Negotiation Theory for Geeks
How to get what you want with a minimum of misery

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“The projects that have been the most successful ... are good at all sorts of soft skills”

- David Eaves
We Negotiate All the Time

We often don't call it negotiating

We often assume that all talk that does not fall into the light quadrant is going to be difficult....

Which contributes greatly to making it difficult.

For more, see bit.ly/ValeofSuck
How to Negotiate

This topic can fill several volumes. Fortunately, they already exist!

bit.ly/HarvardNegotiation
Negotiations in FOSS Projects

a.k.a. Why We're All Here Today

- Addressing personal grievances
- Mailing list discussions
- Patch reviews
- Bug triage
- Roadmap creation / feature prioritization
- ...


Negotiation: The Basics

Positions vs. Interests

Focusing on positions instead of on interests precludes finding a more optimal outcome.
Negotiation: The Basics

Active Listening

- Actively listen to the other party
- Ask clarifying questions
- Summarize to assure you understand
- Find common ground and move forward

*If you're not actively listening, it shows ....*
Negotiation: The Basics

Independent Standards

Try to find one (or more!) independent standard and lead your discussion around this.
Negotiation: The Basics
Stages of conflict escalation (by Glasl)

1. Hardening
2. Debates and Polemics
3. Action, not words!
4. Images and coalitions
5. Loss of face
6. Strategies of threads
7. Limited destructive blows
8. Fragmentation
9. Together into the abyss
The Two Most Important Negotiation Tips

TALK! CARE!
Questions?

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