

Setting Healthy Boundaries for Lasting Love

Have you ever felt angry or hurt because of something your partner said or did?

Setting healthy boundaries can help you protect your emotional energy and deepen the connection within your relationship.

Boundaries are the guidelines we set about our expectations, availability, and energy. Because boundaries communicate how we feel, they prevent us from overcommitting or feeling resentful. They also help give others guidelines with how to treat you.

They do not have to be hard, aggressive rules. **Setting boundaries allows us to be transparent with our partner about how we feel, so we can have a deeper, longer, lasting relationship.**

The word boundary might be interpreted as pushing someone away. It is better described as an invitation to let your partner in to learn more about you and your needs.

Setting boundaries with your partner can improve the strength of your relationship. Not only are you inviting your partner to learn more about you, but you are also claiming responsibility for your emotions and how you take care of yourself.

Benefits to setting healthy boundaries:

1. **Take care of mental health.** Boundaries allow you to take responsibility for your emotional energy and mental health. Setting healthy boundaries can help you name your limits with your emotional energy in mind.
2. **Give both partners a safe space to be transparent and vulnerable.** Setting boundaries creates a safe container for both partners to be honest. **It's a way to grow trust and foster love.**
3. **Learn about yourself.** Learning where your boundaries are is a process of tuning into your own needs.

Setting boundaries allows us to care for ourselves and remove resentment.

Follow these tips to set boundaries in your relationship:

1. **Include your partner.** Let your partner know why you might be setting boundaries. Check in with their emotions. Invite your partner to learn about setting boundaries along with you.
2. **Explore what you need.** Pay attention to where you might feel resentment, guilt, or anger towards your partner.
 - What makes you feel uncomfortable?
 - What values are important to you?
3. **Make the boundary about you and your needs.** When you state a boundary, focus on you.
 - “It was great to spend time together this weekend. I would like to decompress alone the rest of the night. Want to get lunch in a couple days?”
 - “In order to continue this discussion, I need us to be calmer.”
 - “I feel attacked when my point of view isn’t considered. I need a space to feel heard and understood.”
4. **Start with thank you.** If you have trouble setting boundaries, start by thanking the other person for their thoughts or requests.
 - “Thank you for wanting to spend time together, but I would like to spend some time decompressing.”
 - “Thank you for inviting me to spend time with your family. I would like to spend some time with them and feel free to leave when I feel tired.”

Healthy vs. Unhealthy Boundaries

As you and your partner set boundaries, **it’s important to understand that setting a boundary with the intent of controlling the other is not a healthy boundary.**

For example, one person might say, “You cannot dance salsa with others, because I get jealous.” That reflects a lack of trust and attempts to maintain control over the other person.

A healthy boundary does not control the other person. They’re about what makes you feel most comfortable, but without trying to control the other. **Boundaries respect and honor both parties to grow and thrive together.**

Although committing to grow together, you and your partner are still two different people with separate needs and expectations. Boundaries ensure that you both continue to respect one another, communicate, and honor each other’s needs.

Boundaries will deepen the connection between you and your partner as you learn more about the other.