

# Boundaries Summary

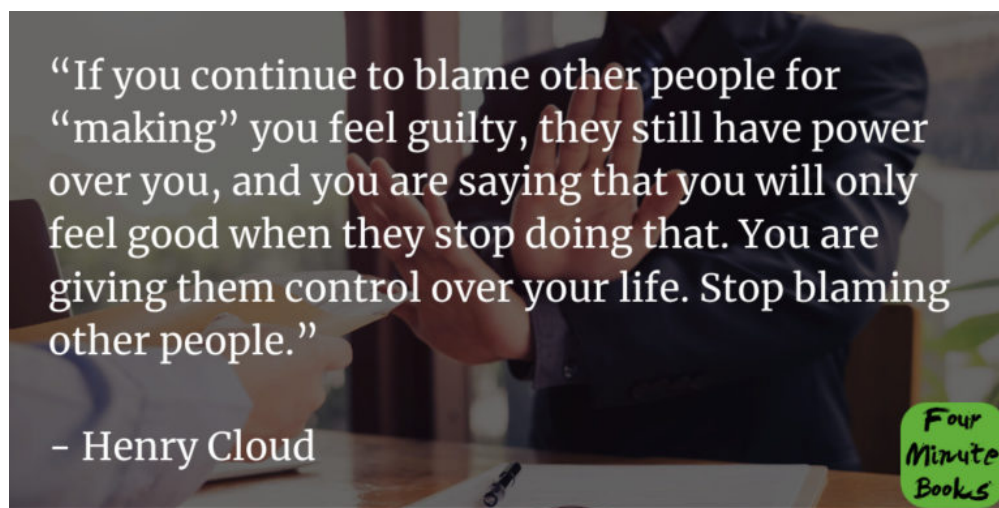
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**1-Sentence-Summary:** *Boundaries explains, with the help of modern psychology and Christian ideals, how to improve your mental health and personal growth by establishing guidelines for self-care that include saying no more often and standing firm in your decisions rather than letting people walk all over you.*

**Read in:** 4 minutes

**Favorite quote from the author:**



A day without boundaries looks something like this: You wake up early to make breakfast for your kids. Even though you're doing a presentation at work that you really need to prepare before leaving, you still don't ask your husband to help you cook for the kids.

Once you get to work, the presentation equipment isn't ready, so you go get it yourself, even though it's not your job. Your boss asks you to run the Christmas party, and you agree, even though you're probably too busy. And your day is just getting started! If any of this sounds familiar, you could probably use boundaries. Life without them can be draining!

*Boundaries: When to Say Yes, How to Say No to Take Control of Your Life* by Dr. Henry Cloud and Dr. John Townsend is a classic guide on setting healthy boundaries and finally taking the reins in your own life. Using both Christian faith and contemporary psychology, the authors create a strong argument for why healthy boundaries are essential for your emotional and spiritual health.

Here are the 3 of the most helpful lessons this book taught me:

1. Boundaries are all about kindness to yourself and others.
2. It won't be quick or easy, but setting boundaries is always worth it.

3. Boundaries will help you in both your personal and professional life.

Let's get right into these ideas and learn how to take better care of ourselves!

## **Lesson 1: It is an act of kindness to yourself and those around you to set boundaries.**

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From concrete walls to “No Trespassing” signs, we find physical boundaries all around us. Usually, these exist for a good reason. A tall chainlink fence around an electrical plant is there to protect us from walking inadvertently into a dangerous area.

Personal boundaries are likewise necessary for protecting your emotions and spirit. But unlike physical boundaries, others can't always see them. This makes it hard to establish boundaries and to recognize the boundaries of others. It also is hard to enforce them because it can make you feel mean. But it shouldn't.

**Setting boundaries entails taking ownership of your own wants, needs, and feelings.** It means prioritizing you, but often people feel like it means they are neglecting others. But the authors emphasize that setting up healthy boundaries doesn't mean you don't care about other people's concerns or problems. All it means is that you aren't solely responsible for them.

Take the O'Riley family. Unfortunately, their son Peter has gotten involved with drugs and was expelled from school. His parents could take responsibility for his problems by enrolling him in a new school and paying his fines, but it's likely this isn't going to solve the problem. In this case, his parents would shoulder the whole problem for him.

On the other hand, they could hand the responsibility to their son instead. They could listen and support him in becoming sober and do all this without stepping in to fix his problems. In this case, they are taking care of themselves by establishing boundaries and still taking care of Peter. Setting boundaries like this is an act of kindness to yourself as well as to everyone around you.

## **Lesson 2: It can be hard to set up boundaries, but it will make your life much better.**

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Before you are comfortable enough to assert boundaries, you might make excuses for other people violating your boundaries. You might say stuff like, “Jeff always puts me down when he's with his friends. He's only joking, though.” But over time, you start to get resentful. This resentment can be a good thing! If it means you're done being complacent about boundary violations, so pay attention!

This will be your first step to healthy boundaries. But it won't be easy. When you try to set boundaries with a controller or manipulator, they are set on using you and won't let you say no. **Their insistence on using you can be addictive for you because it makes you feel needed.** Friends who don't make a fuss if you can't make it to lunch won't give you the same high. But this is the time to seek out these types of friends.

Next, learn how to love and value yourself. When our boundaries are constantly being violated, we start to treat ourselves like these people treat us. We can't use our thoughts, feelings, talents, and bodies like God intended us to. If we can't love these things in ourselves, we will have a hard time loving these things others. This is why finding value in yourself is key to creating and recognizing healthy boundaries.

After that, you can start setting small boundaries like telling your partner you don't want to be left with taking out the garbage all the time or accepting your friend's offer to bring a dish to your party. Ultimately, you'll find out that you enjoy having your new healthy boundaries and the peace they can bring to your life.

### **Lesson 3: Boundaries are essential in both your personal life and your work life.**

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It's important to establish, maintain, and respect boundaries within a marriage. The authors say it is the key to a fulfilling romantic relationship and is something couples should work on together. It's also important in friendships, where it can be harder for people to assert their boundaries.

Many times there are friendships with a compliant person and a controller. An example of this is that friend that wants you to cancel all of your plans to spend time with them. In situations like this, one person walks all over the other, and both are left unhappy. Being a natural compliant or controller isn't necessarily bad, but you need boundaries to make sure the friendship stays within the bounds it should.

It's also equally important to assert boundaries at work as it is in your personal life. Many people find it hard to say no in a professional setting. **But just because you are clocked in doesn't mean your boundaries have disappeared.**

You might be the type that steps in and takes responsibility for your colleague's poor performance. If this is you, it's time to step back and only take responsibility for your own tasks and let them figure it out.

You might also be an overworker, but often this is the fault of a boss who doesn't know how to allocate work. Don't take responsibility for this problem if it's not yours!

At the end of the day, remember that you need to create a boundary that separates your work and home. Stress from work should be left at work, and stress from home should be left at home. Of course, you'll always have things you need to do. But if you never say no to work, you're probably missing out on the things that make life worth living.

## Boundaries Review

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*Boundaries* is really eye-opening. It makes you realize that you need to lay down some boundaries for your own health and that you shouldn't feel guilty about doing so! It also helps you recognize other people's boundaries and hopefully become a better person for that, which the world could use a lot more.

## Who would I recommend the Boundaries summary to?

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The 47-year-old who always feels mentally drained and isn't sure why, the 29-year-old that lets people walk all over them, and anyone who wants to discover a crucial component of self-care.