Philosophy

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Clay becomes pottery through craft, but it's the emptiness that makes a pot useful.

- Laozi

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Radical simplicity

- **Scalability and interoperability** are more important than a menagerie of unessential features. Scale comes from simplicity, speed, and ease. Interoperability comes from unadorned, digestable content.

- **Fewer distractions** make for better writing and more productive reading.

- **New features should never interfere with the simplest use case** and should remain invisible to users who don't need them.

- **This guide is designed for the average engineer** – the busy, just-want-to-go-back-to-coding engineer. Large and complex documentation is possible but not the primary focus.

- **Minimizing context switching makes people happier.** Engineers should be able to interact with documentation using the same tools they use to read and write code.

Readable source text

- **Plain text not only suffices, it is superior**. Markdown itself is not essential to this formula, but it is the best and most widely supported solution right now. HTML is generally not encouraged.

- **Content and presentation should not mingle**. It should always be possible to ditch the renderer and read the essential information at source. Users should never have to touch the presentation layer if they don't want to.

- **Portability and future-proofing leave room for the unimagined integrations to come**, and are best achieved by keeping the source as human-readable as possible.

- **Static content is better than dynamic**, because content should not depend on the features of any one server. However, **fresh is better than stale**. We strive to balance these needs.

Minimum viable documentation

- **Docs thrive when they're treated like tests**: a necessary chore one learns to savor because it rewards over time. See Best Practices.

- **Brief and utilitarian is better than long and exhaustive**. The vast majority of users need only a small fraction of the author's total knowledge, but they need it quickly and often.

Better is better than perfect

- **Incremental improvement is better than prolonged debate**. Patience and tolerance of imperfection allow projects to evolve organically.

- **Don't lick the cookie, pass the plate**. We're drowning in potentially impactful projects. Choose only those you can really handle and release those you can't.