

*chosen, adored, celebrated*

*Healthy*  
**BOUNDARIES**  
**WORKBOOK**  
**WEEK #1**

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*Welcome here!*

I'm so excited you've decided to join! Please tune in to the weekly videos for lots of extra tidbits along the way. I'm looking forward to hearing from you, and working together.

Boundaries are essential for mental health and wellness. When good, healthy boundaries are in place, life is a lot easier.

This is a 5 week course to help you build, enforce, and maintain assertive, healthy boundaries. And while it's a great jumping off point, it's not the end of your boundary work.



Maintaining healthy boundaries is an ongoing practice, and will require regular tweaking and adjusting as you move through different seasons of your life.

## Healthy Boundaries Workbook

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Here's an overview of what you can expect over the next 5 weeks:

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| <b>Week 2</b>    | Digging Deeper into Boundaries<br>Values & exercise<br>Crossed or ignored boundaries<br>Your Boundary Beliefs exercise (adapted from Better Boundaries: Owning and Treasuring your life. Black & Enns)<br>What gets in the way of putting boundaries in place?<br>Homework |
| <b>Week 3</b>    | Different types of boundaries<br>Understanding the different areas to protect<br>Self Awareness exercise   |
| <b>Week 4</b>    | Assertive Communication<br>What's the difference between assertive, aggressive, passive aggressive and passive communication?  |
| <b>Week 5</b>    | Setting Boundaries<br>Tips and tricks to set assertive boundaries  |
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# WEEK ONE

## What are Boundaries, anyways?

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- Boundaries are a life management tool. They are borders and limits you put in place to protect and honour yourself.
- Boundaries are rooted in a deep knowing of yourself, your worth, and your value. And they communicate self respect to others.
- Boundaries are parameters you put in place, based on your values, needs, wants, and beliefs.
- Boundaries say:
  - 'this is far enough',
  - 'I am not comfortable with more,'
  - 'This is where things change, stop, or move'
- Boundaries are a collection of emotional, mental, physical, spiritual, and sexual limitations to ensure stability, safety, and wellness.
- Boundaries are essential for mental wellness because they teach people how to treat us.
- A boundary communicates cause and effect - "If A happens, B will happen."
- Boundaries are an ongoing process. We create, tweak, change, and move boundaries all the time. And working continually on strengthening our boundaries is an important part of building emotional intelligence (EQ).

An **internal boundary** is something you decide inside yourself - a way to talk to yourself, about yourself. It's an internal system in your mind that allows, or disallows, mental chatter. How we talk to ourselves matters. And when we permit negative, mean, hurtful messages to circulate in our minds, we lose self esteem, mental health, and confidence.

An internal boundary is us saying 'no' to our nasty chatter.

An **external boundary** is the limitation we put on others, as well as ourselves. These boundaries say no to certain things, and yes to others. For me, an external boundary is, "I will only eat one Purdy's Sweet Georgia Brown".... And for others, "I will only allow you, my husband, one Purdys' Sweet Georgia Brown." ( do you see a theme here?).

External boundaries teach people how to treat us. Our boundaries communicate and enforce our values, our needs, and our wants.

Not all boundaries are created equal. There are some very big, even rigid boundaries we each hold, and then there are boundaries that are a little more flexible, and small. We get to decide how this looks for us individually.

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Here are some common boundaries from women I work with:

- People may not talk to me disrespectfully
- My son must be home by midnight
- I will not say mean things to myself about myself
- I will only drink wine one evening a week
- I will be in bed by 10pm every night
- I will not answer the phone at dinnertime
- I will say no when I mean no

## Why Are Boundaries Important?

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Boundaries are essential for mental health and wellness, and create guidelines for ourselves and others regarding treatment and behaviour.

Healthy Boundaries help you to:

- **Define your identity** - this increases confidence and helps people understand what to expect from you.
- **Protect yourself from violators and the control of others** - letting in what's good, and keeping out what's bad - keeping you safe. Having good boundaries lessens the chance of others having control over you, and makes it easier for you to say no.
- **Bring order** - helping you organize ideas, demands, responsibilities, and activities in a way that promotes wellness and health for you and your loved ones.
- **Maintain healthy relationships** - good boundaries set the stage for open and clear understanding of relationship parameters.
- **Be true to yourself and your goals, wants and needs** - boundaries keep you from being drawn into things not meant for you, and keep you focused and ready to be fully you in your life.

Unhealthy Boundaries can lead to:

- Increased anxiety and depression
- Loss of control of your life
- Feeling overwhelmed and pulled in different directions
- Feeling taken advantage of, used, and walked on
- Anger and resentment in relationships
- A not knowing or not honouring of ourselves - resulting in lowered self esteem, and self confidence

To put a boundary in place we need to consider two things:

1. **What are my limits? What is ok and not ok?** To determine this, consider what makes you stressed or uncomfortable. When you've figured this out you will find the place you stand and that will help you put boundaries in place.
2. **What are my feelings?** Knowing our feelings will inform the seriousness of the boundary and help us communicate it more effectively.

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## The Do's of Boundaries

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- DO be direct
- DO be clear and concise
- DO own your feelings
- DO be respectful
- DO be honest
- DO let people know what you're doing "I'm practicing having better boundaries in this area."

## Boundaries Don't

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- DON'T blame or shame the person
- DON'T feel guilty
- DON'T be afraid to remind or follow up
- DON'T forget why you're doing this - to improve mental health and self esteem

# WEEK ONE HOMEWORK

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What do boundaries mean to you?

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What misunderstandings may you hold about boundaries?

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What areas of your life are you hoping to establish stronger boundaries? Be specific here.

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If boundaries were set in these areas, what would that be like for you? How would life be different? And how would you feel differently?

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