What Is Mine, What Is Theirs?

PRACTICE · RESPONSIBILITY, BOUNDARIES AND LETTING GO

Sorting what I can hold from what isn't mine to carry

In close relationships it's easy to take on what belongs to someone else, or to hand over what belongs to us. Seeing the line more clearly can ease guilt and resentment, and make it easier to care for others without carrying everything for them.

MY SIDE — Mine *what I can hold and act on*	THE LINE	THEIR SIDE — Theirs *what belongs to them*
○ My feelings		Their feelings ○
○ My choices		Their choices ○
○ My boundaries		Their boundaries ○
○ My words		Their words ○
○ My behaviour		Their behaviour ○
○ What I can control		What I cannot control ○

BETWEEN US

What I can ask for, share or talk through — *and then let them choose*

01 Sorting a situation

something that's weighing on me

The situation, in a few words

MINE
What I can own
my part, my feelings, my next step

BETWEEN US
What I can ask for
a request, a conversation, a limit

THEIRS
What I can set down
their reactions, choices and moods

02 Reminders to hold onto

tick one that fits, or write your own

- "*I can care about how they feel without being responsible for fixing it.*"
- "*I can say what I need. What they do with it is theirs.*"
- "*Their reaction tells me about them, not only about me.*"

03 Reflecting

after sorting it out

Something I'm ready to put down

Something of mine I'll take care of

What I'd like to talk about

When the line is less clear: with children, people we care for, or shared work, responsibility can overlap, and that's okay to think through. If someone is hurting or frightening you, their behaviour is theirs, and getting support is a sensible next step.

SOURCES

Hayes, S. C., Strosahl, K. D., & Wilson, K. G. (2012). *Acceptance and commitment therapy: The process and practice of mindful change* (2nd ed.). Guilford Press.

Kerr, M. E., & Bowen, M. (1988). *Family evaluation: An approach based on Bowen theory.* W. W. Norton.

© 2026 B&F Clinical Psychology · Evidence-informed educational resource · For educational purposes only.