

Effective Resolution

If there is a disagreement with someone over a specific fact or incident, there is not always a clear-cut answer and the other person may not always play by the rules. None the less, it is important for a number of reasons to stick to the motives and methods outlined below to properly resolve the issue without turning the issue into a toxic one. The skills used are similar, though their application is very much the same.



Avoid Presumptions

If someone else has issue with you, it is important to avoid presuming what or why the other person has resolved to bring up a conflict. If you found that this person has caused what you perceive to be an error and you feel that you must challenge them, it is just as important to maintain the same mindset. Try to leave behind personal rage and resentment and be objective on the matter. Is this person really out to get you, are they honestly misunderstanding something, are you the one in honest error, or has a third party miscommunicated between one of you and an information resource? Could the information resource be in error? There are a myriad of issues that could cause an issue that are more likely than simple dislike or posturing.

Detaching 'Correctness' and 'Civility'

Even if someone were out to get you for some reason, what do you accomplish by meeting anger with anger or worse yet, charging into the discussion in rage from the start? A calm and objective person

starts with the advantage in being able to resolve any situation and tends to maintain a better relationship with their peers than one that yields to rage – regardless of correctness. A person who is proven in error and responds with civility and grace is often still more favorable than someone who is proven correct and is smug about it. Being correct and being civil are not mutually exclusive concepts, and the prospect of admitting an error on your part does not make you less of a person. Resolve to maintain some class and stick to constructive criticism, and be aware that constructive criticism pointed at yourself is meant to be helpful rather than insulting. You're accountable for your own behavior, so keep control of yourself no matter what the other person does.

Analyze

This is the hardest part for some people, but it is important to verify one's own stance is valid before even putting finger to key in debate. At the very least, one should refresh their memory on the issue in question. There may be a chatroom, but it is a forum based roleplay. One need not immediately type a rage-filled personal response in the chat before they take the time to scour the wiki and forum for the relevant data. There are a number of parts to this step that are too often ignored.

Introspection

While we would not like to admit it, we all make errors. Does the person claiming that we messed up this fact or overstepped that boundary have a point? Is there a valid complaint within their words, regardless of how much vitriol they might be conveying it with? Make doubly sure that you are not in error before dedicating your time to such a discussion.

Ask for Clarification

Instead of typing an insulting response or assuming that the other person is being foolish, ask them to elaborate. Ask them what exactly the problem is in as much detail as possible. Ask for specifics. Simply showing the other person you are willing to hear their complaint and pay attention may improve their mood then and there regardless of the outcome if it is an honest error by either side. If this is indeed a personal attack in the heat of the moment, it might just start to fall apart if viewed with such specific scrutiny. Do not yield to prodding to respond in kind if the other person is nasty.

Research

If the fault does lie with you, then this step may reveal it and prevent a problem from proceeding any further. Even if the fault does not lie with you, a refresher about the data in question will not cause harm. Searching with Wiki, RP posts, or politely asking those directly involved through PMs will allow more informed queries and responses and can even lead to evidence, whether it supports your claim or theirs. It may also reveal lapses in available data, or even reveal possible sources of confusion that may have given rise to the problem in the first place. Note areas of possible interest or supporting facts.

Please do not amend any sources of information at this time, either to correct them properly nor to artificially make yourself look correct. Everything is time-stamped. Wiki pages can show previous entries, who edited them, and what was changed. We will know if something has been altered and it will weaken the validity of your statements if it even looks like the data supporting them has been altered.

By the time you have even gotten to this point, you should have made certain that you are correct. If you are not, then be ready to concede, be it partially or completely, as appropriate for the situation. If there is uncertainty, then explain the uncertainty clearly and, if no resolution can be achieved, be prepared to invite an outside authority to the discussion to mediate.

Discussion

It is important, when opening or continuing dialogue, to maintain the resolve to keep it in the area of discussion and now allow one's self to enter the realm of argument or disruption. It takes two or more people to maintain a toxic state, and one person shouting while another remains calm and civil tends to make the unreasonable party look quite unfavorable to the community. Keep control of yourself no matter what the other person does.

No matter what other people do, remember that you're in charge of you.

Choose an Appropriate Venue

Is this something that can be resolved between two people best in PMs? Is it best discussed in chat where everyone can see it and weigh in? Is it relevant only within a certain group that participates in a certain section of the forums or chat? Is chat or forum better for this? Be careful selecting which venue in which this is discussed. Having a fight in the center of the main chatroom can and has scared off players both veteran and prospective.

Being Specific

Stay specific and constructive about your complaints and sources and ask that they do the same. This not only serves the purpose of staying on topic and working through to the heart of the problem, but also serves to avoid overgeneralizations and general conflict. Saying "Your weapon's DR rating is below my shield's DR rating and thus should not penetrate" is quite different from "You autohitting , you always do this" which can easily lead to an argument.

Being Constructive

This leads into what being constructive means. A constructive discussion is one that is not geared toward tearing down the other person or idea, but instead works toward actual improvement. It's about being helpful and progressing on the ideas presented. This is as much an attitude as a practice and can take effort to develop and maintain, but it is a critical boon to have. Being civil and helpful is a large part of

being constructive, as one can be correct and still cause conflict or tension.

Requesting Mediation

If an agreement cannot be reached, an impartial third party with sufficient authority can be called in to investigate and rule on the matter. Sometimes we're too close to our pet projects, characters, or factions and need someone else to make a ruling. Ideally it would be a party with sufficient knowledge of the problem already but if not, please give a detailed and objective description of the issue with the evidence and resources thus far gathered.

This is not the same thing as drawing in cliques or random people to support your side. The practice of dragging people into the argument who are not constructive or who clearly have a bias will do nothing but turn the chat into a rage-filled maelstrom that new players will flee from. It is not a crime for people to weigh in or comment on a discussion if it happens to be accessible to them, but don't stoke the flames or let them egg you on. Filter out the constructive and the helpful from the conflict-starting and ignorant.

Behaviors to Avoid

In the course of discussion, there are a number of behaviors to avoid. This is not a comprehensive list by any stretch, but some basic examples will be included. This is more for you to better see the direction a discussion is heading than simply a reference with which to call out other people with.

Trolling

Intentionally riling someone up then maintaining a calm demeanor as they respond in rage, especially for the sake of making the other person look foolish, is simply trolling. Do not presume those viewing the discussion to be too ignorant to tell the difference if you attempt it yourself, and also do not allow yourself to be baited by a troll into acting uncivil. They get their entertainment from it.

Overgeneralizations

An example of this was the earlier reference to autohitting, but this extends to many different areas and is not always intentional. Sometimes it is said in the heat of the moment and it does not mean that the discussion cannot be salvaged. Words such as "never" and "always", along with other absolutes, are to be avoided when discussing the matter. Overgeneralization serves to take the original complaint and apply it far more broadly, potentially to the point of insult. Another example might be "You always side with X faction" or "you never let your character get hit". These serve to muddy waters and obscure the original complaint, even if it was potentially valid.

If you catch yourself doing this; please clarify your specific reference and feelings rather than let the overgeneralization continue.

Sarcasm

Sarcasm has virtually no value whatsoever in such discussions and tends to be an intentional attempt to mock or demean. Please avoid using it at all costs and note when a person is utilizing it. Take care, however. Some things that look like sarcasm may not be as clear-cut as they appear due to the fact that inflection does not work through text. You may be misreading it. Do not cast aside a discussion simply because of an uncertain perceived slight, nor should you allow yourself feel offended when someone accuses you of this by mistake in a headed discussion. If you yourself are using it, please stop and re-evaluate your stance and intent.

Passive-Aggressive Comments

Passive-Aggressive actions are somewhat related to sarcasm in that the person speaking does not truly mean what they are saying, and it can often be paired with sarcastic statements. Passive-Aggressive statements tend to be more clear, often with their true thoughts inserted into the false statement. It could be something along the lines of "Fine. I don't see why the staff always support you and your ideas and neglect mine, but sure we can do it your way. It's always the only way, after all."

This is by no means healthy and is harmful to the discussion, but also points to an underlying perfection on the part of the user that their opinion does not matter regardless of potential correctness or that their point is undervalued. It is not something to participate in by any means, but its nuances can also provide a clue as to the root of the problem the other party truly has or even as a clue to the user that they have a different issue infringing on the current one.

Shifting Topics

Sometimes, when a person feels they are losing an argument, they will attempt to divert topics intentionally to throw the other person off-base or onto something more advantageous. This is not the same as exploring multiple aspects of the same problem. An example of this would be if an argument about "I don't think your shield could have stopped my weapon" devolves into "Well that type of armor is too OP and shouldn't exist anyway". Some arguments may naturally progress along these lines, so it can be hard to tell when an intentional shift has occurred for this purpose, but it is usually not a tactic that has been planned out in advance.

This method and intent is to be avoided. Stick to the matter at hand unless a larger problem is keeping your specific issue from being resolved and keeps you from proceeding further. Do not try to escape or disregard a failed issue by escaping to a new one without cause or merit which warrants the shift in topic. If you find yourself doing this, it is important to ask yourself if you are you really still arguing for your original point. Does this new point have actual merit, or is it simply a fight to pick? Do you have to step away and calm down?

Reductio ad absurdum

This is the introduction of an intentional logical fallacy to try and make the other person look ridiculous. One scenario would be a person who is hesitant to accept the latest changes to the DR system due to a specific concern. An arguing party might state: "You don't support the newest DR system? Do you intend to let this site turn completely lawless?" Now, the first person quite probably does not subscribe to such an extreme, but none the less is accused of such. This is meant to make the first person look bad to their peers by the second, even though it has no factual basis. Sometimes used by politicians against each other, it is an intentional tactic. If the attempt is perceived for what it is and fails, it may be played off as an attempt at sarcasm. Please avoid this one, as it is one of the dirtiest tricks in the book.

Walk Away

There are times when no amount of discussion or mediation will resolve something. There are times when the person seeks to cause trouble or just simply will not be reasoned with. Some arguments exist not for the sake of that being argued but simply because the person has an axe to grind, though these must be assumed at the start to be in the minority. Before allowing yourself to fight or to be goaded into a conflict, walk away or mute them. This is not a victory for them, as much as a statement that they and their concerns are not worth your consideration if they cannot be articulated or discussed in a rational manner. If needed, involve a moderator. Do not put up with harassment, but show discretion in your response.

Taking a Break

There are times when we just feel like we hit a wall everywhere we turn or simply do not accomplish much. Where we feel like we're always fighting or seeing others fight. Do not be afraid to take a break from the chat to get some breathing room. You would not be the first to feel the need to do this and you likely will not be the last. Some people intentionally avoid the chat indefinitely after making this call. If you do so, however, please do not try to shame the other person for making you leave or cause undue drama with it.

Conceding

If you're in error, you're in error. It happens, and how we act when we're proven wrong on something is rather important. Accept the result with grace and move on. Do not badmouth, do not recruit people to your side to drag out the fight. Show some class and move on to more important things.

Of course, there are times when a small concession is warranted, but it does not render your point logically invalid or at least warrants re-evaluation in the new light. Don't be afraid to re-evaluate and act as needed given new information.

So you're correct. Now what?

If you're correct, and your view has been successfully supported to the point of the argument's conclusion, then remain civil. Don't be smug or prideful and certainly don't gloat.. Move on to more important things. Be constructive through the whole process or don't bother with it to begin with. Few people like someone who can effectively debate and support their viewpoint only to watch them get full of themselves at the end.

OOC Notes

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