



## Be Brave. Make Space.

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### Hi! I'm Coach Margie

If it's Monday, it must be the Brave Space newsletter day. Thanks for reading!

Hello Margie,

This week's newsletter is about setting boundaries.

I'll be very honest with you. I thought I was good at setting boundaries. I thought I had a strong sense of what I would put up with and what I wouldn't. But when push came to shove, I either caved, or I came on so strong that I pushed people away from me.

It wasn't until I gave up alcohol that I learned what boundaries are, when to use them and how to use them so that you maintain relationships. I'm grateful for the lessons I learned and I want to share them with you. I'm also designing a virtual course on how to learn to set healthy and loving boundaries - but for now, I'll give you the highlights of what I've learned.

**Let's start with how you know it's time to set boundaries.**

Here are 12 signs:

1. **You're tired all the time.** When you're giving too much of yourself to others, it makes sense that you'll be too tired and stressed to take care of yourself. I found myself so wrapped up in the problems of people I cared about and doing things to make them happy, I was worn out.
2. **You "breakdown" a lot.** Breakdowns like crying and feeling super emotional may leave you wondering what's wrong with you, but I realized that this was one of the biggest signs that I wasn't giving myself enough love and attention. The breakdowns are a clear sign that things need to change.
3. **You're eating more than usual.** This one really sucks. You may not be an emotional eater, but I'm not alone in this! If you realize that you're turning to food more than usual when you're feeling down, it may be that you're filling the void you have with food, rather than love and self-care. If you're more likely to avoid eating because you feel "too busy", this is also a warning sign.
4. **No one can say anything right.** This is classic "If we don't talk it out, we'll act it out". When I was hanging on by a thread, hearing words of advice was the last thing I

wanted. Words of advice annoyed me. I didn't want to hear it. I couldn't hear it. I was stuck.

5. **There's no more joy in simple things.** Things that made me happy no longer did. I was too occupied with feeling overwhelmed. This isn't (and wasn't) a good place to be, but I was too enmeshed in others' needs to recognize my own.
6. **You don't have work-life balance.** If you're lucky enough to have a great boss, he/she will likely point this out to you. Mine let me work and work and work. It occupied my mind, and I got a hell of a lot of work done. My over-productivity led to sleepless nights, stress, exhaustion and more. See #1-#5 above. All of it.
7. **You don't put yourself first.** Cue the burnout! I couldn't put myself first because there wasn't any room. I thought I was doing a good thing for others, but all I was doing was losing myself. Funny how those benefiting from my lack of boundaries didn't seem to mind.
8. **You begin to resent people.** If there's one indication that you need to learn how to set and communicate boundaries, it's this one. I felt walked on, unappreciated, and undervalued.
9. **You find it hard to make a decision.** This one is a bit confusing. I wasn't making decisions in my best interest, aligned with my values, or that made me feel like I was following my goals. I was too busy trying to please everyone else and my decisions reflected that.
10. **You've become passive-aggressive.** This is related to #4 above. I wasn't being honest with myself, much less anyone else. When the resentment built up to a point where I thought I'd explode, the resentment started slipping out in sarcasm and other passive-aggressive behavior. A couple of examples are "You're so lucky you get to do something you love" or "I wish I could spend time relaxing, but unfortunately, I have to pay rent."
11. **You can't say no.** This is a classic indication that boundaries are in order. I hear this a lot from clients. Something meant to be a sign of love and affection can result in stress and overwhelm when boundaries aren't enforced.
12. **You take everything personally.** Well, who wouldn't, right? Every criticism, rejection, or negative comment gets internalized.

If you relate to one or more of these signs know that you can develop emotional resilience and protect your personal space. It doesn't mean you close people off or end relationships. It means that it's time to learn how to set boundaries in a loving and compassionate way.

### **Let's get clear on what a boundary is and why you need them:**

Repeat after me: Setting boundaries is not being selfish! Connecting with others shouldn't come at your own expense. Caring for others gives us purpose, but when we over-focus on pleasing others, **we can start neglecting ourselves.**

It's important to say here that a **boundary is something you set for you, not them** Telling someone that they're violating your boundary so they will have to DO something differently is a rule, not a boundary. If someone crosses a line with you, you need to be prepared to explain what you will now do (or not do), not what you expect of the other person.

**Setting boundaries for how much you're willing to do is healthy** and beneficial for your relationships. Doing too much for your kids, partner, family, or co-workers could contribute to unhelpful relationship patterns. A boundary is letting others know how a fulfilling and mutually

satisfying relationship looks.

## How I learned to set loving boundaries:

- I had to discover what I valued. Now I'm a grown, mature woman! And I didn't know what my core values were. This won't likely come quickly to you, but it's definitely the place to start. For help getting started, check out this [guide](#).
- Once I had an idea of what I valued, I was ready to put my core values into action. Who knew there were so many to choose from? Use this [exercise](#).
- Using the exercise for putting my core values into action, I narrowed my list down to a workable number. I chose seven. Not too few, not too many. Just like Goldilocks!
- To make the list meaningful for me, I made them actionable and prioritized them. I put a verb in front of each value. For example: Value=Peace; Actionable Value=Live in Peace. I want to live in peace!
- Now I had a way use my values to create my boundaries
- When someone did or said something that violated one of my values, I needed a way to teach that person what I would or wouldn't do or say when this happened. In a way that didn't sound like an accusation or threat.
- Ok, so here's an example of how I used my value of "I want to live in peace" to state my boundary. It's simple but not easy at first:
  - My friend had a habit of calling me when she was upset with her partner and tried to drag me into her drama. If I was a good friend, I would take her side and speak up for her, right? Wrong. Because I care about her AND I want to live in peace, I needed to first explain that I won't get dragged into her drama, and make sure she understood how much I cared about her.
  - ""Samantha", I need to talk about something. I really care about you. You've been my friend for a long time. And when you tell me about the problems you're having with "Bill", I spend a lot of my time trying to fix the problem for you with Bill. I get frustrated about that. I don't want to get frustrated with you, so I can't get involved in your problems with "Bill" anymore. I'd love to hear your thoughts."
  - Samantha eventually understood. She didn't want me to feel frustrated or spend my time fixing her problems. Now we talk often about everything that's going on in our lives and we're both comfortable knowing that we understand each other.

Creating boundaries is a thoughtful and careful exercise. Anyone can do it and I can attest to the fact that they absolutely work! I hope this newsletter helps you get started.

Sending you lots of love and compassion,

Margie

**Margie, would you like some help setting boundaries? I can help!**

You know by now that I coach people who want to change their relationship with alcohol - whether that's stopping, moderating, or simply taking a break.



You may not know that I also coach people with the many ways life might



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be keeping them stuck. Stuck in relationships, jobs or life in general.



If you'd like to talk about how coaching works and see if we're a good fit to work together, please click the **Schedule a Free Call or Email Me** button. ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

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