


THE
BOUNDARY
BOSS
WORKBOOK



**THE RIGHT WORDS AND STRATEGIES
TO FREE YOURSELF FROM BURNOUT,
EXHAUSTION, AND OVER-GIVING**

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Dear Reader

I'm curious . . .

When you know you need to set a limit or say no to someone, do you labor over the words and *still* end up feeling like it came out all wrong?

When you wait too long to draw a boundary or tell someone you have a problem with them, does it ever come out like an explosion rather than a calm and simple statement?

Do you avoid asking for what you want or speaking up about your preference because you just don't have the words and can't deal with the drama?

Would you like to free yourself from exhaustion, burnout, and over-giving and find peace, be able to assert your boundaries with ease, and live your life on your own terms?

If so, you're in the right place! Whether you've read *Boundary Boss* or not, *The Boundary Boss Workbook* is your roadmap to an entirely new way of interacting in your life!

What's a Boundary Boss? Simply put, a Boundary Boss is a person who is fluent in the language of boundaries. This means possessing the skills and words to communicate honestly, precisely, and with ease.

Think of boundaries as your own personal rules of engagement. They are guidelines you set in order to let others know what is okay and not okay with you. I define boundaries as knowing your preferences, desires, limits, and deal breakers, and having the ability to communicate them when you so choose. It's telling the truth about how you feel and about what you DO and DO NOT want and need.

Bad boundaries are exhausting, whether they are too rigid or too porous; whether you're unyielding or a pushover. Neither is a good way to go through life. If you have rigid boundaries and someone does something you don't like, you might ghost them or withdraw in anger. If you have loose or nonexistent boundaries, you're doing *all the things* for *all the people* *all the freakin' time*. Either way, you end up feeling frustrated, angry, and alone. You feel used and abused without realizing you're serving yourself up on a silver platter by doing things for others that they can and should be doing for themselves.

Not being fluent in the language of boundaries is not your fault. You've likely observed and internalized disordered boundaries as the norm since birth. Disordered boundaries are unconscious behavior patterns that have been ingrained in us since very early childhood. Most of us were raised and praised to be self-abandoning codependents. It's no wonder we have issues with boundaries. How often did we hear "Be good," "Turn that frown upside down," or "If you don't have something nice to say, don't say anything at all"?

Many of us were conditioned to be outwardly focused on the wants, desires, needs, and comfort of other people. We learned to do whatever we needed to avoid negative feedback from the grown-ups in our life. We may struggle with disappointing others or saying no because we're still driven by a childhood fear of rejection and judgment. First, it came from our parental impactors, and then the behavior was reinforced by our teachers, friends, bosses, and coworkers. And it doesn't stop there, the message is repeated in TV and movies, on social media, and in every corner of our society. Over and over we're told that being kind, generous, nice, and self-sacrificing is desirable, and having strong boundaries makes us self-absorbed, dramatic, or mean.

The solution is simple. It's not easy, but it is simple. When you know your preferences, desires, limits, and deal breakers, you don't spend your life catering to or blaming other people. You're able to kindly and gently let people know how you feel, what you're willing to do, and what your boundaries are. Learning to regularly establish healthy boundaries on your own is like trying to speak a language nobody taught you. But just like a language, with the proper information and instruction, you can learn it.

WHY ARE BAD BOUNDARIES SUCH A PROBLEM?

In my experience, I can say with certainty that unhealthy boundaries are the number one cause of pain and suffering for my clients and can readily doom relationships to fail. People caught in unhealthy boundary patterns live on a sort of hamster wheel of frustration, bitterness, and anger. They feel like others are taking advantage of them and don't know how to make it stop. The resentment accumulates over time as they don't express their needs or set limits.

If you've read the *Boundary Boss* book, you know what a boundary disaster I was. There was no request I wouldn't say yes to. No over-functioning I couldn't handle. Seriously, in my twenties, I was a bridesmaid eight times! I was frustrated, resentful, and most of all, exhausted.

The good news is I was able to turn all that around by learning how to speak a new language. I literally changed the words that came out of my mouth and changed my life.

I've also seen the same boundary issues in thousands of clients. Best of all, I've been able to help those clients rewire their behavioral patterns and change their lives.

After writing *Boundary Boss*, I was asked repeatedly for more exercises, more scripts, and more ways for readers to help themselves become more empowered in their relationships. They wanted more ways to practice because *knowing* how to set healthy boundaries is not the same as *doing it*. And although practice does not "make perfect" per se (because we're humans) it sure does elevate your boundary-setting capabilities. This workbook is going to raise your awareness to the blocks you may be experiencing, give you the emotional tools you need to succeed, and teach you to write clear, concise boundary scripts.

You'll make small yet powerful changes that will lead to breakthroughs in your relationships because *everything* changes when you do!

WHAT WILL HAPPEN WHEN YOU IMPROVE YOUR BOUNDARY SKILLS?

Proactive boundary skills can empower you to eliminate the cycle of frustration or emotional pain in relationships. Our conditioned patterns and behaviors are automatic responses. It's like you're going through life on autopilot without any thought to the fact that you have a choice in the matter.

Interrupting the automatic response, even for just a few seconds, allows you to stop and think. Do you *really* want to say yes to a request to host a twenty-person holiday meal on your own? Or would you prefer to switch it to a potluck and share the prep work? Are you *really* okay with the fact that your sister borrowed money and has not paid it back yet? Or are you frustrated and having a conversation about a payment timeline would help?

The self-care, self-soothing, meditation, breathing, and self-reflection techniques you're going to learn are about slowing down to give you two to three seconds of delayed response time in every interaction. That's all it takes to stop, see the choice, and make a more empowered decision. (Again, simple but not necessarily *easy*.)

People think boundaries are all about the other person's behavior, but really, it's about yours. Once you start setting boundaries, you change. You become more assertive. You understand what you want. You get to know yourself. Your confidence and self-esteem will start to rise. You get to be your authentic self. And most of all, you realize how you feel, what you think, and what you want, matters.

HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE TO BECOME A BOUNDARY BOSS?

People always want to know how long it's going to take to change their lives. All this newfound satisfaction with life sounds great and all, but I have things to do! Listen, it took your whole life to build these disordered boundary patterns, and they're not going to just disappear overnight. Becoming a Boundary Boss is a lifelong practice. You'll find that even small changes in your communication will have a huge impact on your well-being. Once you start to notice changes happening in your life, my hunch is that you'll want to keep going and the exercises, mindfulness practices, and strategies in this book are here to support you.

The way we create a new normal is through repetition. And there will always be new levels of boundary conversations to navigate. You'll start with setting boundaries in low-risk situations like sending back the salad that is not the one you ordered. Then you'll move up to family and friend situations that might feel a little more high-risk. Over time, the fear subsides little by little, and the next thing you know, you're handling work negotiations with your boss with ease and confidence.

Ultimately, that's what having healthy boundaries is all about—the ability to advocate for your preferences, needs, limits, and deal breakers—while respecting the boundaries of others at the same time. People tell me all the time that it was worth the effort and time they put in because they found such peace and satisfaction on the other side of creating their own healthy boundaries.

SETTING BOUNDARIES IS LOVING, NOT SELFISH

Boundaries are compassionate and loving. They help us build strong relationships in all areas of our lives because they teach people how to treat us. When you leave things unspoken, you're setting yourself up to feel disappointed and frustrated when people don't meet your expectations. No one can read your mind, and it's not fair to expect them to. If you really want something from someone in a relationship, you can't leave it unexpressed. You need to actually use words to succinctly communicate your preferences and desires.

Showing other people the real you, expressing your needs, and being truly yourself sets you free. And it sets everyone else free, too. When you can be appropriately vulnerable and share your true feelings, you're creating an authentic connection with another. You might be surprised how many people will say, "Thank you so much for your candor." You may be surprised at how many people will actually validate you: "I didn't realize how much I interrupted while you were talking. Thank you so much for telling me. I will work to be a better listener." Or even "You're right, the amount of work you do around here does deserve a raise."

If you care deeply about the relationships in your life, be assured that setting boundaries is only going to make them stronger. We're so conditioned to complain about reason number 1,042 why Bob's a jerk and file the resentment away in our heads. But it's so much braver to simply talk to Bob and tell him that his comments made you feel unappreciated. Maybe he has no idea he was being insensitive and apologizes. Great! You can move on with your day. But even if he doesn't apologize, you can feel good about standing up for yourself and making an empowered choice to be seen.

Setting boundaries is not a lever of control to pull in order to get your way. It's not about manipulation. It's about knowing your preferences, your desires, your limits, your deal breakers, and having the ability to communicate them.

Having healthy boundaries is your right but it's also your obligation if you want to have healthy relationships. It's not about anyone else; it's about you. By the end of this workbook, you'll have the tools and strategies to effectively communicate your desired boundary requests. Most importantly, you'll have the skills to do it *your way*. There's no one-size-fits-all when it comes to expressing your boundaries. It's what's right for you.

HOW TO USE THIS WORKBOOK

The Boundary Boss Workbook is set up in three sections: Get Ready, Get Set, and Go! These sections will take you on a journey from self-awareness to self-mastery, and the best part? You get to keep your new skills for life. I've designed these exercises to be simple and doable so that you can work through them right inside the pages of this book. Or if you love journaling, you can also do the exercises in your own separate journal. Here's what you'll find in each section:

Get Ready: We'll start by looking inward and raising your awareness by defining boundaries and the most common boundary blocks you may be experiencing right now. You'll also identify your personal preferences, desires, limits, and deal breakers which are your unique building blocks to healthy boundaries.

Get Set: Next, you'll get prepared for what could go right and what feels like could go very wrong as you practice boundary setting. The activities in this section are going to help rewire your nervous system to be less reactive to the fear of rejection, judgment, and shame. Instead, you'll learn to respond as someone who knows that boundary setting is about protecting yourself, your integrity, and your relationships.

Go: Alright, you're ready for the big time—taking your new skills out into the world and using them with the relationships in your everyday life. You're going to learn how to set healthy boundaries by creating scripts that follow your own natural style. You'll be able to hold your ground in a kind way, using words that feel comfortable and natural to you.

In the back of the book, you will find additional boundary script writing resources that include how to buy time instead of giving an insta-yes, additional script starters, how to say no with ease, and a section on techniques to make your boundary scripts even more successful.

Throughout the workbook I've built in mini-breaks to reinforce what you are learning:

Say It With Me 🗨️ are positive affirmations to empower

Do It With Me 🙌 are quick, powerful actions for you to take to stay on track

Loving Reminder ❤️ are loving little truth bombs from my heart to yours

All the exercises build on each other, so don't skip around. Even if you read *Boundary Boss* cover to cover and feel like you've improved your boundary setting skillset, you're in a different place now—so your answers and approach will be different. There are growth opportunities at every level of our *Boundary Boss* journey!

What you feel and what you want *matters*. In fact, they matter the most! It's time to give the people in your life the opportunity to show you how much you matter as well. It's going to take some work, but that's okay. You're not that fragile. And your relationships are not that fragile either. You can handle it.

I've taught thousands of people just like you how to create and sustain lives that they absolutely love based on self-knowledge, self-compassion, self-love, and my proven techniques for transformation.

Your potential for true happiness is my driving force in all of the work that I do, and I am deeply committed to adding value to the quality of your life. I know this workbook will do just that.

Let's do this!

Terri Cole

BOUNDARY BASELINE ASSESSMENT

The questions in this brief assessment are designed to clearly establish your current *Boundary Baseline*. Think of it as a snapshot of your boundary-setting skillset. You've got to understand where you are right now before you can begin to make any lasting changes!

Please take ten minutes to answer these eighteen short questions. The more thoughtful and honest you are in your answers, the more helpful and illuminating your results will be.

➔ *If you had to choose just one, which best describes your boundary status right now?*

- I'm boundary curious and ready to learn more.
- I have okay boundaries and I want to improve.
- My boundaries are solid in some relationships, weak in others, and I could use help.
- I'm a boundary disaster and I feel stuck.
- Other _____

➔ *Why do you want to develop the ability to draw healthy boundaries? (Check all that apply.)*

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Speak my truth | <input type="checkbox"/> Less conflicts |
| <input type="checkbox"/> More joy and harmony | <input type="checkbox"/> Better relationships |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Uplevel my professional life | <input type="checkbox"/> More freedom |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Self-protection | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |

➔ **What stops you from drawing boundaries? (Check all that apply.)**

Not sure how

Fear of punishment

Anxiety

Other _____

Guilt

Other _____

➔ **Do you think people will view you as mean, selfish, rude, or offensive if you draw boundaries or speak up?**

Yes No

➔ **Do you already know what boundaries are and the importance of them?**

Yes No

➔ **Does the thought of drawing boundaries create anxiety for you?**

Yes No

➔ **How difficult do you find it to draw boundaries right now? On a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 being easy and 5 being very difficult**

[1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
easiest very difficult

➔ **Do you use passive-aggressive communication to express your opinions when boundaries are being violated?**

Yes No

➔ **Can you connect your current anger, resentment, anxiety, fear, and/or frustration to boundary violations?**

Yes No

➔ ***Do the conflicts in your life originate from the lack of clear, concise boundaries?
(Or the violation of these?)***

Yes No

➔ ***Who are the people you find it most difficult to draw boundaries with?
(Check all that apply.)***

Spouse / Partner

Friends

Children

Frenemies

Parents

Boss

Siblings

Coworkers

Other relatives

Other _____

Lover / Date

Other _____

➔ ***Did you have good role model(s) for healthy boundaries growing up?***

Yes No

➔ ***Do you know what your preferences, desires, limits, and deal breakers are?***

Yes No

➔ *List two to three of your biggest challenges with boundaries today.*

➔ *What is your intention and desire for your Boundary Boss Workbook experience? What results would you like to achieve?*
