



EMPOWERING WOMEN TO RECLAIM THEIR STRENGTH AFTER
EXPERIENCING DOMESTIC ABUSE

Empowering Yourself: A Guide to Setting Boundaries with Your Abusive Ex-Partner

Taking back control of your life is a crucial step toward healing. This guide will help you understand how to set healthy boundaries with your ex, protect your emotional and physical well-being, and rebuild your sense of safety and power.

What Are Boundaries?

Boundaries are limits we set to protect ourselves from harm. They allow us to define what is acceptable behaviour and help us maintain our personal space, emotional safety, and well-being.

Setting boundaries is not about controlling others; it's about taking control of your own life and saying, "This is what I will accept, and this is what I won't."

In the context of an abusive relationship, boundaries are vital in maintaining distance, protecting your peace and reducing further harm.

Understand Your Rights

First and foremost, you have the right to safety and peace. Your emotional and physical well-being are essential, and no one, especially an abusive ex, has the right to violate those rights.

Recognise that your boundaries are valid and deserve to be respected.

Key rights include:

- The right to be left alone.
 - The right to feel safe and secure.
 - The right to decide with whom you communicate and when.
 - The right to seek support from loved ones or professionals without interference.
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Identify Your Boundaries

Think about your needs and desires concerning your ex-partner. Consider the following categories of boundaries and decide what will make you feel safe:

- **Communication Boundaries:** How often, if at all, do you want to communicate with your ex? What method of communication (text, email, phone call, court-ordered app) do you find most manageable? Is there any contact necessary for co-parenting, and if so, what limits will you set?
 - **Physical Boundaries:** Do you need to limit physical contact or interactions, such as meeting in person? Are there specific places or situations where you do not want to be approached or contacted? Should you consider always meeting in a public place with witnesses and CCTV?
 - **Emotional Boundaries:** Protect your emotional health by setting limits on how your ex communicates with you. They should not guilt-trip, manipulate or control your feelings.
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Communicate Your Boundaries Clearly

Once you've identified your boundaries, it's important to communicate them clearly and directly to your ex.

Here are a few tips on how to do this:

- **Be firm and assertive:** You are not required to explain, justify or apologise for your boundaries. Simply state what you need. For example: *"I will not be communicating with you unless it's in relation to our children."*
 - **Use clear, concise language:** Avoid vague language that can be misinterpreted. Be direct and concise to eliminate any room for confusion.
 - **Keep it neutral:** Avoid engaging in emotional arguments or explanations. The goal is to establish a boundary, not to engage in a discussion or debate.
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Stick to Your Boundaries

Enforcing boundaries with an abusive ex can be challenging. They may try to manipulate, guilt-trip or push against your limits. Stay firm and consistent. If they ignore your boundaries, it may be necessary to take further steps:

- **Limit communication:** If your ex continues to contact you, consider blocking phone numbers or social media accounts or using a third-party service to communicate.
 - **Document any violations:** Keep records of any instances where your ex violates your boundaries. This can be useful if legal action is required in the future.
 - **Seek support:** Share your boundaries with trusted friends, family members or professionals who can provide accountability and support.
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Take Steps Toward Safety

If you fear that your ex may become violent or retaliate, it is essential to take further steps to ensure your safety:

- **Develop a safety plan:** Identify safe places you can go if you are threatened. Have emergency contacts in place and know how to get help quickly.
- **Consider legal protections:** A restraining order or protective order may be necessary if your ex continues to violate your boundaries or makes threats against you. Legal action can help reinforce your boundaries and protect your rights.
- **Reach out for professional support:** Consider talking to a domestic abuse organisation or a therapist or counsellor who specialises in abuse recovery. They can help you build emotional resilience and guide you through the process of setting boundaries and healing.

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Remember, It's Okay to Ask for Help

Setting and maintaining boundaries can be difficult, especially when you have been manipulated or controlled in the past. It's okay to seek help, whether it's from a trusted friend, a support group, or a mental health professional.

Healing is a journey, and you don't have to walk it alone.

Conclusion

You have the right to live a life free from abuse and manipulation.

By setting clear and firm boundaries with your ex, you are taking control of your safety, well-being and peace of mind.

Boundaries empower you to define your own life, protect yourself and heal.

No one should have the power to dictate your actions or emotions. By setting these boundaries, you are reclaiming your strength and your future.

Sending you love, Michelle xx

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