



## HEALTHY BOUNDARIES

While boundaries can be the “ultimate life hack” giving you space to protect your energy, and help with overwhelm and daily stress most of us struggle with setting, maintaining and protecting them.

### What is a boundary?

Boundaries are your firm line. They are your verbal (and sometimes non-verbal) communication with the world and the people in it about what you will tolerate and what you won't. Practicing healthy boundaries means you can clearly sit in your truth and make decisions about what you will and will not be responsible for.

### Why do we need them?

Creating and setting boundaries are very powerful actions that are indeed a vital act of self-care.

Confidence and self esteem will start to build and relationships will hold more meaning for you. Setting boundaries means we are making firm statements that we are able to put our emotional needs first and not forsake them to make other people feel happy or to fulfil a desire to be liked.

Setting boundaries for ourselves begins to disrupt the patterns of belief that do not serve us.

One of these underlying beliefs when we do things to make others “feel” better is that we are responsible for how people feel. Some people don't like hearing no. Other people may think you are “selfish” or “rude.”

How people feel about your actions is based on their own previous experiences in the world. They have little or nothing to do with you. You are not responsible for the feelings created from them.

This can be a hard pill to swallow when the conditioning is so very different.

### Why are they particularly important as women:

Understanding and taking the actions that people's feelings are not your responsibility can be huge for us women. Healthy boundaries are not often not taught to us growing up, nor are they modelled to us by our family in any kind of healthy way, and so we believe that as the natural carers, mediators, peacemakers, do-ers of the tribe, it is our responsibility to remain selfless for the good of everyone.

The truth is that if we can't take care of ourselves, we are simply not as equipped to show up to the responsibilities and commitments that are our highest priority and really be the best parent, wife, mother, worker and colleague we would like.

### What happens when we don't have healthy boundaries:

We become drained and overwhelmed. Resentments creep in when people continually expect us to do what we have always done for them and lose appreciation. Tempers flare when things become too much and we start to feel undervalued.

Ultimately, if we are operating without boundaries there's no distinction between what we need to take care of for ourselves and what we are responsible for in other people. Without this distinction disease can manifest and we live in emotional co-dependency.



### **How to tell if you need to reassess or implement boundaries:**

- You cringe at the word "no" and find it difficult to practice "no" being a complete sentence, where you don't have to explain yourself.
- While your mind might be able to grasp the concept that no is a complete sentence, actually practicing this simple word can induce all kinds of fear and anxiety and it can be a struggle to not explain yourself or apologise.
- You feel guilt, shame, fear (insert any similar emotion) when you put yourself and your own needs over the wants of someone else.
- Not having boundaries is really an underlying statement that your self esteem is not as strong as it could be. Wanting to be liked or avoiding conflict is normal, but when it comes at the expense of you own feelings your self worth needs some development.
- The great news is that establishing boundaries does just that.
- You've never/rarely ask "what do I want?" When boundaries are hazy, we literally lose our "self" in the mix. Thinking of ourselves in every situation is not selfish, it is self care

## Tips on setting boundaries

### Prepare:

Clearly and specifically identify what the boundary is and why it's important for you to put it in place. When you do this you give yourself permission to ask for your needs to be met around boundaries.

Understand that it's not going to be perfect: While we can communicate to the best of our ability, it may not be possible to simultaneously set a boundary and take care of their feelings at the same time.

### Leave the drama out.

Remain calm yet you don't have to tolerate disrespect. Communicate in a firm and kind manner what you need to say. There is no need to apologise for voicing your needs, so take the personal edge out of it by making the boundaries about you.

### Phrases like:

This is what I need...  
I've decided not to....  
I understand your point of view and ...  
I'd prefer not to....  
It's important to me...

### Work on your "No"

Here's what will work for me...  
I need to think about if that will work for me  
I really appreciate you asking me,  
but I can't...

### Handle Violations

If someone is violating your boundaries you need to decide if you can accept these violations. You need to be clear on what treatment you'll accept and what you won't.

### Let it Go

One of the most difficult things that we begin to realise is that some people (including our loved ones) will not respect your boundaries no matter what you do. Get support if you can.

