

# life Happens

## HEADLINES

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## Boundaries: Where Do You Draw the Line?

When it comes to personal boundaries, where do you draw the line? Boundaries are essential to establishing and maintaining healthy relationships with yourself and others. You may think of boundaries as a way to limit interactions or keep people out, but healthy boundaries do more than deter toxic relationships. Boundaries are a blueprint that outlines your limits and rules within your relationships. They define what behavior you will accept from others and what other people can expect from you. For example, you may be comfortable enjoying a casual lunch-and-chat with a coworker but uncomfortable friending them on social media. Boundaries are like protective guidelines for connecting with others! By setting boundaries, you communicate what you need to have a healthy interaction with someone else. Your needs can change over time and will look different in personal and professional relationships, so communication is a critical part of maintaining boundaries!

### Too Rigid, Too Loose, or Just Right?



Think about boundaries like your front door. When they are loose, it's like having your front door wide open for everyone, including unwelcome guests, to enter. Loose boundaries blur the line between your needs and emotions and the needs and emotions of others. This can cause you to feel responsible for things that are out of your control, like your spouse's mood or your teammate's poor performance. When your boundaries are rigid, it's similar to bricking yourself up in a tower surrounded by a moat. You're unlikely to have as many negative encounters with others, but it limits opportunities for meaningful connections and can lead to isolation.

Most people have a mix of different boundary types. For example, you could have rigid boundaries at work, loose boundaries with a partner, and a combination of boundaries with family.

## Finding Balance in Healthy Boundaries

An inability to advocate for yourself can lead to resentment in relationships and lowered self-esteem, so it's essential to establish healthy boundaries. Healthy boundaries are flexible, allowing you to loosen them when it feels safe to do so. Here are tips to help you identify and establish boundaries in your life:

**Examine the existing:** Take a look at what boundaries exist or are lacking in your life. Examine how these boundaries serve you – why are they important? Then determine what you want from your relationships. This could be more independence from parents or a closer relationship with a friend. Decide what boundaries are needed to accomplish your goals.

**Tune into your feelings:** Sometimes it's difficult to determine when a boundary is violated. Your feelings and emotions can act as an alarm system, alerting you when someone crosses a line. If you leave a conversation with a family member, friend, or coworker and feel depleted, anxious, or on edge, it could be a sign that a boundary was crossed and needs adjustment.

**Stand firm:** When you identify the need to set a boundary, do it clearly, calmly, firmly, and in as few words as possible. You don't need to get angry, justify, or apologize for the boundary you are setting. You aren't responsible for someone's reaction to your boundary. You are only responsible for communicating your boundary calmly and clearly.

**Remember your right to self-care-** At first, you will probably feel selfish, guilty, or embarrassed when you set a boundary. Remind yourself you have a right to self-care, and that setting limits is a responsible step that protects you from becoming overcommitted and overburdened. Setting boundaries takes practice and determination- don't let anxiety, fear or guilt prevent you from taking care of yourself!

[Learn about boundary types and tips for boundary building](#)

## Blurring Boundaries with a Click

Social media has further blurred the lines between boundaries. With a short tweet or post, you can easily (and accidentally) put too much personal information onto the

Internet. And once it's on the Internet, it's out there forever. Nearly **40%** of internet users between the ages of 18-35 have regretted posting personal information about themselves, and **35%** have regretted posting personal information about a friend or family member.



Sources: [Webroot](#)

## Adjusting Boundaries for Changing Needs

Boundaries are an important aspect of self-care. They protect your emotional, mental, and overall well-being by managing demands on your time and emotions. No one can set boundaries for you because they cannot anticipate your every need. The better you understand yourself and your needs, the easier it is to establish boundaries that serve you. Your boundaries will change over time, and when you notice they are becoming too loose or too rigid, try adjusting them gradually. Making incremental changes allows you to continually readjust without the risk of overcorrecting. As you continue this practice, you will learn to trust your judgment and enjoy healthier relationships with yourself and others!

[Click here to listen to Let's Talk About Boundaries](#)



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