



Boundaries



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01 ✧ Knowledge ✧

What are *boundaries*? What do they protect?

Boundaries Are Everywhere

What do Your Boundaries Say?

- Have you ever agreed to take on extra work without being compensated?
- Have you ever let a close family member verbally assault you without consequence?
- Do you often take responsibility for your partner's actions or emotions?

These are all common examples of *unhealthy* or *weak boundaries*. What do your *boundaries* look like? Could they be improved?



Start Today

We all start somewhere. So, start setting *healthy boundaries* today! Recognize your **worth** and your **right** to have limits.



Practice

More practice = more effective boundaries! Though stressful at first, upholding your limits will become easier with time AND improve your self-confidence.



“Daring to set *boundaries* is about having the courage to love ourselves even when we risk disappointing others.”

Brené Brown



What are Boundaries?

Definition

Boundaries are psychological, emotional, and physical limits established by individuals to define and protect their needs, values, limits, and so forth.

- They define expectations for ourselves and others; the parameters of a specific relationship.

Types

General Boundaries

Apply to society—shared standards and norms for behavior that help us to function and stay safe.

Individual Boundaries

Apply to others—rules for family, friends, colleagues, partners—and ourselves.

Everyone's boundaries are unique!



General Boundaries

a

AKA “Social Norms”

General boundaries—or “social norms”—are developed throughout life and seldom thought about.

b

Hidden Rules of Society

General boundaries are not overtly communicated—they are the invisible rules of society. People learn to be aware of these boundaries and easily conform to them under social pressure.

c

Changing Tides

General boundaries vary from group to group; they develop and change with one’s culture. They are born of the intention to reduce harm, seek positive relationships, and/or avoid the consequences of negative behavior.



Individual Boundaries

a

Personal Values, Expectations, and Limits

Unlike *general boundaries*, *individual boundaries* vary widely depending on the individual and the relationship in question. Most people don't question where their boundaries truly lie.

b

Don't Hide Your Boundaries

Unlike *general boundaries*, *individual boundaries* need to be overtly communicated. Boundaries of others must be confirmed and personal boundaries asserted, unless you have powers of telepathy!

c

Defend Your Boundaries

When an individual limit has been crossed or ignored, it is your right and choice to communicate clear boundaries. Remember, *boundaries* are fluid and may change (strengthen OR weaken) over time.

Individual Boundary Domains



Individual Boundary Domains





02 ✨ Development ✨

Why is it important to set and maintain healthy *boundaries*?



Why People Often Hesitate to Set Limits

They feel a responsibility to be kind, helpful, and liked.

When interacting with strangers, it may feel rude to set a *boundary*.

They feel a responsibility to be dependable and available.

With friends, we may think we are being a bad friend by having limits/expectations.

They feel a strong commitment to honor and obey.

With significant others, we may feel obligated to say yes—or have no *boundaries* at all!

They feel an instinct to provide care and meet every need.

With children, we may feel guilty for taking personal time away or wanting personal space.



Why Boundaries are Difficult to Set



Demands

We all have social responsibilities and commitments to others. These vary according to the relationship.



Balance

It is a balancing act to uphold these social agreements while maintaining *personal boundaries*.



Priorities

When we allow the demands and expectations of others to take precedence over our own, we end up developing unhealthy or weak *boundaries*.



The Result of Weak Boundaries

Identity Loss

Adapting only to the needs of others, thus losing your sense of self.

Loss of Time/Energy

Losing focus on self-care and fulfillment, thus neglecting your goals.

Anxiety

Doing everything for everyone else increases stress and negativity.

Permissiveness

Not voicing your needs may lead to feelings of passivity or apathy.

Resentment

Putting yourself last results in bitterness, jealousy, and low self-worth.

Vulnerability

Weak boundaries leave you at risk to manipulation/harm.



The Benefit of Healthy Boundaries

Autonomy/Identity

Maintain control of your life; know your values and limits.

Reciprocity

Secure a framework for mutually beneficial relationships.

Respect

Setting and adhering to fair rules leads to respectful interactions.

Assertiveness

Improve ability to express your needs—effectively communicate.

Mental Peace

Reduce stress, burnout, and resentment by learning to say "no."

Safety

Ensure your safety: emotionally, mentally, physically, sexually, etc.

03



Practice



How are healthy *boundaries* created and upheld?

Five Steps to Healthy Boundaries:





How to Identify Healthy Boundaries (practice)



Your Rights

- Think of the current relationships in your life.
- What do you feel you deserve or need from these unique relationships?
- What are your non-negotiable needs, rights, and agreements in life?



Your Values

- We all have different, strongly held beliefs that inform our behavior.
- Consider and select 10 values you strongly believe in.
- Now, narrow your list down to your top 3 values.



Your Limits

- After reflecting on your needs, rights, and values, locate a boundary that you wish to work on.
- Create an "I" Statement for this value.



How to Identify Healthy Boundaries (example)



Your Rights

- I have the right to be in a loving partnership.
- I have the right to be treated fairly and not face discrimination.
- I have the right to grow and overcome any hardships in my life.



Your Values

- I value commitment; keeping a promise builds trust.
- I value inclusivity; everyone deserves the opportunity to be their best.
- I value resilience; there is strength in adaptability.



Your Limits

- "I will not accept being lied to or cheated on."
- "I will not accept myself or others being treated less than we deserve."
- "I will not accept stagnation nor defeat for myself."



Reflect on Reasons for Your Boundaries

Internal Motivators

- Identify boundaries that will help you to reach your goals.
- Assert boundaries that will empower you, build self-confidence, and facilitate healthy self-esteem.
- Enforce boundaries that will help you to achieve personal growth.
- Practice self-forgiveness when mistakes are made and boundaries are not upheld--growth takes time and effort!
- Goals: achieve work/life harmony, experience relationship satisfaction

External Motivators

- Assert boundaries that will inform others--you show others how to treat you.
- Hold others (and yourself) accountable for respecting boundaries; respecting the boundaries of others models respect, patience, and appreciation.
- You are responsible for upholding your personal boundaries; you choose if/how to acknowledge a boundary violation.
- Violations: infidelity, overtime without extra pay, gaslighting, telling someone else's secret



For more tips on asserting & enforcing
boundaries, please view the lesson on
Communication.

04 ✨ Conclusions ✨

What did we learn about *boundaries* today?



Boundaries

...are limits you set and enforce. They keep you safe and voice your expectations.



Steps

...to setting boundaries: identify, reflect, assert, enforce, and forgive.



Important

...benefits of boundaries are autonomy, mutual respect, assertiveness, and more.



Practice

...setting boundaries by reflecting on your needs, rights and values. You define your limits!

05 ✨ Resources ✨

Where can we learn more about *boundaries*?



Practice, Practice, Practice!

Below are a few resources to help you learn about and begin improving your mental health.

Website	<u>Map It Out: Setting Boundaries for Your Well-being Mayo Clinic Health System</u>
Mobile App	<u>Balance: Meditation and Sleep</u> <u>Fabulous Daily Routine Planner</u>
Podcast	<u>Podcast 164: How to Set Boundaries with Dr. Henry Cloud Dr. Caroline Leaf</u>
Book	<u>The Top 5 Must-Read Books on How to Set Boundaries Marlana Eva Medium</u>
Journal Article	<u>Building Better Boundaries (Workbook) University of Alberta</u>
YouTube	<u>What Porcupines Teach Us About Boundaries Henry Ammar TEDxStGeorgeSalon</u>