BOUNDARIES

Know Your Limits | Honor Your Needs

1 Understanding Boundaries

Boundaries are the limits and expectations you set to protect your time, energy, values, physical space, and emotional well-being. They clarify what you are comfortable with and what you will do when a limit is crossed.

A boundary is not a demand that someone else change.

It is a clear statement of what you will accept, what you need, and how you will respond. Healthy boundaries can be firm and respectful at the same time.

2 Where Did My Boundary Patterns Begin?

Think about when you first learned to put other people's needs ahead of your own. Check any experiences that fit. You can choose more than one.

- ☐ Childhood or family expectations
- ☐ My relationship with a parent or caregiver
- ☐ My first romantic relationship
- ☐ Friendships or wanting to fit in
- ☐ School, work, or authority figures
- ☐ Religious, cultural, or community messages
- ☐ After a painful experience or conflict
- ☐ I am still figuring this out

What message did I learn about saying no or having needs?

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3 Recognizing My Boundary Needs

Boundaries may be needed when you notice resentment, dread, exhaustion, guilt, discomfort, or repeated pressure to ignore your own needs.

Where might I need a clearer boundary?

- ☐ Time and availability
- ☐ Physical space and touch
- ☐ Digital access and privacy
- ☐ Family and relationships
- ☐ Emotional support
- ☐ Money and belongings
- ☐ Work or school demands
- ☐ My own habits and routines

4 Identify the Limit Before You State It

Choose one situation in which your needs or limits have been overlooked. Boundaries can be set with other people or with yourself.

The situation or pattern:

What am I feeling, needing, or protecting?

What is within my control?

Remember: You cannot control another person's reaction. You can decide what you will communicate, agree to, and do next.

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5 Try a Boundary Statement

A useful boundary is clear, specific, and realistic. You do not have to overexplain or apologize for having a limit.

Examples you can adapt

"I care about you, and I cannot take that on right now."

"I am available to talk for 15 minutes, but then I need to go."

"I am not comfortable discussing that topic. Let's change the subject."

"If the conversation becomes disrespectful, I will end the call."

"I will stop checking work messages after my scheduled hours."

6 Other Ways to Say No

You can decline a request clearly and respectfully without using the word itself. Choose wording that fits your comfort level and situation.

Brief	"Not at this time."
Direct	"That does not work for me."
Polite	"Thank you for asking, but I will have to decline."
Firm	"I have made my decision, and it is final."
Personal limit	"I am unable to commit to that right now."
Alternative	"I can offer 20 minutes on Saturday instead."

Write a response that feels natural to you:

A boundary is not unkind because someone dislikes it. Clarity is often more respectful than agreeing when you do not want to.

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7 Maintain the Boundary

Setting a boundary is the beginning. Maintaining it means following through consistently, even when you feel guilty or someone pushes back.

When your boundary is challenged, try this:

1. Repeat it calmly.	"I understand, and my answer is still no."
2. Skip the long defense.	You can acknowledge feelings without changing your limit.
3. Name your next step.	"If yelling continues, I will leave this conversation."
4. Follow through.	Choose an action you can realistically take.
5. Practice self-boundaries.	Protect your rest, spending, screen time, or commitments.

8 My Boundary Action Plan

One boundary I want to establish or strengthen:

The exact words I will use:

If the boundary is challenged, I will:

My commitment for the next 7 days

- ☐ I will practice this boundary at least once.
- ☐ I will notice how it feels afterward.

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