



Mentoring Staff+ Engineers into Powerhouses

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Background



16yo


First tech job as junior in
highschool

20yo

First promotion into
engineering leadership

21yo

Stepped into first
Engineering Manager role



21.5yo

Graduated from college

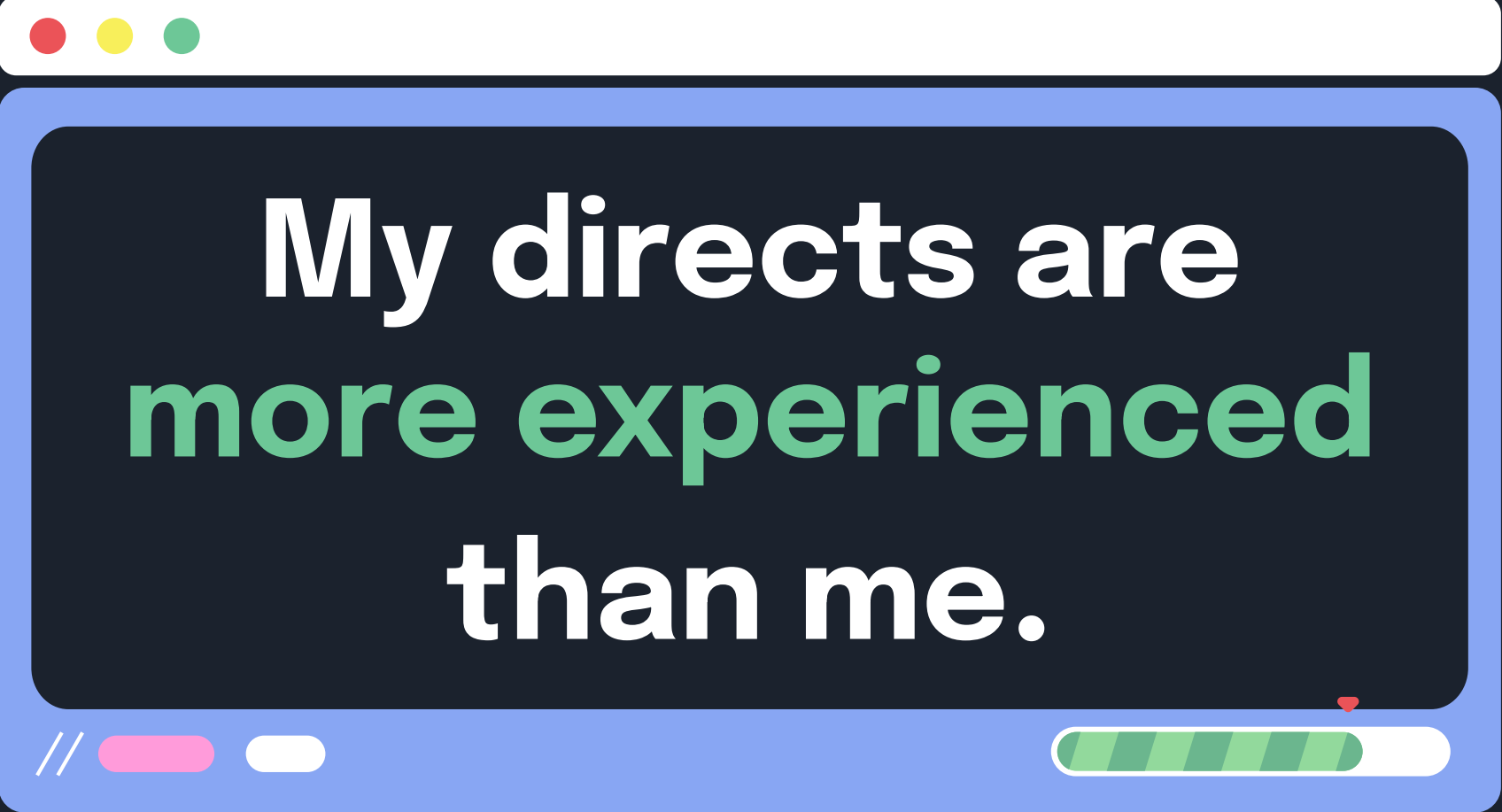


Managing is very
hard for me.





My directs are
older than me.



**My directs are
more experienced
than me.**



My directs are
taller than me.



Have you managed someone...

smarter

more tenure

**more
technical**

**more
privileged**

more liked

**more
impactful**



Have you managed someone...

smarter

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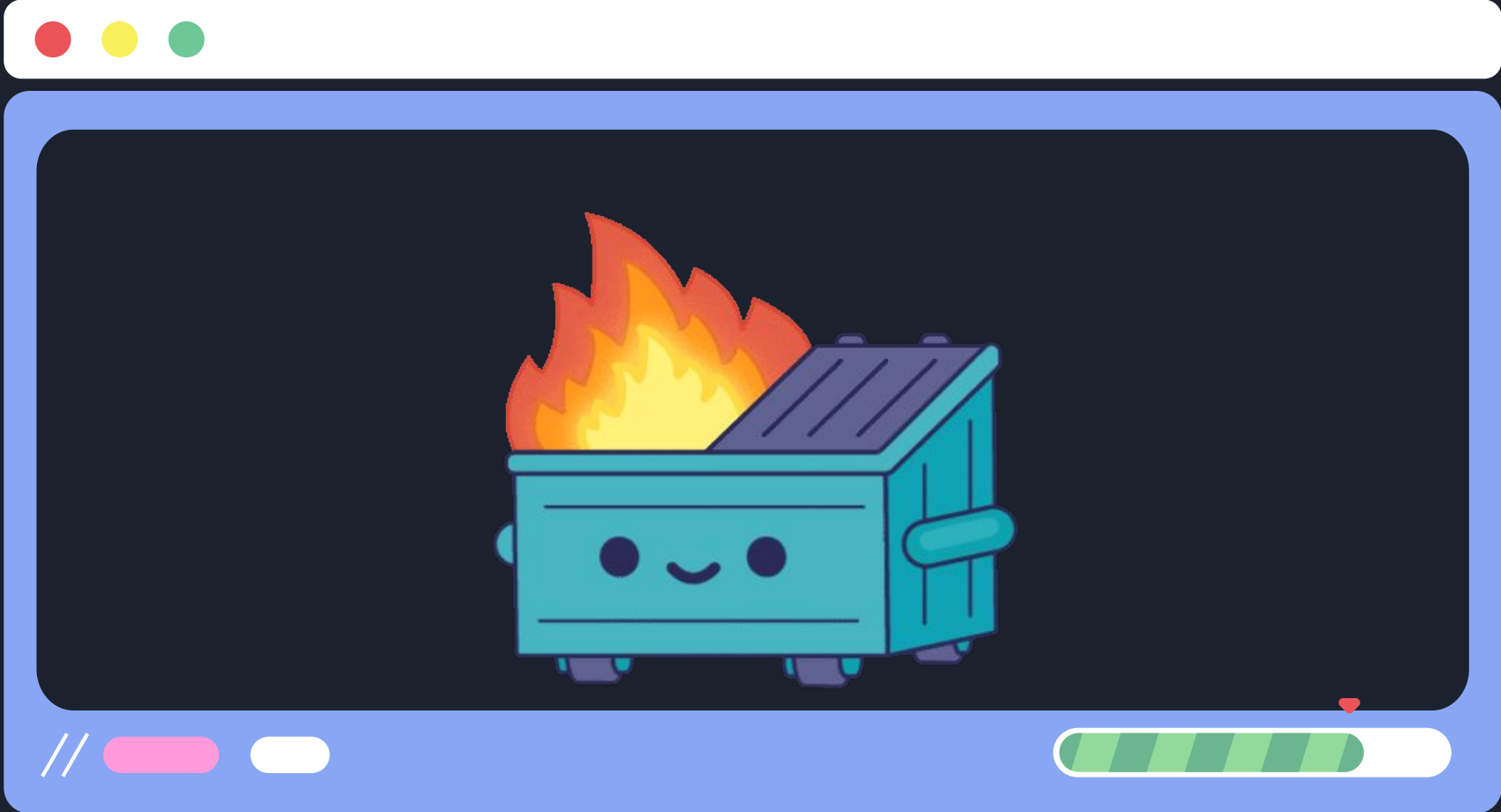
**more
impactful**

Did they have performance problems?



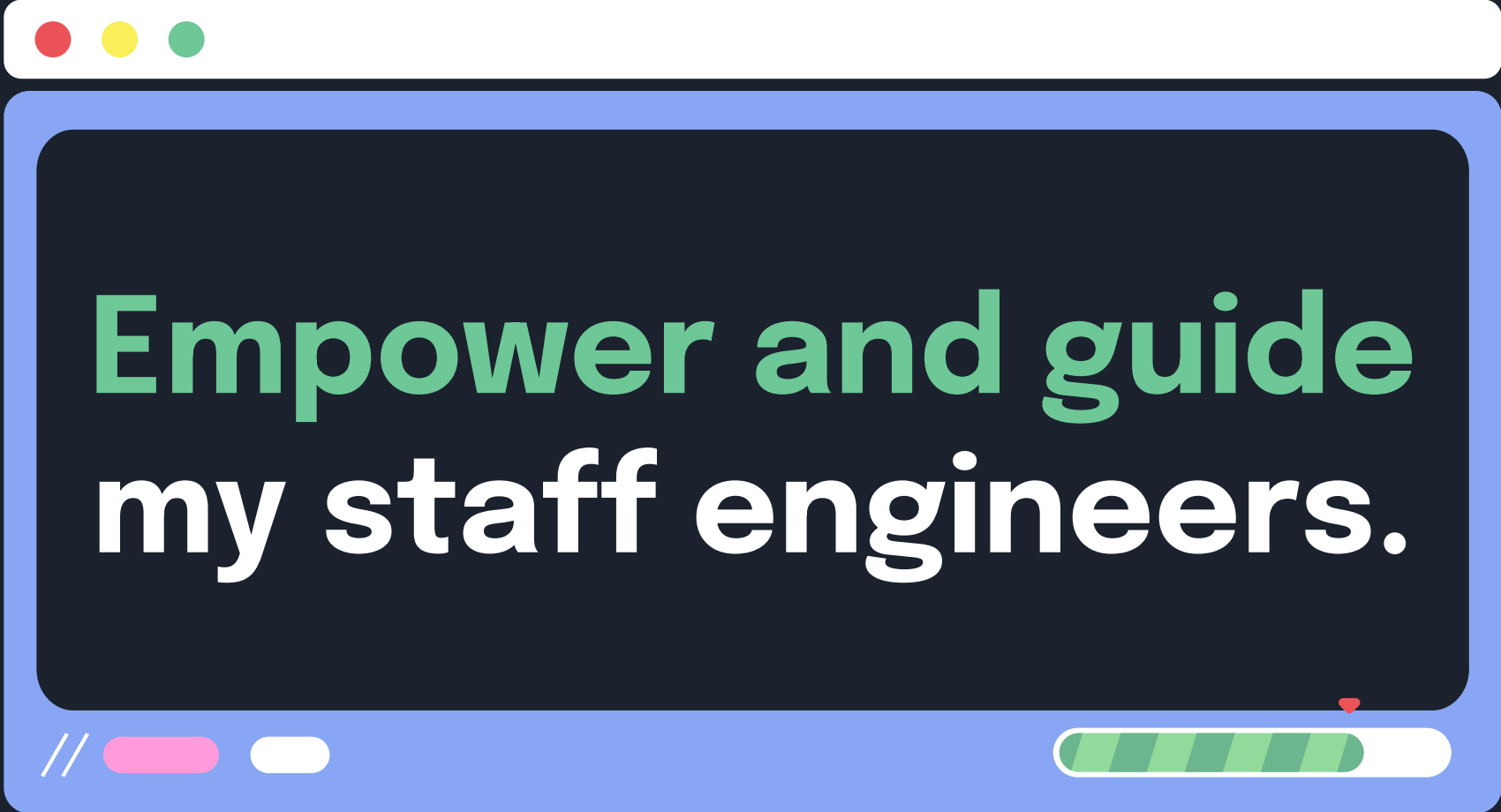
Story time.







I am responsible for
making this team
successful.



**Empower and guide
my staff engineers.**



How do we do it?

Connect

Take personal interest in them as a human.

Gain Respect


Prove you're an engineer at heart.

Give Feedback

Be honest, frequently.

Trust Them

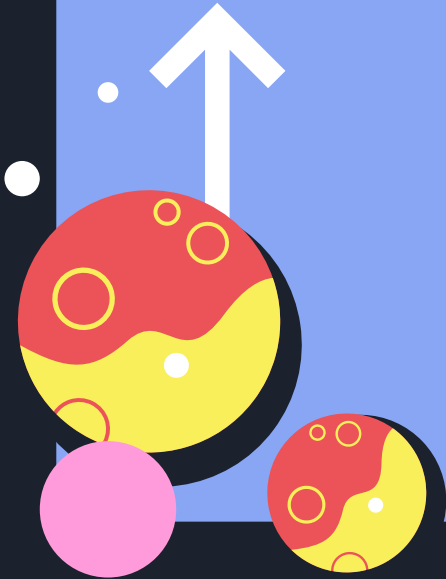
Value their opinion before making decisions.





Connect

Take personal interest in
them as a human.



Connect with your engineer.

They are human beings, treat them as human beings.

Regardless of experience level, they need to know you care about them.

You can do it!

- Remember their dogs, cats, small humans, partners. Ask about them.
- Treat them to lunch or coffee. Remote isn't an excuse.
- Check in on them, not just their work.

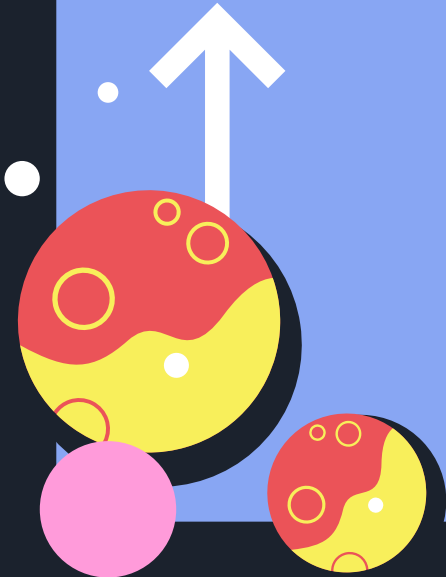




02

Gain Respect

Prove you're an engineer at heart.



Gain their **technical respect**.

Convince them you are still relevant.

They need to know you still know your stuff, you haven't sacrificed yourself to middle management.

You can do it!

- Read their architecture docs, ask questions until you fully understand.
- Go through the code base, don't wing it.
- Understand the product.
- Create an automation. Help with a bug. Provide a small dose of technical value.

Me, tech lead,
trying to explain
why we can't make
a cat shaped
square

my manager



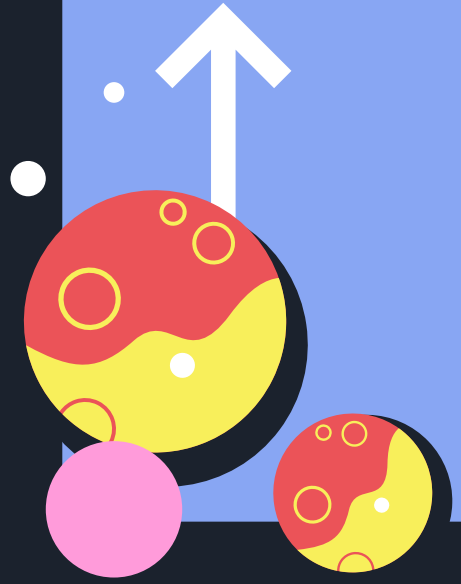
ProgrammerHumor.io



03

Give Feedback

Be honest, frequently.





Disclaimer

This only works if you **connected** and built **respect** first.

Provide regular, hard **feedback**.

At the top of the pyramid, critical feedback is rare to find. Don't deprive them.

Staff+ Engineers still need development plans, they need to know what comes next (\$\$ or promotion). Plus this is your chance to let them know, they aren't meeting your bar.

You can do it!

- Document, Document, Document.
- Hold regular 1-1s or Career Focused meetings.
- Force your other engineers to give them REAL feedback.

Me: `print("Hello World!")`

Output: Hello World!

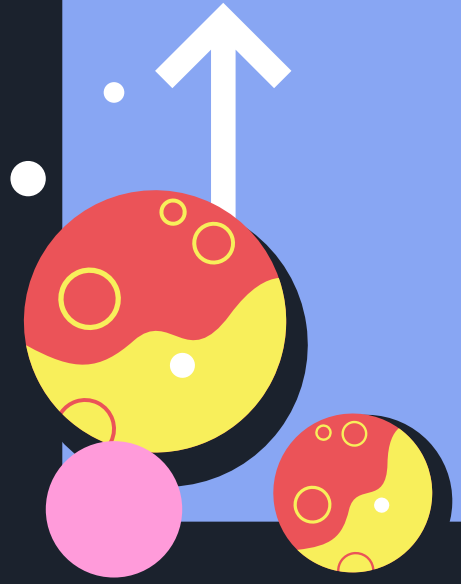




04

Trust Them

Value their opinion before making decisions.



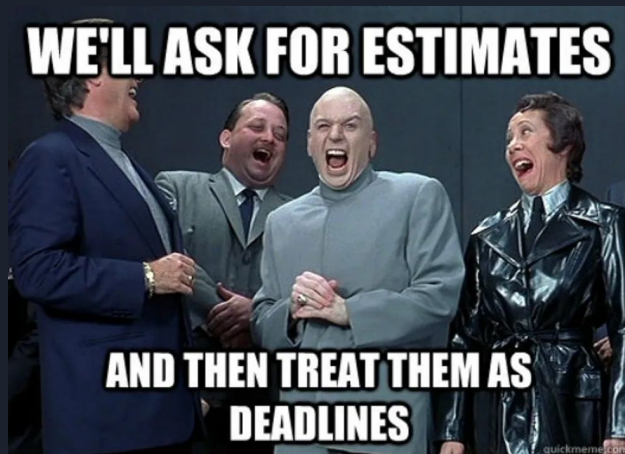
Trust their opinions and confidentiality.

If you overshare with anyone, do it with them. This is your right-hand.

They are your boots on the ground, throw them signals and they'll repay you 10x.

You can do it!

- Share leadership notes and business updates, when you can - especially when bad.
- Funnel their opinions back up, if possible bring them with you.
- Ask about the rest of the team.



Recap

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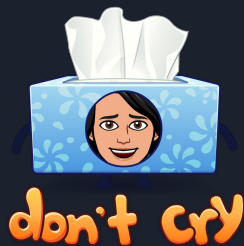




Success Metrics

This can be you!

- Delivery improvements
- Healthy team relationships
- Healthy Engineers, trickle down effect
- Your manager is happy
- Consistent career progression
- YOUR job is easier.



Emily! Thank you so much for investing yourself so wholly in this team and our work. You leave us in a much better place than you found us, and I am profoundly grateful for your kindness and positive influence. I wish you the best of luck in your next adventure!

enjoyed working with you. You've been an awesome manager. Thank you for showing personal interests in me and supporting me to grow into a better engineer. ❤️ All the best on your new adventure!

Thanks!

