

Script options
for
communicating
your

Boundaries



Boundaries are guidelines, rules or limits that you create to identify reasonable, safe and permissible ways for other people to behave towards you. A very importantly part of boundary setting is to understand and learn how to communicate your boundaries to others and also how to respond when someone passes those limits.

Your boundaries act as filters permitting what is acceptable in your life and what is not. Know that you have a right to communicate your personal boundaries. You not only have the right, but you must take responsibility for how you communicate how you will and will not allow others to treat you.



The process of establishing personal boundaries includes identifying the actions and behaviours that you find unacceptable. And to let others know when they've crossed the line, acted inappropriately, or disrespected you in any way. Do not be afraid to tell others when you need emotional and physical space. Part of that process, is what you are going to do if someone behaves a certain way. It is for you to know, communicate, and to follow through on. Think of it simply as an, "if you/they do _____, then I will _____." This does not have to be personal towards them. But boundaries are certainly personal to you!

Remember that others do not owe you anything, and you cannot expect them to always respect your boundaries. However, you can decide for yourself if you want someone in your life who is crossing lines, making you feel uncomfortable, or disrespecting you. And you do not owe anyone an explanation about why you are setting the boundary.

The person can be a friend, family member, colleague, partner, classmate etc. Sit down with the people involved in crossing your personal boundaries and communicate your mind shift. Let them know you have spent some time thinking about what is important and acceptable to you and what is not. Advise them how they have crossed your boundaries in the past, and ask them to respect and support your new boundaries.

Regardless of who the person is, these following list of prompts are suggestions to help you share your boundaries in a loving and respectful way to strengthen your relationships.

Setting limits

- I do not feel comfortable here. I am going to go home.
- I do not want to talk about this in public.
- This is a deal-breaker for me. I cannot compromise on behaviour that's unsafe.
- I can respect your point of view even though I do not agree.
- I do not want to talk about Anne when she is not here.
- I really like talking to you and getting to know you, but my sexual history is not something I would like to discuss.
- We do not allow smoking in our house.
- I do not want to talk about it. Please do not bring it up again.
- I know you mean well, but I am not looking for advice right now.



Declining a request

- I am sorry, I do not lend my car to anyone.
- My answer is still no.
- I would prefer to do it myself.
- I know I told you that I would help you move, but something pressing has come
- Unfortunately, I am not available.
- I appreciate the invitation, but I need to decline.
- I am overbooked and cannot take on anything else.
- I have a personal policy of not going out on weeknights.
- Friday is not good for me. Perhaps we can do it another time.
- I cannot do that, but I could do _____.



Setting expectations

- I am available for an hour, then I will need to leave.
- I do not answer work emails on the weekend. I will respond on Monday.
- Children, I will give you your allowance once your chores are finished.
- Mum, I do not have time to take you shopping, so I will place an order with the grocery delivery service.

- I will be back in twenty minutes. I need a little time to myself.
- I am not sure how I can help; I do not have any experience with this type of situation. I can help you find a professional with the expertise you need.
- up and I won't be able to help.
- I am on a budget, so I brought my lunch from home and won't be ordering lunch today.

Making a request

- Your comments about my appearance are hurtful and I would like you to stop.
- I am the designated driver. So, please do not offer me alcoholic drinks.
- My child has a severe nut allergy, so I ask that you not bring any food that contains nuts to our home.
- Please do not look through my phone without my permission.
- Your behaviour is disrespectful and I need you to leave now.
- We do not wear shoes in our house. Please take yours off when you come in.
- Please do not borrow my car without asking.
- That joke was insulting and inappropriate. Please do not speak like that at the workplace.
- I feel embarrassed when you chastise me in front of our kids. I would like you to stop.
- Our wedding is for adults only. We'd love to see your children another time, but please do not bring them to this event.
- I go to bed at 10pm, so please do not text me after that.
- I would like to connect with you. Could we agree to put our phones away while we eat?
- That feels critical. Please do not say that



Communicating what you will do with a boundary is crossed

- Your behaviour is extremely hurtful. I am going to spend the night at my sister's.
- Since you will not leave, I am going to call the police.
- I am going to hang up now.
- Infidelity is a deal-breaker for me and I will not continue in this relationship if you cheat on me.
- Your unfenced pool is dangerous. My children are not going to be able to come to your house because it is unsafe.
- I have asked you multiple times to stop making sexualized comments about me, but you've continued. So, I have asked our boss to address it with you.
- Since you never paid me back last time, I will not lend you money again.
- I think you have had too much to drink. I am going to call a taxi.

Scripts for more specific situations:

For individuals who keeps asking you for discounts or freebies from you professionally:

- *“It’s out of my professional integrity to give you a [discount/free service]*
- *“As a friend, I’m asking you to respect my professional boundaries and stop asking for X or Y.”*



For individuals who keeps asking for free advice, services(if you are a service provider):

- *“As a friend, I’ve been glad to help you with [services rendered] and can do [X/Y] at no cost to you. Moving forward, if you would like [services you provide for \$XXX] I invite you to work with me professionally.*
- *“Out of respect for my time and profession, [I’d appreciate it if you would/ I’m asking you] stop asking me for X, Y, and Z. If you feel uncomfortable paying me for my services, I can refer you to someone else who can help.”*



For individuals who keeps giving you advice when you did not ask for it:

“I know you [mean well/are trying to help me], but I’m not open to being advised right now. I’d really appreciate it if you could [what you want instead; listen/provide feedback on only the things you ask for] instead.”

For individuals who are always worried about you or pushing their agenda for your life on you :

“[Name], I [understand/ hear] your concern about my [dating life/ career/ health/ financial], but I am prioritizing other things right now. I feel [judged/ disrespected/ rushed/ pressured/ uncomfortable] when you say things like, [repeat what they said that makes you feel unpleasant] I am asking you to stop asking me those questions and bringing up those suggestions”.

For individuals who is always late, ghosts you, cancels last-minute, etc.:

- *“I understand if you are late or need to cancel, but I’m asking you to be more mindful of my time and let me know next time if you will be late, or if you are unable to make it”*



- *“I would love to [have you at this event/ meet with you], but if your schedule is overbooked or you don’t have the bandwidth to participate, please let me know so I [know not to expect you/ can plan accordingly.]”*
- *“[I’m/We are] going to be there at X time, and [I/we] will be leaving at Y time. Join [me/us] if you can”*

For when someone breaks a boundary you already discussed:

- *“[name], when you [said/ did/asked for] it crossed the [profession/ emotional/ personal] boundary we discussed before. I am asking you to respect that moving forward. If you continue to break this boundary, I will leave and not respond to any communication from you.” You can even remind them that the relationship cannot continue if that boundary is crossed again.*

For individuals who do not seem to have boundaries, but you want them to respect yours:

- *“I feel [pressured/ unsupported/ disrespected] when you [say/do X, Y, and Z] I understand if that was not your intention, but I am asking you to please refrain from saying/doing those things to me again. If you continue, I’m going to leave the room.”*

To set a boundary with an angry person:

“You may not yell at me. If you continue, I will leave the room.”

To set a boundary with personal phone calls at work:

“I have decided to take all personal calls in the evening in order to get my work done. I will need to call you later.”



To say no to extra commitments:

"Although this organization is important to me, I need to decline your request for volunteer help in order to honour my family's needs."

To set a boundary with someone who is critical:

"It is not okay with me that you comment on my weight. I would like to ask you to stop."

To buy yourself time when making tough decisions:

"I have a policy of not making decisions right away. I will have to sleep on it before I give you my response."

To back out of a commitment:

"I know I agreed to head up our fundraising efforts, but after reviewing my schedule, I now realize that I won't be able to give it my best attention. I'd like to help find a replacement by the end of next week."

To set a boundary with an adult child who borrows money:

"I won't be lending you money anymore. I love you and you need to take responsibility for yourself."

Additional thoughts

What can also be very helpful is to reflect on situations from the past where you have struggled to communicate how you were feeling. Imagine yourself being in that situation again and then apply the following steps.

- Describe your situation, using 'I' statements, making it personal. Then share the feeling you are experiencing in the situation.
- Express what you would like to happen instead in this situation.
- Share what the positive effects of the new situation will be.

Keep practicing until your message is clear. Perhaps practice saying them in the bathroom mirror, in the car, or during a walk (yes, you might look a little crazy for talking to yourself in public, but hey, it will be worth it). This will have you feeling more confident to express yourself the next time you encounter such a situation.

Finally, stop caring about other people's reactions. It is not your job to make sure they are okay with your boundary. It is your job to be okay with how you are treated! If they get upset with you, they were not your people to begin with.

