

Common Boundary Myths

Put a check mark beside each boundary myth that feels true to you.

- 1. If I set boundaries, I am being selfish
- 2. Boundaries are a sign of disobedience (i.e. to your boss at work)
- 3. If I set boundaries, others will walk out of my life and I will get hurt
- 4. If I set boundaries, I will hurt others
- 5. Setting boundaries mean that I am angry
- 6. When others set boundaries, it injures me
- 7. Boundaries cause feelings of guilt
- 8. Boundaries are set in stone
- 9. Boundaries will burn bridges
- 10. Boundaries are about right and wrong
- 11. Boundaries take the joy out of life
- 12. Setting boundaries will make me unhappy

Boundary Truths

- Boundaries are a human right.
- Without boundaries, I can't build or sustain a healthy relationship with myself or others – and that might make me cantankerous, overdrawn, exhausted, ugly, and mean.
- The more I set the boundaries I need, the more energy I have for the things I want to focus on and to maintain those boundaries.
- Boundaries create space for me where I can ground myself in the fact that I've prioritized my well-being over other people's need to have control in my life.
- I do not need to apologize or feel guilty for my boundaries.
- Having boundaries may make us appear to be less sweet, but give us the ability to be more loving, because we will not feel resentment when we know we have and are executing the choice to say "yes" or "no."

- Everyone has to respect my emotional and mental limits (including me, which I do by setting boundaries).
- Boundaries are flexible and I'm allowed to change them from moment to moment based on what I need and how I feel.
- There is no perfect, right, or wrong way to set boundaries. I can have an in-person conversation in the moment, I can have an in-person conversation after the fact, I can send a text message, I can send an email, I can send a letter, and I can use body language and other non-verbal cues.
- Setting boundaries is a consistent process. It is a continued process of learning how to set boundaries, reflecting on the boundaries we need throughout our lives (which will change as we grow and evolve), and holding boundaries repeatedly to clearly define our needs and space in our relationships with others.
- It is not my responsibility to carry other people's personal baggage or manage their toxicity. I already have a job and I don't work double-time for free! If a person reacts to my boundary in a negative way, I don't have to work with them through that negative reaction – that's on them and is their responsibility. Sometimes we pretend that we can do other people's work and then carry so many of other people's bags that we can't do our own work and deal with our own bags.
- I do not deserve to experience harm.
- The harm that people cause me is not my fault. Because of the world we live in, we are always at risk of experiencing harm. Setting boundaries is not something we do to alleviate ourselves of blame when others hurt us – we have nothing to be blamed for. It is something we do to protect and hold our space and maintain our own physical, mental, and emotional health.