

## GO DEEPER

These exercises are essential for becoming a Boundary Boss.

*Don't skip them!*

Each one helps you integrate your understanding of Boundary Boss-ness and guides you to develop the skills necessary to put your knowledge into action.

You can do many of the exercises more than once to deepen your understanding and ability.

## CHAPTER 1: From Boundary Disaster to Boundary Master

### MAKE YOUR OWN ZEN DEN

Creating your Zen Den is simple, and you get to do it in a way that suits you.

1. Choose a spot. You can choose a corner of a room, an entire room, or a corner of your nightstand. Anywhere that feels inviting and comfortable.
2. Personalize it. Decorate it with things that feel soothing and inspirational—for example, a string of twinkle lights, a candle, a bottle of essential oil, a soft blanket or a cushion, or your favorite healing stones or crystals. Whatever you find nourishing and uplifting is 100 percent perfect.

This is your sacred space. Once you've set it up, return often to reflect, journal, do breathing exercises, meditate, complete your BB integration exercises, or even just to recharge for a few moments.

*Can you feel that soul-exhale already?*

## GET YOUR MEDITATION ON

A dedicated meditation practice creates more space in you and in your life. In fact, it can add two to three seconds of response time to all your interactions. This essential pause allows you to respond, not react. That is powerful.

- Start easy. At first aim to sit for five minutes. Set a timer.
- Sit down, light a candle, and take a long, slow, deep breath.
- Use a very simple Sanskrit mantra, with universal value: so hum, which means “I am that.” Silently repeat so (“I am”) on the inhalation, and then hum (“that”) on the exhalation.
- Do this meditation every day, first thing if possible. Pay attention to what changes when you add a few minutes of stillness and silence to your daily routine. And once you’re comfortable, try adding a minute a week until you reach twenty minutes.

To get free guided meditations, additional mindfulness tools, and supplemental strategies, go to [BoundaryBossBook.com/bonus](https://BoundaryBossBook.com/bonus).

## CHAPTER 2: Boundary Basics

### WHAT'S OKAY/NOT OKAY

Get centered in your Zen Den, BB-in-training. Break out your journal and get ready to uncover what does and does not work for you (what's okay/not okay). The more you acknowledge what you do and don't like, the easier it will be to identify what boundaries you want in all areas of your life.

Use the questions below as a guide to write out an unedited list. You can complete it in more than one sitting, too, making notes on the fly as circumstances or situations come up. You may also find that the *Okay* List grows after you dive deep into the *Not-Okay* List. Aim to create one master list of what is currently okay/not okay in every area of your life, including your relationships.

- **Home.** How do you prefer your surroundings to be? Think of noise level, lighting, vibe, textures, cleanliness, etc.
- **Work.** Do you like what you are doing? Think of how you interact with coworkers, as well as the physical environment, working conditions, corporate culture, etc.
- **Finances.** When it comes to finances, what is okay/not okay regarding your spending, saving, sharing a budget with a partner, or splitting expenses with others? Is it okay if you have a small amount of savings, or do you need to have a lot in the bank to feel okay?
- **Love and Dating.** Do you prefer to be in a relationship or to date casually? What is your favored form of communication: text, phone, video call? How do you like to problem-solve?

How much time together or apart works for you in a relationship? What, where, when, and with whom is sex okay?

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- **Body.** Is your physical health and wellness good where it is right now? Do you have daily or weekly habits that are non- negotiable (yoga, meditation, etc.)?
- **Personal Space.** How much do you require? Do you prefer a handshake or a hug? Do you like to be touched or not? How does it differ with close friends or a lover versus strangers and acquaintances?
- **Beliefs and Opinions.** Are you okay when other people's beliefs and opinions differ from yours? Can you listen with an open mind, or do you become judgmental?

Can you stand behind your own beliefs or opinions if someone else disapproves? Is it okay to have a spirited debate or not?

- **Your Stuff.** Is it okay for others to borrow your possessions, eat food off of your plate, or borrow money?
- **Communication.** Do you like a lot of communication with friends, family, and partners, or not? Do you prefer to dive deep or keep it light? Is it okay if people interrupt while you're talking?
- **Social.** Do you prefer going out or staying in? Are group activities okay, or do you prefer more one-on-one time? Are live music, parades, parties, bars, crowds okay or not okay?
- **Relationships.** List anything that is currently happening in any of your relationships that is not okay.

Your list will transform as your BB journey progresses. Remember: only you know what is okay and not okay for you. The more you honor your list, the more empowered and satisfied you will feel.

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AREA OF LIFE:

**OKAY**

**NOT OKAY**

## CHAPTER 3: The Codependency Connection

### EMOTIONAL LABOR ASSESSMENT

Use the checklist below to identify any relationships that have an unequal balance of emotional labor and where you might be taking on more than is necessary.

#### Emotional Labor Checklist

- I often feel like I'm doing everything for everyone.
- I wish that the people in my life acknowledged my efforts more.
- I feel overwhelmed and resentful at times.
- I often act as the go-between for the people in my life.
- If I wasn't here, nothing would get done.
- I feel responsible for fixing other people's problems and issues.
- My partner/friend/parent/boss often underestimates the time and energy required to accomplish tasks.
- I am the problem-solving point person personally or professionally.
- There are times I leave a social interaction feeling exhausted and depleted.
- I identify as a high-functioning codependent.
- I often think that if I want it done right, it is easier to do it myself.
- At times I feel inexplicably exhausted.

The more boxes you've checked, the more emotional labor you are doing.

## Questions to Consider

- Where are you volunteering to do or just doing more emotional labor than you need to be?
- Where in your life are you the point person on all things?
- Where is your partner/sibling/coworker the point person?

Make a list of the tasks, emotional and physical, that you are currently taking responsibility for, and then look to see where you can delegate, initiate conversations, and step back from over-functioning. Creating more equity in your relationships will reduce your resentment and increase your energy.

## TASK LIST

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**EMOTIONAL**

**PHYSICAL**

## CHAPTER 4: Corrupted Boundary Data

### UNPACKING YOUR BOUNDARY BLUEPRINT

This exercise is foundational to your Boundary Boss journey. In fact, you began it in the *Back to You* check-in exercise on page 76 in chapter 4. But that was just a snapshot. Now, it's time to go deeper.

During your childhood, your family of origin had specific rules of engagement that informed the way members related to each other and the outside world. These rules set the stage for how well or poorly you create boundaries in your personal and professional relationships today.

Get centered in your Zen Den and read the following questions. Then, give yourself time and space to reflect, remember, and journal more on the questions you answered yes to. You may want to do this exercise over several sessions to allow your responses and insights to unfold.

#### QUESTIONS

**YES**      **NO**

- Did you grow up in a home with abuse, addiction, strict rules, or neglect?
- Did your parents, caregivers, or people who raised you have poor problem-solving skills? Did they respond to conflict with hostility, silence, or with verbal or physical violence?
- Did you lack physical and material privacy? (Could you close your bedroom door? Were your things sacred, or could others take or use them? With or without your permission?)

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- Were there one or more family members who controlled others?
- Did everyone know what everyone else was doing? Were family members overly involved in each other's business and relationships?
- Were you punished for saying no or for not going along with the group?
- Did your family believe there was a "right" way to do things, with little tolerance for new ideas or suggestions?
- Were you discouraged from sharing your thoughts and feelings if they differed from the group?
- Were you praised or rewarded for being a "good girl"? Including being compliant, agreeable, polite, and nice?
- Were you given unasked for advice or criticism regularly?
- Were your emotional and/or physical needs neglected?

By reflecting more deeply on your yes answers, you will illuminate the way your family related to each other and the outside world. Creating a detailed snapshot of your Boundary Blueprint, which will guide you on the rest of your BB journey.

## CHAPTER 5: Digging Deeper: Now Is Not Then

### THE RESENTMENT INVENTORY

You alone can free yourself from the toxic prison of resentments, new or old.

Becoming aware of your resentments is the first step in letting them go. The quick self-assessment tool below helps you understand how you feel and what you need. Read the questions and make a list of your answers. Then, you can decide if you need to take any action.

- Is there anything you're feeling resentful about right now?
- Where do you feel upset, hurt, unheard, or unseen?
- Are there past experiences around which you still harbor resentment?

If you carry old resentments, you may want to journal about them, write a letter you never send, or, if appropriate, have a direct conversation to express your feelings. Honoring your upset is the Boundary Boss way to talk true and be seen. This exercise is for your liberation only, not to forgive or condone anyone else's behavior.

## CHAPTER 6: The 3Rs: Recognize-Release-Respond

### KNOW YOUR PREFERENCES, DESIRES, AND DEAL-BREAKERS

Now is a perfect time in your BB journey to make some fine distinctions between your preferences, desires, and deal-breakers.

Go back to the Okay/Not Okay list you created above (for chapter 2's "Go Deeper," page 239). Categorize the items in your master list according to how intensely you feel about them. Is something a preference (nice to have), a deal-breaker (cannot live without), or a desire (somewhere in between)?

Remember, you are the foremost authority on your needs. You don't need anyone's permission to feel the way you do. Reviewing your Okay/Not Okay list with an eye to your preferences, desires, and deal-breakers clarifies where you have room to compromise (a preference) and where you can't and shouldn't (deal-breakers).

### NOT YOUR MAMA'S AFFIRMATIONS

An affirmation is a personal statement that can impact self-esteem, stress levels, and behaviors. What you may not realize is that negative self-talk is also affirming. But it affirms things you don't want, such as disordered boundaries.

Instead, consciously choose positive affirmations that boost self-esteem, reduce stress, and retrain your unconscious mind (which matters because your unconscious mind informs your behavior).

This will help you stay focused on what you want instead of on what you fear or what you've been conditioned to expect.

Start by developing a few positive affirmation statements to repeat about yourself, your life, or the world. Then, repeat them throughout the day.

To create your affirmations:

- Write in the first person (use “I”).
- Use the present tense.
- Use only positive statements. Express what will be true, not what won't. For example, instead of saying, “I am no longer exhausted daily” which affirms the negative, turn it around and say, “Every day I feel more and more energized!”
- Keep it short.
- Make it emotionally meaningful to you; it needs to feel right.
- As you speak the affirmation, feel the feelings associated with it being true.

Examples to get you started:

- I love myself unconditionally.
- I express my preferences, desires, and limits with ease and grace.
- I treat myself with the same kindness and consideration I give others.
- I prioritize my pleasure daily.
- It is easy to be calm and relaxed.

When you notice negative self-talk or fear-based statements running through your mind, gently bring yourself back to your positive affirmation and feel the feelings associated with it.

Be mindful of the fact that words have wings and creative power. They can take flight and set things in motion. Speak about yourself, your life, and your potential the way you want it to be. You may also use more generalized affirmation statements in your everyday life.

For example:

- Everything flows with ease and grace.
- I always have more than enough time.
- I am divinely guided and protected.
- I am abundant.
- All my needs are met with ease.
- I am loved.
- I am worthy.
- I am grateful for all of my blessings.

Mindfully using positive affirmations raises the energetic vibration you send out into the universe, which positively impacts the experiences you attract. This is one way to harness the mind-blowing power of your intention to create a fulfilling Boundary Boss life.

## CHAPTER 7: From Reactive to Proactive Boundaries

### COMMUNICATION INTEGRITY

Many of us learned that telling little white lies to avoid conflict was harmless. For a Boundary Boss, this is not accurate, especially in high-priority relationships.

Half-truths, omitting information, or tolerating the same from others to keep the peace undermines your personal power and healthy boundaries.

To assess your current communication integrity, put a check next to the behaviors that resonate with you:

- I say things I don't mean to avoid discomfort, such as accepting an invitation to an event I have no intention of attending.
- I sometimes use white lies to avoid conflict. For example, I might dodge a call from a demanding pal or say I'm eating dinner when I'm not.
- I tend to flatter others to manipulate a situation.
- I break promises to myself and others.
- I complain about pals behind their back but rarely communicate my displeasure directly.
- I usually remain silent instead of naming my discomfort when someone gossips, tells an offensive joke, or engages in hate speech in my presence.
- Even when I know that someone is being dishonest or is not keeping their word, I rarely confront them.
- I often make excuses about others' bad behavior instead of calling it out.

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Your checked answers from the previous page identify where your communication lacks integrity. Now, choose three or four of your answers. Journal about where each lack of integrity happens, when it happens, with whom, and how you feel after the interaction.

What did you learn about your patterns? Use this knowledge to make different choices next time, so you can communicate consciously and with more integrity going forward, like the Boundary Boss you were born to be!

**THE BEHAVIOR:**

**WHERE IT HAPPENS:**

**WHEN IT HAPPENS**

**WHO IT HAPPENS WITH:**

**HOW I FEEL AFTERWARDS:**

## CHAPTER 8: Things Are Getting Real

### MOURN THE DREAM

The journey to become a Boundary Boss often spotlights painful or disappointing childhood experiences.

To properly honor and release them requires us to accept the way it really was and mourn the way we wished it had been.

Honestly grieving your childhood disappointments without blame or judgment will free you to create more satisfaction and joy in your life now.

Do the three steps below:

1. Identify childhood disappointment(s) that you need to honor.
2. Journal about what actually happened and the way you wished it had been. Be specific about your feelings and have compassion for yourself and your pain. You may want to share what you've written with a compassionate pal or a professional to be witnessed.
3. Now, tear out that page in your journal and light it on fire in your sink, your garden, or anywhere that is safe for open flames. Ritualistic burning can be a powerful way to release the energetic hold of past disappointments. (If you can't burn it safely, you can rip it up instead.)

## CHAPTER 9: Boundary Destroyers

### BOUNDARY DESTROYER HIT LIST

If you are struggling with a Boundary Destroyer, it's important to understand who you're dealing with. The first step is to take an inventory of their behaviors, including manipulation tactics, previous boundary violations, and whether your connection to this person is mandatory or optional.

Intense feelings might be activated during this exercise. Be gentle with yourself and proceed as a compassionate observer.

Use the steps below to gather information about your BDs, one at a time.

1. The **WHO**: Family, friends, romantic partners, siblings, bosses, coworkers, etc.
1. Their **BEHAVIOR**: Passive-aggressive communication, gaslighting, any form of abuse, addiction issues, love-bombing, dishonesty, (add your own).
1. The **IMPACT**: Fear, anxiety, resentment, exhaustion, reduced self-esteem, financial loss, (add your own).
1. The **CONNECTION**: Low priority, high priority, or mandatory (such as co-parenting).

Once you identify the existing patterns at work, you are in a far better position to act strategically and successfully. To help you craft your action plans or your next right step, refer back to page 197 in chapter 9.

## CHAPTER 10: Real-World Boundaries (Scenarios & Scripts)

### NEXT-LEVEL BOUNDARIES

Now that you have the tools (Proactive Boundary Plan, the 3Rs, and scripts) to set your boundary skills in action, add visualization to your tool kit to further support your life as a Boundary Boss.

Visualization can help you get out of your own way by connecting you to your desired outcomes and how they feel before they happen. This helps make them a reality. Allow yourself and your senses to go beyond what you know to be currently true. Instead, visualize what you desire to be true. Be as detailed as possible when picturing and feeling the feelings of having empowered boundary conversations.

Follow this three-step process to create next-level boundaries.

- 1. SEE IT.** Visualize yourself in an important meeting, negotiation, or annual review. Avoid focusing on what you fear might happen. (For example, that you will freeze up, agree to bad terms, and feel humiliated.) Instead, focus on what you want to happen. In your mind's eye, see yourself strong, articulate, and empowered—no matter the outcome.
- 2. SAY IT.** Speak positively and powerfully about yourself, your desires, and your potential. (For example, instead of affirming, “I hope I don’t stumble on my words,” say, “I am confident that I deserve a raise. I negotiate with ease.”)
- 3. SENSE IT.** Gently close your eyes and take a deep breath. Hold the visual you created in your mind. Next, using all of your senses, conjure the feelings of actually experiencing what you envision. (For example, the room is a perfect temperature. The chairs are comfortable. You are relaxed and confident. You speak truthfully and self-assuredly. You leave feeling proud for negotiating for your worth.)

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You can apply visualization to any situation. When done consistently, it profoundly and positively impacts your ability to implement your new boundary skills every single day. Spend five minutes each morning doing this exercise to harness the incredible power of your intention.

## REMEMBER:

Your mental health and emotional safety are your responsibility and must always be your highest priority. So, throughout our journey, please take care of you. My promise is that if you do the work, you will see and feel the positive results in your life and relationships.

Although mastering boundaries can take time, learning how to set and enforce them does not. If you stay the course, using these exercises will help you develop the skills and savvy to do just that. You will systematically weed out corrupted information that's been affecting your boundary behaviors. You will transform your limiting, habitual thought patterns into empowered, mindful beliefs and actions. You will pave the way to positive, sustained changes that will bring more satisfaction, confidence, and peace to all of your relationships.

And they'll be based on what you really want instead of some crap you've inherited. The self-knowledge you'll gain will powerfully influence the rest of your life.

*with love Terri*

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Some names and identifying details have been changed to protect the privacy of individuals.

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