

Boundaries

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We can be more intentional about setting boundaries by first becoming aware of places, situations, or relationships where we feel uncomfortable. With this new awareness, we can grow a new consciousness in which we actively pause and make decisions about what we let in and out. We begin telling ourselves that we have the right to say no, and the right to pause, at any time.

Here are some things you can do today to begin setting healthy boundaries:

1. Imagine a bubble around your personal space, and a filter inside of you, where you can "catch" and pause to reflect on thoughts, feelings, and behaviors of others and yourself.
2. When reflecting on others' requests, we can say something like, "i'll get back to you on that," "i need some time to consider that," or, "that's an interesting question. I need to give it some thought before i answer."
3. Conjuring up an image of an object, character, or person to help us set a boundary. Some examples are a cactus, cartoon character, or anything that can offer you strength where you may feel "shakey" or "wobbly" or unsure. When your boundaries are challenged, visualize this image.
4. Make a list of any roles or activities in which you feel used or taken advantage of, or resentful about, and identify where you may have said "yes" when you meant "no." imagine yourself speaking the truth about the situation, and notice what emotions come up. Journal about the way these emotions came about, such as shame or powerlessness about saying no, and connect them to dynamics in your family of origin.
5. Make a list or emotions you "take on" in a situation or in relationship, such as a relationship with an addict who doesn't take responsibility for their own feelings.
6. Imagine yourself brushing these feelings off of you. If you must be in a situation where you end to take on others' disowned feelings, imagine yourself with a protective bubble around you, where you can begin to "catch" others' feelings and ideas, and you can decide what, if any, of these feelings and ideas you want to take on. You may need to visualize additional layers to protect yourself, such as additional layers of bubble wrap around your protective bubble. You can imagine yourself sending these unwanted feelings, thoughts, or behaviors back to the other person like a "white light." you send these back not as an act of anger, but rather as an act of self-love.