

SET BOUNDARIES

Boundary Scripts for Indian Family Contexts

How to Use This Worksheet

This worksheet is not about saying the perfect thing. It is about choosing responses that protect your emotional well-being while staying realistic about your family context. You can use different kinds of boundaries with different people - there is no single right way.

You may want to:

- Read through once before the holidays
- Highlight scripts that feel doable
- Come back to this after an interaction to reflect

PRE-HOLIDAY BOUNDARY PLANNING

What situations usually feel the most triggering for me during holidays?

- Marriage / relationships
- Career / finances
- Body / health
- Comparison with others
- Expectations around availability or help
- Other:

Which people do I feel least emotionally safe with?

What kind of boundary feels most realistic right now?

- Passive
- Active
- Internal

What is one thing I am not willing to explain or justify this time?

What would help me regulate if things feel overwhelming?

- Stepping outside
- Limiting time
- Calling/texting a safe person
- Leaving early
- Other:

PASSIVE BOUNDARY SCRIPTS

When speaking up feels risky or
exhausting.

Passive boundaries focus on changing
your response rather than trying to
change the other person.

For intrusive questions

“I’m not getting into that right now.”

“I’ve already thought about this.”

“Let’s talk about something else.”

“I don’t feel like discussing this today.”

“I’ll share if there’s something to share.”

When advice is repeated

“I hear you.”

“I know you’re concerned.”

“I’ll think about it.”

(No follow-up explanation required.)

When comments feel triggering

“Hmm.”

“Okay.”

Change the topic

Leave the room

Reflection: Which passive boundary feels easiest for me to use?

ACTIVE BOUNDARY SCRIPTS

When emotional safety allows for direct communication.

Active boundaries clearly and verbally state a limit. They work best when they are brief and calm.

Naming discomfort

“That comment makes me uncomfortable.”

“I don’t appreciate jokes like that.”

“I don’t want to talk about this.”

Stating limits

“I’m not discussing my personal life today.”

“Please don’t comment on my body.”

“I’m not open to advice right now.”

Setting time boundaries

“I’ll stay for an hour.”

“I’m leaving by 9.”

“I’ll join later.”

Reflection: Who, if anyone, might I try an active boundary with?

INTERNAL BOUNDARY SCRIPTS

What you say to yourself.

Internal boundaries are especially important when external boundaries are not respected or when it doesn't feel safe to set any kind of external boundary.

“I don’t need their approval to make this decision.”

“I’m allowed to feel uncomfortable without fixing it.”

“Their disappointment is not my responsibility.”

“I can care about them and still say no.”

“I don’t need to explain myself again.”

“When they bring this topic up, I’m not going to engage too much.”

“I’m not going to say yes, I’m just going to deflect.”

Add your own internal boundary:

BOUNDARIES AROUND GUILT/ EMOTIONAL PRESSURE

Guilt is a common experience when attempting to set boundaries. We don't need to make the guilt go away or even expect not to feel guilty. Our own internal boundaries around how we respond to guilt can make all the difference.

When guilt shows up

“Feeling guilty doesn’t mean I’ve done something wrong.”

“This discomfort is familiar, not dangerous.”

“I can tolerate this feeling.”

When emotional pressure is used

“I’m sorry you feel that way.”

“I understand this is hard.”

“I see where you’re coming from, and I feel differently from you.”

Empathy does not require compliance.

BEHAVIOURAL BOUNDARIES

When words don't work.

Boundaries are sometimes actions, not sentences.

Leaving the room when conversations escalate

Reducing time spent in triggering spaces

Not engaging in repeated arguments

Spending time with safer family members

Leaving earlier than expected

Which behavioural boundary might I try?

AFTER-INTERACTION REFLECTION

Use this section after a family interaction.

What boundary did I try?

How did it feel in my body?

What was difficult?

What worked better than expected?