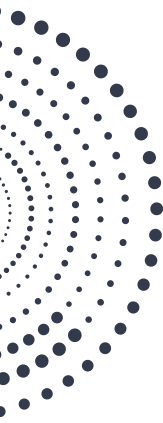




Drawing THE LINE

Discover Your Personal Boundary Style
for a Thriving Stepmom Journey



A CHAT ABOUT PERSONAL

Boundaries...



Personal boundaries are essential aspects of our identity and well-being, acting as invisible barriers that help define where one person ends and another begins. They safeguard our emotional, physical, and spiritual health by clearly indicating what we value and need to thrive. In a relationship, personal boundaries play an important role in maintaining a healthy balance between intimacy and autonomy. When people feel comfortable communicating their needs and respecting each other's space relationships can flourish.

Whether we realize it or not, we all have a personal boundary style which teaches others what treatment we expect and will respond to. As a stepmom, understanding your personal boundary style is crucial because it ensures you protect your heart and energy while nurturing your relationships. Embracing boundaries allows us to show up authentically and remain rooted in love.

The Bible offers wisdom in this regard: Proverbs 4:23 says, "Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it." This verse reminds us of the importance of setting boundaries that protect our innermost being. Jesus Himself modeled boundaries when He retreated to quiet places to pray (Luke 5:16) and when He said no to certain demands to align with the Father's purpose for Him (Mark 1:35-38). By understanding our boundary style, we learn how to say yes to what aligns with our values and no to what drains our spirit.



Boundary Styles

Descriptions of Each Boundary Type

Understanding the various boundary styles helps stepmoms discern where they stand and how to move toward healthier patterns. Each type is shaped by a unique set of attitudes and beliefs, often influenced by past experiences and fears. Here's a breakdown of each type, possible underlying fears, and examples of what someone with that boundary style might say.

1. Open Boundaries

Description: Open boundaries involve being very transparent and often disclosing personal information freely. Individuals with open boundaries may have trouble distinguishing between what is appropriate to share and when to keep certain things private.

Possible Fear: Fear of loneliness, driving them to share too much to feel connected.

What They Might Say: "I always want everyone to know where I stand, so I share my thoughts, even when it may not be necessary. I don't want anyone to feel left out."

Challenges: This type can make a person vulnerable to being misunderstood or taken advantage of, as they may struggle with keeping aspects of their life private that should be safeguarded.

2. Porous Boundaries

Description: People with porous boundaries often find it difficult to say no, give away too much time or energy, and allow others to intrude into their emotional or physical space. They may be overly concerned with the needs of others and neglect their own.

Possible Fear: Fear of being disliked, seen as selfish, or causing conflict by saying no.

What They Might Say: "Sure, I can help out, even though I'm already busy this week. I don't want to disappoint anyone."

Challenges: This type can lead to burnout, resentment, and a loss of personal identity because individuals prioritize others' needs over their own. They may feel unappreciated or taken for granted.

Boundary Styles

3. Healthy Boundaries

Description: Healthy boundaries strike a balance between openness and protection. Individuals with this boundary style know how to express their needs and limitations assertively and compassionately. They are clear about what they are comfortable with and communicate those limits effectively.

Possible Fear: A healthy boundary style is generally not rooted in fear but in confidence. However, there might be a mild fear of disappointment from others, balanced by a stronger commitment to personal integrity and well-being.

What They Might Say: “I’d love to help out, but I can’t this time. I need to rest and take care of myself so I can be more present later.”

Strengths: These boundaries foster respect and mutual understanding in relationships. The individual is able to say yes or no without guilt and maintains self-respect and self-care.

4. Rigid Boundaries

Description: Rigid boundaries are characterized by keeping others at a distance and avoiding vulnerability or deep connection. Individuals with rigid boundaries may seem closed off or detached and often avoid letting others get too close emotionally or physically.

Possible Fear: Fear of betrayal, vulnerability, or being controlled by others.

What They Might Say: “I don’t need anyone’s help. I can handle this on my own, and it’s better that way.”

Challenges: While rigid boundaries can protect a person from immediate harm or discomfort, they can also lead to isolation, difficulty building trust, and strained relationships. Over time, this style can lead to loneliness and a lack of intimacy.



Boundary Styles in the Bible

Biblical Examples of Boundary Types:

- **Open Boundaries:** King Hezekiah when he received envoys from Babylon. In 2 Kings 20:12-19, Hezekiah welcomed the envoys and showed them all the treasures of his kingdom, including his silver, gold, spices, and armory—essentially everything in his palace. This openness and willingness to reveal all his resources demonstrated a lack of discernment and appropriate boundary-setting.
- **Porous Boundaries:** Martha in Luke 10:38-42, who, despite her good intentions, became overwhelmed by serving and didn't establish limits for her own peace.
- **Healthy Boundaries:** Jesus, who would teach and heal but withdrew when He needed to pray (Luke 5:16) and respectfully declined certain requests to prioritize His mission (Mark 1:35-38).
- **Rigid Boundaries:** The Pharisees, who kept themselves distant and resistant to the teachings of Jesus out of fear of losing power and control.

Which boundary type do you resonate with most, and how do you think this style serves or challenges you in your role as a stepmom?



Boundary Styles at a Glance

OPEN	POROUS	HEALTHY	RIGID
Invites everyone to get close	Let's anyone get too close	Chooses who to let close	Let's no one get too close
Says "yes" to everything	Struggles to say "no" to others	Says "no" without feeling guilty	Says "no" to most things
Indiscriminate with people	Overly trusting of other people	Takes time to get to know people	Does not trust other people
Actively solicits opinions of many	Easily influenced by opinions of others	Respects other's opinion while staying true to values	Does not listen to other people's opinion
Keeps nothing to self	Shares too much information with strangers	Is selective who to share personal life with	Shares nothing
Inserts oneself into other people's problems	Gets involved in other's problems	Support others while not getting overly involved	Does not get involved in anyone else's problems
Fears being alone	Fears being rejected, or disliked	Accepts rejection as a part of life	Avoids rejection by pushing others away
Has a vomiting communication style	Has a passive communication style	Has an assertive communication style	Has an aggressive communication style

Boundary Styles

Assessment

This exercise will guide you in discovering your **personal boundary style** and help you reflect on what is important to you as a stepmom. Set aside 20-30 minutes in a quiet space to engage fully in this process.

How much do you agree/disagree with the following statements (on the scale of 1 to 10)

1 I feel guilty when I take time for myself.

Agree Disagree
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

2 I avoid conflict and usually give in to keep the peace.

Agree Disagree
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

3 I feel bad when I say, "no," to someone, even when I'm exhausted.

Agree Disagree
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

4 It's hard for me to express my needs and preferences openly and directly.

Agree Disagree
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

5 I only feel like a good person if I help out other people with their problems.

Agree Disagree
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

6 I find it difficult to stand up to other people's opinions.

Agree Disagree
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

7 I sometimes avoid situations where I may get embarrassed.

Agree Disagree
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Total all the numbers that correspond to the boxes you checked:



Scoring Your *Style...*

0 to 14 - Your boundaries are probably wide open.

15 to 29 - Your boundaries are rather porous, depending on the situation.

30 to 44 - You have healthy boundaries.

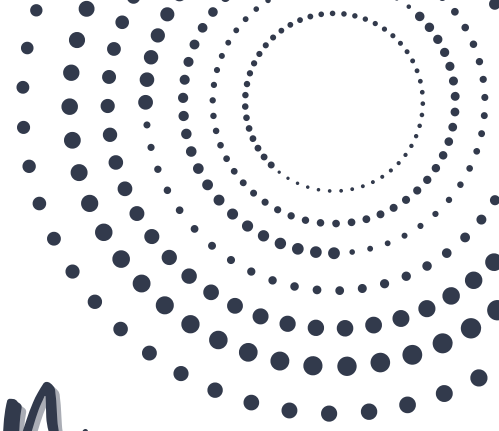
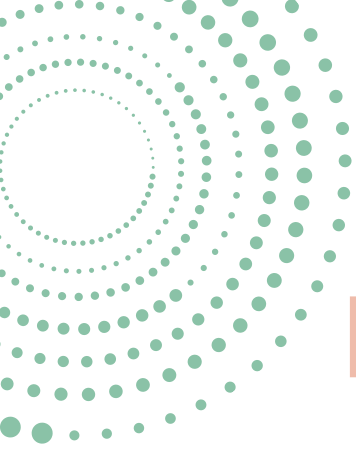
45 to 59 - Your boundaries lean towards rigid, depending on the situation

60 to 70 - Your boundaries are probably rather rigid.

Connect Boundary Values to Scripture

List 3 values that are most important to you when it comes to boundaries (e.g., respect, peace, honesty). Find a Bible verse that aligns with each value. For example:

- **Respect:** "So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you" (Matthew 7:12).
- **Peace:** "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God" (Matthew 5:9).
- **Honesty:** "Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ" (Ephesians 4:15).



Diving

Deeper...

Based on your border style, which aspects of your personal boundaries would you need to work on the most?

What can you do to make your boundaries healthier, or to maintain healthy boundaries?

Choose one boundary you would like to practice setting this week. It might be taking time for a personal hobby, saying no to a request, or creating time for prayer and rest. Write down how you will communicate this boundary and any supporting verses to meditate on.

Example Script: *"I really value our family time, but I also need moments to recharge so I can show up well for everyone. I'd like to spend one evening this week for personal rest. I appreciate your understanding."*



Acknowledging God...

Close this exercise by asking God to give you wisdom and strength as you set and maintain boundaries. Pray for a spirit of peace and love as you grow in understanding your needs and those of your family.

Prayer Example: *Lord, thank You for teaching me the importance of protecting my heart. Help me set healthy boundaries that honor You and foster love and respect within my blended family. Guide me to walk in wisdom and grace as I embrace my needs and the needs of those around me. Amen.*

Reflect on this exercise after a week. Were you able to set the boundary? How did it make you feel, and what did you learn?