



# Setting Boundaries with Grace

*Protecting Your Peace in Relationships & Social Situations*

*Setting boundaries is not selfish. It is healthy for your mind, body, and soul. It is spiritual maturity.*

*I matter. My healing matters. My peace matters.*

*Flourish with Rhonda*

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# Welcome

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Welcome to **Setting Boundaries with Grace** — a guide to establishing healthy boundaries around alcohol, relationships, and social situations, grounded in both psychological science and spiritual wisdom.

You may have stayed in situations that triggered your drinking. You may have allowed others to pressure you, enable you, or disrespect your choices without even fully realizing it was happening. You may have prioritized others' comfort over your own healing because you simply did not yet have the awareness or the tools to do anything differently.

That changes here.

**Core Truth: Setting boundaries is not selfish. It is healthy for your mind, body, and soul. It is spiritual maturity. It is saying — I matter. My healing matters. My peace matters-**

■ Rhonda's Reflection: When I Did Not Know Boundaries Were Even Possible

*I want to share something that I think is more common than most boundary conversations acknowledge.*

*My experience was not that I knew what a healthy boundary looked like and simply failed to enforce it. It was that I did not even know that what was happening to me was wrong. I did not have the awareness yet.*

*I was in a relationship for four and a half years with someone who was deeply manipulative. His actions were not lining up with his words consistently and that is a huge red flag. But I was blinded by my own unhealed emotions and what I was craving was the love I had missed out on as a child.*

*I was being gaslit. And when you are being gaslit you start to question your own perception of reality. You think maybe you are the problem. Maybe you are too sensitive. Maybe you are not seeing things clearly.*

*Alcohol only made that worse. When you are drinking and suppressing the truth of what your gut is telling you, you make decisions that are not genuine to your soul. You stay when you should walk away. You accept things that do not align with your values because you are numbing the voice inside that is trying to tell you something important.*

*What I know now is this. If someone's actions and words are consistently not lining up, it is not just okay to walk away. It is the wisest and most self-loving thing you can do.*

*Your gut instinct is God-given. Learn to trust it. A clear mind is what allows you to hear it.*

— With love and grace, Rhonda

# Part 1: Understanding Boundaries

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## What Is a Boundary?

A boundary is a clear limit you set around what you will and will not accept in relationships and situations. Boundaries are not walls. They are fences that protect what is sacred — your healing, your peace, your clarity, and your relationship with God.

- I will not drink at social events
- I will not spend time with people who pressure me to drink
- I will not stay in situations where I feel unsafe or triggered
- I will trust my gut instinct when something does not feel right
- I will not allow someone's words to override what their actions are showing me

## The Three Types of Boundaries

### Physical Boundaries

Who touches you and how. Your personal space. Your body.

### Emotional Boundaries

Your feelings are valid and yours alone. You are not responsible for others' emotions. You can protect your peace without guilt.

### Relational Boundaries

What you will and will not accept in relationships. How you allow others to treat you.

What patterns you are no longer willing to tolerate.

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## Part 2: Common Boundary Challenges

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### Challenge 1: Family Pressure

Family members may pressure you to drink, minimize your concerns, or make you feel like your choices are inconveniencing them.

#### Common phrases you might hear:

- "One drink will not hurt"
- "You are being dramatic"
- "You are no fun anymore"
- "We always drink at family gatherings"

#### How to respond:

- Be direct and calm. Use I statements.
- I'm taking a break or I'm doing an experiment.
- I understand you are disappointed. This is my choice.
- You do not owe anyone a lengthy explanation.

#### **Ephesians 4:25**

*"Each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbor, for we are all members of one body. "*

#### Your Reflection Space:

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## Challenge 2: Social Pressure

Friends or social groups may pressure you to drink or make you feel excluded if you do not.

### Simple responses that work:

- "I am not drinking tonight"
- "I'm doing a no alcohol experiment"
- "I am good with what I have, thank you"

You do not owe anyone an explanation. A simple confident statement is enough. Notice who respects your boundary and who does not. That information matters.

### A Gentle Reframe

**Instead of:** *"I have to go to every event and drink to fit in. "*

**Consider:** *"I am choosing situations that support my peace and healing. My peace is worth more than anyone's approval."*

### Your Reflection Space:

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## Challenge 3: Enabling Relationships

Someone in your life may enable your drinking by buying you drinks, making excuses for you, or benefiting from your drinking in some way.

### Red flags to watch for:

- They encourage you to drink
- They get upset or uncomfortable when you try to stop
- They minimize the harm of your drinking
- They have their own unaddressed drinking problem
- They benefit from you being less clear-headed

If someone refuses to respect your boundary around alcohol, you may need to create distance. This is not rejection. This is self-preservation. Your healing is more important than keeping the peace at the expense of your growth.

### 1 Corinthians 15:33

*"Do not be deceived: Bad company corrupts good character."*

### Your Reflection Space:

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## Challenge 4: Manipulative and Toxic Relationships

This challenge is different from simple peer pressure. Manipulative relationships operate in ways that make it difficult to even recognize that something is wrong. Your reality gets distorted. Your instincts get suppressed. And alcohol makes all of it worse.

### Signs of a manipulative relationship:

- Their words and actions consistently do not line up
- You find yourself constantly explaining or defending yourself
- You feel confused about what is real
- You feel worse about yourself the longer the relationship continues
- Your gut is telling you something is wrong but you keep dismissing it
- You are drinking more to cope with the confusion and pain



## ■ Rhonda's Reflection: Trusting Your Gut Over Your Emotions

*I want to talk about something that most boundary's guides skip over entirely.*

*Sometimes we are not failing to set boundaries because we lack confidence or courage.*

*Sometimes we are not setting boundaries because we genuinely do not yet see that what is happening to us is wrong.*

*When someone is gaslighting you, they are systematically undermining your trust in your own perception. You start to believe that your gut instinct is wrong. That you are overreacting. That if you just loved better or tried harder things would improve.*

*I was craving something real and genuine because I had not received that kind of love growing up. So when someone came along and told me what I wanted to hear, I held on even when everything inside me was signaling that his actions were not matching his words.*

*Here is what I want you to hear clearly. If someone's words and actions are consistently not lining up over time, that is not a communication problem. That is a character issue. And it is not your job to fix it.*

*Alcohol will only compound this kind of situation. When you drink to cope with the confusion and the pain of a manipulative relationship, you suppress the very instincts that are trying to protect you. You make decisions that are not genuine to your soul.*

*A clear mind, a journaling practice, and a deep connection with God will help you hear the truth that your gut has been trying to tell you all along.*

*Trust it. It is there for a reason.*

— With love and grace, Rhonda

### A Gentle Reframe

*Instead of: "Maybe I am the problem. Maybe I am overreacting."*

*Consider: "My gut instinct is God-given. If actions and words are consistently not lining up, I am allowed to trust what I see over what I am being told."*

**Proverbs 4:23**

*"Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it."*

**Your Reflection Space:**

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## Challenge 5: Judgment and Shame from Others

People may judge you for not drinking, judge your past drinking, or make you feel ashamed of your journey.

### How to protect your peace:

- My choices are not up for debate
- I do not need your approval
- I am not discussing this
- Share your journey only with people who have earned your trust

#### **Romans 8:1**

*"Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."*

#### **A Gentle Reframe**

*Instead of: "Everyone is judging me for my choices."*

*Consider: "I am choosing to share only with people who support me. Other people's opinions of my healing journey are none of my business. "*

### Your Reflection Space:

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## Part 3: The Boundary-Setting Process

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### Step 1: Identify the Boundary

What specifically do you need to protect? Be clear and specific.

### Step 2: Clarify Your Why

Why is this boundary important? How will it protect your peace and your healing?

### Step 3: Communicate Clearly

Use I statements. Be direct and calm. You do not need to over-explain or justify.

### Step 4: Expect Resistance

People may push back. Stay firm. You are not negotiating your healing.

### Step 5: Follow Through

Consistency is everything. If someone violates your boundary, enforce it. Distance if necessary.

### Step 6: Practice Self-Compassion

## Part 4: Boundaries That Protect Your Peace

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Setting boundaries is one of the most powerful tools for protecting your growth. When you set boundaries, you are creating a protective fence around your healing.

- I will not spend time with people who pressure me to drink
- I will not put myself in situations where alcohol is the focus
- I will leave situations where I feel unsafe or triggered
- I will prioritize my growth and freedom over others' comfort
- I will trust my gut instinct even when my emotions are pulling me elsewhere
- I will reach for God and my journal before I reach for a drink

**Your boundaries are not walls that keep people out. They are fences that protect what is sacred — your healing, your peace, your growth, and your relationship with God.**

**Boundaries I need to set to protect my growth.**

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## Part 5: How Your Childhood Shaped Your Boundaries

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Your ability to set boundaries was shaped in childhood. If your emotional needs were met and your feelings were validated, you likely learned that your needs matter. If they were not, you may have learned to suppress your instincts, seek external validation, or stay in situations that do not serve you.

- **People-Pleasing Pattern:** You learned that your needs do not matter as much as others'. You feel guilty saying no. You prioritize others' comfort over your own healing.
- **Validation-Seeking Pattern:** You learned to look outside yourself for confirmation that you are enough. You may be drawn to people who tell you what you want to hear rather than what is true.
- **Avoidant Pattern:** You learned that people cannot be trusted. You keep everyone at a distance and rarely ask for help.
- What was your parents' relationship with boundaries?
- Were your needs prioritized or dismissed?
- Did you learn that your feelings mattered?
- What messages did you receive about saying no or asking for what you needed?

### Your Reflection Space:

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## Rhonda's Reflection: How My Childhood Shaped My Boundaries

I want to share something with you that I have never really put into words quite like this before. Because I think if you are reading this workbook, there is a good chance your story and my story have more in common than you might think.

I grew up in a home where feelings were not really welcome. My dad was not a safe space for me. So I learned early that my emotions were an inconvenience. That the best thing I could do was stay quiet, stay small, and stay out of the way. I made straight A's trying to earn love that should have just been freely given. I thought surely that was enough. But somehow it never felt like enough because in my heart I knew I was not making A pluses. That is what perfectionism and people-pleasing does to a little girl. It moves the finish line every single time you get close.

I became a little expert at reading the room and keeping the peace because conflict in our home felt explosive and unpredictable and I never knew what might set things off.

And when I needed comfort? At first it was in food, and then in alcohol, and many other unhealthy choices. Because nobody sat me down and said "tell me how you are feeling." So I learned to fill my emotional voids with whatever I could reach. That pattern followed me for a long time. Longer than I want to admit.

Here is something I want you to understand because I think it matters deeply. Both of my parents drank daily. My mom remarried and there was drinking there too. Nobody in my home was having deep heartfelt conversations about feelings or needs or healing. We coped by numbing. That was just the normal I grew up in. And what I know now, and what research suggests, is that alcohol is not just a bad habit. It physically hijacks your brain. It triggers dopamine, mimics the chemicals that calm your anxiety, and over time your brain stops producing those feel good chemicals on its own. You need the alcohol just to feel normal. So when you combine a childhood where emotions were never safe with a substance that promises instant relief from those emotions, you have a cycle that is incredibly difficult to break. It was never about weakness or willpower...

## Rhonda's Reflection: How My Childhood Shaped My Boundaries

What I have now, after all of it, is something I could not have imagined as that little girl trying to earn love through good grades and good behavior. I have real discernment. I have a genuine connection with God. I have tools that help me process my feelings instead of numbing them. And I finally feel whole without needing to fill my voids with unhealthy things or unhealthy people. That is not something I achieved. That is something God restored.

And if I could go back and sit with that little girl I once was, here is exactly what I would tell her. And honestly, I am telling you the same thing right now. It is not about your looks. It is not about your weight. It is not about your grades or your achievements or how little trouble you cause. None of that is what makes you worthy of love. God loves you unconditionally, exactly as you are, right now, in this moment. He wants you to be healthy and happy and at peace. You do not have to earn that. You just have to put Him first, do your best, and give Him the rest.

**YOU ARE ENOUGH. You are enough in God's eyes and that is who matters the most.**

*With love and grace,  
Rhonda*



# Reflect on Your Story

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*As you answer these questions, give yourself permission to be honest. There are no right or wrong answers here. This is simply an opportunity to better understand your story, your patterns, and the experiences that shaped you. Invite God into the process and extend yourself the same grace and compassion you would offer a dear friend.*

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1. **What messages did you receive about feelings when you were growing up?**
2. **Did you learn to keep the peace, even at the expense of your own needs?**
3. **Where do you still struggle to say no?**
4. **How have these patterns shown up in your relationships?**
5. **Have you ever used food, alcohol, or another coping mechanism to avoid difficult emotions?**
6. **What would you say today to the younger version of yourself who first learned these patterns?**

## Part 6: Your 30-Day Boundary Practice

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Building healthy boundaries takes practice. Here is a simple daily framework for the next 30 days.

### Week 1: Awareness

Notice where you are saying yes when something inside you is saying no. Do not set any boundaries yet. Just observe. Write down what you notice each day.

### Week 2: Preparation

Choose one boundary you need to set. Write down exactly what you want to communicate. Practice saying it out loud. Notice how it feels in your body.

### Week 3: Communication

Set the boundary. Be direct and calm. Expect pushback. Stay firm. Do not over-explain.

### Week 4: Integration

Reflect on what you have learned. Notice how your relationships are shifting. Celebrate your courage. Identify the next boundary you need to set.

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# Boundary Scripts

Words you can borrow until you find your own.

## ***Boundaries are not walls. They are bridges to healthier relationships.***

These scripts are starting points. Adjust them to feel natural in your own voice.  
You do not owe anyone an explanation for protecting your peace.

*“Let your yes be yes and your no be no.” — Matthew 5:37*

### ***When someone pressures you to drink***

- I'm taking a break from alcohol right now.
- I'm focusing on my health these days.
- I'm good with water, thank you!
- Not tonight, but I appreciate the offer.

### ***When asked for a favor you can't take on***

- I care about you, but I can't take that on right now.
- That doesn't work for me at this time.
- I need to protect my energy right now.
- Let me think about it and get back to you.

### ***When someone is draining your peace***

- I need a little space to recharge.
- I love you and I need some quiet time.
- I'm not able to talk about this right now.
- Can we revisit this when I'm feeling more settled?

### ***When family crosses a limit***

- I love you and this doesn't work for me.
- That comment hurt me. I need you to know that.
- I'm not going to engage when things feel this tense.
- I'll be happy to talk when we can do it calmly.

# Boundary Scripts

Words you can borrow until you find your own.

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## *When you feel guilty saying no*

- |                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                        |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• No is a complete sentence.</li><li>• Saying no to this means saying yes to myself.</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• I am allowed to choose what I take on.</li><li>• Protecting my peace is not selfish.</li></ul> |
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## *When you need time to decide*

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• I appreciate you asking. Let me get back to you.</li><li>• I need a day to think about that.</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• I don't want to commit to something I can't follow through on.</li><li>• I'll let you know by the end of the week.</li></ul> |
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## *At social events*

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|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• I appreciate the invitation, but I'll pass this time.</li><li>• I'm going to head out a little early tonight.</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• I'm having a great time and I'm sticking to water.</li><li>• You go ahead. I'm good right here.</li></ul> |
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## *With a difficult friend*

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|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• I value our friendship and I need honesty right now.</li><li>• That comment crossed a line for me.</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• I'm not comfortable with how this conversation feels.</li><li>• I need us to talk about this differently.</li></ul> |
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# Boundary Scripts

Words you can borrow until you find your own.

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## *When protecting your time*

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|---------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| • My calendar is full right now.                  | • That's not something I can add right now. |
| • I've overcommitted lately and I'm pulling back. | • I need to guard this time for myself.     |

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## *When setting a spiritual limit*

- |                                                 |                                                      |
|-------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| • That's not in alignment with my values.       | • I'm choosing peace over people-pleasing right now. |
| • I'm trusting God with this and stepping back. | • My faith is guiding me to say no here.             |

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## *When breaking an old pattern*

- I used to say yes to everything. I'm learning to be more intentional.
- I'm in a different season and my needs have changed.
- I'm working on honoring myself better these days.
- This is new for me but I know it's the right choice.

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*You do not have to have the perfect words to set a healthy limit. You just have to be willing to say them.*

*God honors a woman who protects the peace He placed inside her.*

*With love and grace, Rhonda*

## Closing Reflection

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Setting boundaries is an act of love — for yourself and ultimately for others. When you protect your peace, you protect your ability to show up fully in all your relationships.

Your boundaries are not about keeping people out. They are about keeping what is sacred in. Your healing. Your peace. Your growth. Your relationship with God

Sometimes you will not recognize that a boundary was needed until after it was crossed. That is okay. That is how awareness grows. Every experience, even the painful ones, is teaching you something about what you need and what you deserve.

You are worthy of respect. You are worthy of peace. You are worthy of relationships where words and actions line up. You are worthy of a life where your gut instinct is trusted and honored.

Protect it because God placed it there for a reason.

### **Philippians 4:13**

*"I can do all this through him who gives me strength. "*

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