What are boundaries?

Boundaries are limits we identify for ourselves and apply through action or communication. This means there are things within your control that you can do to protect your time and energy. They are about what we need for ourselves, not what we want or do not want from others. It is not setting rules for others to live by because, ultimately, we cannot control other people. It is not about controlling someone else's actions or waiting for them to change their behavior. It is about when you set yourself up for something you can control—something YOU are in charge of.

- ✓ *What are some other definitions you have heard for boundaries?*

Boundaries vs. Requests

We use boundaries to change **our** behavior and to protect ourselves, our needs, and our limits.

Boundaries	**Requests**
Separate ourselves from situations that do not meet our needs, or interactions that make us feel unsafe, unseen, or harmed in some way We assess what does not work for us and act accordingly Are not tools to get more of something from someone	When we ask others to change their behavior
Example: "I won't have a conversation with you when you're yelling at me."	Example: "Please lower your voice when you speak to me."

- ✓ What are some other examples of a boundary vs. a request?

Why is it important to set boundaries?

When we define what we need to feel secure and healthy, when we need it, and create tools to protect ourselves, we can do wonders for our wellbeing

- ✓ *What are some other reasons why it is important to set boundaries?*

What are some indicators that someone lacks boundaries?

- They cannot say no.
- They overcommit to things they do not have time or desire to do.
- They feel burned out.
- They often take care of others, even to their own detriment.
- They feel like they cannot say what they need or want.
- They tend to let others walk all over them.
- They struggle to have their own opinions or identity.
- They give away their time and valuable skills for free.
- They find relationships draining because they often involve people dumping their problems on them, leading to a give-and-take imbalance in which they give consistently and the other person takes
- They are highly sensitive to the opinions of others, especially criticism or disapproval.
- They struggle to make decisions, as they are often used to going along with whatever others want.
- They feel responsible for others' feelings and will blame themselves, even when it makes no sense.
- They resent those who ask things of them and those who have the boundaries to say "no."

✓ *Mark 3 indicators from above that you can work on.*

✓ *Share an example of one of your indicators you marked above with the group (e.g., I find it hard to say no to my friends when they want to go out and party).*

✓ *Why can it be hard to set boundaries?*

Types of boundaries:

Hard boundaries:

- Non-negotiables and need to act on immediately
- Things you will never do or accept as reasonable
- Practice setting one hard boundary to protect your high-level priorities by limiting interactions or activities that are not a best use of your time

Soft boundaries:

- Aspirations or goals you want to reach but are flexible
- Can be used to help you feel more productive, creative, and rested at work or home
- Things you are willing to compromise on

✓ *What is a hard boundary you can set that could positivity impact you?*

✓ *What is a soft boundary you can set that could positivity impact you?*

Different approaches to communicate our boundaries:

Short and Sweet Approach
"That's not going to work for me."
"No, thank you."

The I- Statement
Helps to be direct about our feelings and needs
"I feel _____ when you _____ because _____. I need _____."

The Radical Transparency Approach
Best used with people that you trust
"It's hard for me to say this, but I want to be honest with you: _____."

The Speaking Up Approach
A means of making our own beliefs known
"I don't share your opinion."
"I actually believe that _____."

✓ *Write a few boundary statements based on the examples you shared in the indicator section above*

Additional tips and questions with setting boundaries:

- Make sure you put your boundaries into action!
- Do not overexplain the reasoning for your boundary, as long-winded explanations could look like you are justifying your decision.
- Be open that people may not agree with you.
- What is the boundary protecting for you? Time? Money? Hurt feelings? What is it not protecting you from—and why is that so important?
- What happens when you do not follow through with that boundary?
- How will you feel if the boundary is not followed through?
- How will you feel when you do follow through on the boundary?
- Recognize that people may be setting boundaries with you as well.

References:

1. The Gottman Institute. Setting Boundaries with Others.
2. Sanok, Joe. A Guide to Setting Better Boundaries. Harvard Business Review.
3. Shetty, Jay. 10 Steps on How To Set Boundaries Without Offending People. On Purpose with Jay Shetty. Spotify.