



# NAVIGATING BOUNDARIES: A FILIPINO INNER CHILD'S COMPANION TO HEALING GUILT





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Hello Kapatid,

If you've ever felt a lump in your throat after saying "no"... if guilt creeps in the moment you choose yourself... if your heart whispers "what if they think I don't love them anymore?"—this is for you.

You're not broken. Promise. You're just carrying stories—some of them passed down like family recipes, except these don't taste as good.

I get it. I've felt that kind of guilt too—the kind that makes you say yes when your body is already halfway in bed. I used to think putting myself first meant I was being selfish or disappointing someone. But what I've learned (with a lot of deep breaths and 2 bags of Chippy) is that taking care of yourself doesn't mean you're turning your back on your family or your culture. It just means you're finally making room for the part of you that's been quietly whispering, "Hey... don't forget me."

This little guide is here to help you hear that voice, maybe for the first time in a long while—and give it the love it's always deserved.

*Dr. Marinette Asuncion-Uy, Psy.D.*



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## Hello my kapatid,

if you've ever tried to set a boundary in a Filipino family, you know it can feel like walking a tightrope... over a volcano... with your Lola watching from below, holding a tsinelas.

Here's the thing: if you've ever said "yes" when you meant "no," kept the peace even when you were breaking inside, or helped everyone else but forgot to feed yourself (hello, burnt adobo), you're not broken.





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# You're carrying your inner child.

And they've been doing their best.

But you don't have to wait for the perfect moment to start healing. You can start now—with small, powerful shifts. Here are 3 Instant Wins to help you reclaim your peace today.





## Instant Win 1: The 5-Second Pause

(Because boundaries start with breath, not battle)

Before you say yes to a request (or a guilt-trip), pause for 5 seconds. Just breathe. That's it. This pause helps your inner child feel safe enough to choose—not just comply.





## Say silently:

*“I have time. I don’t need to rush. My worth isn’t in how fast I serve others.”*

Try this the next time someone texts you “Pwede ka ba?” and your body screams “No,” but your fingers are already typing “Sure!”

→ Pause. Then reply with: “Let me check and get back to you.”  
That’s a boundary. You just won.





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## Instant Win 2: The “Tita Test” Statement

(So you can speak your truth without getting disowned)

You don’t have to say, “I’m setting a boundary now, please respect it”—unless you want a full on debate at the dinner table.

Instead, use what I call the Tita Test: short, firm, and guilt-resistant phrases that keep your dignity and peace.





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# Here are 3 to memorize:

*“Tita, right now, I need to rest muna. Let’s talk later.”*

*“Tita, I really appreciate your concern. Right now, I just need space around that topic*

*“Tita, thank you for caring. I’m choosing to do this differently, even if it’s not how we’re used to doing things.”*





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These work because they sound respectful  
but still center you.

And if they reply with silence or sarcasm?  
That's information—not your responsibility.





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# Instant Win 3: Touch One Tender Memory, Then Talk to Your Inner Child

Think of one memory where your younger self felt small, scared, or silenced. Nothing too deep—just one. Close your eyes and imagine gently holding that child's hand.





Then say,

*“I see you. I hear you. You didn’t deserve that.  
You’re not alone now.”*

That’s it. That’s the start of reparenting. That’s healing. You don’t need the perfect meditation playlist. Just 30 seconds of love, Filipino style: warm, fierce, and soft at the same time.





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# IF THIS GUIDE STIRRED SOMETHING IN YOU

— a tender remembering, a quiet ache, or a new boundary drawn with love — you're not alone.

The Hilom Collective is our monthly membership space for Filipino inner child healing: a soft, grounded container for becoming whole, together.

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Spots are limited to protect the intimacy of our circle.

If you feel called – this is your moment to say yes to the child within you who has waited so long to be seen.



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# Final Words from your Divine Inner Child:

*We are never too much.*

*We were never broken.*

*We just needed to be seen.*

