

On the Daily Dish Show, I spoke about boundaries and how they can be both beautiful and necessary.

We all start to learn about boundaries at a very young age. We learn not to pull the cat's tail when we get clawed, or not to touch a hot stove by getting burned. These are self-imposed boundaries that we learn through trial and error. We also learn the boundaries that our parents put on us. Some are good, some are bad, and some may be outdated and no longer serve us. (Have you ever had to kiss a family member who gave you the heebie-jeebies, just because it was considered polite?)

Sometimes we set (or don't set!) boundaries based on our belief systems. We may struggle to set boundaries when we are playing to an imaginary audience that we don't want to disappoint. We find ourselves saying yes to things that we don't want to do, and overextending ourselves to meet other people's expectations. We also let fear play too big a role. "Oh no- I can't possibly do that!"

To set boundaries, you have to find the Goldilocks Zone - not too much "yes;" and not too much "no." You can't be a control freak and micromanage those around you while encouraging autonomy and creativity. We have to find a balance. Having bad boundaries, or even no boundaries, leads to unnecessary drama and puts you in the place of being a victim. we may as well be sending out written invitations for other people to run us over.

Good boundaries are good for everyone. They not only put you in charge and help you to take responsibility for your life, but they work for the betterment of who you want to be.



Now, not everyone is going to come on board and say "Good for you!" for putting up those boundaries. When you bravely operate from your best self, you will get push-back from the people who are used to your ill-defined boundaries. When you shift your boundaries, you may expect everyone else to shift theirs or to be accommodating, but this isn't always the case.

Say, for example, that you and a girlfriend always get coffee and donuts together. If you suddenly tell her that you are cleaning up your diet and can no longer hang out at the coffee shop, she may feel that you are rejecting her and be hurt by your decision. Or, she may get snarky and think you are acting like you're better than her. It is important to be considerate when you're setting your boundaries. Let her know that your time with her is the most important thing and that you need to stay away from these things because they are not working for you. Find something else to do together.

You don't owe anyone an explanation, just the encouragement that you aren't going anywhere and that you still love them. Don't be judgmental when they don't hop on the bandwagon with you. Your friend may still want to eat donuts and drink Caramel Macchiatos with extra cream and sugar. Don't say "That is going to poison you one day" or "I wish I could still eat that." Just focus on connecting with the person and asking yourself "How can I be an encouragement to them?"

Take responsibility for your yes and your no. When things shift, it is important for the people around you to know what they can expect from you. If it makes it easier, say "This is the advice I got from my doctor/nutritionist and I feel better doing this."

Boundaries also stop us from being the savior in everyone's life. You create an opportunity for growth when you say no. If you don't want to do something, be honest and say "Thank you for thinking of me, but I can't commit to doing that right now." Don't lie or give false hope. These are the ways we allow people to know what we think of ourselves. When we don't set boundaries, our good intentions turn into frustrations. Conversely, you become a woman of integrity when your words and actions align. You set an example for the little eyes around you- your children and grandchildren.

Who you are shows up in what you do, not what you say. You don't lose the dog when you have the integrity of a fence, and you don't lose your soul when you set boundaries. You will meet resistance but you will be happier, and finally free of everyone else's expectations of you.

It's time for us to live our very best lives, Lovelies!