BOUNDARY WORKBOOK / BEGIN

Make room for your needs

A boundary describes what you can offer and what you will do.

Begin with an everyday situation

Use these pages for reflection, not as a substitute for care. Start with a low-stakes example. You do not need to confront someone who threatens, controls, or harms you.

Where do I feel stretched?

Choose one area: time, energy, privacy, money, touch, work, or digital contact.

What do I need more or less of?

Name a need without judging it. Examples: rest, notice, choice, quiet, or shared effort.

Safety before a conversation

When there is abuse, coercion, or a risk of retaliation, work with confidential support on a safety plan. A well-worded boundary cannot make an unsafe person safe.

BOUNDARY WORKBOOK / NOTICE

Separate a wish from a limit

You can request a change and choose your own response.

What I wish would change

Describe the behavior or situation in specific, neutral words.

What is within my control?

Name an action you can take. Examples: end a call, limit availability, decline a task, or ask for more time.

A realistic limit

What can you follow through on without threatening or trying to control another person?

U.S. crisis support: call or text 988. In immediate danger, call 911.

BOUNDARY WORKBOOK / PRACTICE

Find a clear sentence

Brief and respectful is enough.

A flexible script

Try: “I am not available for ___. I can ___.” Or: “If ___ happens, I will ___.” You do not owe a long explanation. Adapt the words to your relationship and safety needs.

My first draft

Write a boundary or request in one or two sentences.

Make it clearer

Remove blame or extra explanation. Keep the need, limit, and next action visible.

How I want to communicate

Would a short message, a planned conversation, or support from another person help?

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BOUNDARY WORKBOOK / EXPLORE

Plan for the response

Discomfort does not automatically mean your limit is wrong.

A response I might hear

Consider one likely response without rehearsing every possible argument.

My calm repeat

Write a brief repeat of your limit. You can pause rather than debate.

My follow-through

What will you do if the limit is ignored? Choose a safe action you can actually take.

You may change the plan

If the response becomes threatening or you feel unsafe, step away when possible and seek support. You do not need to keep explaining.

U.S. crisis support: call or text 988. In immediate danger, call 911.

BOUNDARY WORKBOOK / PLAN

Care for the feelings afterward

Guilt and relief can show up together.

What did I feel?

Notice feelings without using them as the only evidence that your choice was right or wrong.

What was fair to everyone, including me?

Consider your needs, responsibilities, limits, and the effect on others. Is a repair or adjustment needed?

What support would help?

Choose rest, reassurance from a trusted person, a practical change, or a conversation with your clinician.

U.S. crisis support: call or text 988. In immediate danger, call 911.

BOUNDARY WORKBOOK / CARRY FORWARD

Keep one boundary workable

A useful limit can be reviewed and adjusted.

One limit to practice

What will you try this week? Keep it specific and safe.

When I will review it

What would tell you the plan is helping? What support or adjustment might be needed?

Care is available

Seek support for ongoing relationship distress or fear. If you are in current danger, contact emergency services or a confidential violence-support service through Crisis Support.

Read more from trusted sources

NIMH: Caring for Your Mental Health
https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/caring-for-your-mental-health

Original reflection exercises by Grace in Healings. For immediate support, visit Our Healing Room / Crisis Support.