

On Getting Old(er) in Tech

Staying Relevant

- Average age of IT workers:
 - Facebook: 28
 - LinkedIn: 29
 - Google: 30

- Average age of all U.S. workers: 42

"I want to stress the importance of being young and technical. Young people are just smarter."



3 till 60



TOMMY LEE
JONES

JAVIER
BARDEM

JOSH
BROLIN

**NO COUNTRY
FOR OLD MEN**



A **COEN BROTHERS** FILM



John Stahler

KETTLER USA
888.253.8853

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At KETTLER, we take fun seriously. We are a leader in bikes, fitness equipment, patio furniture, table tennis tables and outdoor play. We believe in using high quality materials, solid construction and durability in all of our products. From our outdoor play toys to our adult exercise equipment and everything in between, it is our hope that KETTLER leisure and fitness products will enhance your lifestyle. Our focus is on quality, durability and innovation so that your focus can be on using our sports and leisure products to feel better, both physically and mentally. We hope you enjoy your experience with KETTLER and enjoy our products even more, whether you ride our bikes, exercise with our fitness equipment, play with our outdoor play or relax in our patio furniture. KETTLER insists on delivering exceptional quality in every piece of product we manufacture. By paying great attention to detail in the manufacturing process and only using the best materials and state of the art manufacturing techniques, we have established ourselves as a global industry leader. Consider visiting our retailers or ordering our products online. For over 30 years KETTLER USA has built distribution in the United States, Canada, Mexico and Central America.

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So how old
is he?



Captain Kangaroo

Jim Stanicki

JANUARY 3, 1983

\$1.50

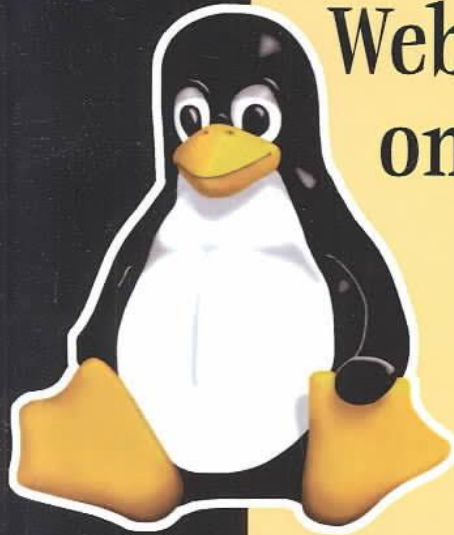
TIME

MACHINE of the YEAR

The Computer Moves In



UNDERSTANDING



Web Hosting
on Linux



Don Denoncourt and Barry Kline

*“I’d like to thank and dedicate this book to Jim Stanicki. Jim got me interested in this field, gave me my first job, and trained me on how to be a coder. **Jim taught me how to attack technology with intelligence, enthusiasm, and humor.**”*

Lifelong learner

- *"Patient with Chronic Lung Cancer Becomes Hospice Caregiver"*
 - [http://**abcnews**.go.com/Health/dying-man-hospice-volunteer/story?id=13213353](http://abcnews.go.com/Health/dying-man-hospice-volunteer/story?id=13213353)

Strategies I've used to stay relevant



mediocrity



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About 8,820,000 results (0.42 seconds)

me·di·oc·ri·ty

/,mēdē'äkredē/ 

noun

the quality or state of being mediocre.

"heroes rising above the mediocrity that surrounds them"

- a person of mediocre ability.

plural noun: **mediocrities**

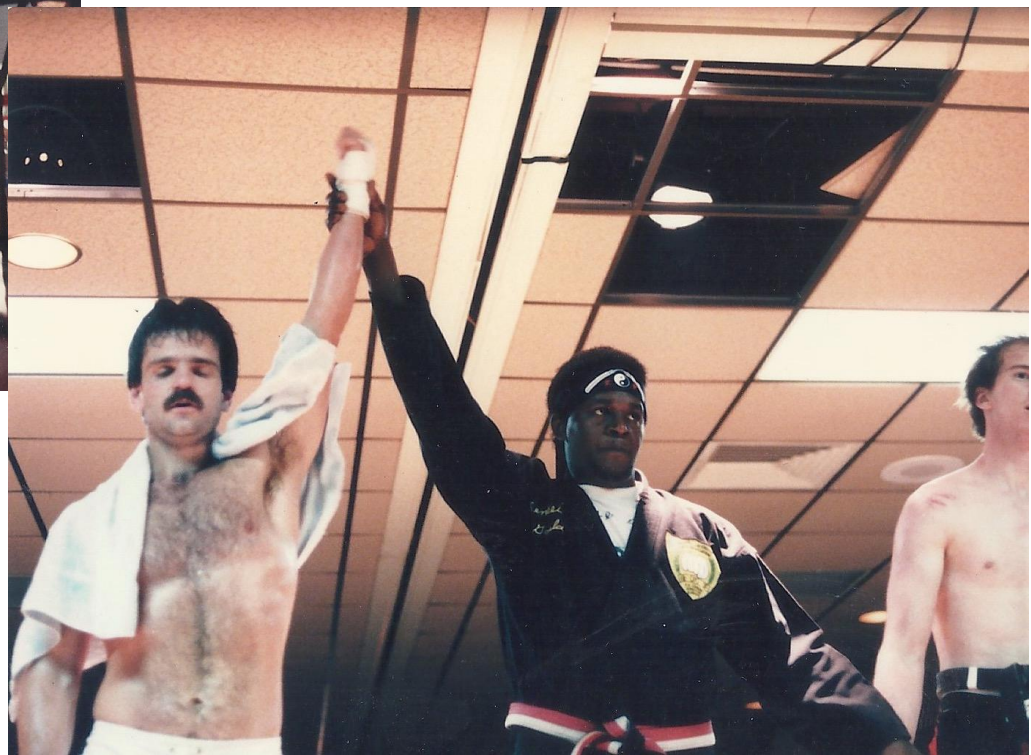


Translations, word origin, and more definitions

<http://corgibytes.com/blog/2016/08/30/quest-for-mediocrity/>

Don't be a Dojo Champion





Cubical Dancing



Cross Boundaries



Challenge yourself



What do you do if you are the best... in your shop

- Read code
- Join an open-source project
- Write blog posts
- Speak at user groups and conferences
- Discover technologies that others team members are adept
- Mentor

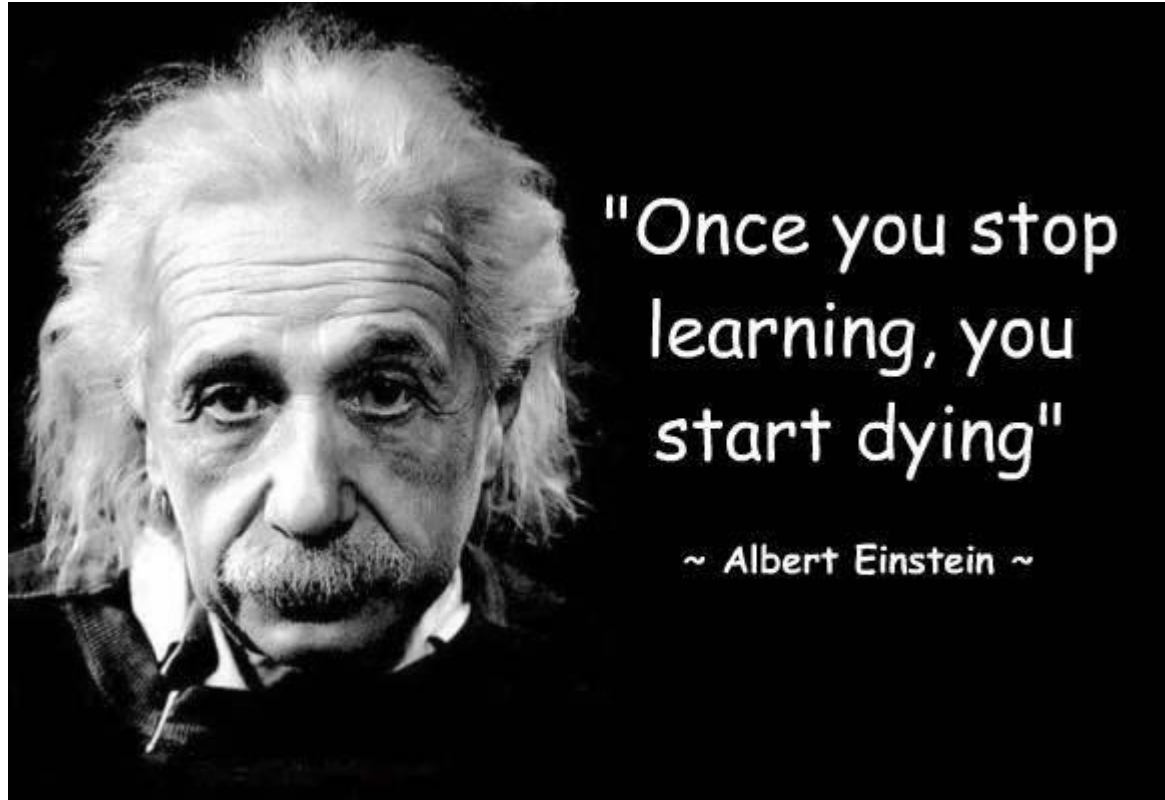
“10 years experience or 1 year 10 times?”



*“After doing 1 year 10 times...
folks often lose the ability to learn”*



“If you plan on being in the IT field for more than 10 years, you need to become a lifelong learner”



“Only as Good as Your Last Two Years of Accomplishments”

Let me tell you about my accomplishments...



```

Source Col:1 Line:32 Seu:0030.00 *COPY .....
: C* Call CUALFS to display current customers
: C MOVE *BLANK ALPHA ← 8
: C Z-ADD 0 CUST# 5 0
: C CALLA TAG
: C* =====
: C CALL 'CUALFS'
: C PARM ALPHA
: C PARM CUST#
: C*
: C* Close Program
: C CUST# IFEQ 99999
: C GOTO LAST
: C END
: C* -----

```

Stopped Line



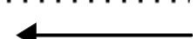
Factor 1
Automatic Watch

```

.....
Log..... Watches.....
: Program is not running : : ALPHA =
: > ab : : -----
: @ 33/78 in SHIPDETAIL of EXILE/SHIP : : CUST# = 00000.
.....

```

Automatic Watch
User Watch





What have you done lately?

- Docker
- ElasticSearch
- AWS OpsWorks
- Cypress.io testing
- Python
- Rescued a dying start-up app where a consulting firm used three years and \$1,000,000 to make an unmarketable mess



“What am I going to say are my accomplishments two years from now?”

On Learning

Know your learning style

- Auditory: classroom
 - Less formally, audio books and youtube videos
- Visual: books
 - I literally slept through high-school and too much of college
- Kinesthetic: doing
 - Who can argue with actually using a tech
 - Develop internal company tools
 - Perhaps code that writes or converts code

We remember the first and last things we study

- Do short bursts of learning
 - Pomodoro 5 minutes
 - Automated tests that take 10 minutes or so
 - Cleanse your palate after completing a task
- Ruby Tapas
 - Daily dose of learning as appetizer or snack
 - Find video series that are short bursts of tech

Multi-pass

- *"Expose your mind to the new material as soon as possible, even if only for a few moments"*
 - Multiple books on the same subject

Mental Pump

- Similar to bodybuilder's addiction to "The Pump"
 - Get a mental pump each day



*“One hour of study a day
and you’ll be an expert in
ten years”*

- “Ten thousand hours is the magic number of greatness”
 - Malcolm Gladwell in “Outliers”



Surge

- Blast of learning coerced by:
 - Pre-conference
 - Pre-project launch
 - Between-projects
 - Job-hunting



Stockpile resources

- Ask teammates what books, blogs, online courses, or videos they've benefited from
- Accumulate posts from web magazines and newsletters
- Use getpocket
- Conferences and seminars videos



But I don't have the time...

- "Being an Outlier"
 - Cory House
 - <https://www.infoq.com/presentations/better-developer>
- "Multi-thread life"
 - "Hack the Commute"
 - audio books
 - Exercise time
 - Youtube videos while on the cross trainer
 - Podcasts while running or cycling



On Getting Hired

Be upfront about your age

*“Your team is looking for someone with ‘7+ years software development experience’ and a ‘Polyglot programmer with skills in 5+ programming languages and 2+ frameworks.’ How about 7+ years of C/C++, 7+ years of Java, 2+ years of PHP, and then 3+ years of Ruby (**not to mention 7+ years of RPG and Cobol, otherwise, you could do the math and guess my age**).”*

Be and look fit, and don't worry about looking younger

- It doesn't have to be at the gym
 - Walk
 - Take the stairs



Be interesting... To yourself!

- Have some hobbies



Take a cut in salary for new opportunities

- Moved from an RPG business programmer to a C++ Systems Programmer
- Left Fortune 100 overpaid contractor to an underpaid developer for a tiny “mover and shaker” consulting firm

No work is an opportunity to learn

- Do your own start-up
 - Pick something real or something silly
 - If it's silly put the code public on github
- Join an open-source project



In Summary

On Learning

- Know and leverage your learning style
- Techniques:
 - Short bursts
 - We remember the first and last things we study
 - Multi-pass
 - Mental Pump
 - Surge
- One hour of study a day and you'll be an expert in ten years
 - The 10,000 Hour Rule
- Stockpile resources
 - getpocket.com
- "Multi-thread life"
 - "Hack the Commute"

On Getting Hired

- Be upfront about your age
- Be and look fit, and don't worry about looking younger
- Be interesting... To yourself! Have some hobbies
- Take a cut in salary for new opportunities
- No work is an opportunity to learn

On Having a Growth Mindset

- Don't be a Dojo Champion
- Cross Boundaries and Challenge yourself
- 10 years experience or 1 year 10 times?
- If you plan on being in the IT field for more than 10 years, you need to become a lifelong learner
- Only as Good as Your Last Two Years of Accomplishments

On Getting Old(er) by Bob Dylan

May you build a ladder to the stars

And climb on every rung

May you stay forever young

May you grow up to be righteous

May you grow up to be true

May you always know the truth

And see the lights surrounding you

May you always be courageous

Stand upright and be strong

May you stay forever young”

“Forever young, forever young

*May you **stay forever young***