

Paige.

The PlayBook

MEMBERSHIP

BUSINESS | MODULE THREE

Boundaries & Client Communication

PERSONAL BOUNDARIES

BUSINESS BOUNDARIES

CLIENT COMMUNICATION TOOLS

DIFFICULT CLIENTS

Business vs Personal

YOU NEED BOTH - SO WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

Personal Boundaries-

Protect your energy & wellbeing
Example: No screen time after 8pm

About lifestyle choices

Flexible for relationships

Business Boundaries-

Protect your time, money & professionalism
Example: Client emails answered within 48 hrs

About professional expectations

Written & enforceable in contracts

Personal Boundaries

YOU NEED TO SET THEM TO AVOID BURNOUT.

Time & Availability Boundaries

No-meeting days

At least day a week with zero scheduled calls/meetings. I actually have no calls on a Monday and Friday.

Set “office hours”

For friends/family (e.g., no social calls during work focus hours). Even though you’re self employed to still need structure for productivity.

Delay responses

Intentionally wait (e.g., 24 hours) before replying to non-urgent messages. Not everything is urgent.

Protected lunch breaks

No eating at your desk or taking work calls during meals. Maybe go get some fresh air or do something non-work related.

Technology & Digital Boundaries

Do Not Disturb

Automatic DND on phone/laptop during focus time or after a set hour. My phone is on DND every Sunday and between 10pm - 7am.

Social media limits

Set times or days aside where you don't go on socials. For example my phone goes away from 8pm and I don't use social media on at least one of the days on the weekend.

Separate devices/accounts

If you can have a separate phone for personal vs business. This really allows you to switch off. Plus separate emails etc. Always separate business vs personal.

Single-tasking rule

No second screen (e.g., phone) when watching TV, eating, or doing skincare. Use this time to switch off for you.

Content-consumption cap

Pick set windows for consuming news, videos, or social feeds, e.g 15 min at the end of your work day. No algorithmic scrolling outside those times. Unfollow/mute accounts that drain you or spark comparison.

Mental & Emotional Boundaries

Energy check-ins

Decline events/projects if they drain you more than they energise you. Ask yourself, am I EXCITED to go?

Pause before yes

Always say, "Let me think and get back to you," before committing if you're not 100% sure.

Selfcare time

Have a set day focused to slowing down. List the tasks that help you relax and do those on a selfcare day. E.g, my selfcare day is Sunday and I always like to do an "everything" shower. My "No device" day.

Physical & Environmental Boundaries

Work zone separation

A dedicated workspace, even a specific chair or corner, only for work. If you don't have this you will never feel like you can escape that "work" feeling.

Change of scene

Sofa Day – e.g., Fridays spent working from the sofa to create a softer, end-of-week vibe.
Workout/coffee shop day – a midweek outing to a café to refresh creativity.

Tech-free zones

Bedroom, dining table, or bathroom stay screen-free.

Lifestyle/Health Boundaries

Movement breaks

Walk in the morning, midday, or evening...but you have to move.

Creative/ play time

Weekly slot (3/4 hours) for hobbies that have nothing to do with productivity. Don't feel bad doing it!

Sleep-first rule

No screen time before bed and always place your device away from you or outside your room. Never beside you.

Business Boundaries

YOU'RE IN CONTROL.

Time & Availability Boundaries

Set office hours

Example: 9–5 Mon–Thu, no Fridays for client calls.

Response time policy

Promise a 24–48 hour turnaround and stick to it. I take 48 hours to respond to any leads/applications.

Rush fee policy

They want it quicker? Charge extra. Your time is valuable.

Meeting limits

Cap client calls (e.g., max 2 per day). I only allow one discovery call booked a day and 2 client calls booked a day from Tuesday to Thursday.

Service & Scope

Clear scope of work

Define exactly what's included (and what's not) in proposals/contracts. How many of XYZ do they get? State it.

Revision limits

e.g., "Includes 2 rounds of edits; extra rounds billed hourly."

No freebies

Your discovery calls are not a chance for them to pick your brains. It's a chance for you to ask about their brand and then explain your service.

Payment terms

Require deposits/upfront payments before starting.

Communication Rules

Channels of contact

Only email, project management tools, or business numbers—no personal WhatsApps/channels.

Template responses

I have template responses for application forms, off boarding emails, on boarding emails.

Auto replies

On holiday? Good, enjoy it. Put an automated response on emails and your communication channels.

Calls

Stick to a time amount for your calls, e.g 30 minutes and never book back to back. Have a buffer.

Client Relationship Boundaries

Red flag filter

Walk away from clients who ignore contracts, delay payments, or disrespect timelines.

Feedback deadlines

“If feedback isn’t received within X days, project timeline extends.” Have a fee for delays (brand designers).

Cancellation policies

Clear fees for last-minute cancellations or no-shows.

Professional tone

Keep communication friendly but not overly personal to avoid blurred lines.

Financial Boundaries

**Separate
bank
accounts**

Business finances are never mixed with personal.

**Late fee
enforcement**

Charge interest or penalties for overdue invoices. OR
don't release their ownership rights.

**Budget
limits**

Decide in advance what expenses are acceptable
(software, travel, etc.). You need to be tracking
finances in Notion, Google Sheets, or some kind of
tool.

**Personal
payments**

You need to be paying yourself a wage each month.

Communication Tools

COMMUNICATION IS A HUGE PART OF OUR JOB

Social Media Managers

Tool	Why It Works	Key Boundary Feature
WhatsApp Business	Ideal for quick approvals, posting updates, and client questions.	✔ Business hours + auto-replies keep you off the hook outside set times.
Slack	Great for teams or retainer clients needing constant touchpoints.	✔ Channel-based messaging keeps each client/project neatly separated.
Telegram (with bots)	Similar speed to WhatsApp but with advanced privacy and pinned updates.	✔ Pinned messages highlight key info so chats don't get lost.
Google Chat	Pairs well with Google Workspace users.	✔ Threaded conversations reduce clutter and keep decisions trackable.
Voxer / Voice notes	Good for clients who prefer talking over typing.	✔ Async voice messaging lets you reply when you're available.

SMMs → fast, app-based tools (WhatsApp Business or Slack) with automation to manage constant pings.

Brand Designers

Tool	Why It Works	Key Boundary Feature
Email	Best for formal communication, contracts, and milestone feedback.	✔ Built-in paper trail for approvals and clear timelines.
Notion Comments / Messaging	Ideal if you set up a client portal.	✔ All feedback in one workspace—no scattered messages.
Slack (if ongoing)	Useful for collaborative design sprints.	✔ Channels & status settings control notifications.
Google Meet Chat (during calls)	Great for live presentations.	✔ Chat log stays with the meeting link for easy reference.

Brand Designers → formal, slower channels (Email, Notion) that naturally encourage thoughtful, documented feedback.

Difficult Clients

WE ALL GET THEM...

Early Termination of Contract

Typical Situation

Client wants to end the project/retainer before the agreed date.

Response Steps

1. Stay calm and professional, don't take it personally. (9 times out of 10 its to do with finances).
2. Refer back to the signed contract (notice period, termination clause, final invoice).
3. Clarify next steps in writing.

Sample Script

“As outlined in our [3/6]-month agreement, the contract secures content planning and scheduling for the full term.

If you choose to end early, ownership of any scheduled or published content remains with me and must be removed from the profile, and the remaining balance for the contracted period is still payable as stated in the agreement.”

Friendship Blur / Over-Familiarity

Typical Situation

Client treats you like a friend, late-night messages, personal requests, or expecting free extras.

Response Steps

1. Re-establish the professional relationship.
2. Gently redirect communication back to agreed tools/hours.
3. Stick to scope.

Sample Script

“To keep everything organised, I reply to client messages during my office hours and through [WhatsApp Business/Slack]. This way I can give you my full focus and nothing slips through.”

Rude or Disrespectful Behaviour

Typical Situation

Client uses aggressive language, belittles work, or crosses personal boundaries.

Response Steps

1. Pause before responding, don't match their tone.
2. Address behaviour, not character.
3. Outline next steps and boundaries clearly.

Sample Script

"I really value clear and constructive conversations so we can create the best results together.
Let's pause here and reconnect [suggest a time] when we can both approach this calmly."

(If behaviour continues, reference termination clause in contract.)

Missed Deadlines / Late Feedback

Typical Situation

Client repeatedly delays approvals or doesn't send content, stalling progress.

Response Steps

1. Remind them of how delays affect the timeline.
2. Set a clear cut-off date.
3. Outline the consequence (timeline extension, rush fee, or pause).

Sample Script

“Just checking in so we can stay on track for [launch/posting/project date].

If you could share feedback by [deadline], we'll keep everything moving smoothly.

If more time is needed, no problem—we can shift the timeline to the next available date which is XYZ.”

Scope Creep (extra work without pay)

Typical Situation

Client keeps adding “one more thing” outside the agreed deliverables.

Response Steps

1. Acknowledge the request.
2. Refer to contract scope.
3. Offer a paid add-on.

Sample Script

“I absolutely love this new idea, it sounds exciting!

If you’d like to move forward with it, I can add it for [price] or we can schedule it as a next-phase project.

That way we protect the current timeline while bringing your vision to life.”

Payment Issues (late or unpaid invoices)

Typical Situation

Client delays payment or avoids invoices.

Response Steps

1. Send polite reminder referencing contract terms.
2. Add late fees if specified.
3. Pause work until payment clears.

Sample Script

“I hope everything is going well on your end.

I wanted to gently remind you that invoice [#] is now [X] days past its due date.

Once payment is received we can jump right back into the next steps.”

Constant Last-Minute Requests

Typical Situation

Client repeatedly asks for urgent changes or same-day turnarounds.

Response Steps

1. Remind them of normal turnaround times.
2. Introduce a rush fee if they need expedited service.

Sample Script

“This request sounds great and I’d love to make it happen.

My standard turnaround is [X] business days, but if you’d like it sooner I can prioritise it with a rush option of [fee].

Would you like me to arrange that?”

OR

“This sounds great and I’d love to make it happen.

My current schedule means the soonest I can deliver is [X business days/date].

If that timing works for you, I’ll lock it in and keep everything on track.”

Price Increase for Retainer Clients

Typical Situation

You need to raise your monthly retainer rate due to increased value, rising costs, or expanded services. The client is on an ongoing 3–6 month contract with monthly upfront payments.

Response Steps

- Give 30–60 days’ notice before the new rate begins.
- Share key results or added value you’ve provided.
- Present the new rate and effective date clearly.
- Offer to adjust scope if they need to keep the same budget.

Sample Script

“I wanted to give you a heads-up that due to rising business expenses and inflation, my monthly retainer will increase to [new amount] starting [date].

This adjustment ensures I can continue delivering the same quality and level of service you’re deserving of.

Please let me know by [decision deadline] so we can update the agreement smoothly and hopefully we can continue to build something amazing.”

Clients Who Aren't Worth your time

- Create anxiety or dread every time they message.
- Ignore boundaries (late-night calls, constant “urgent” requests).
- Are consistently rude or disrespectful in tone or behaviour.
- Refuse to follow processes (miss deadlines, skip approvals).
- Question contracts or pricing after signing.
- Drain your energy far more than the project is worth.

Takeaway:

- No amount of money justifies sacrificing your mental health or professional standards.
- A respectful, process-oriented client is always more valuable than a high-paying but boundary-breaking one.

Your PlayBook Practice

ACTION TASK

YOUR PLAYBOOK PRACTICE

Take 10–15 minutes to answer these prompts in your notes or a journal:

1. Spot the Red Flags

- *List 3 client behaviours that instantly raise stress or anxiety for you (e.g. late payments, constant urgent requests, rude messages).*
- *Next to each, write the first action you would take (e.g. friendly reminder, formal warning).*

2. Create Your Scripts

- *Draft one friendly but firm message you can use for:*
 - *A boundary reminder (e.g. office hours or communication tool)*
 - *A price increase notice*
 - *A scope-change request*
- *Keep each under 3 sentences so it's easy to copy and paste.*

3. Set Your Strike System

- *Decide how many times a client can ignore a boundary before you pause or end the project (e.g. “One reminder + one formal warning + then enforcement”).*



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Turn the Paige

AND FOLLOW THE PLAYBOOK

NEXT UP: SELLING WITHOUT FEELING SALESY