

RUDE/ANNOYING AND TOXIC PEOPLE

HOW TO HANDLE THEM IN OPEN SOURCE
AND ALSO AT WORK



POSS Ch:6

WHAT DO WE MEAN HERE?

- Rudeness can be handled and may not be necessarily difficult but annoying.
- Initially:
 - Comment on the rudeness the first time
 - Either ignore them or treat them like everyone else
- Eventually they make themselves unpopular
- Will have no influence on others in a project
- They become self-contained problem

WHAT IF NOT OVERTLY RUDE BUT ABUSE PROJECT PROCESS?

- Wastes people time & energy and no one will benefit from the project
- Creating Wedgepoints in the projects procedures to give themselves more influence (insidious more than rude) delaying the work in the end

EXAMPLES OF ABUSING PROJECTS PROCESS

- The Filibuster (1)
 - When what is really going on is that s/he senses a consensus or a ballot is about to form and s/he doesn't like where its headed.
- The Obstructionist (2)
 - Relentlessly complicating the question of what should be in it (the summary), either by objecting to reasonable suggestions or by introducing unexpected new items

WHAT ABOUT DIFFICULT/TOXIC PEOPLE?

Noone says (one would hope): "Today I'm going to cynically manipulate procedural forms in order to be an irritating obstructionist"

This really comes from:

- Semi-paranoid feeling of being shut out of group interactions and decisions
- Conspiracy of not being taken seriously
- Ultimately justify to make formal manipulations of the projects procedures b/c they want to be taken seriously due to their 'theories'

WHEN TO TAKE ACTION

- Usually people like this are not debilitating at first, but eventually it can be parasitic. So if you **CAN'T TOLERATE, THEN ACTION!**

Where to start?!?



TAKING ACTION

1. Stop gathering notes on the patterns you see
2. References to public archives (exactly why you keep records)
3. Have private conversation with other participants, once case is built.
 - Ask what they have observed first! Let them talk, which is **Unfiltered feedback**
 - If you speak first, then their opinion will become polarized and you want what they formally thought first.
 - Indicate in private conversations others see the problems as well.

TAKING ACTION

4. Be really cautious, the person can make it look like you picked them unfairly.

- Never accuse them maliciously of abusing the project's procedures of any of the other things that you suspect are probably true.

5. Look more reasonable and more concerned for the welfare of the project.

- Goal of either reforming the person's behavior
- If reforming behavior doesn't occur, getting them to go away permanently.

TAKING ACTION

6. Advantageous to gather allies privately first.

- HOWEVER, Be careful however this can also be scene as a improper "whispering campaign" and create ill will.
- Make sure you have data or you will appear destructive if you make a public charge you can't back up.

7. Plenty of examples to demonstrate what you're saying and say it as gently as possible while still being direct.