

# **How to deal with toxic people**

Lessons from the trenches of Open Source Development

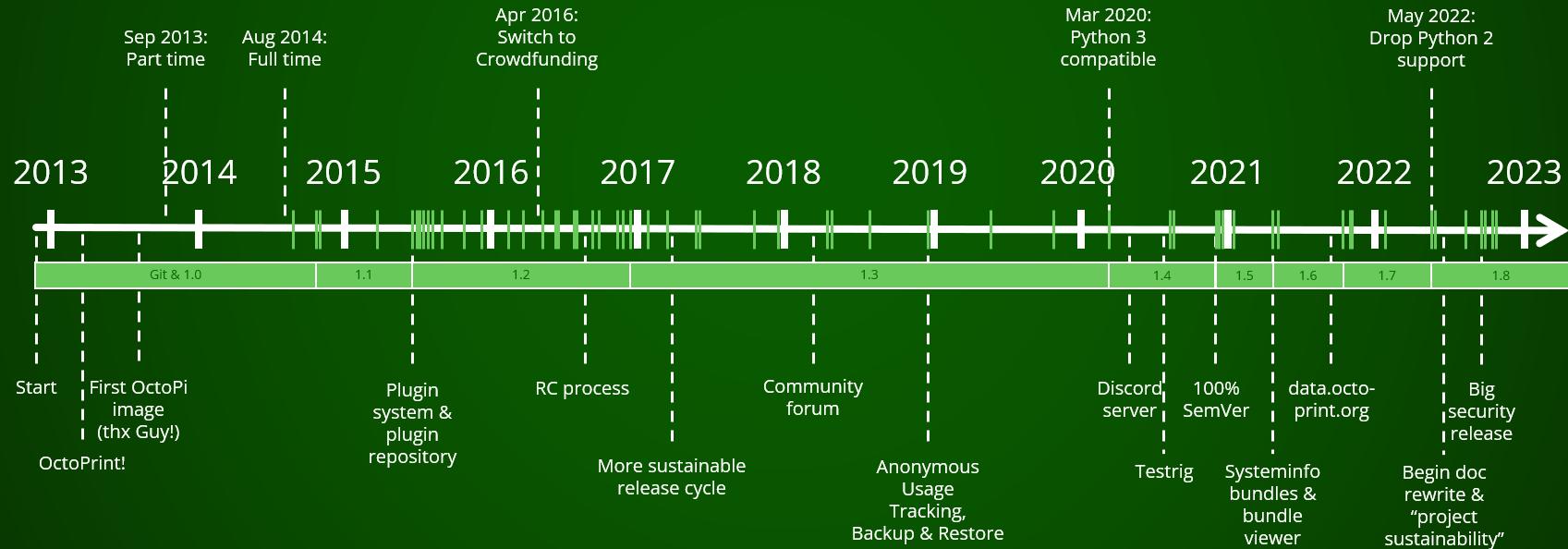
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OOP2023

# Gina Häußge

- 39 years old
- Software engineer
- Maker & hobby baker
- GitHub Star
- 100% Nerd
- Creator & maintainer of  
**OctoPrint**



# A decade of maintaining OctoPrint



# Bad Behavior



# Entitlement

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

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

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

# Frustration

This crap just cost me  
thousands of dollars,  
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

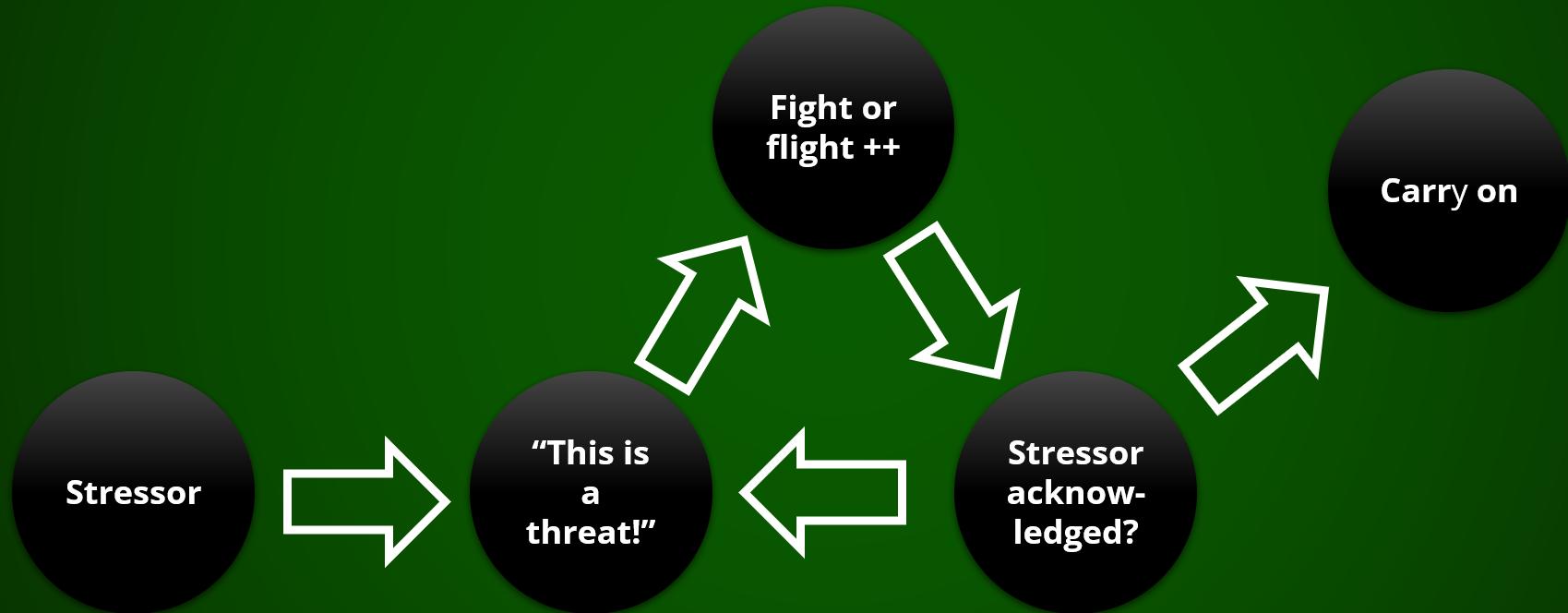


# First: Disengage & cool down

- 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



# Stress response cycle?



# Remind of realities

- Open Source = no demands but **collaboration & cooperation**
- Not just code, everything helps!
- “Patches welcome” 🙌



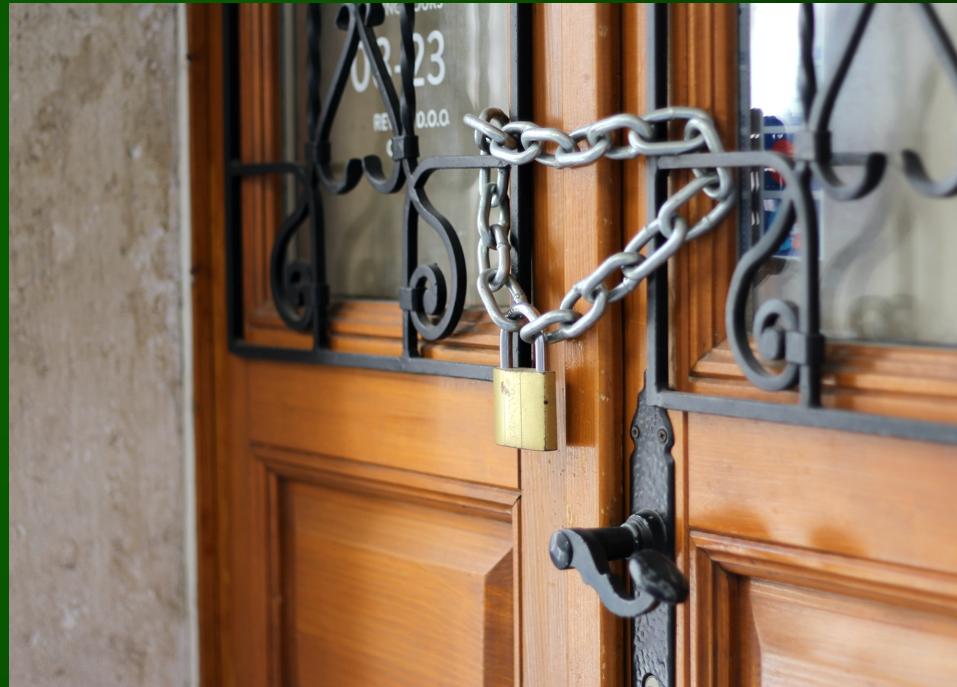
# Remind of boundaries

- 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/](https://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**



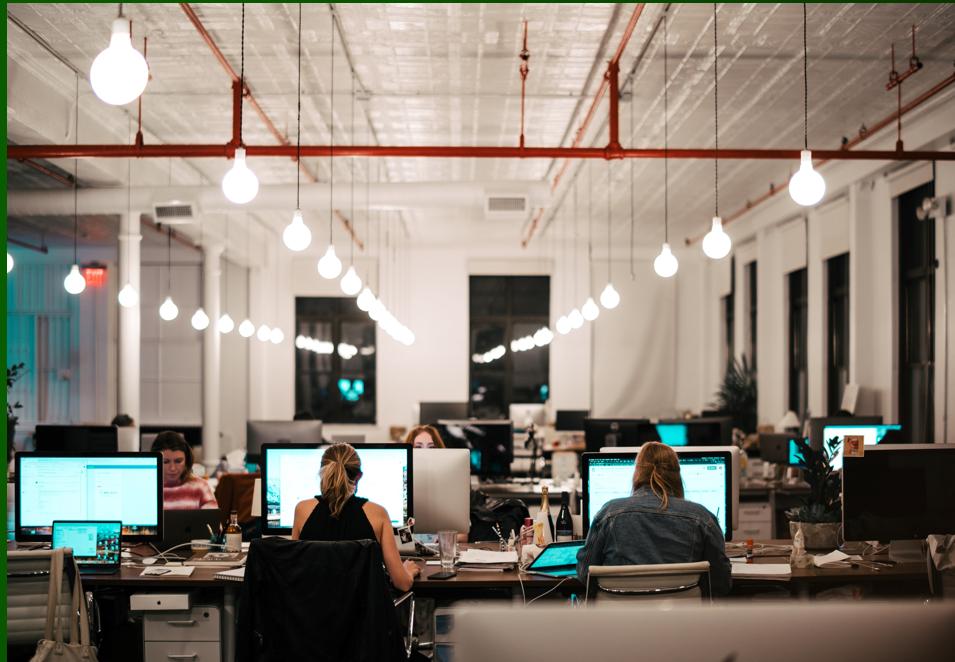
# How the community can help

- “This is just like it is in Open Source!” 🤦
- Call out bad behaviour
- Always remember **yourself** that there is a human on the other end



# How companies can help

- Understand that Open Source is a two way street
- Don't just take, give back – on company time!
- Don't expect to implement your business workflows for you
- Sponsor the projects you use



# Thank you for your attention!

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