Congratulations, dear friend. You have made one of the best decisions of your life—deciding it's time to step into your power.

I am thrilled to introduce this workbook all about setting boundaries and creating a life that is truly yours. As a life coach, I have seen (and experienced) time and time again how challenging it can be to prioritize our own needs and desires. I've also seen how easy it is to fall into the trap of people pleasing.

I created this workbook to help you break free from that cycle and start living a life aligned to your values— that you've always dreamt of having but never thought could be yours.

This workbook is for you— the woman ready to say goodbye to people pleasing and start saying "YES" to yourself.
to finding true freedom through boundaries includes:
Section 1: Introduction + Facing the Facts
Section 2: Your Boundary Six Pack
Section 3: Identifying Your Personal Boundaries
Section 4: Setting and Communicating Boundaries
Section 5: Maintaining and Adjusting Boundaries

I'M IN YOUR CORNER.

LOVE,

Kerry

YOUR LIFE COACH AND CHEERLEADER
Boundaries are essential for living a healthy and balanced life. They are like an invisible fence that protect us from being taken advantage of or manipulated by others. As women, boundaries are especially important as we often face unique challenges when it comes to setting limits with other people in our lives. This workbook is designed to help you understand what boundaries look like, why they’re so important, and how to set them in your own life. Using this resource as your guide, you can learn how to create a stronger relationship with yourself and those around you while still protecting your emotional and physical wellbeing.

Within the following pages, you’ll find the tools you need to gather the courage to have difficult conversations, identify the boundaries that you need to set, and stand your ground with confidence. With practical exercises and insights, you’ll be empowered to take control of your life and your relationships. Together, we’ll work towards building stronger boundaries, so you can live a more fulfilling life on your own terms.
FACING THE FACTS

7 out of 10 women report feeling difficulty setting and maintaining boundaries in their relationships (Hill et al., 2016). And those were just the ones being honest.

8 out of 10 women report having trouble saying "no" to unwanted physical touch (Talkspace, 2018).

6 out of 10 women report feeling obligated to meet the emotional needs of others (Hill et al., 2016).

According to a study by Everyday Health, 8 out of 10 women reported experiencing gaslighting in a relationship, past or present (2018).
Setting boundaries can be a very real challenge, but it is essential to understand that you are not alone (re-read "Facing the Facts" for a reminder). I've seen firsthand how difficult it can be for women to prioritize their own needs and assert themselves in a world that often expects us to be accommodating and deferential to others.

There are endless reasons why setting boundaries can be particularly hard for women. From a young age, many of us are taught to be "good girls" and to always put the feelings of others before our own. This can create a pattern of behavior that makes it tough to say "no" or assert our own needs, even when we know that doing so would be in our best interest.

On top of these societal pressures, you may also face more specific challenges when it comes to setting boundaries. You may feel guilty when saying "no" to others or putting yourself first. You may worry about damaging your relationships, or being perceived as difficult and unlikeable. In some cases, you may even fear negative consequences if you push back against authority figures or assert yourself in certain situations.

Despite these valid challenges, setting and maintaining boundaries is a crucial aspect of self-care and personal growth. By recognizing and challenging what makes boundary-setting difficult for you, you can begin to prioritize your own needs, assert yourself in all areas of your life, and finally live life on your own terms.

Remember: you deserve to have boundaries that help you feel safe, respected, and empowered.
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Let's jump in. There are six types of boundaries. Each are vital to stepping into your power. They include:

- Physical
- Emotional
- Mental
- Material
- Time
- Sexual

Read on to master your boundaries in each area.
Physical Boundaries

Preserving physical boundaries is an essential part of any woman's autonomy and self-care journey. Physical boundaries in relationships include those around your body, your personal space, and your privacy - and the limits we set to protect ourselves from being taken advantage of or being manipulated in those areas. Let's dive into how you can set boundaries in this area.

**Your Body**

Your body is your own and should always be respected. That means drawing the line when it comes to physical touch that unsettles you - whether it's from strangers or from someone you're close to. You can decide how and when to hug, kiss, or hold hands with people, based on what feels comfortable for you.

Reflect:

Do I ever feel pressured to be physical with someone even when I don't want to?

Click here to type in your answer.

Are there any situations in which I tend to avoid setting boundaries with my body?

Click here to type in your answer.

Are there any people in my life who make me uncomfortable when they touch me?

Click here to type in your answer.
Your Personal Space
Your personal space is the physical area around you that should not be violated by anyone, regardless of their relationship with you. Depending on your comfort level, this boundary could extend further or closer than someone else's. Setting boundaries around your personal space is just as important as setting boundaries around your body, and you should always feel free to express what you're comfortable with.

Some examples of setting a personal space boundary:
- Letting someone know when they've entered your space without permission (saying something like "Excuse me, I need a bit of space").
- Asking someone not to come too close when talking, or to back away if they move in closer than you're comfortable with

Reflect:

What are some situations where I tend to feel a lack of privacy? How comfortable am I when it comes to setting boundaries around physical space and privacy?

What are some times when I could have set a better boundary around my personal space?
Your Privacy

Setting boundaries around your privacy can include things like deciding who you're willing to share certain personal information with. It also means setting limits when it comes to physical privacy. For example, telling someone they can't enter your bedroom without your permission or that you need some alone time when you feel overwhelmed.

Some examples of setting a privacy boundary:

- Telling someone you don't want to talk about something they asked about if it makes you uncomfortable
- Setting limits on how much personal information you're willing to share with friends and colleagues

What are some experiences in your life where you have felt uncomfortable or violated in terms of your privacy?

How do you currently feel about the level of privacy you have in your relationships, both personal and professional?

What are some of the beliefs and values you hold around privacy?
As a woman, understanding emotional boundaries is an essential part of living a healthy and balanced life. Emotional boundaries are limits we create around certain types of behavior, thoughts, and feelings in order to preserve our self-respect (and the respect of others). They are the lines we draw between ourselves and others to protect our feelings, thoughts, and emotions from being violated or manipulated. These lines help us to remain in control of our own feelings and actions, while also allowing us to express ourselves without fear of being judged or attacked.

Let's be clear: setting emotional boundaries is not always easy. It can be difficult to establish limits when it comes to our emotions because we often fear being seen as selfish or unsupportive— but it is important to remember that setting emotional boundaries is a necessary skill for women to have in order to live a life of balance.

One example of a situation in which emotional boundaries may need to be established is when you are feeling overwhelmed by someone's behavior. If you feel like someone is taking advantage of you, you probably need to set boundaries to protect your emotional wellbeing. You can do this by making it clear to the person what behavior is acceptable and what is not.

If you feel like you're not being appreciated or respected, it's important to set emotional boundaries. Expressing your feelings and stating what type of behavior is expected from the other person facilitates healthier relationships in your life. Setting these boundaries will help ensure that your needs are met and that you're getting the respect you deserve.

It's never too late to start setting boundaries and making sure your needs are being met in your relationships. Doing so will not only help you feel more secure and respected, but it can also create healthier relationships with those around you.

REMEMBER: You are worth setting boundaries for and putting in the (sometimes emotional, sometimes challenging) work to make them strong. Don't be afraid to take the necessary steps to ensure your emotional boundaries are respected.
Reflect:

What are some self-limiting beliefs or fears that may be preventing you from setting and enforcing healthy emotional boundaries in your life?

What are some situations or relationships in your life where you feel that your emotional boundaries have been crossed or violated?

In what ways do you currently prioritize your own emotional needs and self-care practices? Which areas would you like to improve?
Mental boundaries are an important part of maintaining healthy relationships and avoiding people-pleasing. To put it simply, these boundaries are the limitations that you set for yourself when interacting with others, or even when engaging in activities like scrolling social media. Having strong mental boundaries means that you know how to maintain your sense of self, even when faced with difficult or emotionally charged situations. These guidelines help to keep your thoughts, emotions, and actions balanced—the key to a happy and healthy life.

Every person is unique in what their mental boundaries look like. Some people may have a boundary that they don't talk about certain topics like religion or politics, while others may be open to discussing these things. Some people are comfortable with their emotional vulnerability, while others prefer to keep their feelings private. It's up to each of us to decide what works best for our unique personalities, values, and circumstances. Some of us may find it easier to give in or go along with someone else's wishes, while others of us take a firmer stance on the matter at hand. There are no wrong answers when it comes to creating mental boundaries, as long as they help you maintain your sense of self.

Examples of situations in which you need to set mental boundaries include:

- When someone is trying to pressure you that goes against your values or beliefs, it's important to stand firm and politely say "no".
- If someone is constantly asking intrusive questions about your personal life, it's okay to tell them that you don't feel comfortable sharing those details.
- If you find yourself getting drawn into arguments or debates that leave you feeling drained, it might be best to step away from the situation.

Just like with any type of boundary, mental boundaries can be hard to stick to—especially when you're surrounded by people who don't seem to respect them. Through the challenges that can come with this boundary setting journey, remember that you have the power to choose how you interact with others, and it's okay to assert your boundaries where needed. With practice, you can learn to be confident in setting and enforcing your mental boundaries so that you can have healthier relationships and lead a happier life.
How can you better assert yourself when faced with difficult situations?

Reflect:

What qualities do you have that will help you in setting and maintaining strong mental boundaries?

In what ways can mental boundaries benefit your daily life?
Material Boundaries

Material boundaries refer to the ways we protect our physical environment, possessions, and time. For many of us, setting and enforcing these boundaries is especially important to avoid feeling taken advantage of or overextending ourselves.

Examples of situations where you may need to set material boundaries include:

- Saying no to requests for favors that you can't or don't want to do for someone
- Not allowing others to impose their values onto your choices (this includes your physical appearance like your haircut or clothing, diet, how frequently you exercise, who you are friends with...)
- Avoiding lending money or valuables out unless you are absolutely sure the person will return the item in proper condition
- Establishing rules for visitors (including a significant other) coming into your space and sticking to them

Setting material boundaries can be difficult, especially if it is unfamiliar territory. A great way to start is by identifying what kind of environment and lifestyle you want for yourself and then making a plan to get there.

Creating these boundaries can be intimidating, but it is important to remember that you're the one with the power to decide how your resources are used. When you stick to the limits you set, it will ensure that you don't overextend yourself and still remain true to your values.

Reflect:

What kind of environment and lifestyle do you want for yourself? What areas do you need to be more mindful of when it comes to material boundaries?

How can you ensure that your resources are used in a way that is true to your values?
Establishing time limits is a powerful way to ensure that you're taking care of yourself and not overcommitting your resources. By setting boundaries on how much time and energy you are willing to give, you can prioritize what's important without the burden of guilt or exhaustion. For women who struggle with people-pleasing and burning out, establishing these boundaries can be key in helping them maintain a healthy lifestyle.

Examples of situations where it is important to set time boundaries include:
* Limiting your availability when it comes to commitments, whether it be tasks that you need to do or social activities.
* Saying no without feeling obligated when asked for favors that exceed your capacity.
  * Allowing yourself enough time to rest and recuperate after completing a task.
  * Taking breaks throughout the day to give yourself moments of pause and reflection.
  * Creating healthy boundaries around what types of conversations you partake in, both online and in person.

These are only some examples, as time limits will look different for everyone depending on their individual situation or preferences. It's important to start with the basics and build up from there, making sure you are accounting for your well-being.

Reflect:
- How can setting time boundaries help you protect your well-being?
- What types of conversations do you need to have healthy boundaries around?
- How do you prioritize your activities to give yourself enough time to rest and recuperate?
- What strategies can you use to stick to the time boundaries you create for yourself?
Establishing sexual boundaries is an important part of any relationship, but it can be especially difficult for those who struggle with people-pleasing. Creating these boundaries gives you the power to decide what kind of intimate physical contact you are comfortable with and when it is appropriate. This helps ensure that your relationships remain healthy while respecting your limits and needs.

Examples of situations where it is important to set sexual boundaries include:

- Being clear about your expectations when it comes to intimacy in a relationship.
- Saying no without feeling guilty if someone makes advances that exceed your comfort level.
- Allowing yourself to explore your sexuality but within a safe and consensual environment.
- Respecting physical boundaries in friendships as well as romantic relationships.
- Talking openly about sex with your partner(s) and feeling comfortable enough to ask for what you want or need.

These are only some examples, as sexual boundaries will look different for everyone depending on their individual situation or preferences. It's important to take the time to figure out what works best for you and communicate that with your partner(s) in a respectful way.

Reflection questions (not yes/no):

- How can you be clear about your expectations when it comes to intimacy?
- What strategies can you use to explore your sexuality safely and consensually?
  - How do you communicate your boundaries to a partner(s)?
- How can you best respect physical boundaries in both friendships and romantic relationships?
Determining Your Personal Boundaries

For women struggling with self-love, it's important to take the time to identify and set your personal boundaries. By cultivating a better understanding of yourself, you can start to recognize situations in which your boundaries are being violated or crossed. This can help you make decisions that prioritize your mental and emotional health while navigating different aspects of life.

To get started, ask yourself the following questions:
- What do I need to stay safe mentally, emotionally, and physically?
- How do I feel when someone tries to control my actions or choices?
- Are there any environments or people who cause me harm?
- When do I feel most respected and valued?
- Who can I trust to respect my boundaries?
- What do I need to be happy and fulfilled?

Once you begin to identify your boundaries, it's important to communicate them clearly with others. This will help ensure that your boundaries are respected, and you don't have to worry about someone else crossing them. Additionally, remember that it's okay if some of your boundaries change over time - what works for you now may not work a few months or years down the line.

1. Here's a quiz that can help you decide which boundaries to prioritize as you begin this work: Which of the following scenarios resonates with you the most?
   a. Feeling physically uncomfortable or in pain due to someone else's actions.
   b. Feeling like your emotions are frequently invalidated or dismissed.
   c. Feeling pressure to engage in sexual activities that you're not comfortable with.
   d. Feeling like your ideas and opinions are frequently ignored or dismissed.
   e. Feeling like your possessions or resources are often borrowed or taken without your permission.
   f. Feeling like your time is frequently taken advantage of or not respected.

2. How do you usually react when someone violates your boundaries?
   a. You feel resentful and angry but don't confront them.
   b. You let it go but feel frustrated and powerless.
   c. You assert yourself and communicate your boundaries clearly.
   d. You avoid the person altogether.
   e. You feel guilty and apologize for having boundaries, especially when it comes to sexual boundaries.
   f. You struggle to react assertively in other situations.
3. What is your biggest fear when setting boundaries?
   a) Losing relationships with the people you care about.
   b) Being seen as selfish or rude.
   c) Not being able to enforce your boundaries.
   d) Making the situation worse.
   e) Feeling guilty or ashamed, especially when it comes to sexual boundaries.
   f) Other fears that prevent you from setting boundaries.

4. Which statement do you agree with the most?
   a) "It's better to keep the peace and avoid conflict."
   b) "I have a right to my boundaries, and I will assert them when needed."
   c) "I'm not sure what my boundaries are, but I know I need to figure them out."
   d) "I'm afraid of setting boundaries because it might change the dynamics of my relationships."
   e) "I feel guilty for having boundaries, and I often compromise them to please others, especially when it comes to sexual boundaries."
   f) None of the above.

5. Which type of boundary do you think you struggle with the most?
   a) Physical boundaries.
   b) Emotional boundaries.
   c) Sexual boundaries.
   d) Mental boundaries.
   e) Material boundaries.
   f) Time boundaries.

6. Which of the following scenarios would you find most challenging to set boundaries in?
   a) A coworker who physically invades your personal space or touches you inappropriately.
   b) A family member who frequently ignores your emotional needs or boundaries.
   c) A romantic partner who is controlling and manipulative, especially when it comes to sexual activities.
   d) A colleague who frequently dismisses your ideas and takes credit for your work.
   e) A social situation where you feel pressured to engage in sexual activities that make you uncomfortable.
   f) A friend who frequently borrows your possessions without asking or returns them in poor condition.

Key:
- If you chose mostly A's: prioritize working on physical boundaries.
- If you chose mostly B's: prioritize working on emotional boundaries.
- If you chose mostly C's: prioritize working on sexual boundaries.
- If you chose mostly D's: prioritize working on mental boundaries.
- If you chose mostly E's: prioritize working on material boundaries.
- If you chose mostly F's: prioritize working on time boundaries.
Setting and Communicating Boundaries

Setting boundaries is an important skill that can help you prioritize your needs and values in relationships, whether it be with controlling partners, family members, friends, or employers. However, it can be challenging to communicate your boundaries effectively without sounding insincere or repetitive. Here are some tips for setting boundaries that feel authentic and genuine:

**Be Clear and Direct:** When communicating your boundaries, it's essential to be clear and direct in your language. Avoid using passive language or making excuses for your needs, as this can come across as insincere or vague. Instead, be assertive and straightforward. For example, if your partner tries to control what you wear, say "I'm not comfortable with you dictating what I wear. I have the right to dress how I want." Other examples of clear and direct communication can include:

- "I need to leave work at 5 PM today. I have other commitments that I need to attend to."
- "I'd prefer to keep my personal life private. I'm not comfortable discussing it with you."
- "Please speak to me respectfully. I'm not comfortable with the way you're speaking to me."

**Stay Firm:** It's important to stay firm in your boundaries and communicate that your boundaries are not negotiable. Avoid apologizing for your boundaries, and remember that it's okay to enforce them. Use language that is confident and self-assured, while avoiding repetitive patterns that may sound insincere. For example, if your friend tries to pressure you into doing something you don't want to do, say "I appreciate your invitation, but I've made my decision. I need to prioritize my own needs and values."

Other examples of staying firm can include:

- "I'm sorry, but I won't be able to attend the event this weekend. I need to take some time for myself."
- "I've made my decision, and it's final. I can't keep compromising my values."
- "I understand that you may feel that way, but I need you to respect my boundaries. Can we find a way to work together that feels good for both of us?"

**Prepare for Pushback:** When setting boundaries, it's important to prepare for pushback from the person or people you're setting boundaries with. They may try to argue, manipulate, or intimidate you into changing your mind. Have a plan in place for how to respond to pushback, and remember that it's okay to enforce your boundaries, even if it means letting go of relationships that no longer serve you. Use language that is confident and assertive, while avoiding language patterns that may sound insincere. For example:

- "I hear that you're upset, but it's not okay to use guilt to manipulate me. I need to prioritize my own needs and values."
- "I appreciate your concern, but I've made my decision. I need you to respect my boundaries and support me."
- "I understand that you may not agree with my decision, but it's important to me. Can we find a way to work together that respects my boundaries?"

In conclusion, setting and enforcing boundaries is a crucial skill that can help you build healthier relationships and live a life that aligns with your values. By communicating your boundaries clearly and directly, staying firm, and preparing for pushback, you can set and enforce boundaries that honor your needs and values. Remember to trust yourself, prioritize your well-being, and start setting those boundaries today.
Maintaining and Adjusting Boundaries

While establishing boundaries is vital, it is equally important to maintain and adjust them as necessary, especially if you tend to people-please or are in an emotionally abusive relationship. In this section, I'll provide tips on how to maintain and adjust your boundaries assertively and effectively here:

It's important to remember that nobody has the right to access to you. Your time, energy, and emotional labor are valuable and should be respected. Here are some tips on how to maintain and adjust your boundaries with confidence and self-respect:

**Sitting in the Awkwardness:** Setting boundaries can be difficult, and it's not uncommon to feel awkward or uncomfortable at first. However, sitting in this discomfort is essential to building healthy relationships that honor your needs and values. Here are some tips on how to sit in the awkwardness and know that it will be worth it:

1. **Remind yourself of your worth** and the importance of your needs and values. You deserve to have relationships that support and respect you.
2. **Practice self-compassion.** It's okay to make mistakes, and it's okay to struggle. Remember that you're doing the best you can in this moment.
3. **Lean on supportive friends** and family members who can offer you encouragement and validation. You don't have to go through this process alone.

**Maintaining Your Boundaries:** Maintaining your boundaries requires consistency and assertiveness. If someone crosses your boundaries, calmly and firmly communicate that their behavior is not acceptable. Remember, you have the right to define what is and isn't acceptable in your relationships. If the person persists in disregarding your boundaries, it's okay to enforce consequences, such as ending the relationship. Here are some specific examples of how to maintain your boundaries:

- "I've already made plans for that day, and I won't be able to change them to accommodate your request."
- "I'm not comfortable with you speaking to me in that tone. If you continue, I'll need to end this conversation."
- "I don't feel comfortable with that activity. It isn't something I'd like to do, and I won't be participating."

**Adjusting Your Boundaries:** Your boundaries may shift as you grow and evolve in your relationships. Be open to adjusting them as necessary, and communicate these changes clearly and confidently to the people in your life. Here are some more specific examples of how to adjust your boundaries assertively:

- "I've realized that I need more time to focus on my career goals. Going forward, I'll be setting aside more time for work-related activities."
- "I'm not comfortable with you showing up unannounced. Can you please call or text me beforehand?"
- "I need to establish a new boundary around my phone usage. Going forward, I won't be available for non-emergency calls or messages after 9 pm."
Prioritize Self-Care: Maintaining and adjusting your boundaries can be emotionally taxing, particularly if you're in an emotionally abusive relationship. It's essential to prioritize self-care, whether that means setting aside time for relaxation and self-reflection or seeking professional support. Remember, it's okay to seek help when you need it. Here are some examples of self-care practices:

- Taking a relaxing bath or going for a walk
- Journaling your thoughts and feelings
- Seeking counseling or therapy

Healthy boundaries are key to respecting yourself and having your needs heard by the people in your life. Remember that you have the right to draw lines around what is and isn't acceptable in your relationships, and it's okay to stand firm on these boundaries. With patience and practice, you can cultivate relationships that are grounded in mutual respect and understanding. You deserve to be treated with kindness and care, so don't forget to prioritize self-care as you navigate this process.