THE
CODING DOJO
HANDBOOK

*a practical guide to
creating a space
where **good** programmers
can become **great** programmers*

Emily Bache
Foreword by Robert C. Martin

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What is a Coding Dojo?

A Coding Dojo is a meeting where a bunch of coders get together, code, learn, and have fun. It's got to be a winning formula! Programmers generally love the plain activity of writing code, away from managers and deadlines and production bugs. When they've got over their shyness, most are delighted to show others how well they can actually write code, as well as to pick up tips and advice from them. Throw in a suitably puzzling Code Kata and a safe environment to discuss topics like design, testing, refactoring, choice of code editor, tools... and you're away! You'll hardly be able to stop them talking and writing code and learning from one another!

There are few obligatory elements to a coding dojo, designed to promote the aims of learning and having fun. Within those constraints, you still have a lot of freedom to adapt the form and activities according to what you discover suits your group, or in other words, makes it more fun. Some people just prefer to meet with some like minded coders and hack at something together. That's absolutely fine, and can be great fun, but I think you'll learn more if you add just a little more structure.

Essential Dojo Elements

For a dojo I think you need to:

- Hold an intro and retrospective
- Write tests as well as code
- Show your working
- Have moderation or facilitation

The intro and moderation are designed to make sure everyone feels safe to experiment and learn. The retrospective makes sure you reflect on what you've learnt. Writing some tests as well as code sets you up with a feedback mechanism on whether your code is working as you expect. Demonstrating how you write the code, not just the code you end up with, means you learn a mechanism to produce good code, not just what good code looks like. Those elements - intro, retrospective, moderation, showing working, and tests - are what sets a coding dojo apart from any other kind of coding meeting.

The rest of this book explains how a Coding Dojo works in detail.