

Re-examine: Quiet Quitting

Resource Sharing Document for the 10/24/2022 CARLI Instruction Committee Virtual Discussion. 94 registered from 48 different CARLI members plus CARLI staff. At highest point, 63 logged in for the event on Zoom.

*Please feel free to **add suggested resources** from your own research either about Quiet Quitting or related topics! This is a crowdsourced list that we'll reference during the discussion.*

Audio

- 10/4/2022, [Quiet Quitting](#), Cubicle Confidential, Apple Podcasts. [NO transcript available]
- 9/27/2022, [Why Are People "Quiet Quitting" Their Jobs?](#), The Takeaway, WNYC Studios [Transcript available]
- 9/21/2022, [Quiet Quitting Speaks Loudly About Bad Bosses](#), Radical Candor, Apple Podcasts. [NO transcript available]
- 9/13/2022, [Quiet Quitting](#), Lessons from a Quitter, Apple Podcasts. [NO transcript available]
- 9/9/22, [Quiet Quitting: A Loud Trend Overtaking Social Media](#), Consider This, NPR [Transcript available]
- 9/6/22, [Quiet Quitting is About Managers, Not Employees](#), The 90th Percentile: An Unconventional Leadership Podcast, Zenger Folkman [NO transcript available]
- 9/2/22, [Quiet Quitting](#), Quirky HR, Apple Podcasts. [NO transcript available]
- n.d., [Quiet Quitting Speaks Loudly About Bad Bosses](#), The Podcast: Radical Listening, Radical Candor [Closed captioning available in embedded player]
- 10/13/22, [Why Rest is an Act of Resistance](#), NPR [Transcript available]

Video

- 9/14/22, [Feel the urge to 'quiet quit'? Time to check in with your mental health, experts say](#), USA Today
- 9/1/22, [What is 'quiet quitting'? ...The Leader podcast](#), Evening Standard

Text

- 10/17/2022 [Let's Talk About Quiet Quitting: Why Work Drains Us and How to Build Better Lives](#) (ACRL Blog)
-
- 10/4/2022, [Quiet Quitting: An Investigative Report](#), Jackson County Library
- 9/29/22, [‘Acting Your Wage’ Is Detrimental To Long-Term Career Success](#), Forbes
- 9/9/22, [‘Quiet quitting is a new name for an old method of industrial action’](#), The Conversation [audio available]
- 9/3/22, [The Cure for Burnout is Not Self-Care](#), The Atlantic
- 5/1/22, [The Librarians Are Not Okay](#), Anne Helen Petersen–Culture Study
- 6/1/22, [Quitting Time](#), American Libraries Magazine
- 10/13/22, [The Nap Bishop Is Spreading the Good Word: Rest](#), NY Times

Event Questions

If you'd like your answers to be anonymous log out of your Google account or open this document in an Incognito browser.

Which definition resonated as you prepared for this discussion?

- [I believe quiet quitting can come from increased responsibility with lack of support]
- Quiet quitting is a re-defining of roles in the workplace and trying to re-establish what your work day looks like in a post pandemic era.
- Quiet quitting seems to be a shorthand for describing a situation in which an employee sets boundaries to maintain a work life balance.
- Quiet quitting as doing your job as written...
- Quiet quitting is not prioritizing work over life
- QQ being realistic about what work can be done with existing resources and fellow staff.
- The idea of burnout vs demoralization and how that impacts librarians for whom this is a vocation.
- I've always enjoyed quilting, and it's great to be able to quietly do it at work with nobody noticing

What does Quiet Quitting look / feel like in the library and instruction? And in your campus community (including students)?

- [I believe quiet quitting can come from increased responsibility with lack of support]
- At my institution we haven't had meaningful (as in, keeping up with inflation) pay increases in over a decade and our reference/instruction staff has been cut from 12 to 4 despite rising undergrad enrollment. We've finally started saying "no" to new projects and even cut traditional ones like most one-shots and almost all first year instruction. We've hit the point of "if you don't value us, we're going to do *exactly* what you pay us for."
- ^^ this quote - I feel like this embodies quiet quitting definitions in the library context...
- Low moral as a result of changes to our work.
- Students - less engaged / a little more overwhelmed so doing the minimum to get the grade and get the class finished – less immediate excitement
- Saying "no" to instruction when necessary due to librarian shortages and scheduling overload. Getting guilt bombed or shamed by colleagues if say "no"?
- Risk losing relationships with faculty and whole curricula if "say no".
- ^^ Or saying "not right now" when the requests are too last minute... [not quiet quitting but boundaries?]
- Seems like a lot of responses are with setting boundaries when it comes to going above and beyond - but what about quiet quitting in terms of feeling that you're not doing anything worthwhile or for not being valued (or even noticed) for doing the bare minimum. Or quiet quitting as a response to under appreciation.
- We asked so much of our student workers during the pandemic- to step up and do work that was previously the task of furloughed positions. Now that the positions have been filled, I've noticed they need ... I don't want to say extra supervision, but they won't do certain everyday tasks unless repeatedly asked. Totally don't blame them! They had to do so much beyond their immediate job descriptions.
- ^^This exactly, always appreciate our student workers for working extra hours as well
- Discussion summary outside of the doc...
 - Tired
 - Need more support
 - Concern with pay not matching workload from years of increases being too low
 - Short staffing but holding the boundaries can make staff feel demoralized

Have you ever had any personal experience with quiet quitting?

- Oh heck yes. In my case, it's also fueled by our new state-mandated time-reporting system. I started tracking how many hours a week i spent on work tasks and when the first two weeks turned up 70-ish hours, I've gotten very serious about policing what i do and how long it takes me to do it. I'm not slacking off, mind, I'm just stopping before I let work take over my life like i may have a couple of years ago. Could I finish this huge project by the end of the semester if I throw myself completely at it like I might have in

the past? Sure. Am I going to do that? Nope. Want me to add another responsibility? Maybe, but the big project's gonna slow down as a result.

- [Yes]
- Yes
- Yes - like with folks retiring in a year or 2.
- No - but I'm very bad at boundary setting when I want to help / provide services lol
- I haven't quiet quit, but have had colleagues that have QQ. Sometimes no one notices as the person has quietly made themselves less relevant, other times it is very noticeable and they get called out on their effort.
- I would say I have Quiet Quit, even though I was over-engaged at work and doing much more than my job description stated (I was a solo full time employee in my library during this time, so boundary setting was almost impossible). For me QQ was more an emotional disengagement after feeling demoralized at work, having low morale, and knowing that I could not sustain the amount of work I had with no help from my administration.
- After some personal trauma in my life, my concentration was destroyed, and I found myself quiet quitting without even doing it intentionally. I just "can't" anymore, many of the things I used to do before my trauma. I hope that my concentration returns at some point, but UGH and I'm so tired.
- Summary from chat...
 - More boundary setting (less quiet quitting)
 - Time + low staffing = new ways of problem solving (replacing consultations with instruction for a class or train-the-trainer for faculty)

What does it look or feel like in library instruction / what are the challenges when we can't say no?

- [Add your responses here!]
- With all the challenges regarding staff, it often feels like I just can't say no. Which leads to feeling overwhelmed; super stressed.
- In library instruction it is putting off sessions and being less accommodating with faculty. Not having the energy/ drive to want to do sessions.
- Challenges - tired / teaching the same class over and over means I might forget something by class 3
- Looks like not having the energy to make truly custom classes - mostly remixing (which is okay, but I feel like I used to do a lot more true customization based on syllabus / etc.)

What is the role of individuals to set personal boundaries?

- [Add your responses here!]
- Because of the status most of our librarians have, the individual is also solely responsible for policing their own boundaries and (as the shop union rep) I scream that they need to. That said, it's nearly impossible to do because the culture here (and I think

in libraries in general) is to do any and everything possible, only saying “no” as an absolute last resort.

- ^^this – the culture of the institution + the profession make personal boundaries difficult to set instead of easy or second-nature
- It feels a lot better setting personal boundaries when you feel supported by the staff around you to prioritize yourself and not feel guilty/putting additional pressure on others.
 - ^^same on the one above – all about the culture
- There is a partial role for the individual to set boundaries, but became harder as a result of working from home.
- I think it can include things like not putting your work email account on your personal phone, so that you cannot see work emails while at home.
- ^^ This! I avoided adding access to any work accounts to my personal laptop/ device as long as possible. It is important to have the conversation about setting boundaries with your co-workers and supervisor so they understand why it is necessary to do so.
- Stop calling it work/life balance. Life is a balance and work is a component. Stop giving it power to control your time.

What is the role of administration to create healthy boundaries?

- Administration needs to understand when libraries are short staffed, and some projects can't be completed due to helping students and staff. – Yes!
- Administration should try to leave employees alone after hours and make an effort to drive this point to their immediate reports.
- Setting healthy boundaries IS the administration's role.
- Expectations set should be mutual agreement. Negotiate with your administrator.
- Administration is clueless...or they don't really care
- Administration should also listen to experienced staff - who frequently know how situations have been handled in the past - and actually use their suggestions.
- Don't just blame administration - is efficiency asking you to do something a different way? Ask why and have your thoughts documented.
- Helping employees to thrive, rather than be “efficient”. I have seen a lot of emphasis on “efficiency” as the cure for under-staffing, but all that seems to mean is doing more work without adding more employees. Focusing on giving employees space to thrive is more important, I think.
- Administration might be clueless or it might just be like the business management class: wring every last drop of blood out of the staff and if the staff flees, replace them. If they even want the appearance of caring, they need to support staff setting boundaries or setting healthy ones for staff.
 - ^^ Admin holds so much power and in our social system of needing jobs for healthcare / general wellbeing, its easy to feel like you have to play by their rules
- And to keep these boundaries consistent! A mutually agreed upon consistency. Communicate the boundaries and stick to them.
- There is an opportunity to use the pandemic as a set of data points (or at least “anecdata”). The situation exposed many places where staff and services were

over-extended beyond what was sustainable. These data points could be used to identify and advocate for more support and to discuss the vision of what success looks like with all levels. Re-establish new expectations for what's needed.

What is the role of the profession to support a healthy culture in librarianship?

- [Add your responses here!]
- Advocating for ending the 'doing more with less' mentality in our profession
- ^^ AMEN. STOP THAT. PLEASE.
- When you value yourself by "doing", which many in our profession seem to do, when I drop tasks that were too much, sometimes it feels like I am also dropping my self-esteem and my value. As "helpers" we need an identity outside of helping.
- Altering what 'success' looks like - it doesn't always have to be cutting-edge efforts or going 'above and beyond'
 - Yes! Please let organizations move at their own pace; so many small organizations cannot have the most-recent technology or enough staff to cover all the possible ways to serve.
- And related to "success" HR and promotion committees having reasonable expectations. Not punish those who balance their lives with tenure denial, no significant pay raises or no promotions (if the person wants promotion.)
- Reinforce that working remotely does not equate to being permanently on-call, and also does not mean that meetings should involve multi-tasking between paying partial attention and continuing to work on other objects. Being present and mindful should be the expectation.

Other Notes

- From the chat:
 - I think it's really important to draw a sharp distinction between quiet quitting and setting boundaries. Setting boundaries is widely regarded as a healthy thing to do for personal wellness and professional success. Setting boundaries also should help establish clearer expectations. Quiet quitting conveys a different type of intentionality, whether it's letting go of tasks and approaches that no longer fit (also possibly healthy), or if consciously limiting the effort level compared to past expectations; but I think the "quiet" part is less transparent to everyone, and thus expectations become vague.
 - understanding that pushing back or saying "no, does not mean you are not committed to the work.
- Fight for employee rights as part of the discussion in the resources we reviewed. History behind it with generations being pushed to go above and beyond - but there was pay-off with promotion or raises. But now there isn't a pay-off, but it has become an expectation. New generation is seeing that they won't be compensated for it, so going back to their job as written.

- Reminds me of my favorite thing ever said to me at a grocery store. The upper teenage checker said, "Well, if they're going to pay me minimum wage, I'm going to do minimum work."