

The Three Step Process for Creating Boundaries

Please thoroughly read chapters five and six of *Boundaries Made Easy* before using this worksheet.

The three-step process is relatively simple. First, you're going to answer some questions to help you identify your deal-breakers (those core values of yours). In Step 2, you're going to use those deal-breakers to create specific standards for yourself. Then in Step 3, you'll add "teeth," which are your responses and what you'll do if your standards aren't met. These will be your completed boundaries.

Step 1. Identifying Your Deal-Breakers

Identifying your core values or deal-breakers is the first step in identifying your boundaries. Really taking time to dig deep is crucial to identifying your deal-breakers so give yourself time and patience with this step. Answering these questions will help you identify your deal-breakers.

If you already know your deal-breakers, that's great. If not, here are some questions to help you gain clarity.

1. Looking back on a past romantic relationship, what were the top three reasons you broke it off with that person? What behaviors or feelings were coming up (in either you or the other person) that let you know it was time to leave or that the relationship was at a breaking point? If you've never been in a romantic relationship, substitute a past friend or family member you cut off in some way.
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
2. Looking back on a past job or volunteer commitment, what were the top three reasons you quit? What behaviors or feelings were coming up (in either you, your boss or coworkers) that made you feel it was time to leave and/or start sending out your resume?
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
3. Think back to your childhood. When was a time you felt completely safe and happy? If you had a difficult childhood, dig deep for a moment; even in a tumultuous household, there were times when you found even brief feelings of respite and contentment. Describe this situation in as much detail as possible as you think about *why* you felt safe or happy in those moments.
4. Think of a time you have felt completely happy and content in a relationship. If this has never happened before, imagine it in your mind's eye. Name the top three things that were present to make you feel that way.
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
5. What are the top five qualities, actions, words or behaviors you need to see/hear to feel appreciated and respected in any relationship?
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
 - d.
 - e.

Now take a moment and look at everything you've answered in these five questions. There should be some overlap and a couple of things that stand out and resonate deep down for you; these are your deal-breakers. Remember, deal-breakers are generally one or two words: respect, appreciation, harmony, equality, or freedom. This is the time to listen to your inner guidance system as you identify what's really important to you.

Write them here (remember less is more when it comes to deal-breakers so list no more than three):

My core values/deal-breakers are

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Now you're ready to create your standards.

Step 2. Identifying Your Standards

Your standards flow from your deal-breakers. So, let's say that your deal-breaker is appreciation. Think about what kinds of standards would flow from that. Your standards are what show up in your day-to-day life that let you know that your deal-breaker or core value is being honored.

In this case of needing to feel appreciated, a standard might be that others are kind and patient with you, not that they always say, "please and thank you." Or maybe you feel appreciated when others are warm and caring to you consistently.

You want to boil things down to standards that can apply in a multitude of situations. In other words, you don't want one standard with your mom and a different one with your partner.

Now it's time to write your standards.

My standards are (no more than five here)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Step 3. Identifying Your Boundaries

Now that you've identified those deal-breakers, which lead you (easily I hope) to your standards, you're officially ready to list your boundaries!

Your boundaries are your standards with teeth. What I mean is that what makes a standard into a boundary is that *you're going to have a certain response if someone doesn't hold your standard*. I'm purposefully not using the word consequence here because that denotes that you're angry or resentful about your boundary being crossed and I don't want you to be in a punishing state because someone crossed your boundary.

Write your top three-to-five boundaries here:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.