



*Workbook*  
UNDERSTANDING  
BOUNDARIES  
EDITION



BOUNDARIES ARE NOT MEANT TO CONTROL OR PUNISH OTHERS. THEY ARE A WAY TO TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF. YOU HAVE TO KNOW YOURSELF IN ORDER TO KNOW YOUR BOUNDARIES. THEY ARE A WAY TO ENSURE THAT YOU ARE FREE TO BE YOU, BUT THEY ALSO ALLOW THOSE AROUND YOU TO BE THEMSELVES AS WELL.

TAKE A LOOK AT THE GRID BELOW AND BE REFLECTIVE WITH YOURSELF ABOUT YOUR OWN BOUNDARIES:



	<b>Weak or no Boundaries</b>	<b>Flexible or Healthy Boundaries</b>	<b>Rigid or Overly Tight Boundaries</b>
How you feel	Vulnerable	Safe and connected	Isolated or alone
How others treat you.	Others are likely to hurt you.	Others treat you with respect and connect in ways that feel good.	Others can't approach you or connect with you.
How you treat others	You're likely to hurt or pull away from others.	You treat others with respect and connect in ways that they enjoy.	You do not approach others or try to connect with them.

CHART FROM [THE BETTER BOUNDARIES WORKBOOK](#) BY SHARON MARTIN, MSW, LCSW

LOOKING AT THE GRID ABOVE, WOULD YOU DEFINE YOUR BOUNDARIES AS WEAK, HEALTHY, OR RIGID?

WHY DO YOU DEFINE YOUR BOUNDARIES THAT WAY?

NO ONE HAS "PERFECT" BOUNDARIES. BOUNDARIES CHANGE AS YOU GROW AND LEARN MORE ABOUT YOURSELF. GO EASY ON YOURSELF IN THIS PACKET AND BEGIN TO UNDERSTAND WHY YOU MIGHT HAVE CHALLENGES WITH BOUNDARIES.

MANY PEOPLE HAVE WEAK OR RIGID BOUNDARIES BECAUSE THEY HAVE SET BOUNDARIES IN THE PAST AND PEOPLE HAVE NOT RESPECTED THOSE BOUNDARIES.

HERE ARE **FEARS** THAT PEOPLE HAVE WHEN SETTING BOUNDARIES:

- ☐ HURTING SOMEONE'S FEELINGS BY SAYING NO
- ☐ CONFLICT WITH OTHERS
- ☐ BEING IGNORED
- ☐ BEING MISUNDERSTOOD
- ☐ A PHYSICAL FIGHT
- ☐ BEING PUT DOWN, CUSSING OUT, OR NOT TAKEN SERIOUSLY
- ☐ DISAPPOINTING SOMEONE OR MAKING THEM MAD
- ☐ GETTING REJECTED
- ☐ GIVING IN AFTER SAYING NO
- ☐ WONDERING IF YOU DESERVE RESPECT

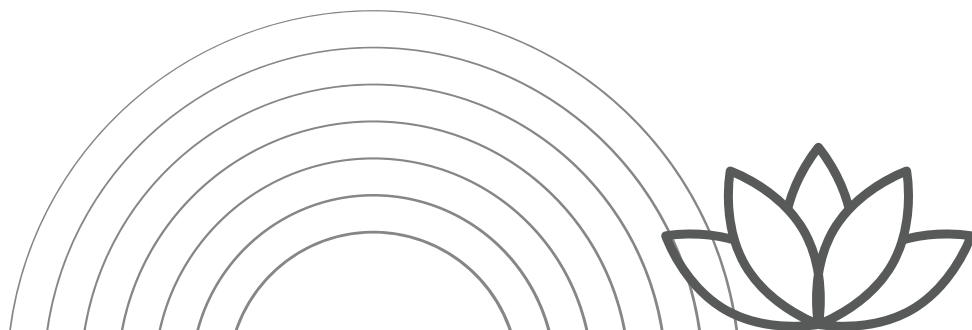
CHECK ALL OF THE ABOVE THAT MIGHT APPLY TO YOU.

**GUILT** CAN ALSO MAKE YOU HESITATE ON SETTING BOUNDARIES. DO YOU EVER FEEL THE FOLLOWING THINGS:

- ☐ I SHOULDN'T NEED OR WANT ANYTHING.
- ☐ I NEVER NEED ANYTHING ANYWAY.
- ☐ IF I EVER DO NEED ANYTHING, I SHOULDN'T ASK.
- ☐ I CAN TAKE CARE OF MY OWN NEEDS AND DON'T NEED ANYONE.
- ☐ IT'S MY RESPONSIBILITY TO TAKE CARE OF OTHERS.
- ☐ BEING SELFLESS IS HOW I WAS RAISED.
- ☐ I SHOULD KEEP MY OPINIONS TO MYSELF. NO ONE WANTS TO HEAR THEM.
- ☐ WHAT I WANT DOESN'T MATTER.
- ☐ IT CAN BE CONSIDERED RUDE IF I SAY NO.
- ☐ I DO NOT WANT TO BE SEEN AS SELFISH.

CHECK ALL OF THE ABOVE THAT MIGHT APPLY TO YOU.

WHEN YOU HAVE GUILT ABOUT YOUR BOUNDARIES THIS MEANS THAT YOU BELIEVE THAT THE NEEDS OF OTHERS MIGHT BE MORE IMPORTANT THAN YOUR NEEDS. AT SOME POINT YOU MAY HAVE GOTTEN A MESSAGE (BY ACCIDENT OR ON PURPOSE) THAT YOU DO NOT DESERVE TO BE TREATED WELL.



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SOME THOUGHTS THAT WE FIGHT AGAINST ARE AUTOMATIC AND NEGATIVE. THESE THOUGHTS CAN PREVENT US FROM FEELING LIKE WE DESERVE BOUNDARIES. LOOK AT THE SENTENCES BELOW AND DECIDE IF YOU HAVE AN EXAMPLE OF THESE THOUGHTS IN YOUR LIFE. IF SO, WRITE OUT THE SCENARIO ON THE LINES.

- SOMETIMES I BELIEVE THAT PEOPLE CAN READ MY MIND OR I "JUST KNOW" WHAT OTHERS ARE THINKING.

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- IT IS OKAY IF OTHER PEOPLE LET ME DOWN, BUT I HAVE A HARD TIME LETTING ANYONE ELSE DOWN.

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- IF I SAY NO TO SOMEONE, THEY MIGHT COMPLETELY REJECT ME.

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- SOMETIMES PEOPLE HAVE A HIDDEN AGENDA.

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- THERE ARE PEOPLE WHO ACTUALLY TRY TO PUSH MY BUTTONS.

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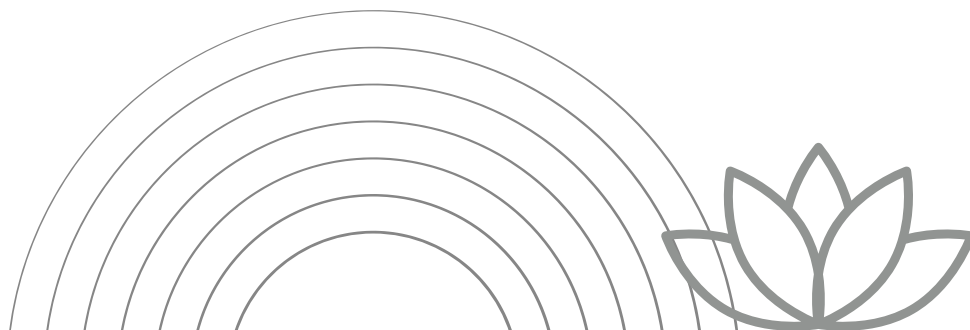
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- WHEN SOMEONE CROSSES MY LINES, I FEEL LIKE A JERK WHEN I ENFORCE MY BOUNDARY.

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# Coloring Page



# Boundary Stages

1. THE FIRST STAGE OF SETTING BOUNDARIES IS THE REACTIONARY PHASE. IT IS SOMETIMES CALLED "AGGRESSIVE," BUT THAT LABEL HAS SOME NEGATIVE CONNOTATIONS. THIS IS THE STAGE WHEN WE FIRST DISCOVER OUR BOUNDARIES AND WE TEND TO OVER-REACT WHEN OUR LINES GET CROSSED. DO YOU BELIEVE YOU ARE AT THIS STAGE? WHY OR WHY NOT?

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IF NOT, DESCRIBE THE TIME OF YOUR LIFE WHEN YOU WERE IN THE REACTIONARY PHASE OF BOUNDARIES.

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2. THE SECOND PHASE OF BOUNDARIES CAN BE CONSIDERED PASSIVE AND/OR PASSIVE AGGRESSIVE. PASSIVE IS WHEN YOU ALLOW OTHERS TO GET AWAY WITH THINGS YOU WOULD NEVER ALLOW FOR YOURSELF. PASSIVE AGGRESSIVE COMES IN WHEN YOU POSSIBLY DO HARM TO OTHERS INDIRECTLY AS SMALL WAYS TO GET REVENGE. IT MOSTLY INVOLVES DOING A LOT OF TALKING ABOUT OTHERS WHEN THEY ARE NOT PRESENT. DO YOU EVER ACT PASSIVELY OR PASSIVE AGGRESSIVELY? WHY OR WHY NOT?

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IF NOT, DESCRIBE THE TIME OF YOUR LIFE WHEN YOU WERE PASSIVE OR PASSIVE AGGRESSIVE.

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3. THE THIRD STAGE OF BOUNDARIES IS BEING ASSERTIVE. NO ONE IS PERFECT WITH THEIR BOUNDARIES, BUT IN THIS PHASE YOU ARE CONFIDENT WHEN YOU SET A BOUNDARY. YOU ARE NOT HARSH WITH OTHERS, BUT YOUR BOUNDARIES KEEP YOU SANE AND SAFE. DESCRIBE A TIME WHEN YOU CONFIDENTLY SET A BOUNDARY.

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