CONCENTRATED WISDOM

FREE PRINTABLE SCRIPTS & CHECKLIST

A List of Relationship Boundaries, and the Words to Actually Say Them

A boundary only works if the wording holds up. Real scripts by category, plus the tone and timing that make them stick.

FREE • NO SIGNUP

13 PAGES

10 ITEMS

concentratedwisdom.com • Free to download, no email required

About this resource

A relationship boundary is a one-sentence statement of what you will and won't accept, delivered calmly, without a justification attached to it. The method is short on purpose, state it, don't defend it, then repeat it if it's tested. Most boundaries fail not because the underlying need was wrong, but because the delivery buried it under three paragraphs of explanation.

WHAT'S INSIDE

- The Communication Skill Behind a Boundary — 4 items
- Saying It Without Over-Explaining — 5 items
- What to Do When It's Tested — 1 item
- How to Use These Pages — guide
- Boundary Inventory: Part One — checklist
- Boundary Inventory: Part Two — checklist
- My Boundaries — worksheet
- Boundary Script Cards — cut-out cards
- Partner Conversation Planner — worksheet
- Boundary Check-In — tracker
- If Boundaries Keep Being Ignored — guide

The Communication Skill Behind a Boundary

4 items

Tone

1

Neutral, not apologetic and not sharp. A boundary delivered with an apologetic tone invites negotiation, a boundary delivered with a sharp tone invites defensiveness. The flattest, most matter-of-fact version of the sentence usually works best, the same tone you'd use to state a fact about your schedule.

2

Timing

Stated before the moment it's tested, whenever possible, not improvised in the middle of the situation it's meant to prevent. A boundary announced in advance is information. The same boundary announced mid-conflict can read as a reaction to that specific fight, which makes it easier to dismiss as temporary anger rather than a standing preference.

3

Brevity

One sentence, not a case. Mayo Clinic's guidance on assertive communication is direct about this, keep requests simple, specific, and clear, and remember that no is a complete sentence that doesn't require an explanation to be valid. Every sentence added past the first one is a chance for the other person to find something in the explanation to argue with instead of the boundary itself.

4

A Worked Example

The difference between the three variables done well and done poorly is easiest to see side by side. The over-explained, poorly timed version: I'm sorry, I know this is probably annoying, but I've had a really long week and I just feel like I need some time to myself this weekend, is that okay, I hope you're not upset.

Saying It Without Over-Explaining

5 items

5

Time

I need my Sunday mornings to myself, so I won't be answering texts until the afternoon. This names a specific window rather than a vague request for more space, which is easier for the other person to actually honor.

6

Physical Space

I need a few minutes alone when I get home before we talk about the day. Framed as a need, not a rejection, this makes the space about decompression rather than distance from the relationship itself.

7

Emotional Labor

I can listen, but I'm not able to problem-solve this for you right now. This draws a real line between presence and responsibility, you can offer one without owing the other in every conversation.

8

Digital and Privacy

I'm not comfortable sharing my phone passcode, that's true for me regardless of what's on it. Naming it as a general position, not a defense of specific content, prevents the conversation from turning into a demand for proof of innocence.

9

Finances

I'll cover shared expenses, but individual purchases are mine to decide on. This draws the line at the category, shared versus individual, rather than at a specific dollar amount that invites renegotiation every time.

What to Do When It's Tested

1 item

10

Two Kinds of Testing

Boundaries tend to get tested in one of two ways, and each one calls for a slightly different response. Active testing looks like direct pushback in the moment, an argument, a guilt trip, a but why not right now. This is where the flat repetition described above works best, the sentence doesn't change no matter how the pushback is phrased.

How to Use These Pages

Boundaries are not walls or ultimatums. They are clear statements about what you will do, so your relationship has room to breathe.

Steps

1. Tick the boundary inventory to see what matters to you.
2. Write your top boundaries in the My Boundaries fields.
3. Practice the script cards out loud.
4. Plan one partner conversation using the planner.
5. Check in regularly with the table.

> A boundary is about your own actions: what you will do, not what your partner must do.

Boundary Inventory: Part One

Tick each boundary that matters to you in this relationship.

Emotional

- [ ] I will not be yelled at or insulted
- [ ] I need time alone to recharge
- [ ] I will not be blamed for my partner's feelings
- [ ] I can say no without a long defense

Physical and sexual

- [ ] My body and personal space are mine
- [ ] I decide when I want physical affection
- [ ] Consent can be changed at any time

Time and energy

- [ ] Regular time for friends and family
- [ ] Plans are confirmed ahead
- [ ] My work and rest time are respected

Boundary Inventory: Part Two

More areas to consider.

Money

- [ ] We agree how shared costs are split
- [ ] Large purchases are discussed first
- [ ] I keep some money that is mine

Digital and privacy

- [ ] My phone and messages are private
- [ ] We agree what to share on social media
- [ ] No pressure to share passwords

Family and friends

- [ ] We discuss visits and holidays together
- [ ] Private arguments stay private
- [ ] My partner backs me with their family

My Boundaries

Write your three most important boundaries in a form you can say aloud.

Boundary 1
I need... / I will...

Why it matters to me

Boundary 2

Why it matters to me

Boundary 3

What I will do if it is crossed
An action, not a threat

Boundary Script Cards

State it, do not defend it, repeat it if needed. Keep your tone flat and kind.

I need an hour to myself tonight.

I am not okay with being spoken to like that.

I will talk when we are both calmer.

I do not share my phone. That is private.

I need advance notice before guests come.

I am saying no to this, and that is final.

I will leave the room if voices are raised.

Please ask before you make plans for us.

Cut along the dashed lines.

Partner Conversation Planner

Plan a calm conversation about one boundary.

The boundary I want to share

Good time and place
Not mid-argument; both rested

How I will open
Start with care, then the facts

What I am asking for
One clear request

What I will say if they push back

What I am willing to be flexible on

Boundary Check-In

Review once a week or month. Honest check-ins keep small issues from growing.

Date	Boundary	Respected? (Y / Partly / N)	What happened	What I need next

If Boundaries Keep Being Ignored

One missed boundary is a conversation. A pattern is information.

- Restate the boundary calmly and name what you will do
- Follow through with the consequence you chose
- Notice if apologies come without any change
- Talk to a trusted friend or counselor about what you see

> If you ever feel afraid, controlled or unsafe in a relationship, please reach out to a trusted person or a local domestic abuse support service. A couples or individual therapist can also help.

Want more like this?

This printable is the companion to our guide "A List of Relationship Boundaries, and the Words to Actually Say Them".

Read more at concentratedwisdom.com

Free to share. Please keep this page intact if you pass it along.