

# Dealing With Angry Library Patron Behaviors



With Andrew Sanderbeck

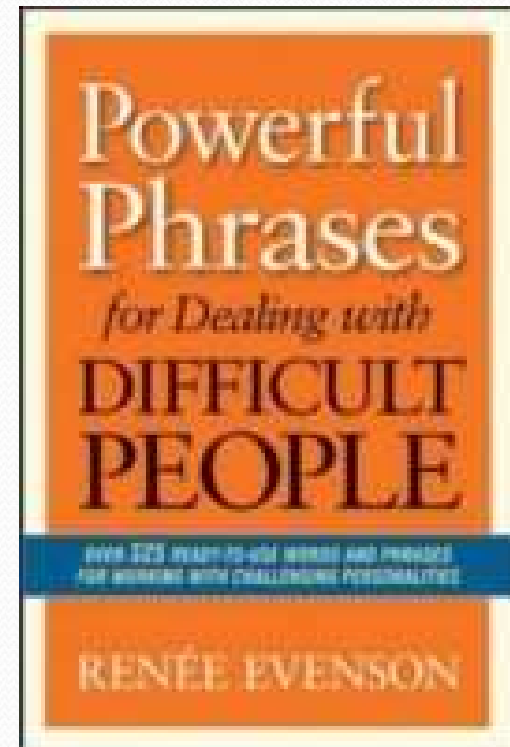
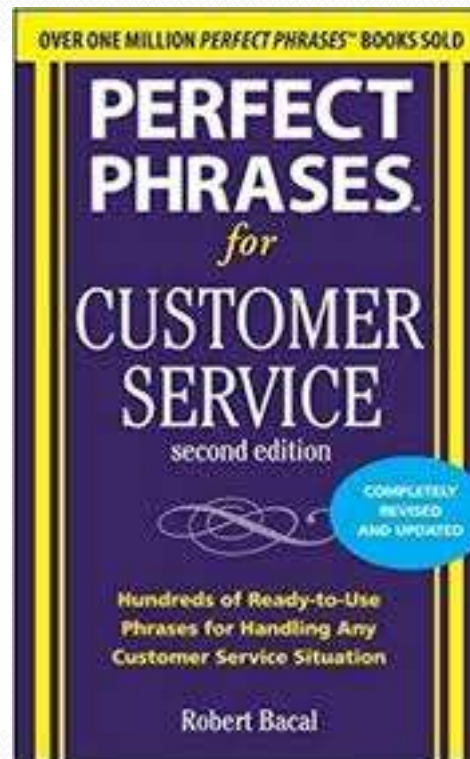
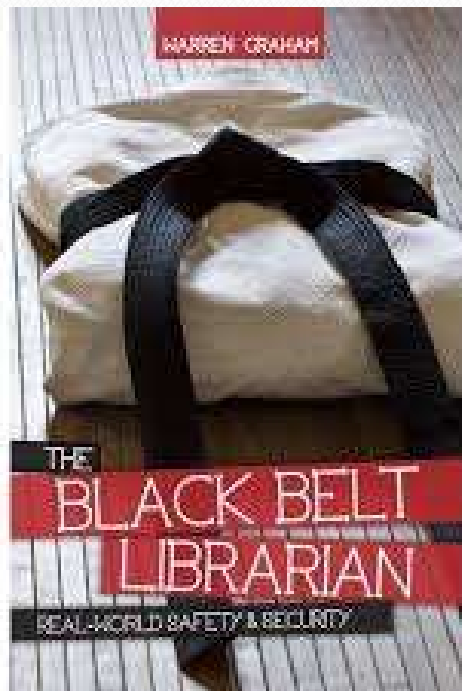
# Let's Talk About...

- Where You Get Stuck Dealing With Angry Patrons
- Emotion vs. Logic in Dealing with Your Patrons
- Using the  $E+R=O$  technique to reduce stress and improve your response to situations you can or cannot control
- 3 powerful techniques for not “*eating the angry patrons poison*” and not taking things personally
- Specific phrases to use with patrons that help keep emotions under control

I have a  
Secret



# Three Wonderful Resources



# Today's Quote

“The earlier in life that you know your currency, the better and easier life will be for you.” – **Amy Poehler**





**\*BIG DISCLAIMER\*** Nothing in communicating with human beings is certain because every person is different and their moods change from day to day or even minute by minute.

# The Nature of Angry Customers

Angry patrons are unhappy. They range in emotional state from mildly disappointed to completely outraged and they present themselves from calm to abusive. Sometimes their behavior is outrageously bad.



# The Nature of Angry Customers

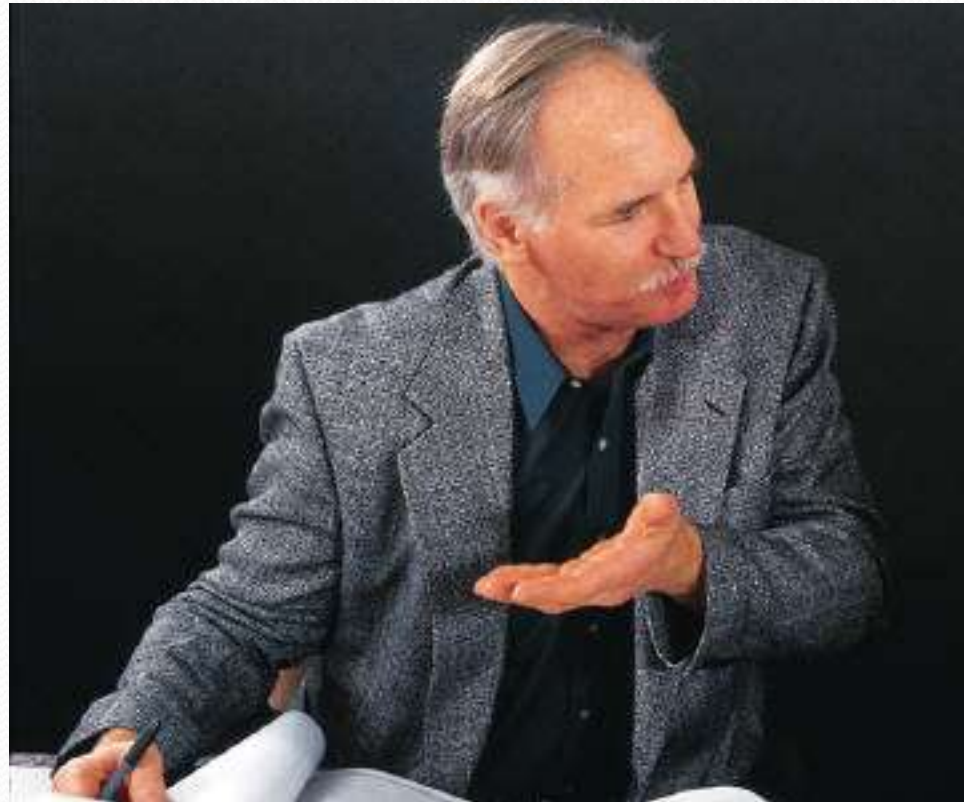
Sometimes they have a reason for being unhappy – their expectation of a product or service the library offers wasn't met or someone didn't make good on a promise.





# Angry Patron Fact

An angry patron is most likely not angry with you



# Anger is a Form of Suffering...





Hurt people  
hurt people.

magic pill





# Customer Service is Situational

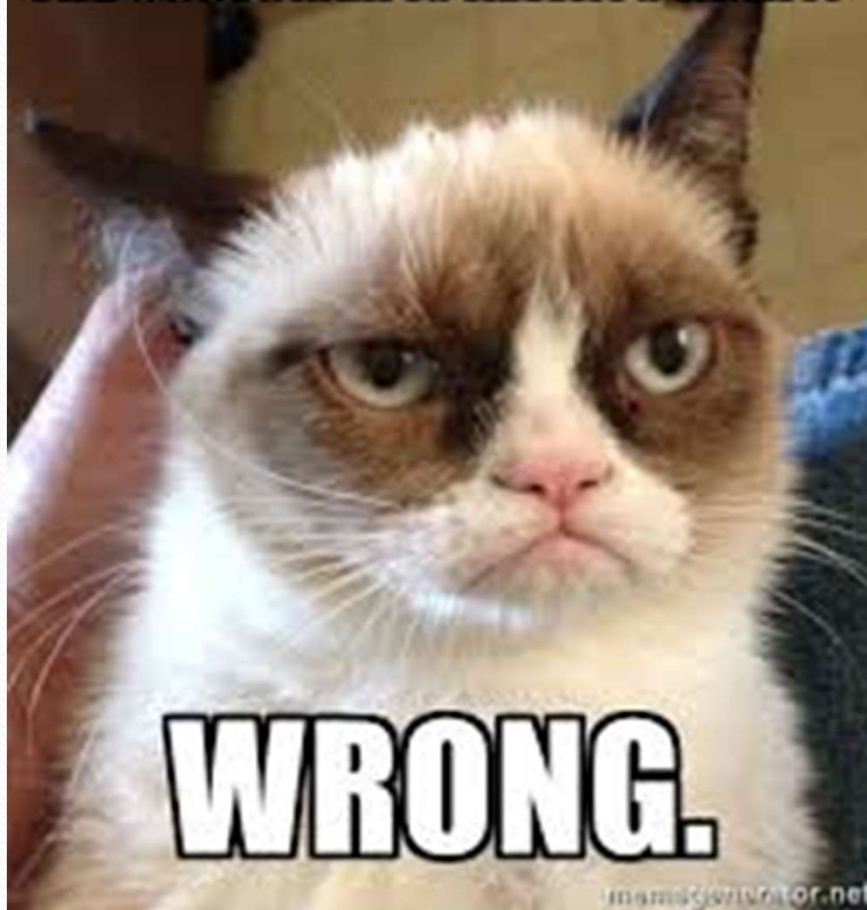


ALWAYS TRUST  
YOUR GUT.  
IT KNOWS WHAT  
YOUR HEAD  
HASN'T  
FIGURED  
OUT YET.



the customer  
is always  
**right**, right?

**THE CUSTOMER IS ALWAYS RIGHT?**



**WRONG.**

mamagenerator.net



Is this a patron worth keeping?



# Sometimes We Get Stuck...



Where  
are you  
STUCK?



# Tips for Deescalating an Angry Patron's Behavior



# Transfer the Patron



# When Is It Appropriate to Transfer the Patron?

- When the patron asks for a supervisor
- When you can't help them
- When a “second voice” is needed
- When the patron wants something you're not authorized to give them

# Tips for Deescalating an Angry Patron's Behavior



**YOU SUCK THIS MUCH!**

# Threatening Patrons

- Threats can be an attempt to intimidate you.
- Keep calm and keep your responses focused on the issue at hand.







# How Are Threatening Patrons Handled in Your Library?

- Ignored
- Warning to Stop the Behavior
- Suspension of Library Privileges
- Banned from the Library

# Important to Remember

Most Angry Patrons want to be heard

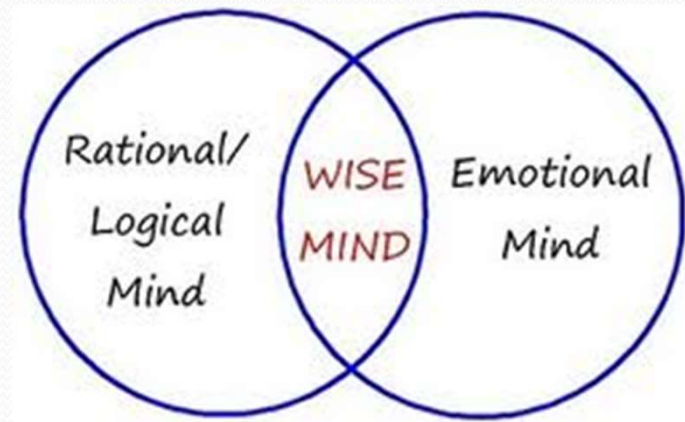
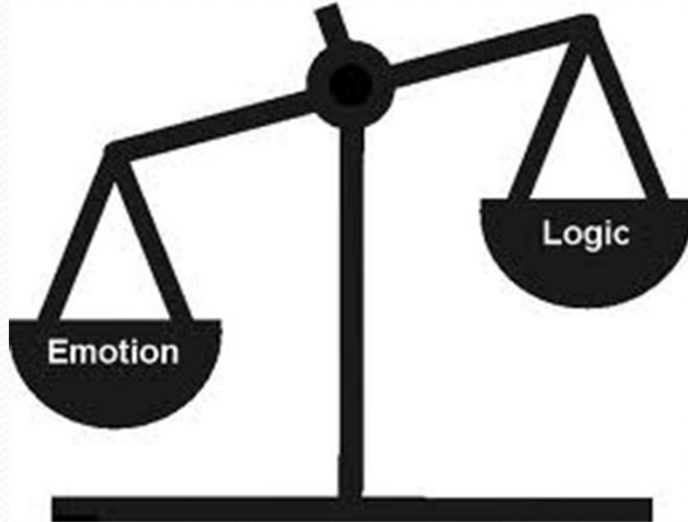
Most Angry Patrons want to be acknowledged

Most Angry Patrons want to be understood

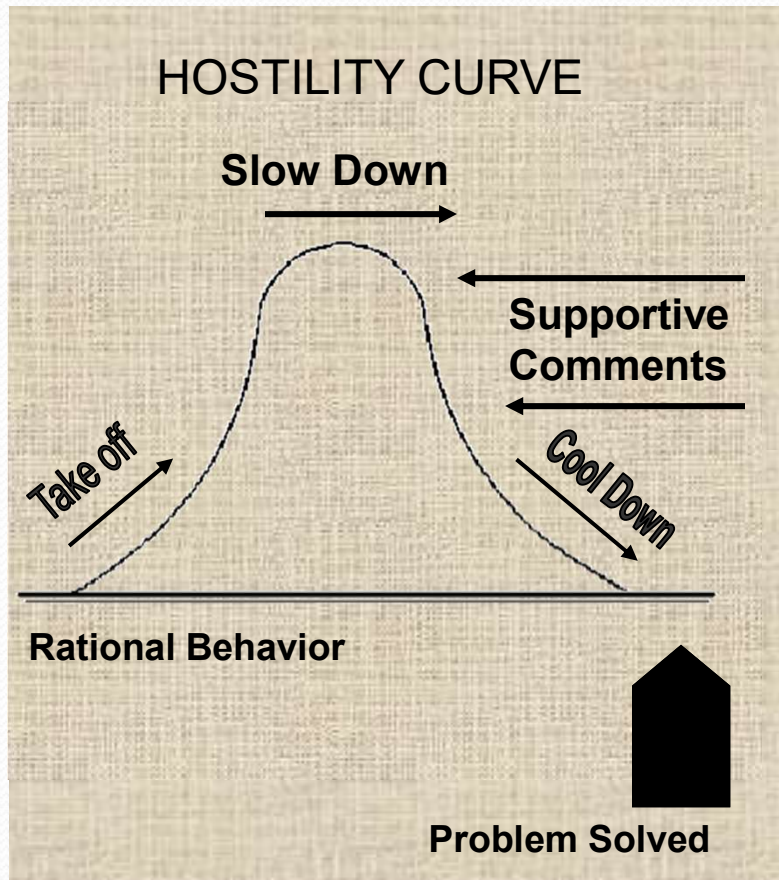


\* *What you focus on is what you get more of...don't encourage the patron to continue to be more difficult or angry. **Acknowledge Without Encouraging.***

# *Emotion vs. Logic*



# Hostile/Angry Patrons

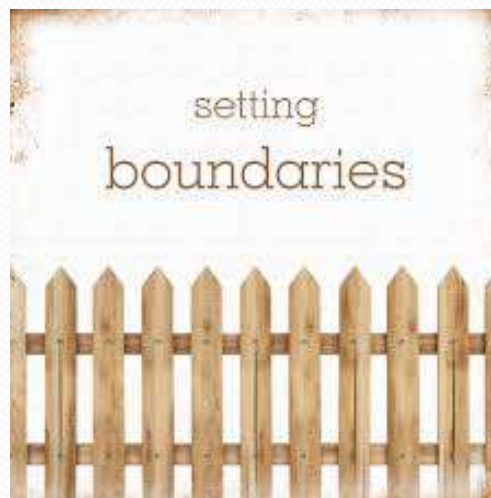


- ✓ Wait until their anger peaks and then begins to cool.
- ✓ Unless it doesn't. Some patrons vent their feelings and become angrier.

# If Their Behavior is Inappropriate

**You teach people how to treat you  
by what you allow, what you stop,  
and what you reinforce**

*qitations.com/29380*





## Specific phrases to use with patrons that help keep emotions under control

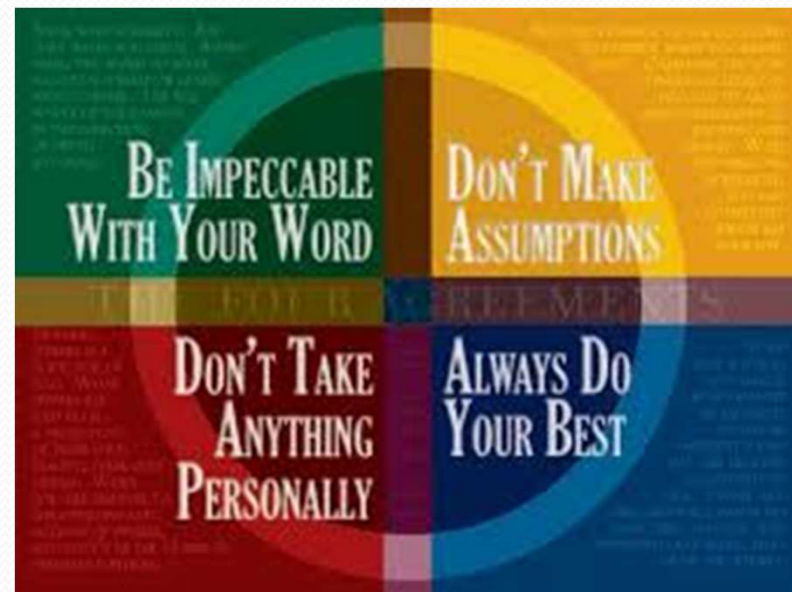
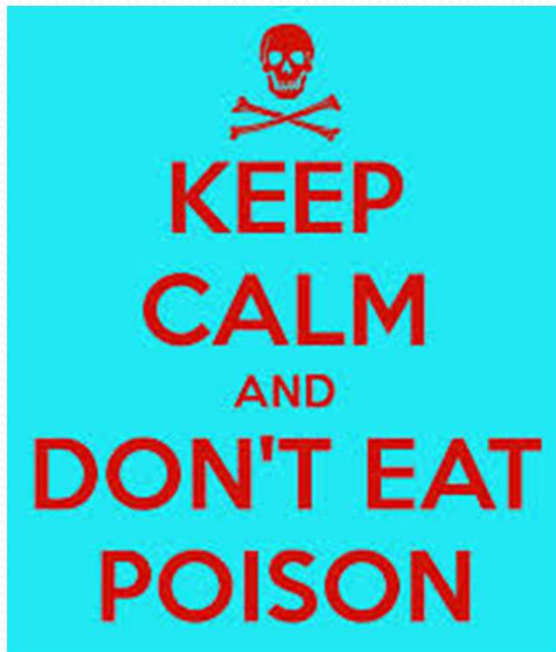
Our insurance policy prohibits you from doing that (*walking behind the desk/going into staff areas etc.*)

I'm uncomfortable when you are standing this close to me. Please step back.

For the safety of all of our patrons, we do not allow...

\* That behavior is not allowed in our library

# *Handling Angry Patrons Without Taking Things Personally*

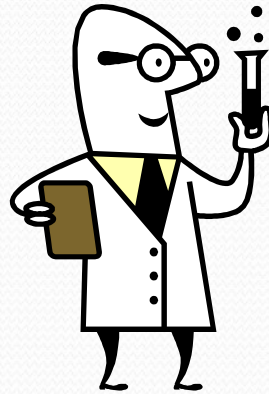


# Techniques to Help You Stay Calm and in Control





$$E + R = O$$



Event + Response = Outcome

# Other Techniques That Work!!

QTIP = Quit Taking It Personally

Ask Yourself:

What can I learn from this?



# When You Become Angry...

**Suffering**





**Thank You For Attending This Program!**



Reaching Across Illinois Library System

Questions? Workshop Information?  
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