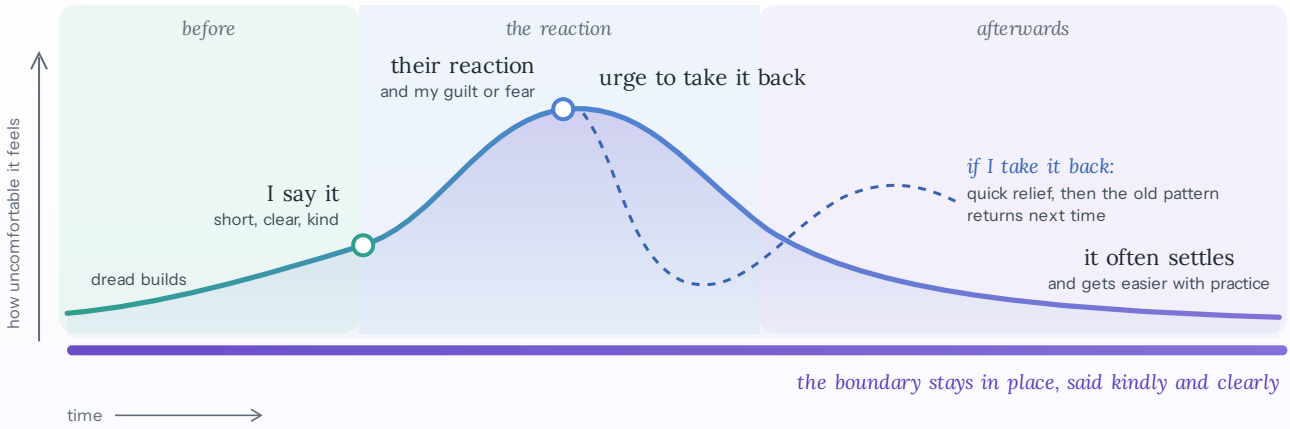
Boundary Practice

PRACTICE · REHEARSING A BOUNDARY

Knowing the boundary is often the easy part; staying steady through the reaction is the practice

Many people already know what they want to say. What makes it hard is another person's disappointment, irritation or hurt, and the guilt or fear that rises in us when we see it. This sheet is a rehearsal: get clear, find the words, say them out loud, and plan in advance how you will look after yourself if their response is hard to hear.



An illustrative shape, not a promise. Discomfort often eases as you practise, but not always: some reactions stay hard and some relationships change. Both are worth talking through in session.

01 What happened?

the facts, as a camera would record them

Who with: _____ **Where or when:** _____

How it left me feeling (tick any)

- ○ Resentful
- ○ Guilty
- ○ Anxious
- ○ Drained
- ○ Angry
- ○ Sad
- ○ Unheard
- ○ Taken for granted
- ○ _____

02 What do I want, and what don't I want?

both sides of the line

I WANT
what would feel fair or respectful to me here

I DON'T WANT
what I am no longer willing to keep doing or accepting

03 What am I willing to offer?

boundaries often hold a yes and a no

I AM WILLING TO OFFER
time, help, contact or compromise I can give freely

I AM NOT WILLING TO OFFER
what I would only give out of guilt, fear or resentment

For example: "I can't lend money again, but I'm happy to help you look at a budget."

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04 What could I say?

short and clear beats long and justified

Name it	Say it	Offer	Stop
Briefly describe the situation, without blame.	What I want, or what I won't be doing.	What I can do instead, if anything.	No long explanation needed. Let the silence sit.

My words

My one-sentence version:

Say it out loud ◯ once ◯ twice ◯ three times Discomfort before ____ /10 after ____ /10

05 What am I afraid will happen if I say it?

the prediction

My fear (what they might do, think or say, and what it would mean)

HOW STRONG IS IT?

How likely, in my mind? _____ %

Other ways it could go:

06 If their reaction is hard for me, what will I do?

the part most worth rehearsing

Often the hardest part is not the boundary itself but staying with the other person's feelings, and our own, as they arise. Their disappointment or upset is understandable and doesn't necessarily mean the boundary was wrong. Planning a response now, while calm, can make it easier to stay steady.

Reactions that might be hard for me:

◯ Disappointment ◯ Irritation or anger ◯ Hurt or tears ◯ Going quiet ◯ Asking again ◯ Questioning my reasons ◯ Raising past events

If they respond with...	Then I will...	And I'll remind myself...

Ways I could respond (tick the ones I'll use):

◯ Acknowledge their feelings, keep the boundary ◯ Repeat it calmly, once ◯ Pause and come back to it later ◯ End the call or leave the room ◯ Offer what I am willing to offer ◯ Let the discomfort rise and pass

07 Afterwards

what actually happened?

What happened, and how I handled their reaction

Did my fear come true? ◯ yes ◯ partly ◯ no · Pride in how I did it (0–10) ____

BRING TO MY NEXT SESSION

what was hardest, what I'd try differently

If you think setting a boundary could put you at risk of harm, please plan it with your clinician first rather than practising it alone.

SOURCES

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