



# Boundaries in Relationships

## Tips to Setting Healthy Boundaries in Relationships

- When we need to set a limit with someone, do it clearly, preferably without anger, and in as few words as possible. The most important person to notify of our boundary is ourselves.
- We cannot simultaneously set a boundary (a limit) and take care of another person's feelings.
- Anger, rage, complaining, and whining are clues to boundaries we need to set. Other clues are feeling threatened, suffocated, or victimized by someone. We may need to get angry to set a boundary, but we don't need to stay resentful to enforce it.
- We'll set boundaries when we're ready and not until then.
- A support system can be helpful as we strive to establish and enforce boundaries.
- There is a fun side to boundary setting, too. Besides learning to identify what hurts and what we don't like, we learn to identify what we like, what feels good, what we want and what brings us pleasure.
- Boundaries are a personal issue. They reflect and contribute to our growth, our connection to ourselves, our Higher Power, and to other people.
- Strive for balance, flexibility, a healthy sense of self and how you deserve to be treated.

Borrowed from Claudia Black, Ph.D., [www.claudiablack.com](http://www.claudiablack.com)

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# Effective Communication Techniques

- **Be in tune with yourself and your feelings.** Identify your need to have a talk.
- **Goal setting.** Ask yourself, “What do I want to accomplish by talking with the other person?” Example: The goal is to work together on a project.
- **Make an appointment to talk.** Arrange to talk at a mutually good time. Don’t put it off!
- **Set the stage.** Thank the other person for agreeing to take the time to talk.
- **Use “I” statements.** The “I” statement helps to communicate with others openly and honestly. It allows us to say what we feel and think without hurting or attacking another person. One reason that the “I” statement is effective is that it focuses on behavior and not on the person. When you communicate with the “I” statement, you describe your feelings and thoughts about the other person’s behavior.  
Example: “**I** feel angry when your stuff is left all over the room. **I** would like for you to keep your stuff picked up.”  
Rather than: “You are a slob. You make me angry. You better pick up your stuff.”
- **Feedback.** Check in. Has the communication been clear? Have you been heard? How does the other person feel about what you have said?  
Example: “Do you understand?” or “How do you feel about what I have said?”
- **Avoid the “Me first” game.** Do not compete for time. Avoid talking over each other. Often it is best to invite the other person to go first.  
Example: “It is clear that you have some feelings about this too. You go first.”
- **Listen.** Listen, reflect, and paraphrase the content of the message to make sure you understand what the other person is saying. Do not use this time to argue your point or to plan what you are going to say when it is your turn.