

## Boundary Challenges

Here are some things that may add difficulty to your choices to set and strengthen your boundaries. If you are aware that some of the challenges may occur, you can be better prepared to reinforce your boundaries during challenging times.

### Life Shifts

- Things are always moving, changing and needing adjustments. New lines need to be drawn, old ones removed.

### Disagreements

- Not all people in your life will agree with where you have drawn your boundaries. It is necessary for healthy relationships to discuss and learn to respect each other boundaries.

### Misunderstandings can occur when:

- Others have weak boundaries and therefore cannot respect yours.
- You have not adequately paved the way for a new boundary through respectful notification and discussion.
- Others only support your growth if they do not have to make adjustments.

### Excuses

- "I just live day to day and trust things will work out."
- "It is easier to say 'yes' than 'no'."
- "If I set boundaries, I might as well kiss that relationship/job/friend/opportunity goodbye."

### Your Own Patterns/Beliefs

- Your patterns have been adopted to protect you in times of discomfort and continue when that time has passed. Building boundaries is a process. Free yourself from blocks to personal power.

### Fear

- Change can be scary. Fear can alert you to potential threats and danger. Feel the fear, listen to its message. Act on it if necessary, or go around it.

### Ignorance

- Knowledge is power, so fight ignorance by educating yourself and improving your level of understanding.

### Facing the Challenge

- By facing and beating a challenge, you are better prepared for future challenges and have reaped the reward of achievement.

(Adapted from: Black, J. & Enns, G. (1997) *Better Boundaries: Owning and Treasuring Your Life*. Oakland, CA. Raincoast Books)

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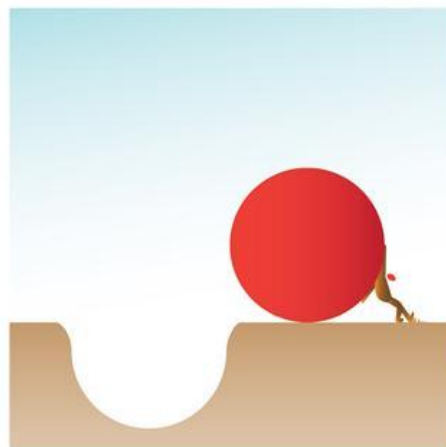
With your group, brainstorm other ways that your boundaries may be or have been challenged. You may choose to identify this generally or related to specific boundary types: Physical, Sexual, Spiritual, Relational, Emotional, Mental, Legal. Other: \_\_\_\_\_.

Examples:

- ✓ Not wanting to hurt others feelings.
- ✓ Your friend says “But you did that for me before.”
- ✓ People continue to enter your room or office without your permission.

For a few items from you list above, discuss ways you can respectfully enforce and strengthen the boundary that has been challenged. Role playing these with your group may help you feel more confident in maintaining your personal boundaries.

Once you have explored the tools on the next page, you may wish to return to your boundary challenge list and look at different ways to enforce your boundaries.



## Tools to Enforce Your Boundaries

- 1) Clear Agreements with People
  - “Now, I want to be clear about what each of us can expect from this agreement...”
  - “We will meet at the centre at 3 pm sharp?”
- 2) Confident Knowledge of Yourself
  - “No, that is not my style.”
  - “I need more structure than that, can we compromise?”
- 3) Commitment to Your Goals
  - “I’m sorry, that just does not fit with the direction I’ve chosen.”
  - “I’ve committed to using my lunch hour for personal development 3 times a week, but I’d be happy to have lunch with you every other Tuesday.”
- 4) An Air of Ownership
  - Appearance that says you are authentic and know what is appropriate
  - Confidence in your role and contribution.
  - Spirit of enthusiasm and adventure.
  - A calm ‘knowing.’
- 5) Speak Up
  - “No, I will not accept your behavior.”
  - “I need to let you know that your actions and words hurt me.”
- 6) Suspend Privileges
  - “I will not continue this arrangement!”
  - “Let’s step back and resume when we have adjusted our behavior.”
- 7) Withdraw
  - Withdraw emotionally to keep your objectivity.
  - Retreat and start fresh if the situation calls for it.
- 8) Denounce
  - “You are no longer welcome here.”
  - When appropriate, refuse to speak about it, or hang up the phone. If needed, call for help, hire an attorney, consult an advocacy support, or get a restraining order.

## Tools to Enforce Your Boundaries (Continued)

For each of the examples below, discuss with your group ways the *Tools to Enforce Your Boundaries* from the previous page or other ways that might be beneficial:

- Your neighbor has a very cute dog, but they keep allowing it to go to the washroom on your lawn.
- A coworker or co-volunteer frequently compliments you in way that makes you feel uncomfortable (i.e. you already have a significant other, or the compliments are of an inappropriate nature).
- A family member insists on sitting in on your doctors appointments and you would prefer to speak to your doctor alone.
- You are late for the third appointment this week.
- Can you think of other examples of situations where boundaries need to be enforced?



## Back Ups to Help You Stick to Your Boundaries

### 1. Promises to Yourself

- “When I reach a certain point of exhaustion/stress, I will stop, identify the problem and/or get the rest and help I need.”
- “When I am rejected, I will feel the discomfort, sort through my part, if any, accept current circumstances, learn and move on.”

### 2. On-Call Help

- Confidante: Someone who will let you vent and keep it confidential.
- Mentor: Someone you admire and trust to encourage, teach and guide you.
- Helping Team: friends and family who will be there for you and help you when you need.

### 3. Personal Power Sources

- Physical: Sleep, exercise, nutrition, etc.
- Spiritual: meditation, affirmations, prayer, etc.
- Emotional: getting feelings out in a way that is safe for you and others.
- Mental: thinking about something else for a while, giving your mind a break.



For each of the ways to help you maintain your boundaries, fill in what you are already doing or what you can start doing to help you stick with your own boundaries. You may choose to post this on your fridge or mirror, or keep a copy in your wallet.

### 1. Promises to Yourself

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

### 2. On-Call Help

- Confidante: \_\_\_\_\_
- Mentor: \_\_\_\_\_
- Helping \_\_\_\_\_

### 3. Personal Power Sources

- Physical: \_\_\_\_\_
- Spiritual: \_\_\_\_\_
- Emotional: \_\_\_\_\_
- Mental: \_\_\_\_\_