

A Menu For Improving Personal Boundaries

Boundaries aren't just about reacting to others. The concept also includes how you reach out to and connect with others.

Try to work on one action from each category per week! Circle the item or make a note once you've practiced it, to keep track of your efforts.

"Having emotionally immature parents may have undermined your self-acceptance, self-expressiveness, and hopes for genuine intimacy, but there's nothing to hold you back now as an adult." – Lindsay C. Gibson, PsyD*

<p>Help-seeking</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask for help when I need it. • Remember that asking for help gives the other person a chance to feel helpful. • Make requests by clearly explaining how I feel and why. 	<p>People-pleasing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Express myself considerately, then avoid trying to change others' minds. • Offer only as much (energy, time, resources) as I have to give. • Share my true opinions, instead of presuming to know what others want to hear. • Avoid agreeing to do things I will resent.
<p>Connecting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice giving and receiving help. • Value others' intentions even if they don't express themselves perfectly. • Express gratitude for kindness. • Look for opportunities to improve relationships when they frustrate me. 	<p>Self-compassion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remember that half-assing something is better than no-assing something. • Expect myself to put in a reasonable effort, but not to be perfect. • Rest when I'm tired instead of criticizing myself for being tired. • Take a break before I'm forced to (by crisis, injury, burnout, etc.). • Ask myself whether I'd forgive a friend for the same mistake I made.
<p>Communicating</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell others what I need, so they don't have to read my mind. • Respond to feelings of hurt by suggesting how the other person can help me feel less hurt next time. • Question whether my hurt feelings are related to the present moment or to a moment from my past. • Follow up in order to get the answers I need. • End conversations when I'm out of energy (considerately) without feeling guilty. 	

And if you need motivation... Ask yourself what it'd feel like if you implemented all of the above boundaries? How great would that feel? What might your life look like?