ratnfuture Overreaching Discussion Tree

I diagramed this example of overreaching because it's short with a high error density, and the errors increasingly derailed the conversation and prevented it from being effective.

From the Fallible Ideas Discord. Message link.

by Elliot Temple, Jan 2020

Context: ratnfuture came to the FI discord, said he's a fan who's trying to learn, and brought up playing Overwatch. I sent him my battle tag so he could add me to his friends list. Two weeks later he hadn't sent a friend request or responded, but had talked about other stuff including Overwatch.

curi: @ratnfuture why didn't you add me?

ratnfuture: I like solo play @curi

curi: so what?

internetrules: i read "ratnfuture: I like solo play @curi" and didnt think much of it, but then curi said "curi: so what?" and then i had ideas about ratnfuture's message. it was like curi's message was telling me: *hey, you can think about this.*

some thoughts i had were: why do you like solo play? maybe all the people u group with you dont like for some reason, curi could be better cuz of his philosophy ideas

ratnfuture: I'm interested in improvement through self criticism for the time being.

curi: your comments are non sequiturs

ratnfuture: What I said doesn't follow from what internetrules said?

curi: are you ESL?

ratnfuture: Ya

curi: were you trying to answer internetrules? i thought you were responding to me.

ratnfuture: Ya I answered him

curi: I suggest you read the material in #low-error-rate and start talking there. this conversation is full of indicators you need it.

ratnfuture: Ok I'll read it again and then look at this convo

Alisa: You wrote "Ok" as if you were agreeing with curi's suggestion, but curi suggested something different than what you said.

curi suggested to read the material in #low-error-rate and then start talking there. Nothing about looking at this convo again.

ratnfuture: That was my initiative

I am not sure if would work

Alisa: You presented something that was not curi's suggestion as if it were curi's suggestion.

If I say, "Hey Rat, I suggest you get a haircut" and you say "OK, I'll go to the store again and buy some bread"... there's something missing there.

ratnfuture: @Alisa yes I understand. I should have made the distinction in agreement with curi and my initiative

Alisa: It's still unclear to me what exactly you agree with. Do you intend to start talking in #low-error-rate? Or just to read the material there? Or something else?

ratnfuture: I read it yesterday, so I might be not remember it well now. Low-error-rate is about overreaching, so I wanted to read that again and maybe be able to see where I made the mistake.

curi: You made > 10 mistakes, not "the mistake".

ratnfuture: Ok.

This is the last message in the conversation.

Discussion comments: There were a lot of errors. Most of the errors were important. A few didn't really matter but most were content errors or got in the way of communication. The best thing to do is try to fix all the errors, not try to take a shortcut by ignoring some errors you think aren't important. If you can do it all right, and you no longer have an overreaching problem, then maybe you'd be in a position to consider taking some shortcuts that you understand well.

Conclusion: ratnfuture, like most people, is a heavy overreacher. This prevents productive discussion and most learning (which involves self-discussion – thinking in language). The solution begins with caring about errors like these, understanding one's situation, and working to change with small steps and practice.

Error: This reply is unclear about what ratnfuture wants to happen next or why.

Error: This seems to indicate agreement with having made over 10 mistakes but I don't think ratnfuture knows what they are, so he shouldn't reach a conclusion about that yet.

Error: This seems to indicate agreement with having made lots of mistakes, but then ratnfuture does nothing to deal with those mistakes.

I was being conservative because I hadn't counted. It was over 20.

Error: ratnfuture seems to think he only made one mistake, contrary to reality and contrary to my prior comment that the conversation was "full of indicators" (that's not one).

Error: The channel is "#low-error-rate" not "Low-error-rate". The hashtag is what indicates a channel name so it's important for being understood. ratnfuture also changed the capitalization.

Error: Why would reading about overreaching theory grant ratnfuture the skills to find his conversational errors? He needs to practice and build up his skills, as the material explains, not read an essay and suddenly be clever. His plan is contrary to the material he's apparently already read.

Error: He already read that material, then made these errors. Why would rereading (emphasis on the "re") it make a big difference for problems that the first reading didn't work on?

Error: It's ambiguous in what sense he "read" the material. Did he read the links included in it? Also his concept of reading it apparently didn't involve coming up with any questions or trying to start doing anything it said.

Error: This message indicates agreement with me, but I didn't say to reread it.

Error: I didn't say to look at this conversation, so that isn't agreeing with my suggestion. For more explanation, see Alisa's explanation of this coming up in the conversation.

Notice how the conversation hasn't gotten anywhere. I'm giving up because he's so hard to talk with.

Error: This doesn't directly answer the question. I asked what he was *trying* to do, but he answered what he *did*. This introduces an extra claim (that his message answered internetrule's question) which is false. He introduced this false additional claim while claiming to be agreeing with what I said, so he's putting words in my mouth. He makes it sound like I agree with what he's saying, but I don't.

Error: Grammar parallelism problem. I think you answer "Did you answer him?" with "I answered him" and answer "Were you answering him?" with "I was answering him."

curi: you aren't sure if *what* would work?

Error: Missing "it" after "if".

Error: It's unclear what the missing "it" refers to.

Error: ratnfuture ignored this message. Why wouldn't he clarify his message? If he wanted to communicate something, then on finding out he failed to communicate it he should fix the problem. If he didn't want to communicate, he shouldn't have spoken. Also silence is problematically ambiguous (and also that's been explained in FI material he's seen or could have seen).

Error: Attempting to early-concede. He doesn't understand enough and should be trying to learn instead of trying to shut down the opportunity to learn.

Error: I think "in" is an error that should be "between".

Note: I thought he was replying to me, though it's a non sequitur anyway because of the jump from the issue of solo play to solo (self) criticism.

Error: I think he could caught on that I thought he was talking to me, not ignoring what I said, when I followed up. (His message makes about as much sense as a reply to me as it does as a reply to internetrules.) My first reaction was wondering why he was talking about internetrules at all in the middle of my conversation with him. I had to guess what was going on.

Error: Ambiguous which question this is a reply to.

Error: Later we find out it was a reply to internetrules. So ratnfuture intentionally ignored curi's direct question. That's the third indicator of disinterest to someone he has communicated he wants help from. First indicator of disinterest was intentionally ignoring the battle tag message, second was not wanting to play Overwatch with curi, and third is intentionally ignoring curi's question here.

Error: This isn't a reason for solo play, it's a reason for solo criticism. He's apparently falsely assuming that group play means group criticism.

Error: ratnfuture is hiding his reasons which makes discussion hard. He's not trying to share useful information nor is he telling us he doesn't want to discuss. Instead he's acting like it's a normal conversation where people share information, but he's hiding the info at the same time. Why doesn't he want external criticism? When, or under what conditions, might that change?

Likely Error: ratnfuture suggests the situation might change after time passes. While we don't know what's going on, I'm guessing it might change if/when something changes, not when a certain amount of time passes. Time isn't the issue.

Error: He's ignoring the FI material that explains the importance of external criticism. I'm guessing he's read enough to have seen that. So he's doing something bad (limiting criticism, thus limiting learning) *and* has probably read things explaining it's bad which he's apparently ignoring.

Error: He seems to mean learning *only* through self-criticism, but he didn't say that.

Error: Missing hyphen in self-criticism.

Error: Grammar problem. I think you answer "Are you ESL?" with "I thought you were responding to me." and answer "Were you trying to answer internetrules?" with "I thought you were responding to me." Also, "ESL" is a bad question because it's a bad question in general, and a counter-productive way to treat someone you're a fan of and allegedly want to learn from. Why not express any kind of appreciation even though you decline something, or at least not leave the person hanging with no idea what's going on? If the reason for not expressing appreciation is he doesn't appreciate it, that doesn't make sense in the fan context.

Clarification: After seeing this tree, ratnfuture said he didn't understand that he'd been sent a battle tag which he could add to his friends list. He had made up two separate fantasies which he didn't communicate about. First, on the basis of not knowing much about Discord, he imagined the battle tag was a special Discord invitation (I think for switching discussion channels, but he wasn't clear). Second, he made up that when I asked why he didn't add me, I had expected him to find me with a name search. He said these errors may have been due to already being biased to play solo.

Error: This doesn't answer the question. ratnfuture seems to have made an unstated, false assumption: The only reason to friend someone is for group play. So he's saying he doesn't want to do the one reason to friend someone. But there are other reasons, e.g. for communication purposes, to view profile to facilitate the conversation (specifically conversations ratnfuture had been trying to have: he'd been talking about his OW games and opinions), and also to avoid asking for someone's battle tag a second time later.

Error: Overwatch is a 6v6 game. He doesn't play solo. He plays with five teammates. Whether curi is one of those teammates or not, he isn't playing solo.