

Dealing With Boundary Violations

Examples of boundary violations

If you're wondering how others might cross the line, here are common boundary violations to watch out for:

- Physical boundary violations involve any invasion of physical personal space.
- Emotional boundary violations involve transgressing limits that damage another person emotionally, such as name-calling, insinuating that someone is worthless, stupid, or difficult, and giving unsolicited advice.
- Spiritual boundary violations include imposing spiritual opinions on others and trying to control someone spiritually without their consent.
- Time boundary violations involve disrespecting agreed time limits that devalue another's time.
- Sexual boundary violations may be physically or emotionally related to sexuality, such as making sexual advances and innuendoes without another's consent.
- Material boundary violations involve disrespecting another's money and possessions. For example, using a plot of land without the owner's consent or maintaining a debt to another longer than agreed.

1. Establish clear consequences

When you set clear boundaries, you also need to set clear consequences should someone violate them. After all, without consequences, you won't be able to hold your boundaries.

Consequences should be:

- Realistic: Ensure that you can follow through with the consequence if you want to maintain your boundaries and for others to respect them.
- Clear: For example: "If you start making sexual advances at me, I'll go home".

2. Stay consistent

If you set boundaries and then relinquish them sometimes, people will cross them whenever they like, knowing you might not enforce them. This applies to the boundaries you set with your family, friends, acquaintances, colleagues, and so on.

3. Maintain your stand during pushback

You will encounter people who refuse to respect your boundaries. Don't give up. Stand your ground to maintain your boundaries. Calmly remind them of your boundaries and state that you won't change your mind.

For example, "I know you're upset, but I still need you to respect my boundaries. I won't meet with you if you don't respect my personal space."

4. Be firm

Setting boundaries with close loved ones can be tough. Some may feel deeply hurt by your standards. Others even think you don't love them if you set boundaries with them. But you know what is good for you and the relationship. Don't slip up just because someone doesn't respect your limits.

For example, "I know you feel hurt because I don't want to talk about.... but I care about you, and my boundary isn't meant to damage our relationship but to deepen the trust between us."

5. Remind others of your boundaries when they forget

Humans are forgetful and will forget your boundaries. That doesn't mean you need to loosen your limits. When someone forgets your boundaries, you need to firmly but calmly remind them.

For example: "You seem to have forgotten that I told you I'm uncomfortable talking about that. Please don't ask me about it again."

6. Calmly express the violation

Many people have their boundaries crossed and get passively upset about it or attack the boundary violator harshly. Either of these tactics leads to failure to hold on to boundaries. The way forward is calmness.

For example, "Even though you're upset, you've crossed the line and called me names again, so I'm not going to take this abuse anymore. I'm leaving." This way, your boundary setting becomes helpful rather than destructive.

7. Stay patient with yourself and others

It is entirely normal to blunder from time to time. You might forget your boundary sometimes or slip up if someone triggers you. You might have said you don't want to talk to your roommate while working from home, but find yourself breaking the rule.

Don't beat yourself up about that. And don't give up on the boundary either. Instead, defend your boundaries next time and try again. If you have boundary issues, it's going to be difficult to get it right the first time. Still don't give up. Being kind to yourself about your slip-ups increases your chances of holding onto your boundaries.

This applies to others as well. Some boundary violators have boundary issues themselves. Even people with the best intentions find it hard to stick to new rules. You need to be patient with them as well.

8. Cut a persistent violator off

If someone ignores your boundaries intentionally and violates them constantly, this strategy is the best to prevent further violations. People who refuse to respect your boundaries are toxic and should stay away from your life. Shut down your connection with them completely if you can.

For instance, someone who constantly posts inappropriate things on your social media profiles despite your protests would be better off blocked. You can also avoid going to places where you'll find your boundary violator so you can keep your peace of mind.

You can take any of these steps to cut off boundary violators from your life:

- Block them on social media
- Ignore them completely
- Give them the last talk to communicate your decision

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