

Boundaries are not walls

What boundaries really are, and why they are the most loving thing you can offer.

Most of us were taught that boundaries are about other people. Something you set with someone who has gone too far. A line you draw when a relationship has gotten out of hand.

But emotional intelligence research tells us something different. A boundary is not primarily about another person. It is about you, your self-awareness, your values, your needs, and your capacity to regulate yourself under pressure. Before any boundary can be communicated, it has to be understood. And that understanding begins inside. Not controlling what others do. Coming home to what you know about yourself.

DOES THIS SOUND FAMILIAR

"I feel guilty every time I say no."

"I end up doing things I don't want to do just to keep the peace."

"I don't even know what I need anymore."

"If I set a boundary, they will think I don't care."

Notice that every one of these statements is about your internal experience, not about what someone else did.

THREE SIGNS YOUR BOUNDARIES NEED ATTENTION

Resentment	Exhaustion	Silence
You keep giving but feel invisible. The anger is quiet, but it is growing.	Tired in a way rest does not fix. You have been carrying too much for too long.	You stopped asking for what you need because it never seemed to matter anyway.

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE DAY-TO-DAY

In your body	Tension you cannot explain. Dread before certain conversations. Relief when plans cancel.
In your emotions	Resentment that builds quietly. Guilt when you say no. Anxiety about disappointing others.
In relationships	Saying yes when you mean no. Feeling used. Avoiding people who drain you instead of naming it.
In your identity	Not knowing what you actually want. Defining yourself by what you do for others.
In your voice	Explaining, over-justifying, apologizing for having needs at all.

A boundary is not a punishment. It is a declaration of what you value.

UNDERSTANDING BOUNDARIES

A boundary is an internal clarity, knowing what you are willing to do, give, accept, and carry. It is not a rule you impose on others. It is a decision you make about yourself.

When we have no boundaries, we do not disappear. We leak. Our resentment shows up as withdrawal, passive aggression, or exhaustion. The boundary was always there; it just came out sideways. Emotional intelligence research is clear: people with healthy boundaries are more present, more genuine, and more capable of real connection, because they are not performing their relationship from depletion.

FINDING YOUR WAY BACK

- 1 Name the belief.** Before you can set a boundary, you have to know what is being crossed. Resentment, dread, and exhaustion are signals. Listen to them.
- 2 Separate guilt from wrongdoing.** Guilt when you say no does not mean you did something wrong. It means you were taught that your needs come last. That is a story, not a fact.
- 3 Get clear on your values.** Boundaries are not about what you do not want. They are about what you do want, rest, honesty, reciprocity, respect. Your values are the source.
- 4 Start small and specific.** One honest response. One request. One 'no' that you follow through on. That is enough to begin.
- 5 Let the relationship respond.** Healthy relationships can hold a boundary. Some will push back. That response is information, about the relationship, not about you.

BRING THIS TO OUR SESSION

Take a few quiet minutes before we meet. Honest answers are the only ones that matter.

- 1** Where in life do I feel most resentful or depleted right now?
Your thoughts:
- 2** What am I saying yes to that I actually want to say no?
Your thoughts:
- 3** What do I believe will happen if I set a boundary with that person or situation?
Your thoughts:
- 4** What value of mine is not being honored, by others, or by myself?
Your thoughts:
- 5** What would one small honest boundary look like for me this week?
Your thoughts:

FREE. Open to everyone. Space is limited.

Thursdays · 5:30–7:00 pm · Starting June 25, 2026 · EMG · 324 E. Street, Marysville
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