



Setting Healthy Boundaries

- 1 **Know yourself.** This means knowing your innermost thoughts, beliefs, feelings, choices, and experiences. It also means knowing and connecting with your needs, feelings, and physical sensations. Without knowing your true self, you can't really know your limits and needs, i.e., your boundaries. This will also help you to define your needs when your boundaries are crossed more clearly.
- 2 **Be flexible.** Having healthy boundaries doesn't mean rigidly saying no to everything. Nor does it mean cocooning yourself from others. We are constantly growing, learning, and evolving as human beings.
- 3 **Stay out of judgment.** Practice having healthy compassion for others without the need to "fix" them.
- 4 **Let go of judgment about yourself.** Easier said than done but start practicing compassion and acceptance. When you can accept yourself for who you are, there is less needed to hide your true self. A more positive inner world can help you feel safe with vulnerability. Connect with the voice of someone loving and nurturing and imagine what he or she would say to you in this moment instead.
- 5 **Accept the truth in what others say and leave the rest.** Feel what you feel and don't take responsibility for or take on the emotions of others. Give back their feelings, thoughts, and expectations.
- 6 **Practice openness.** Be willing to listen to others about how your behavior impacts them.
- 7 **Watch out for black and white thinking.** Do you have difficulty saying no? Try, "let me think about it and get back to you." Do you have to do x, y, or z or else? Try to find the middle ground.
- 8 **Pay attention to activities and people who drain you and those who energize you.** Protect yourself by saying no to those who drain you or finding ways to reduce them through delegating, setting limits, or lowering perfectionistic standards. Add more energizing activities to your day instead.
- 9 **Pause.** When you feel the urge to (*insert compulsion here*), stop and check in with yourself. What are you feeling? Can you allow that feeling to be present without

acting on it for the moment? What do you need? Dig deep and see what comes up for you. Take five or 10 deep breaths, if need be, focusing on exhaling completely.

- 10 **Get clear on what you value and desire.** What do you really want or long for? What is truly important to you in your life? Get clear on your most important values. Use your values to guide your decisions vs. others' opinions or expectations. Use this to help you find what is missing from your life.