



Healthy Boundaries vs. Unhealthy boundaries

Examples of Healthy Boundaries:

Valuing your own opinions

Not compromising personal values for others

Sharing personal information in an appropriate way (not over- or under-sharing)

Knowing your personal wants and needs, and communicating them

Accepting when others say "no"

Staying focused on your own growth and recovery

Deciding whether a new relationship will be good for you, as opposed to imprinting onto the first person who shows interest

Being your own loving advocate

Noticing when someone is engaging in unhealthy boundaries

Trusting your own decisions

Knowing who you are and what you want

Moving slowly into intimacy

Keeping track of red flags, as opposed to sweeping them aside

Examples of Unhealthy Boundaries:

Making one person the center of your world

Sharing intimate and personal information to someone you've just met (such as problems with all of your relationships, sexual history, sexual preferences, the number of times you've dated or been married/divorced, your long-term desires regarding a relationship)

Changing the way you look, dress, or style your hair because someone you barely know suggests it

Allowing someone you've just met tell you how to interact with and/or discipline your children

Not noticing when someone invades your boundaries

Not trusting anyone – or, trusting everyone: All or nothing thinking

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Letting others describe your reality

Determining My Personal Boundaries

What things make you feel uncomfortable about a current, recently ended or new relationship?

1) I don't like it when:

2) I feel resentful when:

3) When _____ (insert name) does this, I think about it for the rest of the day:

4) Things that I believe other people should respect about me are:

5) Things I will no longer tolerate are (i.e., my deal-breakers):

6) The first boundary or boundaries I will set is (are):

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Ways to Communicate My Boundaries

Examples of phrasing and words to use:

I feel uncomfortable about...

I'd rather not...

I can see your point of view, but...

It's important to me that...

This is difficult for me to say, but...

I've thought about it, and I've decided not to...

It's okay that we don't agree on everything, that's what makes us different.

I'd feel more comfortable if you didn't...

_____ *is unacceptable to me.*

I'll think about it.

Perhaps we should agree to disagree.

I'd prefer not to...

I have a problem with that.

Things to consider:

- These steps can be used to establish and implement boundaries in any relationship, but for narcissistic abuse survivors, they are especially important in romantic relationships.
- If you are currently in a relationship with a toxic or abusive individual, it may be necessary for your own safety and well-being to implement them *after* you've exited the relationship.
- If thinking about setting your personal boundaries causes discomfort, it's an indicator that these are the ones that you most need to implement.
- Boundaries are rules for your life designed to make you feel emotionally safe and should not be used to control people or circumstances.

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- When setting your personal boundaries, make sure they're based on your own wants and needs, and not on what you believe other people will think.
- Learning to establish healthy boundaries is a great way of role modeling for children in your household.

If you need help breaking free from a toxic relationship, consider joining us in [The Essential Break Free Bootcamp](#).



Boundaries/Emotional Protection Fact Sheet

“Boundaries make it possible for us to separate our own thoughts and feelings from those of others and to take responsibility for what we think, feel and do. Intact boundaries are flexible—they allow us to get close to others when it is appropriate and to maintain our distance when we might be harmed by getting too close. Good boundaries protect us from abuse and pave the way to achieving true intimacy. They help us take care of ourselves.” (lifesteem.org)

Boundaries are invisible layers of protection separating us from others; that layer is fluid, and can be adapted as needed.

We want and need to exchange some emotional energy with people if we are to connect with them.

We can determine how much or little of our psychic (emotional) energy to share in specific situations and with different people. We also decide how much or how little emotional energy we will accept from other people.

When someone shares more information than you are comfortable knowing, s/he has crossed a boundary. By saying “Okay – TMI – that’s all I want to know.” you have set a boundary.

By refusing to answer questions in detail – only sharing what you feel comfortable with – you are setting a boundary.

Often we do not establish good boundaries because we don't want to hurt someone's feelings, or aren't comfortable dealing with what we perceive to be a confrontation. When this happens, we are at risk for being taken advantage of or even abused.

This can happen by allowing people to say things to us that we don't like, or by not saying 'no' to requests that we really don't want to do.

When we don't set clear boundaries about what we will accept from others and what they can expect from us, we are sending the message about what behavior or requests are acceptable.

Sharing feelings 'openly' (unguarded) with a loved one may be appropriate. However, when interacting with people at work, the level of emotional sharing and closeness will likely be very different.

If at any time you begin to feel emotionally vulnerable or unsafe, you can 'close off' (guard) or 'shut down' (withhold) your thoughts and feelings.



In new dating relationships and when recovering from abuse, boundaries are critical. You are setting the tone for how you will be treated later, and the behavior you are willing to accept.

Finding the right balance of what is enough and what is too much takes practice. You will naturally let down your guard/boundaries as you get to know and trust a new dating partner.

Want to learn more about boundaries? Join us in [The Essential Break Free Bootcamp](#) where we have live Q&As each month and support one another through our healing journeys!