



FINDING YOUR *Way Home*

A Practical Guide to Boundaries

Understanding Them. Setting Them. Holding Them.

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WELCOME

Hello, Love.

This guide is for you if you have ever said yes when every part of you was screaming no. If you have given until you were empty and called it love. If you have put everyone else first and quietly wondered whether your own needs were even allowed to exist.

You are not alone in this. And you are not broken.

What you are is someone whose nervous system learned early that having limits was dangerous. That saying no might cost you love, safety, or belonging. That your worth was measured by how much you could give — and that giving less meant you were less.

That learning made complete sense at the time. It kept you safe. It helped you survive. And it has been running your life from the background ever since.

This guide is not about fixing you. It is about giving you the language, the tools, and the permission to begin returning to yourself. Boundaries are not walls. They are the architecture of a life that is actually yours.

A boundary is not a punishment for someone else. It is an act of self-respect for yourself. The two things are not the same — even though every nervous system that learned to survive through people-pleasing will insist that they are.

Take what resonates. Leave what doesn't. And if you find yourself reading these pages and thinking *I know this but I still can't do it* — that is exactly the gap this guide is designed to address. And exactly the gap the work I do goes beneath.

See you on the inside, love. — Alyssa

SECTION ONE

What a Boundary Actually Is

Most people come to the topic of boundaries believing they know what one is — and most of those people are only half right.

What a boundary is not:

- A boundary is not a wall. It does not mean shutting people out or becoming cold.
- A boundary is not an ultimatum or a punishment.
- A boundary is not selfish. This one needs its own paragraph.

What a boundary is:

A boundary is a clear expression of what you need, what you will and will not accept, and how you intend to respond if that line is crossed. It is not about controlling another person's behavior — it is about deciding what *you* will do.

The simplest definition: a boundary is the line between where you end and where someone else begins. Without it, there is no you in the relationship. Just a person endlessly adapting to survive it.

There are several kinds of boundaries:

- **Emotional** — what emotional weight you will carry for others versus what is theirs to hold
- **Physical** — your personal space, your body, your physical environment
- **Time** — how you spend your time and energy and what you protect it from
- **Mental** — your right to your own thoughts, opinions, and beliefs
- **Internal** — the boundaries you set with *yourself*: honoring your own no before you can voice it to anyone else

That last one — internal boundaries — is where most boundary work begins and where it most often gets skipped. If you cannot hear your own no internally, you will not be able to speak it externally. We will come back to this.

SECTION TWO

Why You Struggle to Hold Them — The Root Cause Lens

Understanding intellectually that you need boundaries and actually being able to hold them are two entirely different things. If knowledge were enough, you would already have the boundaries you need. So why don't you?

Because the inability to hold boundaries is not a personality flaw or a lack of willpower. It is a nervous system response — and it was installed long before you had any say in the matter.

Somewhere early in your life, you received a message — explicitly or implicitly — that your needs were too much, your feelings were inconvenient, or that love and belonging were conditional on your compliance. Your brain, doing exactly what brains do, created a survival strategy: *make yourself agreeable. Give more. Ask for less. Keep the peace at any cost.*

That strategy kept you safe. And it has been running on autopilot ever since.

The Guilt, Shame, and Responsibility Tangle

When people try to set boundaries and fail, three emotional states are usually getting in the way — and they are easy to confuse:

- **Responsibility** — the feeling that something is genuinely yours to address or repair.
- **Guilt** — the feeling that you have done something wrong.
- **Shame** — the feeling that you *are* something wrong.

Researcher Brené Brown's decades of work on shame draws a critical distinction: guilt is about behavior — it says I did something bad, and can motivate repair and growth. Shame is about identity — it says I am bad, and is one of the most corrosive forces in human psychology. Boundaries consistently trigger shame in people who were taught early that their needs were a burden.

Here is what this looks like in practice: you set a boundary. Someone reacts badly. Immediately, a voice inside says *see — you're selfish. You're too much. You're a bad person for doing this.* That voice is not the truth. That is shame — installed early, running automatically, and completely indistinguishable from your own thoughts until you know what you're looking for.

The work is not just learning to set boundaries. It is learning to recognize the shame response when it floods in — and to not let it be the deciding vote.

Internal Boundaries First

Before we talk about what to say to other people, we need to talk about what you say to yourself.

An internal boundary is the decision you make with yourself — before anyone else is involved. It is the moment you hear your own no before you override it. It is the pause between feeling something and performing the opposite of that feeling for someone else's comfort.

For people who have spent years self-abandoning, the internal no has often gone completely quiet. Not because it isn't there. Because it has been consistently overridden until the volume was turned all the way down.

How to Begin Hearing Your Own No Again

1. Notice the body first.

Your nervous system knows before your mind does. A tightening in the chest. A sinking in the stomach. A subtle resistance that you have learned to talk yourself out of. Start by noticing that sensation without immediately moving to override it. Ask: what is my body saying right now?

2. Name the feeling before you respond.

Before you answer a request, pause. Even five seconds. Ask: *do I actually want to do this, or am I doing it because I am afraid of what happens if I don't?* You don't have to act on the answer yet. Just hear it.

3. Practice with small things first.

Internal boundaries are built in small moments. Ordering what you actually want. Leaving a conversation when you are done rather than when they are done. Saying "I need to think about that" instead of an automatic yes. These small acts of self-allegiance build the muscle.

4. Recognize self-abandonment as it happens.

Self-abandonment is the act of leaving yourself to keep someone else comfortable — silencing your feelings, overriding your instincts, minimizing your needs. Every time you do this, you send your nervous system the message that your needs are not safe to have. The boundary work begins with stopping that message.

You cannot consistently hold a boundary with someone else if you are not holding one with yourself first. The external no is only as strong as the internal yes to your own needs.

SECTION FOUR

What Your Body Is Telling You When You Hold One

No one tells you that holding a boundary feels terrible — especially at first. They tell you to "just set the boundary," as if the knowing is the hard part. The hard part is what happens in your body when you do.

When you hold a boundary for the first time, your nervous system responds as if you are in danger. Because for a very long time, you were. Saying no, taking up space, having needs — these things genuinely carried risk in the environment where your nervous system was formed.

What you might feel when you hold a boundary:

- A flood of anxiety, guilt, or dread
- A compulsive urge to take it back, soften it, or over-explain
- Physical symptoms: racing heart, tight chest, shallow breathing, nausea
- An overwhelming sense that you are being selfish or unkind
- Shame — the voice that says *see, this is why you shouldn't have said anything*

This is not a sign that you did something wrong. This is your nervous system doing exactly what it was trained to do. The goal is not to make the discomfort disappear before you act. The goal is to act while the discomfort is present — and let your body learn, over time, that you survived.

What helps in the moment:

Ground yourself physically. Both feet on the floor. Three slow breaths. Feel the weight of your body. You are here. You are safe.

Name what is happening. *"This is my nervous system responding. This is old. This is not about right now."* Naming it creates just enough distance to stay in your decision.

Do not confuse discomfort with wrongness. Doing something new and hard will feel wrong. That feeling is not information about your boundary. It is information about how long you have been without one.

Resist the urge to over-explain immediately. You do not owe anyone a dissertation on why you have a need. A clear, kind statement is enough.

SECTION FIVE

How to Communicate a Boundary — The Scripts

The following scripts are real-world language you can use across the situations most likely to challenge your limits. They are designed to be clear, kind, and complete — without over-explaining, apologizing, or giving away your authority.

State it simply. State it once. State it without an apology. Then stop talking. The silence after a boundary is not awkward — it is the sound of you holding it.

01 — HIGH-PRESSURE WORK ENVIRONMENT

"I'm not able to take that on right now. My current workload is at capacity. Let's talk about timeline or what could come off my plate first."

Why this works: Direct without being emotional. It names the reality, acknowledges the request, and offers a professional path forward without apology.

If they push: "I understand this feels urgent. Taking on more without adjusting something else will compromise everything I'm currently responsible for. I want to do good work — that's why I'm being clear with you about this."

02 — CONTROLLING OR CRITICAL SIGNIFICANT OTHER

"When you speak to me that way, I shut down and nothing gets resolved. I'm willing to have this conversation, and I need us to slow down first."

Why this works: Names your experience without blaming. Signals willingness to engage while holding a clear line about how. Does not escalate — it pauses.

If they push: "I'm not able to continue this conversation right now. I'm going to take some space and come back when we can talk to each other respectfully."

03 — HIGH-NEED FAMILY MEMBER OR FRIEND

"I love you and I'm not able to be the only person holding this with you. I'm here for you — and I also have to take care of myself. What support can you get in addition to me?"

Why this works: Names the love first, which reduces defensiveness. Honest about limitation without abandonment. Redirects toward expanding the support system.

If they push: "I hear that you're struggling. My capacity is real, not a rejection of you. I can't pour from an empty cup — not for you or for anyone."

04 — HIGH-NEED CHILDREN OR PARENTING DYNAMICS

"I hear you. I'm not able to respond to that right now. I need five minutes and then I'm all yours."

Why this works: Models that adults have needs too — healthy parenting, not abandonment. Teaches children that their needs will be met and that a brief wait is survivable.

If they push: For older children: "I understand you're frustrated. My answer is still no. I'm not going to explain it again, and I love you very much."

05 — WHEN SOMEONE KEEPS PUSHING AFTER A CLEAR NO

"I already answered that. My answer hasn't changed."

Why this works: The most important script in this guide. When someone pushes after a clear no, the instinct is to re-explain, justify, or cave. This does none of those things. It is complete as written.

If they push: If they continue: silence, or simply: "I'm done discussing this." You do not owe anyone a new reason every time they push.

SECTION SIX

The Pushback Phase — Why It Gets Harder Before It Gets Easier

Here is something no one warns you about when you start setting boundaries: it is going to get harder before it gets easier.

When you change the rules of a relationship — when you start saying no where you used to say yes — the people around you do not immediately think *how wonderful, she is finally taking care of herself*. They think: *something is wrong. How do I get things back to normal?*

And they push. Harder than before.

This is called an extinction burst — a behavioral term for what happens when a previously rewarded behavior (getting you to say yes) stops being rewarded. The immediate response is to try harder, escalate, increase the pressure. It is not personal. It is predictable. And it is temporary.

What the pushback can look like:

- Guilt-tripping: *"I can't believe you're doing this to me"*
- Escalation: louder, more emotional, more persistent
- Minimizing: *"You're being so sensitive"* or *"It's not a big deal"*
- Silent treatment or withdrawal of affection
- Enlisting others — bringing in family or mutual friends to apply pressure
- Bargaining: offering something in exchange for you going back on your limit

The pushback is not evidence that you were wrong to set the boundary. It is evidence that the boundary is working — that something is changing in a dynamic that had been operating at your expense.

What you need to know about the arc: the pushback peaks and then, if you hold, it diminishes. The person either adjusts to the new dynamic, or reveals that the relationship was contingent on your unlimited availability. Both outcomes, as painful as the second one is, are information you needed.

Most people cave during the pushback phase not because they stopped believing in their boundary, but because the discomfort felt unsurvivable. It is survivable. And the other side of it is a relationship based on something real.

Coping Skills for Holding the Line — And the Repair Protocol

Knowing what a boundary is and why you need it is only part of the work. The other part is the daily practice of holding it — especially when your nervous system is flooding, someone you love is upset with you, and every part of you wants to make the discomfort stop.

Five Coping Skills for the Hard Moments

- 1. The Pause and Name.** Before responding to pressure, pause. Name internally: "This is the pushback. This is expected. I don't have to respond right now." You are allowed to say "I need some time before I respond to this." That sentence is itself a boundary.
- 2. The Regulated Breath.** When shame and anxiety flood in, your thinking brain goes partially offline. A slow exhale — longer than the inhale — signals your nervous system that you are safe. Four counts in, six counts out. Repeat three times. Not a cure — enough to stay in your decision for the next sixty seconds.
- 3. The Evidence Check.** Shame tells you your boundary is wrong, selfish, or unkind. When that voice gets loud, ask: *Is this true? What is the actual evidence?* Often the only evidence is that someone is unhappy with you — which is not the same as you having done something wrong.
- 4. The Written Record.** Before a difficult conversation, write down what you need to say in one or two sentences. Having it written anchors you when the emotion rises and the urge to over-explain or backpedal kicks in.
- 5. The Trusted Witness.** Have one person — a friend, a therapist, a coach — who knows what you are working on and can reflect reality back to you when you lose perspective. Shame wants you alone with it.

When You Drop It — The Repair Protocol

You will sometimes cave. This is not failure. This is learning.

Do not catastrophize. One boundary dropped does not erase the work. The pattern is not a single moment — it is a direction.

Notice, don't punish. Ask: *What happened? What feeling was loudest when I gave in?* This is information, not evidence that you are hopeless.

Re-set without drama. "I said yes the other day and I've been sitting with it. I'm changing my answer to no." This is allowed.

Practice self-compassion as a non-negotiable. The same compassion you extend to others when they struggle is owed to yourself. Not as a luxury — as a practice.

SECTION EIGHT

A Self-Assessment & What's Possible From Here

Signs You May Need Stronger Boundaries in an Area of Your Life

Check any that resonate:

- You regularly feel resentful, exhausted, or taken for granted after interacting with this person or environment
- You say yes automatically without checking in with what you actually want or have capacity for
- You feel responsible for managing other people's emotional states or reactions
- You find yourself dreading interactions because of how they might respond
- You give until you are empty and then feel guilty for having nothing left
- You have said no and then talked yourself out of it because of their reaction
- You feel like your needs are a burden or inconvenience to the people around you
- You recognize the pushback pattern — things get harder when you try to hold a limit

If you checked more than three of these, the issue is not that you don't know what boundaries are. Something much deeper is making them feel unsafe. That is root-cause work — and it is exactly what I do.

What's Possible From Here

This guide is an introduction. It gives you the language, the framework, and the awareness to begin. But if you have found yourself nodding through these pages and still feeling the weight of the thing underneath — that weight has a root. And the root can be cleared.

Below are the ways you can continue this work with me — wherever you are in your journey.

WAYS TO WORK WITH ME

Ways to Work With Me

Prices are not listed here intentionally. Every woman's next step is personal. Reach out and we'll find what fits.

COMPLIMENTARY

The Seed Sessions

A free guided meditative audio series working through five core beliefs — all rooted in the single belief at the center of nearly every pattern I have seen across 250+ clients: I am not enough. This is where the work begins, and it costs you nothing to start.

SELF-PACED AUDIO SERIES

The Becoming

A deeper, more immersive meditative audio series that unlocks 35+ core beliefs and trapped emotions while anchoring in new affirmative beliefs through somatic integration. Designed for the woman who is exploring, testing the waters, or simply not ready for group or one-on-one work yet.

SMALL GROUP CONTAINER • LIVE VIRTUAL • UP TO 20 WOMEN

The Becoming: Full Circle

A sacred, capped container of up to 20 women meeting virtually for one hour each week — minimum three-month commitment. We go beneath what The Becoming scratches the surface of: unconscious reprogramming, somatic release, breathwork, somatic integration, and the power of community doing this work together.

SELF-PACED COURSE

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SELF-PACED COURSE

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A more comprehensive nervous system regulation course focused on finding your center regardless of what is happening around you. Built for sustainable, lasting regulation — not just crisis management. Purchase once and take it at your own pace.

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Three to six months of deep, personalized one-on-one work circling around one specific issue to clear it from the root. Using NLP, Time Technique, somatics, and Human Design — customized entirely to you and your nervous system. This is high-touch, precision work.

Ready to explore what's next?

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