

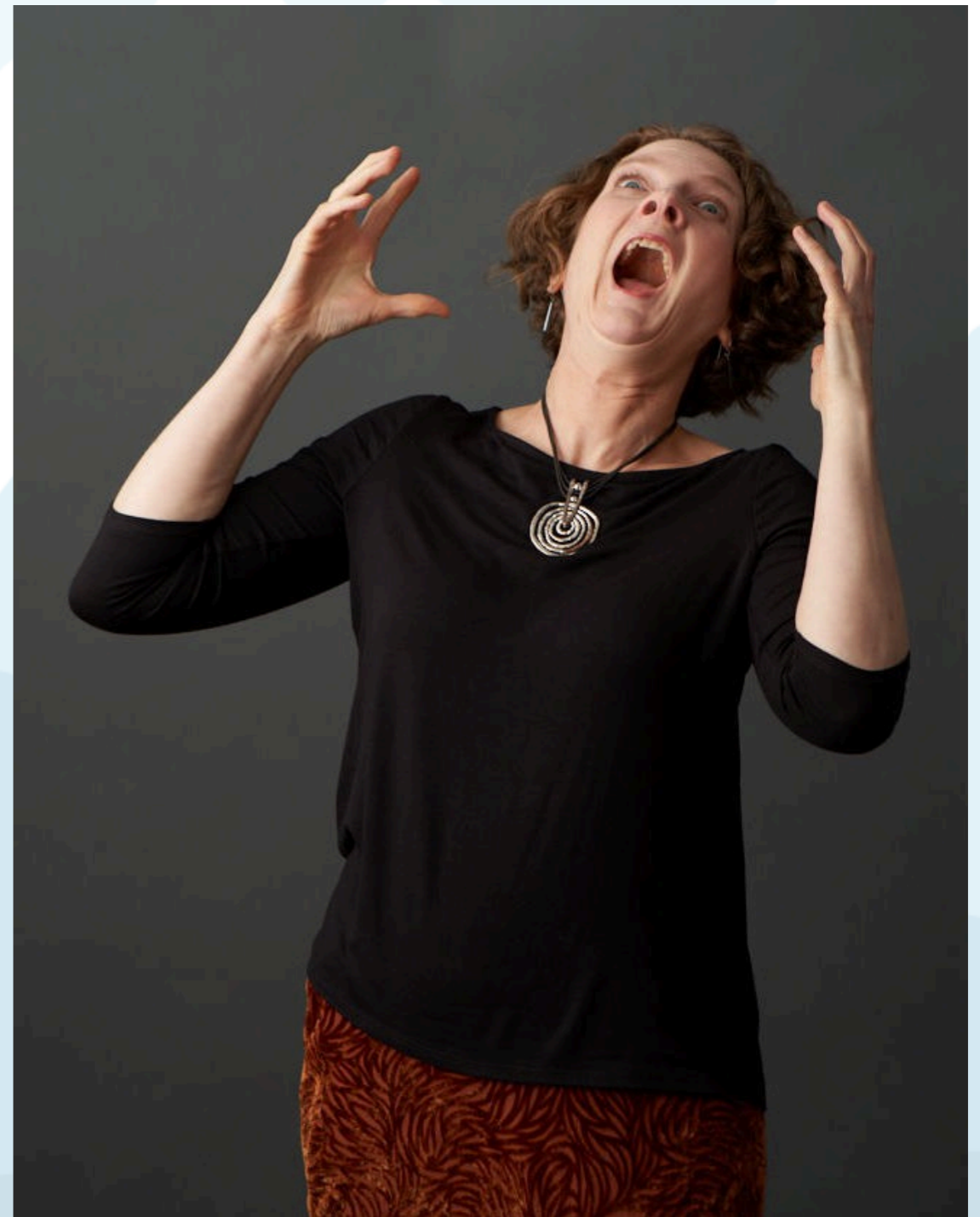


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**fighting your own demons:
how to deal with all your wordpress problems at once**

who is this person?

- WordPress front-end developer & generalist
- Part tech, part creative
- Clearly takes this stuff very seriously



learning outcomes

- Identify problems that can occur when working with WordPress sites
- Identify a strategy for troubleshooting each problem



**You've got a great website!
Everybody's gonna love it!**

BUT THEN...



< < < **DRAMA** > > >



possible demons

- Site down / 500 error / critical error
- Site doing weird things / code buggy
- Hacked or defaced site
- Slowness
- Disappointing traffic
- Unhappy client
- Frustrating colleague



what do we do first?

- Stay calm
- Retrace your steps
- Look for the root of your conflict
- THEN troubleshoot

staying calm

- Everything goes more smoothly when you're not freaking out, and that'll help the people around you not freak out too.
- It's not happening to you, it's just happening.
- Don't believe everything that you think.

retracing your steps

- Like looking for your keys
- When do you last know it was working?
- What has happened since?



understand the root of your conflict



breaking it down into smaller pieces

- Get specific
- Get details: errors, behaviour



change one thing at a time

- If you change too many things, you still won't know what the problem is
- ...and you might create more issues
- In a crisis, "Restore backup" counts as one thing

leave a breadcrumb trail

- If you change settings, take screenshots or notes so you can get back to how it was before.

Default operator
This setting determines the default operator for the search.

Default order
If you want to override this or use multi-layered ordering (eg. first order by relevance, but sort ties by post title), you can use the `orderby` query variable. See Help for more information.

Keyword matching
Whole words means Relevanssi only finds posts that include the whole search term.
Partial words also includes cases where the word in the index begins or ends with the search term (searching for 'ana' will match 'anaconda' or 'banana', but not 'banal'). See Help, if you want to make Relevanssi match also inside words.

Weights
All the weights in the table are multipliers. To increase the weight of an element, use a higher number. To make an element less significant, use a number lower than 1.

Element	Weight
Content	<input type="text" value="1"/>
Titles	<input type="text" value="5"/>
Comment text	<input type="text" value="0.75"/>
Tag weight	<input type="text" value="1"/>
Category weight	<input type="text" value="1"/>

Boost exact matches Give boost to exact matches.
If you enable this option, matches where the search query appears in title or content as a phrase will get a weight boost. To adjust the boost, you can use the `relevanssi_exact_match_bonus` filter hook. See Help for more details.

Admin search Use Relevanssi for admin searches.
If checked, Relevanssi will be used for searches in the admin interface. The page search doesn't use Relevanssi, because WordPress works like that.

Respect exclude_from_search Respect `exclude_from_search` for custom post types
If checked, Relevanssi won't display posts of custom post types that have 'exclude_from_search' set to true.

Throttle searches Throttle searches.
If this option is checked, Relevanssi will limit search results to at most 500 results per term. This will improve performance, but may cause some relevant documents to go unfound. See Help for more details.

code trouble: syntax or logic?

- Typos - that evil missing ;
- Inaccurate logic
- Do your variables have the values you think they do?
- Display everything! Use `var_dump()` and `echo()`

code trouble: thinking in pseudocode

- Say it out loud, or write it in English if you have to:

```
FUNCTION CleanTheFridge
  for EACH item in the fridge DO
    IF(the item is rotten) THEN
      put it in the compost
    ELSE
      put the item back in the fridge
      add 1 to AnythingLeft
    END
  END
END
IF (AnythingLeft > 0)
  Make Dinner
ELSE
  Order in Sushi
END
```




site crises

Site down! Site down!

- Are people actually in danger of dying?
- Didn't think so (but maybe your client thinks so)

Stay calm
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Understand root of conflict
THEN troubleshoot

technology culprits



Plugins



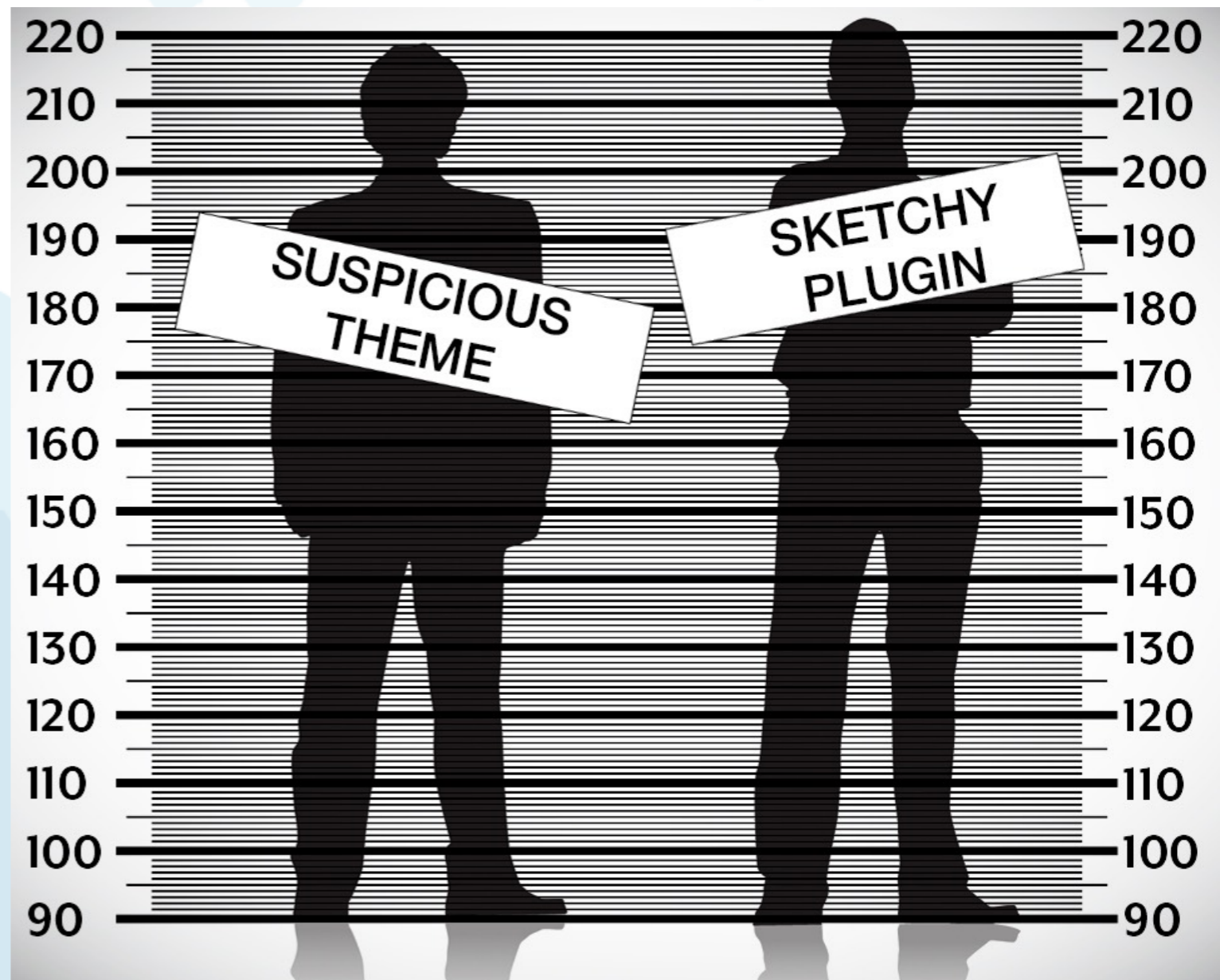
Server



Domain
name

eliminate suspects

- What can you rule out?
- Deactivating plugins/themes, commenting out sections of code
- Works on one page but not another? What is different about those pages?



what are plugin conflicts?

- A plugin trying to alter the same functionality as another plugin or current theme
- A plugin loading a different variation of the same script loaded in another plugin or current theme
- A plugin out of date with the latest WP, or not up to standards

Site buggy

- Essentially the same situation, but less alarming

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slow site

- Sometimes it's just a temporary issue at your host, and if you ignore it it will go away.
- Could be too much traffic - investigate hosting
- Could be plugin or theme - deactivate and test

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disappointing traffic



- You need to be proactive
- SEO is a moving target
- Where are you marketing?

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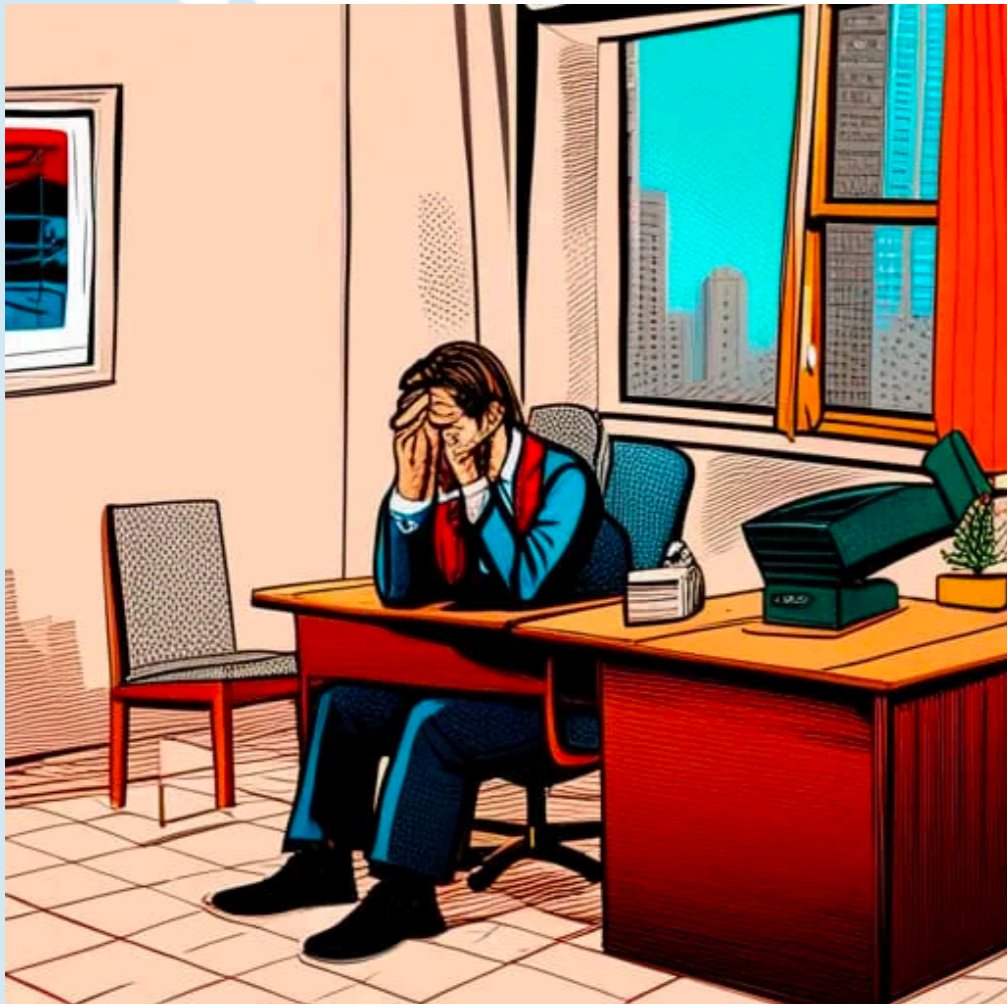


people problems

what were those steps?

- Stay calm
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unhappy client



- ...Because site is down/broken?
- ...Because of your communication time/style?
- Are you clear on what you're providing?
- Did you overpromise and underdeliver?

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frustrating employee or contractor



- Have you been moving the goalposts?
- Are you clear on what you're asking for?
- Are you listening to what they have to say?
- Are you giving them space to work?

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set expectations

- Let the person know when they can expect to hear from you.
- What's your communication style?
- Leave wiggle room on time estimates.
- Be realistic about what you can and can't do.

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acknowledge and reflect

- Drop the defences and address the root of the matter
- “I’m hearing that you’re really worried about slow loading time.”
- “Are you getting frustrated that the development site isn’t looking exactly like the designs?”

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expressing your concerns

- Take a collaborative tone
- How will this impact the project or the budget?
- Your emotional state may or may not matter to them



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make suggestions

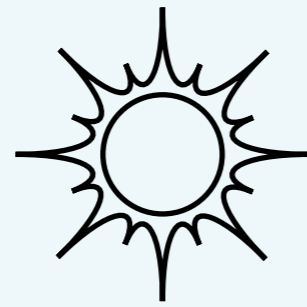
- What steps can you take towards change?
- Request ≠ ultimatum
- “Can we agree on a time for a weekly meeting to check in on the site’s progress?”

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more resources

- Nonviolent Communication - Marshall Rosenberg
- Say What You Mean - Oren Jay Sofer
- <https://tinyurl.com/nvcwp>

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outside in the sun

Questions??

Feel free to reach out to me:

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Sign up on my website
to learn more about
WP troubleshooting!