



Drawing a Boundary

What is something that has been irritating you around which you can draw a boundary? Pick something that has been grating on your nerves a bit, and put the Language of Needs to work. The formula for the Language of Needs looks like this:

Start by addressing your own self-care needs.

To prevent the other person from feeling attacked, don't mention them. Simply use an "I statement" to talk about your own self. If you find yourself using the word "you," rethink what you are going to say.

- Try saying something like: "I need to feel relaxed and settled when I am driving in the car, especially when there is a lot of traffic."
- Avoid accusations like: "You are constantly fiddling while I'm trying to drive, and sometimes you turn the music up way too loud!"

State what you need from the other person.

Try to frame this by telling them what you want them to do instead of what you don't want them to do. This way, they know exactly what you expect.

- Try saying something like: "This means that I need you to choose just one song or playlist at the beginning of our drive, and then leave the music and my phone alone for the remainder of the drive."
- Avoid: "I need you to stop messing with my phone and the music so much."

State what you will do if others cannot help you.

Let the other person know what you will do to take care of yourself if they cannot help you get your needs met. It needn't be an ultimatum, but a simple statement of fact.

- Try saying something like: "I will be in charge of my phone and the music if this is too difficult."
- Avoid: "If you respected me, you would do this for me."

Follow through!

Your boundaries are more likely to be respected if your words have meaning, so follow through by taking care of yourself if your boundary is violated.

- Try saying something like: "Oops! Remember that I need to feel relaxed while driving in the car, which means I don't want you fiddling with my phone while we are driving. I'll put my phone in the purse until you get used to this new rule."
- Avoid accusations that put the other person on the defense: "I told you not to touch my phone! Why are you so disrespectful?"



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What is something that has been irritating you around which you can draw a boundary?
Pick something that has been grating on your nerves a bit, and put the Language of Needs to work.



Start by addressing your own self-care needs.



State what you are doing to draw your boundary.



State what you will do if others cannot help you.



Follow through!