

An aerial photograph of a vast, rugged mountain range, likely the Andes, with a clear blue sky above. In the foreground, the white wing and tail of an airplane are visible, suggesting the photo was taken from a high-altitude flight.

Listening to the Needs of Your Global Open Source Community

Linux.conf.au 2017

Elizabeth K. Joseph
@pleia2

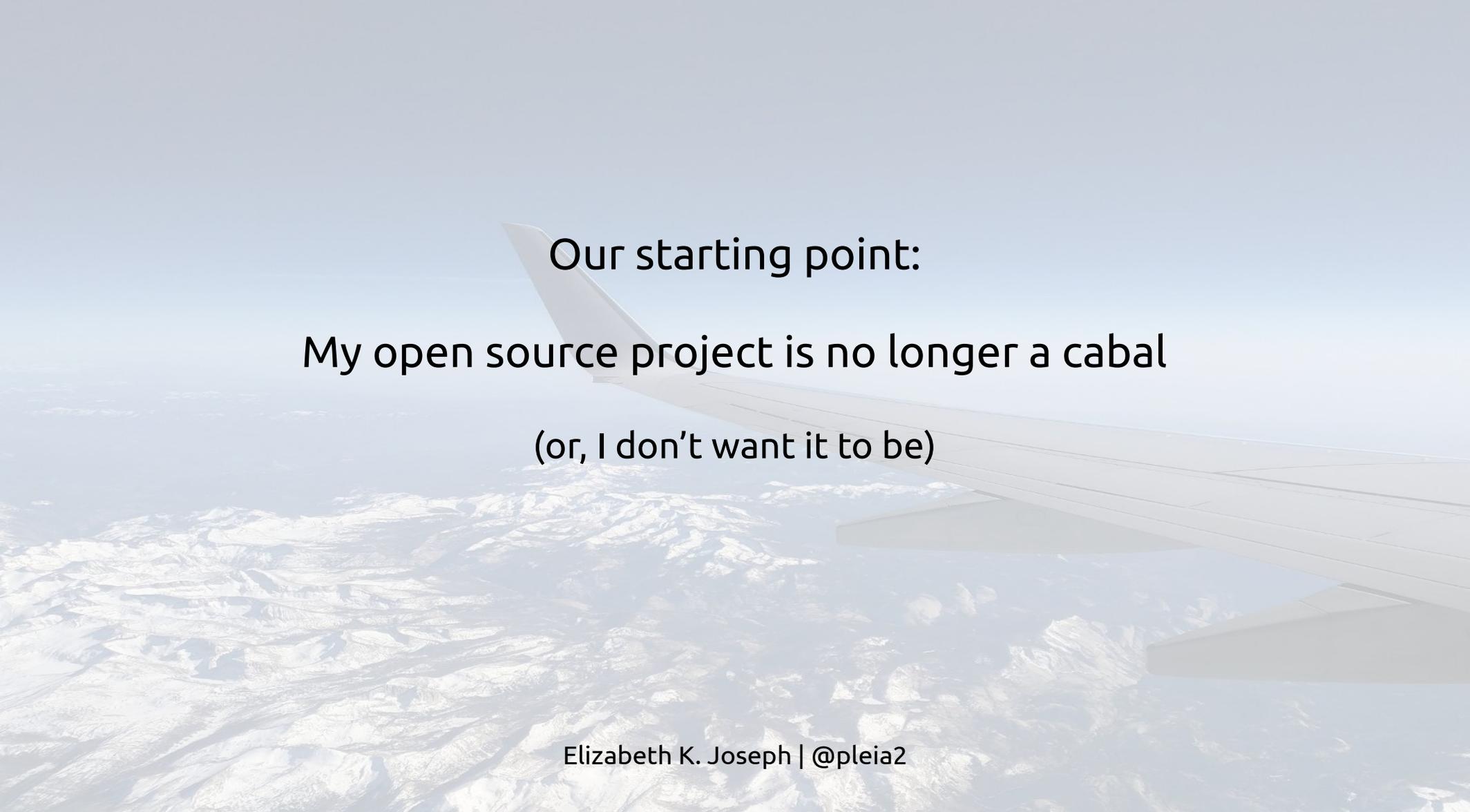
Elizabeth K. Joseph

- Been organizing Open Source communities since 2002
- Spent 6 years on the Ubuntu Community Council
- Spent 4 years on the OpenStack Infrastructure Team
- Joined Mesosphere as a DC/OS Developer Advocate in 2017

An aerial photograph of a mountain range, likely the Himalayas, viewed from an airplane window. The mountains are rugged and covered in snow, with deep valleys and ridges. The sky is a clear, pale blue. The wing of the airplane is visible in the foreground, extending from the right side towards the center.

8 Tips!

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An aerial photograph of a mountain range, likely the Sierra Nevada, seen from an airplane window. The mountains are rugged and covered in snow, with a clear blue sky above. The wing of the airplane is visible in the foreground, extending from the right side of the frame towards the center.

Our starting point:

My open source project is no longer a cabal

(or, I don't want it to be)

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Tip 1

Provide a simple way for contributors to contact project owners

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Lots of options

- Email! Mailing list, or list of contacts
- Bug/ticketing system
- Chat channel (but be sensitive to time zones)
- Forum

Tip 2

Acknowledge every piece of feedback

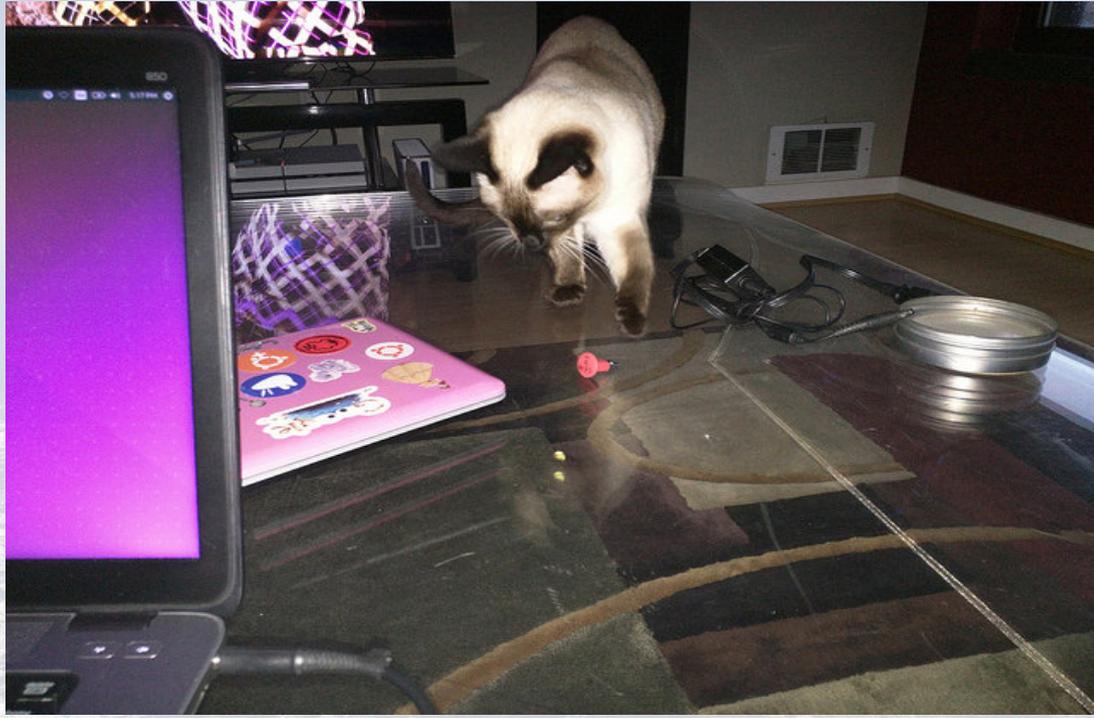
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Even if you don't like the feedback, and want to
hide



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Even if you have a *Very Good Reason* for the way you're doing things



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Even if it makes you feel unappreciated



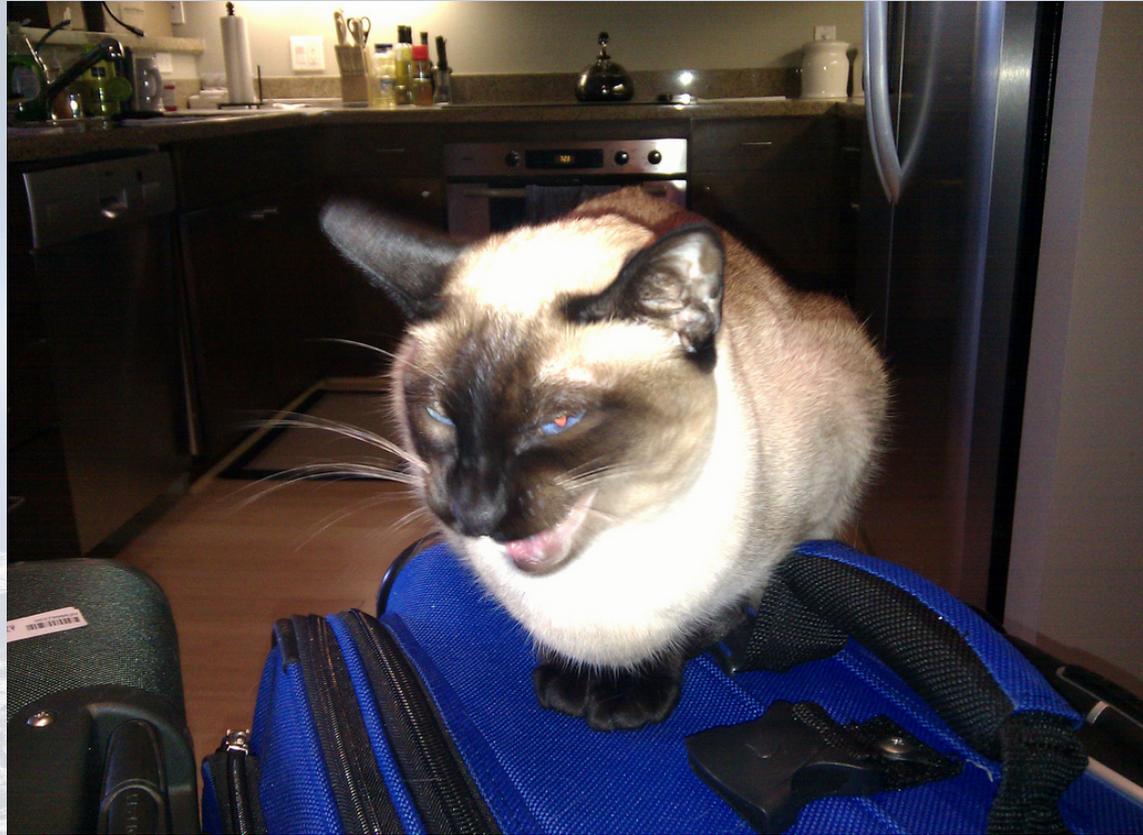
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An actual exchange

“I’m curious as to why the infra team keeps ignoring the issue we are trying to bring to you attention for past three days?”

“well, the last two days were the weekend”

“That sounds like a reply I would get from IT from the 1990s”



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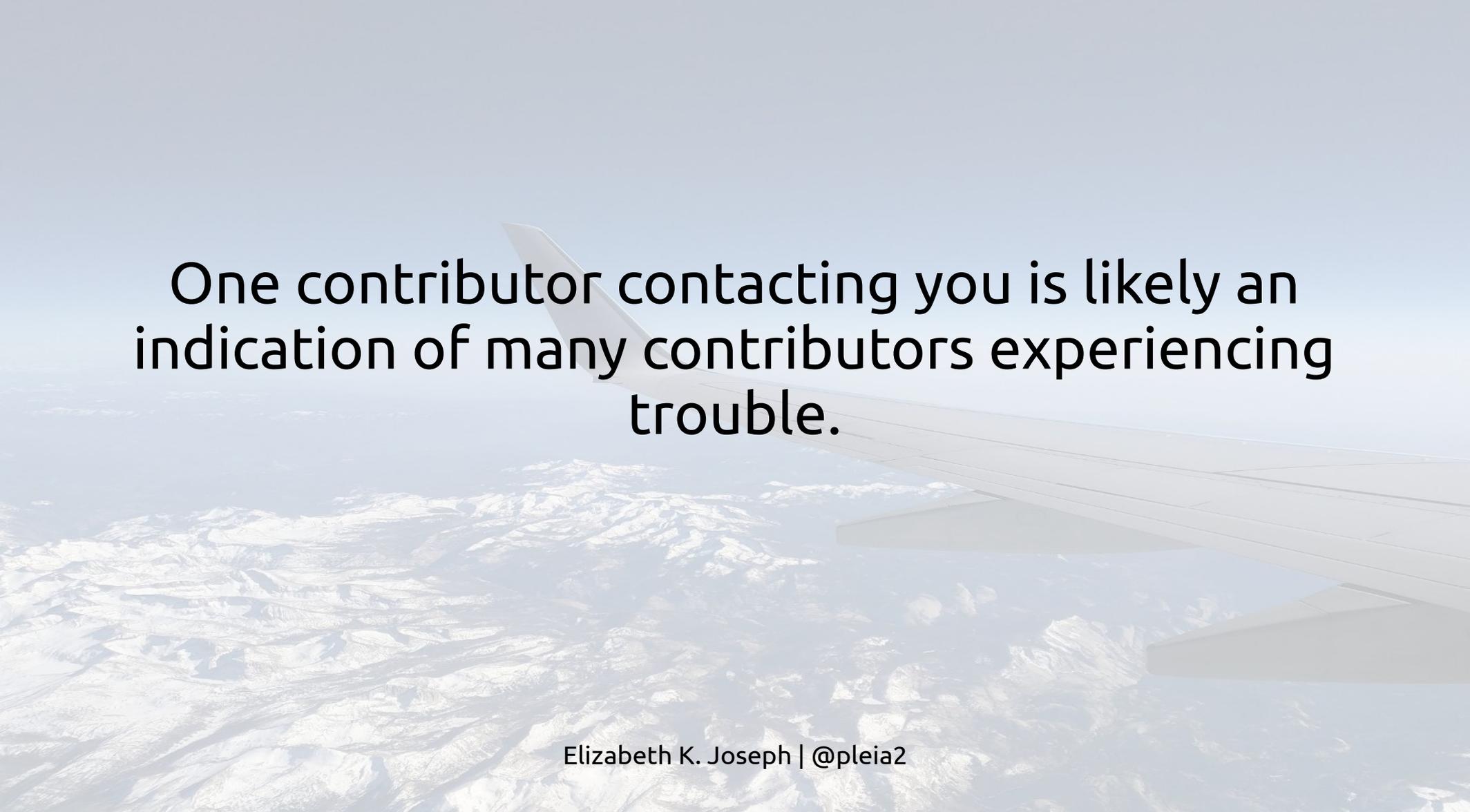
And yet...

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An aerial photograph of a vast mountain range, likely the Himalayas, with a white airplane wing and tail fin visible in the foreground on the right side. The sky is a clear, pale blue. The text is overlaid in the center of the image.

Don't let it fall into an unresponsive black hole.

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An aerial photograph of a vast, rugged mountain range with snow-capped peaks and deep valleys. In the foreground, the white wing and tail of an airplane are visible, extending from the right side of the frame towards the center. The sky is a clear, pale blue.

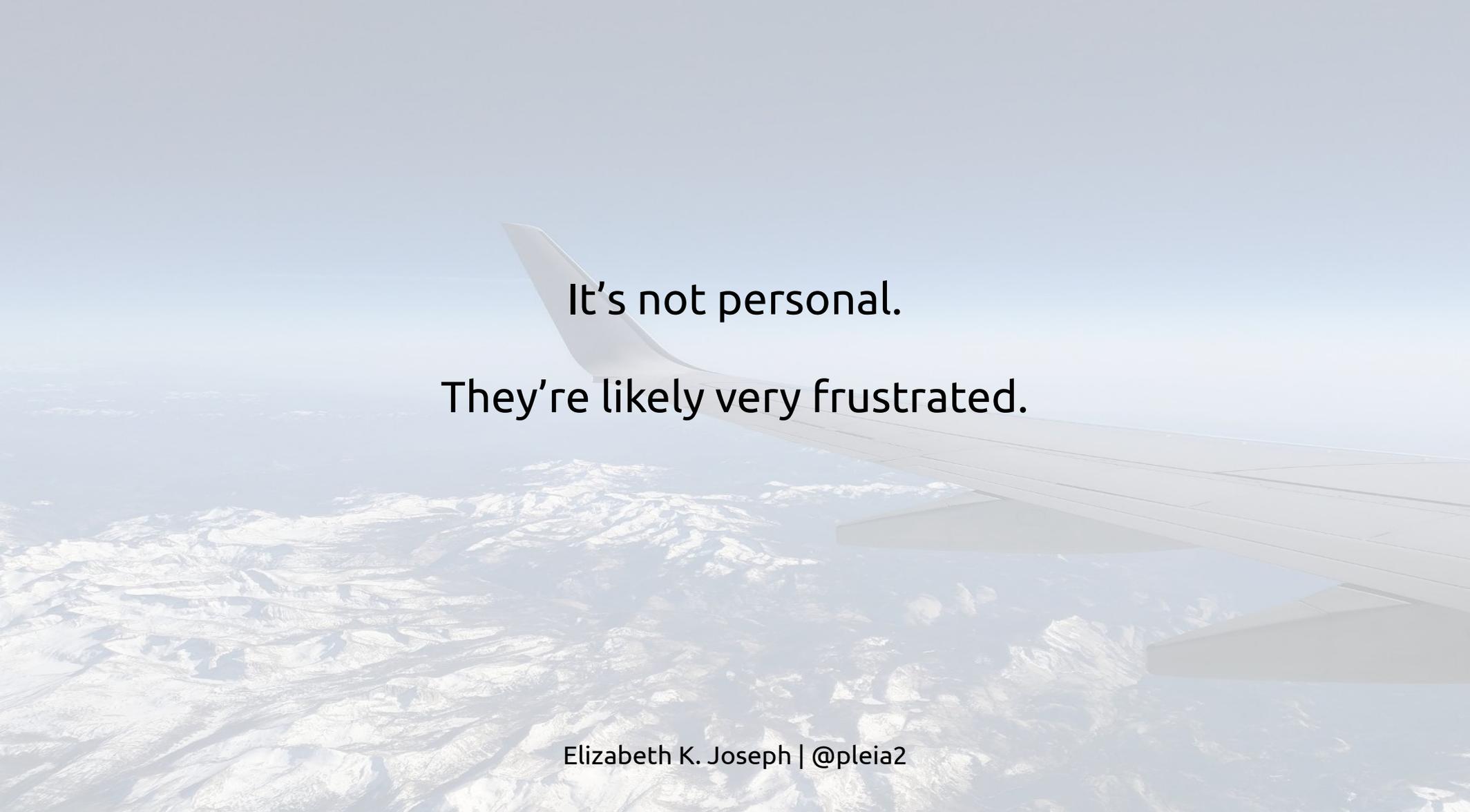
One contributor contacting you is likely an indication of many contributors experiencing trouble.

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Tip 3

Stay calm

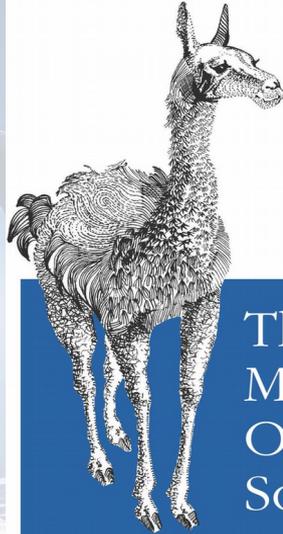
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An aerial photograph of a mountain range, likely the Himalayas, viewed from an airplane window. The wing and tail of the aircraft are visible in the foreground, extending from the right side of the frame. The mountains below are rugged and covered in snow, with deep valleys and ridges. The sky is a clear, pale blue.

It's not personal.
They're likely very frustrated.

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Acting out of the goodness of your heart, or something



Thanklessly
Maintaining
Open Source
Software

ORLY?

@ThePracticalDev

Source: <https://twitter.com/ThePracticalDev/status/765215047580807168>

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An aerial photograph of a mountain range, likely the Himalayas, viewed from an airplane window. The wing of the aircraft is visible on the right side of the frame. The sky is clear and blue, and the mountains below are rugged and snow-capped.

In the end, the project will benefit!

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Tip 4

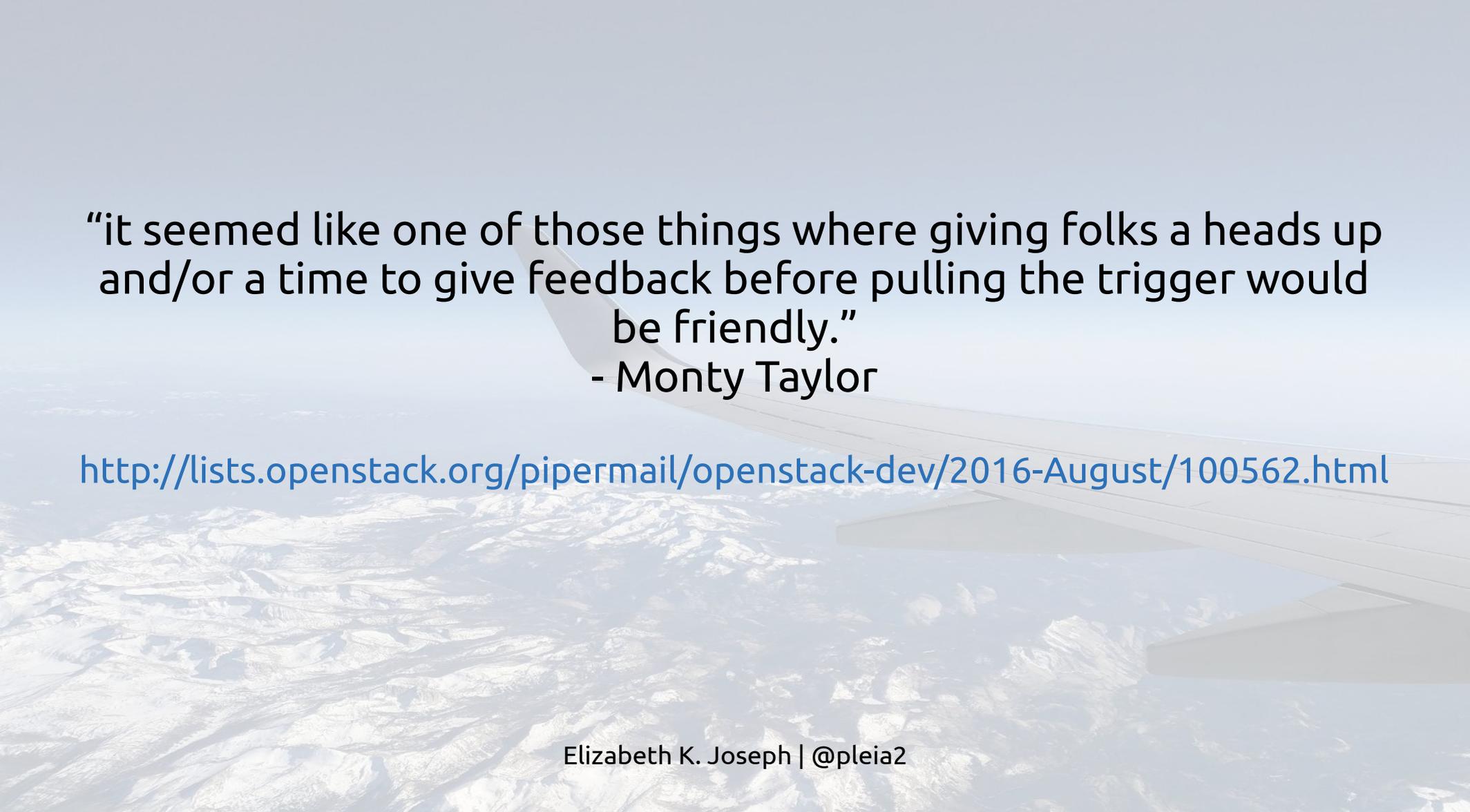
Openly communicate potential changes and ask for feedback

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Mailing list thread
Poll of your community
Meeting topic

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An aerial photograph of a vast, rugged mountain range, likely the Himalayas, with snow-capped peaks and deep valleys. In the foreground, the white wing and tail section of an airplane are visible, flying over the terrain. The sky is a clear, pale blue.

“it seemed like one of those things where giving folks a heads up
and/or a time to give feedback before pulling the trigger would
be friendly.”
- Monty Taylor

<http://lists.openstack.org/pipermail/openstack-dev/2016-August/100562.html>

Tip 5

Check in with teams

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Our current schedule:

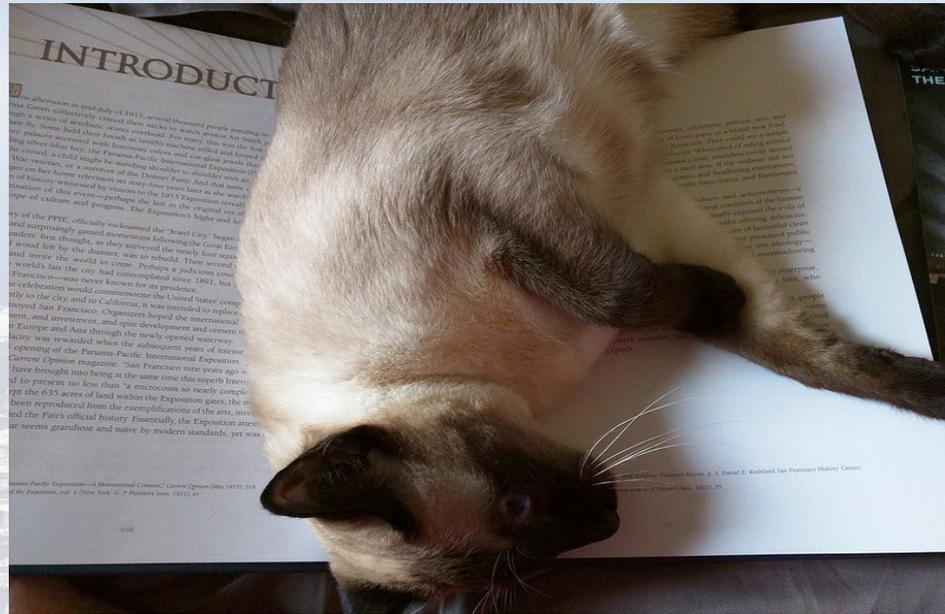
- 2016-07-21 - Desktop 17:00UTC - Developer Membership Board 17:30UTC
- 2016-08-04 - Ubuntu GNOME 17:00UTC - Snappy Team 17:30UTC
- 2016-08-18 - Xubuntu Team 17:00UTC - Ubuntu Studio Team 17:30UTC
- 2016-09-01 - Ubuntu Technical Board 17:00UTC - LoCo Council 17:30UTC
- 2016-09-15 - Doc Team 17:00UTC - QA Team 17:30UTC
- 2016-10-06 - IRC Council 17:00UTC - Canonical Community Team 17:30UTC
- 2016-10-20 - Kubuntu Council 17:00UTC - Membership Board 17:30UTC
- 2016-11-03 - Ubuntu Mate 17:00UTC - Lubuntu 17:30UTC
- 2016-11-17 - Ubuntu Core/Phone/Desktop 17:00UTC - Server/Cloud team 17:30 UTC
- 2016-12-01 - Ubuntu Governance 17:00 UTC
- 2026-12-15 - Forums Council 17:00UTC - Core Apps/Phone 17:30UTC
- 2017-01-05 - QA Team 17:00UTC - Translations Team 17:30 UTC

Check In Questions

- Do you have any problems with tooling?
- Do you have any problems with processes?
- Do you have the resources you need?
- If one thing could make your life much easier, what would it be?
- What is working well?

Tip 6

Document your processes



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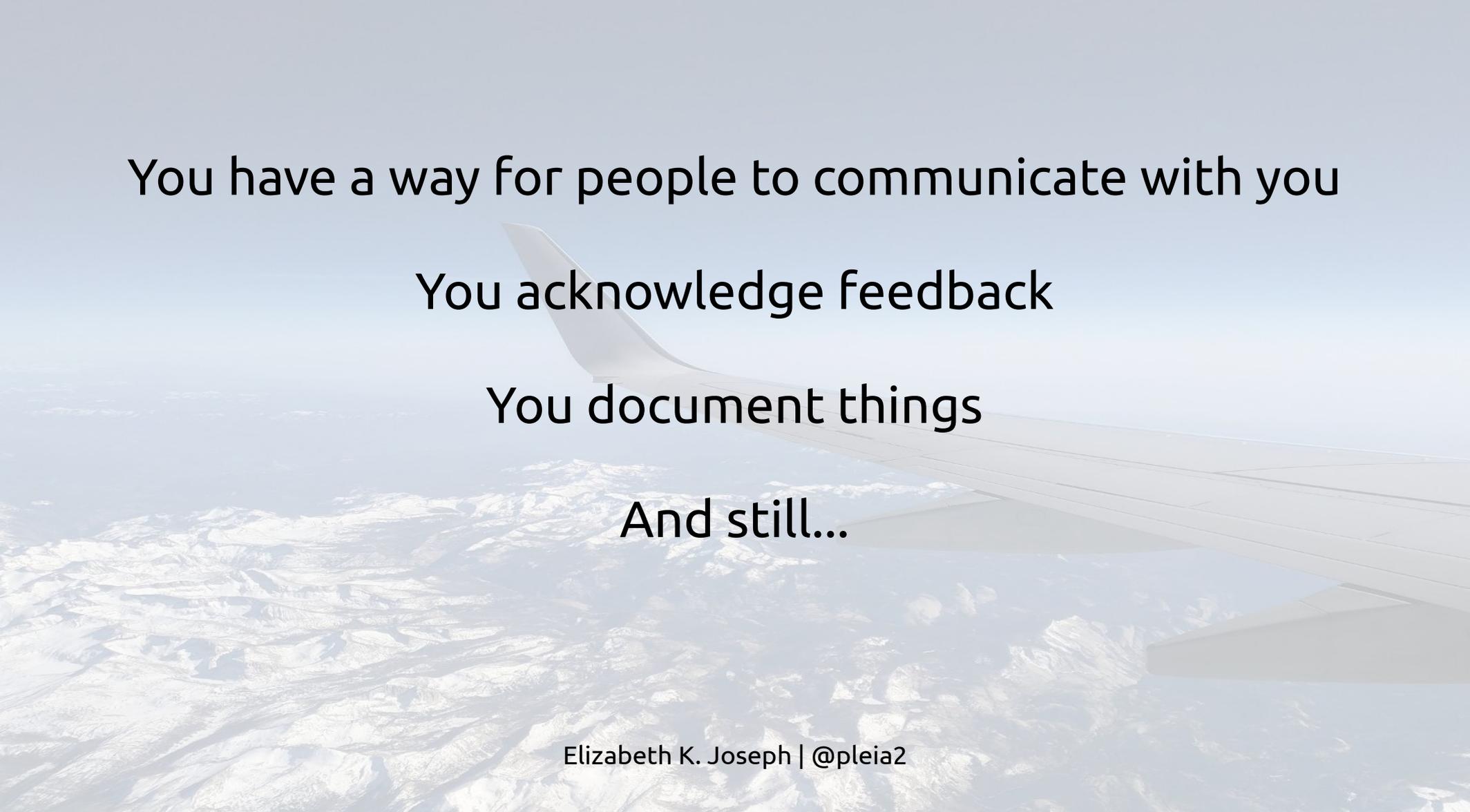
...but don't beat people with the
documentation



Tip 7

Read between the lines

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You have a way for people to communicate with you

You acknowledge feedback

You document things

And still...

“By the way...”

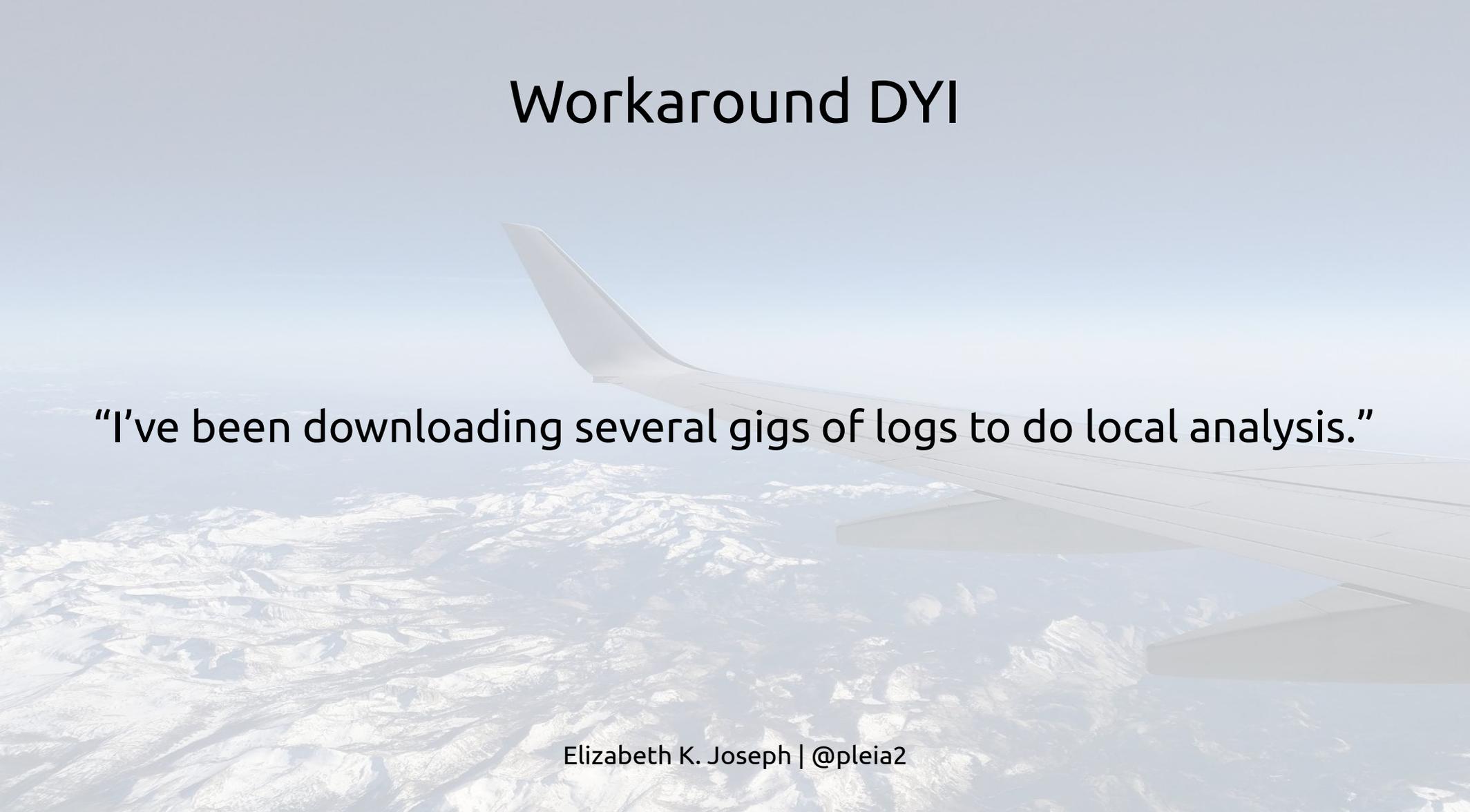
```
> Note that this will only be true if the change's parent commit in  
> Gerrit was the branch tip at the time it landed. Otherwise (and  
> quite frequently in fact) you will need to identify the SHA of the  
> merge commit which was created at the time it merged and use that  
> instead to find the post job.
```

Without wanting to diverge too much from the topic at hand, I believe this is why those of us who only occasionally want to look at post job output usually just give up! Keeping this in your head for the once every few months it's needed is hard ;)

Workaround tool

I could never remember the formula for constructing the URL either, so I built this to help me: <https://pypi.python.org/pypi/git-os-job>

Workaround DYI

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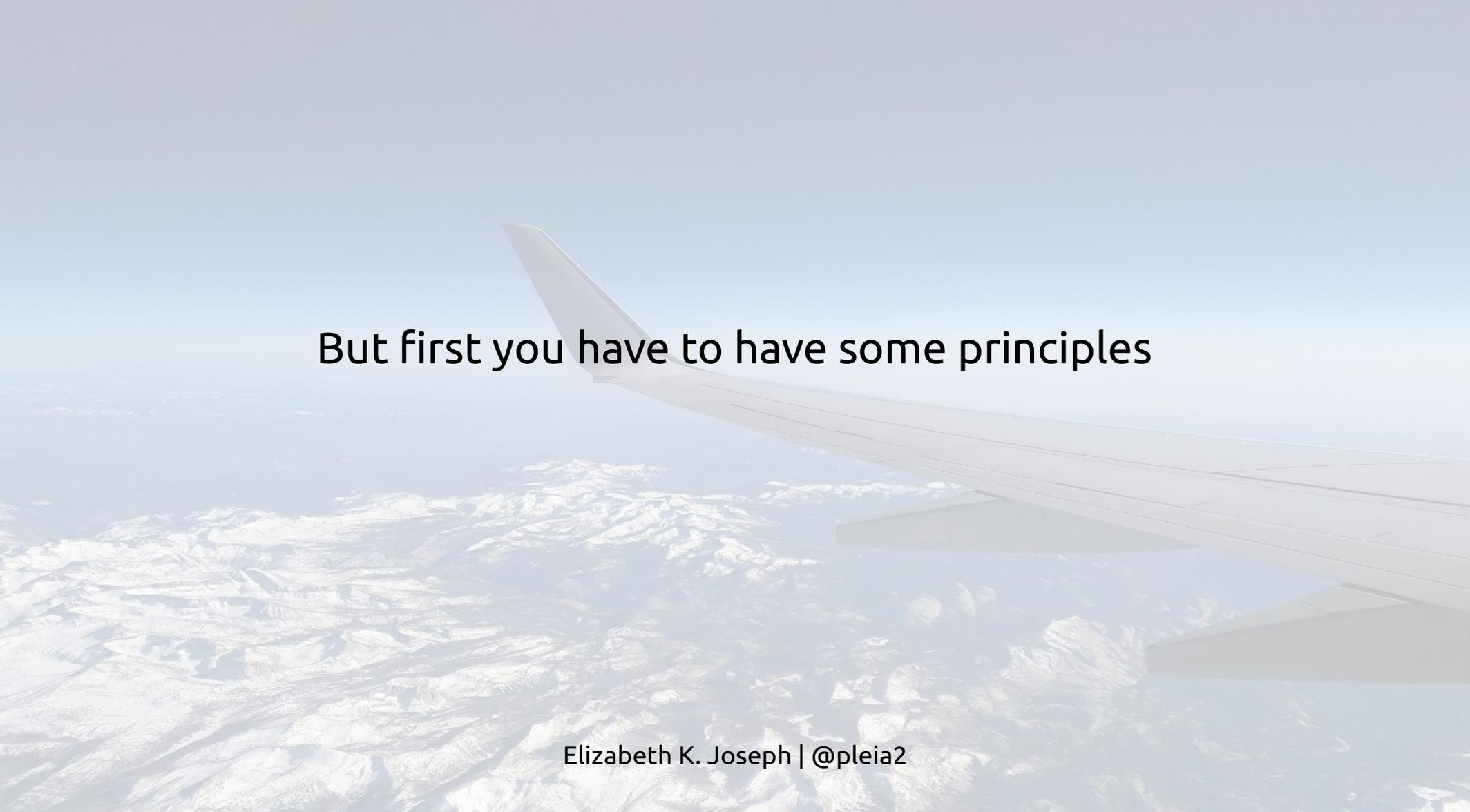
“I’ve been downloading several gigs of logs to do local analysis.”

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Tip 8

Stick to your principles

...the “customer” is not always right ;)

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But first you have to have some principles

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Developing principles

Have clear software choices

Do you only use open source?

Other tooling restraints?

Cost considerations?

Provide clear support instructions to set boundaries

We're able to support you in these ways...

Define what you're willing to compromise on

Threshold in which you'll consider a rework

Trust your high-level view

You know a lot about the project, use that

Software transition

An aerial photograph of a mountain range, likely the Alps, seen from an airplane window. The sky is clear and blue, and the terrain below is rugged and mountainous. The wing of the airplane is visible on the right side of the frame.

Is the Transifex open source project dead?

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In Conclusion

- Provide a simple way for contributors to contact project owners
- Acknowledge every piece of feedback
- Stay calm
- Communicate potential changes and ask for feedback
- Check in with teams
- Document your processes
- Read between the lines
- Stick to your principles

Questions?

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