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## The D's of Boundary Making

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# 6 strategies

to help you maintain healthy  
boundaries in unhealthy  
situations

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# What you will *Learn*

01

How to identify relationships that would benefit from boundary implementation

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02

The different types of boundaries needed in various situations

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03

How to communicate and honor your boundaries in the presence of boundary crossers.



# What to know about *Boundaries*

There are people in your life that can “fill up your cup” and there are people that will drain your cup. We unfortunately do not have a limited amount of energy or space to hold for others. Maintaining healthy boundaries can help you preserve what is in your cup for yourself and for people that also add to your cup. The 6 D's of healthy boundaries are an easy to remember guide for maintaining better relationships .



- 1) *D*rainers: who are they?
- 2) *D*efine the relationship
- 3) *D*ecide what you need
- 4) *D*ictate your boundaries
- 5) *D*etermine the consequences
- 6) *D*on't negotiate your terms

# 1 Identify your Drainers

Do you ever find yourself leaving conversations feeling deflated, angry, or even empty? You may have went in with a positive attitude, only to be left feeling as though all the positivity and interpersonal energy had been siphoned out of you little by little. Some times something as simple as listening to your body can help you identify those unhealthy individuals.



## Cues to pay attention to may include:

- *Hyper-focusing on conversation topics before meeting*
- *Not feeling as though the conversation is reciprocal*
  - *you are only there to support them, they do not ask about you*
- *Leaving the conversation with a pit in your stomach or feeling frustrated.*

Building up your self-awareness can help you determine where (and with who) you need to put boundaries in place.

## 2 Define The Relationship



Ok... you have figured out who your drainers are and have recognized you do not like the way you feel after interactions with them. Now it is time to define your relationship. How do you want them to fit in your life? Where in your support circle do they fall? If they are close family, like a mother-in-law, how do you navigate those waters?

It can be tricky wanting to be close with someone, while also understanding that attempts of a close relationship in the past have left you feeling empty. Here is something many people do not know...

*You can love someone, while also understanding that you are unable to hold space for them or be vulnerable in their presence.*

Figure out what is important to you. What is this person to you? Just like you can have "fair weather friends", there are also "fair weather family members". Trying to muscle through and be close to someone who constantly drains your cup will do worse things to your relationship than if you just took a few emotional steps back.

## 3 Decide What you Need

Boundaries come in various shapes and sizes. Deciding which boundary to use in each situation is the next step. Maybe it is a **physical boundary** like,

*"We are opening our home to company a week after the baby is born. The first week is reserved for us to get to know each other as a family unit."*

Or maybe you need a **time boundary**,

*"The baby goes to bed at 6:30pm, at that time I turn my phone on silent and wont be answering calls or texts."*

One of the most important boundaries you will need firmly in place prior to facilitating any of the above examples is an emotional boundary. This is the "emotional step back" that was mentioned earlier. With **emotional boundaries**, we get to decide how we interpret and internalize other peoples words, behaviors, actions, and reactions.



# Decide What you Need cont...

When we put a physical boundary in place, we cannot control how the person will react to the boundary, but we can control how we let their reaction impact us. Emotional boundaries are also great for situations where we have to maintain a relationship with a drainer.

**In order to maintain healthy emotional boundaries, it is important to keep the following in mind:**

- You are not responsible for their feelings
- It is none of your business what they think of you
- It is not your responsibility to change their perception
- You get to decide how much or how little you participate in any given conversation
- If they need space to vent, you can validate without taking the issue on as your own
  - You can implement this by saying something like, "That sounds really heavy, I can see why you feel that way, you should try talking to [insert person they are frustrated with]."

*"You shouldn't have to compromise your well-being to hold space for someone else"*

## 4 Dictate your Boundaries

When placing an emotional boundary, you do the majority of the work. It is internal and you may or may not make the other person aware of the boundary you've set. With other boundaries, you will likely need to communicate your boundaries. You do not have to be mean when setting a boundary. Assertiveness is key. You can acknowledge the other person's feelings while also firmly asking for what you need.



### An example might look like:

*"Mom, that sounds like a really difficult situation. I know you are going through a hard time, but it puts me in a difficult position when you talk about dad in that way. I can't be the person you talk to about my father anymore. I hope you understand."*

## 5 Determine the Consequence



Sometimes drainers can also be boundary crossers. If this is the case, simply putting a boundary in place may not be enough. You may have to go a step further and put a consequence in place.

**Using the same example on the previous page, this might look like:**

*"I am glad you feel comfortable talking to me about your relationship with dad, however, because it puts me in a difficult position, If you keep bring him up I will have to politely end the conversation."*

Again, remember your emotional boundaries. After you provide the information, understand you cannot control how the other person receives it. It is not your responsibility to rescue or reduce your consequence because it has upset another person.

## 6 Don't Negotiate your Terms

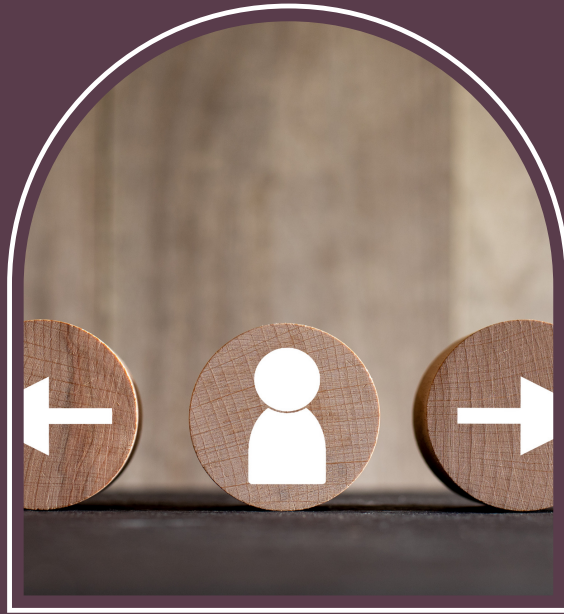
Boundary crossers do not like the consequences that follow a boundary placement and will try to get you to renegotiate the terms. This is where you need to be firm and unwavering.

*When you decide on putting a boundary in place. It was likely a difficult decision, but it is not an "up for discussion" type of situation*

You were prompted to put the consequence in motion for a reason, so do not dismiss your own emotional well-being in favor of another's.

Know that placing boundaries can be difficult and takes a little bit of practice. Sometimes when boundaries are introduced, the relationship may take a little dip before it gets better. Anytime you disrupt the status quo in a relationship, there will be a period of adjustment. It is ok.





## When taking space is *Necessary*

In some situations, implementing boundaries requires some physical space from the drainer/boundary crosser. One of the hardest things about putting a boundary in place is knowing it may cause a fracture in the relationship.

Try to think about it as a "time out" rather than a permanent consequence. Time outs are good and often necessary to gain perspective. It does not mean the end of a relationship but it could mean the beginning of a new chapter in the relationship.