

As the weather starts to turn towards spring and the get-togethers and gatherings start to increase in quantity, we all find ourselves mingling with new people and making new acquaintances and (hopefully) friends.

One of the first questions we are asked is usually “*what do you do,*” right? While I love this conversations most of the time, I find myself being increasingly disgruntled with other industry professionals in similar positions to my own when discussing their team(s).

What I find frustrating is the lack of responsibility and weight that many of these individuals feel with the positions they hold at their organizations. It is not only a tremendous responsibility, but an honor to be given the leadership of a team, let alone more than one; and referring to your team members as “reports” is not only a reflection of the organizational structure, but of you as a leader.

I have, to a fault in some cases, taken my role as a leader extremely personally and very much to heart, where I feel a ceaseless responsibility to the team I lead and all of the members of it. This often extends outside of the office too, where I make it a point to connect with everyone on *some* level with respect to their hobbies, family (if applicable), or other non-professional interests.

When you are the leader of a team, it is not only your responsibility, but *your job* to not merely manage those individuals but to grow them professionally and otherwise.

For *decades* we have accepted the reality of turnover being <1 year for a “typical” software engineer, and while I do not have any research available to back up my theory, I strongly believe that can be correlated to generally poor management and leadership in the industry. We need to stop misrepresenting loyalty for leadership and recognize that just because someone has stayed with the company for several years does *not* mean their professional growth path is to manage and/or lead others at the organization.

The strength of your organization is in the ability of its leaders to grow and improve the people they work with on a daily basis, and we need to do a better job collectively of recognizing that leadership is a skill in and of itself, and be willing to have hard conversations

with people who aspire to be leaders, that they simply may not have the genetic code it requires.

Ironically that requires the leaders of leaders to have those same conversations. What do we do? How do we break the cycle and start growing from within, and building amazing engineers and leaders and playing to everyone's strengths?