

How to Maintain Your Personal Boundaries

Ask directly for what you want. This shows who you are to others.

Nurture yourself and your integrity. This creates an inner, intuitive sense that lets you know when a relationship has become hurtful, abusive, or invasive.

Be objective about others' behavior toward you without getting caught in their drama. Maintain a bottom line – a limit to how many times you allow someone to say no, lie, disappoint, or betray you before you will admit the painful reality and move on.

Change the focus of trust from others to yourself. Don't put yourself in someone else's hands or expect infallibility. Trust that you can allow others to be normally human and still have satisfying intimacy.

Tips for Setting Boundaries

Anger, rage, complaining, whining, and feeling threatened, “suffocated” or victimized are clues to boundaries you need to set. When you identify a need to set a boundary or a limit with someone, do it clearly, preferably without anger and in as few words as possible.

You cannot simultaneously set a limit with someone and take care of their feelings – they may be hurt, angry or disappointed with you. You'll probably be ashamed and afraid when you set boundaries.

Be prepared to follow through by acting in congruence with the boundaries you set. You'll be tested when you set boundaries. Some people are happy to respect your boundaries.

A support system can be helpful as you strive to establish and enforce boundaries. You'll set boundaries when you are ready and not a minute sooner. There's a satisfying side to setting boundaries – it feels good.

“If we're going to have a working relationship, I need honesty, respect and equality.”

Limit Setting (Boundaries)

- I'd rather not answer that.
- I'd rather talk a little later. Right now, I need to collect my thoughts.
- I would like to think further about that before deciding what to do.
- That is not one of my priorities.
- I'd like to pay my own way.
- Ethnic jokes bother me. I prefer not to hear them.
- I don't want to hear critical things about other people.
- I don't doubt your concern, but I want to make my own decision.
- I don't feel like making love tonight.
- That's not my responsibility. Please find someone else to take care of it.
- Thank you, but I don't need any help.
- I don't think that this is part of my job description.
- I wish that you wouldn't make commitments for me.
- I would appreciate you not smoking.
- I understand that you would like to read this book, but I have a no lending policy.

Limit Setting (Boundaries)

- Self care
- Attend support groups
- Detach emotionally
- Let go of assumptions
- Set boundaries
- Discuss expectations
- Acknowledge your emotions
- Maintain your serenity

Families may find themselves slipping into old patterns of behavior in times of crisis. This is when it is most important to practice detachment.



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