

TIPS FOR SETTING HEALTHY BOUNDARIES

By Terri Cole

(Modified from the book, [*Boundaries: Where You End and I Begin*](#), by Anne Katherine)

- When you identify the need to set a boundary, do it clearly, calmly, firmly, respectfully, and in as few words as possible. Do not justify, get angry, or apologize for the boundary you are setting.
- You are not responsible for the other person's reaction to the boundary you are setting. **You are only responsible for clearly and respectfully communicating your boundary.** If it upset the other person, be confident knowing **that their reaction is not your problem.** Some people, especially those accustomed to controlling, abusing, or manipulating you, might test you. Plan on it, expect it, but remain firm. Remember, your behavior must match the boundaries you are setting. You cannot successfully establish a clear boundary if you send mixed messages by apologizing.
- At first, you will probably feel selfish, guilty, or embarrassed when you set a boundary. Do it anyway and tell yourself you have a right to protect yourself. Setting boundaries takes practice and determination. Don't let anxiety or guilt prevent you from taking care of yourself.
- When you feel anger or resentment or find yourself whining or complaining, you probably need to set a boundary. Listen to yourself, determine what you need to do or say, then communicate assertively.
- Learning to set healthy boundaries takes time. It is a process. Set them in your own time frame, not when someone else tells you.
- Develop a support system of people who respect your right to set boundaries. Eliminate toxic people from your life—those who want to manipulate, abuse, and control you.

Establishing healthy boundaries and enforcing them builds self-worth and confidence.