



COLOR OUTSIDE THE LINES COUNSELING



The Boundary Pause

A moment to hear yourself before automatically saying yes

People pleasing can make another person's comfort feel more urgent than your own capacity. The Boundary Pause gives you room to notice what you want, what you can realistically offer, and how to respond without abandoning yourself.

• Pause Before Responding

What am I being asked to do

What was my immediate reaction

• What My Body Is Saying

☐ Tension

☐ Relief

☐ Dread

☐ Energy

☐ Resentment

☐ Fear

☐ Excitement

☐ Pressure

☐ Confusion

☐ Other

If I did not have to answer immediately I would want to say

How much capacity do I honestly have

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 very little

plenty

• Check the Cost of Yes

If I say yes what will it require from me *Time energy money emotion or schedule changes*

What might I have to give up or postpone

If I say no or not now what am I afraid may happen

• Choose the Response That Fits

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Not now

☐ I need more information

☐ I can offer something smaller

☐ I need time to decide

My honest response

• Practice the Words

Choose a starting sentence and change it until it sounds like you.

☐ I cannot take that on right now

☐ Let me check my schedule before I answer

☐ I am not available for that

☐ I can help with part of it but not all of it

☐ That does not work for me

☐ I need some time to think about it

☐ I care about you and my answer is still no

☐ I can offer this instead

The boundary sentence I want to use

How I will support myself after I communicate it

• Remember

☐ Discomfort does not automatically mean I did something wrong

☐ Someone else's disappointment does not make my boundary unkind

☐ I can be caring and still have limits

☐ I am allowed to change an automatic yes into a thoughtful answer

• A Gentle Reminder

A boundary is information about what you can offer and what you need. You do not have to make another person agree with it before it becomes valid.

This resource is for education and personal reflection. It does not provide diagnosis, treatment, medical advice, or crisis care. If you are in immediate danger, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department. You may also call or text 988 for crisis support.

Created by Raven Thomas, MA, LPCC-S | Color Outside the Lines Counseling

© 2026 Raven Thomas / Color Outside the Lines Counseling, LLC. All rights reserved.

For personal and educational use. You may print and share this resource unaltered with credit. Resale, modification, removal of branding, or presentation as your own work is prohibited without written permission.