

4 Ways to Set Boundaries in Relationship

1. Know Yourself and Your Needs

Every relationship involves a certain amount of compromise, but you should never give up fundamental parts of who you are just to be with someone. You may have specific activities you engage in which he isn't interested in or a commitment to your career which may require you to work on short notice. You might have children or other family members who need tending to, and you most likely have expectations about what you require in a relationship and what you are willing to give. Obvious boundaries such as not cheating or not engaging in physical or emotional abuse may go without saying, but it helps to know and acknowledge them before they come up in a relationship. The more you know about yourself, the easier you can convey your needs to your partner.

2. Clearly Set Your Limits

Relationship boundaries tend to fall into three basic categories: the amount of time you are willing to spend, the amount of money you are willing to spend, and the amount of emotional energy you are willing to spend. Recognize your limits on all three of them and determine the amounts you are willing to devote to your relationship. Once you have them, set rules for yourself about their expenditure and stand by them as your relationship proceeds.

3. Communicate Your Limits Compassionately but Clearly

No one is a mind reader and your partner may not have any idea where you draw these lines. As the relationship progresses, be very clear about your boundaries and don't be afraid to express them openly. You will likely gain some insight into your partner's probable reactions as you spend more time with her. Factor those into the way you approach your partner and always speak with her feelings in mind. But you should still be clear and resolute. Your partner should be able to understand your reasonable limitations and not try to wheedle or seduce you past them.

4. Accommodate Your Partner's Boundaries

Just as you have your boundaries, so too does your partner. As you talk about your needs and limitations, encourage your partner to think about where she may draw the line and what boundaries she may have. Be open and receptive to what your partner has to say, and let her feel comfortable with talking about them to you. Once you know what those boundaries are, you can talk about potential friction points, seek solutions to areas of disagreement, and find a place where you both can bond and grow without crossing either your boundaries or your partner's.

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