Mentoring and Coaching New Hires

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2-month plan for mentoring and coaching when a New Hire starts with the team.

Mentoring:
1. Unblock them. But don't stop there. Every time you unblock them, take the opportunity to create more context. You have been with the team more than them, use your privilege to add value.
2. Hand holding is fine if the mentee needs it during the first couple of weeks. Builds confidence, gives them the small wins. Talk about good engineering practices often.
3. Two ways to bring change: share feedback, support it with helping specific points of concern. Listen keenly.
4. Root-cause all the way(7 'whys' usually gets you to the real problem) why they are asking certain questions, maybe as a team we can improve and create better systems.
5. The focus is to get them up and running as fast as possible while making it pleasant for them to learn our systems. Look for yellow flags and red flags, mentor them.
6. By the end of 2 months, you should know their strengths and areas which might need more of our attention.
7. Most importantly, when they come to you with a question, and you know there is documentation somewhere for it, it's better to say something like this: "That's a good question, we have some great documentation around it, but let me give you some context around it. It will help you approach the documentation better". People influence, not documentation.

Coaching:
1. Influence on things beyond the team, know the person behind the mentee.
2. Ask more questions than answer them. When they come to you with queries or doubts, ask them good questions to invoke thought processes inside them.
3. Make it more about a long term experience, can they remember you as someone who changed their professional life?
4. Influence perspective changes, teach new ways to think, push them to think harder. Technical problems are not the only things one needs to know to become a successful engineer. The biggest seed to sow is the desire for greatness.
5. If you have had great coaches/es in your career, think about what made them so special. Try an emulate until you develop your own styles.
6. Represent them and speak for them if you see them having difficulty speaking their ideas. Provide them that initial push.
7. Keep discussions thinking oriented. This is your opportunity to get creative.

Some Recommended AI for a mentor:

1. Set up at least 2 meetings per week for the first 4 weeks. After 4 weeks, finetune it as required. Take the liberty to overcommunicate, more often than not, new hires are hesitant to ask for your time. Give it to them yourself.
2. Ping and catch up on Slack every day. Bond with them at a level they are comfortable with.
3. Keep discussions action-oriented. Every discussion should wrap up with a next step defined and agreed upon.
4. Give them feedback every week, use this graph to give craft your feedback, we want 'radical candor':

Courtesy of CANDOR
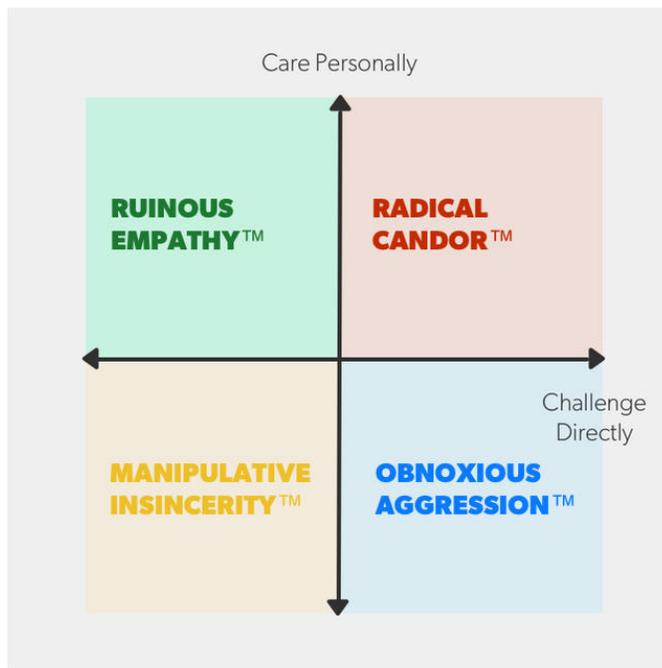
Also on a weekly basis, share a 2 line summary on Slack of your feedback with the coach to be in sync.

5. Have trouble framing your feedback? Use the STAR framework:
   a. Situation: what is the problem you want to solve
   b. Task: what did they do, what should they have done instead
   c. Action: can they take specific action to course correct?
   d. Result: what is the result you want to track and follow up on next time you meet them.
6. After 2 months, they should hopefully be pretty familiar with how things work inside the team and they will be with a subteam. You will continue to mentor them but hopefully will need to spend lesser time.
7. Have a doc where you collect thoughts: things to discuss today, action items for the mentee, assign to them, follow up next meeting.

Some Recommended AI for a coach:
1. Meet them at least once a week for 1 full hour. Take a top-down approach to explain things.
2. Pick big problems to talk about. Example: an ongoing production issue and use that to brainstorm. Give them the building blocks and ask them how they would solve it? They perhaps will not come up with the right answer, but they should think hard about it (navigate unknowns, ask more questions, identify with the problem, etc)
3. Get them to talk, know them. Be an ally.
4. If they can open up to you, understand what they are finding challenging?
5. Share engineering experiences that shaped your career, talk about good engineering practices, and how and why they are crucial to an engineer's success.
6. Ask this: 30 years from now, will they remember you as someone who changed the way they think about their vocation?

What is the goal of doing all this:
1. We want to create a place for happy, top-performing, accountable engineers who care to do good work.
2. Mentors and coaches are one of the biggest factors why engineers are happy, satisfied, positive about their work.
3. When engineers feel safe and valued, they tend to bring their better selves to work, share their ideas, are more productive, are easier to collaborate with, write better code, are more effective in code reviews, and influence high standards.
4. When they think they are creating value, they stay with the team and company longer.
5. Longer retention avoids unnecessary churn inside the team eventually adds to building a high-performance team.
6. By the end of 2 months, they should be familiar with all the basics -- SI's working rhythm, the fundamentals of our services, basic challenges, tools we use inside etc.

Notes:
Mentorship is more time consuming than coaching. 1-3 hours per week.
Mentors to discuss progress with EM briefly, especially if something needs attention. 1-1.5 hr per week.

If at any point in time you think you want more information, please let your EM know.