




*The Boundaries Workshop
companion workbook*

EXPLORING BOUNDARIES

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EXPLORING BOUNDARIES

Boundaries are the limits we place that separate us from other people. There are physical, emotional, mental, sexual, and material boundaries, as well as those around our time. When our boundaries are healthy, we feel free to assert ourselves by saying no, asking for space, and expressing our feelings directly. When we struggle with people pleasing, setting boundaries can feel uncomfortable or even unsafe.


WHY ARE BOUNDARIES IMPORTANT?

Without boundaries, we burn out. Building resiliency using boundaries is critical to personal and professional fulfillment. Boundaries are designed to protect our individuality and authenticity.

SIGNS IT'S TIME TO LOOK AT YOUR BOUNDARIES

- You're an open book: you over share with people you've just met
- You adopt your partners' opinions/hobbies/interests as your own
- You find it difficult to make decisions
- You're often tired for no apparent reason
- You secretly carry around resentment
- You say sorry all the time, even to inanimate objects
- You are usually friendly, but every once in awhile you explode
- You identify yourself as a people pleaser
- You set up rigid walls regardless of the person or situation

On the next page, we will look at an area of your life and check on your boundaries in that situation.



EXPLORING BOUNDARIES

TAKING THE TEMPERATURE

Think of a person in your life: a colleague, partner, friend, or even child. In your relationship with this person, how are your boundaries? For each category, check the column that best describes the way you set boundaries with this person.

- Porous: always saying yes, backing down under pressure
- Rigid: immediately putting up walls
- Healthy: feeling neither overly protective nor like a doormat

MY BOUNDARIES WITH _____

Boundary type	Porous	Rigid	Healthy	Something else
Mental/emotional				
Time				
Material				
Sexual				
Physical				

- **Mental/emotional:** respecting/honoring feelings, being respected
- **Time:** understanding your priorities, not overcommitting
- **Material:** how your possessions are used/treated
- **Sexual:** consent, respect, privacy
- **Physical:** personal space, physical needs

EXPLORING BOUNDARIES

To create new boundaries, we have to lean into new thoughts. Using a self-coaching model, we will reveal the thoughts fueling our porous or rigid boundaries. Then, we'll make more empowering choices.

Referring to the table you created on page 3, choose a recent interaction with that person where you walked away feeling uncomfortable, drained, angry, resentful, disrespected, or hurt. Then, fill out the following information about the situation:

C: circumstance (the situation you have already defined)

T: thought (what thoughts emerge as a result of this situation)?

F: feeling (which emotion arises as a result of this thought)?

A: action (what do you do next as a result of this feeling)?

R: results (what happens/doesn't happen in your life overall as a result of this action)?

MY UNINTENTIONAL MODEL

C:

T:

F:

A:

R:

**For an example of how to create a model, see the appendix on page 9*

EXPLORING BOUNDARIES

Congratulations! You've just uncovered your Unintentional Model. This model represents your default thinking and behavior when you interact with this person in this situation. Everyone has unintentional models of thinking, feeling, and behavior.

THE INTENTIONAL MODEL

Creating change starts with reaching for new thoughts about this situation. Note: *these thoughts must be true for you NOW* to create a better feeling and a new way of approaching your situation. Here's how to build your new model:

1. Find a thought about this person/situation that's different. This could sound like:

- "I value my time"
- "I am worth standing up for"
- "This person can handle it if I say no"
- "Saying no doesn't make me a bad person"
- "I'm allowed to protect my time/space"

2. Add this thought to the **T** line of your new model below

3. Continue the model using this thought, keeping the circumstance line the same as in your unintentional model

****For an example of how to create a model, see the appendix on page 9***



EXPLORING BOUNDARIES

MY INTENTIONAL MODEL

C:

T:


F:

A:

R:

How does it feel to imagine a new way of showing up in this situation? As you begin to explore new ways of setting boundaries, it's normal to feel a bit uneasy with your new freedom. Remember to take it slow: reclaiming your worth and asserting your needs is a practice.

On the next page, there are prompts to help you reflect on your experience of creating a new way of thinking and behaving in your chosen situation. These are designed to help you deepen your understanding and design action plans for when doubt sets in.





EXPLORING BOUNDARIES

PROMPTS FOR REFLECTION

What shifts did you notice as you created your intentional model?

Add a little bit of body text



What is possible now that was not before you created a new model?

Add a little bit of body text



How comfortable would you be using your intentional model in real life on a scale of 1-10?

Add a little bit of body text



What would you need to do or think about yourself to make it a 10?

Add a little bit of body text






EXPLORING BOUNDARIES

Do you need personalized support as you begin renegotiating your boundaries and breaking free from people pleasing? Let's talk! We'll uncover what's getting in your way, where you want to be, and how coaching can help you create that future for yourself.

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APPENDIX

EXAMPLE USING THE MODEL

Unintentional model

- Circumstance: taking on extra tasks at work
- Thought: my colleagues expect me to do everything they ask
- Feeling: resentment
- Action: I don't tell my colleagues how I feel and work late
- Result: my colleagues continue to ask me for help with extra tasks

Intentional model

- Circumstance: taking on tasks at work
- Thought: my colleagues can handle the disappointment when I refuse their requests
- Feeling: contentment
- Action: I finish my work on time and finish work at 5pm
- Result: my colleagues don't continue asking me for help with extra tasks

SOURCES AND RESOURCES

[The model](#)

[Psychcentral](#)

[Positive psychology on boundaries](#)