

---

## Understanding Boundaries

### What are boundaries?

Boundaries are expectations and needs that help you feel safe and comfortable in your relationships. Expectations in relationships help you stay mentally and emotionally well. Learning when to say no and when to say yes is also an essential part of feeling comfortable when interacting with others.

Signs that you need boundaries:

- You feel overwhelmed.
- You feel resentful towards people for asking for your help.
- You avoid phone calls and interactions with people who might ask for something.
- You make comments about helping people and getting nothing in return.
- You feel burned out.
- You frequently daydream about dropping everything and disappearing.
- You have no time for yourself.

3 types of boundaries: Porous, Rigid, and Healthy

1. **Porous** boundaries are weak or poorly expressed and are unintentionally harmful. They lead to feeling depleted, overextending yourself, depression, anxiety and unhealthy relationship dynamics. Porous boundaries look like: oversharing, codependency, enmeshment (lack of emotional separation for another person), inability to say no, people-pleasing, dependency on feedback from others, paralyzing fear of being rejected, and accepting mistreatment.
2. **Rigid** boundaries involve building walls to keep others out as a way to keep yourself safe. Rigid boundaries are a self-protective mechanism meant to build distance. Rigid boundaries look like building walls, avoiding vulnerability, cutting people out, having high expectations of others, and enforcing strict rules.

# humantold

3. **Healthy** boundaries are possible when your past doesn't show up in your present interactions. They require an awareness of your emotional, mental, and physical capabilities, combined with clear communication.

Two parts to setting boundaries: communication & action.

1. **Communication:** Verbally communicating your needs is step one. People cannot accurately assume your boundaries based on your body language or unspoken expectations. When you explicitly communicate what you expect, there is little room for others to misinterpret what works for you. Assertive statements are the most effective way to do this.
2. **Action:** You must uphold what you communicate through your behavior. Betting on the other person to read your mind is a recipe for an unhealthy relationship. Action is required.

Homework:

In what area of your life would you like to set up boundaries? List three places or relationships where you would like to set a new one. (Areas where we commonly need boundaries are family, work, friends, romance, friendships and technology)

Book: Set Boundaries, Find Peace: Written By: Nedra Glover Tawwab

Worksheet Created By: Janay Bailey, LMHC