

Krish (products.snowpal.com) (00:00.97)

Hey there, welcome to Snowpal Software Development and Architecture podcast. Our guest today is Serkan Durusoy. Serkan is a generalist engineering leader, mentor and facilitator for 20 plus years. Serkan builds engineering teams, coaches developers, grooms leaders and ships products. We've had a previous conversation with Serkan, so welcome back to the podcast Serkan.

Serkan Durusoy (00:24.151)

Yeah, thank you, Krish. It's good to be back.

Krish (products.snowpal.com) (00:27.066)

Today's topic is impact of layoffs, letting go and being let go. In other words, both sides of the layoff equation. We're going to have in the next hour, we're going to talk about the

facets of layoffs, if that's the right way to phrase it, the consequences, the impact. And we're gonna sort of try and wear both hats as people who might find ourselves in the position in management where we've got to let go of other folks, some other folks in the team, and in the position where you are part, you've been impacted by certain restructuring that could have happened, just to see what this means in totality. So without further ado,

Serkan Durusoy (00:42.909)

Mm-hmm.

Krish (products.snowpal.com) (01:09.744)

Kick those off, Serkan.

Serkan Durusoy (01:11.459)

All right, well, thank you very much, Krish. In fact, thank you very much for the opportunity and for the timing because this is a great time as I've just been laid off a couple of days ago. And having reflected a little bit on it, I thought the best thing I could do at this point is to talk about it because I have an interesting experience with layoffs. I've been part of the decision-making group.

and two companies who had to lay people off. And then I've been part of a group who has opted to voluntarily terminate. And then I've been part of a group who's been let's go. So it's fair to say that I've experienced multiple outcomes of a layoff or multiple perspectives of a layoff, so to speak.

I was actually trying to figure out the best reference just like you did the moment ago, the facets maybe. And I just wanted to share my experience because I think this might be helpful to anyone out there who is either considering downsizing their company as part of leadership responsibilities and or it might be relevant to someone out there who's just heard the news that the company is going to.

Krish (products.snowpal.com) (02:12.067)

Right.

Serkan Durusoy (02:37.663)

downsize and that they might actually lose their job. Or maybe they've just heard the news, suddenly they woke up next morning and they no longer have a job. So I think out of this, my expectation is that this could help some folks out there navigate their situation with more information. Because I think this is fairly new to anyone, especially when it suddenly hits.

I don't think there are a lot of people out there who's been a part of this either way, more than once. And having experienced it in different times, different companies, different strategies, different levels of care, it's fair to say that my experience could maybe help someone out there.

Krish (products.snowpal.com) (03:30.93)

Absolutely. I mean, I have no doubt at all. So I want to not exactly break this down into different paths, but just to give an attempt at that, I want to say, if you don't mind, let's start with you being in a role where, you know, you're in management, you've been in management, you know, a while.

Serkan Durusoy (03:32.923)

Mm.

Krish (products.snowpal.com) (03:49.358)

So you mentioned that you've had you've been in positions where you've had to actually let people know. So if you could just walk us through the experience, you know, both sides of this. When I say both sides, I don't mean being let go and let go. I'm saying both sides, meaning you maybe agree with those decisions. Maybe you do not, but you see, you know, it's we live in a capitalistic world. And naturally so for the most part. So you have to do what you have to do.

Serkan Durusoy (04:00.984)

Mm-hmm.

Serkan Durusoy (04:13.009)

Mm-hmm.

Krish (products.snowpal.com) (04:18.992)

with those decisions. I mean, you agree with the company's decisions because you have to cut costs, but you don't find yourself in a human position, if you will, to have to communicate that. So if you could just walk us through an example of, how that transpires.

Serkan Durusoy (04:20.031)

Mm-hmm.

Serkan Durusoy (04:32.329)

Mm-hmm.

Serkan Durusoy (04:35.819)

Okay, well, I think it transpires in one of two ways. It either happens quite knowingly, where you actually expect that this is about to happen, or it hits you as a surprise, right? And I think either case, it's still avoidable. And I think it's best for any leader out there is to look for signs that tell them that...

the figurative shit is about to hit the fan and that they should do something about it as early as possible because the moment one realizes that, every single minute counts. Every single minute could change the livelihood of the company, the livelihood of the people that they are working with. And I think it matters because it does change lives, it does affect lives.

So if it's a surprise, it just means that as a leader, this person may not have been looking at the correct information or all the relevant information to drive their decisions. Or if it's not coming in as a surprise, maybe something needs to change with regards to leadership principles or company's culture and values. Either way, I think these are avoidable.

Being able to avoid the situation like this strengthens the company in the longer term So I think let's definitely start with that now as a leader who Whose hands are tied when a decision is made and you're asked to you know reduce the number of people in one or more teams

It's a tough one. At that point, it's a matter of fighting for number of roles that you can sustain. You also think about the people and who would be affected, but then there's also the longer term expectations around companies sustaining its livelihoods, so that this never happens again, in which case the decision is biased towards the company's economic sustainability as well.

Serkan Durusoy (06:50.331)

So it's a really tough situation to be in. And oftentimes, I think most layoffs happen because decisions are made with little to no planning at all. So there's an optic in market conditions and there's a rush to hiring people, right? Or there's an expectation, there's a bet that the company wants to make. They say, hey, we have X amount of dollars in the bank. We wanna invest.

five months of our one runway into a new product, it's a bet, right? It's a risk. But oftentimes the risk doesn't actually only belong to the company and the founder and the senior leadership. It also quite frankly belongs to those who are unknowingly becoming a part of this. They are having an interview with this company who weighs the lottery at hand and says, hey, you know what, there's a big prize here for all of us. I think...

At that time, it's really important for someone interviewing for a job to ask the right questions about the company, about their livelihood. For instance, I was thinking about expanding my team in my last role, and a couple of candidates kind of tried to ask me how we're doing financially.

but they weren't comfortable asking the questions. And the way I responded to them was quite frank, open, and transparent. And I helped them, led them to acknowledge that they should be comfortable asking these questions because it's fair, right? We're promising them an amazing new role. We're promising them equity. We're promising them a big salary. And then, but we don't talk about how long we could actually sustain it. So...

I try to be as open to them as possible with regards to the risks, where the company are, what the runway is, what kind of financing we might be looking into, what challenges we're facing, why we have that role and why we think that role is impactful to a potential positive outcome and then how we think this person might help us get there and how alternatively this person and the company could also fail.

Serkan Durusoy (09:12.847)

So I think that's the right thing to do when we're hiring. So it all starts from there, right? And then obviously, sometimes things come in as a surprise. In my last role, we really cared about our people, right? And our entire strategy was being data-driven.

Krish (products.snowpal.com) (09:20.267)

Right.

Serkan Durusoy (09:38.979)

We really read the market conditions. We really read, like, looked deeply into what we needed. We were thoughtful about hiring. We didn't rush into hiring. We kind of even took our time with everything. We tried to focus. We tried to do everything right. But then an unexpected economic crisis happened that affected the entire country and lots of startups. Now, that's a big surprise for everyone.

But then reflecting back on it, it's also fair to say that there was that one major data point about the country's economic standing that we actually never looked into, right? Had we maybe looked into that as part of the data points we had, maybe we could even have avoided this in the first place. So I think it's about learning and then making sure that we don't repeat these mistakes.

I've also been part of layoffs where the care and the thoughtfulness wasn't there to begin with. It was all about business. Business comes first, we have to hire fast and fire fast. That also puts a lot of pressure on those people who have to become part of those decisions. And actually in that case,

I personally took the voluntary termination option myself because I fundamentally disagreed with the way we ran the business. Not saying it was right or wrong, I just disagreed with it. Like it didn't fit with me. Right? So, yeah, there's a lot to unpack. There's a lot to discuss. There's a lot to debate. But I think more importantly, there's a lot to know about.

Krish (products.snowpal.com) (11:22.166)
Right.

Serkan Durusoy (11:36.719)
what a layoff is, how it affects people, and depending on which side of the layoff one is, how to look at it. Oftentimes, it comes as a personal hit, right? If, for instance, being on the business side, trying to decide who to let go, it's really normal to feel a personal attachment.

to that decision because ultimately, if as a leader who cares about people, you're there to support them, then making a big decision that will impact their lives, it suddenly becomes as personal as the relationship one is setting with them. On the other side, yeah.

Krish (products.snowpal.com) (12:27.778)
So, Serkan, let me, sorry, let me ask you this, right? So the way I see it, you took two examples of a company that does care about his employees, makes the best decisions it can possibly do, keeping their growth in mind and the growth of their employees as well. Took a second example where probably that wasn't to be the case. To me, I wanna say that is it safe for the error on the side of the second company, meaning as an employee,

all of your due diligence, but there are many things that control and this is not within your control as somebody getting hired in an organization. I cannot tell for sure if this organization, yeah, can do whatever reading you possibly could, but that's still theory. Are they gonna care? Are they not gonna care? Or even if they do, are they gonna be able to make control? How much control do they have over their decisions? Because macro and micro economic conditions play a big role. Even if the company did everything perfectly well, things could have changed.

Serkan Durusoy (13:02.019)
Mm-hmm.

Serkan Durusoy (13:10.331)
Mm-hmm.

Serkan Durusoy (13:20.822)
Mm-hmm.

Krish (products.snowpal.com) (13:27.852)

I see it and again there's no right or wrong way to do it the way I see it or I have seen it in my career is never feel attached to the organization because you know like they say a company is not necessarily a family even though you read it sometimes it's far from a family a family is related to you by blood It's kit and kin a family doesn't like you or dislike you hopefully because of what you bring to the table That's quite the opposite when you take a company and it's rightfully so because the company is there to make money

Serkan Durusoy (13:37.978)
Mm-hmm.

Serkan Durusoy (13:48.462)
Mm.

Krish (products.snowpal.com) (13:58.412)
whether it's for profit or just taking for-profit companies, even not for profit, I would imagine they're there to serve a particular purpose. And unless you help them serve that purpose, you're not being useful. So you're going to have to be let go. That singularly, to me, separates the statements where they say a company is a family. I don't think so. I think it's far from it. So if I say...

As an employer, as a manager, I have to be, you know, can I say that I should never be surprised because things could potentially change, maybe dramatically, maybe not so dramatically. So I should be prepared to actually pass on this bad news, if you will, or the pink slip at some point. And as an employee, I should also be ready to accept that this could happen just about any time. At least that's my perspective. And as somebody who's been in the business of consulting most of my career,

Serkan Durusoy (14:35.951)
Mm-hmm.

Serkan Durusoy (14:47.163)
Mm-hmm.

Mm-hmm.

Krish (products.snowpal.com) (14:51.482)
It's not easy, not everybody takes to it just as easily. It's not an easy thing to accept. So if I said that that's the foundational premise, as somebody who's in management, you have to be ready to let people go. And as somebody who's actually in a position where you could be given that news, you should always be ready for it so you never surprise. Is that a decent way to approach this situation?

Serkan Durusoy (14:57.304)
Mm-hmm.

Serkan Durusoy (15:20.019)
I think yes, it's very pragmatic, but I think it's a bit harsh too. So let me expand on this. Yes, you are not family with the people you're working with. That said, if the founders have been doing their job right, they've been surrounding themselves with like-minded people who are driven to the mission of the company, right? Now.

If that happens, that brings those people much closer than mere colleagues, you know, working from paycheck to paycheck. There's something higher involved, right? Now, that's

when it becomes a little tricky, because you're still not family, but you're actually quite very close, because you really feel that you're part of something larger, and you're in it together.

There's a feeling of camaraderie that builds up. In which case, it becomes tougher. You suddenly kind of start confusing your feelings, emotions towards that camaraderie with kinship, with family. And that's really natural. And I've actually witnessed that with a lot of people I tried to support through their transition out of the company. Even after I got laid off, you know,

chatting with some of those other people who got laid off alongside me, trying to make sense of things, try to help them understand that this wasn't personal, but then they weren't there as part of a family and that the CEO wasn't there to take care of them. Their goal is much larger than that and that they joined the company in the first place to serve that goal. That said,

The questions are had the company always been transparent, had the company always cared about them, had the company truly put people above many other things, like were they always doing the right thing when it came to such decisions? And I think the answer is yes. And that's for instance, what really made it even harder for everyone this time. And in fact, when I talk to my CEO about

Serkan Durusoy (17:44.879)

you know, my role getting terminated. She was really surprised that I wasn't surprised at all. And that I was actually trying to be supportive with her because I really understood where she was coming from, where, why the company existed in the first place. And I really truly believed and aligned with the mission, with mission and what we wanted to do. What we really woke up every morning and tried to do day to day.

There was a really strong bond there. And the company really did care about the people that they let go. Like there were proper service packages in place, support structures in place. They really did the best they could. In fact, I think the best thing that this company did was call it out at the earliest possible moment. We didn't waste any longer than two days on this.

And had she asked me, I would have said, you know what, this is a good time to reduce our company size, go back to our roots, start with me please. I would have actually asked her to do that. So I think there's that element. But then, well, I mean, it became a little bit personal too, because they knew, I knew,

Serkan Durusoy (19:12.291)

goal and mission and drive together anymore the next morning. Right. It was a very emotional party, really very emotional party. Um, so, so I think there's really not one major, uh, you know, summary of, uh, how we could, you know, uh, frame a layoff. It really depends on the unique situation of a company, the employees, the leadership.

how things transpired, how they came to be, what people learn out of this. I think the fair question to ask is, is everybody doing the right thing, given the circumstances, with knowing what they know, right? And the right thing is not like, give me, I don't know, 24 months of a severance package, or like keep me employed, even though I don't have the money. It's not the right thing, right? The right thing is more pragmatic than that.

Krish (products.snowpal.com) (19:56.842)

Okay, so.

Krish (products.snowpal.com) (20:09.798)

Right, so let's take an example. So, you know, recently I saw a video where, you know, there's a couple of different examples from, when you're in a position where you have to tell, convey

this news to somebody in your team, you've worked with them maybe for a certain period of time. Maybe it's lengthy, maybe not so lengthy. There are two broad differences I've seen. One company is actually, you know, it's like the movie Up In Air. I don't know if you've seen that movie, George Clooney from years ago. It's a good movie. Yeah.

Serkan Durusoy (20:36.311)

Oh yes, it's a good movie, yeah.

Krish (products.snowpal.com) (20:40.512)

I don't know if it's a satire, but you know, there is this cold, you know, they hired somebody else to actually let go of people versus you actually conveying that news as not so good as it is to the people you've actually worked with.

What is your take on the difference? You know, it's not so much a leading question. You know, it's not necessarily, hey, the obvious answer is sure. Uh, I worked with the team. It's better for me to let them know. Again, there are things in your control. There may be a company policy, like, but I just want to hear another person's perspective on, okay, that comes to the situation. A few people have to be let go in your team. And you're like, you know what? I'm not going to convey this news. I'm going to actually bring some other people who the team has never worked with and have them convey this.

to the team versus you conveying it. What is your take on the difference between how this news is actually passed along to the people who are impacted by these layoffs?

Serkan Durusoy (21:34.54)

I think that's a tough one. It depends on the size of the company, I think, and the general structure of the company at the good times, quote unquote. Like, if the company is structured in a way that people get to be supported by thoughtful and caring managers, supportive managers, I think the way to let people go should still be...

through the same mechanics, through the same relationship, as much as it is possible. So it means that I'd personally be informed by someone in my reporting line. Maybe my manager is also being let go, maybe an entire team is being let go. I think one, two, three levels up, there should be someone who is part of the decision, who has been part of the decision, to actually help us navigate it.

and break the news. I think that's the right thing to do. If everything else came through that communication channel, I think this last communication should go through that as well. If there is a completely new person talking me through a termination, I would personally find it rather disrespectful, right? I understand requirements, maybe there are laws, compliance regulations, ETC, that force...

the company to make rash decisions in a very short amount of time. But I think the execution still can err on the side of thoughtfulness and care. Because who knows these people are still going to be ending up maybe working with the same company at some point, maybe not as, you know, in an employment relationship in a different relationship. So I think like it's still in the company's best interest to, uh, you know, sustain that relationship.

Krish (products.snowpal.com) (23:21.632)

Right.

Serkan Durusoy (23:28.375)

at a professional and courtesy level. But with smaller companies, I think it's definitely best if it's more personal. And hey, you know what? Being part of this at two different companies now,

oh, in fact, actually now I remember it's actually three because as an entrepreneur in my early career, I had a company that actually failed, meaning a lot of people had to...

had to move on to new jobs and I feel supporting most of them successfully. Now to this day I'm sustaining great relationships with the people I parted ways with, even with those that I've been responsible of their job change, of their life. Now the way you can handle it speaks to one's...

integrity, I think, above all, and then, hey, this is life. 20 years later, you might end up, you know, having an amazing relationship with some of those people. And I think it's still the right and courteous thing to do.

Krish (products.snowpal.com) (24:36.698)

Right, now, so, you know, great points. But here's what I want to say, just to add to that. Since we, as somebody who's working with an organization, you have little control, you know, getting employed in whatever capacity that is. You have a certain trust, you do your due diligence, and you get hired.

Is it, going back to what I tried to say earlier, at least this would be my recommendation, not that it's one right way of doing things. I feel like the more you are attached to something, the more you're gonna react to it. Let me take a very random example. Let's say, again, completely random, but I'm just gonna give companies names just to make the random seem less random. If you are, let's say you're an engineer, you're working at Netflix, or one of these magnificent seven companies,

Serkan Durusoy (25:10.863)

Mm-hmm.

Krish (products.snowpal.com) (25:27.704)

a lot of money, a whole lot more than anywhere else. Now let's say you do that and you build your lifestyle around that particular position. Are you getting paid a lot of money? You're writing code, you're building software, you're in product management, whatever it is that you do. Simply because you're doing it at one of those places, you get paid a whole lot more. Now let's say you take a situation where somebody gets hired into those companies and then you build a life, you buy a beautiful house, you get a lovely car, and you have everything

around it, that's one example. And I'll take the other example, which is just the way I think and my personality, not that one of it is right or wrong.

Serkan Durusoy (25:59.756)

Mm-hmm.

Krish (products.snowpal.com) (26:06.45)

I always go with what is the lowest a certain position could potentially pay in the world that you're living in? Like you're writing software, you have a certain position. There's a range of salaries or rates that you could potentially make. Now, if you end up being at the higher end of that spectrum in a certain position and you build your lifestyle around it, you're gonna have to do everything you can to maintain that position and that lifestyle. Now, not everything is in your control. In fact, most things are not. So if you'd end up being let go,

Serkan Durusoy (26:12.472)

Mm-hmm.

Krish (products.snowpal.com) (26:36.504)

adjustments and I've actually seen this you know talk to people who inadvertently put themselves in those positions. The other extreme of this and you don't have to be in either extreme you can find a middle ground is you ask yourself what is this position what should this position or what does it typically get paid in the part of the world I'm living in. I say the part of the world because geographically you know numbers change quite a bit. So I'm not saying live in one country or one place and look at the cost in another country or one city and one state and look at the cost of another

Serkan Durusoy (26:39.002)
Mm-hmm.

Serkan Durusoy (26:55.535)
Mm-hmm.

Krish (products.snowpal.com) (27:06.794)
being more pragmatic saying if I'm writing certain code in a certain language and building certain software, this is the least I could potentially get paid. Now, if I built a lifestyle around it, then I'm less quote unquote desperate. If I were let go, I'm not going to react much to it. So, I mean, beyond the macro and micro economic conditions are kind of beyond the fact that companies have to be caring about their people. I feel like in my opinion, the majority of this responsibility lies on the person actually who may be getting laid off.

If you don't put yourself in these desperate situations and you didn't build your life around certain assumptions Then you have less reactive if your lifestyle is built around the lowest you could potentially have gotten paid doing that work

Serkan Durusoy (27:42.948)
Mm-hmm.

Serkan Durusoy (27:46.817)
Mm-hmm.

Krish (products.snowpal.com) (27:51.39)
Then if you got laid off from say Netflix or in media, which seems unlikely today, but we know that companies that are doing extremely well, things can change, like we've talked about in the last 30 minutes. How do you see it in these extremes? I don't know whether you agree or disagree, like how do you think an employee, a person, should build themselves, their lifestyles and choices and decisions?

Serkan Durusoy (28:02.396)
Mm-hmm.

Serkan Durusoy (28:10.792)
Mm.

Krish (products.snowpal.com) (28:21.384)
could play into how the react will lay off and if so how do you think they should go about this.

Serkan Durusoy (28:26.887)
I think you're absolutely right. It does play into how much one can react to it. So I think that what you're talking about is, you know, emotional attachment and then creating a physical attachment around that emotional attachment. So if I'm getting a big salary and I'm, you know, establishing a lifestyle and life choices that bound me that to salary, that make me dependent on it.

then it increases the stakes for me about losing. It becomes golden handcuffs for me, right? So I might not even be able to consider leaving myself because I'm so dependent on it, right? So I think there's that element of how to craft a life for oneself, right? With their own family, with their own life choices, with their own, you know,

personal needs, wants, aspirations, ambitions. So I think a lot of people, first things first, are financially irresponsible. I've seen that far too many times. I don't know, maybe it's a little bit of age talking here, in my late 40s. I'd rather be more financially responsible, but reflecting on myself from 20 years ago where I was much less responsible.

I didn't think about retiring myself, I didn't think about putting savings aside. For me, every last penny could go into something I like, I want, I want to create. So now it's somewhat different. But I think ultimately it's about creating balance in one's life. And if that balance isn't there and there's a strong attachment to something, that kind of...

you know, tips the scale of that balance towards that job, towards that employment. And the moment it's lost out of your control, it becomes a devastating thing. So, I think, you know, leading a fulfilling life doesn't really go through forming strong attachments to a job. But maybe if, since we're spending majority of our, you know, awake time.

Krish (products.snowpal.com) (30:40.75)
Correct.

Serkan Durusoy (30:47.939)
with our colleagues at our jobs, maybe it's best if we can figure out ways to apply ourselves to our jobs, bring a genuine, authentic part of ourselves to our jobs, and then kind of be smart about our career choices as well as our life choices. Then the...

the effects of a layoff might become far less than it might seem when there's that kind of attachment. For me, there was an emotional attachment this one last time, particularly because I really believe in the mission, I really believe in the company, I really believe in the people. Things that were out of our control happened. It was sad. It was a big surprise.

Krish (products.snowpal.com) (31:26.006)
Very much so, very much so.

Serkan Durusoy (31:45.764)
But then...

Serkan Durusoy (31:49.451)
A few days after it, I feel much more... I don't even have the right word for it. I feel okay, you know? I'm sad that I'm not going to be seeing those friends I made over these months. Again, day to day. I really felt connected with them through what we were trying to do. And it kind of failed.

But the company didn't fail. I know this big decision is potentially setting them up to kind of regroup, reassess, and maybe rise again. Who knows, maybe a couple years down the line, we're going to read big success stories about what they've been trying to accomplish. Maybe in this crisis, there's a different type of opportunity for them to create impact, you know, for the people that they always...

cared about, the people of Africa, maybe that's going to happen in a different way. I remember talking to you once about losing big things, big crises in my own life. I went bankrupt, I lost

everything, yet that was the best thing that ever happened to me. That was a wake-up call for me to change a lot of things in my life and put things into perspective again. So I think in the end, the type of attachment is, I think...

uh... the nuance there

Krish (products.snowpal.com) (33:15.158)

Correct. I think you said it well, because, you know, as, you know, with age, you come some mature, some people, you know, have the maturity earlier on, some of us not so much. The attachment to your job, let me play the devil's advocate here. Let's say you work in a position where for a few years with somebody, you like the people, you like the company, you're enjoying what you do, you're fulfilled. I know that's a blessing because, you know, it's not just a paycheck, but you enjoy what you do. And you actually like the people you

Serkan Durusoy (33:40.347)

Mm hmm.

Krish (products.snowpal.com) (33:46.072)

But is it, again, playing the devil's advocate, is it fair to say that even though you enjoy the people and you move down, you feel not so happy because things changed for whatever reason, you had to be let go or you decided to move on?

But it's still, you know, while you enjoyed working with people and you relish that experience, it's still very different because the reason I want to mention this is to people who are early on in their careers or who haven't had this experience, maybe have a career without this, I wish, but that's not necessarily, you know, it's something not we can, maybe it's not even practically possible.

Can I say that it's again different from family because the depth of that impact is actually pretty superficial. You feel that for a day, you feel that for a couple of days, you feel that for a week, but since the entire relationship was built on the premise of a financial foundation, if you will, professional relationship as it is.

Serkan Durusoy (34:47.107)

Mm-hmm.

Krish (products.snowpal.com) (34:48.594)

you are going to get over it in much sooner time than you actually might think at that point. Because I feel like, you know, I was in a situation where somebody literally broke down and they were sobbing and I thought to myself, they are probably, I can understand some part of that reaction. But to be fair and to be very, I don't want to sound like, to be candid,

Serkan Durusoy (34:54.36)

Mm-hmm.

Krish (products.snowpal.com) (35:13.57)

Sometimes you need that paycheck to actually buy food, put food on the table. But some of us are blessed that we can pull ourselves through for a certain period of time without that paycheck to put that same food on the table. And that's, I mean, it's just a fact of life. It's just the way life works.

Now, if people, if I said, if you reacted to a layoff because, you know, your fundamental alien and Maslow's hierarchy of needs, your basic needs come into question here. Can I pay for my, pay my rent? Can I buy food? Can I pay for gas in my car?

Serkan Durusoy (35:46.37)
Mm-hmm.

Krish (products.snowpal.com) (35:53.102)
then I react to it a certain way if I said that that's an understandable reaction. But what if you're in a, you know, I'm going to, since we are in similar positions, right, in white collar jobs, is it, is it wrong for me to say that people who are in white collar jobs getting paid these top dollars and you get laid off, laid off and you have these big reactions that you then record and post on social media and whatnot?

Is that justified? I mean, people can do what they want to do, but just playing the devil's egg, is that justified or is it sort of undermining the real impact of layoffs to people who are immediately impacted from this massless hierarchy of needs? I know I said a lot of words, but I hope I convey the essence of what I'm trying to ask here.

Serkan Durusoy (36:38.091)
Yes, yes, and I'm with you on that. I think we with our professions and the advantageous salaries and all of those, you know, perks and whatnot, we have been somewhat spoiled, right? I think we depend far too much on those material things that we often lose sight of more important things around us.

And that we also take them for granted and we lose them. We make a big fuss about it. But then now if we're thinking about, you know, Maastricht's hierarchy of needs, the pyramid, then well, there are a lot of people out there who suffer from hunger, who suffer from diseases. That's still a reality of the world we live in, right? So.

when there's that on one side. Or let's not go that far. Let's stay within the premise of our lives. Like maybe our next door neighbor is suffering from a terminal disease, right? Or they're about to lose a loved one. Like who's to compare that kind of pain and suffering to one losing their job? It comes down to being responsible with your money, your finances, and being able to make some savings.

put things aside. Do we all have to buy the next iPhone? Do we all have to buy the next best Mac? Right? Okay, if it's Apple then we have to buy it. I know, okay. Yeah, so I think that's all about it. I mean, ten months ago, when I actually first started this last job I had, two weeks into it, I lost my father.

Krish (products.snowpal.com) (38:07.37)
No, I think, Saragun, we have to. We have to buy it. Ha ha ha!

Serkan Durusoy (38:29.847)
And I was devastated. Oh, thank you, thank you, thank you. He was a brilliant man. And when I lost him, it felt like end of the world for me. And by the way, again, this company, we just had to lay me off, was so kind and understanding two weeks into my job. This big disaster happened in my family.

Krish (products.snowpal.com) (38:29.858)
I'm sorry to hear that, Sir, I'm sorry to hear that.

Serkan Durusoy (38:57.515)
Honestly, I did think about whether or not I'd be able to keep the job like two weeks into it Why would they have to you know, be patient with me? They nobody knew how much time I needed to get back on my feet and actually, you know Bring a positive influence to the company with

that state of mind, right? But they were so kind and understanding and they gave me all the space now I think that speaks a lot to character that speaks a lot to culture. That's that's what I wanted to say when I

It kind of is important when you find the right kind of people to work with. It's still not family though. Now, when I compare losing my father to losing my job, which was an amazing job, I think it's not even in the same realm of comparison with each other. So I think, yes, I do have strong empathy for those people who...

cry out loud when they lose their job. I know the feeling is real. I don't think they are making it up. They're faking it. But then I think we are all responsible for sitting down, sitting back and then putting things into real perspective, not being spoiled about it. I did tell you when I went bankrupt with a business I had, I lost everything.

And the next thing, I wasn't just, you know, curling up and crying, I was actually washing dishes at a dive shop for tips. And that helped me, you know, put money on the table, sorry, put food on the table. So I was back on my feet. I just had barely enough to, you know, survive me. I had a friend who was kind and gracious enough to, you know, allow me to live on their own premises for a while without rent.

So I was able to kind of get back on my feet. And I never thought, hey, I was this big hotshot business person who had a company at his early 20s. So I should have a lot. I'm entitled to have a lot. I'm entitled to someone handing me off a big paycheck. I didn't say any of that. I just went back to what I could do with my bare hands and then work my way up from it. I started fixing computers for a few.

Serkan Durusoy (41:22.159)

shops here and there, made a little bit more money, started thinking about, you know, getting back into software development. And then one thing led to another. I kind of reached down in and figured what my strengths are, and I banked on them. I applied myself, I applied my skills, and I applied my will to start again, to getting myself back out. I never complained about it. I did, baby, on occasion.

Krish (products.snowpal.com) (41:48.562)

You know what, Serkan, those are fantastic points. I want to, I'm interrupting there intentionally because you mentioned a multitude of skills that you developed, right? You had skills, but you took this opportunity to improve your skills. And that's something personally, over the years, I've told people, to myself and to everybody I've worked with, that, you know, when you talk job security, you know, and I've worked with, you know, over the years, a number of people.

I always thought job security was your responsibility. It's not the company's responsibility. It's not the responsibility of the country you live in, not the industry that you work in. It's your responsibility because somebody I worked on that I respect a lot in my first job told me that most people can keep their current job, but fewer people can find the next one. I think he said it beautifully. It still resonates in my mind. Because I always tell people,

even when you're in your current position, what is it that you're working on? Are you enjoying what you do? Because if you don't enjoy what you do, you're not going to do it well, not even close. But even if you did enjoy what you do, sometimes you enjoy it too much and you lose track of whether that's what you should actually be doing from a futuristic standpoint. So there is a delicate balance you're going to have to draw. You know, you could still do, someone told me the other day, you could still do Cobol programming and have a job. If that's all you, you know, you want to keep

Serkan Durusoy (43:09.836)
Mm-hmm.

Krish (products.snowpal.com) (43:14.5)
where people have that skill. So perhaps it's a skill you might wanna have, I don't know, but not all of us could potentially do that. So the idea is whatever it is that you're working on, whichever industry you're in, you're gonna have to be up to date, I think. I mean, let me know what you think. The more up to date you are, the broader your skills, the less desperate you are. So you're not dependent on any one employer.

Serkan Durusoy (43:16.388)
Mm-hmm.

Serkan Durusoy (43:21.615)
Hahaha!

Serkan Durusoy (43:33.113)
Mm-hmm.

Krish (products.snowpal.com) (43:41.898)
Personally, that's I can say that I'm not making this up That's truthfully what I felt my entire career up until this point and I'm sure it's going to not change in future either I always found comfort in Trusting what I know whether it's little bit or much or whatever it is. It's for other people to you know They're welcome to make the judgments, but I've always thought

Serkan Durusoy (43:56.826)
Mm-hmm.

Krish (products.snowpal.com) (44:04.966)
Given what I'm doing, let me take what the average rates and pay scales for this position, this skill would be. You know, you're doing a certain job. You can't expect, you know, there's a broad range of payment structures. Like I mentioned earlier, you find the middle ground, or you find the lower end, whatever makes you comfortable. You say, hey, this can pay \$0, \$1 to \$500 an hour. What do I think it should truthfully and realistically pay,

Serkan Durusoy (44:24.643)
Mm-hmm.

Serkan Durusoy (44:28.695)
Ahem.

Krish (products.snowpal.com) (44:34.8)
country. And you build your lifestyle around it and then you keep updating your skills because you have an interest in it. If you have to force yourself to do it, it's going to not stand the test of time because there's too many people that you see in the industry and software who would rather be doing something else, but they actually do this because they want to get paid. And it's very understandable, but you're never going to find that fulfillment. And not only that, you're never going to want to keep up to date because you're trying to

to get paid. And that is not going to stand the test of time because something is going to show up here and that's going to be able to do what you do, perhaps better. And that could be called, say, generative AI as we speak today because the other day, sir, can't let me take a digress a tiny bit here, but it's relevant to what I'm trying to explain there. I went to chat GPT and I said, you know what? I want to create two endpoints.

Serkan Durusoy (45:19.043)
Mm-hmm.

Krish (products.snowpal.com) (45:32.542)
to add a restaurant and add a few attributes to a restaurant like a location and you know I don't know the square footage or there's a few metrics I said you know create a couple of end points in a certain language with these attributes in the next 30 seconds it laid the foundation for me you know 30 percent of the code that I would have had to write to begin with it was there

Serkan Durusoy (45:39.812)
Mm-hmm.

Ahem.

Serkan Durusoy (45:57.516)
Mm hmm.

Krish (products.snowpal.com) (45:59.826)
Now it told me, now you could either be in denial and I actually know good developers as we speak of today who are still in denial, having seen this. Oh, you know what AI cannot do this, AI cannot do that. Sure, maybe not today, but it's only a matter of time. And if to not be hypocritical, if we are in this industry of building good software, we should not have to reinvent the wheel. If you keep trying to reinvent the wheel and society cannot progress essentially. Now I'm asking myself, you know what?

Serkan Durusoy (46:14.903)
Mm-hmm.

Krish (products.snowpal.com) (46:29.86)
of the job, then I'm only adding 70% of the value here. So if I was getting paid, say \$10, just hypothetically, then I should really realistically only get paid \$7 if a 30% of the job is done by some other tool. Or I can provide some other value for the 30% to maintain my \$10 rate, for instance. Or I do something even better, use the tool better than other people could potentially use the tool. So now I can demand \$12

Serkan Durusoy (46:51.746)
Mm-hmm.

Serkan Durusoy (46:58.005)
Mm hmm.

Krish (products.snowpal.com) (46:59.6)
as opposed to \$10 because now I can tell my employee, you know what, as opposed to three people doing it, I think one person can do it. I know how to use this tool better with my skills and the tool being used. I can save you the other \$20. Why don't you pay me the three extra dollars? So in totality, you're saving like \$17 out of the three people, for instance. So you're providing quantitative value to your employer. To me, that I see, that perspective, there's just a manufacturer example, but that I see as a more stable,

Serkan Durusoy (47:09.659)
Mm-hmm.

Serkan Durusoy (47:22.404)

Mm-hmm.

Krish (products.snowpal.com) (47:30.02)

approach to job security, then relying on the fact that my employer is a great company, they love me and they're gonna take great care of me, the conditions are not going to change, all of that is outside my control. So can I, if I said Serkan that layoffs are entirely a hundred percent, you know.

Serkan Durusoy (47:42.416)

Mm-hmm.

Krish (products.snowpal.com) (47:50.682)

are on the employee and 0% on the employer. Is that like a preposterous statement or is that like a reasonable place to even start having a conversation?

Serkan Durusoy (48:02.735)

I think there is a mathematical notation that kind of implies what you just said. I wouldn't say 100 to 0, but I would say approaching 0. I think it's called the limit, right? So the limit function. So, but that aside, I think, yes, you're right. I think it's on the employees' responsibility to stay relevant, stay valuable.

The definition of value contrary to what a lot of people think is a moving target, right? Being an amazing developer might be valuable today, but the definition of that value might shift in a matter of mere months where being a developer is less important than figuring out how to solve a problem with a product approach.

So this person then needs to figure out ways to understand how to address customer needs, how to kind of digest that into a product experience. Or let me give you a more relevant example. Let me just wear my manager hat, a leader hat, who has to decide who to let go, right? Say I do have to...

Say I have a 10-person team and I need to come up with three names Now the way I do that is look at my upcoming challenges and See who would be best fit to remain relevant and upskill themselves into working against those challenges because I it turns out as a company who faces

big challenges, big sudden unexpected challenges, I need a level of adaptability. So that means I need to find those people who have always been good at this one thing but who always chose to remain there, who didn't have that growth mindset. And those would end up on my list. So even if, in case they are...

Serkan Durusoy (50:19.231)

far more senior, far more experienced, they might still end up being on that list because they're content with where they are. Otherwise, the other people aren't content with where they are. They are far more likely to look into how to use chat gpt, co-pilot to write code, be more efficient, do things at a shorter amount of time because apparently that's what the company needs to sustain its livelihood.

sustain its, you know, runway and whatever. So those skills become more relevant, adaptation becomes more relevant. So I'd keep them. So yes, I think you're really right in the sense that it's on all of us to stay relevant and valuable in our jobs and not only in our jobs, for a potential next job that we might suddenly find ourselves having to search for, right?

Krish (products.snowpal.com) (51:12.802)

Correct. No.

Serkan Durusoy (51:14.391)

In my own career, I've always had multiple windows and tabs open. Or like at the time of books, have multiple books and tabs inside books open somewhere where I learned something new. Not because I needed in the next two weeks, just because I figured early on that learning and keeping that learning was the way to move forward.

Krish (products.snowpal.com) (51:42.002)

And, you know, to add to what you said there, right? I've seen that every day I learn something else, something new. I've also learned that I actually know lesser than what I thought I did the previous day. And I truly believe in this. When I started my career, I thought I knew a lot. I knew nothing, but I did not know that then.

Serkan Durusoy (51:57.356)

Mm-hmm.

Krish (products.snowpal.com) (52:08.582)

A year went by, I learned a few things. And then I realized, oh, you know what? I actually did not know everything I thought I knew at the time, meaning otherwise what I could not have learned anything the last year. So you fast forward then and extrapolate this to a couple of decades. Your learning increases. But alongside your learning and knowledge, what also personally has increased for me is my awareness to how little I actually do know. So every day I learn something else, it's the opposite feeling. I feel like, oh my god, I actually

if I did not know lesser, I could not have had something to learn today. So I think that to me is fundamental to growth and understanding, because I actually, you know, my career I've worked a lot of people, nice, good, smart people, but sometimes I could say overconfident, meaning I've personally felt like they think they know more than they actually do. And it's not their fault because sometimes you're, I mean, there's no right or wrong answer, but let's say I work on something.

Serkan Durusoy (53:02.512)

Mm-hmm.

Krish (products.snowpal.com) (53:09.178)

I work on the same thing every day, the same type of things with the same group of people with the same company and then five years go by, ten years go by.

As much as I've learned, my experience is sort of boxed. It's almost like you born in a place you've never done any travels. Just a similar kind of example, I think. You could do all the reading about other countries, but unless you step foot in the land, you breathe that air and digest the food. You know, if I need to understand Turkey, I could do everything I can theoretically. I can watch YouTube videos. I can see people going to Turkey, but unless I go to Turkey and drink the pomegranate juice, which I see everybody drinking must be brilliant in Turkey,

Serkan Durusoy (53:25.039)

Mm-hmm.

Serkan Durusoy (53:44.685)

Hahaha!

Krish (products.snowpal.com) (53:47.148)

same. It's not even close. So I think it's important to sort of recognize that fact that there is, you know, it's good to be confident and some of us are more confident than I might say we should be and some of us are less confident than we probably should be to each their own. But it's important to recognize that there is plenty that you don't know. And one other thing you mentioned was problem solving, which I think you'd hit the nail in the coffin there because, you know,

Serkan Durusoy (53:48.315)
Hmm.

Krish (products.snowpal.com) (54:17.148)
If I had to list two of my, I mean my personal opinion, not that it's right or wrong, what would be two of my top skills?

I've always said the first one is integrity, which is not really a skill, but I think, you know, I look at it as a skill because if I don't know something, if I can say that I don't know something in an interview, then I think that speaks a little bit about a certain person, right? I'm not trying to fake it till I make it. I could never do that. The second skill I always thought is problem solving. And that's exactly what you mentioned there. I think coding, even as an engineer who does this every day, even today.

Serkan Durusoy (54:37.093)
Mm-hmm.

Yes.

Krish (products.snowpal.com) (54:52.678)
It's an important skill, but I think it's diminished in value. And here's why I say that even as somebody who loves and who doesn't have any other skill. I told you an example of ChatGPD, give me 30% of the code. Was it close to what I wanted? Not exactly. Now, did I even need to go to ChatGPD to create that for me? Not really have like a hundred other end points. I didn't need ChatGPD to do that. But I still want to explore it because if I don't have those end points, if I didn't have that code, should I write it from scratch? I don't think so.

Serkan Durusoy (55:04.961)
Mm-hmm.

Serkan Durusoy (55:12.982)
Mm-hmm.

Serkan Durusoy (55:21.689)
Mm-hmm.

Krish (products.snowpal.com) (55:22.174)
So today, Serkan, what do you think? I think even as a programmer, being able to code is important, sure. It doesn't create all of the code. You have to still do 70% of the work till it does most of it. But problem solving is the most important skill and with generative AI in the picture in the mix of things today, I feel like...

Serkan Durusoy (55:29.156)
Mm-hmm.

Krish (products.snowpal.com) (55:43.326)

If you want to hire somebody to fill a position that's programming, I want somebody who can, you know, problem solving is always an important skill, but I feel like it's become even more important at this moment of time. Your ability to construct, write a few lines of code syntactically is good, but to me, that doesn't really cut it at this point of time. If I said that, it's going to disappoint myself as a programmer, and I'm sure a lot of other people are watching this,

Serkan Durusoy (55:58.884)
Mm-hmm.

Serkan Durusoy (56:09.69)
Mm-hmm.

Krish (products.snowpal.com) (56:13.56)
other stakeholders in the company and a coder has kind of become muddled because somebody else who's not a programmer can kind of play the role of a programmer for a few weeks if you have to backfill a position because there are these tools that come to your assistance. At least that's the way I look at it. What is your take on it?

Serkan Durusoy (56:31.844)
I agree with that. I think what's rare in terms of skill is the ability to recognize and understand a problem. I happen to work with so many engineers who jumped into solutions because that's what they know. They know how to write code, they immediately start writing their code. Or they know how to use a few tools, they immediately start using those tools before even understanding what the problem is.

or before even recognizing the problem itself. Or, and oftentimes, those engineers who had the skills of recognizing and understanding problems spend majority of their time dissecting the problem so that they come up with the right solution. And sometimes, the solution doesn't require any coding at all, or any tool at all. Maybe it's just a simple conversation, or maybe it's an update in the documentation, right?

I think that's the blind spot that a lot of engineers have. And if there's one skill that an engineer can acquire today to stay relevant, and not only relevant, but valuable at a company, is definitely that, on top of their integrity.

Krish (products.snowpal.com) (57:48.266)
Right. So today, as we get to the end of this initial conversation, nobody can tell anybody that, hey, you're never going to get laid off, no matter how big or small the company is. You know, when people tell me, when they call, hey, you know, companies got in so much money in funding, yada, yada.

Serkan Durusoy (58:01.414)
Low.

Krish (products.snowpal.com) (58:11.802)
Ultimately, no matter how much money you got in funding, no matter how big your organization is, no matter how you would be a trillion dollar company, you can't just say, hey,

it doesn't make all that much of a difference to me. At least the way I've picked my, the work, you know, that I've engaged in is do I think I'll enjoy what I do? Do I think I'm gonna kind of enjoy the experience? The longevity of it almost hasn't mattered either. But to, again, to each their own. Trying to be a consultant and doing something differently, working with a different

team every six months is something that is challenging. I mean, I couldn't, I can't say it is not, and it's not for everybody.

Similarly, working in the same organization for like 15 years is for certain people. So we have to have a certain mindset to want to be in that same company, working, solving the same type of problem in that industry for 15 years of your life. So there is no single right answer. So with that broad spectrum, what do you recommend to people?

Serkan Durusoy (58:56.547)
Mm-hmm.

Serkan Durusoy (59:02.715)
Mm-hmm.

Krish (products.snowpal.com) (59:12.654)
who are graduating, say recently, who graduated recently as one category. And the other extreme is, extreme maybe is not the right word, but the other end of that spectrum is people have done this a long time, done this maybe a decade or two decades, perhaps even more.

What would your recommendation be to both parties to deal with this uncertainty, which is going to be there till eternity, essentially, it's not going to change. That's just how capitalism works. Just like, you know, people want to get paid top dollars for knowing doing top really nice cool important difficult complex things. They have to accept that somebody else can perhaps do that better tomorrow and there could be a human or maybe not a human. Maybe it's a machine. If

Serkan Durusoy (59:39.339)
Mm-hmm.

Krish (products.snowpal.com) (59:57.558)
You had to give an advice to two categories of people. Again, new graduates recently into the workforce, and then people have done this a long time to deal with layoffs. How should they prepare? What are some pointers and recommendations you might give them so they are better prepared? Again, if you could speak to each of these categories, that'd be great.

Serkan Durusoy (01:00:04.484)
Mm-hmm.

Serkan Durusoy (01:00:23.731)
Well, college is about four years, right? And the professionally relevant part is about the last year or so. But even that is Unrelevant compared to a year spent working at a company. So I'd say start with that throughout the lifetime. Hoping one will have a long and prosperous life.

There's going to be so many four years of learning, so many one, two years of learning. And it means that anyone can start an entirely new career whenever they want. I love this Japanese term, ikigai, like being able to find that cross between what you enjoy, what you are really good at, and what others are willing to pay for.

Krish (products.snowpal.com) (01:01:11.546)
Oh yeah, the circle, right? The four circles. Yeah, yeah.

Serkan Durusoy (01:01:13.247)
Yes, exactly. Those circles and that, and then the cross between all of those. That is a sweet spot. And that's a moving target in life. There's this, again, Japanese dude I read about, he's I

think, roughly 18 years old now. And he switched his career right around his 60 year mark when he became a runway model.

And I don't know, he started appearing in movies, it's an entirely new career. You wouldn't think about, when you start to think about someone getting into acting, getting into modeling, you imagine someone in their early 20s, right? But hey, this person decided it's up to him. So he went for it and he did it. People change their careers, because life changes, things around us change and who knows, we might find...

passion in something that is new to us and that passion could immediately become our profession. Over the last years I've had this different type of life, lifestyle where I ended up living on a boat. I'm a sailor. At this point in my life I could actually quit my engineering or like management jobs or skills and just become a sailing instructor.

easily like tomorrow morning I could start doing that. In fact, I can imagine myself doing that at one point in my life. Not now, I still have lots of passion towards sharing what I've learned and acquired over the years in software, in leadership, in management, in products, in engineering, but then I think it's about being open to learning new things and acknowledging that learning new things can take you

wild places in the same profession or in entirely professions

Krish (products.snowpal.com) (01:03:11.446)

Which means, so that's, so what about for the folks who have done this a long time? Like in other words, how do you, what should they be doing so they are better prepared for in the event something like this were to happen to them, the layoffs.

Serkan Durusoy (01:03:16.751)

Mm-hmm.

Serkan Durusoy (01:03:25.475)

That's exactly why I kind of wanted to mention that Japanese guy who went into runway modeling after 60 years of age. I think the largest trap is thinking they're too old to do anything about this. I think that's it. I can recognize that feeling. I'm in my late 40s. Honestly, I had that feeling myself.

every once in a while, right before I go to sleep, like, oh, wait, am I getting too old? And then, hey, heck no, I'm actually too young for anything. Right? Uh, so I think there's that trap and I think we just all need to keep in mind that we could do or be anything we want to do or we want to be whenever, right? It really doesn't matter whether we're 20 or whether we're 60, 70 or whatever. Right? I think as long as we.

Krish (products.snowpal.com) (01:04:01.151)

haha

Serkan Durusoy (01:04:23.179)

we are looking at what we want to do from the positive side. And we're open to learning. We're open to challenging ourselves. We don't feel entitled or we don't feel sad. Then I think, you know, it's all wide open.

Krish (products.snowpal.com) (01:04:38.678)

No, brilliantly said. I'll just add one more point to it, right? And I think providing value. How is it that each of us can provide value to whatever it is that we are committed to? Now, how have you provided value years ago? Because that was what was needed of you of that position.

Things change. So I think here's what I, in addition to what you just said, so here's what I would recommend to people. Take it to the grain of salt.

you don't want to fight the tide. Sometimes it makes sense, not only because you shouldn't fight it, it's because you actually deep down agree with that tide. I don't know how many programmers coders there are today who disagree with the fact that there is a fair bit of code that's generated by other tools. And the fact that, I think I did a podcast, I haven't done one exclusively, so what I want to do one on copilot, it's just amazing. With all the hesitation I shattered

Serkan Durusoy (01:05:08.6)
Mm-hmm.

Krish (products.snowpal.com) (01:05:35.52)
I work closely with, even engineers and good developers, the way folks reacted to it was kind of surprising to me. I was like, okay, I don't see that coming. It was almost like touching a hot pan and they're like, no, there's gotta be something not quite right about this because it was coming to get your position. But to me, there's a different way to look at it. You have a certain period of time on planet Earth, whatever that period of time is, and none of us have any control over that.

Serkan Durusoy (01:05:45.059)
Mm-hmm.

Serkan Durusoy (01:05:53.057)
Mm-hmm.

Krish (products.snowpal.com) (01:06:02.57)
You want to do as much as you can during that window of time. Now, if you did not have any of the tools available to you, it's going to take you longer to do everything, which means in that span of time that God has given you on planet Earth, you're going to be able to do much fewer things.

Serkan Durusoy (01:06:11.898)
Mm-hmm.

Krish (products.snowpal.com) (01:06:17.47)
The more the tools you have available to you, the more they can get accomplished in that same period of time. You're not gonna live till eternity. We're not immortal souls. So it seems ridiculous to me if you ask me, as the reactions were, oh my God, I'm rejecting things that are improving. I couldn't be more ecstatic that generative AI showed up now than 20 years down the road, personally speaking. If it came 20 years down the road, I don't know if I could have made as much use of that

Serkan Durusoy (01:06:22.968)
Mm-hmm.

Serkan Durusoy (01:06:40.747)
Mm-hmm.

Krish (products.snowpal.com) (01:06:47.344)
that I could possibly do today. Now I'm like, you know what, when I'm writing code, I actually wait a second after I type a character, believe it or not, when I'm using any of these IDEs because I'm like, you know what, let the tool do a little bit more of what it's supposed to be

doing and then tell me. In the other day, I actually put two slashes, and again, I'm giving you a very practical real example. I know this conversation was about layoffs.

Serkan Durusoy (01:06:59.199)
Mm-hmm.

Krish (products.snowpal.com) (01:07:10.39)
But since two engineers are talking about this, the last 20 minutes seems less about layouts and more about engineering, but that's, unfortunately, it is what it is, right? So I wrote a method.

Serkan Durusoy (01:07:10.421)
Mm-hmm.

Serkan Durusoy (01:07:15.747)
It's got to be, it's got to be. Yeah.

Krish (products.snowpal.com) (01:07:23.582)
And I'm not one of those people who's writing a method that's called getRestaurants. And I have a comment that says, this returns restaurants. And I have a log inside of the method that says, retu entering. And then at the end of the method, retu exiting. Those are like four useless lines of code that could not have been there in the first place. So given that I'm not somebody who's going to document the obvious, I'm not documenting code that you should be able to read and understand. You only have to document things that

Serkan Durusoy (01:07:32.719)
Mm-hmm.

Serkan Durusoy (01:07:39.812)
Mm-hmm.

Serkan Durusoy (01:07:43.419)
Mm hmm.

Krish (products.snowpal.com) (01:07:53.756)
because if you have to document code that you're writing, then you're probably not writing code as well as you could have written in the first place, right? So I had, I want to document something about that method that was not quite obvious from the 10 lines of code that were there in that method, in that function. So I put two slashes and I waited for a second and I'm not making this up.

Serkan Durusoy (01:07:54.499)
Mm-hmm.

Serkan Durusoy (01:07:58.686)
Yep.

Krish (products.snowpal.com) (01:08:18.062)
Copilot generated the comment as though it was reading my mind. It freaked me out for a second because it was not

Serkan Durusoy (01:08:24.137)
Hmm, ha!

Krish (products.snowpal.com) (01:08:27.206)

stating the obvious. It was not anything about what the code is doing. So this large language models have become so absolutely brilliant. I'm going to do a few podcasts, my early days of me learning and trying to incorporate that into the mix of things at SnowPAL, real early days. But it's fabulous. I put two slashes and it's actually writing out a comment, not an executable line of code, sir. It's a comment.

Serkan Durusoy (01:08:28.867)

Mm-hmm.

Serkan Durusoy (01:08:36.377)

Mm-hmm.

Serkan Durusoy (01:08:52.407)

Mm-hmm. That's...

Krish (products.snowpal.com) (01:08:54.17)

And it is not a common stating or summarizing what that function does. So my read into that, I actually want to share that and do a podcast on it. I forgot about it. Was that it's actually learning about not just from its learnings from other places, it's learning what I had done in the last 20 minutes. It has to be. I don't know. It's got to have done that learning for it to have generated that comment. Because if it generated code, which it always does, I'm not that flabbergasted.

Serkan Durusoy (01:09:10.447)

Mm-hmm.

Serkan Durusoy (01:09:15.042)

Yes, it becomes contextual, yes.

Krish (products.snowpal.com) (01:09:24.044)

will but when it wrote that comment this was a rude awakening to me this is like Krish you better get better at what you do otherwise you're not gonna have an opportunity to do whatever it is that you're gonna have to do I just want to share that because I think it's important to recognize that fact and here is my recommendation if you're working in a startup as I run the company I really recognize it

Serkan Durusoy (01:09:29.135)

Mm-hmm.

Serkan Durusoy (01:09:32.499)

Mm-hmm. Ha ha ha. Do do do.

Krish (products.snowpal.com) (01:09:49.978)

the lines are grayed out between different positions, right? Because on a given day, sometimes I have to do prospecting on LinkedIn. We do an hour or so of prospecting. Certainly doesn't come naturally. It's very concocted, manufactured, don't wanna do it, but we've gotta do what we've gotta do. And then you switch gears into, let's say you're architecting something and then you're implementing a little bit. And then you're doing content creation and you're doing podcasting.

Serkan Durusoy (01:09:58.369)

Mm-hmm.

Serkan Durusoy (01:10:08.972)
Mm-hmm.

Krish (products.snowpal.com) (01:10:19.212)
You know, you're doing some deployments on AWS and whatnot. And these are not hypothetical. These are real things that we are doing on a daily basis. I could have put my, you know, I could have chosen to be in a career where I'm gonna write code, that's it. I'm not gonna do anything else. And it's actually much easier because you sign up to write code, somebody pays you, your job is done, you go back and you're done.

Serkan Durusoy (01:10:33.816)
Mm-hmm.

Krish (products.snowpal.com) (01:10:41.87)
But some of us find less pleasure in doing, you know, you find the hardest ways to make money. May or may not make sense, but it is, it is, it is again what it is. But I think it's important to recognize that if you had asked me circa five or six months ago, how difficult sales was, I would have said, sure it's difficult, but that would be just a few words put together in a sentence, not recognizing it after three months or so of doing it part time.

Serkan Durusoy (01:10:48.385)
Mm-hmm.

Krish (products.snowpal.com) (01:11:07.53)
I'm like, oh my God, this is difficult. This is difficult. You could build the greatest of things, but unless and until you have a way to present it, find the right people to make that connection with and have the communication done, it's no good to doing that. So now I respect, not that I ever not respected other stakeholders, but now I find myself respecting the rest of the stakeholders in the software company a whole lot more than I would have, you know,

Serkan Durusoy (01:11:09.148)
Hahaha, yes.

Serkan Durusoy (01:11:20.611)
Mm-hmm.

Krish (products.snowpal.com) (01:11:42.048)
I'm saying that I've now recognized that every job is difficult because I sometimes feel like engineers think that they are doing the most difficult things in the company. Oh, you know what? I'm building this really complex thing. It's scales. It stands at 10. That's too arrogant, right? Because

Serkan Durusoy (01:11:52.896)
No, no, no. That's too arrogant. That's too arrogant. Yes.

Krish (products.snowpal.com) (01:11:58.086)
You can build the most beautiful piece of software that scales and stands the test of time. But if nobody's ever going to use it, it's an antique. It has to be in a museum, not deployed into AWS or Azure or Cloud or Google Cloud or something. So I think it's important to recognize that everybody's job is difficult. Even as you know.

Serkan Durusoy (01:12:06.07)
Mm.

Serkan Durusoy (01:12:10.37)
Mm-hmm.

Serkan Durusoy (01:12:14.741)
Mm-hmm.

Krish (products.snowpal.com) (01:12:21.946)
recognize that everybody's doing something important, recognize that you're not invincible, recognize that you have to keep up to date with the changes in the market conditions and economies and whatnot, and recognize that you could get laid off in the next 30 minutes and don't react to it in a negative manner.

Serkan Durusoy (01:12:26.52)
Mm-hmm.

Krish (products.snowpal.com) (01:12:40.818)
and you mentioned positivity is out of it. I know I want to end the podcast with folks hearing the voice of the guest, but I want to say two things that I said like 20 things. So I'm gonna ask you to say a couple of more things, Serkan, just so people watching this have the voice of the guest resonating in their minds more so than my voice. So anything else to just summarize and close this would be awesome.

Serkan Durusoy (01:12:53.061)
Mm-hmm.

Serkan Durusoy (01:12:58.555)
Oh! Ha ha ha!

Serkan Durusoy (01:13:07.891)
Okay, well, to those people who are or have been getting laid off, take your time, deal with your emotions, and then get back to asking yourself what you're good at and what you need to get better at. And that's a great way to start looking for your new job. And for those leaders out there who have had to, you know, make layoffs or, you know, are thinking about them. Well.

I think this is a great time to start thinking about how to avoid them in the first place. If you're at a point where you cannot avoid it anymore, be thoughtful because it definitely is going to pay off. It is going to be in your best interest down the line. And then next time, try to have a broader picture so that you could see all of the signs to help you understand where the company is going.

and then bank on your people. They're going to pay back.

Krish (products.snowpal.com) (01:14:09.631)
Lovely.

With that, folks, again, thanks to Serkan Durusoy for taking time to sharing his experience over the years. We talked a specific topic, layoffs, but we also touched upon other peripheral items as two engineers. It's unavoidable. So one more time, Serkan, thank you very much for taking time and sharing your personal experiences. And I'm quite certain it's going to, you know, people are watching this or listening to it.

Serkan Durusoy (01:14:40.176)
Mm-hmm.

Krish (products.snowpal.com) (01:14:40.464)

listening to this is on. Hopefully it benefits you. And I'll include links to Serkan's LinkedIn profile. If you want to get in touch with Serkan, certainly do so. And I've had the pleasure of having worked with Serkan in a project. And I highly recommend you.

Serkan Durusoy (01:14:56.563)

Oh hey, likewise.

Krish (products.snowpal.com) (01:14:57.91)

You work with Serkan for whatever it is that you want to solve in the space of software engineering. Now, about his sailing skills, I don't know a whole lot about, but I trust what I trust. I'm just kidding. I trust that Serkan can help you with that as well. So with that, we will end this podcast. And thanks, Serkan. And we'll talk more soon.

Serkan Durusoy (01:15:09.002)

Hahaha!

Serkan Durusoy (01:15:18.863)

Thank you very much for having me.