



HEALTHY BOUNDARIES WITH PARENTS

AN ASSERTIVE COMMUNICATION TOOLKIT FOR ADULT CHILDREN

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A BOUNDARY DESCRIBES YOUR ACTIONS

- A boundary identifies what you will share, allow, do, or stop doing. It is not a punishment and does not require the other person to agree.
- You can appreciate a parent's concern without giving unlimited access to your private life.
- Adulthood includes the right to make decisions, learn, recover, change direction, and ask for help on your own terms.



CHOOSE WHAT IS PRIVATE

- Consider calls and texts, visits, location, money, treatment information, recovery updates, parenting, relationships, work, legal matters, health, disability, faith or spirituality, identity, and social media.
- Ask: What am I comfortable sharing? With whom? For what purpose? For how long?



ASSERTIVE SCRIPTS

- "I know you care. Please ask before giving advice."
- "I will share what I am comfortable sharing."
- "I am handling this with the supports I chose. I will ask if I want additional help."
- "If I do not answer right away, I will respond when I can."



CULTURE AND FAMILY EXPECTATIONS

- Some families value close involvement, collective decision-making, or strong obligations across generations.
- You can honor cultural or family values while still discussing privacy, consent, capacity, and respectful limits.
- A healthy boundary does not require rejecting your culture, family, faith, or community.



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WHEN GUILT SHOWS UP

- Setting a limit can feel uncomfortable, especially when family, culture, religion, caregiving expectations, finances, disability, or recovery shape the relationship.
- Discomfort is not automatic proof that the boundary is wrong.
- Ask whether the limit protects dignity, safety, recovery, functioning, or the relationship itself.



IF THE BOUNDARY IS IGNORED

- Repeat the boundary briefly rather than arguing it endlessly.
- Choose an action you control: end the call, change the subject, leave, reduce information shared, change privacy settings, or delay responding.
- Use consequences for protection and clarity - not humiliation or revenge.



WHEN DIRECT COMMUNICATION IS UNSAFE

- If a parent or family member is abusive, stalking, threatening, coercive, financially controlling, or likely to retaliate, you do not owe a face-to-face confrontation.
- Safer options may include written communication, less contact, a third party, privacy changes, documentation, advocacy, or professional/legal support.



BUILD YOUR STATEMENT

- "When ___ happens, I will ___."
- "I am willing to ___; I am not willing to ___."
- "If this continues, I will ___."
- Who can support me while I practice this boundary without taking over for me?