

3 Step Boundary Builder

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Step 1:

Define Your Limits

Boundary Besieger

- Work Colleague
- Parent
- In-Law
- Friend
- Sibling
- Relative
- Acquaintance
- Neighbour
- Other



Boundary Besieger

- Time
- Opinion
- Personal Space
- Money
- Choice
- Tolerance
- Other



Step 2:

Rehearse a Breach

Brainstorm - who will do what - what will you do/say to enforce your boundary

Build Boundary

Step 3:

Assume Positive Intent

Brainstorm optimistic reasons why people push your boundaries



Explanatory Notes



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Step 1: Define Your Limits

E.G An acquaintance has started turning up at your house unannounced for coffee and a chat but because you work from home your time while the kids are at school is so precious. You find yourself constantly reassuring them and advising them about life but have realised that they have no intention of making any meaningful change and you just get left feeling tired and drained not to mentioned utterly frustrated by the interruption to your work and loss of valuable work time. Time to build a boundary!

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Step 2: Rehearse a Breach

Now that you've identified the different areas in your life where you need to implement boundaries, you probably also have some pretty clear ideas of who might just try to test them. In fact you can almost predict how it's going to go down. Time to rehearse. No one wants to be rude but you do need to be really explicit so that there can be no confusion. By rehearsing the phrases that you are going to use, you can be confident that you are being explicit without being rude.

E.G. If you know your acquaintance is in the habit of just showing up, head that off at the pass. At the first opportunity, tell them that although you appreciate the visit, you've started to implement some boundaries to support your work so you would love it if they could ring ahead, only come on a set day or after a set time- whatever restrictions you need to feel happy about the relationship. If they turn up unannounced or out of the approved times, you need to know what to say. Hey I wasn't expecting you, normally I'd love to have a coffee and chat but I'm right in the middle of something, can we catch up maybe on :time /day that works. Better yet don't answer the door! Remember, if you're not prepared to enforce your boundaries you can't expect people to respect them.

Step 3: Assume Positive Intent

Sometimes we can feel like people are deliberately disrespecting us and although that can be true, more often than not it is unintended and the result of poor communication. Assume positive intent and simply continue to firmly reinforce your boundaries. Your boundary besieger will either get the message or find the situation so uncomfortable that they remove themselves from your circle.

EG That acquaintance that keeps turning up unannounced will either start making a coffee date and sticking to it or will stop coming around unannounced if you keep turning them away anytime they're off schedule. Don't feel bad turning people away if you've been clear. They might think it's rude but if you've given them the heads up, you're in the clear. You know your intention isn't to be mean and you can assume that they're not intentionally trying to disrupt your work. Approach the process of establishing boundaries with the assumption of positive intent.