

# Setting Boundaries with Library Patrons: The Rules

## **Rule 1 - It's *Not* Personal**

- The opposite of “personal” is not “impersonal.” It’s “professional.”
- What makes it personal? *Focusing on getting people to “agree” with you.*
- What is your goal? *Outstanding customer service.*

## **Rule 1A - It Takes More Energy to Be Professional (but It's Worth It)**

- Always choose to be:
  - Empathetic over apathetic
  - Attentive over indifferent
  - Warm over cold
  - Respectful over condescending
  - Engaged over robotic
  - Flexible over rigid
  - Responsive over obtuse

## **Rule 2 – Use Triangulation, Not Polarity**

- You and the patron are controlled by the same boundaries
  - Offering choices gives you power—triangulation
  - Giving ultimatums makes you weak—polarity

## **Rule 3 - Focus on Immediate Behaviors As You Establish Boundaries**

- Don't be distracted by plot before addressing behavioral problems

## **Rule 4 - Restrictions Should Be Mechanical (Positives Are Personal)**

- Computer use policy
- Closing times
- Off-limit areas

## **Rule 5 - Know What You're Talking About**

- Only say what you mean
- Always mean what you say