

THE BOUNDARY BREAKTHROUGH FOR PROFESSIONALS AND ENTREPRENEURS



10 Key Strategies for Setting Boundaries
with Narcissistic And Toxic People Plus
Calming Techniques to Stay in Control

By Dr Paulette Ogun



Welcome!

Dr Paulette Ogun | Empowerment & Success Coach

Dr Paulette Ogun enables professionals and entrepreneurs to break free and heal from the emotional weight of toxic or highly stressful workplaces and relationships —so that they can reclaim their power and thrive in their desired lifestyle, career and business.

Her clients come to her feeling undermined, micromanaged, or emotionally drained—whether by toxic or very stressful work environments, unsupportive bosses, or toxic and controlling family dynamics. Many have spent years questioning their worth, second-guessing their abilities, and holding back from the promotions, business ventures, or personal success they long for.

Through her powerful blend of EMDR Therapy, Wellbeing & Stress Management Coaching, and deep psychological expertise, Dr. Paulette has helped clients:

- ✓ Escape toxic or stressful work environments and land fulfilling leadership roles.
- ✓ Rebuild their confidence and step into new careers or entrepreneurial success.
- ✓ Understand and heal emotional triggers like anxiety, anger, or self-sabotaging habits.
- ✓ Set boundaries and reclaim their autonomy in both personal and professional life.

Dr. Paulette (Empowerment & Success Coach) – is a qualified EMDR Trauma Therapist, Certified Wellbeing & Stress Management Coach, and Chartered Educational Psychologist—bringing over 22 years of experience in helping people break through toxic, stressful barriers and create thriving, fulfilling lives.



WHAT ARE BOUNDARIES AND WHY DO WE NEED THEM

Boundaries are made by you for you. They are related to you understanding what is good for you and what is not good for you, and ensuring that you keep out what is not good for you.

In other words, boundaries are about self-care and how you allow yourself to be treated by others. They act as personal limits to protect your mental, emotional and physical health.

Setting boundaries is an act of empowerment because when you establish clear limits, you foster self-respect and self awareness. You are indicating to yourself and others that your needs and feelings matter.

Setting boundaries provide a space where you can thrive!



RECOGNIZE THE NARCISSISTIC OR TOXIC PATTERNS & HOW THEY MAKE YOU FEEL

ONE

The first step in dealing with Narcissists and toxic people, whether in your personal life or at work, is to recognise their toxic patterns. They often manipulate, gaslight, and deflect responsibility. Undermining you and being overly critical is also common.

Emotional Symptoms

It is important to notice how they make you feel. If you feel negative emotions due to their behaviour towards you, this is a sure sign that you need to put effective self-protective boundaries in place. Some examples of the negative emotions you may feel are – anxiety or fear; depression; resentment (for being used and abused); helplessness; feeling emotionally drained; anger (e.g. for being unfairly blamed/criticised or lied about); confusion and insecurity (from being gaslit); feeling alone or trapped; low confidence, low self-esteem and feeling worthless.

Physical Symptoms

Interacting with Narcissistic and toxic people can lead to physical symptoms like headaches, stomachaches, muscle tension and sleep disturbances, due to the .

constant stress and anxiety they induce. The physical symptoms can lead to long-term physical health problems, due to the mind-body connection, which has been confirmed by much research.

Understanding all the above things helps you avoid engaging in the psychological games that Narcissistic and toxic people play and sets you up to both know where you need to have boundaries and know that you need to protect those boundaries.



HOW TO EFFECTIVELY ENFORCE YOUR BOUNDARIES

TWO

Detach Emotionally – Don't Take the Bait

Narcissists and Toxic people thrive on emotional reactions. Whether it's a critical family member or a manipulative colleague, resist the urge to react emotionally.

Calming Technique:

Stay calm and detached by using deep breathing.

Deep Breathing: Inhale deeply for 4 seconds, hold for 4, and exhale for 4. Repeat this cycle to stay grounded and calm under pressure.

THREE

Be Direct and Assertive – Using "I" Statements in a calm manner

When dealing with narcissistic and toxic people, subtle hints don't work. Be clear and assertive about your boundaries. For example: –

Personal: "I'm not comfortable discussing this topic. Let's talk about something else."

Work: "I'm unable to take on this extra task as it's outside my role."

Being direct prevents you from being

manipulated or guilted into actions you don't want to take.

It is also best to use "I" Statements because:

- They **express your needs without blaming others**, reducing defensiveness.
- They **shift focus to what you require** rather than engaging in toxic patterns.
- They help **set clear, firm boundaries** while keeping the conversation calm, and if you are at work, professional.

A useful phrase to use, when unsure of how to respond to demands by a Narcissistic or toxic person is:

"I need to think about it".

Then take at least 24 hours before deciding. This is especially useful when caught off guard by someone. It's also really useful when dealing with emails /situations that create an emotional charge in you.

More examples of "I" boundary setting statements:

"I need to maintain a positive space in my life. I'm not comfortable discussing this, and I'd rather focus on more uplifting topics."



Pro Tip:

If someone pushes back, **repeat your boundary without justifying or over-explaining:**

"I understand that's how you feel, but I need to stick to what works best for me."

Toxic person: "You never make time for me anymore. After everything I've done for you, I can't believe you're being so selfish."

Your boundary: "I understand that you're upset, but I am prioritising my well-being. I'm not available for guilt-tripping."

Toxic person: Work colleague who keeps asking for a "minute" of your time for some help but ends up taking much longer – on a regular basis.

Your boundary: "I appreciate your trust in my expertise and I'm glad to help when I can. However, I have my own deadlines to meet and need to stay focused for an extended period of time each day. Could we schedule a time to discuss these projects?"

Toxic person: Manager who keeps dumping more work on you – well outside of your capacity.

Your boundary: "I appreciate your trust in my abilities but my current workload is at capacity. Could we prioritise tasks or perhaps discuss a longer timeline that accommodates this."

Calming Technique:

Mantra Repetition: When asserting your boundaries, silently repeat a calming mantra like, **"I am in control, and I deserve respect."** This keeps your focus on your right to boundaries without getting caught up in their reaction.

FOUR Limit Information Sharing

Narcissists and toxic people often use personal information as ammunition. Be mindful of what you share. Keep conversations neutral and avoid discussing sensitive topics. This applies to both personal and professional settings.



Calming Technique:

Grounding Exercise: If the conversation starts to feel tense, mentally shift your attention to your surroundings. Pick five things you can see, four things you can feel, three things you can hear, two things you can smell (or like the smell of), one thing you can taste. This helps you stay present and calm, preventing you from getting sucked into their manipulation.

FIVE

Set Time Boundaries

Protect your time by limiting how long you engage with Narcissistic or toxic individuals. Whether it's a family member or coworker, keep conversations brief. Set clear start and end times for meetings. Exit social situations once they start draining your energy.

Calming Technique:

Progressive Muscle Relaxation: If you feel tension building, quietly tense then release your muscles one group at a time (shoulders, hands, legs). This simple practice can release physical stress while reinforcing your time boundary.

SIX

Use the "Broken Record" Technique

Narcissistic and toxic people love to push boundaries repeatedly. Stay firm by calmly repeating your boundary without engaging in their provocations:

Personal: *"As I've said, I'm not discussing this right now."*

Work: *"I've already communicated that this task is outside my current capacity."*



Calming Technique:

Visualisation: Imagine yourself as a steady, unshakeable rock. No matter what is said you remain grounded. Visualising this calm state can help you maintain composure when repeatedly tested.

SEVEN

Don't engage in Power Struggles

Narcissists and toxic people try to drag you into power struggles to maintain control. Instead of debating or defending yourself, calmly state our boundary and walk away. This prevents you from being emotionally trapped.

Calming Technique:

Count to 10 slowly: When you feel pulled into an argument, silently count to 10 before responding. This pause gives you time to calm your emotions, helping you avoid reacting in the heat of the moment.

EIGHT

Establish Work-Life Separation

In the workplace or when working at home, set clear boundaries to protect your time and well-being. Avoid taking work-related calls outside of your allotted work hours. Limit work discussions during personal time. Let colleagues and clients know when you're unavailable.

Calming Technique:

Breathing Anchor: When stepping away from work to personal life, do a few minutes of deep belly breathing. Focus your attention on the rhythm of your breath, anchoring yourself in a calm state before transitioning.

NINE

Keep Written Records of Work Interactions

Dealing with a Narcissistic or toxic boss, colleague, client or supplier, can involve manipulation or denial of conversations. Keep written records of important interactions to protect yourself. Document emails and conversations. Save notes from meetings to create a clear trail of communication.

Calming Technique:

Hand-on-Heart Breathing: If you feel overwhelmed or anxious after toxic work or business interactions, place your hand on your heart and take slow breaths. This gesture activates the body's relaxation response and brings a sense of emotional comfort.



TEN

Be Prepared to Walk Away

Some situations with Narcissists and toxic people may become so toxic that the best boundary is to walk away. Whether it's limiting contact with a family member or leaving a job, client or supplier, your peace and well-being are more important than enduring continued abuse.

Calming Technique:

Journaling for Release: After an intense interaction, take a few minutes to journal how you feel. Getting those emotions out on paper can provide clarity and emotional release, helping you move on without harbouring stress.

By using these 10 key strategies and incorporating self-soothing techniques, you'll master the Boundary Breakthrough needed to handle narcissistic and toxic people in your personal, professional and business life.



BONUS STRATEGIES

ELEVEN

Decide on a Consequence for Boundary Violations and stick to it

It is important to decide what you will do or say if a toxic person breaches your boundary. It is also very important that you carry out this consequence. You can tell them the consequence, when you state your boundary or just decide for yourself, without telling them, if it's not relevant or appropriate.

Some examples:

- *"I don't appreciate you shouting at me. If this continues, I will leave this conversation."*
- *"If you keep taking my things without asking, you will no longer be allowed access to my space."*
- Self-talk: *"If they insist on being negative and critical of me, I will limit my contact time with them and keep conversations at a basic, superficial level."*
- *"If you don't return the things you borrowed from me when agreed, you will no longer be allowed to borrow things from me."*
- *"I can only stay for 1 hour to help you today."* When the hour is up, leave and don't be persuaded to stay longer. You don't need to give a reason for why you need to leave.
- *"On Wednesdays, I have to leave at the end of the working day, so cannot attend any impromptu extension meetings etc. on that day."* On Wednesdays always leave on time without giving any explanations.

BONUS STRATEGIES

TWELVE

Seek Support and Practise

- Talk to Trusted Friends, a Therapist or Coach: Discuss your boundaries with friends, a Therapist or a Coach for guidance and support.
- Role-Playing or Visualization: Practise boundary-setting conversations with someone you trust to build confidence. You can also close your eyes and visualise stating and enforcing your boundaries.

Protect your time, energy, and peace, and regain control of your emotional well-being.

Setting and enforcing boundaries are not always easy to do. The more you practise doing them the easier it gets.

However, sometimes you need more support to get to the root of the problem, so that setting boundaries can happen on auto-pilot.

If you feel that you would benefit from this extra support, contact Dr Paulette Ogun at drpauletteogun@wellbeingandachievement.com for a no-cost 30 minute **Thrive Beyond Toxicity Game Plan Call**.



"You were not born to shrink around toxic people—you were born to rise, to shine, and to lead a life that reflects your true worth. The moment you choose yourself, your healing begins, and your great future unfolds."

– DR. PAULETTE OGUN

THRIVE AND SHINE! ✨✨

