
YOUR GUIDE TO SETTING HEALTHIER BOUNDARIES IN RELATIONSHIPS

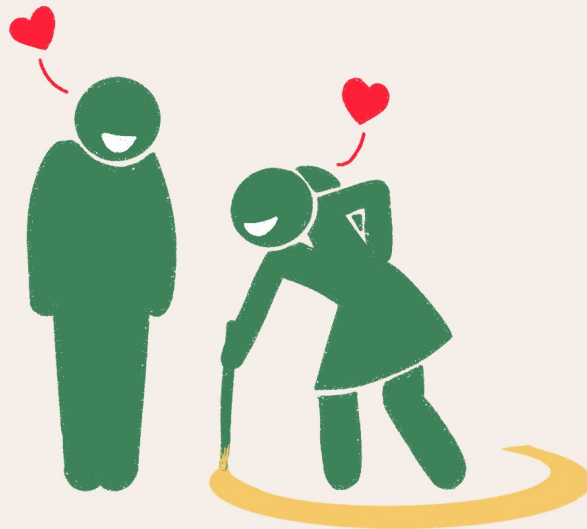
THE BOUNDARY BLUEPRINT

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The personal boundaries we set are highly important, as they help us to know where we stop and another person begins. They are the lines that separate us from others.



Healthy boundaries



Rigid boundaries



Weak boundaries

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1. Why do we need boundaries?

Healthy boundaries give us the opportunity to embrace a secure sense of self as someone separate from others. Setting good boundaries prevents extremes in relationships, such as being too close to the extent of suffocation or too distant to the extent of detachment, giving too much or too little, idealizing or devaluing others. None of these extremes are healthy

Remember the connection happens between two selves.

- If you have too rigid a boundary – no connection can happen
 - If you have no boundaries – you lose your sense of self and no connection can happen
 - Healthy boundary – preserves two selves as well as the connection between them
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2. How do we form healthy boundaries?

If we grow up in a healthy family system, we have the chance to build a healthy sense of self. However, if we grow up in a family in which we're abused, neglected, shamed, or abandoned, then we can't learn to set appropriate, healthy boundaries.

I did not see any abuse in my family and yet I struggle in making boundaries

It's not just abuse. There are families in which parents are emotionally and/ or physically unavailable. Often these parents will expect their children to handle responsibilities way beyond what's appropriate for the children's ages. And these children learn that there are no boundaries as to what may be expected of them.

Boundary is the gate around my front yard that keeps positive stuff in and negative stuff out.

An inability to set healthy boundaries is a misguided attempt to be loved. In his book, *Healing the Shame That Binds You*, John Bradshaw writes, “Only when we have good boundaries can we expand our boundaries with someone else. Only when we have strong boundaries can we love.”

When you don't respect your own sense of self, boundaries become nonexistent, and you can become over-giver as an adult. When boundaries are blurred, the feelings and behaviors of others become your own... There is no dividing line between where your self ends and other person begins.

If you are struggling to make a boundary, you might feel like this

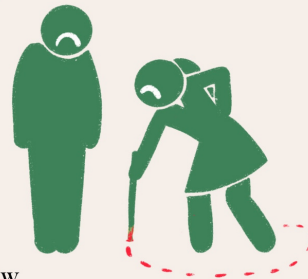
I am crushed out of my own need to please and be loved. I describe my relationship as if the other person is living inside my own skin. There is a desperate need to merge with my partner to prove my love for them. I know it's not healthy for me but I don't know a way out.

3. Signs of boundary violation

- Having deep conversations with others you hardly know
- Falling in love and/or getting involved without really knowing someone
- Trusting too easily
- Staying in relationships long after they have turned sour
- Intruding on others' boundaries (checking a partner's texts, e-mail, talks with friends)
- Having promiscuous sex with others;
- Touching another without their permission or letting them touch you;
- Letting others tell you how to live your life;
- Flirting with others just to make a connection;
- Expecting another person to know your needs without you expressing them.
- Forgoing your needs on a regular basis because you are scared other person will leave

Weak boundaries

- Passive
- Don't ask for what you want or need
- Allow others to mistreat you
- People-pleasing
- Unsure of what you like, what matters to you, what you need or want
- Crave external validation
- Overshare personal information



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4. How can I create boundaries?

- You learn to nurture yourself
- You start by honouring your own feelings, thoughts
- You ask and assert your needs.
- You are not afraid to have a different opinion
- You know what someone else's business is and what is yours
- You do what you want to do without depending on another's suggestions
- You stop blaming yourself for everything that isn't right in your relationship
- You stop feeling guilty and stop believing that everything problem in your relationship is somehow your fault.
- You realize you are not responsible for the behaviour of others
- You learn to differentiate your own needs from the needs of others and begin to feel a sense of safety in just being you.

Only when you set healthy boundaries, you create the space necessary for the RIGHT person to show up in your life!

Here are a couple of exercises to help get you started towards creating better, healthier boundaries.

Exercise 1: Setting Boundaries in An Existing Relationship

(Name of person you are setting boundary with)

(Your reason for setting the boundary)

(What the boundary is)

Guidelines for setting your boundaries:

1. The purpose is to take care of your needs and to protect yourself from inappropriate behavior, so you don't feel victimized by someone else's actions.
2. Some boundaries may be more rigid than others. Only set limits that you are willing to follow through with.

If you (behavior)_____, I will take care of myself by _____.
(behavior) (action)

Examples:

- For my own self-esteem, I will no longer enable you by blaming myself for your unjust accusations.
- If you verbally or physically abuse me, I will take care of myself by leaving the situation.
- If you blame me for something I know I am not responsible, I will confront your blaming.
- If you continue that behavior, I will stop the conversation.

Exercise 2: Make a list of boundaries you can set with others and with yourself:

Boundary:

With others:

With myself:

Example:

Boundary: Saying, "no."

With others: Don't go along with activities I don't want to engage in.

With myself: Don't fall in love blindly or trust so quickly.