Microsoft

Microsoft Ignite

Microsoft

Building inclusive workplaces: Supporting coworkers with autism

Dennie Declercq
President / Developer at DDSoft

Content

- Intro
- My job experience
- Theory about autism
- Results of this theory (difficulties) and how to help them
- And finally, see the talents
- Wrap up
- Q&A || Thanks

Intro

Thanks for this magic!

♡♡♡♡

Who am I?

Dennie Declercq
Fulltime volunteer developer
DDSoft
@DennieDeclercq
#DreamingIsBelieving
Ithaka

#7ThYearMagic

My autism

- Diagnose when I was 13
  - Hard time at school
    - Didn’t choose the school
  - Level math way to low
    - No high school
  - What can I say more
    - Bullied a lot
    - Didn’t belong
    - Always fanatic pro Microsoft

My job experience

School’s out for summer

Trying for job applications

And being refused

Rather never an invitation

I had to say: ‘I am autistic’

Microsoft

Issue 1: No masters degree

Many companies need developer with Masters Degree

My jobs at a fabric

Belgium government told me to do

- Fabric for people with disability
- Manual jobs
- Couldn’t use my brains

Microsoft

Issue 2: Talk too much

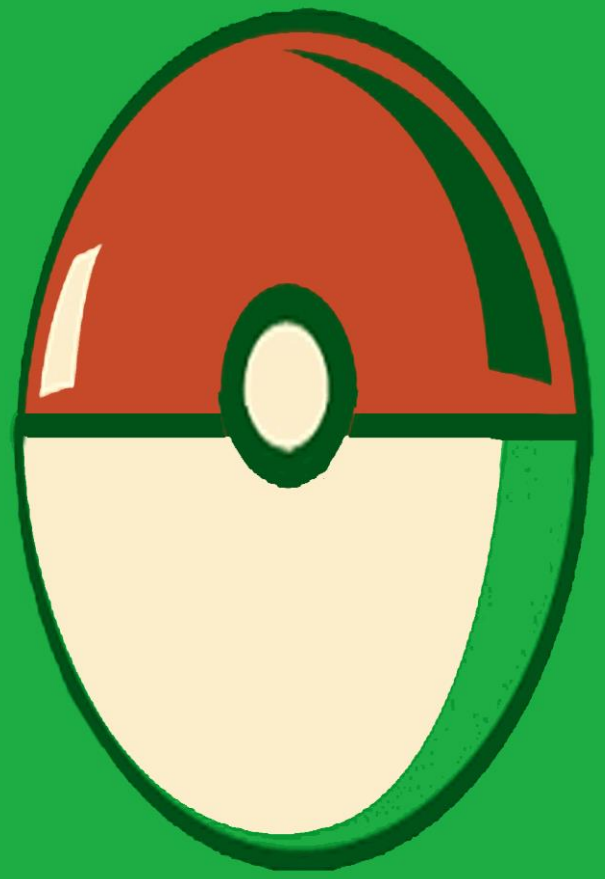
Dennie shut up!
Dennie be quiet!
Work instead of talk!

Microsoft

Issue 3: Limited topic of interests

Hobby programmer

You can’t!



Issue 4: Motoric restriction

Issue 5: Speed, stress & deadlines

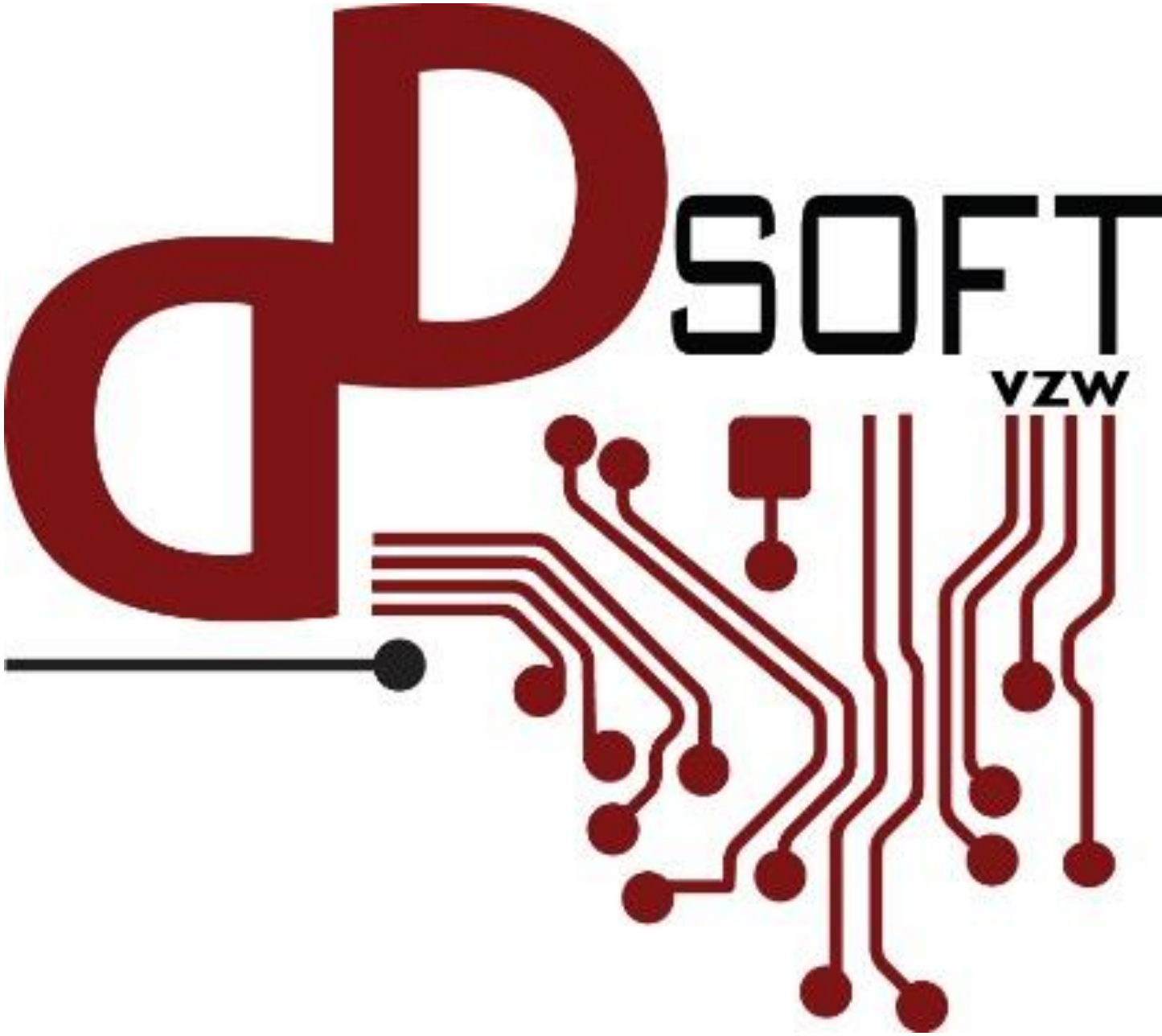
2012: The end of an era, the start of an era

2011: I crashed

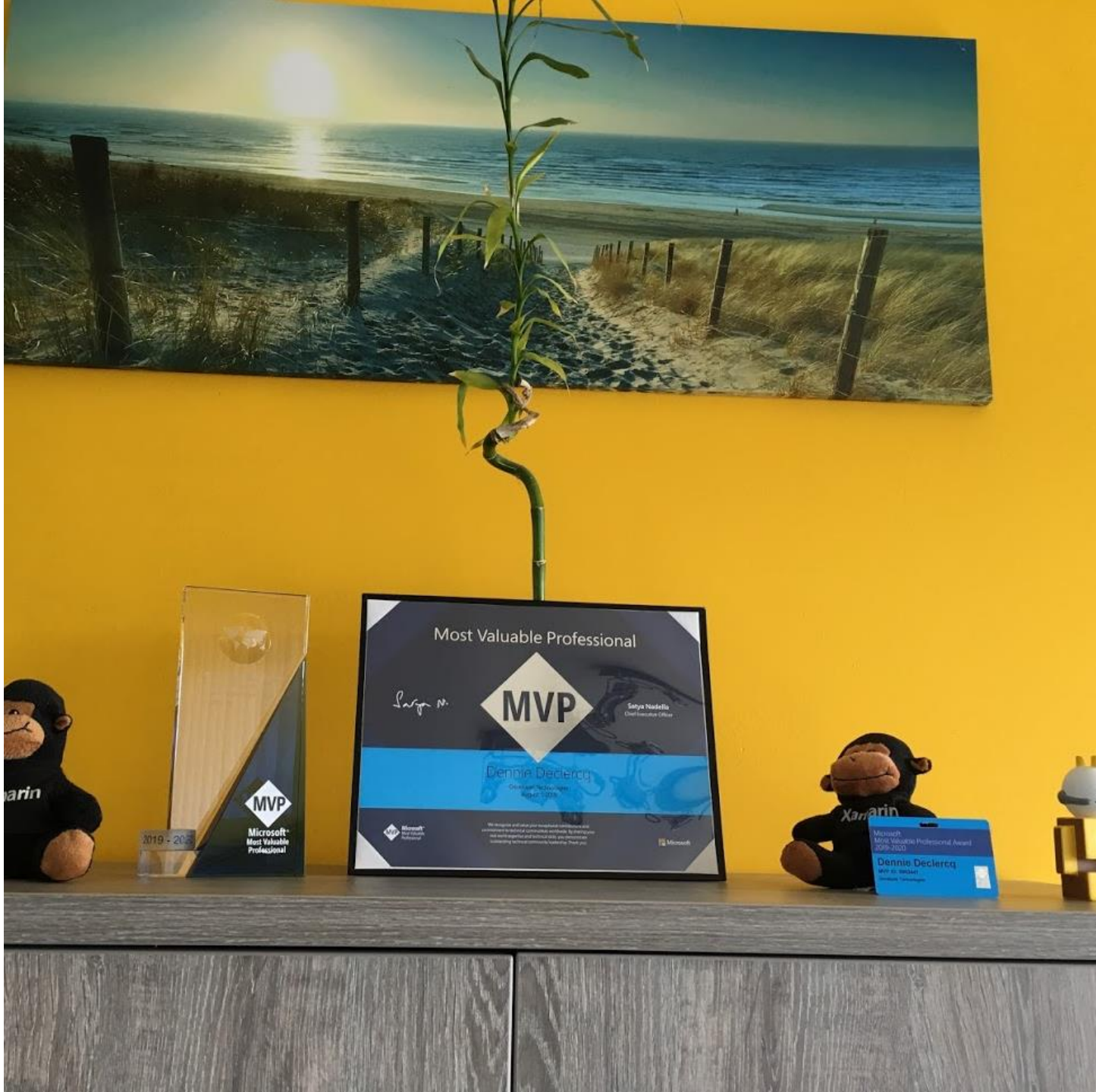
2012: Ithaka vzw COACHING CENTRUM

2015: dPSOFT vzw

My talents as a volunteer



Until a Microsoft MVP



But still a volunteer

Financial consequences

Careful about money

Why?

- Belgian government

Theory about autism

Autistic People

Mismatch in:

- Communication
- Executive Functioning
- Central Coherence
- Context Blindness

Communication

Talking too much or too little
Limited topics of interest
Difficulties with eye contact

Executive Functioning

Planning
To be flexible
Time Management
Public Transport
Cooking Dinner
Groceries

Central Coherence

Missing global overview
Problems with seeing full scene

Context Blindness

One incentive

- One meaning!

Communication with words

- One word one meaning

Co-morbid diagnosis

Results of this theory (difficulties) and how to help them

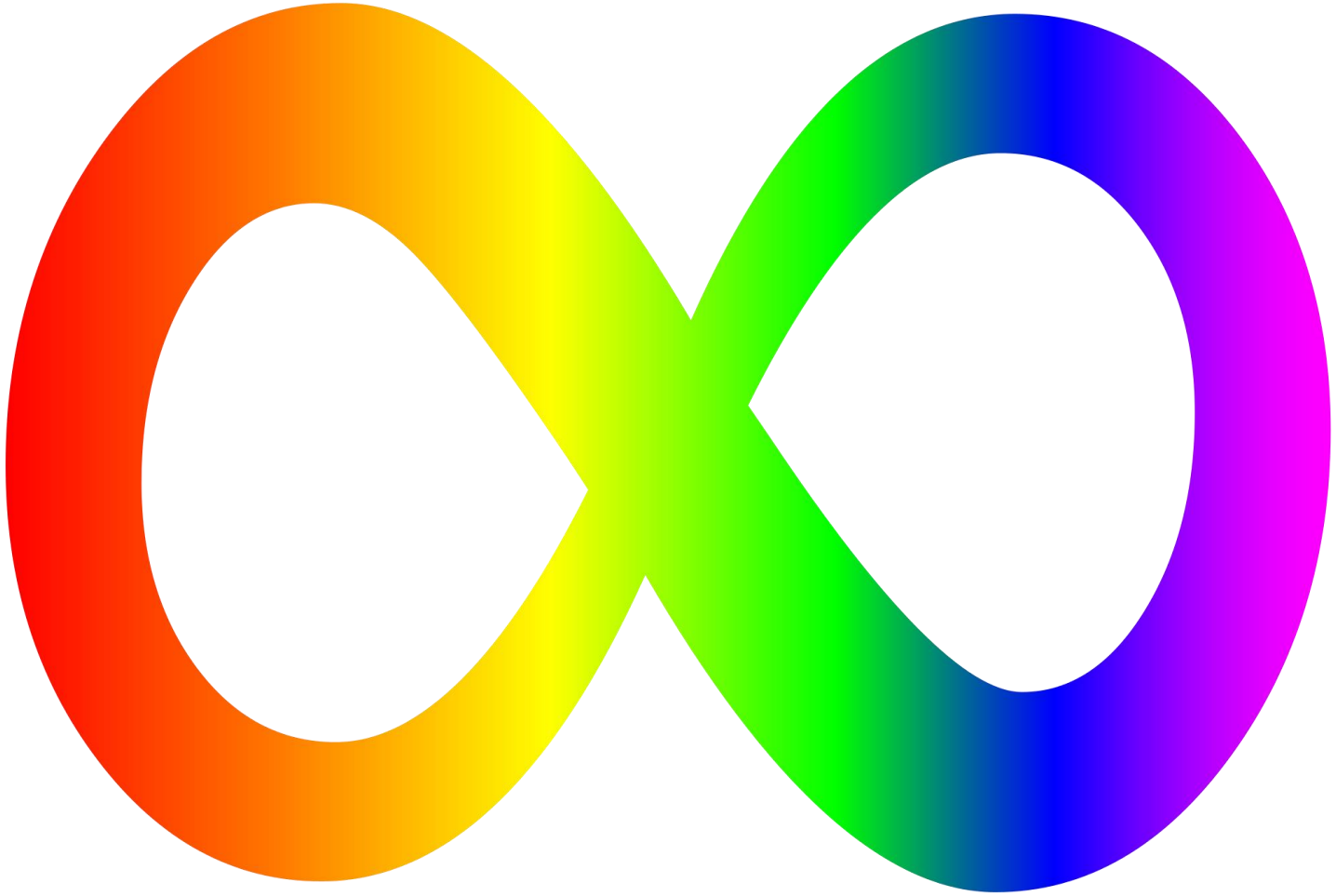
Difficulty: Being stuck in a thought

Advice to support

Suggest positive thoughts

Say you're not angry

The person didn't something wrong

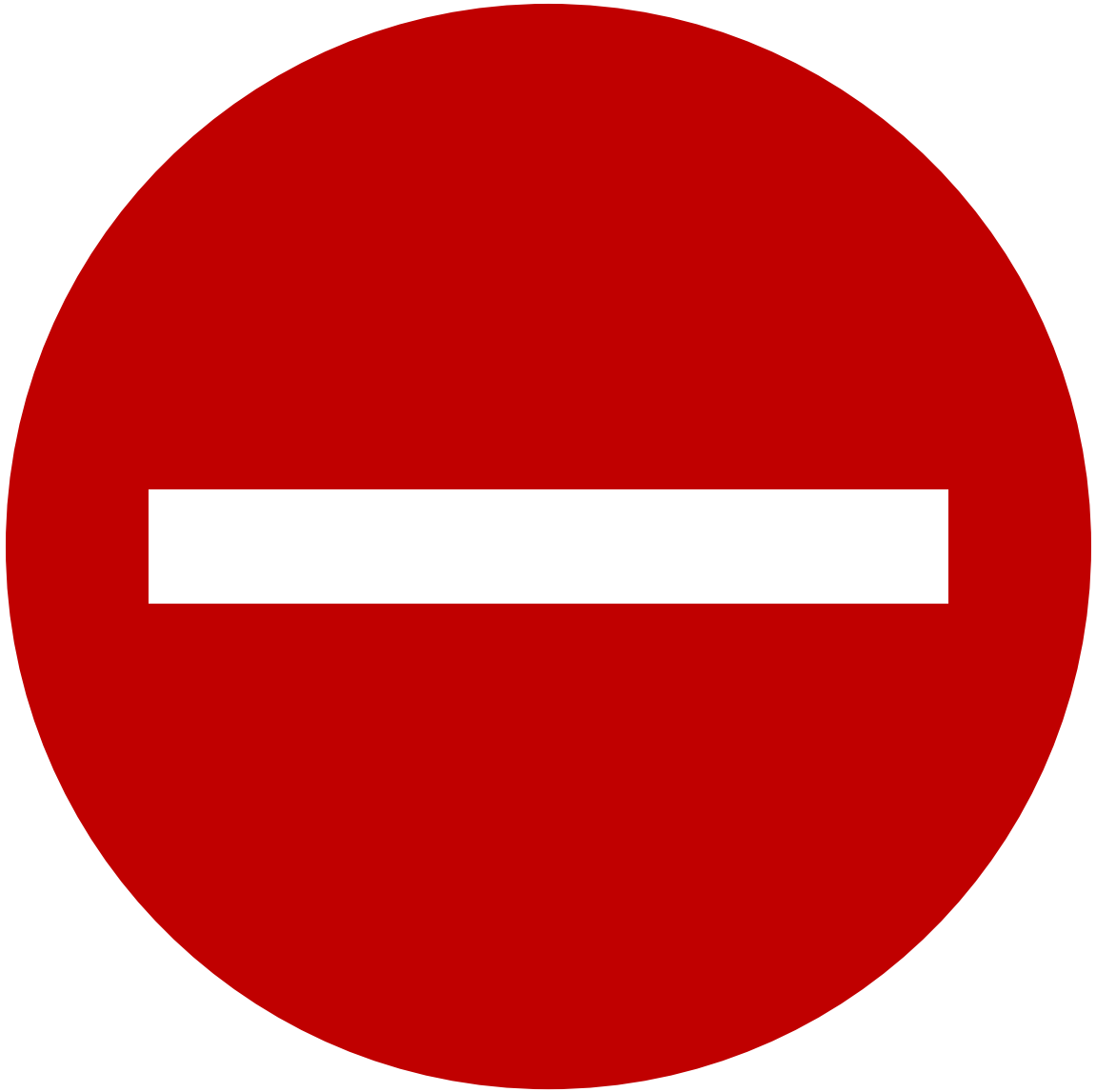


Please don’t

Make yourself angry

Raise your voice

Say the person is nagging too much

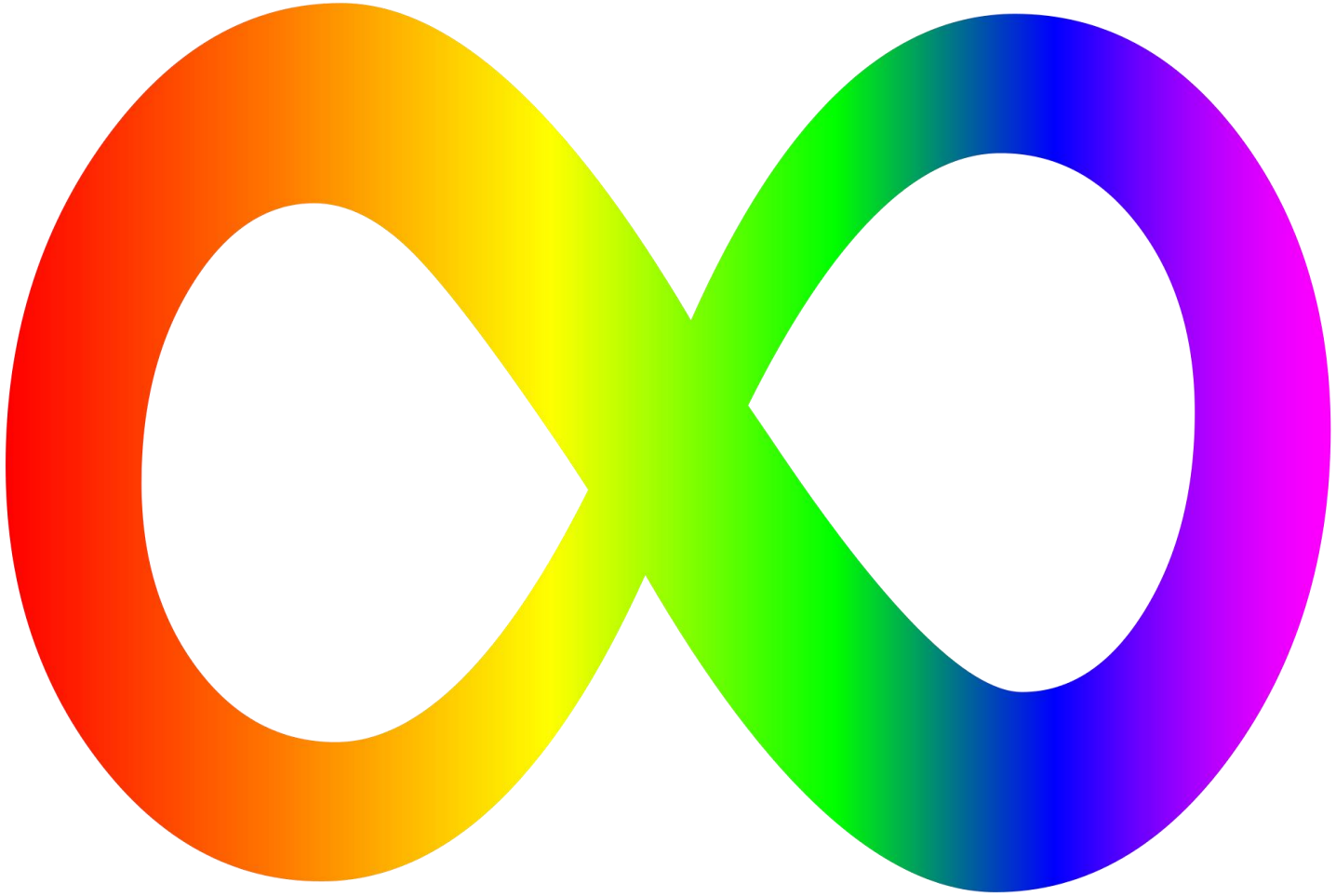


Difficulty: Too honest

Advice to support

Be aware what you say

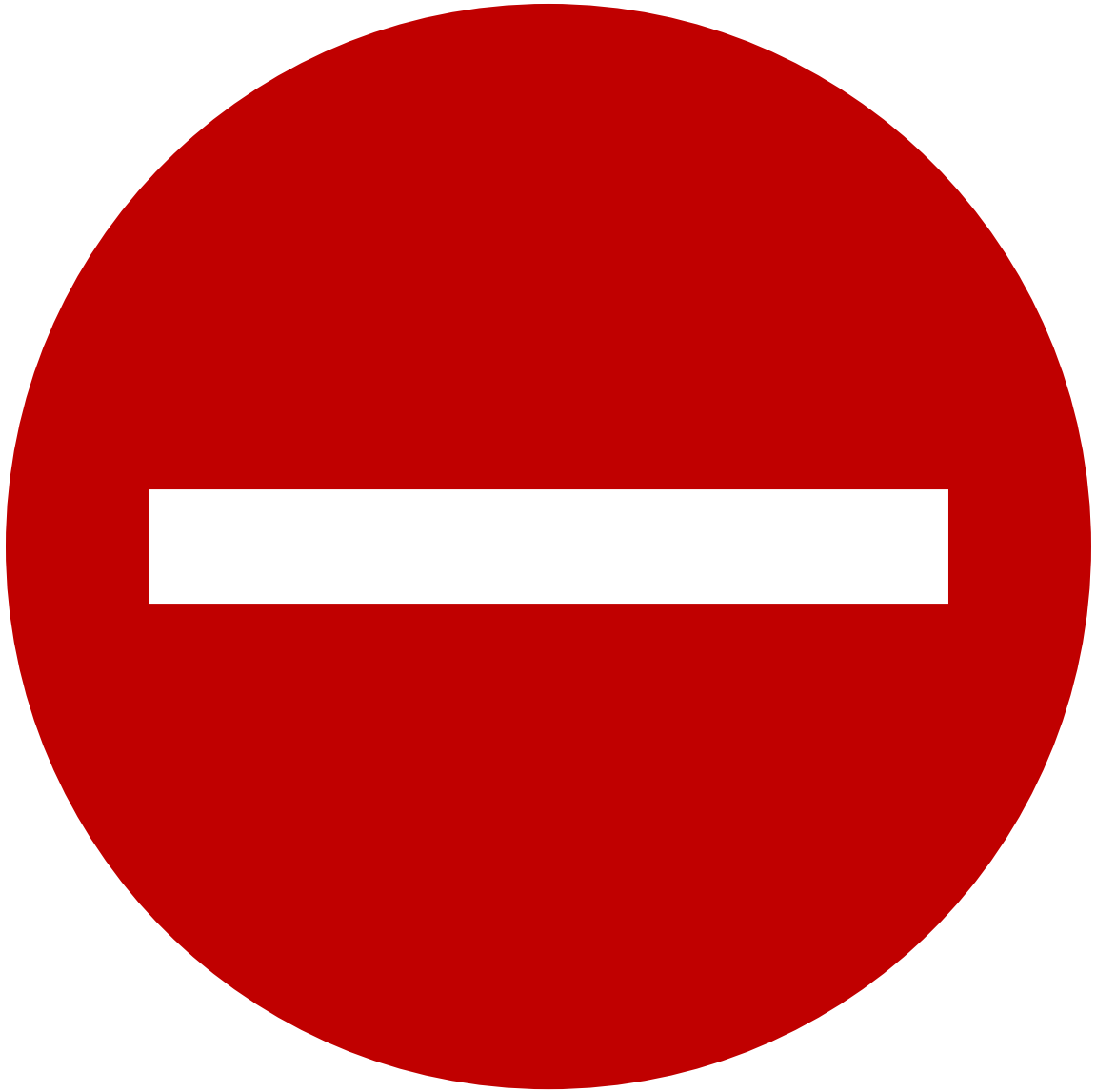
Indicate if it’s private



Please don’t

Think your coworker thinks like you

Break professional relation



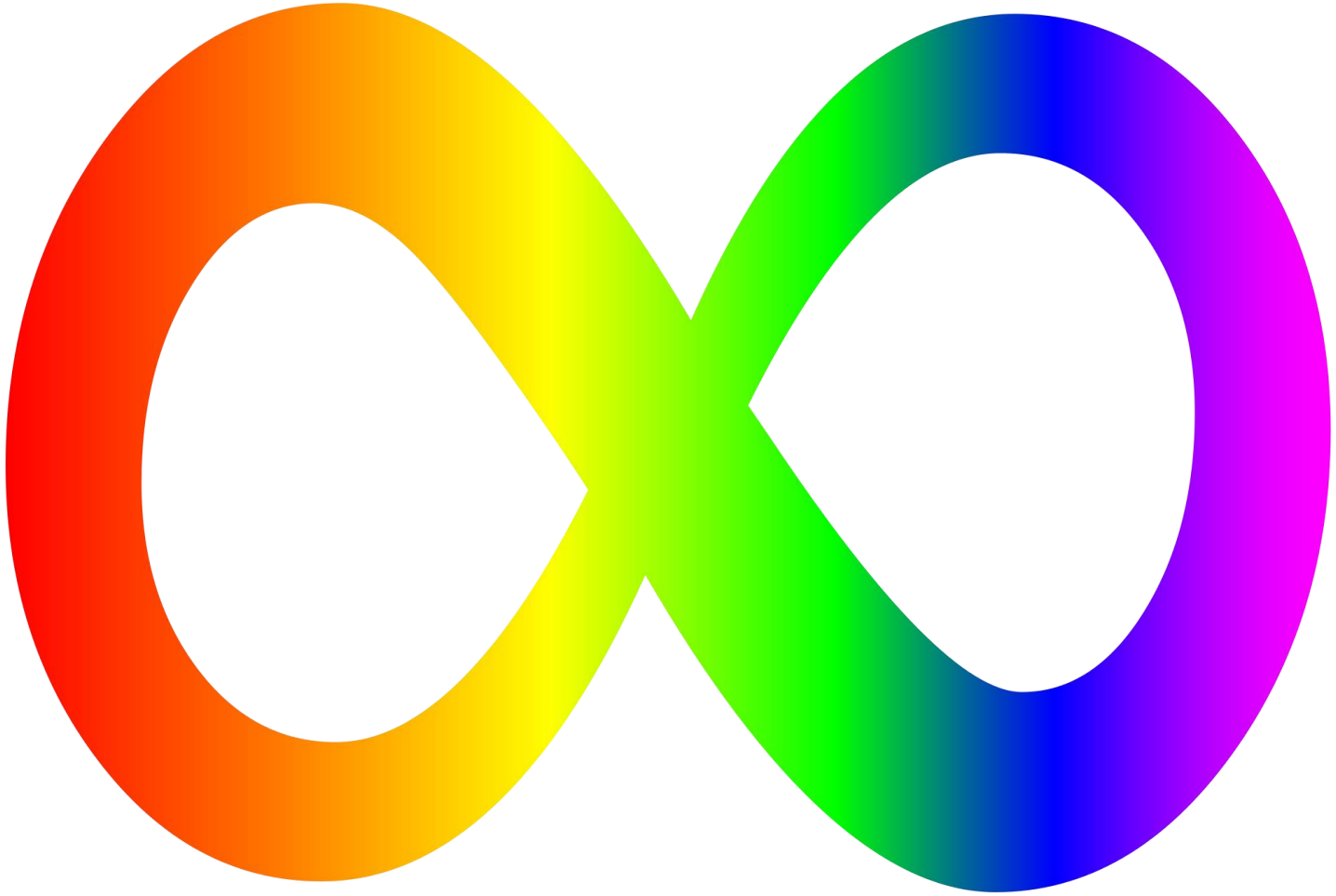
Difficulty: to cope with deadlines

Advice to support

Give R&D projects

Longer term project

Split up larger chunks of work

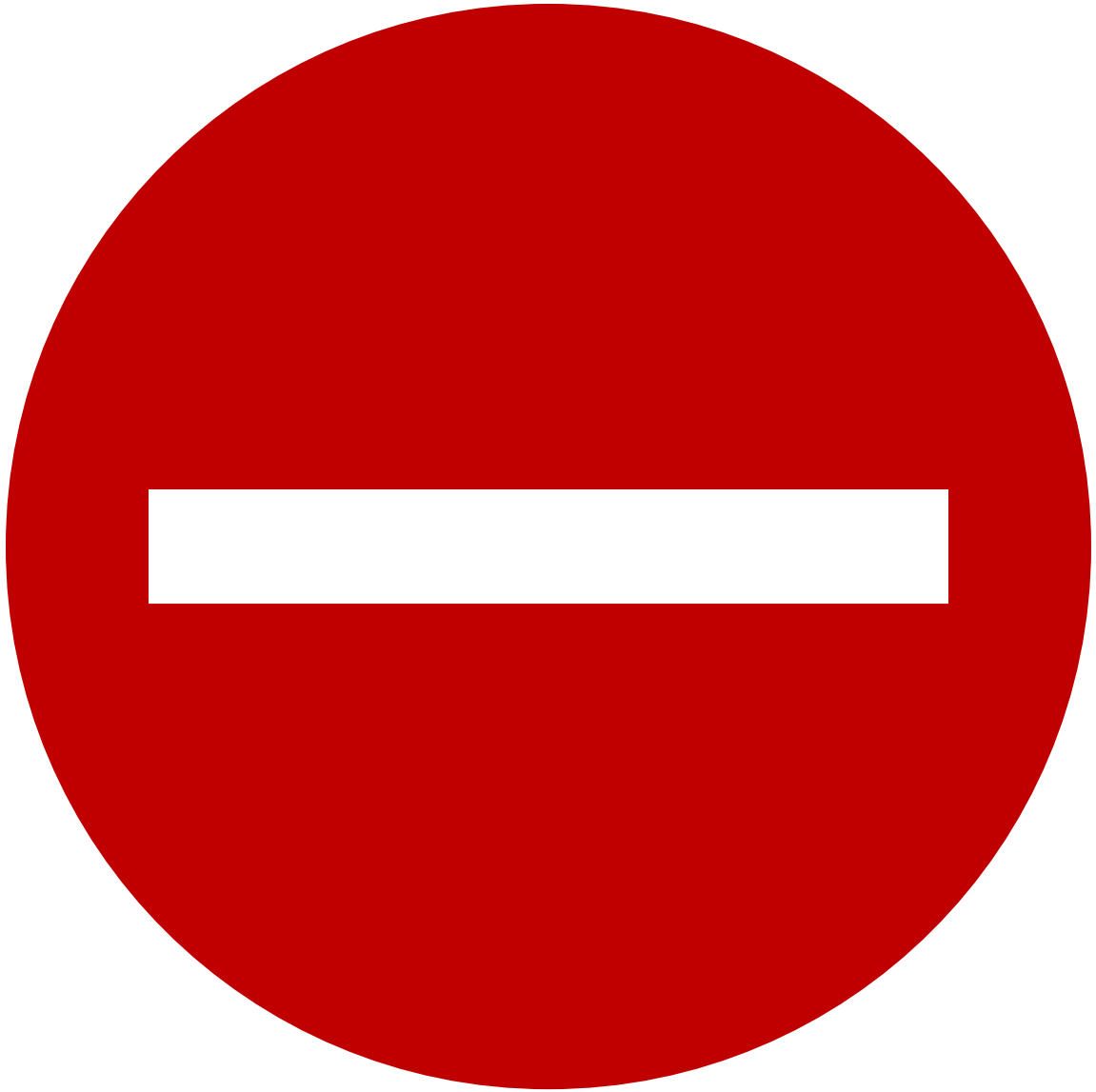


Please don’t

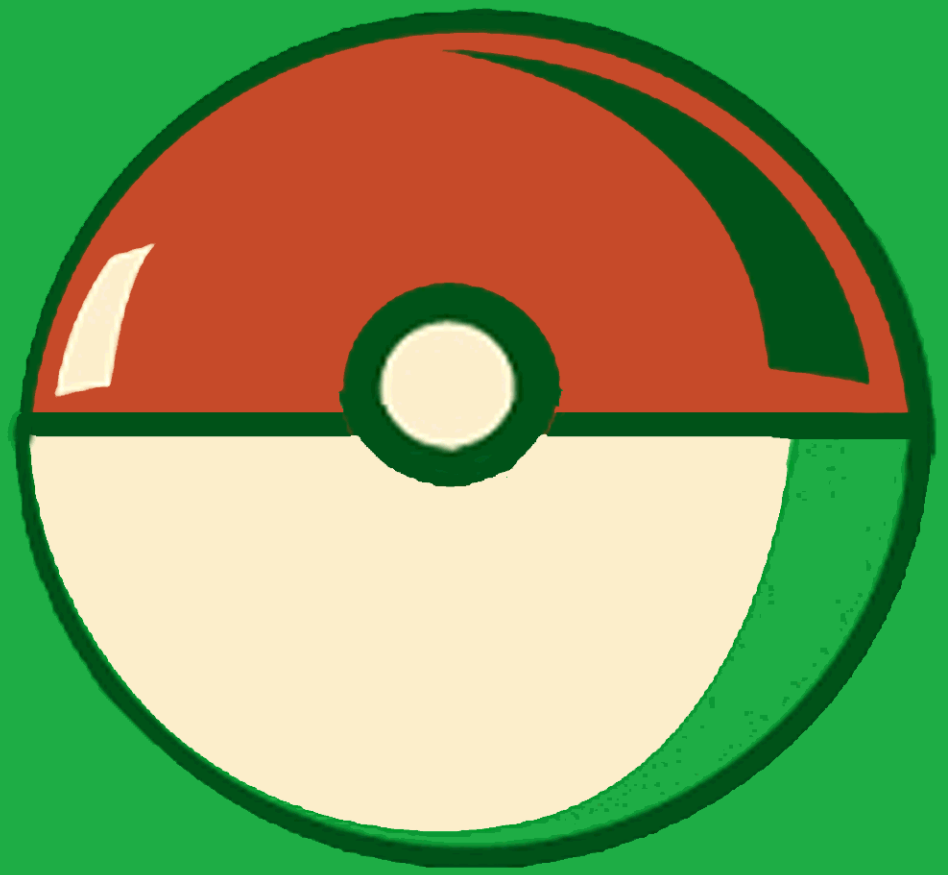
Stress too much on the deadline

Prioritize the deadline

Remind the deadline daily



Difficulty: Limited topic of interest



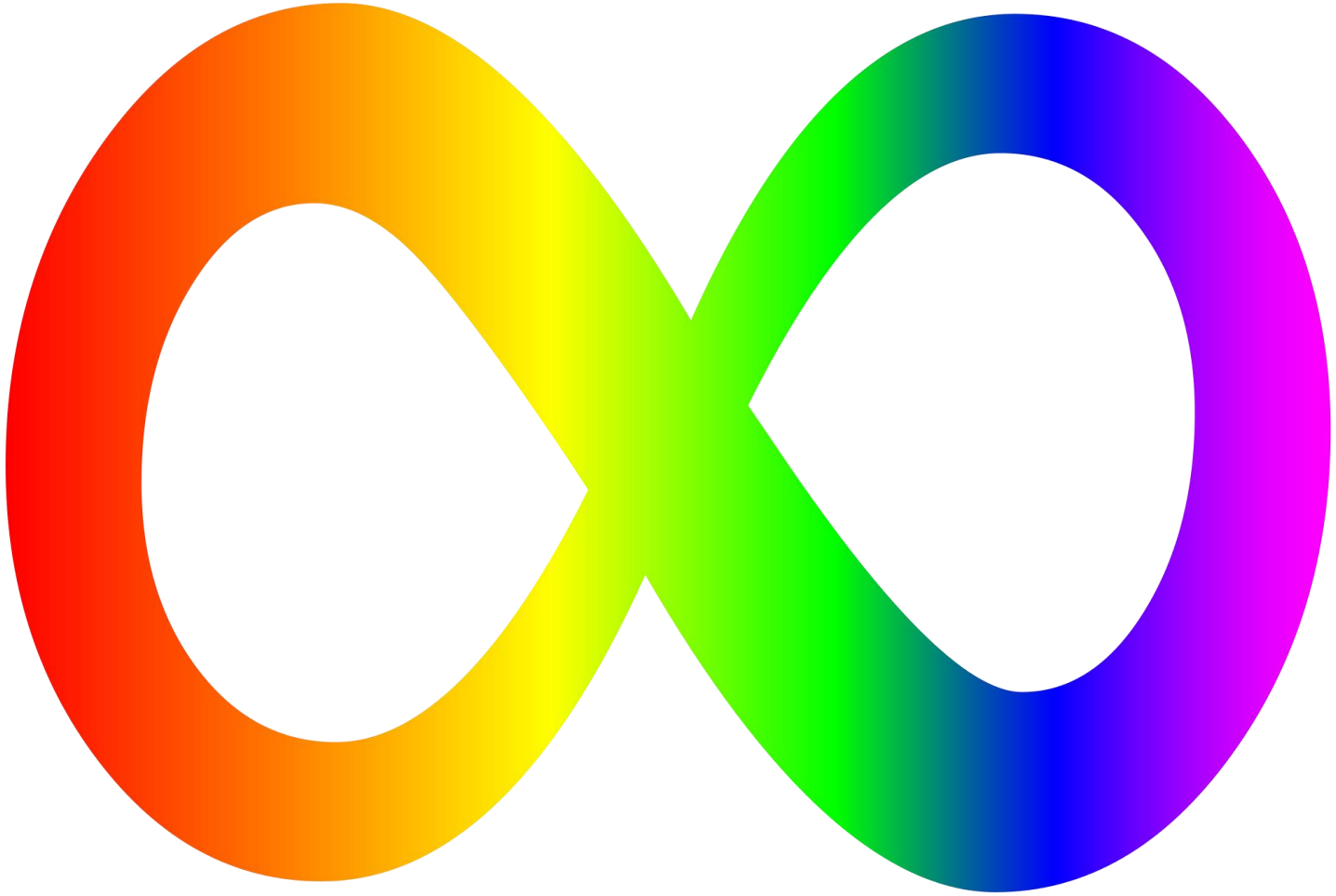
Advice to support

Listen to the story

Show interest

Keep telling about own interest

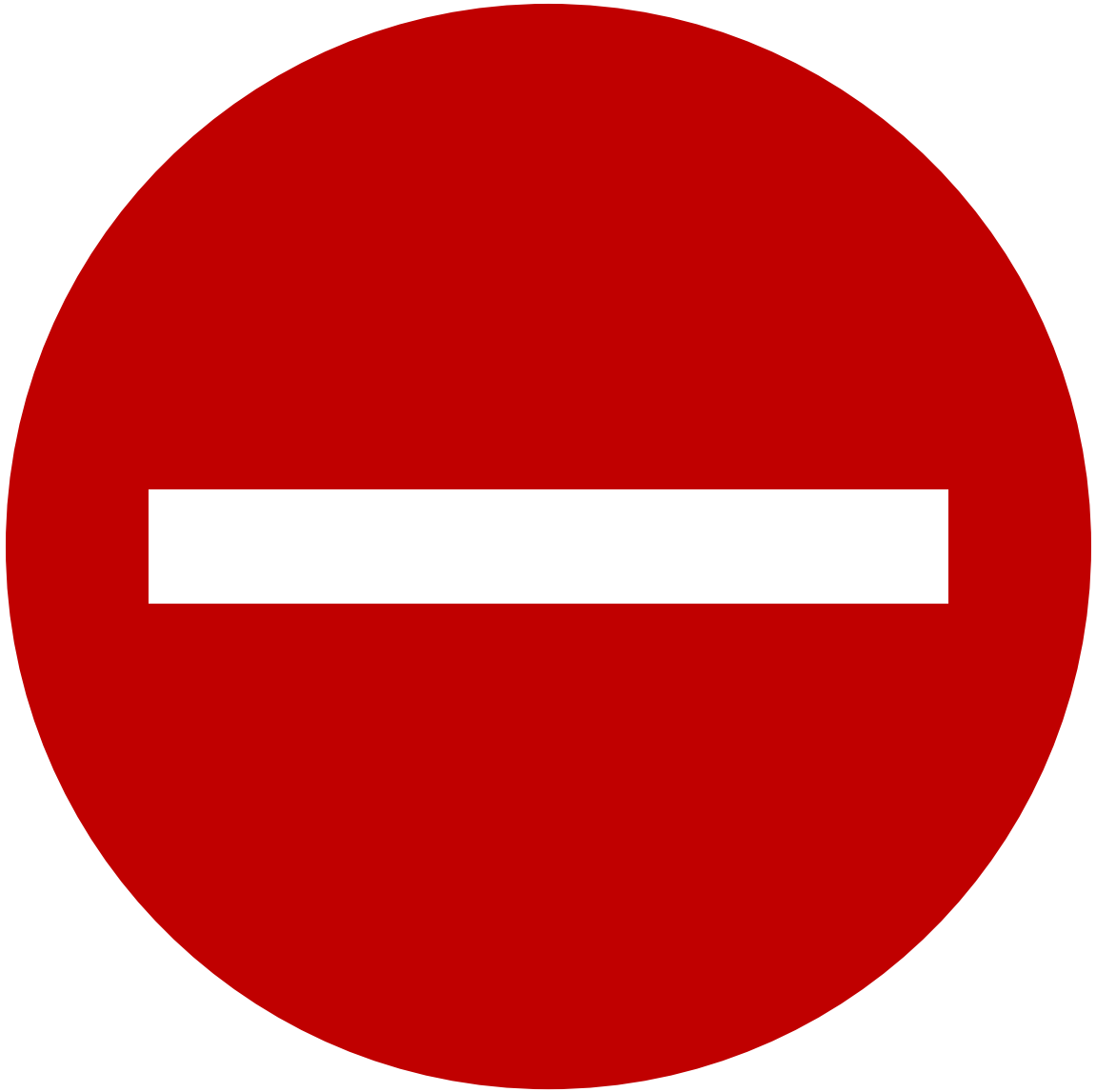
Ask feedback



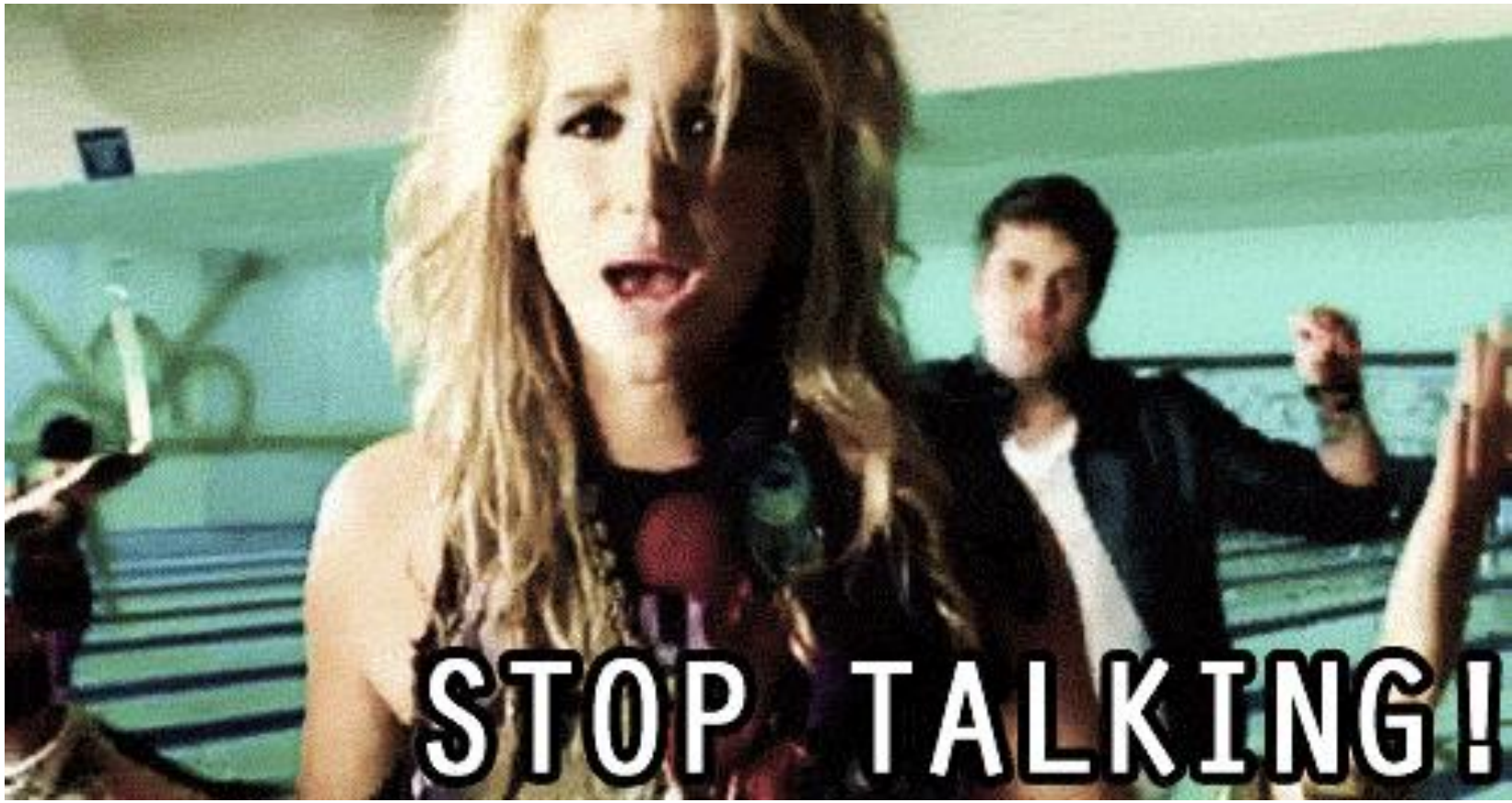
Please don’t

Completely ignore the person

Say time and time your coworker is he / she’s nagging



Difficulty: Talking too much

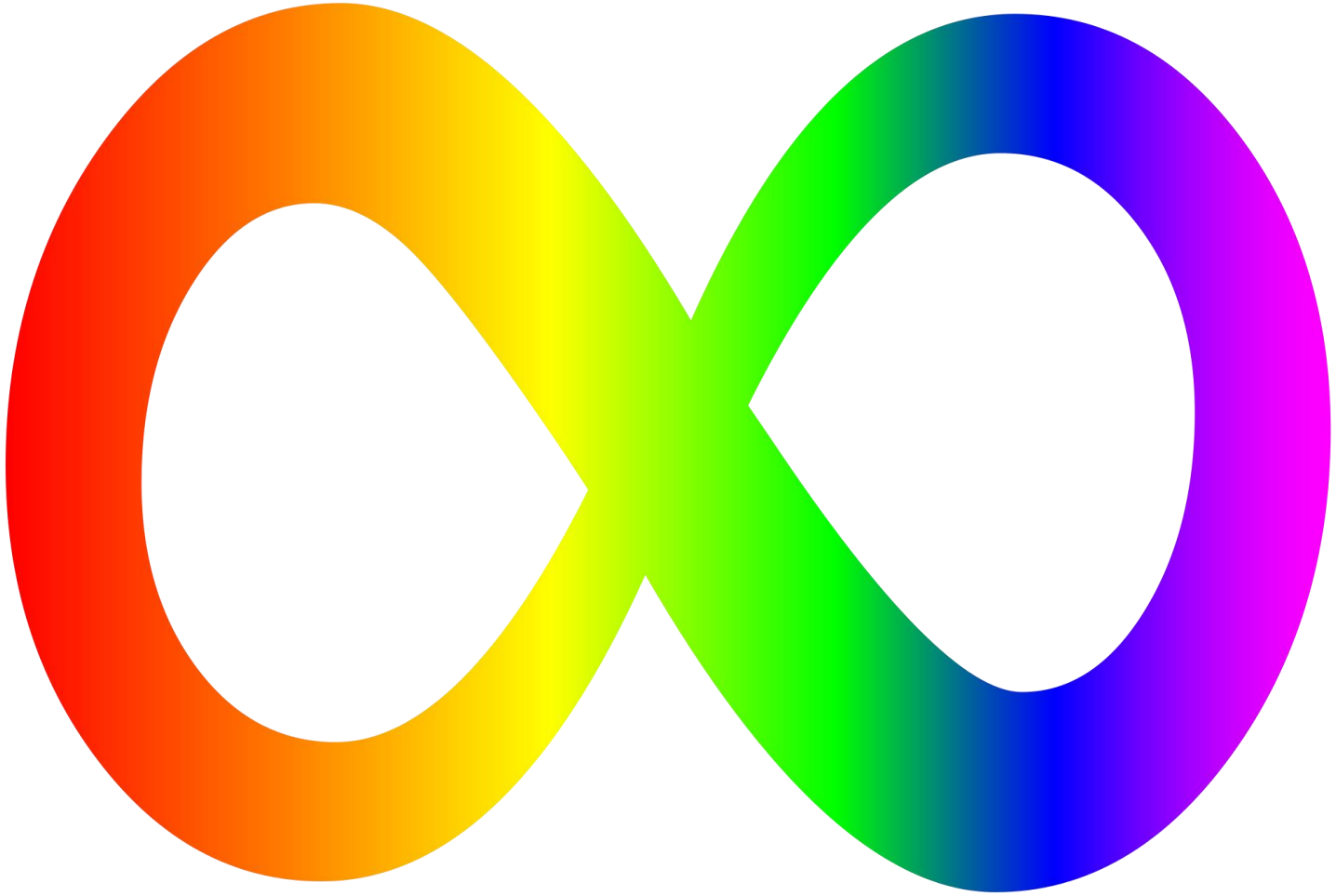


Advice to support

Indicate clear and polite

Ask to continue working

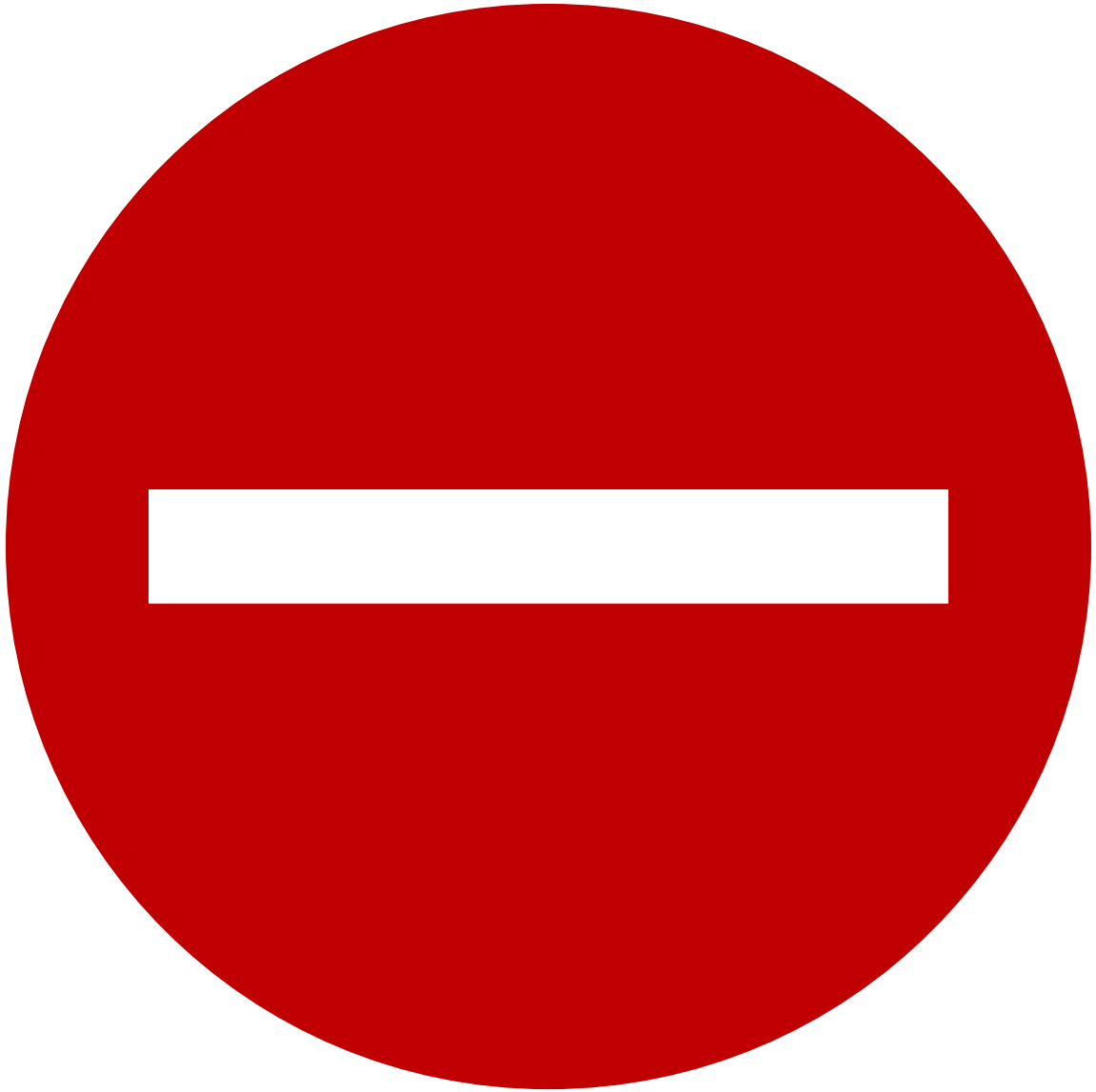
Incentive



Please don’t

Start to ignore the person

Always stop / block the conversation



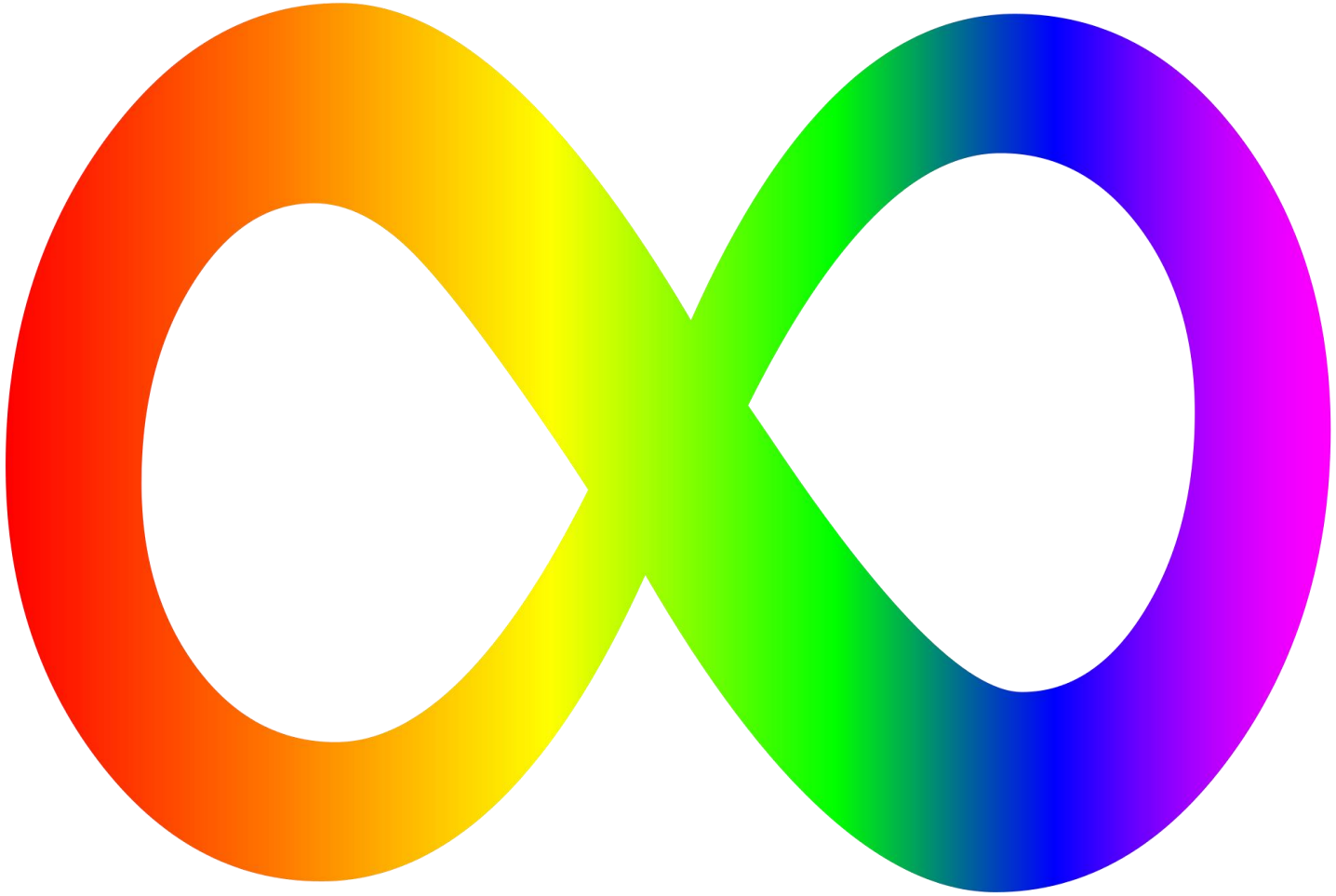
Difficulty: Talking too little

Advice to support

Ask very specific questions

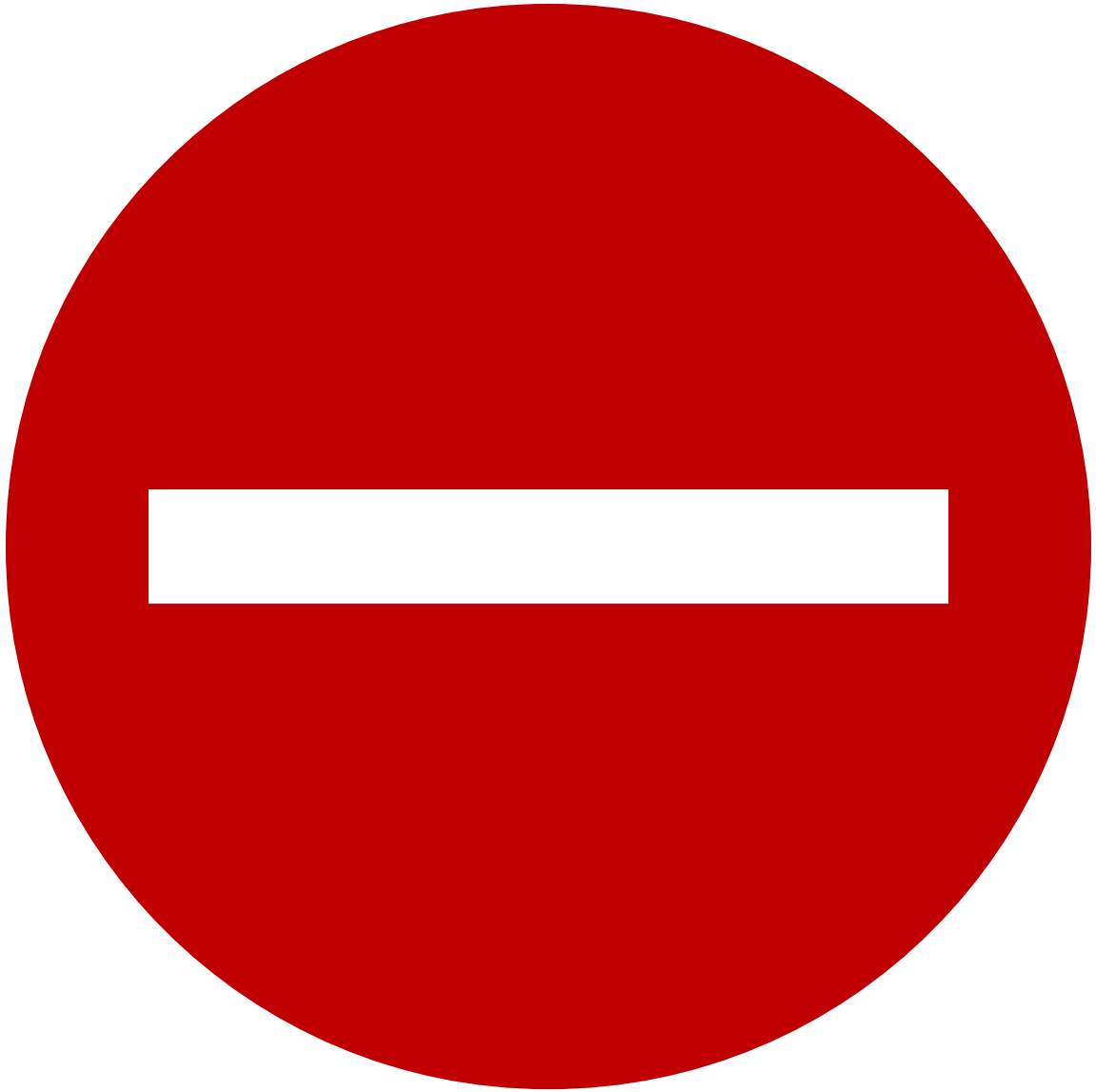
Don’t assume the person needs to tell something

Tell something yourself

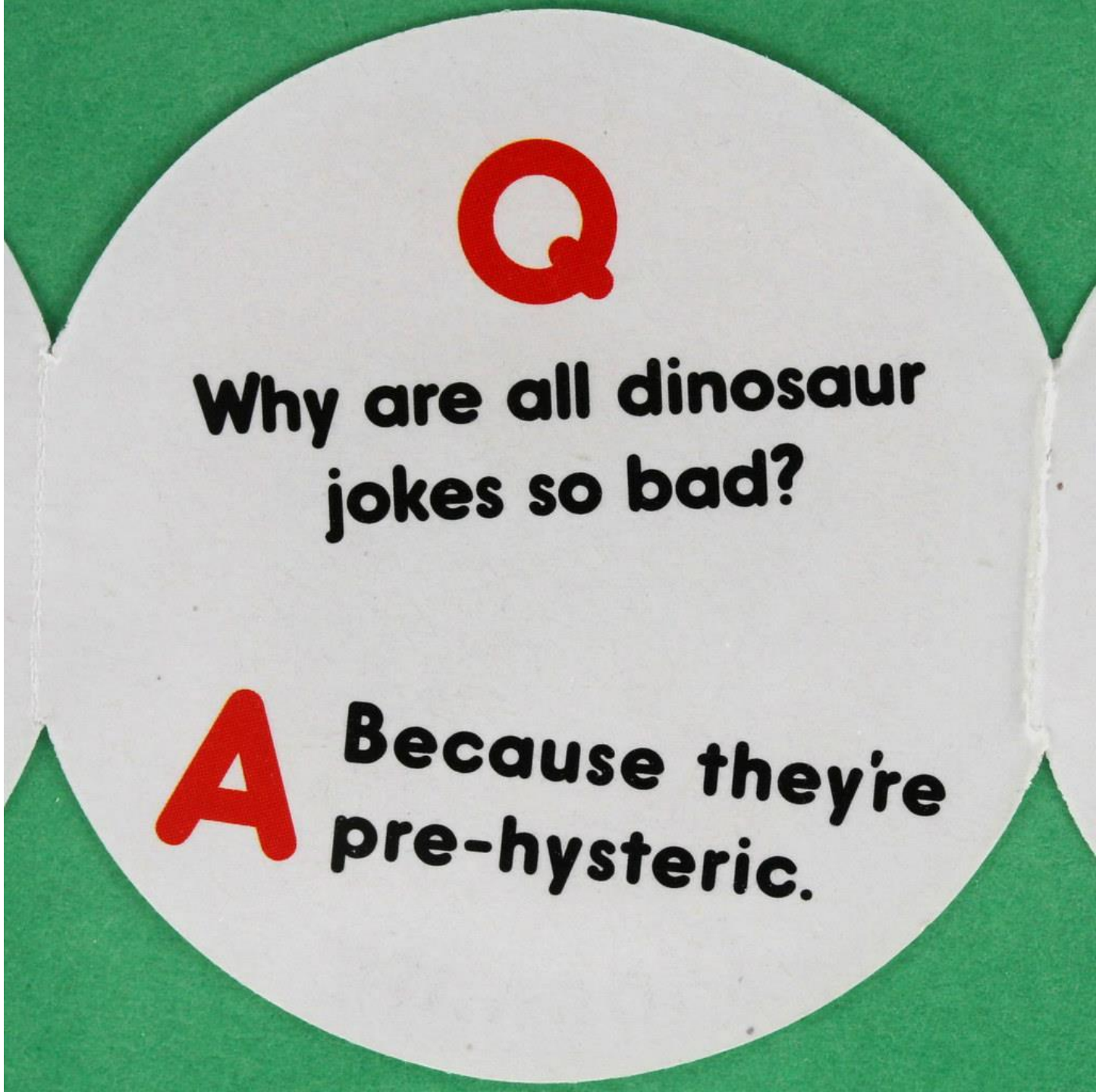


Please don’t

Ignore the person



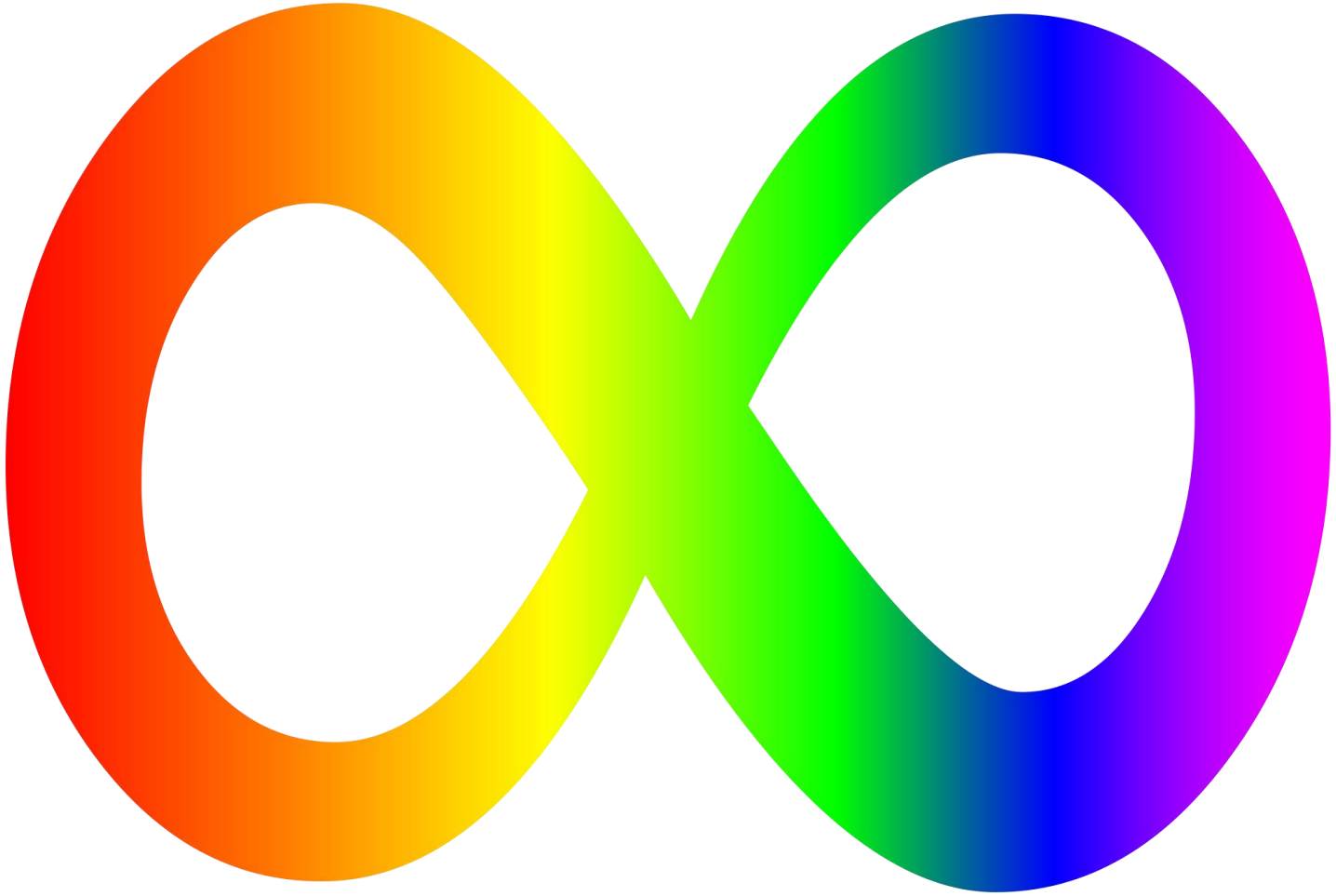
Difficulty: Handle jokes different



Advice to support

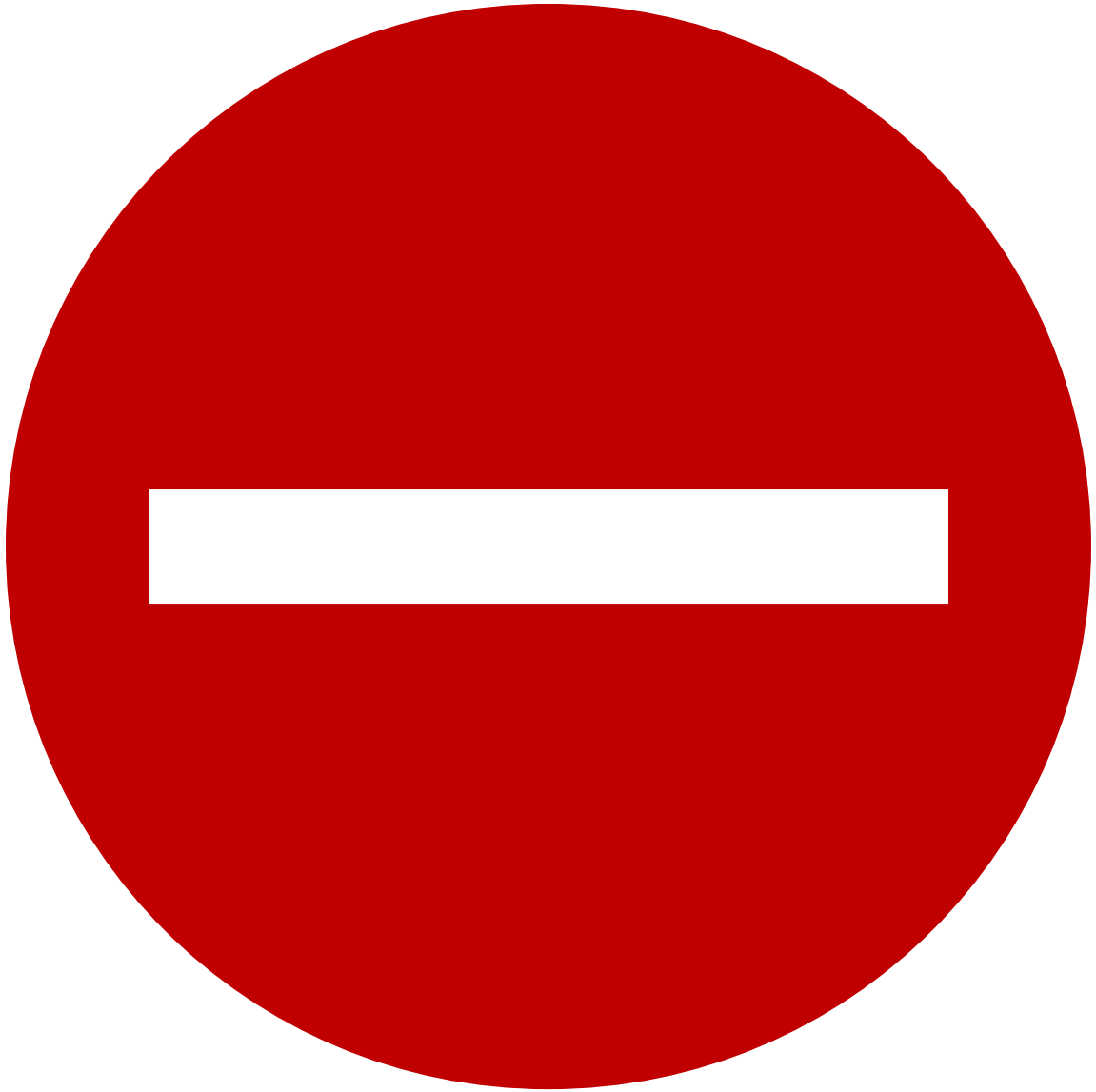
Explain jokes

Indicate borders polite



Please don’t

Be offended



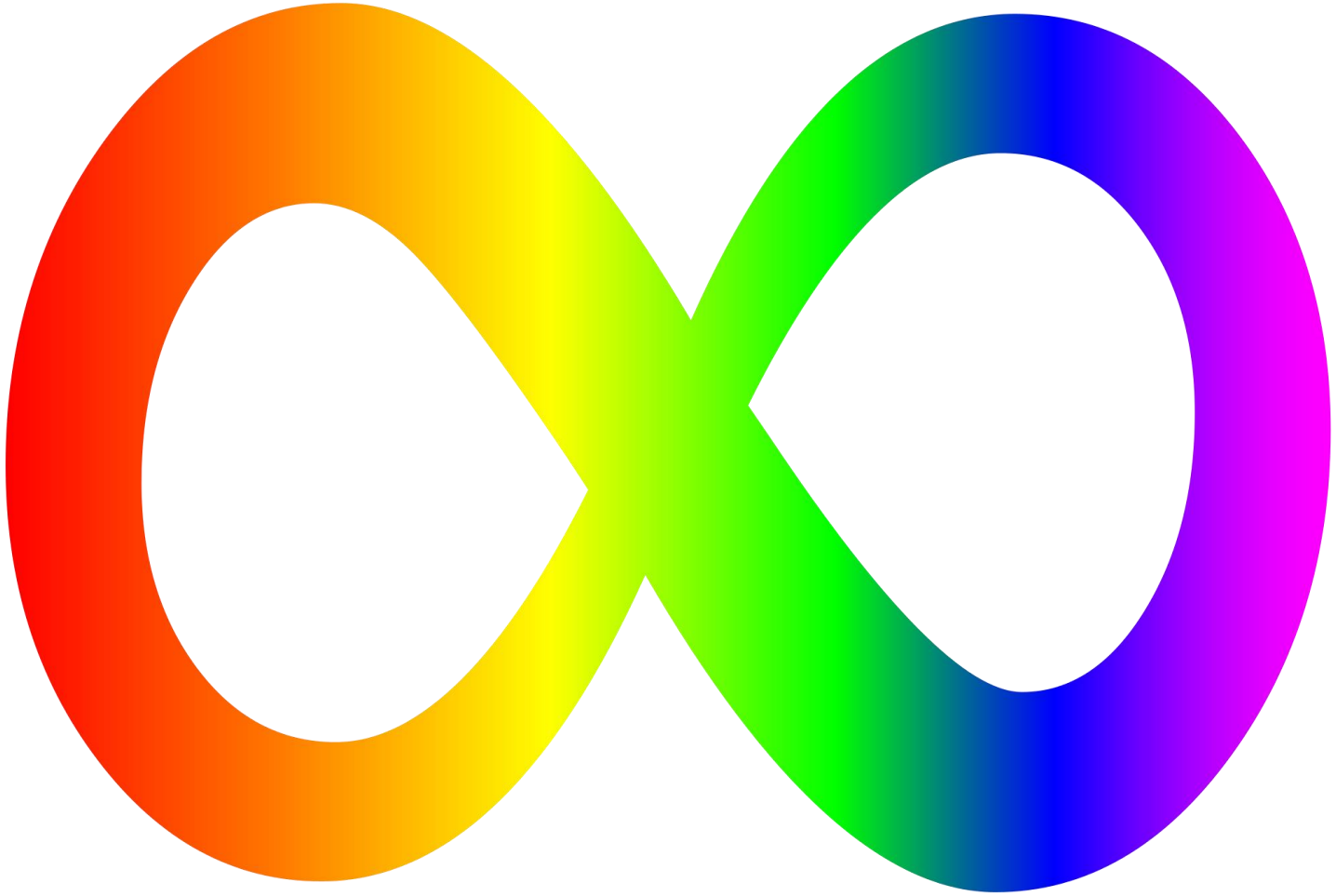
Difficulty: Being afraid to ask help

Advice to support

Look into his project

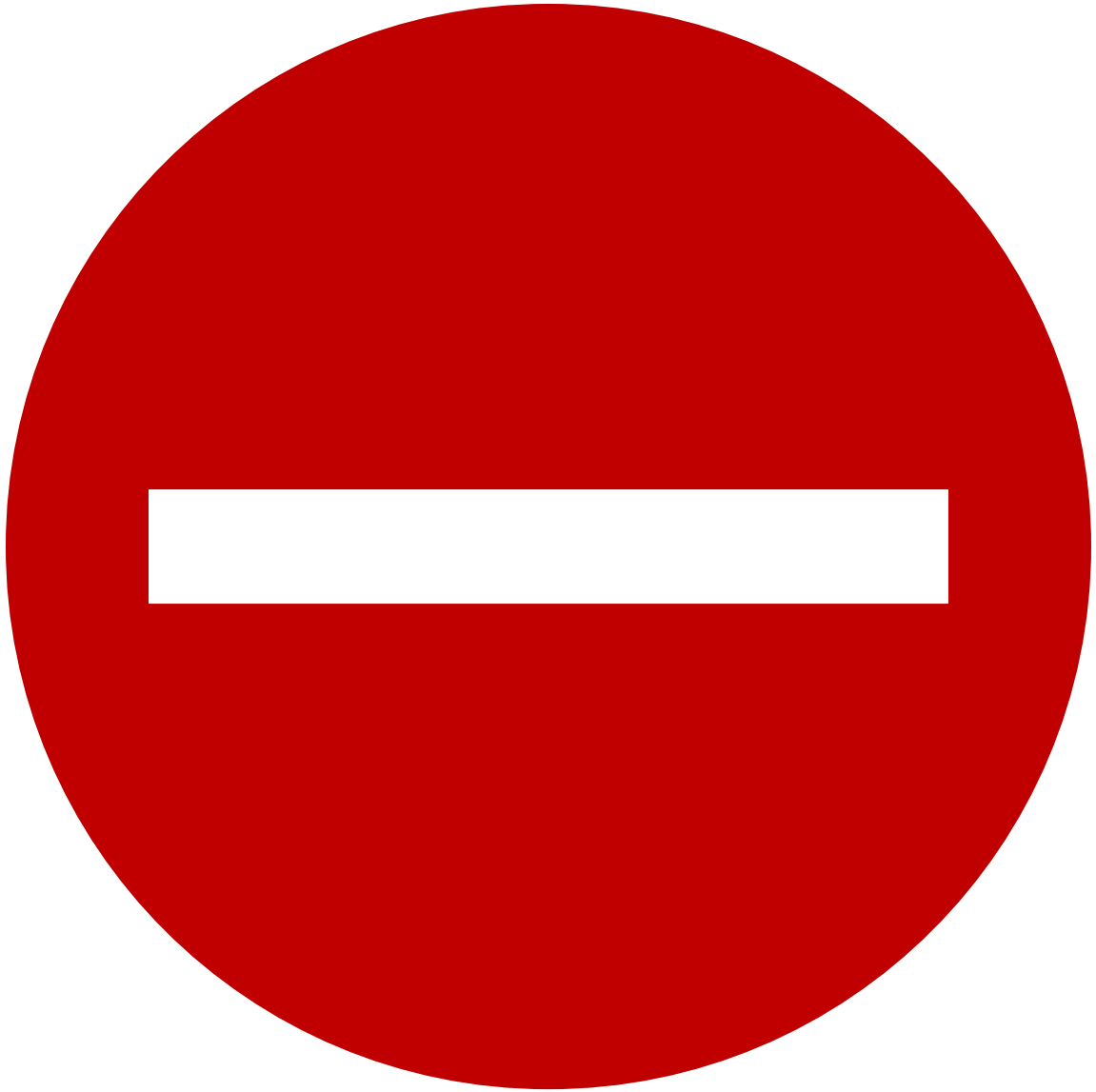
Try to fix his / her problem

Indicate she / she can say everything



Please don’t

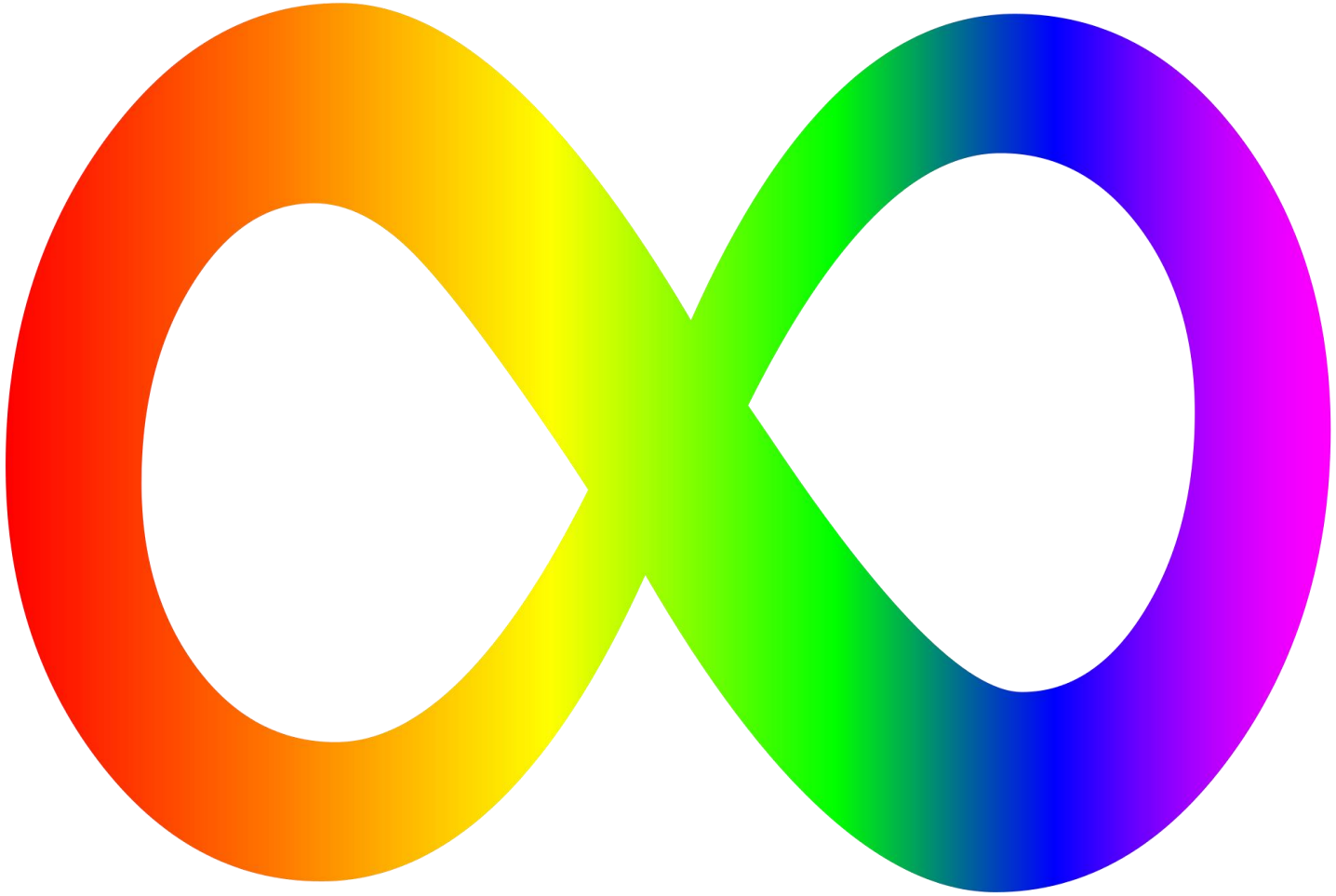
Ignore the person but
continue with coworkers



Difficulty: Too much on their own

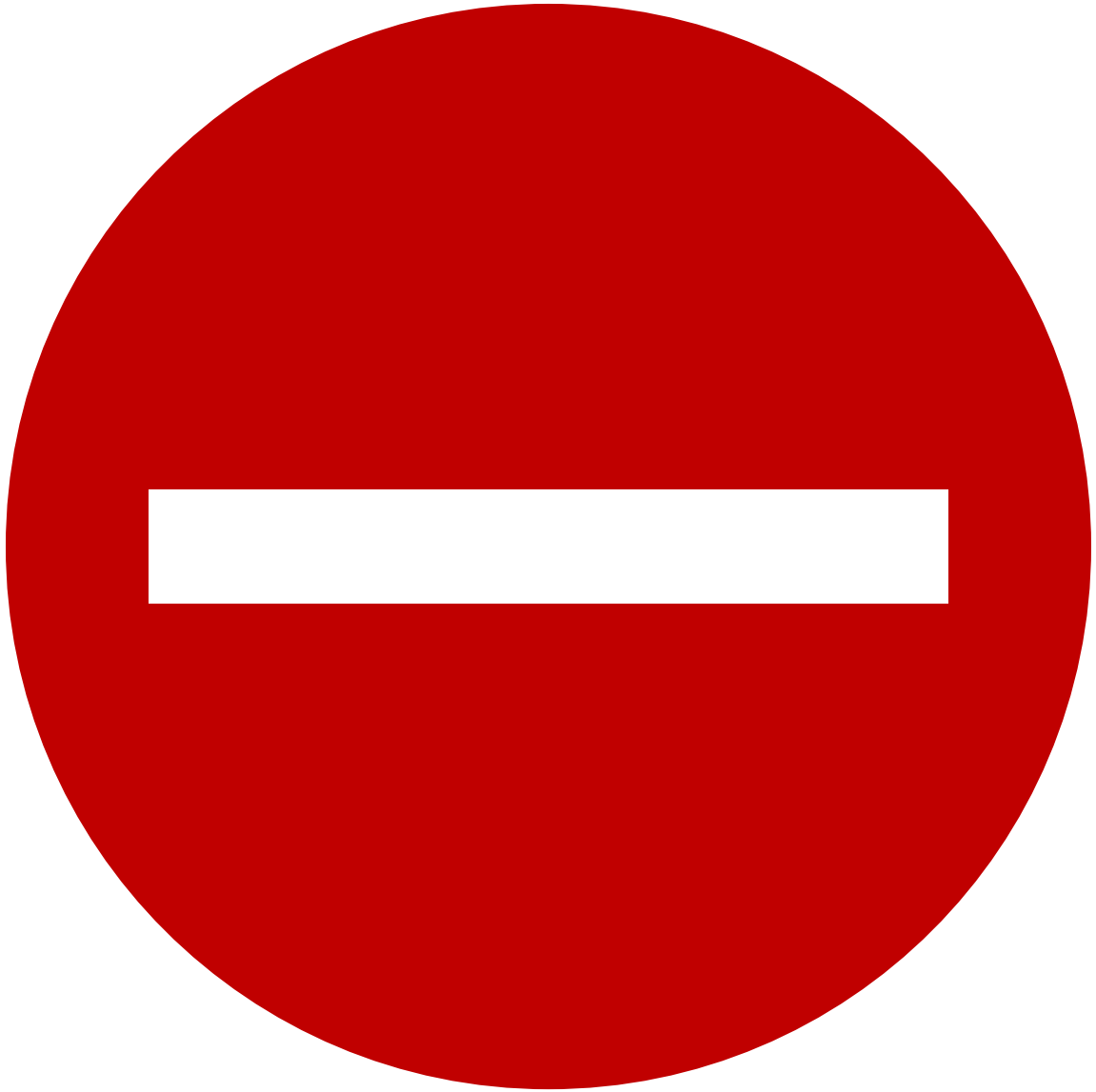
Advice to support

Try conversation
Start talking
Clap your hands
Wave to him



Please don’t

Complain about this

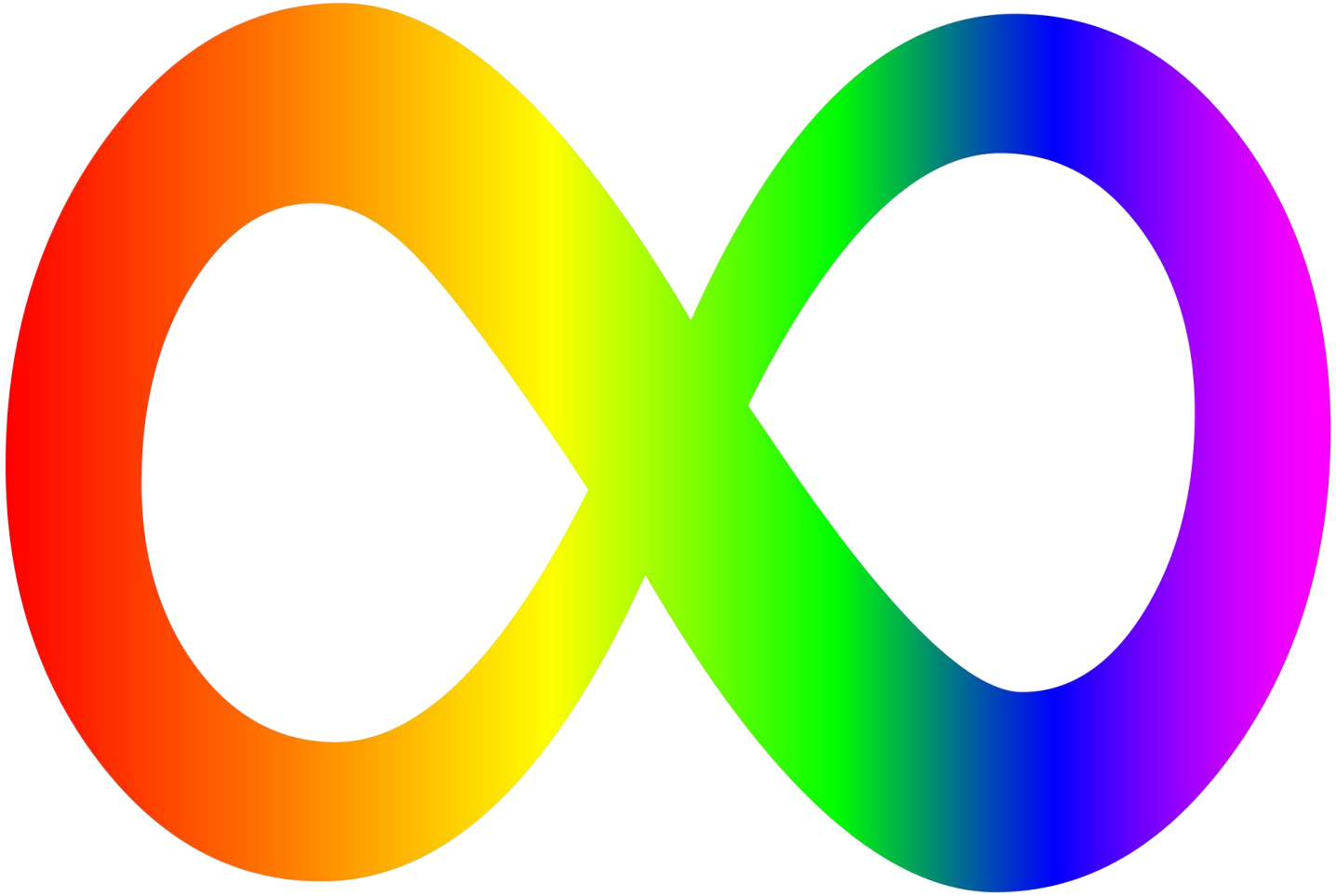


Difficulty: Have a strange planning

Advice to support

Suggest to help

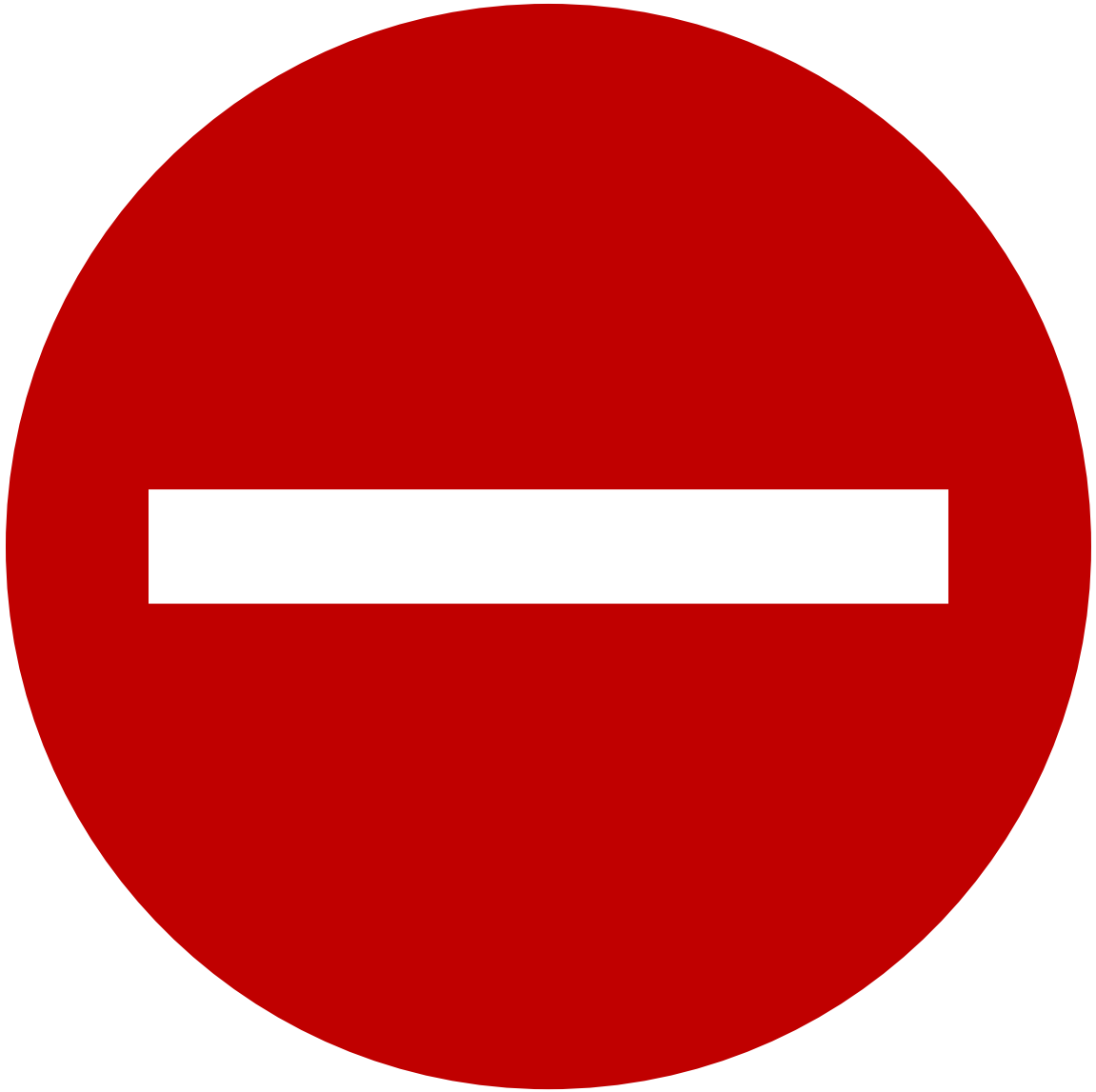
Indicate own time



Please don’t

Complain passive

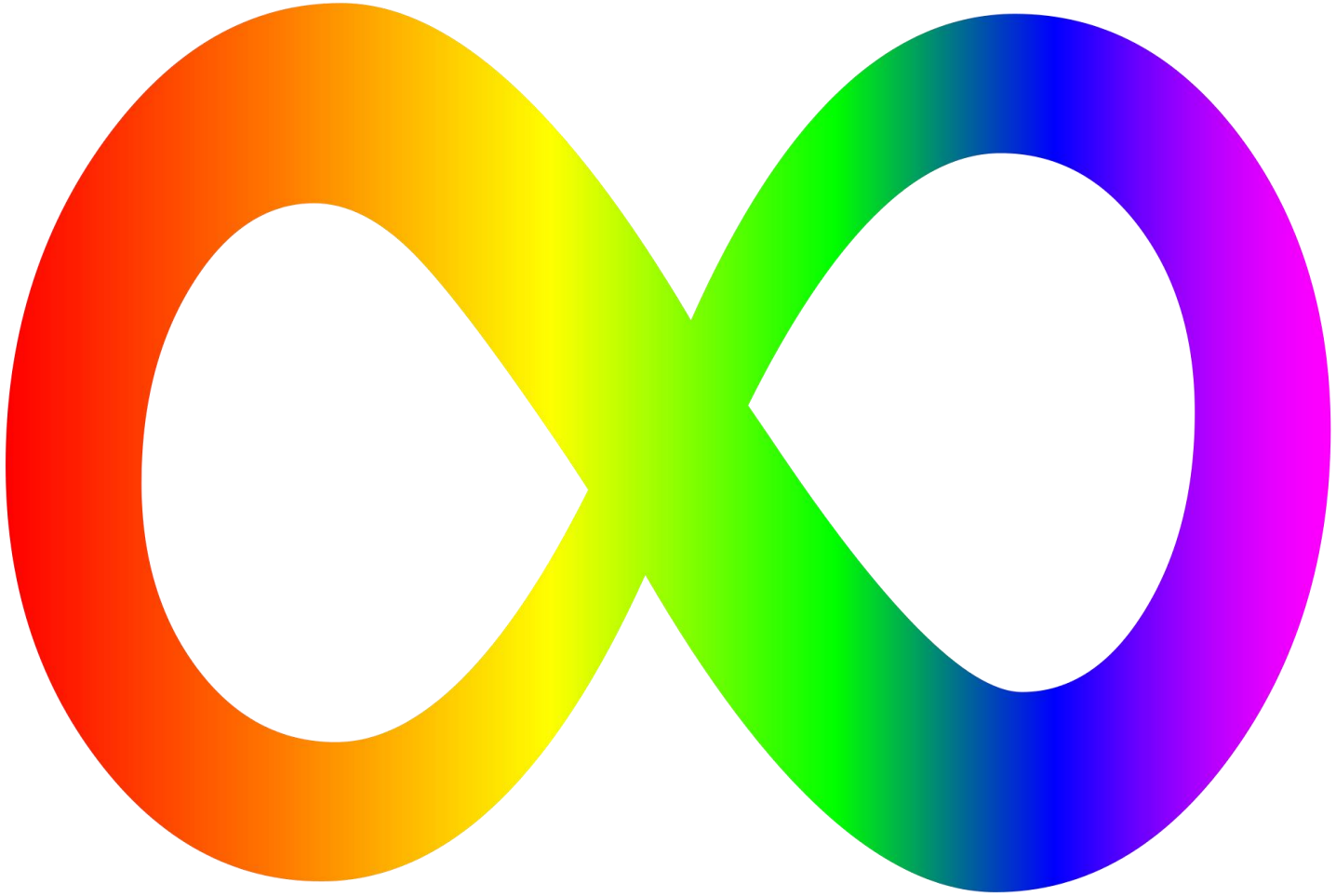
Always say yes



Difficulty: Have difficulties with structure

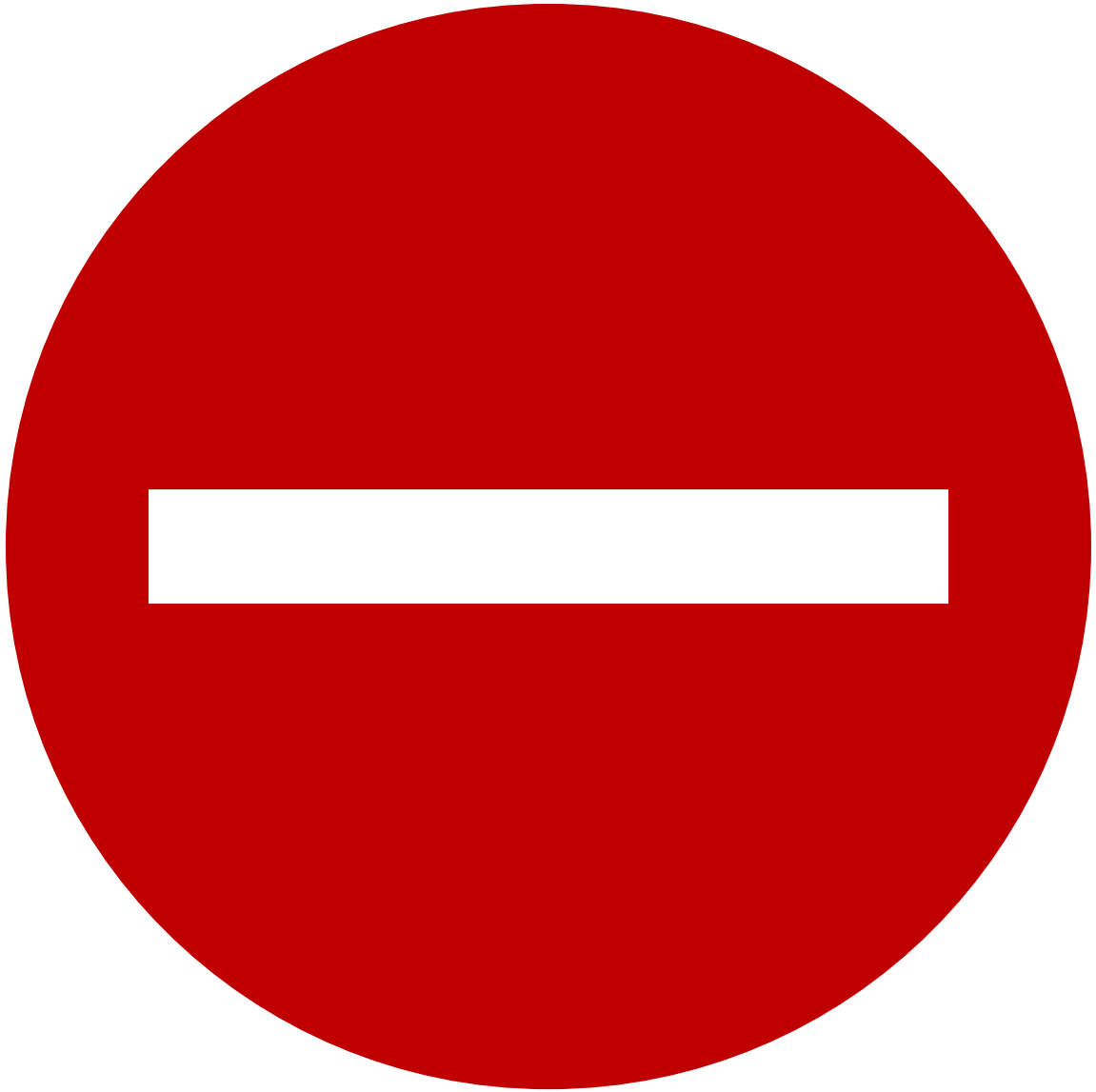
Advice to support

Suggest structure



Please don’t

Just leave them

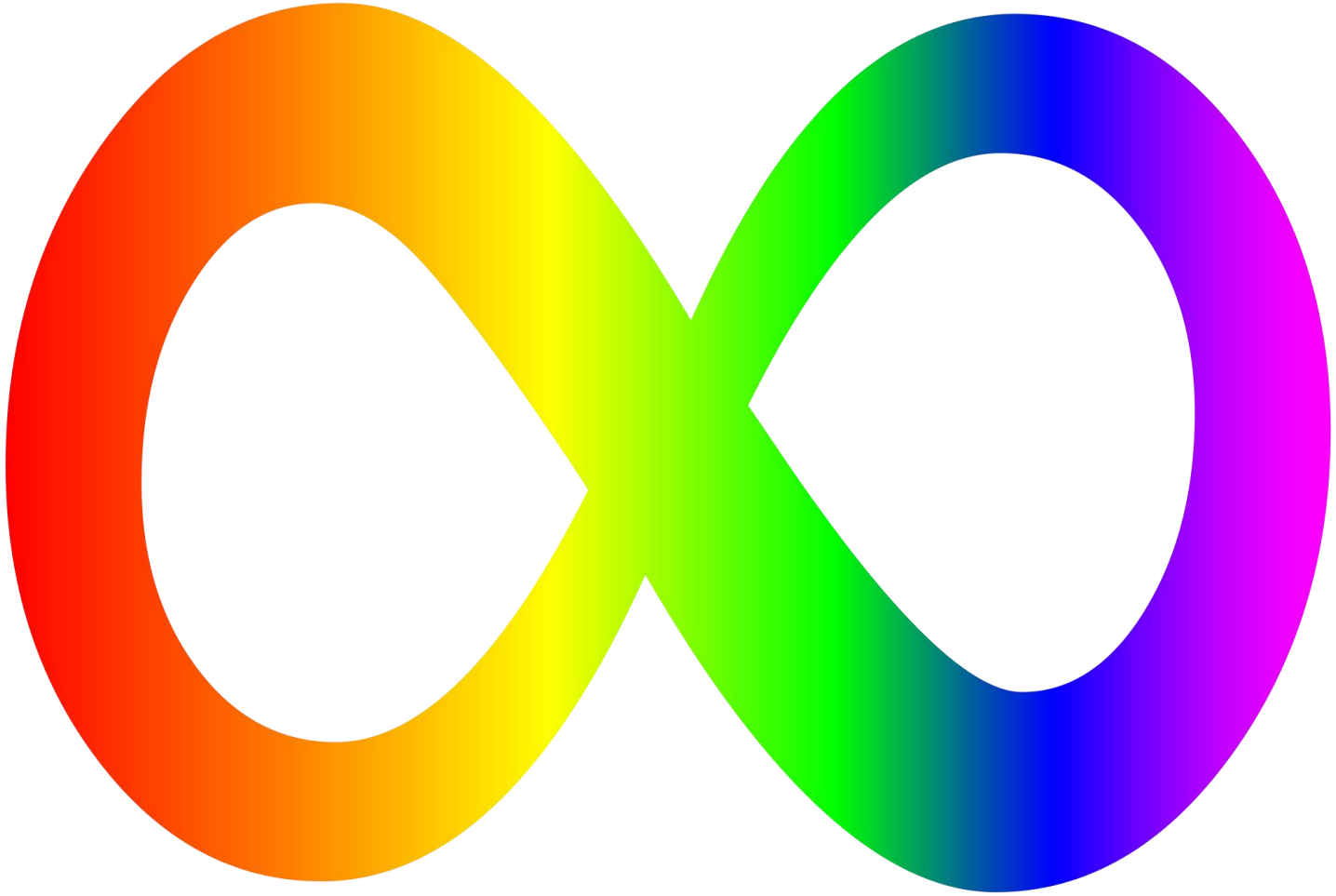


Difficulty: Need a lot of confirmations

Advice to support

Just give confirmations

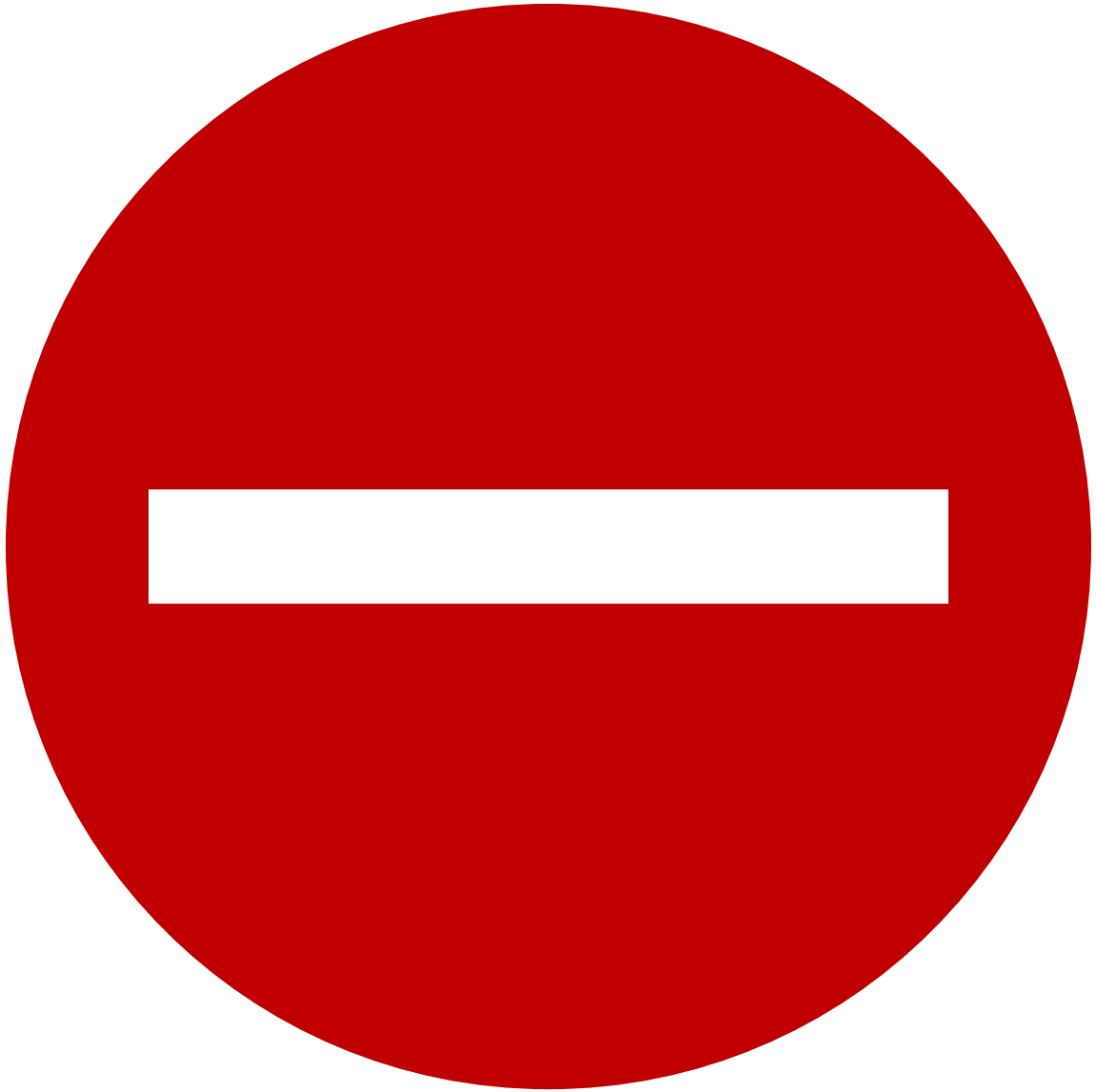
Understand person



Please don’t

Stop communicating

Ignore questions

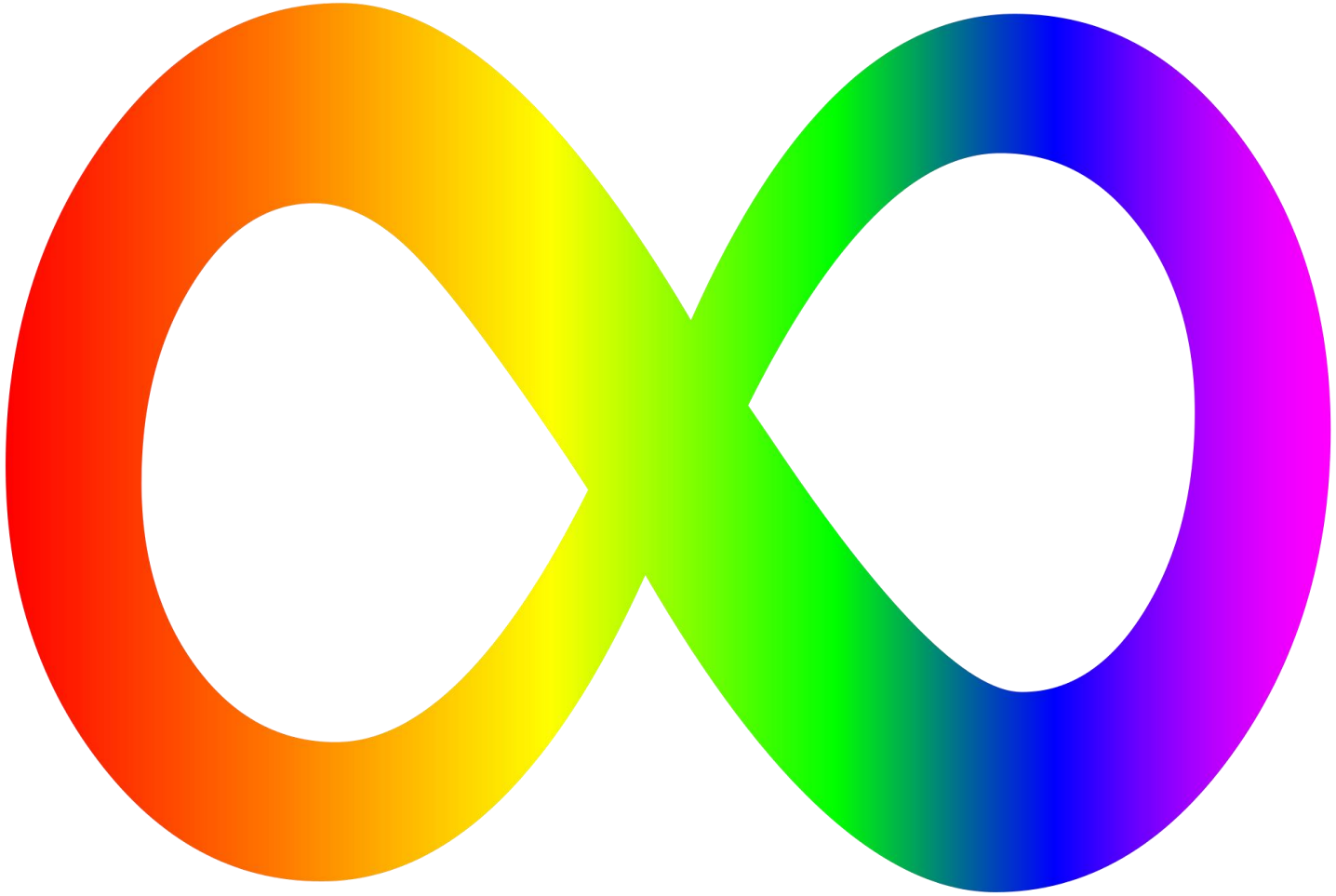


Difficulty: Have a lack of friends

Advice to support

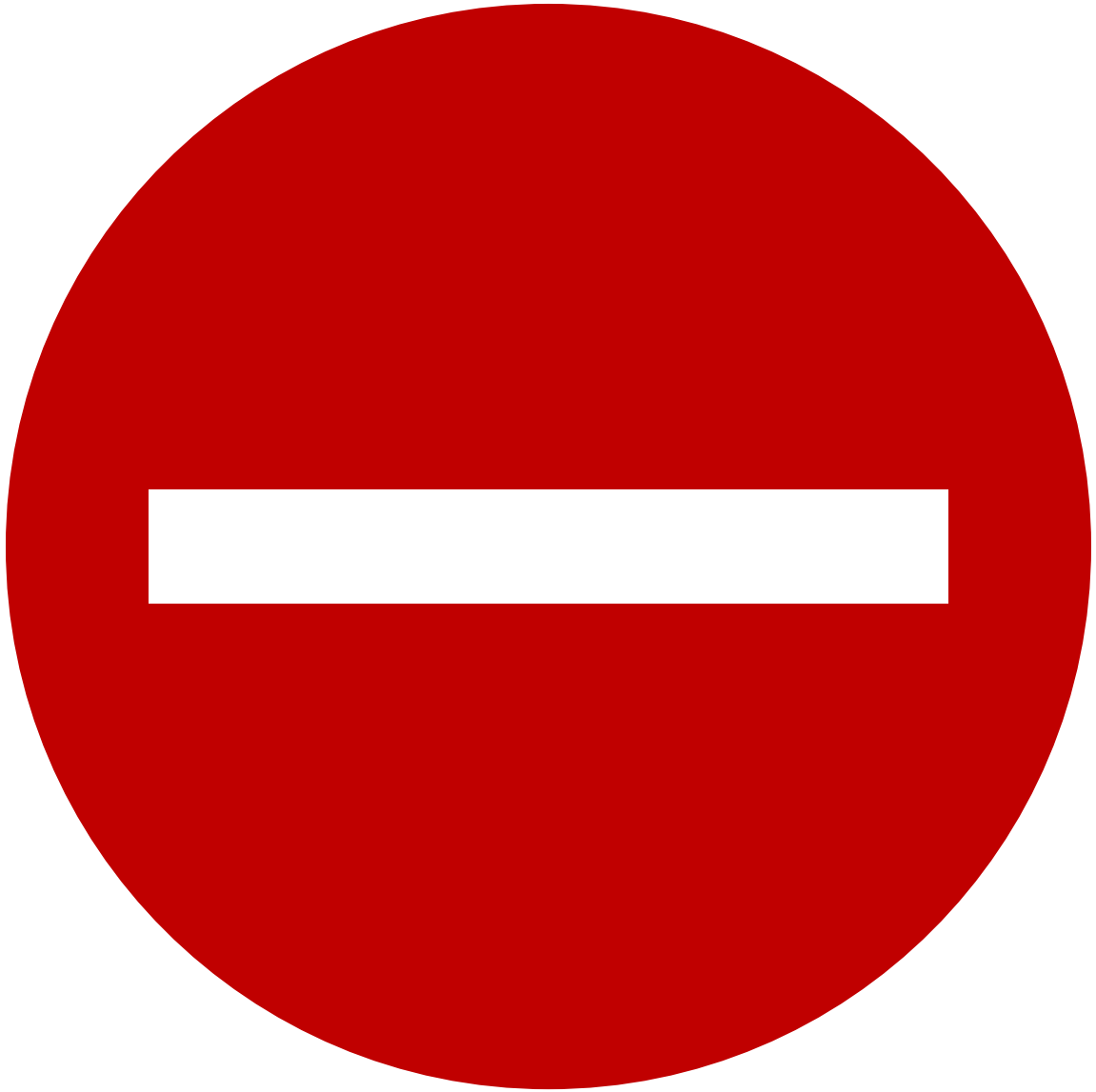
(neuro) diverse group of friends

Accept people to your friend group



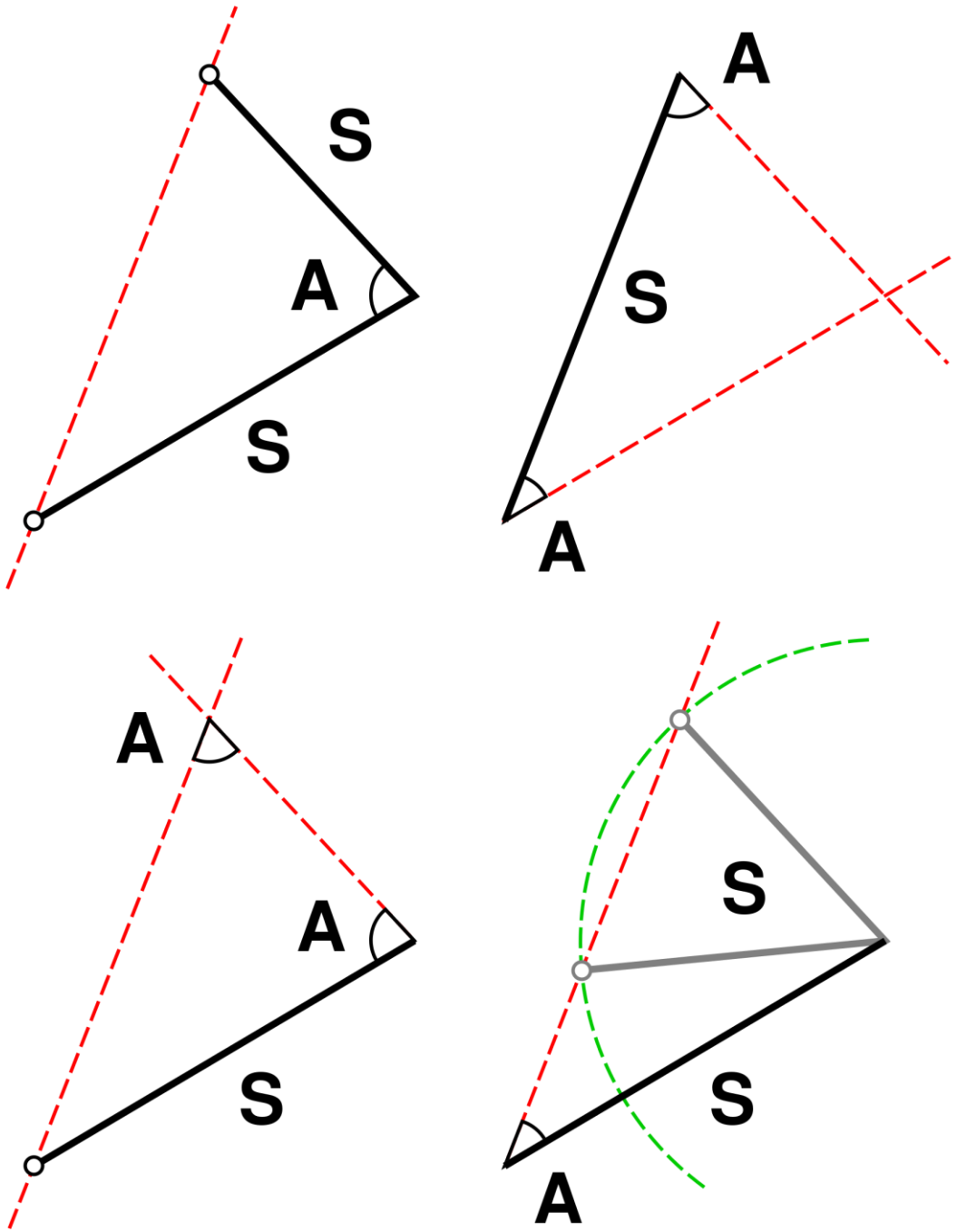
Please don’t

Just be friends with people are the same as you



Difficulty / Talent:

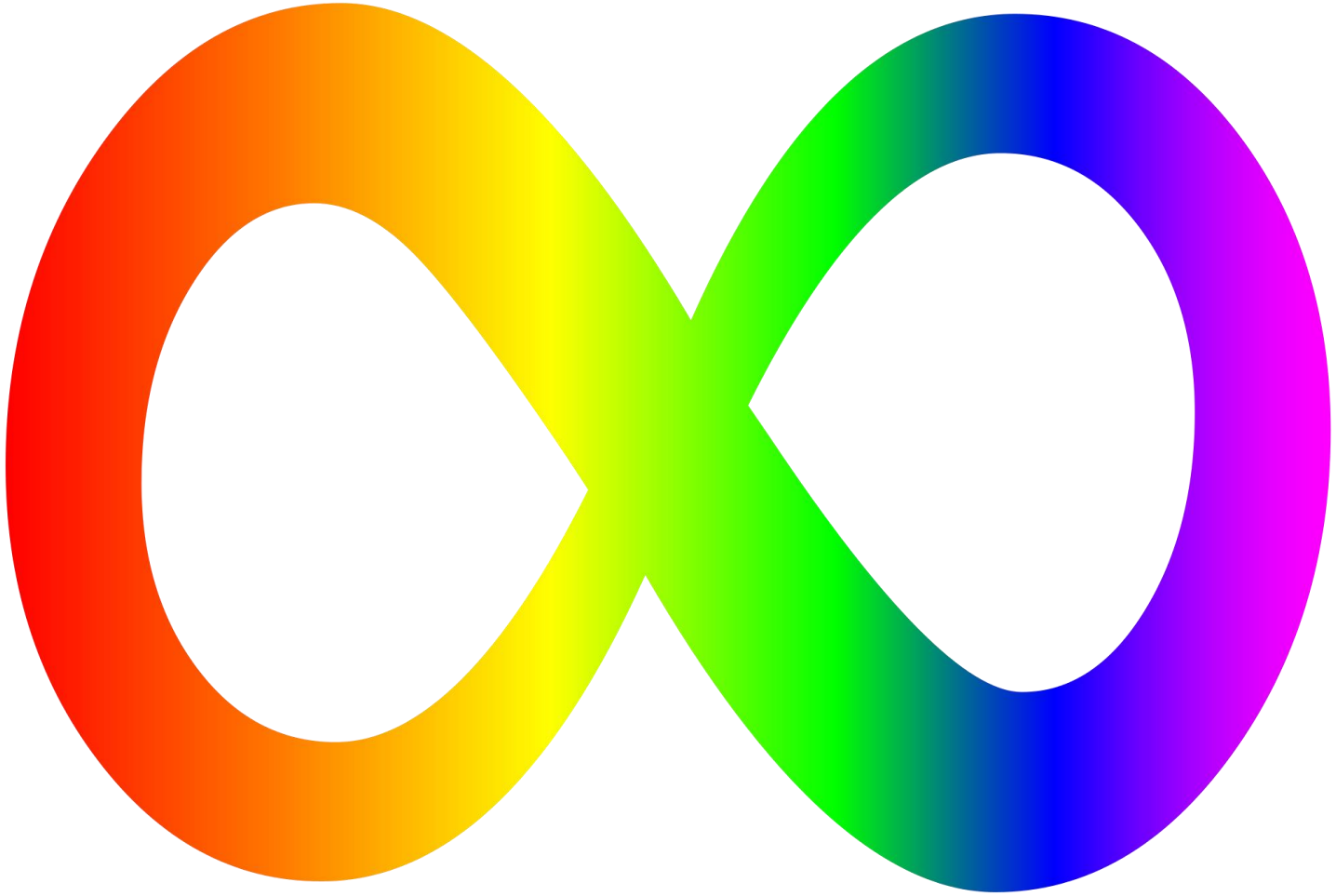
Have a specific detail view



Advice to support

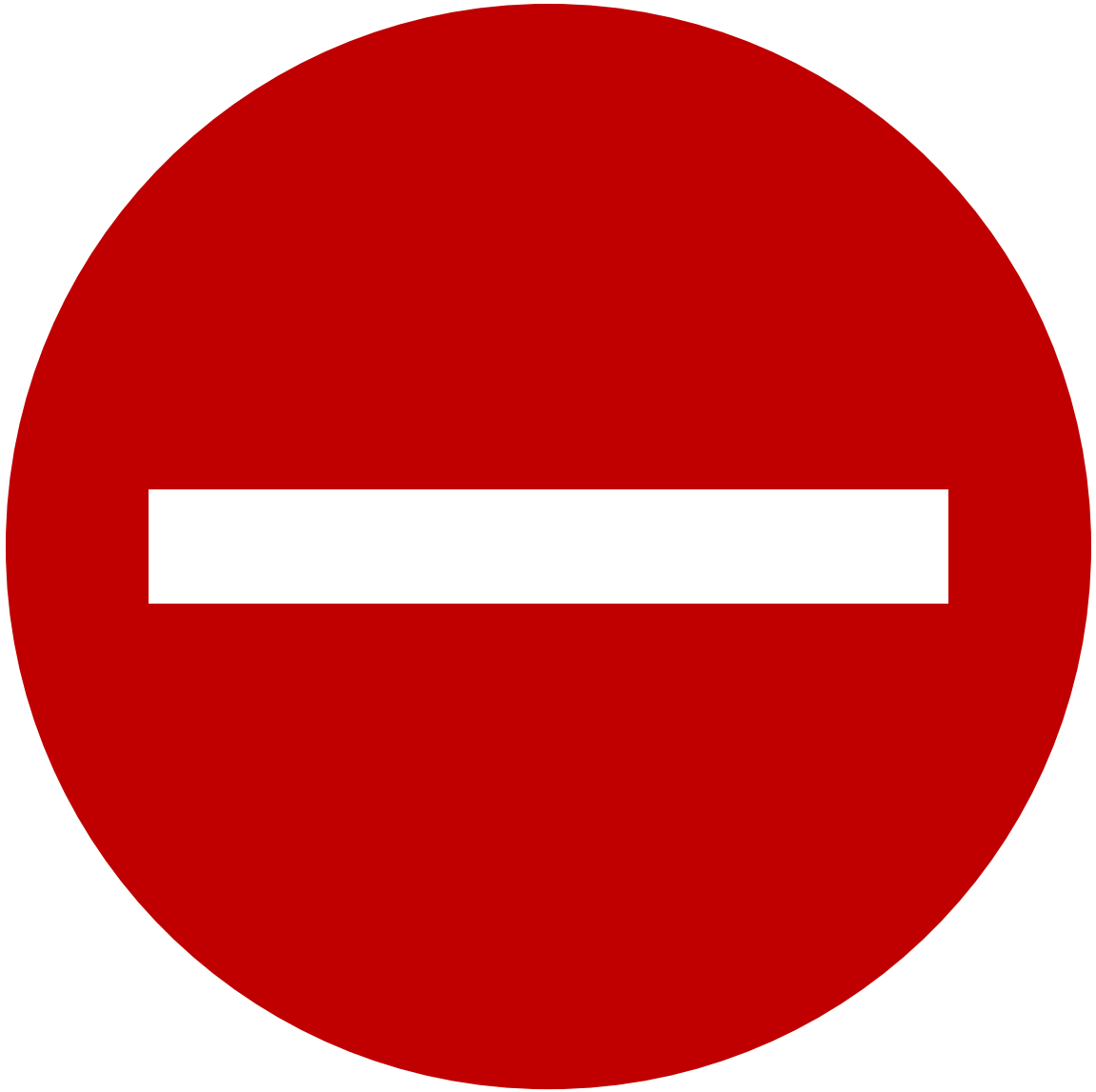
See the talent!

Ask to preform code reviews



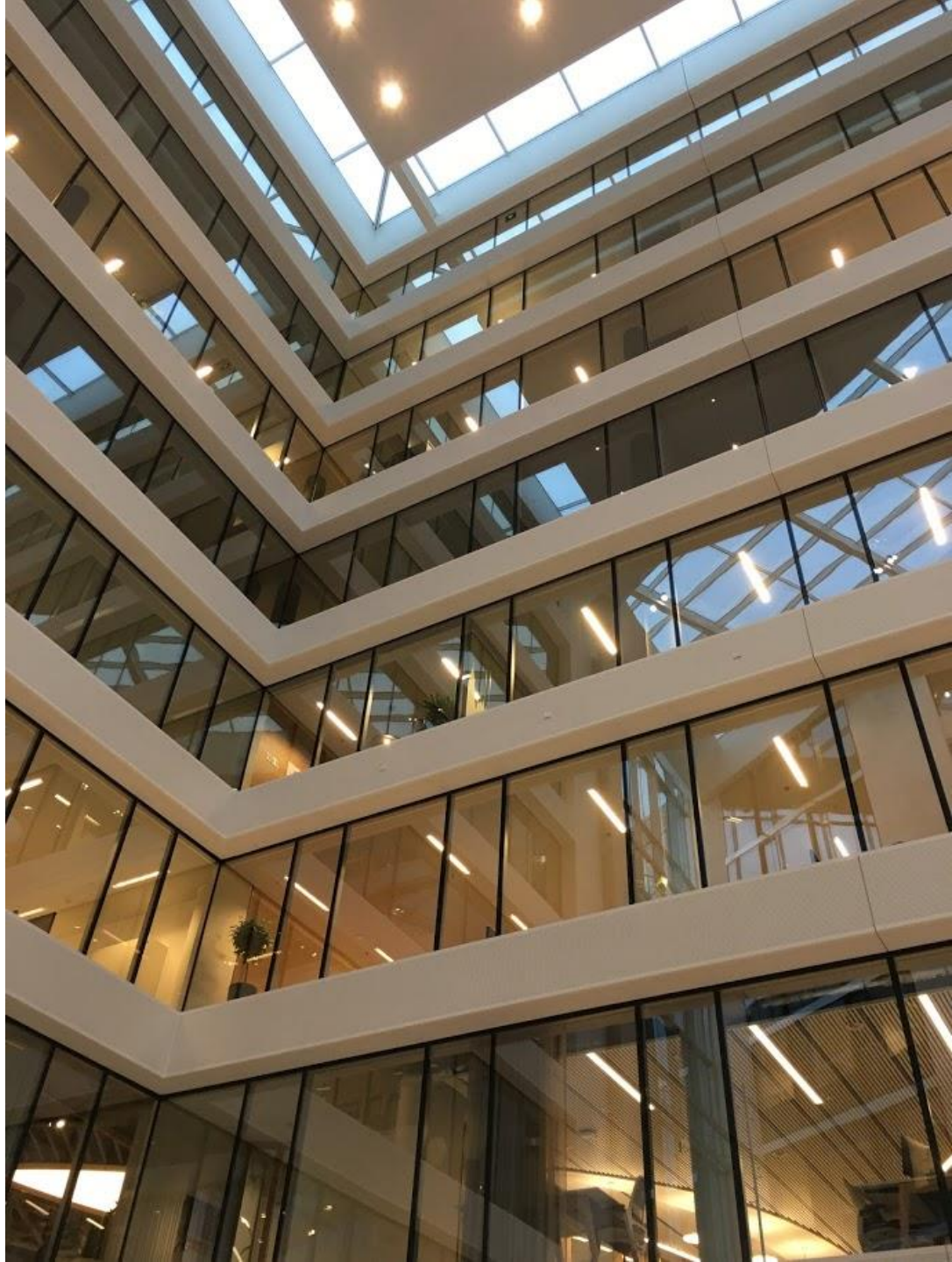
Please don’t

Only focus on time



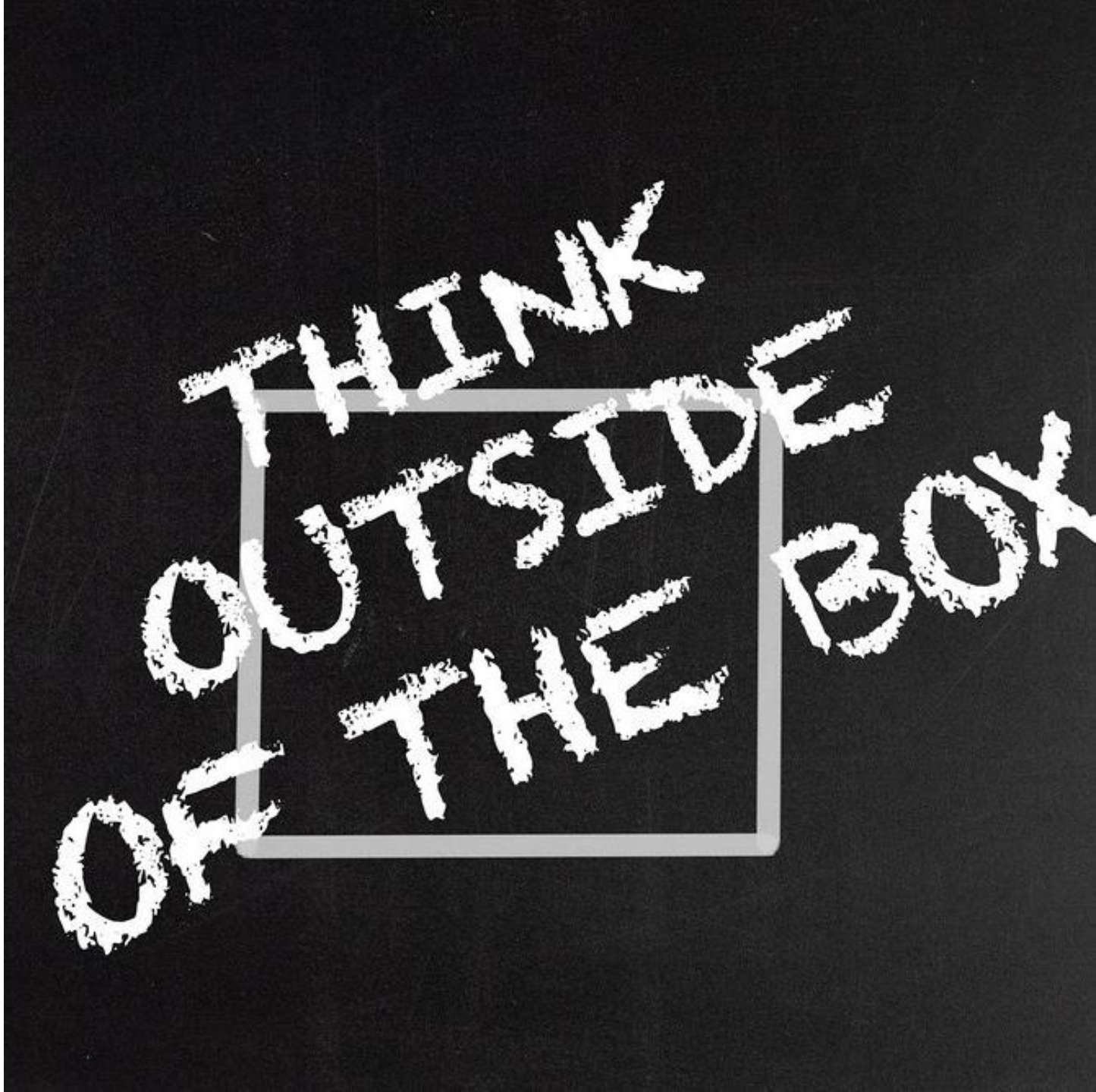
And finally: see the talents!

Talent: Hard workers (if they are motivated)

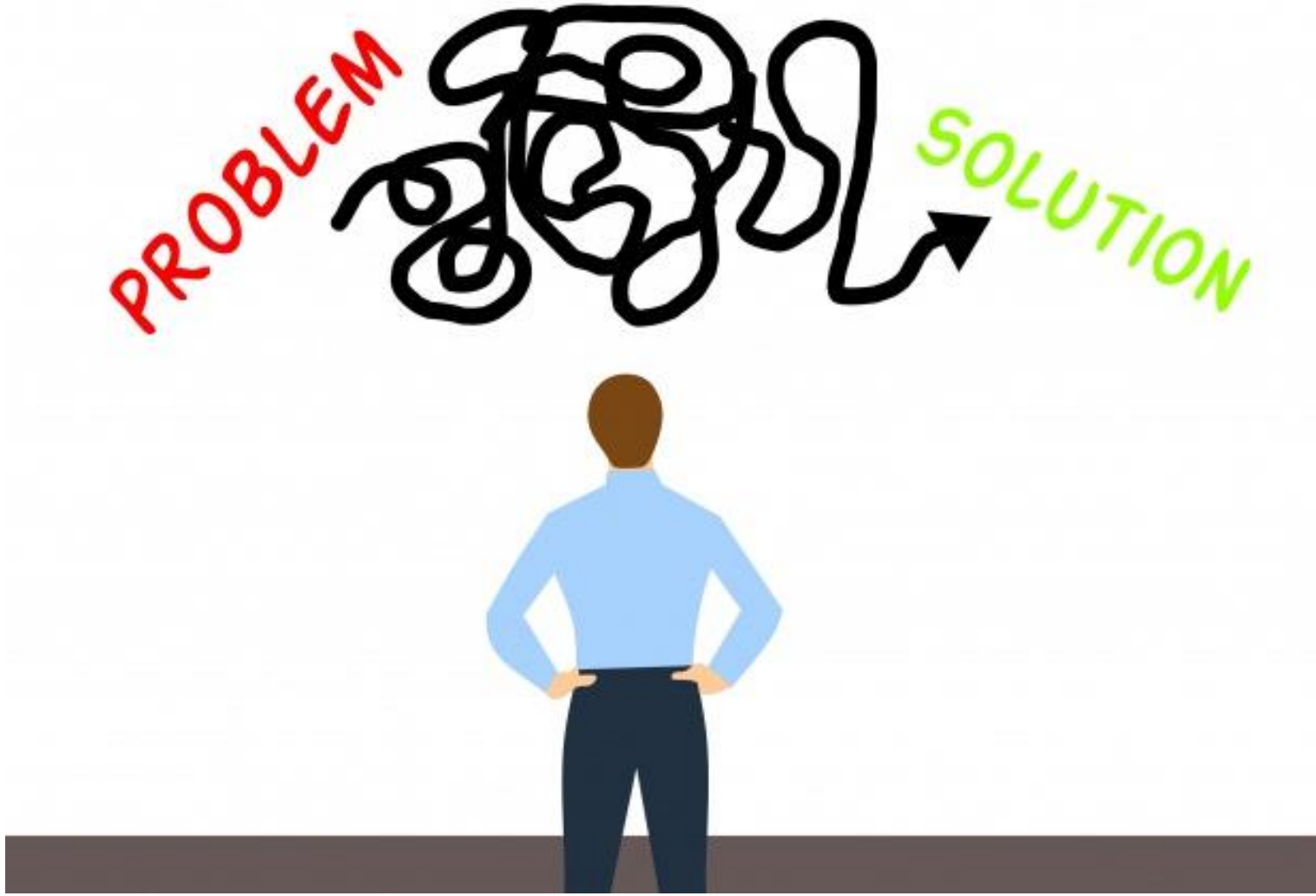


Talent: Very strict

Talent: See ‘outside the box’

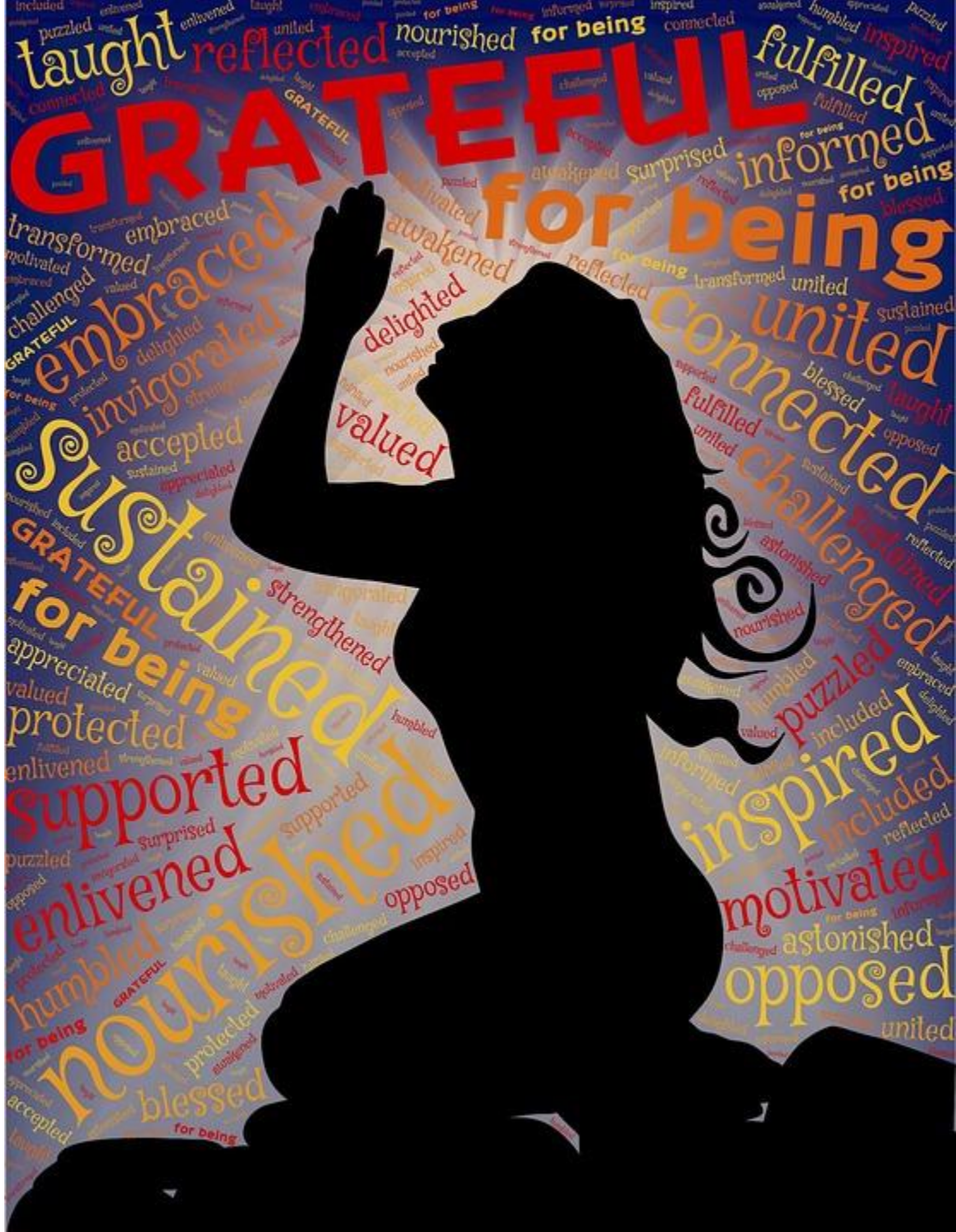


Talent: Problem solvers

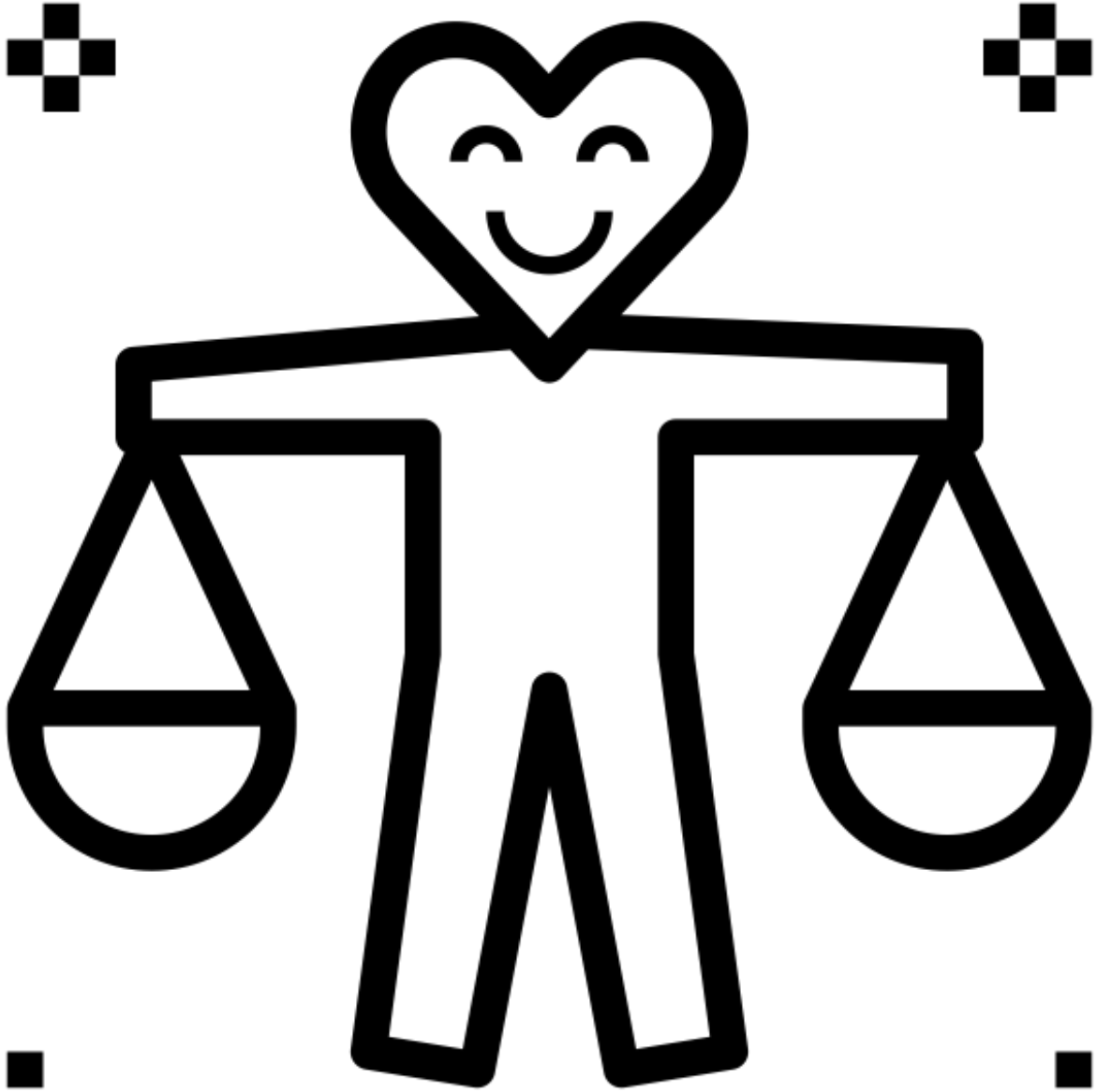


Talent: very enjoyable

Talent: Grateful



Talent: Honest



Created by Nithinan Tatah
from Noun Project

Wrap up

Microsoft

Q&A || Thanks

- Dennie Declercq
- Dennie@ddsoft.be
- @DennieDeclercq
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