SIMPLE DETAILS RESOURCE · BOUNDARIES

Growing in boundaries.

Boundaries grow the way maturity does: one level at a time, through practice. Start at the bottom. Find where you are today, and practice what moves you up.

> *"Healthy boundaries aren't about becoming less caring. They're about caring without carrying what was never yours to carry."*
> Kristen Hodge

BUILDING UP

4	**Grounded** Builds a full life. Confident, disciplined, makes clear choices. Not pulled off course by others. Enjoys time alone. Grows stronger under stress.	PRACTICE Protect time for what matters most. Reset boundaries after a crisis. Help others build theirs.	☐ I'M HERE
3	**Able to say no** Can disappoint people and be disliked. Notices anger and other hard emotions. Recognizes old defenses. Works through past hurt.	PRACTICE Say no without over-explaining. Let someone be disappointed without fixing it. Treat anger as information.	☐ I'M HERE
2	**Distinct** Comfortable being different. Forms and shares opinions. Stays steady when criticized. Gives honest feedback and affirmation.	PRACTICE Share a different view in a low-stakes meeting. Ask for feedback and listen without defending. Affirm someone specifically.	☐ I'M HERE
1	**Defined** Knows likes and dislikes, values, and faith. Sees strengths and limits. Starting to sense a purpose.	PRACTICE Name your core values. Make small choices without checking with others first. Say "I think" out loud.	☐ I'M HERE
0	**Blurred** Needs to be close and liked. Avoids conflict. Uncomfortable alone. Waits for others to decide or take care of things.	PRACTICE Notice when you say yes and mean no. Spend short stretches alone on purpose. Name one preference a day: "I'd rather..."	☐ I'M HERE

Where am I today, and what tells me so?

One practice I'll try from the next level up:

Levels adapted from Dr. John Townsend's work on character growth. "Antifragile," the idea behind level 4, is Nassim Nicholas Taleb's.

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What healthy boundaries sound like.

Knowing you need a boundary and knowing what to say are two different skills. Borrow these, then make them sound like you.

Emotional

"I'd appreciate it if we could talk about this calmly."

"I need to step away from this conversation for now. Let's pick it up when we can both be constructive."

"I need some time to think this through. Let's talk once I've processed it."

"I'm not comfortable sharing that right now."

"Thanks for your concern. I'd like to handle this on my own."

Personal

"That sounds fun, but I have a few things to take care of. Maybe next time?"

"I appreciate the invitation, but I'm going to pass this time."

"My schedule is full right now, so I can't commit to helping."

"I'm keeping my evenings for personal time. Let's talk during business hours."

"I'm taking some time for myself this weekend. I hope you have a great time."

Professional

"I'm at capacity. Can we delegate this or extend the deadline?"

"I'm not available for work calls after 6 PM. I'll respond first thing in the morning."

"I can't take this on right now, but I can help you find someone who has the capacity."

"I'm on a tight deadline. Can we talk once this project is done?"

Five things that help

Use "I"
Keep the focus on your experience, not their behavior.

Be clear
Vague language invites negotiation.

Offer an alternative
When it fits, propose another time or path.

Stay calm
Tone carries the message as much as the words.

Don't over-explain
A short reason is enough. Long ones weaken the no.

Not every request is a yes

Before you answer, run it through the four Ds.

Do
It matters, and it's mine.

Delegate
It matters, and someone else can own it.

Delay
It matters, but not now. Name when.

Delete
It doesn't need to happen.

A BOUNDARY I NEED	HOW I'LL SAY IT

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Caring without carrying.

A boundary shows where you end and someone else begins. Sort what's yours to own from what isn't.

MINE TO OWN	NOT MINE TO CARRY

Questions to sit with this week

Where am I taking responsibility for something that belongs to someone else?

Which relationship leaves me drained or resentful? What boundary might be missing?

INTEGRATION

Reflect

What does saying no protect for me? What does it protect for them?

Take action

One small boundary I'll communicate this week: to whom, and the words I'll use.

Boundaries aren't walls. They're clarity about what I'll own, what I won't, and how I'll show up in relationship.

For a deeper dive: Boundaries and Boundaries for Leaders, Dr. Henry Cloud and Dr. John Townsend.

You're welcome to share this resource, unaltered and with credit.