



Establishing Consequences for Boundaries

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Setting boundaries without also setting consequences is counterproductive. As soon as people realize that you don't follow through with what you say, they will continue to take advantage of you.

Think about some of the key people in your life and how they live out their personal rules. Have you ever noticed how they react to boundaries? It may tell you a lot about their personalities.

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Boundary Styles

Everyone has a different style of making and keeping their boundaries. We can categorize some of these as controllers, manipulators and non-responsive.

Controllers

A controller is a person who feels the need to control others. They don't respect the limits of other people, and don't take responsibility for their own lives. They tend to be bullies, manipulative, and aggressive. Sometimes they are verbally abusive and don't listen to others' boundaries.

Manipulators

Manipulative controllers try to persuade people to do something beyond their boundaries.

Non-Responsive

Non-responsive types simply ignore the demands and responsibilities of having boundaries. They may appear very passive. Controllers have an easy time getting their way with non-responsive types.

What Can You Do?

If there are any of these types of people in your life, you will have to work hard at setting and implementing boundaries. Think carefully about how you can set your consequences clearly and non-emotionally. Outline the actions you are willing to take and allow for gradual change. Your consequences do not have to be set in stone, but they do need to be firm.

Examples

Here are some examples of consequences:

- "If you break plans with me by not showing up or calling me, I will call you on your behaviors and let you know how I feel."
- "If you continue (offensive behavior) I will leave the room/house/ ask you to leave."
- "If you continue to repeat the behavior I will consider all of my options including leaving the relationship."
- "If you continue to ignore my solutions or suggestions, I will assume that you are not interested in receiving help from me and I will stop working on your case."

Pick Your Consequences

Look at your list of boundaries that you would like to have. Then, write some phrases that outline the boundary with a consequence. Practice saying these to yourself. Say them out loud. Then, start using them.

It's important to remember that you can be responsible to another person, but not for another person. You can't change their behavior or reaction. However, with firm boundaries you can shield yourself from another person's irresponsible behavior.

Inner Boundaries

There is another category of boundaries that often gets overlooked, and those are the boundaries we have with ourselves. These often show in the form of having problems controlling what we eat or what we spend. If you find yourself impulsive when it comes to money, eating, or something else, and don't seem to be able to control yourself, the first step is to recognize the issue and own it.

Often we develop this kind of behavior because we were badly hurt in some way, and we stop addressing our real needs. Once we are willing to be honest with ourselves and our needs, it

becomes easier to take responsibility of our lives and actions. When we have ironed out conflicts with ourselves, it becomes easier to work on our boundaries in relation to others.

When Others Don't Respect Your Boundaries

If people are unwilling to respect your boundaries, they are not true friends or people you want to spend time with. Setting personal boundaries and limits can be very important in how you lead your life and the quality of the relationships you have. Don't expect to make drastic changes overnight, but do focus on making and practising small changes. Your self-esteem and self-respect will thank you for it.

Key points

- Boundary violations need consequences.
- It's important to think through and rehearse your unique boundaries and consequences.
- Implementing boundaries and their consequences takes time and practice.

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