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Introduction

Vocational Awe and Creating Healthy Boundaries at Work

In October, the State Library of Ohio and [OhioNET](#) hosted a virtual event titled [Vocational Awe: Examining the Cost of Your Service](#) with Fobazi Ettarh from Rutgers University. In this session, Fobazi Ettarh discussed the theory of vocational awe and how combined with the value of service has created a toxic framework of leadership that cannot grow or adapt to the ever-changing world in which we live. Ms. Ettarh built upon this foundation and revealed the hidden costs of service that vocational awe demands, and how you can encourage yourself and others to push beyond this framework. If you haven't watched the recording, I urge you to [watch](#), and then refer to the page of [resources](#) to explore this topic personally and professionally.

“The problem with vocational awe is the efficacy of one’s work is directly tied to their amount of passion (or lack thereof), rather than fulfillment of core job duties. If the language around being a good librarian is directly tied to struggle, sacrifice, and obedience, then the more one struggles for their work, the “holier” that work (and institution) becomes. Thus, it will become less likely that people will feel empowered, or even able, to fight for a healthier workspace.”

Ettarh, F.M. (2018, October). Vocational Awe and Librarianship: The Lies We Tell Ourselves. *In The Library With The Lead Pipe*. Retrieved from <http://www.inthelibrarywiththeleadpipe.org/2018/vocational-awe/>



Resources

The State Library received very positive feedback after the live event and the release of the YouTube recording. Ms. Ettarh shared some resources during the live event. Here are some of those links plus a few other helpful resources related to vocational awe:

[Vocational Awe](#) newsletter by Anne Helen Peterson. She discusses the library's role in the election and other social services and how that related to vocational awe.

[Burnout: What It Is and Some Ways to Address It In Ourselves and In Organizations](#) by Dean Spade. The author describes some of the symptoms and feelings that emerge with overwork. He discusses ways to address overwork and burnout within an organization and how to move towards a better balance.

[Library Responses to COVID-19: Ongoing Impacts of Low Morale Experiences with Kaetrena Davis Kendrick, MSLS](#) – Part of the Kernel of Knowledge webinar series. Kendrick will summarize the markers and impacts of low-morale experiences, share the latest results of her survey, and answer attendees' questions about the survey and/or low morale experiences. Countermeasures to workplace abuse and neglect will also be discussed.

[Check out issues #1-#5](#) of the Continuing Education Roundup. Thanks for reading!

Email me at ekelsey@library.ohio.gov if you have ideas, articles, or topics for future issues.

Stay Safe and Stay Well,
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