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Global Coderetreat 2011 in Berlin

I attended the **Global Coderetreat**¹ ([#fn:coderetreat](#)) event initialized by Corey Haines² ([#fn:haines](#)). The general purpose of this event was to get a bunch of hackers together to implement [Conway's Game of Life](#) (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conway's_Game_of_Life).



Setting up goals

As **J. B. Rainsberger** mentioned in his article [article](#) (<http://www.jbrains.ca/permalink/the-four-elements-of-simple-design>) four elements of simple design, it is best to setup goals for your retreat to get most out of it. Here is a list of what I achieved in each session:

1. Being a mentor of TDD: I taught [dedan](https://github.com/dedan) (<https://github.com/dedan>) how to use TDD, why TDD helps you to think about your design
2. Being a mentor of BDD: Showing a fellow Rubyist how to do BDD
3. Doing something completely stupid: I played *evil coder* and *ping-pong pairing* with [@tilosoenke](http://twitter.com/#!/tilosoenke) (<http://twitter.com/#!/tilosoenke>) - we couldn't communicate with words, only with code, one writing tests and other the implementation of the tests.
4. Discuss about names: We said together and discussed about right names for methods, variables, and classes. We concluded that good names saves you scary comments in your code

5. Explain Ruby to a Java-Programmer
6. Being mentored about Lisp: We solved the whole 'Game of Live' in common Lisp³ ([#fn:lisp](#)), while [@HansHuebener \(http://twitter.com/#!/hanshuebner\)](#) explained me the strength and beauty Common Lisp.

Conclusion

It was great to get so many people with so many different skills and mindsets together, exchange experience and encouraging others to try something new. I will definitely have a closer look on Lisp to enhance my Ruby programming style.

Thanks to [Sebastian Guenther \(http://sebastianguenther.org/\)](#) for reading an earlier draft of this post.

Further reading

1. [coderetreat \(http://coderetreat.org/\) ↩ \(#fnref:coderetreat\)](#)
2. [Corey Haines \(http://coreyhaines.com/\) ↩ \(#fnref:haines\)](#)
3. [Lisp \(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lisp_\(programming_language\)\) ↩ \(#fnref:lisp\)](#)