Setting Boundaries

Setting boundaries can feel uncomfortable. Learning when and how to communicate your boundaries *takes practice*. Nobody is perfect the first time they try to set a boundary.

What are boundaries?

Boundaries are limits intended to protect your own well-being, so that your relationships can thrive in the long run.

Healthy boundaries are not so rigid that they keep others you care about emotionally distant, nor are they so flexible that your own well-being suffers because others are always put before yourself. Healthy boundaries fall in between these two extremes and will vary between each relationship. Relationships with unhealthy or no boundaries will be unsustainable long-term.

Having healthy boundaries can help us behave more authentically with others and allow us to become closer over time. With boundaries, we learn how to respect each other's needs and care for one another better.

Here are two tips to help your boundary-setting:

1. Be clear and concise.
    If you have a specific boundary you want to set, then being direct is important. If you make vague requests, the other person may not understand what you are asking of them. You also do not need to provide an extended explanation to justify your boundary. No apology is needed to set a boundary. A concise boundary may look like...

    "Do you mind waiting until after work to text or call me, unless it's an emergency? It would help me focus on work better. I appreciate it!"

2. Remember why you are setting a boundary.
    You might avoid setting boundaries due to fear, guilt, or potential pushback from another person. If this happens, remember your "why." You do not need to back track on boundaries if someone else does not like them.
    Your reasons why could include…
    -   Protecting your mental well-being.
    -   Sustaining a healthy relationship with someone.
    -   Respecting your needs.

Learning to set boundaries and respect those of others is a vital part of long-lasting relationships. Good luck on your journey!

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