

By Coach Mack Arrington

Out of Bounds



Boundaries help protect the sheep as well as other things you care about.

Boundaries are rules you place around yourself for protection and freedom. They define what you can and will do, as well as what you will and will not accept from others. They are filters to stop people from behaving in unacceptable ways around you. By setting limits, you create your identity and by clarifying to yourself and others what you stand for and who you are.

Boundaries help define who you are – and who you are not.

Big boundaries are healthy.

When you have more space, you have more freedom to grow and to choose. Having distance from other people's needs (not necessarily other people) allows you more control over your life. You start attracting people who respect your boundaries. You have more energy because you won't be drained or violated by other people and no longer must you operate out of fear.

What are some examples of boundaries?

1. **Physical** - Not allow others to stand too close, no physical abuse, no touching you without permission
2. **Emotional** - Not allow someone to intimidate you with their anger or fear, or hurt you intentionally
3. **Mental** - Not allow someone to lie to you, not be passive/aggressive with you, not use belittling and demeaning language to you or about you
4. **Sexual** - Not allow inappropriate touching, unwanted sexual advances or sexual innuendoes in your presence
5. **Spiritual/religious** - Not allow disparaging remarks about your beliefs or others to force their beliefs upon you
6. **Creative** - Share your ideas only with supportive people, not allow people to intrude during your creative time
7. **Financial** - Not loan or borrow money with friends and relatives, set limit on how much you charge on credit cards

How to set your boundaries

First: Become aware of your boundary. You usually become aware of your boundaries when someone oversteps them. In response you might feel physically or emotionally uncomfortable or distressed. For example, when people raise their voice to you, you feel uncomfortable and disrespected—this indicates they have overstepped one of your boundaries.

Second: Define and set your boundary. Family, close friends, and bosses might be too intimidating in the beginning, so don't rush the process. Start with boundaries you are comfortable setting. For example, your boundary is that people cannot raise their voices around you, even when they are angry.

Third: Communicate your boundary to others. It is fair to let people know and to enlist their help to set and expand your boundaries. For example, "I like working on this project with you, but I need you to stop yelling when you get upset." Be prepared for their reaction when you politely inform them that "X" is your boundary.

Fourth: Have a plan for infringement. For example, if someone raises their voice, you might say, "It really bothers me when you raise your voice like that. If you can't control yourself, I will have to leave until you can." What will you do: walk away, explain yourself, discuss their own boundaries? People usually take time to change, so you might need to train them. Be patient, be firm. People who are used to old ways may continue simply because they don't know how else to be.

Fifth: Celebrate your successes! Celebrating your successes will reinforce your desire and commitment to creating healthy boundaries in your life. How will you reward yourself for upholding your boundaries? Will you share this with someone?

General Direction

Be kind and gentle to yourself when developing new habits, change can be difficult. It takes practice, so don't expect to get everything perfect the first time out. Since this is for **your** life, you have three options for each item.

1. When you become consistent with that item, check it off.
2. If an item does not fit what you need, rewrite it for your own purpose, check it off when consistent.
3. If you decide an item does not really matter to you, check it off because it's not a challenge for you.

Some mistakes to avoid

1. Setting boundaries too small. When someone oversteps your boundary, you don't want them already to be "in your face." Set boundaries big enough to allow yourself extra breathing room, even if you feel outside your comfort zone at first.
2. Setting boundaries too high. If your boundaries are too big, then you might not enforce or uphold them. If you set them too high too fast, you can lose people you want to keep.
3. Arguing about your boundary. Sometimes it is better to walk away from a person who is crossing your boundary than to argue about it. Simply state your boundary to the infringing person and then walk away, particularly if you feel threatened.
4. Trying to control other people's behavior. Boundaries are to protect yourself, not to control other people. You can't control someone raising their voice at you, but you can control how you respond and walk away.
5. Not preparing for risk. Setting boundaries involves taking risk because you cannot control the other person. Setting boundaries can cost you a job, a client, a sale, a close relationship, etc. Be prepared for the cost.

Six LifeChecks for setting boundaries

- I am polite and direct in communicating my boundaries and the consequences of overstepping
- I let people know what I prefer, they don't have to guess what I like or don't like
- My boundaries are big enough to give me room

- If someone argues about my boundaries, I don't become defensive, I excuse myself and walk away
- I don't use my boundaries to control others or make them feel bad or guilty, if they don't respect my boundaries, we can part company amicably
- If someone wants to respect my boundaries, I can work with that until I see that it's not working

Four LifeChecks boundaries for your choosing

- If I feel I cannot trust someone, I move on
- I don't allow people to raise their voice to me
- I don't allow people to interrupt or talk over me
- I do not allow physical abuse of myself or others around me

Date Completed 10 LifeChecks: _____

Write some of your own LifeChecks boundaries:

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Notes:

As a LifeChecks user, you agree to the following.

Some issues may require other professional services such as medical, therapeutic, legal, tax advice, etc., and that your decisions and actions based on LifeChecks materials, are the completely your responsibility. LifeChecks shall have no liability or responsibility for any actions you take Lifechecks makes no guarantees or warranties, expressed or implied, as to results to be achieved, or as to the consequences of any actions you take or don't take.