self-reliant programmer manifesto

Most of the modern software is a disgrace to its users. Most of the modern software is getting worse every day. Relying on this software is like relying on a cheeto to keep your house safe from burglars instead of using a proper lock. Fuck this. Enough! It is time to become more self-reliant. A self-reliant programmer believes that simple is good, minimises their dependencies, and writes their own tools.

Most of the modern software has more features than anybody uses, you only need a subset of those. You can often implement a subset of features for a program you need. You do not need fourty-two layers of abstractions to implement something simple. You can just implement it.

Everything complex is a sum of simple stuff. You just need to get started. Curl started as 300 lines of C. Reimplementing just the part you need, without catering to others, makes it simple and possible to implement yourself. You can be a lot more self-reliant.

A simpler program has fewer dependencies, less code, fewer bugs and smaller attack surface. Fewer dependencies means being less vulnerable to supply-chain attack on package managers. Simpler code means better understanding what you actually use, and how it works. Implementing something yourself makes you understand it even better. Understanding how stuff works helps you build better mental models of the reality and you become more capable. Being more capable means being more self-reliant, and being more free.

Simpler tools mean that you can work alone, making your software even simpler. You do not depend on bloated CI, Docker, Kubernetes, a countless web-based tools that break half of the time. You can focus on programming and solving your actual problems. You do not need to argue with others about decisions and use the workflows you do not like. You just sit down and solve your problem. You become even more self-reliant.

Being self-reliant makes you more responsible for your own destiny, you do not wait for others to magically do things for you, you have to do this yourself. There is no backup plan, you have to become better or use shitty software. But you won't be able to blame anyone, you are to blame in this case. Being capable and self-reliant and using simpler tools means you do not need anyone's blessing to do whaterver you need. You can just sit down and code stuff without asking ChatGPT to do this for you or fix something when it does not work. You do not need the Internet to remind you how to make a for loop in your favourite language or to download a hundred dependencies for your project. You have more agency to change environment around you. You can just do stuff.