

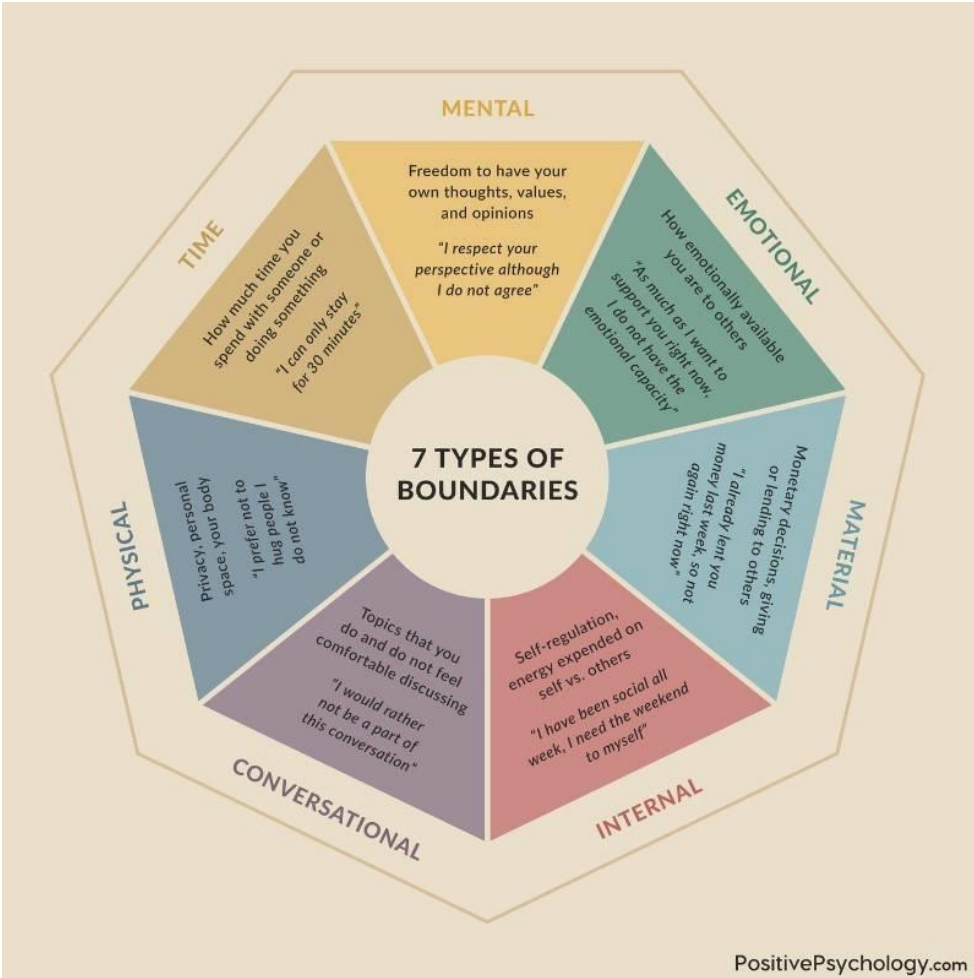
**DBT Aftercare Topic**

# Setting Healthy Boundaries & Building Positive Relationships

Let's define boundaries. Put simply:

*"A boundary is a limit or edge that defines you as separate from others"*  
 (Katherine, 2010, p. 14).

Setting healthy boundaries also requires an awareness of different boundaries involved in relationships, as illustrated in our '7 Types of Boundaries' diagram below.



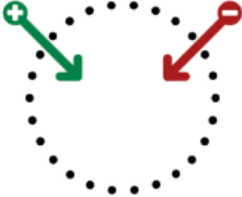
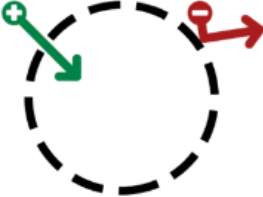
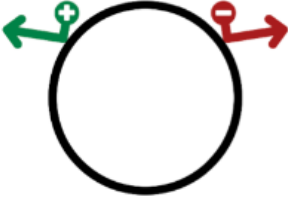
When we don't maintain healthy emotional boundaries with others, we may feel resentful, guilty, and drained.

As in the 7 Types of Boundaries diagram above, it is perfectly OK to state your limitations to people who make demands of your emotional resources. If they push back against your boundaries or continue to violate them, then this shows your relationship may be off balance, problematic, or even toxic.

If so, then restate your boundary and withdraw calmly. There is no need to over-explain yourself or apologize for setting boundaries, as everyone may say what they do and do not want to do.

## Boundary Styles

Boundaries define what is acceptable, and what is not, in a relationship. It is possible to have different boundary types in different relationships.

 <p><b>Porous Boundaries</b></p>	 <p><b>Healthy Boundaries</b></p>	 <p><b>Rigid Boundaries</b></p>
Lets almost anyone get close to them	Selective about whom to let in and keep out	Keeps most people at a distance
Overly trusting of others, even strangers	Takes time to build trust with others	Very untrusting of others
Overshares personal information	Shares personal information appropriately	Very guarded with personal information
Has difficulty saying "no" to others	Able to say "no" when needed	Says "no" to others most of the time
Overly involved in others' problems	Supports others without being too involved	Detached from others' problems
Quick to adopt others' opinions	Values both own and others' opinions	Tends to ignore others' opinions
Avoids conflict by giving in to others	Accepts conflict as a normal part of life	Avoids conflict by pushing others away
Does not assert personal values	Stands by personal values, but can adapt	Has inflexible personal values
Communicates passively	Communicates assertively	Communicates aggressively

## How to Set Personal Boundaries



### DEFINE

Identify desired  
boundary



### COMMUNICATE

Say what  
you need



### STAY SIMPLE

Don't  
overexplain



### SET CONSEQUENCES

Say why it's  
important



When we are dealing with people who repeatedly cross or violate our personal boundaries, then the whole nature of the relationship may need to change. This can be tricky when the relationship is with somebody we cannot escape, such as co-workers and family members.

In the TED Talk below, Shasta Nelson describes the three requirements for healthy friendships that she calls 'frientimacy' as:

- Positivity
- Consistency
- Vulnerability

<https://youtu.be/hmJyWreER7A> (stop at 7:15)

Setting boundaries and maintaining them with friends requires mutual trust and respect. Refer to our seven types of boundaries diagram above to consider your boundaries in friendships.

Boundary setting with friends who have crossed or violated them can be difficult, and you may experience pushback. If so, reassert the boundary again and be prepared to take a break from them by ignoring messages and calls for a while if the pushback continues.

# Setting Boundaries



**Personal boundaries** are the limits and rules we set for ourselves within relationships. A person with healthy boundaries can say “no” to others when they want to, but they are also comfortable opening themselves up to intimacy and close relationships.

## Know Your Boundaries

Boundaries should be based on your values, or the things that are important to you. For example, if you value spending time with family, set firm boundaries about working late.

Your boundaries are yours, and yours alone. Many of your boundaries might align with those who are close to you, but others will be unique.

Know your boundaries *before* entering a situation. This will make it less likely you’ll do something you’re not comfortable with.

## What to Say

You always have the right to say “no”. When doing so, express yourself clearly and without ambiguity so there is no doubt about what you want.

“I’m not comfortable with this”

“Please don’t do that”

“Not at this time”

“I can’t do that for you”

“This doesn’t work for me”

“I’ve decided not to”

“This is not acceptable”

“I’m drawing the line at \_\_\_”

“I don’t want to do that”

## What to Do

### Use Confident Body Language

Face the other person, make eye contact, and use a steady tone of voice at an appropriate volume (not too quiet, and not too loud).

### Be Respectful

Avoid yelling, using put-downs, or giving the silent treatment. It’s okay to be firm, but your message will be better received if you are respectful.

### Plan Ahead

Think about what you want to say, and how you will say it, before entering a difficult discussion. This can help you feel more confident about your position.

### Compromise

When appropriate, listen and consider the needs of the other person. You never *have* to compromise, but give-and-take is part of any healthy relationship.

Now let's practice:

## Setting Boundaries

**Instructions:** Respond to the following practice questions as if you were really in each situation. Think about the language you would use to firmly state your boundary.

### ✓ Examples

**Situation:** You notice your roommate has been eating your food in the fridge. You never discussed plans to share food, and don't want them eating what you bought.

**Response:** "I'd like to keep our food separate. If there's something of mine that you want, please ask me before taking it."

**Situation:** Your friend calls you at 11 pm to discuss issues she is having with her boyfriend. You need to wake up at 6 am.

**Response:** "I can tell you're upset. I want to talk to you, but I need to go to bed. Maybe we can talk tomorrow afternoon."

### 🎯 Practice

**Situation:** You invited a friend over for the evening, but now it's getting late. You would like to get ready for bed, but your friend seems unaware of how late it is.

**Response:**

**Situation:** A good friend asks you out on a date. You are not interested in being more than friends. You would like to let them down clearly, but gently.

**Response:**

Setting healthy boundaries is an essential life skill and an important self-care practice. Healthy boundaries create healthy relationships.

Information pulled from the article below:

<https://positivepsychology.com/great-self-care-setting-healthy-boundaries/>

# 15 Ways to Rebuild a Broken Relationship

Despite what people tell you, burning bridges is a great way to keep pace in the rat race – dancing in the flames of a burnt bridge is great motivation to work faster and keep pushing forward. Unfortunately, sometimes you have to go back and rebuild a broken bridge for the sake of the better good. Here are a few ways to rebuild a broken relationship.

## **1. Initiate a Friendly and Polite Dialogue.**

When you initiate a conversation, a simple “Hi” or quick invite is enough. Just the fact that you sent them a message may be enough, but, depending on how they’ve blocked you, you may need to also mention who you are. This is all that needs to be said, and do not say anything else (or send more than one total message) until he or she responds, or you will come off as annoying.

## **2. Be Clear About Your Intentions.**

Once there’s a dialogue open, utilize it for what it’s worth; be open, up front, and honest about what you want. This will signal to the other party that you respect him or her and help rebuild the trust that was previously broken. Never expect anyone to read your mind, because the fact of the matter is, nobody can, no matter how much you focus on transmitting thoughts.

## **3. Love is All You Need.**

The reason you’re rebuilding a broken relationship is because you either need something or care about the person. Even if you need something, focus on the other person, not what you want. If you show that you care about him or her, he or she will be more receptive to helping you.

## **4. Build a Bridge, and Get Over It.**

Drop whatever issues you used to have in the past – it’s not the past anymore. You can discuss the issues you had in your previous attempt at a relationship, but dwelling will only make things worse. Bridge the gap between the two of you, and get over your rift with a quickness.

## **5. Be Honest (In a Nice Way).**

Always be honest, even when you disagree. Deceit may not have broken your relationship, but it’s certainly not going to fix it. Just make sure you’re neither defensive nor offensive, and if you can’t keep it civil, shut up.

## **6. Brainstorming**

Involve the other person in your attempts to rebuild your relationship. If he or she is talking, he or she is at least interested in hearing what you have to say, put the onus on them and ask for their contribution.

### **7. Release Control.**

Always remember to detach yourself from the results in life. If you put all your eggs into this person's basket, his or her rejection will shatter you. Instead, define yourself and how you react, but don't expect your ideal result.

### **8. Apologize.**

There are few conflicts in life that can't be resolved with an apology. At the very least, it'll give you an opportunity to forgive yourself and move on, even if the other party isn't interested.

### **9. Take Responsibility.**

Always accept responsibility, even if you don't believe you were at fault. The other person clearly believes you are, and accepting responsibility will help you bridge the gap between your perceptions.

### **10. Avoid Pushing Buttons.**

Remember that both you and the other party have animosity toward each other (or at least used to). You know there are certain triggers that get to that person – be an adult and avoid pushing those buttons, no matter how badly you're tempted.

### **11. Think Positive.**

It's always a good idea to think positive in life. Even if things don't work out, you can think positively about the next experience. Keep looking forward, and you'll exude confidence, which is attractive to other people. This will draw the other person to wonder why he or she doesn't have a relationship with you.

### **12. Be Genuine.**

Always be the real you, no matter what happens. You'd rather fail your way than succeed as someone else. Don't bother pretending to be what the other person wants – it's not a competition, and you'd be surprised at how much honesty will open doors for you in life.

### **13. Enforce Your Boundaries.**

You have personal boundaries, and you're going out of your way to not overstep other peoples' boundaries so you deserve respect as well. Be sure to politely and gently remind the other person whenever they've overstepped a boundary you established. But be sure it's one you've both acknowledged exists so you're not falsely accusing anyone of crossing a line he or she didn't know was there.

### **14. Keep Steering the Conversation.**

No matter where the conversation goes, try to keep it moving toward your goals. If the conversation is going well, invite the other party to another conversation or meeting in the

future. Otherwise, ask him or her for whatever it was you contacted him or her for in the first place.

### **15. Sometimes You Have to Let Go.**

Despite your best intentions, there's a chance the other person simply doesn't want to reconnect. If he or she doesn't respond or seem aggressive, forget about it. There are billions of people in the world, and there's absolutely no reason to waste your time on one who doesn't like you.

Rebuilding a broken relationship is difficult – both parties have to face the animosity and distrust that drove you apart in the first place. If you're looking to rebuild a broken relationship from your past, reconnect with the person through text, email, or online. If he or she responds, there may be interest. If not, you have the closure you need to move on.

Information pulled from the article below:

<https://www.lifehack.org/articles/communication/15-ways-rebuild-broken-relationship.html>