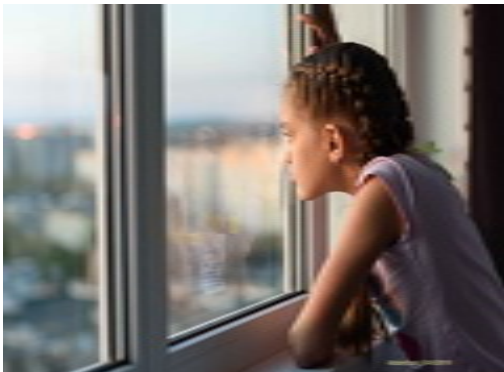


# ASBURY CIRCUIT RIDER

Volume 2 Issue 22

*May 22, 2022*

## Off Balance (Larger Windows)



Larger windows let in more light and expose more scenery. Pets prefer vantage points with plenty of viewing areas to keep watch on their domain. Our dog, Duke, likes the backyard view mellowed. But a groundhog still gets him on his feet and vocal.

Our fight, flight, or freeze response gets activated whenever threatened. This response is as automatic as hitting the break when we see the bright red lights come on in the car ahead of us. And it happens before we consciously recognize that it's happening.

Squirrels no longer get Duke's attention because they're no longer perceived as a threat. So he remains calm and barely

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Please continue to wear your masks when in the building. If you don't have one, let us know we will provide one for you.

**DONATE**

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## Climbing Fences (Setting and Keeping Boundaries)



An invisible fence is a popular way to keep pets at home without constructing a physical fence. The concept is simple. A wire is buried that carries an electrical charge when turned on. The pet, usually a dog, wears a collar with two electrodes aimed at the neck, which

provides a shock or vibrates whenever the pet gets near the buried wire.

While this idea may sound inhumane, makers of invisible fences remind potential customers that a pet running loose is less humane. Pets involuntarily traded in their knowledge of surviving on their own in exchange for daily pampering. Most dogs learn quickly to stay within the invisible boundaries that may be marked with visible flags during training.

Page 2



## Climbing Fences (Setting and Keeping Boundaries) ...cont from page 1

However, we no longer have a working invisible fence to keep our dog, Duke, from visiting neighbors. Although Duke seems to understand the idea of boundaries, he also notices when he is not being watched. Fortunately, he's been able to find a dog-friendly person to call the number on his collar to get a ride home.

Boundaries help keep Duke safe. And similarly, boundaries help keep you and me safe. But, like an invisible fence, the boundaries that keep us safe aren't seen, requiring communication. And must be turned on to work. And we turn on our boundaries when we intentionally set and hold limits.

One way to talk about boundaries is to consider our everyday individual roles.

As a pastor, I have a role in the life of Asbury Church. However, different persons have differing ideas about how I spend my time. Therefore, it's essential that I communicate and stick to what I'm capable of doing and can do. By saying no to a request outside the boundaries I set, I'm better able to be effective in my role as pastor.

It's important to set boundaries that protect us from harm, including trying to do too much.

The same is true for my role as a parent, husband, sibling, friend, and managing our nonprofit. We all have various roles that create expectations on our time and availability to live up to the expectations of the people around us.

And it's difficult for most of us to say no to a reasonable request, Particularly if the demand falls within the things we ordinarily do. And it's even more complicated if we're asked to do something we enjoy doing. And no's are more complex whenever we feel threatened.

According to Dr. Stephen Porges, we determine safety through a subconscious process called neuroception. Our brains rely on past memories to assess danger and whether we encountered either positive or negative effects from similar situations. This means that if setting and holding boundaries in the past resulted in negative consequences, saying no replays negative feelings.

This is why it is so important that we can engage the thinking part of our brain as we consider a request that violates our boundaries. According to Daniel Siegel, our prefrontal cortex secretes a substance that calms the fear center in our brains, known as the amygdala. The result is not unlike the way a mother consoles her frightened child.

Aundi Kolber adds that "the embodied knowledge that we are beloved no matter what" makes setting and holding boundaries possible for all of us to do. This process, she writes, is another way that science confirms that God created us with both the desire and capability to discover the inner peace promised by Jesus.

So, let's call reasonable expectations that we agree to meet our "load." Each of us has a load to carry based on our daily life roles. In Paul's letter to the church in Galatia, he writes that "each of you has to carry your own load" (Galatians 6:5). Yet a load may feel like something we don't want to carry.

Sarah Geringer writes that "a load can be a great blessing" in an article on her website. And as a mother of three children, Sarah lives out her role in the tasks that she takes on as a result of carrying the load that comes with motherhood. And she concludes that "My role as a mother has been the most satisfying job of my entire life."

Sarah's conclusion is consistent with mothers the world over. But parenting in general, and mothering in specific, comes with challenges, disappointments, and heartache. Nevertheless, those of us called to motherhood gladly carry the load that comes with the role.

**Each of you have to carry  
you own load.**  
**Galatians 6:5**



In Our Prayers

Kevin Croom  
 Sylvia Pittman  
 Shirley Craig  
 Richard Oram  
 Chris Freeman

FRIENDS AND LOVED ONES WHO ARE  
HOMEBOUND OR IN NURSING CARE

Nancy Elston            Elaine Lamoreaux  
 Norma Buzzard        Mary Nations

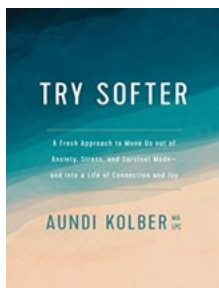


**PASTOR BOOK CLUB NEWS**

Pastor Book Club is still meeting via Zoom. Please call the Church Office for more info 810-235-0016 as it changes.

Meanwhile, as a lot of you are already aware, sharp increases in new infections of COVID are pushing us back into isolation. While our regular attenders are vaccinated, we realize that a large number of persons are not vaccinated.

Therefore, we reinstated our policy to require masks in our building for all persons when not eating or drinking. If you don't have a mask, we can provide one for you, just ask the office.



This month's book series is called, "Try Softer", by Aundi Kolber.

Thank you and everyone stay safe!

**COMING UP THIS WEEK**  
 MAY 23-29

- May 23 Mon 6:00pm            Worship Team
- May 24 Tues 10:00am-12:30pm  
    Food/Water Distribution  
    3:00pm            CDC Board Meeting
- May 25 Wed 12Noon            Pastor Book Club  
    11am-12Noon    Food Giveaway at  
    South Flint Soup Kitchen (No appointments needed)
- May 26 Thu
- May 27 Fri
- May 28 Sat 12Noon            Food Not Bombs
- May 29 Sun 10:30am  
    New Beginnings  
    Contemporary Worship

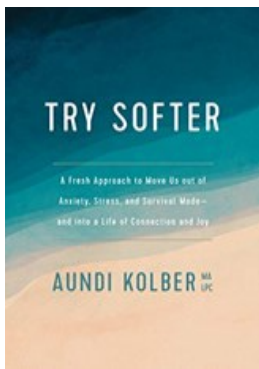
(We are live on [Facebook](#) and our newly launched [YouTube channel](#). You can find these links along with more information about us on our website at [FlintAsbury.org](#).)

## Asbury Worship Series "Masterpiece"



In Psalm 13 we find questions that everyone feels at times. "How much longer will you forget me, Lord? Forever? How much longer will you hide yourself from me? How long must I endure trouble? How long will sorrow fill my heart day and night? How long will my enemies triumph over me?" (Psalm 13:1-2).

## Book Club News



We began reading and discussing *Praying with the Church* by Scot McKnight as the Season of Lent started in March. We

plan to finish our study next week and turn our attention to Easter. <sup>1</sup>

We chose this book as a study during the Season of Lent because of the importance of Prayer in the

lives of nearly every person on the planet. Even persons who don't believe in a God may turn to whatever power that may be greater than their circumstances in search of comfort, protection, and forgiveness.

On the Wednesday after Easter we start a new adventure into the slow but rewarding process of self-discovery.

In parallel to a new worship series, *Masterpiece*, our Book Club digs deeper into the process of self-discovery. But not as a burden to be endured. Rather, as an exciting exploration of who we are behind our layers of protection. Let's call it our un-doctored selfie.

We're in search of that divine image that reflects our Creator. We know it's there beneath the layers

of past disappointments, hurts, and abandonments.

Whether you're a regular on Sunday mornings, only attend on an occasional holiday, or don't cross the threshold of a church building without coercion, there is something for everyone in this conversation.

The write-up found on Amazon has this to say about our next book:

In a world that preaches a "try harder" gospel—just keep going, keep hustling, keep pretending we're all fine—we're left exhausted, overwhelmed, and so numb to our lives. If we're honest, we have been

## Leadership in Worship & Service

Tony, Mirium	Welcome Team
Anthony, Jim	Ushers
Jonathon, Terrance	Production Team
Miriam	Children
Cyndi	Worship Leader
Christine & Norma	Cafe

## Asbury Staff

Rev. Dr. Tommy McDoniel	Pastor & Exec Dir
Connie Portillo	Office Manager
Sylvia Pittman	Empowerment Arts
Jim Craig	Board & Leadership Chair

Kevin Croom	Exec Chef & Dir Opers
Matt DePalma	Farms Manager
Chris Freeman	South Campus Bldg Mgr
Israel Unger	Finance Director
Kim Sims	Connections Suprv
Terrance Williams	Arts Center Mgr



*“Masterpiece”... Asbury Worship Series ...cont from pg 4*

More often than not, we feint humility to cover up our feelings of despair. We wonder if God made some sort of horrible mistake while creating us. Perhaps a part was left out or a piece cross-threaded during our assembly.

Other times, we hypothesize that it isn't God's fault. It was our parents or caregivers that dropped the ball. Maybe it was that horrible thing that happened. That thing that we don't want to talk about lest we condemn ourselves by our own testimony.

The most damning theory of all is that we're somehow irreversibly flawed. It all started with a wrong decision that we can never take back. And no matter how hard we tried, we never really recovered. For years, denial worked best and would still work if it weren't for those voices that won't stop reminding us. "You know what you are!" they shout.

Welcome to our new series, *Masterpiece*. A series about you and your struggle for loving yourself as much as God loves you. Not just through rational logic or because the Bible says so, but because you actually believe you are a masterpiece.

*Masterpiece* is conceived as a trilogy. The first two parts are based on a book by Aundi Kolber. A licensed therapist who shared her own struggles and dedicated her life to helping others deal with their own brokenness. Her book is titled *Try Softer*.

John Li joins our series design team as a content expert. With advanced degrees in Psychology and Sociology, John brings academic rigor to this intersection between faith and science.

As Psalm 13 continues we read a recognition of God's saving grace at work. The Psalmist sings out to God "I rely on your constant love; I will be glad, because you will rescue me. I will sing to you, O Lord, because You have been good to me (Psalm 13:5-6).

I pray that you will join us each Sunday morning at 10:30 am. We share our weekly episodes on our [YouTube channel](#). We go live at 10:30 am. You can find these links along with more information about us, or join our live broadcast on our [website](#) at [FlintAsbury.org](http://FlintAsbury.org).

Pastor Tommy

<sup>2</sup> Aundi Kolber. *Try Softer: A Fresh Approach to Move Us out of Anxiety, Stress, and Survival Mode--and into a Life of Connection and Joy*. Carol Street, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2020.

## Off Balance (Larger Windows).... *cont. from pg 1*

notices them feasting on or storing walnuts. But a groundhog snacking on plants in the yard puts Duke into attack mode. He can't help himself.

On the other hand, fireworks or thunder send Duke into an interior hiding place.

But what if the threat isn't immediate or mostly imaginary yet the anxiety associated with real danger persists? Perhaps we have an upcoming appointment with a doctor or a meeting that creates fear.

If the feelings associated with this state of alarm persist, some of us may discover we're agitated, anxious, or angry. We start to feel overwhelmed. Psychologists call these symptoms hyperarousal.

On the other hand, some of us may experience numbness, disassociation, or exhaustion or notice that we lack energy. We may feel depressed. Psychologists call these symptoms hypo arousal.

When feelings associated with hyperarousal or hypo arousal occur, we're out of balance. In other words, the amount of anxiety falls outside our window of tolerance. Our ability to handle the stresses our body associates with perceived threats.

Dr. Dan Siegel first developed the idea that each of us has a particular window of tolerance. According to a brochure for parents and teachers published by the Island of Jersey Psychology and Wellbeing Service, "the Window of Tolerance describes

the best state of 'arousal' or stimulation in which we can function and thrive in everyday life. When we exist within this window, we can learn effectively, play, and relate well to ourselves and others."

However, whenever we're pushed outside our window of tolerance, our reaction isn't pretty and quite unhealthy for ourselves and everyone around us.

We all have different 'windows' due to factors such as significant childhood experiences, our Neurobiology, social support, environment, and coping skills. Our windows change, but the wider we can make our windows, the less likely we'll experience anger, frustration, or feel flat, low, and lacking energy.

The go-to approach that is readily available is simple. Avoid anything and anyone that causes us to move outside our window of tolerance. But unfortunately, this approach will likely lead to isolation or at least a more complicated life.

And we can try to help one another. Children, in particular, need help in learning awareness of their own window of tolerance. But hear this clearly: You must be sure that you're operating within your own window of tolerance before you consider supporting someone else. If you are outside your own window, focus on your lack of balance first rather than project your problems on someone already struggling.

A better approach is to expand your window of tolerance. First, it's essential to be self-aware of what triggers your hyperarousal or hypo arousal. Knowing your triggers makes it easier to manage your emotions when they appear. This also helps you remain within your window of tolerance.

The amount of stress that we can tolerate is affected by both factors that we can't control and some that we can. For example, traumatic experiences from childhood affect how well we handle stress, and we can't undo what already happened. But we can do something about how we respond.

Other factors that affect our window of tolerance include the amount of sleep we get. And our responses may be more intense after using mood-altering substances that offer temporary numbness.

Lord, you have examined me,  
and you know me. You know  
everything I do.

Psalm 139:1

And the same can be said for every role of every person. When we carry the load God chooses for us to carry, we find satisfaction and joy. But we experience the opposite when we try to carry another person's load.

Aundi Kolber writes that "Jesus was ultimately a suffering servant, but He lived out this truth from a place of choice." Jesus knew that His joy came from living out His role as the Messiah. And He carried His own load rather than ask others to carry it for Him. But Jesus was also clear regarding boundaries.

We set boundaries when we refuse to carry another person's load. Does it surprise you that Jesus tells us to carry our own loads and refuse to carry the load of our neighbor? Let's break this down before jumping to any conclusions.

First, in Paul's letter, he also writes that we should "Help carry one another's burdens" (Galatians 6:2). The distinction between a load and a burden is critical to understanding boundaries. Burdens are intended to be shared because no one of us can carry burdens on our own and find satisfaction. The differences are often subtle but critical to healthy relationships.

A burden may come out of extenuating circumstances, such as illness or injury, preventing a person from carrying their own load. Burdens also come out of community activities that require cooperation

and working together to accomplish. Therefore, God expects us to share burdens in addition to carrying our own load.

Boundaries help us to communicate where the differences lie. Unfortunately, while this sounds simple enough, we humans are messy and complex. And sometimes we lack the motivation to carry anything, including our own loads.

You can join us each Sunday online by going to the button on the homepage of our [website](#) - [Click here to watch](#). This button takes you to our [YouTube channel](#). You can find more information about us on our website at [FlintAsbury.org](http://FlintAsbury.org).

A reminder that we publish this newsletter that we call the *Circuit Rider* each week. You can request this publication by email. Send a request to [connect@FlintAsbury.org](mailto:connect@FlintAsbury.org) or let us know when you send a message through our [website](#). We post an archive of past editions on our website under the tab, Connect - choose [Newsletters](#).

Pastor Tommy

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Sarah Geringer. "The Difference Between a Load and a Burden." © sarahgeringer.com, February 5, 2020. Retrieved from: [link](#).

Dr. Menije. "I Have a Hard Time Setting Boundaries; Where Do I Begin?." © / embracingyouththerapy.com, June 23, 2021. Retrieved from: [link](#)

Life Group Questions & Notes:

Help carry one another's burdens...Each of you have to carry your own load.

Galatians 6:2, 5

NOTES FROM WORSHIP

Five horizontal lines for taking notes.

QUESTIONS FOR LIFE GROUPS

- 1 Read Galatians 6:2, 5. How we choose to distinguish between loads and burdens affects how we interpret these instructions in Paul's letter to the church in Galatia. What is the load that you carry? What are some of the burdens that you share with others?
2. Read this week's article titled Climbing fences. What daily roles keep you busy? Which roles are your favorites? Why? How do you choose to respond when some asks you for help? Do you find it difficult to say no? Why or why not? What boundaries do you need to set for yourself or struggle keeping?
3. How can the members of your group help you this week and on-going to help you to be more receptive to hearing and understanding the Word of God? Pray for each other to have the Holy Spirit bless you with more courage.



“Feed Flint”



## “Feed Flint”

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A meal goes a long way for a senior living alone, a family struggling to make ends meet, or a child fearful of empty shelves at home. But for the residents of Flint who carry the effects of lead-tainted water, nutrition is critical. Feed Flint provides locally grown, chemical-free, fresh produce to residents living in and around Flint. And we're hoping that you can help us provide 10,000 meals this summer.

Feed Flint includes takeout meals, produce boxes with recipes, and home deliveries as part of our work to guide and support families in moving to sustainable abundance. The reality is that Michigan's food insecurity levels got worse during the COVID-19 pandemic, and this summer's recovery is leaving behind those at the most risk of having to miss meals.

### **Flint families continue to struggle with the ongoing effects of the water crisis.**

We're bringing together the resources of the Asbury Community Development Corporation. This includes Asbury Farms, the South Flint Soup Kitchen, the Asbury Community Help Center, multiple food pantries, and our Sizzling Culture Mobile Food Trailer. Our plan is to care for our neighbors when they need it most. We accept all people as they are, and our doors are always open to anyone.

Asbury Farms provides locally grown produce used to create fabulous and nutritious meals. Our seed-to-table approach is community-based. This not only helps families make it through emergencies and crises. We help move families towards sustainable abundance.

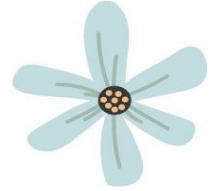
Our Sizzling Culture program provides jobs and new skills to our city's youth. This includes year-round employment. Our staff and most of our volunteers come from the neighborhoods we support. We call this sustainable abundance because families move from need-based on scarcity to enough based on community-generated abundance.

Our work is also about food and justice. Our vision is a revitalized community where every resident can use their talents and passions for the common good, where children grow into active citizens. And all residents can enjoy safety, good health, and a culture that fosters life-long learning and satisfying lives. This summer, help us address food insecurity and strengthen Flint's budding local food system by supporting the Feed Flint campaign. Thank you for taking the time to see what we're doing and considering how you can help.

Donate to our Feed Flint Campaign by visiting:  
[flintasbury.org/feed-flint-donate](https://flintasbury.org/feed-flint-donate)



**SOUTH FLINT  
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MAY  
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**Angel Closet: May 4th & 18th,  
Appointment needed! One client at a time  
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**Food Giveaways: May 11th & 25th,  
No Appointment needed! 11am-noon**

**South Flint Soup Kitchen  
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Choose Veggie Box Subscription and we will fill your order with a variety of each week's harvest. Pay when you pick up your box. **A \$15 VALUE FOR \$10.**

**\* CONVENIENT PICKUP AT ASBURY OR AT THE SOUTH FLINT SOUP KITCHEN \***

Most important, even though our emotions are uniquely our own, we're never completely alone. The author of Psalm 139 writes, "Lord, you have examined me, and you know me. You know everything I do, and you understand all my thoughts. You see me, whether I am working or resting; you know all my actions. Even before I speak, you already know what I will say" (Psalm 139:1-4).

God knows your window of tolerance and has seen every tantrum and burst of anger. And we're reminded by the Psalm that God sees us when we're hiding. "You are all around me on every side; you protect me with your power" (Psalm 139:5).

Aundi Kolber offers us an exercise to help us expand our window of tolerance. She suggests that we imagine a container strong enough that anything we put into it cannot escape. Now imagine that you're putting whatever is causing you anxiety into the container. Finally, if the container doesn't feel strong enough, imagine wrapping it in chains or watching it sink to the bottom of a lake.

As you imagine your anxiety is contained, rest in the knowledge that God is beside you and protects you. Whisper a prayer or softly read Psalm 139. Notice your breathing and take extra long to exhale each breath. Read or pray in rhythm with your breathing.

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Jersey Psychology and Wellbeing Service. "The Window of Tolerance: Supporting the wellbeing of children and young people." © Government of Jersey, May 2020. Retrieved from: [link](#).

over functioning for so long, we can't even imagine another way. How else will things get done? How else will we survive?

It does not have to be this way.

Aundi Kolber believes that we don't have to white-knuckle our way through life. In her debut book, *Try Softer*, she'll show us how God specifically designed our bodies and minds to work together to process our stories and work through obstacles. Through the latest psychology, practical clinical exercises, and her own personal story, Aundi equips and empowers us to connect us to our trust self and truly live. This is the "try softer" life.

According to her author biography, Aundi Kolber is a Licensed Professional Counselor (MA LPC), writer, and speaker in Castle Rock, Colorado. She specializes in trauma- and body-centered therapies and is passionate about the integration of faith and psychology.

If you prefer to avoid groups or live too far away, I encourage you to join us online for our Wednesday gatherings. Alternatively, you can call in by phone, be heard, and hear what others say by calling (929) 436-2866 -- enter the meeting ID, 282 039 5568#.

We are a diverse group, delighted when new people join us. I hope that you will join in on our discussion.

You can contact our office with questions, by phone or simply type your question on our website's homepage — [FlintAsbury.org](http://FlintAsbury.org).

Pastor Tommy

<sup>1</sup> Scot McKnight. *Praying with the Church*. Brewster, MA: Paraclete Press, 2006.

<sup>2</sup> Aundi Kolber. *Try Softer: A Fresh Approach to Move Us out of Anxiety, Stress, and Survival Mode--and into a Life of Connection and Joy*. Carol Street, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2020.

Providing a HOT MEAL and/or local, organic  
PRODUCE weekly.



SATURDAYS starting around 12NOON

Asbury United Methodist Church

1653 Davison Rd, Flint (810) 235-0016



**Food Not Bombs** is a loose-knit group of independent collectives, sharing free vegan and vegetarian food with others. **Flint Food Not Bombs** believes that access of food among other necessities of life-should be viewed as a right, not a privilege. Yet in a nation with a military budget many times that of other nations, people continue to go hungry. This is immoral and unjust.



JOIN THE CONVERSATION!

Facebook.com/flintfoodnotbombs

Twitter.com/flintfnb

Email: flintfnb@protonmail.com

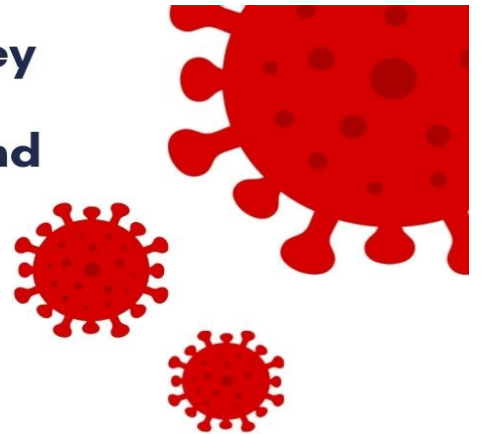
Website: foodnotbombsflint.wordpress.com

We're currently looking for volunteers so we can expand. If interested,  
send us a message! Solidarity!

A nation that continues year after year to spend more money on military defense  
than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual death.—MLK



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SOUP KITCHEN  
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**FRIDAY MAY 27TH  
10:30AM-NOON  
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