Why Won’t Anyone Listen to Us?

Josh Bressers
Security Strategist
Red Hat Inc.
@joshbressers
Why should you listen to me?

- 20 years of technical security work
- Now: Red Hat Platform Business Unit
- Bridge the gap between engineering and everyone else
- I talk to humans
  - Every
    - Single
    - Day
Why Doesn’t Anyone Listen To Us?
Why doesn’t anyone listen to us?

Because they don’t trust us
Why don’t they trust us?

Because we don’t talk to them
I talk to these idiots all the time!

This is why you need this talk
Dealing with Humans

- Squishy incoherent creatures
- Not logical
- Normal people are the antithesis of security people
First, The Why?
Human 101

- People are the problem
- 3 “brains”
  - Lizard brain
  - Monkey brain
  - Human brain
Lizard Brain

- Survival instinct
- Fight or flight
Lizard Brain Triggers

- “Why did you click on that link?”
- “Do you have any clue how bad this code is?”
- “Do you know why I’m here?”
Lizard Brain Danger

If you see yourself here, you’ve already lost
Monkey Brain

- Relationships
- Unknown interactions
- Noticing “details”
- Uncanny valley
Monkey Brain

http://www.flickr.com/people/72645106@N00
Monkey Brain

http://www.flickr.com/people/72645106@N00
Monkey Brain Triggers

- Genuine interest
- Trust
You can recover by listening
Thoughtful rational human you can converse with

We rarely get here
Human Brain Triggers

- Bidirectional conversation
- Mutual respect
- Questions
All three work together
Putting it all together

- Travel through the brains
- Start at the lizard brain
- Past the monkey brain
- Then you get a rational human
Building relationships is a long term investment
Step 1: Be nice

- Get past the lizard brain
- Don’t engage fight or flight
- Don’t be a pushover
- Friends gets to skip step 1
Step 1: Tips

- Polite greetings
- Ice breakers
  - Have some good stories to tell
- Small talk
  - What do you have in common?
- We don’t do any of these things
Step 2: No More Monkeys

- Act sincere
- Their brain will know if you’re not sincere
Step 2: Tips

- Sit down
- Watch your hands
- Phone away
- Personal space
- Don’t act creepy
Step 3: The Human Element

- Wait for questions
- Simple instructions
Step 3: Tips

- What’s the end goal?
- Wait for questions
- Listen
- Listen
- Listen
- Listen
Step 4: The Whole Person

Everyone is different, don’t treat them all the same
Making this work for you

Right now
- Listen
- Observe

The next 3 months
- Build trust
- Show interest
- Practice!

The future
- Find your own way
- Teach what you learn
- Make it your journey
Remember

Learn to listen if you want to be heard
Questions?