



MYND

W O R K B O O K

A Guide to Setting Healthy Boundaries

This workbook is designed to help you
understand boundaries better.

Written by
Jonathan Riley



Welcome to MYND Practice

Hi There!

MYND Practice was founded to help our emotionally crippled society heal by providing compassion, communication, and a sense of belonging. We are dedicated to social change that helps bring about initiatives that better people's lives.

MYND Practice believes it can make a difference in the way society approaches mental health, helping to create a more stable, happier, and fulfilled society.

MYND Practice has been dedicated to fulfilling its mission of inspiring and giving people hope by assisting them in making positive changes in their health, relationships, businesses, and finances.

Counselling isn't just about making a bad life good, but making a good life great. It's about building a brighter future for yourself and your loved ones. Our single focus is helping you achieve what's most important to you.

Jonathan Riley

MYND PRACTICE FOUNDER

Hi, I'm Jonathan Riley. I have dedicated my life to the field of mental health as a writer, educator, counsellor, and speaker.

No matter where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here.





Introduction

The purpose of this workbook is to help you in establishing healthy boundaries for your personal growth. While the workbook may be helpful, you can also see a therapist or counsellor who can help you make much faster progress with setting boundaries.

There are a number of factors that must be considered when establishing healthy boundaries. These include developing a vision of where you want to be and planning how you are going to get there. This workbook is a tool to help you map out what you want to change so you can actually make it happen.

In this guide, you will learn about setting boundaries, its importance, and how to implement them into your daily life.



My Practice Counselling

Let's Get Started

Live One Day at a Time, You'll get there

MYND



What are Boundaries?

There are many different types of boundaries: internal, external, physical, emotional, intellectual, and sexual.

Boundaries can be thought of as setting limits, guidelines, or ground rules within personal relationships. They are unique for each person. In most families, boundaries were never the same from day to day. Sometimes there were no boundaries at all. They shifted and changed depending on the emotional climate of people in that family. Many of us spent a lifetime giving away our power to others. Many of us have lost the innate sense of what is truly ours—our sense of personal integrity—sometimes mistaking our lack of boundaries for gentleness, acceptance and love.

It is up to us to determine where those boundaries begin and end. We need to be aware of our own feelings so we can let others know when we feel uneasy or uncomfortable. We cannot assume other people can read our minds. Setting boundaries is a skill that requires practice, but which can lead to a sense of freedom in our lives.





Why Do Personal Boundaries Matter?

Boundaries help us recognise, honour and respect our individual and unique qualities. Setting limits doesn't mean intolerance or selfishness. It means refusing to allow ourselves to be harmed. It means accepting responsibility for our own beliefs, feelings and actions. It means learning how to take care of ourselves, one day at a time. Our boundaries provide personal

guidelines for communicating to others how we operate and what behaviours are acceptable and unacceptable to us.

Having boundaries allows you to make yourself a priority, whether that's in self-care, career aspirations, or within relationships. Not only that, but many clinical psychological symptoms, such as depression, anxiety disorders, eating disorders, addictions, shame issues, panic disorders, and marital and relational struggles, find their root in conflicts with boundaries.

Boundaries improve our self-esteem and protect our relationships from becoming unsafe.



Physical Boundary Violations

This can happen when someone or something violates our body space in a physical manner. Sometimes people hug us when we don't want to be hugged. People hit us. People continually touch us while they are talking to us. Sometimes these are in offensive ways, and sometimes they are well meaning. When people stand too close to us or look at us in a way that makes us uncomfortable, they are violating our physical boundaries. These are only a few ways in which we can have our physical boundaries violated.

Healthy Physical Boundaries

We have the right to say when, where, how, why and who touches or gets close to our body. An example of a physical external boundary is the “comfort zone” of space around you. This is a flexible space that changes depending on the relationship and the circumstances of the relationship.



Emotional Boundary Violations



This can happen when someone “puts down” or discounts our emotions (feelings) as unimportant, unnecessary or wrong. Sometimes people will try to spare us from feeling our pain, fear, anger, guilt, sadness or shame. Mostly, they will try to do this to spare us from hurt. They are trying to fix us and our feelings. Emotions (feelings) are not wrong or bad, they just are.

Healthy Emotional Boundaries

We all have the right to have our feelings. We are also responsible for what we do with them and how we show them. Other people have the right to their feelings and must account for their behaviour when it comes to boundaries. It is not our responsibility to fix people, places, or things that hurt our or other people's feelings. By acknowledging our emotions without reacting emotionally, we can speed up the healing process and reduce our dependence on others.

Setting emotional boundaries prevent people from manipulating you, using you, and playing with your feelings.





Mental Boundary Violations

This can happen at any age when someone, an institution or a principle discounts what and how we think. One form of an intellectual boundary violation is when people interrupt us when we are talking or otherwise invalidate our thoughts. As children, teens or adults, we have often heard that “We shouldn’t think like that” or “that kind of thinking will get us nowhere”. To be told that our thought processes are “less than” someone else’s is a boundary violation.

Healthy Mental Boundaries

We have the right to our own thinking. It is our choice to accept or reject what others say about what we think or say. To allow ourselves and others the right of thought and let those thoughts and communications of them belong to us will allow us to begin to make our own choices about how we think.

When it comes to mental boundaries, you have the right to your own thoughts, values, beliefs, and opinions.



Sexual Boundaries

This can happen when someone or something speaks about or touches our body in a way that is sexually offensive, painful, frightening, embarrassing or shaming to us. This boundary is truly personal. Sexual boundary violations can be verbal, emotional and physical. A violation can be as horrible and as terrifying as sexual assault or uncomfortable as an inappropriate use of the eyes such as staring or looking. Criticism of our gender and/or our sexual preference, threats, implied contact or physical seduction are other examples of sexual boundary violations.

Healthy Sexual Boundaries

Healthy sexual boundaries play a pivotal role in our personal autonomy. They empower us to articulate when, how, why, where, and with whom we engage in intimate physical contact. Establishing such boundaries ensures our personal comfort and safety, fosters mutual respect in relationships, and safeguards our sexual wellbeing from undue pressure or violations.

Sexual boundary violations are personally offensive and harmful. Healthy sexual boundaries foster respect, personal autonomy, and wellbeing.





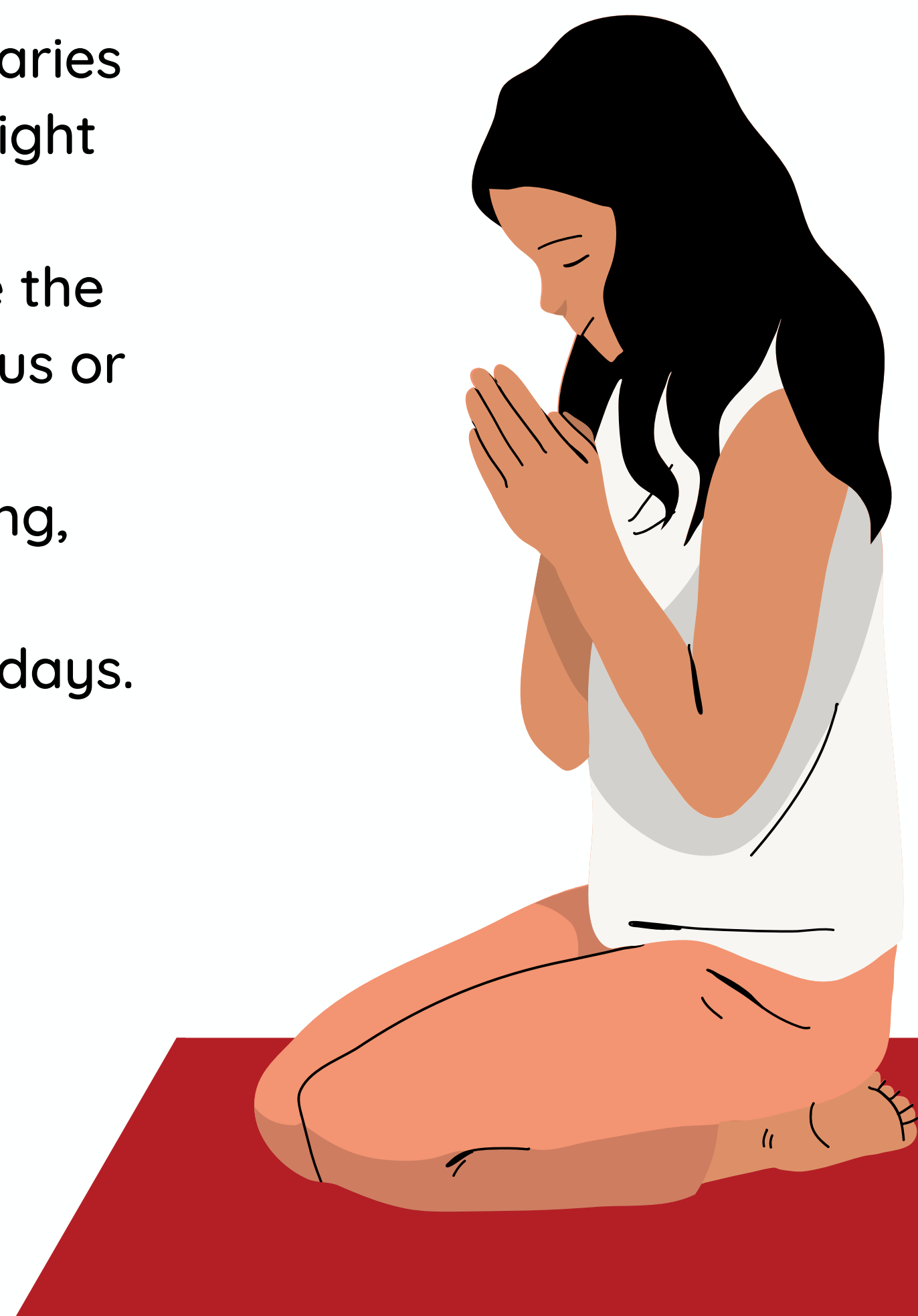
Spiritual Boundary Violations

This can happen when someone or something does not allow us to have our own Higher Power. Any type of boundary violation is a spiritual one. Others are playing God in our lives when they make decisions for us, violate us physically or sexually, dismiss our feelings, challenge our concept of a Higher Power, ignore abuse, or invalidate our thinking. Spiritual boundaries protect our freedom to believe in whatever we want, worship however we want, and practice our spiritual or religious beliefs.

Healthy Spiritual Boundaries

We are exercising healthy boundaries anytime we allow ourselves the right to have freedom of thought, conscience and religion. We have the right to freely express our religious or spiritual beliefs through worship, observance, practice, and teaching, the display of symbols, and the observance of holidays and rest days.

Without healthy boundaries, relationships do not thrive—they result in feelings of resentment, disappointment, or violation.



HOW ARE MY BOUNDARIES?

- ☐ Many people rely on me
- ☐ I let people get close to me really quickly
- ☐ People love confiding in me
- ☐ I do things out of obligation
- ☐ I neglect my needs (including food, rest, etc.)
- ☐ I give constantly
- ☐ I am focused on helping others
- ☐ I feel anxious when other people are not OK
- ☐ I was taught to put others before myself
- ☐ I feel responsible for other people's emotions
- ☐ I feel so drained by all my responsibilities
- ☐ Other people's happiness depends on me
- ☐ I feel bad for others easily
- ☐ I don't spend time, energy, or money on my dreams.

- ☐ People let me down a lot
- ☐ I'm really good at "mind-reading" others
- ☐ I feel selfish when I ask for what I want
- ☐ I find myself doing things I don't want to do
- ☐ I feel unable to say no
- ☐ I don't speak up when I am treated poorly
- ☐ I don't always say what I mean
- ☐ I don't know how to end conversations
- ☐ I feel unable to make decisions
- ☐ I expect other people to anticipate my needs
- ☐ People take advantage of me
- ☐ I grew up with adults with poor boundaries
- ☐ I grew up with adults who crossed my boundaries
- ☐ It's hard to ask for what I want or need



What are your rights?

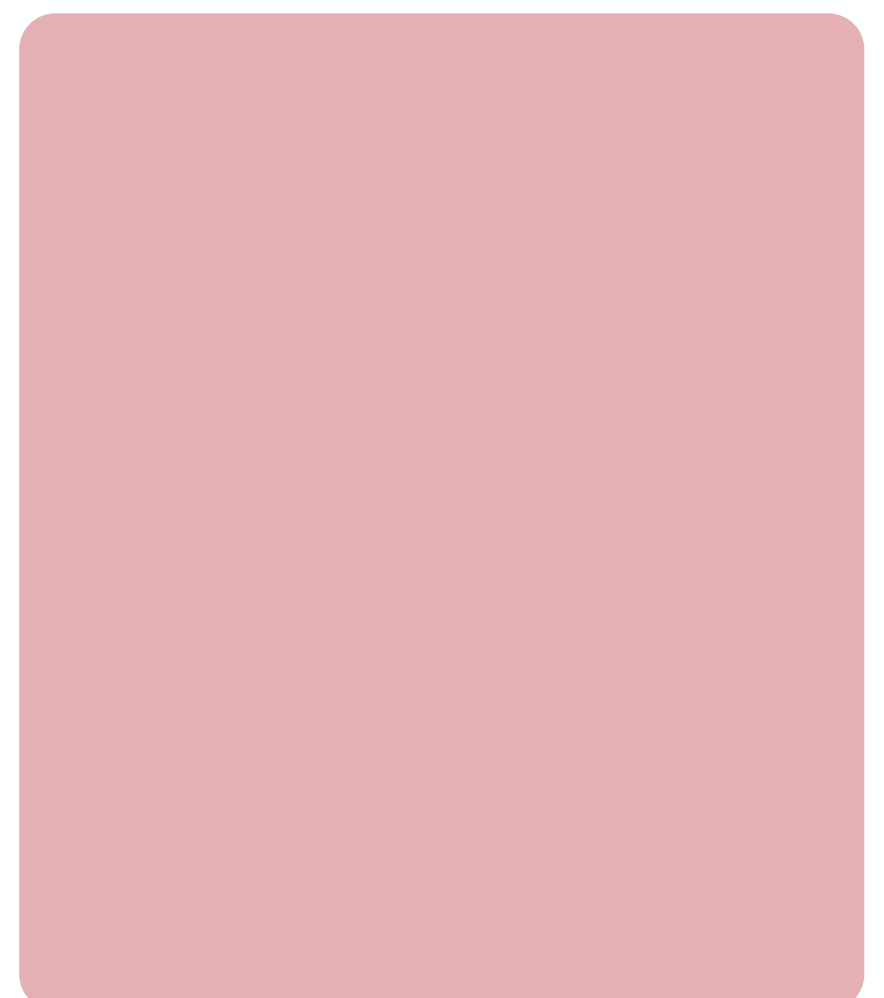


- I have the right to say no.
- I have the right to say, “I don’t know.
- I have the right to detach from anyone.
- I have the right to be treated with dignity and respect.
- I have the right to make mistakes and learn from them.
- I have the right to be wrong.
- I have the right to make my own choices and decisions in my life; I do not have to feel guilty.
- I have the right to all of my feelings.
- I have the right to change my mind at any time.
- I have the right to a spiritually, physically, and emotionally healthier existence.
- I have the right to take healthy risks and to experiment with new possibilities.
- I have the right to be honest in my relationships and to seek the same from others.
- I have the right to ask for what I want.
- I have the right to determine and honour my own priorities and goals.
- I have the right to dream and to have hope.
- I have the right to be my True Self.
- I have the right to laugh, to play, to have fun.
- I have the right to live life happy, joyous, and free.

All human beings are entitled to their human rights.

It is important in setting boundaries to identify your basic human rights. Once you identify your rights and choose to believe in them, you will find honouring them easier. When you respect your boundaries, you will spend less energy trying to please others who violate them.

Which right matters most to you?





Communicating Your Boundaries

When you identify the need to set a boundary, do it clearly, calmly, firmly, respectfully, and in as few words as possible. Do not justify, get angry, or apologise for the boundary you are setting. You are not responsible for the other person's reaction to the boundary you are setting. You are only responsible for communicating your boundary in a respectful manner. If it upsets them, know it is their problem.

Some people, especially those accustomed to controlling, abusing, or manipulating you, might test you. Plan on it, expect it, but remain firm. Remember, your behaviour must match the boundaries you are setting. You cannot successfully establish a clear boundary if you send mixed messages by apologising. At first, you will probably feel selfish, guilty, or embarrassed when you set a boundary. Do it anyway and remind yourself you have a right to self-care. Setting boundaries takes practice and determination.

Don't let anxiety, fear or guilt prevent you from taking care of yourself. Listen to yourself, determine what you need to do or say, then communicate assertively. Learning to set healthy boundaries takes time. It is a process. Set them in your own time frame, not when someone else tells you. Develop a support system of people who respect your right to set boundaries. Remove toxic people from your life, especially those who want to manipulate, abuse, and control you.



How to Communicate Boundaries?

Al-Anon says it best: "Say what you mean, mean what you say, just don't say it mean."

Healthy communication is clear, concise and honest. To improve our communication, we first need to know our hearts and minds clearly. We can continually ask ourselves: "What do I think, feel and need?" Once we answer these crucial questions, we can empower ourselves to express our feelings openly and honestly without being controlled by our fear of the reactions of others. In order to remove the fear of judgement and assumptions, use "I" statements, stick to the facts, and keep the conversation about your experience rather than focusing on the other person.

"I" statements are less likely to provoke a defensive response but, remember, the purpose of setting boundaries is to let someone know you are not okay with their behaviour. The person who is impacted by the boundary may still react. If you are setting a healthy boundary—from a place of self-care—you will be better able to acknowledge the reaction, but not try to fix it.



Learning to say "No"

Saying no doesn't mean that you are being rude, selfish, or unkind. These are all unhelpful beliefs that make it hard to say no.

Even though it can be daunting to say, "No" is a complete sentence. We might be hesitant to say no without offering more information, but it's not necessary, sometimes assertiveness isn't needed for boundary setting as much as personal tolerance for being uncomfortable. You can say no without providing an explanation or an excuse to the person you're saying it to. If someone asks for your number, you can absolutely just say no. If a co-worker asks you to cover their shift, you can also say no, without offering any excuse.



No!



Boundaries Exercise

When answering the following questions, indicate the steps you might take towards setting healthy boundaries.

01 How have unhealthy boundaries affected my life?

02 Who is the most difficult for me to set boundaries with?

03 What is preventing me from taking care of myself?

04 Who is not treating me respectfully?

05

How do I feel when I am around people with rigid boundaries?

06

How do I feel when I am around people with no boundaries?

07

Am I willing to communicate my limits and boundaries clearly and directly?

08

What specific steps can you take to strengthen your boundaries?

09

How do you think other people will respond to these changes?

10

How do you think your life will be different once you've established healthy boundaries?

Boundaries Review

Start Small

Setting boundaries is about learning to take care of ourselves, no matter what happens.

Reminder

Boundaries emerge from the belief that what we want and need, like and dislike, is important.

We have the right to care for ourselves and express ourselves freely.

Boundaries emerge as we learn to value, trust and listen to ourselves.

We speak slowly, firmly and clearly when drawing boundaries.

We listen to our thoughts and feelings and don't have to respond to others.

Boundaries are crucial to mental health and our identity.



MYND

THANK YOU!

We're so grateful to have you as part of our community,
and we hope you love what you're getting. Get in touch
with us if there is anything else we can do for you.

“Knowing yourself is the beginning of all wisdom” — Aristotle

Jonathan Riley

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