

11 Boundaries to Set With Yourself Daily Checklist

Things to say (and not to say) to yourself each day,
to help you develop good boundary habits

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Hey there!

I'm Evelyn Fielding, sexual violence survivor and coach for other survivors. I'm glad you downloaded this ebook and welcome you to the new insights you'll get after reading and practicing what I suggest.

Insights are lights that come on in your thinking, feeling and doing: new information comes to you and connects with what you already know. Insights can be sparks or candles, little lights that help you see your way. Or they can be fireworks or sunrises, big lights that seem amazing and wonderful and change the course of your life.

This ebook and the checklist are one small part of only one skill I teach survivors. There are so many skills we can learn, so many tools to apply to healing! I recommend trying many different things as you go along, because some will work right away, some will work later, and some might not work at all.

I hope you get a lot of use out of this book. And, I hope you decide sooner rather than later to join my Beyond Brave Community. In the community, I talk about dozens of skills and tools, and have conversations with survivors from all over the world. You see, I know a lot, but I don't know everything. I get big insights when I hear other people's wisdom, and survivors are full of wisdom!

There is also a self-paced workgroup you can join to help you set boundaries with yourself. I don't have space to tell you everything about setting boundaries here, which is why I created the [Beyond Brave Community and the 11 Boundaries To Set With Yourself workgroup](#). [Get more details by clicking here.](#)

Please know that you are OK just as you are, and it's not a failure to want to change. Change and growth are good things, and it's nice to have a little help along the way.

Evelyn Fielding

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Author of the forthcoming book *Beyond Brave: Healing From Sexual Violence*



Thoughts From Evelyn

Before you set boundaries with others, practice setting them with yourself. You already have habits around boundaries, and sometimes those habits are not helpful or healthy.

Many survivors of sexual violence have thoughts, emotions and actions that started with the bad things that happened to us. In those traumatic times and afterwards, our brains tried to reduce harmful stuck trauma. For some of us, we lose the ability to form and enforce boundaries with ourselves and others.

This introductory checklist suggests some things to stop saying to yourself, and some things to start saying to yourself. Some of the items may not make sense to you, and that's OK. The checklist is based on my work with a lot of survivors, and has common elements I've seen in their healing processes.

What Each Item on the Checklist Means

1. **Stop Saying “Sorry.”** People raised in or living in dysfunctional or abusive homes sometimes compensate for their trauma by saying “sorry” even when it's not needed. If this is one of your bad habits, begin to set a boundary by noticing how often you apologize and in what situations.
2. **Stop Saying “I Guess.”** Maybe you don't actually know what you want, or really don't care to make a decision. Yet sometimes, saying “I guess” takes away your power to decide, and takes away other people's power to include you in decision-making. By catching yourself saying “I guess” instead of a definite answer, you strengthen all your boundary work.
3. **Stop Saying “Later.”** Parents say “later” to their kids a whole lot. When we say it to ourselves it becomes a problem. If this is a bad habit for you, become aware of when you save your own needs for later, and how often you don't get around to taking care of yourself. Boundaries around self-care are vitally important, and shouldn't be saved for later... or not at all.
4. **Stop Gossiping About Yourself.** Do you realize when you tell your stories, you might be gossiping about yourself? If those stories are always negative, traumatic or self-degrading, you keep yourself stuck in the bad things that happen to you. Obviously, bad things happen, and we think that sharing relieves the burden. Can you shift to telling more positive stories where you solved problems for yourself?
5. **Start Asking “Is This Uncomfortable or Is This Unsafe?”** When you have a thought, belief, emotion, or body sensation that bothers you, it's easy to make it bigger than it really is and bring yourself into anxiety or depression. By asking this question, you take control of how you react. If something truly is unsafe (dangerous), you can act accordingly. Working on this boundary lets you work on your mental health at the same time.
6. **Start Asking “What Is This?”** This question is a fascinating way to introduce yourself to mindfulness. Throughout the day, consider objects, thoughts, emotions, beliefs and so on: What are they really, and what do they mean in your life? The more you ask this question, the stronger your boundary-setting habits become.
7. **Start Asking “Do I need this right now?”** If you're like many sexual violence survivors, you've neglected your own wants and needs for so long you may not even know what you want and need. Yet you may have formed compulsive habits around food, sleep, activities, drugs and alcohol, and even thinking patterns. By asking this question honestly, and answering honestly, you begin to sort out your real wants and needs from compulsive or habitual actions.

8. **Start Saying “No, and I’ll think about it.”** Do you say “yes” most of the time when others ask you for things? Is your time and attention overloaded and overwhelmed? Saying an outright “no” is too hard for most of us, at least at the beginning of setting boundaries. We give ourselves space to decide when we say we’ll think about it.
9. **Start Saying “Go away, I don’t need you.”** So many survivors simply dismiss or bury bad dreams, negative emotions, destructive thoughts and so on without actually deciding to. As you practice setting boundaries with yourself, you’ll eventually be able to sort out what needs to be dealt with right now and what can be dismissed or dealt with later. But you get to DECIDE.
10. **Start Saying “I see you (me).”** This acknowledgment goes with all the suggestions above. Use it to recognize that you’ve done, thought or felt something that bothers you. By becoming aware of secrets and limits, we are better able to set realistic boundaries.
11. **Start Saying “Hello, Change!”** When bad boundaries become habits, it can feel impossible to change. For some of us, changing our boundaries can be downright dangerous, if our environments are dangerous. When we say hello to change, we bring some humor and welcome into our self-work, like greeting a new friend. Try it, because I know it helps.

Print out the checklist or include each item in your daily journal practice, whatever makes sense for your life. Some of us find that talking about new boundaries with a safe person is most helpful.

The point is to become aware and make a habit out of not doing some things and doing other things on purpose. Change is, indeed, hard. These small steps lead to big healing moments.

What To Do Next

This is an extremely brief introduction to setting boundaries with yourself. It’s enough to get you started, but I’ve found that with support, change happens faster and easier.

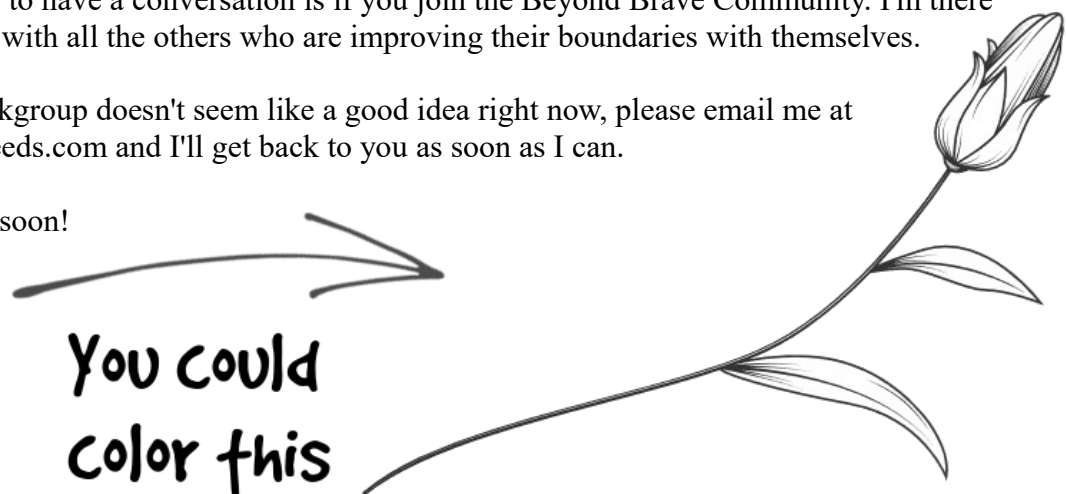
Join the Beyond Brave Community at <http://beyondbravecommunity.com>, where you can get not only a whole series of videos about setting boundaries with yourself, but get to have conversations with others who are healing from sexual violence trauma and working on their boundaries, too.

I would like to know what you think and feel after trying the exercises suggested in this ebook. The easiest way for us to have a conversation is if you join the Beyond Brave Community. I’m there each week, along with all the others who are improving their boundaries with themselves.

If joining the workgroup doesn’t seem like a good idea right now, please email me at evelyn @10000seeds.com and I’ll get back to you as soon as I can.

I hope to see you soon!

Evelyn



You could
color this

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