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## Protect Your Energy with Healthy Boundaries

Boundaries protect your energy. They represent your limits and communicate to others what is and what is not okay. Healthy boundaries can improve your relationships, and they can also preserve your energy for the things you value most.

Even so, boundary-setting can be awkward. Saying no means you might end up disappointing some people you care about, but it also makes it possible for you to allocate your energy more effectively and efficiently.

### Here are three easy steps for setting healthy boundaries:

#### **Define your boundaries.**

Get clear about what is acceptable and what is not. For example, is it okay for your friend to call you in the middle of the night with a non-emergency issue? Is it okay for a colleague to demand something at the last minute? Knowing your limits is the first step to setting a boundary.

#### **Communicate your boundaries.**

Next, you will need to communicate your boundary. While it would be nice if others could read your mind, they cannot. You have to be clear about your boundaries if you expect others to respect them.

#### **Honor your boundaries.**

Boundaries are nothing more than ideas unless you honor and enforce them. You must be willing to be vocalize when someone violates a boundary, and take necessary action to correct the situation when possible and appropriate. Declining unreasonable requests, suggesting alternative solutions, and having honest, uncomfortable conversations are all forms of enforcing boundaries.



*Boundary-setting is a delicate art that requires practice. It can take time to build skills in this area. It is not necessary to be curt or abrasive when setting boundaries. In fact, you will be much more effective when you do it with grace and kindness.*

