

TOP 10 WAYS TO SET BOUNDARIES

Constant demands and requests from coworkers, colleagues, friends, and families can leave you drained and frustrated. It's not an easy thing to say no to someone or something. Change your perspective—you're saying yes to you and to your priorities and needs. You're not saying no to a person, but to his or her request. Boundaries protect your comfort zone.

Boundaries are not negotiable. You must communicate that gently, yet firmly, to others. When you set boundaries for yourself and respect the boundaries of others, you are actually building stronger relationships. Here are 10 ways to set and maintain boundaries and gain time, energy, and respect for yourself and others:

1 List people who drain your energy. Even if you like them, they take your time without your permission.

2 Identify which boundaries you need to set. Try to determine if you have trouble setting boundaries with specific people or specific situations. For example, you may be able to set a boundary with coworkers, but not clients.

3 You have a right to set boundaries. Many people mistakenly believe that setting boundaries upsets other people. While others may not get what they want in the short run, you will garner more respect from them and for yourself by standing up for your needs.

4 Make a short affirmation to describe your new boundary. An example would be, "I get to decide how to spend my time," or "My time is valuable and irreplaceable." Use whatever words are most powerful for you. Use an affirmation to remind you that setting boundaries is the right thing to do.

5 Rehearse away from work. Talk to yourself in the mirror, write in your journal, tape record yourself, or find a trusted friend to role-play with. This is new behavior. The more you practice it, the better you will become.

6 Offer options to the other person. Look for a win-win situation by taking control. For example, "I know that you would like to speak with me. Right now, I need to finish this task. Can I call you later or would tomorrow be better?"

7 Communicate without anger. Be clear and respectful. Use language that feels comfortable to you. Keep in mind that you are saying no to an unreasonable request, not a person as an individual.

8 Relax. Before you respond, breathe deeply. Remember, you are saying yes to you and your time.

9 Think ahead and prepare. List common situations that could use a boundary. If one of them comes up, you will have a pattern of action you can use at your fingertips. You won't even have to think about the best way to handle it; you'll know.

10 Check all your life's boundaries. See if you need to set boundaries with family and loved ones. They can be a wonderful part of a full life, but they too can cause a drain on our energy, time, and vitality. Look at how you can set boundaries in all areas of your life so that you are able to truly create the life you desire.