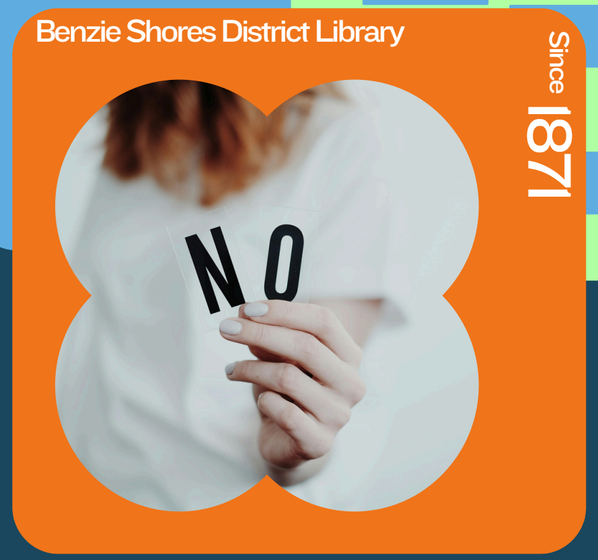

MLA 2026
ANNUAL CONFERENCE
BEYOND BUZZWORDS:
AN ENDURING PUBLIC GOOD
VIBE CREDIT UNION
SHOWPLACE
October 28–30 | Novi

BOUNDARY BUILDING WITH PATRONS



2026

Presented By
Kaitlin Matesich, MI
Interim Director
Benzie Shores District Library
She/Her

Kmate@BSDLibrary.org

GREY AREA

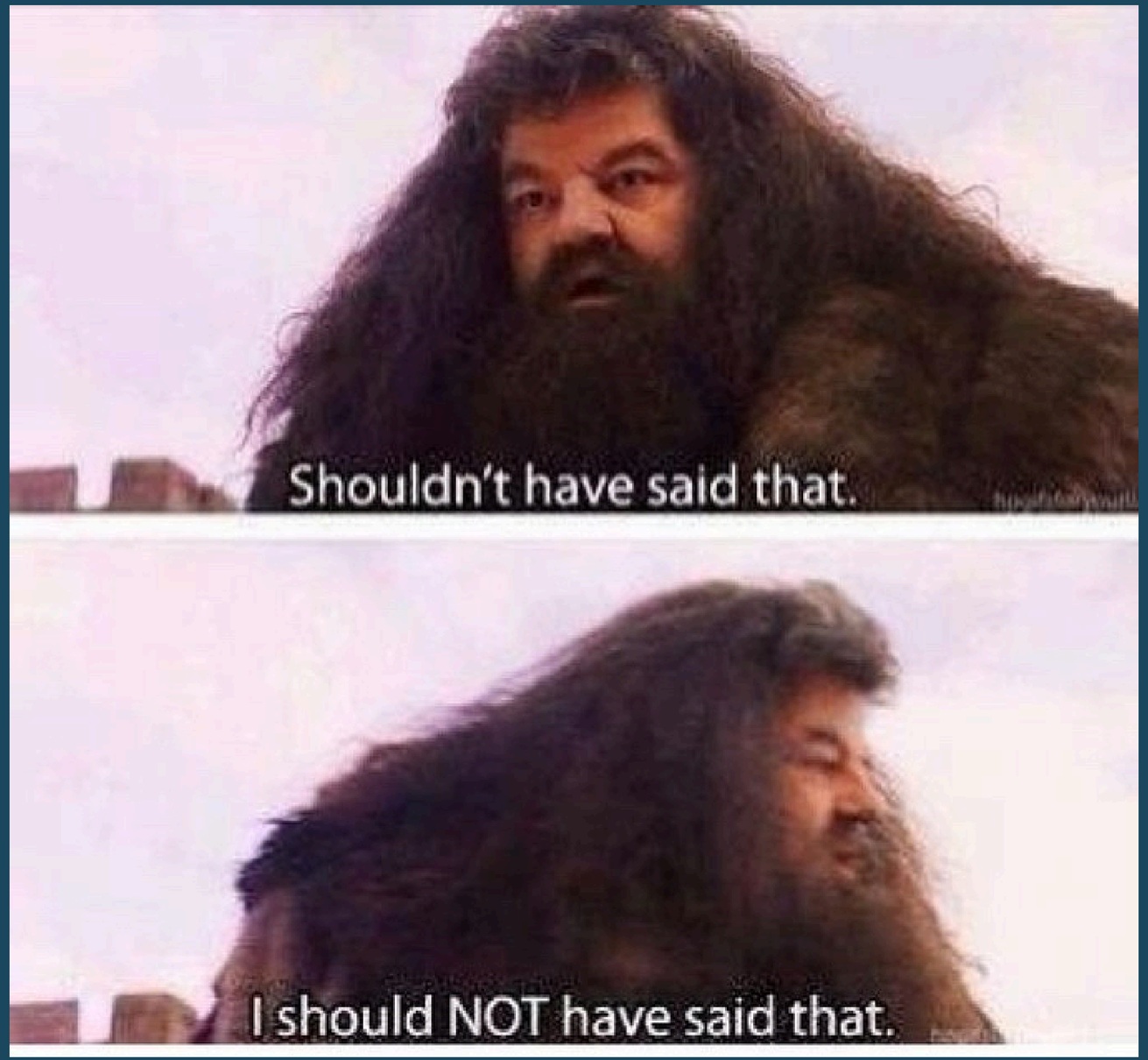


SPEAK UP
SPEAK OUT
INVOLVE
AUTHORITIES

Don’t be an open book.

(Even in the Library)




Shouldn't have said that.
I should NOT have said that.





Provide resources, don’t be the resource.

We cannot solve the problems outside of our scope.

We are entitled to a private life outside of work.

WHY?

“Yes, and...” Service and Reference Conditioning

Lonliness Epidemic

Evolving Social Expectations



Physical Boundaries
Property Boundaries
Sexual Boundaries

Emotional-Relational Boundaries
Intellectual Boundaries
Spiritual Boundaries
Time Boundaries

Permeable Boundaries
Rigid Boundaries
Flexible Boundaries

Key Concepts

External Boundary
Internal Boundary

We are social beings

socialized to help other people

Society favors the asker and expects compliance

Getting the spot light turned on you makes it harder to say no

Women are also at greater risk to feel obligated, guilty and stressed about saying no

The acquaintance trap

The hardest group to say no to are acquaintances



Patrick, V. (2023). T*he power of saying no: The New Science of How to Say No That Puts You in Charge of Your Life*. Sourcebooks.

Your boundary buster might...



1. Have medical or emotional health issues
2. Be autistic, making traditional conversation cues difficult to suss out
3. Be neurodiverse in other ways and have a hard time attending to relational, non-verbal signals and implicit messages
4. Have mental health issues that make them very internally focused
5. Feel so inferior they don't see how their behavior impacts you
6. Be an ingrained behavioral compulsion that they use as a means of feeling more in control of the world
7. Be an abuse groomer in an attempt to get you under their emotional control

Acn, F. G. H. P. L. A. (2020). Unfuck your boundaries: Build Better Relationships through Consent, Communication, and Expressing Your Needs. Microcosm Publishing.

Constructing a Cut-off

Do not over explain

Count to 6 before responding

Public Now Script

Disrupter

Yikes

Ope

Oh!

Hey

Hold up

Wow

Statement

I do not like that

That is not okay

I'm not going to answer a question on that

Transition

Thanks

Excuse me

Speaking of that...

Is there anything else

Orange, K. (2024). Say the Thing: Boundary-Setting Scripts & Phrases to Communicate Directly & Speak Up with Kindness. Hay House, Inc.

Fixing a Foundation

Private Later Script

Remind

The last time we spoke

A couple weeks ago

I've mentioned before

Acknowledge

I let it go then but...

I'm telling you now

I was kind of in shock at the moment but

I didn't know what to say at the time but

Express

I felt uncomfortable

that was stressful for me

I didn't appreciate ...

Ask

Would you...

Can you....

Will you explain...

Moving forward, please don't...

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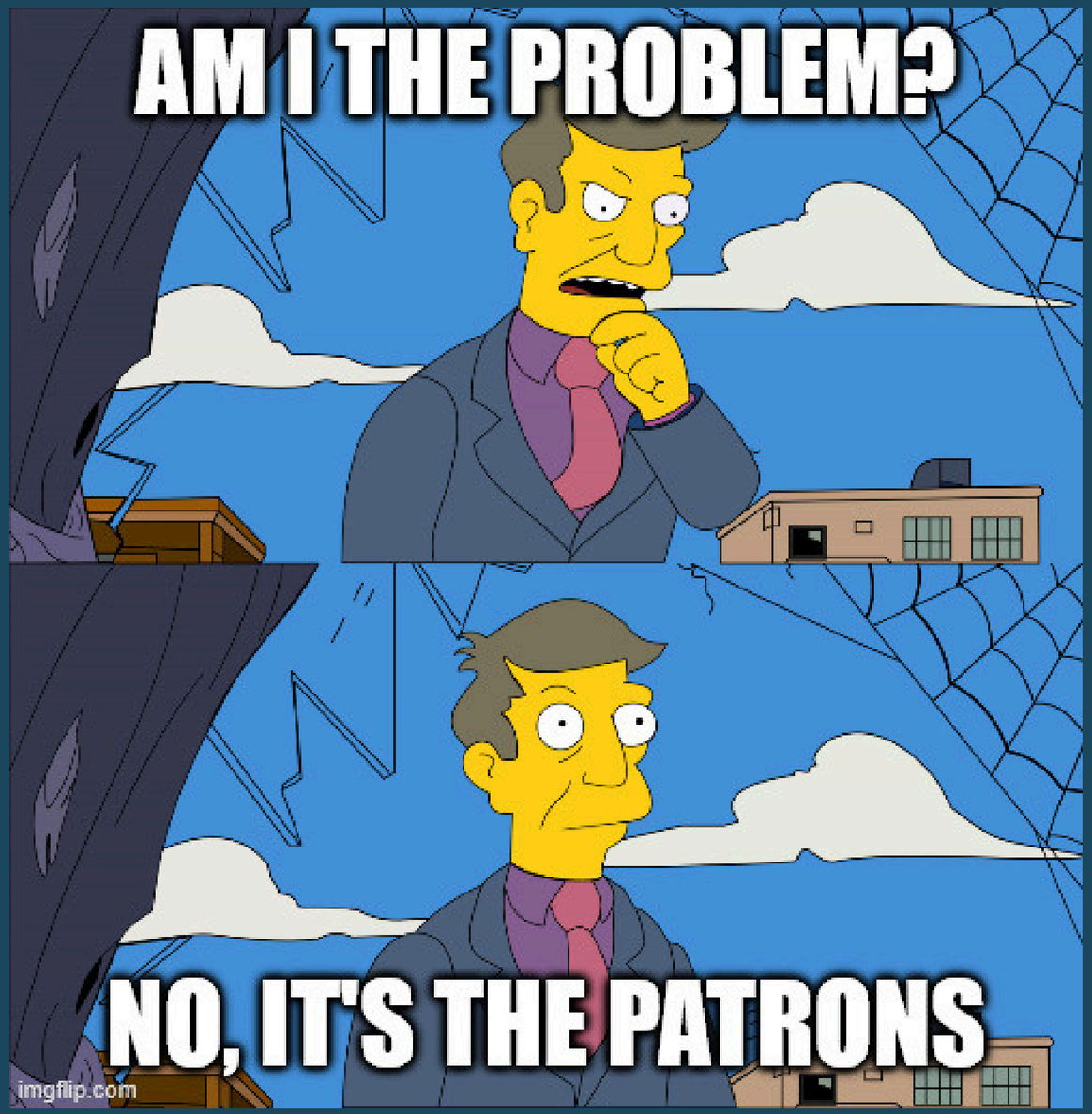
Stock No's

- No
- I'm sorry but no
- That's not something you ask your librarian
- I don't answer personal questions on the clock
- No can do, buckaroo
- I do not have time right now*
- Now isn't a good time for me*
- That's not going to happen
- I am not comfortable sharing that
- I find that objectionable
- I just don't know what to tell you
- This is not something I can help you with
- I am sorry you are dealing with this, can I connect you with some resources

No is a complete sentence

- Rude
- That is unacceptable for the library
- {Don't answer}
- I need you to stop
- What an unusual, and personal question
- Is it just me, or is this becoming a pattern
- I appreciate you sharing, but I have to get back to work
- I just went to a conference, and we've been letting things slide too much
- Ah, I can't chat but is there anything else I can help you with today
- I need some time to think about that
- I **don't** think so! *

Knight, S. (2019). **F*ck No!: How to Stop Saying Yes When You Can't, You Shouldn't, or You Just Don't Want To**. Voracious.


AM I THE PROBLEM?
NO, IT'S THE PATRONS
imgflip.com

HIGH RISK TRAITS

Accommodating Demenor

Enthusiastic

Overacheiver

People Pleaser

Over Explainer

Empathetic

Friendly and Inviting Expression

Conflict Avoidant

Sociable

Stress

New Job/Role

Push-over

Assumes the Best

Oblivious

Tired

Quick to Jump in

Sit with Discomfort

It is unpleasant, and you will encounter people
who do not respond well to boundaries.



If they get frustrated or offended, let them,
and start looking for the next person who needs your help

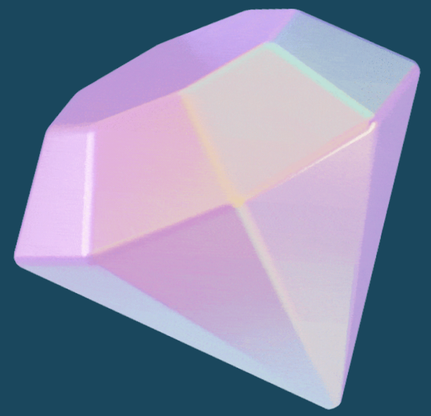
BOUNDARY AUDIT

Find your boundary line

Topic or Boundary

Default Answer:

Public Answer:



Two Responses

-
-

Where do you live?

Default Answer:

1313 Mockingbird Lane

Public Answer:

I live in town.

Two Responses

- **Feels like I live at the library.**
- **Why do you ask?**

Created with inspiration from Lpc-S, A. a. F. G. H., & Harper, F. G., PhD. (2020). Unfuck Your Boundaries Workbook: Build Better Relationships Through Consent, Communication, and Expressing Your Needs. 5-Minute Therapy.

AND IF YOU NEEDED ME TO TELL YOU THIS

(I am glad I told you this)

Do not share:

- Your SSN
- Your Personal Phone Number
- Home Address

Do not give:

- Rides
- Money
- Gifts
- Personal Materials

Do not go:

- To a secondary location
- To patron's birthday parties
- To patron's weddings
- Inside patron's homes

KEEP LEARNING

- Social Workers & Client Boundaries
- Mental Health Professional & Client Boundaries
- Boundary Based Self-Help
- Conversation and Communication Self-Help
- Refusal Skills
- Elicitation Techniques (Espionage)

- Keep Rehearsing
- Look at your Behaviors
- Being Clear is Being Kind
- Let it Go
- Pick up the Baton

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CONTACT

Kaitlin Matesich

Interim Director

Benzie Shores District Library

Kmate@BSDLibrary.org

