How to deal with toxic people

Lessons from the trenches of Open Source Development

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- 38 years old
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- 100% Nerd
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Bad Behaviour

Entitlement

Why isn't this obscure feature implemented already that I need for my personal workflow?

Wow, this bug is still open, six months later? Get off your lazy 🤬 and fix it already!

How rude of you to refuse to implement something I want!

Frustration

This crap has cost me a 12h
print job, shame on you for
ever releasing this!

WELL THANKS FOR NOTHING!

I just updated and
nothing works anymore,
THIS IS THE LAST TIME I UPDATE!

Attacks

Whoever designed this steaming pile of 😡 should be shot!

Stop writing software, you 😡

LOL, you clearly SUCK as a dev!

😡 YOU!!!

Coping strategies

First: Disengage & cool down

- Don't answer hot-headed

- Let off steam **offline**
  - Heavy bag
  - Jumping jacks
  - Brisk walk
  - Count to 100 and back down

- Initial **stress response cycle** needs to run through

- Only then respond

Remind of realities

- Open Source = no demands but **collaboration & cooperation**

- Not just code, everything helps!

- "Patches welcome" 👎
  - Exception: Bragging s.th. could be implemented in hours or "is trivial"

Remind of boundaries

- Open Source Maintainers are people and deserve **respect & decency**

- Make overstepping clear

- Enforce community rules (CoC)

- Refer to snarky.ca/the-social-contract-of-open-source/

Additional measures

- Don't work on the issue (if it only affects the abuser)

- Point the abuser to the door

- Ban hammer (last resort!)

- You don't have to accept abuse - and for the sake of the project you actually **shouldn't**

How the community can help

- "This is just like it is in Open Source!" 👎

- Call out bad behaviour
  - Remind people of CoC
  - Remind people of unwelcome tone & attitude
  - Flag/report bad behaviour

- Always remember **yourself** that there is a human on the other end

Thank you for your attention!

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Slides: octoprint.org/slides/