

Empower You

IN SETTING BOUNDARIES



**A companion Workbook
for Trauma Survivors
Navigating Learning
to Set Boundaries**



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Welcome



Setting boundaries is a key skill in life ... yet ... it can feel soooo difficult.

It's ALWAYS a requested topic for presentations, trainings and lives and thousands of books and podcasts have dedicated themselves to this topic ...

So if you struggle in this area, know you are NOT ALONE!

I've struggled with setting boundaries. I've stayed silent in uncomfortable situations, I've stayed at events and gatherings when I've wanted to leave,, I've said yes when I've wanted to say no.

I know how difficult it feels when intellectually, you know what you should do, but it feels sooo hard. That's where my approach differs from others. I invite you to always look at the part of you that resists changing, the little child inside you who is scared to speak up, because they associate speaking up with being at risk. So when this part of you shows up, don't resist it, don't try and bully yourself into overriding it, acknowledge it, thank it for wanting to protect you and tell it you're trying to do things differently now and it's ok to feel a little scared, but you're gonna go at a slow pace. Tell them they're safe now, because you hear them and you're here to protect them.

Good luck ... and welcome to your new life ... a life in which it's ok to look after yourself and meet your own needs!



About Me



My name is Lucy Charlotte Nicholls.

I am a trauma-informed coach, consultant and educator.

My mission is to create a better understanding of the impact of trauma on a global level and to create better experiences for trauma survivors.

I experienced abuse growing up which was physical, mental and emotional and it was all hidden from the world who all thought my mum was perfect, particularly as she was a foster parent.

Childhood trauma has impacted sooo many areas of my life and made many experiences more challenging as a result.

This workbook is just one in a series of workbooks I have designed to help other people who are also navigating these experiences and finding them difficult, all the time thinking it was just them ...

It's not.

I wanna tell you I'm proud of you for being brave enough to face challenging experiences! Now, go set some boundaries!



**“DARING TO SET BOUNDARIES IS ABOUT
HAVING THE COURAGE TO LOVE OURSELVES
ENOUGH TO RISK DISAPPOINTING OTHERS.”**

**Lucy Charlotte
Nicholls**



An Introduction to Trauma

Even if your childhood looked "normal" from the outside, subtle but repeated emotional injuries can affect how you think and experience life.

How Trauma Can Show Up Around Setting Boundaries

Often if we experienced trauma, we learned to over-attune to the behaviour of the care-givers around us: we needed to be hyper-alert to their moods, potential triggers and sudden changes in mood that could indicate we might be at threat of loss of attachment or of abuse.

This then becomes how we operate in life, we feel over-attuned to our environment and feel responsible for creating harmony. This means we prioritise never upsetting people over our own wants and needs and it actually feels uncomfortable for us and dangerous to express those wants and needs. Subconsciously we feel doing this would threaten our relationships.

What we need to learn is that we never should have been made to feel responsible for managing our environments and the people around us. We need to learn it's ok for us to have wants and needs and that it's safe for us to express these.

In fact doing so allows us to have better relationships because we learn to feel valuable to ourselves and we allow people to really know us: rather than just knowing a fantasy we are projecting which actually leads to us feeling empty inside.

**SIGNS THAT YOU MAY NEED
TO SET BOUNDARIES**

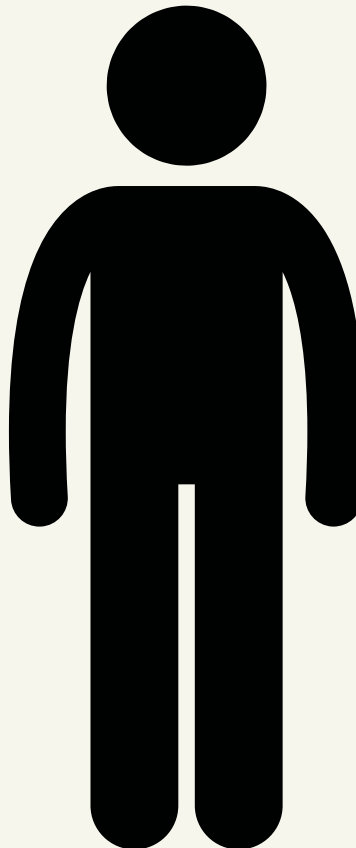
YOU OFTEN FEEL UNAPPRECIATED

YOU OFTEN FEEL GUILTY

YOU OFTEN FIND YOURSELF IN
THE MIDDLE OF OTHERS DRAMA

YOU FEEL OVERWHELMED

YOU SAY YES WHEN YOU DON'T WANT TO



YOU FIND IT HARD TO MAKE DECISIONS

IT'S HARD FOR YOU TO ASK FOR WHAT
YOU NEED

YOU FIND IT HARD TO
SPEAK UP

YOU AVOID CONFLICT

YOU AGREE WITH OTHERS JUST TO
MAKE THEM HAPPY

BENEFITS OF SETTING BOUNDARIES

GREATER SHARED
UNDERSTANDING

BETTER COMMUNICATION

PREVENT CONFUSION OR
MISUNDERSTANDINGS

AVOID TOXIC
FRIENDSHIPS

LESS STRESS

IMPROVED SELF
ESTEEM

RESPECT FOR
YOURSELF AND
OTHERS

**Transforming how trauma is understood,
experienced and healed.**



WHAT ARE BOUNDARIES

Personal boundaries are the limits and rules we set for ourselves within relationships. A person with healthy boundaries can say "no" to others when they want to, but they are also comfortable opening themselves up to intimacy and close relationships. A person who always keeps others at a distance (whether emotionally, physically, or otherwise) is said to have rigid boundaries. Alternatively, someone who tends to get too involved with others has porous boundaries.

COMMON TRAITS OF RIGID, POROUS, AND HEALTHY BOUNDARIES

RIGID BOUNDARIES

AVOIDS INTIMACY AND CLOSE RELATIONSHIPS.

UNLIKELY TO ASK FOR HELP.

HAS FEW CLOSE RELATIONSHIPS

VERY PROTECTIVE OF PERSONAL INFORMATION.

MAY SEEM DETACHED, EVEN WITH ROMANTIC PARTNERS

KEEPS OTHERS AT A DISTANCE TO AVOID THE POSSIBILITY OF REJECTION

POROUS BOUNDARIES

FREELY GIVE OUT PERSONAL INFORMATION.

DIFFICULTY SAYING "NO" TO THE REQUESTS OF OTHERS

OVERINVOLVED WITH OTHERS' PROBLEMS

DEPENDENT ON THE OPINIONS OF OTHERS

ACCEPTING OF ABUSE OR DISRESPECT

FEARS REJECTION IF THEY DO NOT COMPLY WITH OTHERS

HEALTHY BOUNDARIES

VALUES OWN OPINIONS

DOESN'T COMPROMISE VALUES FOR OTHERS

SHARES PERSONAL INFORMATION IN AN APPROPRIATE WAY (DOES NOT OVER OR UNDER SHARE)

KNOWS PERSONAL WANTS AND NEEDS, AND CAN COMMUNICATE THEM

ACCEPTING WHEN OTHERS SAY "NO" TO THEM



EXAMPLES OF HEALTHY BOUNDARIES

- Valuing your own opinions
- Not compromising personal values for others
- Sharing personal information in an appropriate way (not over or under sharing!)
- Knowing your personal wants and needs and communicating them
- Deciding whether a new relationship will be good for you as opposed to imprinting onto the first person who shows interest
- Being your own loving advocate
- Noticing when someone is engaging in unhealthy boundaries
- Trusting your own decisions Knowing who you are and what you want
- Moving slowly into intimacy
- Keeping track of red flags, as opposed to sweeping them aside



WHAT BOUNDARIES SOUND LIKE

THINK OF SOME OLD HABITS THAT HAVEN'T SERVED YOU WHICH COULD NOW BE REPLACED BY HEALTHY BOUNDARIES: (FOR EXAMPLE: EXPERIENCING BURNOUT FROM HELPING OTHERS TOO MUCH, BEING TAKEN ADVANTAGE OF, LETTING OTHERS WASTE MY TIME...)

I DON'T LIKE TO BE
CALLED THAT NAME.

I DON'T THINK
THAT'S FUNNY

YOU'RE A LITTLE
CLOSE CAN YOU
PLEASE BACK UP

THAT'S NOT SOMETHING I
WISH TO SHARE

PLEASE STOP

THAT MAKES ME FEEL
UNCOMFORTABLE

I'LL HAVE TO THINK ABOUT IT

NO.

I DON'T LIKE THIS CONVERSATION

THAT HURTS MY FEELINGS

I'D LIKE TO LEAVE

THIS IS WHAT I NEED...



TODAY'S MOOD

USE THIS PAGE TO:-

- WRITE WORDS OR PHRASES THAT RESONATE WITH HOW YOU'VE FELT TODAY.
- SKETCH OR DOODLE ANYTHING THAT DESCRIBES YOUR CURRENT STATE OF MIND.
- USE COLOURS THAT REFLECT YOUR MOOD





SELF CARE

What are some activities you can do for yourself to give yourself self-care?
For example: have a nice bath, get out in nature, burn some incense ...

ACTIVITY

NOTES



SELF CARE

PLAN OUT SOME ALONE TIME FULL OF SELF CARE ACTIVITIES WITH A FOCUS ON SWITCHING OFF AND SAYING YES TO YOURSELF

Day

Activity

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Day

Activity

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**MY PERSONAL SPACE BUBBLE**

IN MY BUBBLE I FEEL...

I RESPECT OTHERS' SPACE BY

WHY I NEED A BUBBLE OF
PERSONAL SPACE:HOW OFTEN CAN I MAKE TIME
FOR MY OWN PERSONAL SPACE?



HOW TO SAY NO

THOUGH IT MAY SEEM SIMPLE TO SOME, MANY PEOPLE STRUGGLE WITH SAYING NO DUE TO FEARING CONFLICT AND MAY NEED SOME PRACTICE AHEAD OF TIME. THESE TIPS CAN BE VERY HELPFUL IN DEALING WITH INTIMIDATING SITUATIONS.

NO!

- BE CLEAR (KNOW WHAT YOU ARE SAYING YES TO, AND WHAT YOU ARE SAYING NO TO)
- IN SOME CASES, NO REPLY IS NEEDED OR APPROPRIATE AT ALL THAT'S ALSO OK
- PRACTICE (FOR EXAMPLE, BY WRITING A NOTE ON YOUR PHONE)
- KEEP IT SHORT AND SIMPLE, NO NEED TO OVER-EXPLAIN OR JUSTIFY
- KEEP IN MIND WHY THIS IS AN IMPORTANT PRACTICE
- REMIND YOURSELF THAT IT IS OK TO SAY NO
- DECIDE ON THE PLACE THAT IS MOST COMFORTABLE FOR YOU (OVER THE PHONE, VIA MESSAGE, ETC)
- RESPOND IN A TIMEFRAME THAT'S CONVENIENT FOR YOU
- ACKNOWLEDGE AND RESPECT THE OTHER PERSON'S FEELINGS
- OFFER AN ALTERNATIVE, BUT ONLY IF YOU INTEND TO (AND WISH TO)
- IN THE FUTURE, FEEL CONFIDENT IN BEING AVAILABLE AS AND WHEN YOU WISH TO BE

EMPOWER YOU IN SETTING BOUNDARIES

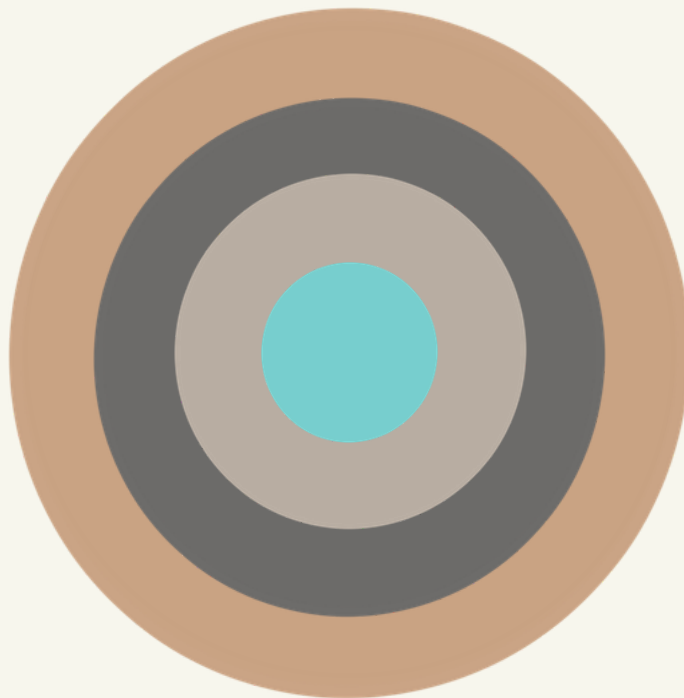
SETTING MY PERSONAL BOUNDARIES



IT'S PERFECTLY NORMAL TO HAVE DIFFERENT LEVELS OF BOUNDARIES WITH DIFFERENT PEOPLE.

LET'S DEFINE WHAT YOU'RE COMFORTABLE WITH.

PLEASE NOTE, YOU CAN HAVE WHOEVER YOU CHOOSE IN EACH ZONE SO SOME PEOPLE MIGHT BE CLOSER TO THEIR FRIENDS THAN THEIR FAMILY.



Strangers



Acquaintances



Close Friends



Family



People	Would Share
Strangers	
Acquaintances	
Close Friends	
Family	

People	Wouldn't Share
Strangers	
Acquaintances	
Close Friends	
Family	

EMPOWER YOU IN SETTING BOUNDARIES

BOUNDARIES CHALLENGE



Some people find completing a short challenge with daily activities can really help them focus in on building the skill of setting boundaries.

If you feel this is something you would like to try, here's a possible structure.

DAY	1	USE THE WORKSHEETS IN THIS BOOK TO DEFINE YOUR NEW BOUNDARIES
DAY	2	HAVE A SELF CARE DAY TO FOCUS ON YOURSELF
DAY	3	SPEAK TO A PERSON YOU TRUST ABOUT YOUR JOURNEY AND NEW BOUNDARIES
DAY	4	RECORD A BOUNDARY THAT WAS CROSSED AND THE ACTION YOU TOOK
DAY	5	START READING A NEW BOOK ON THE TOPIC AND MAKE A NOTE OF ANYTHING HELPFUL
DAY	6	SAY YES TO YOURSELF TODAY! (TAKE A BREAK, TREAT YOURSELF, STAND UP FOR YOURSELF...)
DAY	7	USE THE HABIT TRACKER PAGES TO START CULTIVATING ONE NEW HEALTHY HABIT

RESULTS/NOTES:

EMPOWER YOU IN SETTING BOUNDARIES

SOCIAL MEDIA BOUNDARIES



IT'S OK TO...

BLOCK
PEOPLE

RESTRICT OR MUTE ACCOUNTS

TURN OFF NOTIFICATIONS

UNFOLLOW CONTENT THAT MAKES YOU FEEL
BAD

TAKE TIME
RESPONDING

LIMIT TIME SPENT ONLINE

TAKE A BREAK WHEN NEEDED

UNFRIEND THOSE WHO DON'T RESPECT
BOUNDARIES

POST WHAT BRINGS YOU JOY

Transforming how trauma is understood,
experienced and healed.

EMPOWER YOU IN SETTING BOUNDARIES

THE ART OF SAYING NO



IT CAN FEEL VERY INTIMIDATING TO SAY NO (ESPECIALLY WHEN WE ARE NOT USED TO APPLYING BOUNDARIES. TO HELP WHEN PUT ON THE SPOT, HERE ARE SOME EXAMPLES OF HOW TO REPLY IN A CONFIDENT AND SELF ASSURED WAY.

I APPRECIATE THE OFFER BUT I'VE PLANNED SOME TIME TO MYSELF TO RECHARGE AFTER A BUSY WEEK.

THAT ISN'T MY KIND OF ACTIVITY BUT THANKS FOR THE INVITATION. HAVE FUN AND WE'LL DO SOMETHING ELSE SOON!

THANK YOU FOR THINKING OF ME. UNFORTUNATELY I WON'T MAKE IT BUT THANK YOU FOR THE OFFER.

SOCIALISING IS DIFFICULT FOR ME RIGHT NOW AND NOT THE BEST FOR MY MENTAL HEALTH BUT I'D LOVE TO SEE YOU ONCE I'M FEELING BETTER IN A LITTLE WHILE. I APPRECIATE YOU CHECKING IN.

I KNOW I'VE SAID NO SEVERAL TIMES LATELY BUT I'VE BEEN HAVING A HARD TIME, TO BE HONEST. IT'S NOT THAT I DON'T WANT TO SEE YOU, I JUST NEED SOME TIME TO RECHARGE.

EMPOWER YOU IN SETTING BOUNDARIES

FEARS



HAVING DIFFICULTY SETTING BOUNDARIES CAN STEM FROM FEAR (OF REJECTION, CONFRONTATION, ETC). WHEN WE DIG DEEPER INTO THESE FEARS, WE MAY FIND THE POSSIBLE OUTCOMES AREN'T AS SCARY AS WE THOUGHT AND OUR FEAR MAY LESSEN.

BELOW IS AN EXAMPLE OF A FEAR BEING WORKED THROUGH WITH SPACE FOR YOU TO TRY OUT THIS TECHNIQUE ON SOME OF YOUR OWN FEARS.

FEAR:

IF I SPEAK UP IT WILL LEAD TO A CONFRONTATION

IS IT REALLY TRUE OR HELPFUL?

IT'S POSSIBLE THERE COULD BE A CONFRONTATION, BUT IF THERE WAS I COULD CHOOSE TO WALK AWAY. THERE'S EQUALLY A POSSIBILITY THAT IT COUD WORK OUT REALLY WELL.

CONCLUSION

THIS FEAR SHOULDN'T HOLD ME BACK FROM SPEAKING OUT

FEAR:

IS IT REALLY TRUE OR HELPFUL?

CONCLUSION

FEAR:

IS IT REALLY TRUE OR HELPFUL?

CONCLUSION

FEAR:

IS IT REALLY TRUE OR HELPFUL?

CONCLUSION



MY SUPPORT SYSTEM

WE ALL NEED TO FEEL WE HAVE PEOPLE WE CAN RELY ON IN DIFFICULT TIMES. USE THIS PAGE TO THINK ABOUT WHO THESE PEOPLE ARE IN YOUR LIFE AND EXPRESS GRATITUDE FOR THEM.

WHO CAN I CALL ON IN TIMES OF NEED?

WAYS IN WHICH THEY SUPPORT ME:

THEY ADD VALUE TO MY LIFE BY...

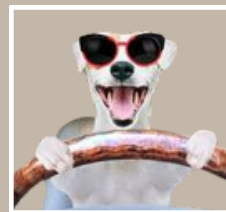
WHY I AM GRATEFUL FOR MY SUPPORT
SYSTEM:

**QUOTES AND AFFIRMATIONS**

MAKE NOTE OF SOME OF YOUR FAVOURITE QUOTES OR AFFIRMATIONS TO REFER TO FOR A BOOST OF CONFIDENCE AND INSPIRATION WHEN DEALING WITH SETTING BOUNDARIES

NOTES

A large, blank, lined area for taking notes, consisting of approximately 30 horizontal lines.



If you liked this workbook ...

If you liked this workbook, why not check out some of my other workbooks and consider following me on social media.

If you know anyone else who might find my resources helpful, why not tell them about me?

I want to tell you:-

- I see you!
- I'm proud of you!
- You can do ANYTHING you want!

Follow Me:-



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