



*"Compassionate people ask for what they need. They say no when they need to and when they say yes, they mean it. They're compassionate because their boundaries keep them out of resentment."*

~ Brene Brown, PhD

# SIGNS OF SUCCESS WITH BOUNDARIES

## 9 SIGNS YOU ARE ON THE RIGHT PATH AND DOING THE WORK TO DEVELOP BOUNDARIES



### 1 RESENTMENT AND SUBTLE ANGER - OUR EARLY SIGNAL OF BOUNDARY VIOLATION AWARENESS

One of the first signs that you are succeeding in developing boundaries is identifying, allowing, and understanding your own feelings of resentment, frustration and especially anger at even the most subtle violations of your boundaries. Feelings need neither be ignored nor placed in charge.

You will likely begin to recall many past experiences in which you lacked awareness of boundaries. This is a good sign. It means you are breaking through the chains of unawareness and finding yourself. The following summarizes an example provided from 'Boundaries: When to Say Yes, When to Say No, To Take Control of Your Life':



*Randy grew up in a family that avoided conflict; arguments were punished and compliance rewarded. Randy sought therapy at age 35 for a long-standing eating disorder. Instead of discussing diet and exercise plans, the therapist asked him about how he reacted to the controlling people in his life.*



*Memories of subtle violations, such as a boss demanding more and more hours and his girlfriend criticizing him for minor imperfections surfaced. These were not simply memories in Randy's mind, they carried hurt, anger, resentment and helplessness.*



People who can't feel their anger, lack the 'warning light' to alert of boundary problems due to anger being shamed and suppressed in childhood. *"Anger is like a fire that shoots up within your heart, letting you know there's a problem to confront."*

An inability to allow anger is generally a sign that we are afraid of others' possible disappointment in us, that comes with telling our truth. We end up controlled by fear of being rejected. When we realize that our truth is always our friend, we give ourselves permission to be angry... and no longer suppress this powerful protective alarm. This does not mean we react to the anger... we simply honor it. [Read more about anger in Empowering Emotions practices: www.CreatingYourBalance.com](http://www.CreatingYourBalance.com)

*"Boundaries in relationships work both ways: they create emotional health and are created by people with emotional health. They are something you can start working on today with the people close to you and you'll begin to notice a difference in your self-esteem, confidence, emotional stability, and so on."*

~ Mark Manson, Author



## 2 CHANGE IN TASTE - BECOMING DRAWN TO SECURELY ATTACHED, BOUNDARY-LOVERS

As you continue to create and maintain healthy boundaries, you will realize a more grounded, self-trusting way of existence. This naturally unfolds into attracted other boundary-lovers capable of healthy attachment and real love. We become attracted to boundary lovers, because in them we find permission to be honest and authentic, seen, heard, valued, and connected with wholeheartedness.



## 3 TREASURING OUR TREASURES

You will begin to see that taking responsibility for yourself is healthy, and you will understand that taking responsibility for other adults is not only impossible, but destructive. "Our basic sense of ourselves and our self-worth comes from our significant primary relationships. That's why many people who were emotionally neglected in childhood (even subtle forms of lack of attunement) can be surrounded by caring people in adulthood, yet not be able to receive love due to a deep sense of unworthiness and unlovability. No matter how much people show them their lovability.



## 4 PRACTICING BABY NO'S

You may have been putting your personal needs on the back burner for many years, so it may be anxiety-producing and feel selfish to say 'no' at first. However knowing when to say 'no' is essential for your well-being. Realize that growth in setting emotional boundaries needs to be at a rate that takes into account your past injuries, otherwise you could fall down before you have enough solid ground. Cultivating boundaries does not mean you call your boss or a controlling parent and start demanding limits. Start with a good supportive relationship that will honor your boundaries and love you for it. A support group is an ideal place to start.



## 5 REJOICING AND EMBRACING GUILTY FEELINGS, INSTEAD OF REACTING OR AVOIDING THEM

Passively complying will begin to be a thing of the past. You will begin to notice the feeling of anger, resentment, and guilt throughout the day and in your relating. Practicing emotional health skills and mindfulness will serve as your compass for setting balanced boundaries. You used to force yourself into things because of guilt and the nagging tug to do what you 'should' do. Now you feel empowered to simply identify the guilt but not let it control you. You are regaining control of your 'property' and enjoying the fruit of "self-control."

*Setting healthy boundaries is not being mean. It is about recognizing we all having a responsibility for our own actions and knowing we do not have to tolerate toxic or harmful behaviors. It is about self-care, self-protection and not enabling unhealthy behaviors of others.*



## 6 PRACTICING GROWN-UP NO'S

This step involves facing larger fears and building boundaries in the most difficult areas of your life. Who is the foremost person in your life with whom it's difficult to set limits? Your boss? A parent? A spouse... or relationship? Straightening out these relationships is one of the biggest hurdles.

*"We can't really love until we have boundaries - otherwise we love out of compliance or guilt. And we can't really be productive at work without boundaries - otherwise we're so busy following others' agendas that we're double-minded and unstable."*

Realize that our perceptions of our current relationships (personal and at work) are tainted by past relationships and our own preconceptions of who we think they are. Be responsible for fact-checking your thoughts and beliefs about others. Take ownership in communicating your needs, wants, and limits. No one can read your mind. Much of your disappointment in others may be due to you not communicating.

Understanding how much to share of yourself, your time, emotions, opinions, past, and future aspirations, with each individual, whether it be family members, friends, or acquaintances requires awareness and skills. These skills are imperative so we may be vulnerable and open in order to truly connect with others that are worthy and capable of healthy relating. We also need to realize that not every is capable of fully connecting with us and some people are even abusive.



## 7 LOVING THE BOUNDARIES OF OTHERS

Boundaries give others a manual on how you expect to be treated and what behavior you will allow in your life. If you don't set boundaries, people won't know how to act around you, and you will be left feeling disrespected. The other side of this coin is that without your own boundaries you are less likely to recognize those of others and be disrespecting them.

You may be so triggered by others needing space, time with friends, time away from texting, and so forth, that you have not noticed your own lack of regard for their boundaries. Some of the most well-intentioned people I know have sabotaged relationships due fear of abandonment. Reactions such as over-texting, controlling, jealousy, and even dumping someone in an effort to end the emotional anguish that the perceived threat of rejection ignites.

Once you begin practicing healthy boundaries, you will also naturally begin to cherish the boundaries of others. Loving others' boundaries increases our capacity to truly care about others and allow the space for freedom, respect and real love.

*"I allow myself to set healthy boundaries. To say no to what does not align with my values, to say yes to what does. Boundaries assist me to remain healthy, honest and living a life that is true to me."*



## 8 FREEING OUR NO AND OUR YES

Which is more mature? (1) Since you were unsure, you said yes or (2) Since you were unsure, you said no. It is likely your guilt and concern over disappointing another, would drive you into saying yes, even when you were unsure.

As you build healthy boundaries, you will chose (2). This results in ensuring you are agreeing to something you feel good about, rather than out of obligation and compliance. You are as free to say yes as you are to say no, as long as you have checked in with your genuine intentions and abilities.



## 9 MATURE BOUNDARIES - VALUE-DRIVEN GOAL SETTING

You will begin to honor your internal boundaries, limits and goals. The ultimate goal of learning boundaries is to free us up to protect, nurture, prioritize and develop the lives we desire. Setting boundaries is a mature, proactive, initiative taking platform.

Self-discipline is self-care. Loving the self is not allowing ourselves to be overly indulgent by over-eating, over-spending, over-drinking, etc., nor is it self-berating and overly-controlling. It is a balanced disciplined way of living, that provides great gifts of financial stability, accomplishing goals, realizing true desires, cultivating and fostering healthy, loving relationships, and more. Developing healthy boundaries may be the most important building blocks of your well-being.



**Important note:** Boundary work is an active process. It is a major component of building self-trust.

Lacking boundaries can often be traced back to a childhood where you learned that if you don't do what others want you will be shamed, punished, or rejected.

Since you were taught the easiest way to get love and approval was to be a good kid and comply, you likely hold a backward belief in your subconscious programming that to be boundary-less will lead to love and approval. This tends to lead to difficult relationships, loneliness, codependency and other addictive patterns.

You may also rebel against this urge to please others and end up shutting down into avoidant tendencies, walled off from allowing love in. Therapy helps navigate your programming stemming from childhood so it no longer controls you and provides the opportunity to live in a boundary-full, balanced way.

*Setting healthy boundaries is not being mean. It is about recognizing we all having a responsibility for our own actions and knowing we do not have to tolerate toxic or harmful behaviors. It is about self-care, self-protection and not enabling unhealthy behaviors of others.*