

# Managing Grumpy

Embracing Diversity to Build Stronger Teams

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# Who is Lisa?

- 20+ years doing..
  - speakeasy/livejournal/sixapart/  
big fish games/twitter/fastly
  - root team/sysadmin/noc/ops/  
techops/it/dba/sre
  - memcached/mogilefs/  
gearmand/mysql
  - ic/manager/sr manager/  
director/VP



# Who is Lisa?

- Diversity Buckets include
  - Woman
  - Mixed ethnicity and race
  - Raised on welfare
  - No college degree
  - Prefers not to wear pants
  - Bad neck and joints
  - Can't listen while typing



# Who is Lisa?

- Acts grumpy when I...
  - Am hungry, tired, annoyed or in pain
  - Have to do things involving paperwork
  - Or really most adulting stuff
  - ...and sometimes for no reason



# On Diversity

- Hire people who don't look like you\*
- Not just for the stuff that doesn't matter
- You don't have to have their career path decided before they start
- Watch your confirmation bias
- Pay them
- Especially underserved folks\*





# Encouraging a diverse environment



# On Grumpy









**Anil Dash** ✓

@anildash



Following

Almost all of the time, people are awesome when you give them the chance to be their best selves. But it can be hard to remember that.

RETWEETS

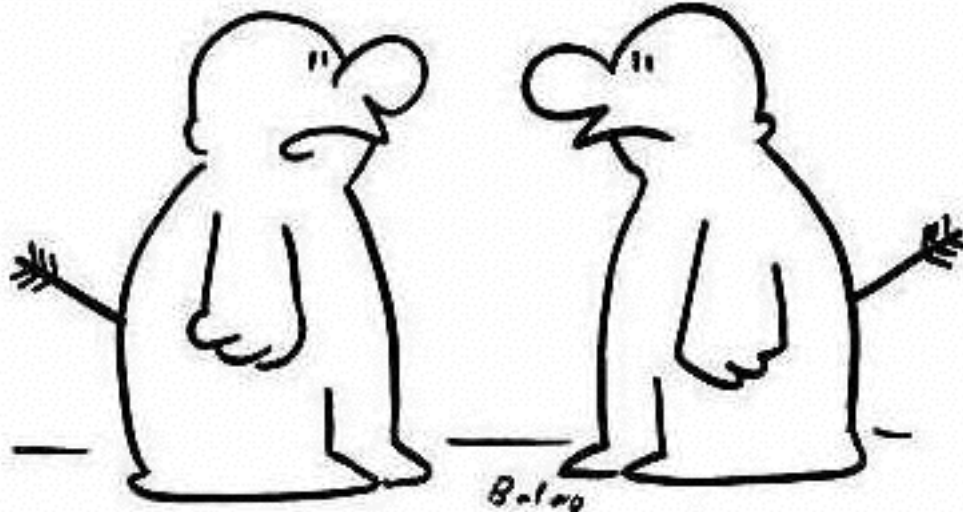
1,651

LIKES

2,881



# Empathy



"I know exactly how you feel."

# Empathy

## Try

- Find your curiosity
- Let them know you hear them - also actually hear them
- Pause. Repeat what you hear
- Feed yourself

## Avoid

- Trying to solve their feelings
- Starting sentences with “at least” or “it could be much worse”
- Dismissing, ignoring or overreacting

# Trust



# Trust

## Try

- Assume good intentions
- Share your stories
- Show your vulnerabilities
- Follow through

## Avoid

- Creating us vs them environment
- Gossiping
- Lying
- General schmarmyness



# Focus



# Focus

## Try

- Set the tone
- Repeat your message
- Target tasks to times to people
- Provide appropriate environment

## Avoid

- Too many p0s
- Dive Bombing
- Deflecting negativity
- Assuming everyone works the same way

# Drama



# Drama

## Try

- Stop immediate bleeding
- Take a timeout
- Eat something
- Provide forum for follow up
- Close the loop

## Avoid

- Feeding the llama
- Making immediate decisions about long term goals
- Drama fanout

# Team Meetings





# Team Meetings

## Try

- Set boundaries about expected language and behavior
- Moderate - watch for word hogs, blame
- Try various methods - private, public, written, vocal
- Ask open questions and encourage feedback

## Avoid

- Skipping them
- Allowing hostility to run its course in the meeting - pause and follow up privately
- Using the meeting to shame a member of the team
- Allowing grumpy to take over

1:1s



# 1:1s

## Try

- Ask what is the one thing you can do to make their job easier this week
- Share your own stories
- Listen
- Have the hard conversations

## Avoid

- Skipping them regularly
- Using them primarily as a task status update
- Monopolizing the time

# Don't take it home



# Worth it





Thank you.  
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