

School Office Empowerment Program

Interactive Training Modules

Setting Boundaries

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Setting Boundaries

Begin to Set Personal Boundaries

Do you have a hard time standing up for yourself? Do you keep agreeing to do things that you really don't want to do? Do you tolerate rude comments or pushy people because you can't handle conflict? Do you take things personally?

Creating stronger boundaries is the number one way for most women to improve their lives. Here you can learn how to stand up for yourself! Set personal boundaries and free yourself from the "disease to please" with these three steps!

Step 1: Self-Awareness

The first step in learning to set boundaries is self-awareness. Complete the following sentences.

Step 2: Setting Your Boundaries

Learn to set boundaries with others. Find support and using specific language.

Step 3: Strengthen Your Internal Boundaries

Too often, women neglect to stand up for themselves by avoiding confrontation. When someone offends you, stop and ask these three questions.

Guilt in Setting Boundaries

Learn how to overcome guilt. Get rid of the obstacles that could be blocking your way to setting boundaries in your life.

The first step in learning to set boundaries is self-awareness. For example, pay close attention to the situations when you lose energy, feel a knot in your stomach, or want to cry. Identifying where you need more space, self-respect, energy or personal power is the first step.

Another way to identify your boundaries is by completing these three sentences with at least 10 examples.

1. People may not _____.
2. I have a right to ask for _____.
3. To protect my time and energy, it's OK to _____.

Step 2: Setting Your Boundaries

Start setting simple but firm boundaries with a graceful or neutral tone. This will feel uncomfortable at first, but as you take care of yourself, the personal power you gain will make it easier.

- Be sure to have support in place before and after each conversation. If you can't find support from a friend or family member, you may be successful finding a friend online.
- Vent any strong emotions with your partner *before* having your boundary conversation.
- Use simple, direct language.

To set a boundary with an angry person: "You may not yell at me. If you continue, I'll have to leave the room."

To set a boundary with personal phone calls at work: "I've decided to take all personal calls in the evening in order to get my work done. I will need to call you later."

To say no to extra commitments: "Although this organization is important to me, I need to decline your request for volunteer help in order to honour my family's needs."

To set a boundary with someone who is critical: "It's not okay with me that you comment on my weight. I'd like to ask you to stop."

To buy yourself time when making tough decisions: "I'll have to sleep on it, I have a policy of not making decisions right away."

To back out of a commitment: "I know I agreed to head up our fundraising efforts, but after reviewing my schedule, I now realize that I won't be able to give it my best attention. I'd like to help find a replacement by the end of next week."

To set a boundary with an adult child who borrows money: "I won't be lending you money anymore. I love you and you need to

take responsibility for yourself."

When setting boundaries, there is no need to defend, debate, or over-explain your feelings. Be firm, gracious and direct. When faced with resistance, repeat your statement or request.

Back up your boundary with action. Stay strong. If you give in, you invite people to ignore your needs

Step 3: Strengthen Your Internal Boundaries

One of the reasons that women take things personally is because they have weak "internal boundaries." An internal boundary is like an invisible shield that prevents you from taking in a comment without checking it out first. For example, when someone accuses you of being arrogant, stop and consider the statement *before* taking it in.

When you use this internal shield, especially with difficult people like an ex-spouse or critical parent, it gives you time to ask yourself the following three questions:

- How much of this is true about me?
- How much of this is about the other person?
- What do I need to do (if anything) to regain my personal power or stand up for myself?

This last question is very important. Too often women neglect to stand up for themselves by avoiding confrontation and end up weakening their internal shield, making it harder to set boundaries at all. So, if someone offends you, it may be necessary to let them know in order to protect and strengthen your internal boundaries.

Guilt in setting boundaries

Is guilt standing in your way of saying no to the things you don't want to do? Learn how to overcome guilt and other obstacles that could be blocking your way to setting boundaries in your life.

Overcoming Guilt

You have to be ready to make tough choices to change your lifestyle. Guilt is the most common obstacle to taking care of yourself. You *will* feel guilty by making yourself a priority. To overcome guilt, face it head on. See it as a sign that you are on the right track.

Overcoming Resistance

Tell people your priorities have changed and that you are taking care of your needs. If you feel your own resistance to focusing on yourself, remember, when you put yourself first, you are then fully available to others without resentment or anger.

Find Support

When you start making yourself a priority, you may feel uncomfortable and uncaring. Stay with it and find support from other women doing the same.

More on curing the disease to please:

- Don't be a doormat
- Set personal boundaries
- Your absolute yes list
- Learning to say no to others

To help you set your personal boundaries and determine your true priorities, create your "Absolute Yes List." This list is about setting new priorities for yourself, using your time the way you really want.

Put your self-care above anything else—say no unless it's an absolute yes. Choose to spend your time and energy on things that bring you joy and make decisions based on what you want instead of what others want. If you don't set boundaries and take care of yourself, your health and well-being are at stake. And, if you are neglecting yourself, you aren't helping your family and others around you.

Ask yourself:

What needs your attention at this time in your life? Think in terms of the next 3 months, not the next year. What needs your attention: your marriage, financial, health, your physical and emotional health? Maybe you need to find a babysitter to care for your child so you can have time for yourself each week. What are the most pressing areas right now? More examples: spiritual well-being, time with friends, school, work, volunteering, finances, household chores, home repair.

Once you've made your list above, pick the top five priorities.

Does your list need to be reordered?

Place yourself at Number 1. Placing yourself at the top may be hard, but ask yourself, "How am I going to take care of others if I am burnt out?"

Remember, this is about you. This Is Your Absolute Yes List.

Daily Reminder:

Once your list is complete, print this out this worksheet and place it where you will see it throughout the day—the bathroom mirror, the dashboard of your car, your computer monitor, etc.

One Page Plan – Setting Boundaries

Areas that I can contribute to a better team environment

I would like to see more of this offered by my team leader

This is the team I would love to be a member of

School Office Empowerment Program

Interactive Training Modules

Core modules (approximately 30 minutes to complete)

1. My contribution
2. Unleash the power of the female brain
3. Looking after self
4. Emotional literacy
5. Role Models
6. Mentoring
7. Two-people teams
8. Stress busters
9. ZAPP empowerment
10. Office Values
11. My personal plan

Elective modules (approximately 15 minutes to complete)

12. Smiling school
13. Workplace bullying
14. Reflection
15. Breathe
16. Mood check
17. Helium Balloons
18. Calming upset parents
19. Male and female energy
20. Communicating with males
21. Managing teachers
22. Leading from behind
23. The Yin Yang of one to one relationships in the office
24. Team building
25. Time boxing
26. Shared goals
27. My life goals
28. Life balance
29. Saying "no"
30. Setting boundaries
31. Customer service basics

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