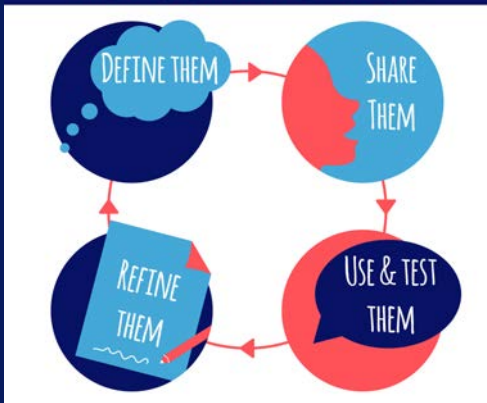


Managing boundaries

Boundaries is a topic I LOVE talking about and working with people on. I think they can be transformative, and their importance is often under called. Whilst I'm not a fan of unnecessary complexity, I do think there's a much richer conversation to be had about this topic that many of us don't explore. It isn't just about saying no! I'm going to take you through my boundary cycle and some self-coaching questions that will set you up on your way to creating and maintaining empowered boundaries!

THE BOUNDARY CYCLE



Boundaries are there to help us be at our best, more of the time - your own personal roadmap to decision making and protecting your wellbeing.

The idea is...

- You start by getting clear on what they are. Literally writing them down, typing them, voicenote yourself - whatever your preference.
- Then you share them with someone - think of them as your accountability partner for sticking to them.
- Then comes actually using them! That meeting that flies in that you know will make you late to pick up, the phonecall request on the day you're not being paid to work...you have to move through how it feels to put them into practise.
- They may then need some refinement. The boundaries you set today may need some tweaking if they don't work - that doesn't mean you cave and change them because it's feeling uncomfortable, but where there's a genuine need to switch it up you can go for it. Use your accountability partner to check your thinking on this if you need to.

Boundaries are not...

- All about saying no
- Just for Christmas...or a one off
- A carbon copy of someone else's
- Meant to be restrictive

Boundaries shift and change, but the kinds of topics to consider to help to identify them could be:

- Communication and contact
- Relationships
- Work set up
- Types of work you want to be involved in
- Self-care
- Childcare
- Home responsibilities
- Physical boundaries (hello personal space)
- Finances

Some coaching questions you could use to help identify your boundaries:

- What's important to you? (because your boundaries should help you keep that front and centre)
- What's your definition of success? (because your boundaries should help you achieve it)
- When are you feeling uncomfortable? (could be an indicator that you need to put some limits in or that your values are being squashed)
- What's happening to your energy levels? (feeling depleted could be a sign that you need to limit your exposure to certain people or situations)
- What's going to help right now? (staying the moment is important - remember your boundaries aren't for life, they need to help for now).

Phrases you might want to use...

It's important to use your language, but in case you need some inspo on getting those boundaries communicated, here are a few suggestions:

- I need some space right now / I'm not available at the moment
- Thank for thinking of me, but I can't / don't want to
- I'm not looking for advice, if you could listen that would be helpful
- Yes, I'd really love to do that – it's something I enjoy doing and want to do more of
- If I do that, it will be stopping this.
- I need to check, I'll come back to you (you don't have to be comfortable with saying no straight away).
- I'm not answering the phone when....(inner boundary)
- This person is no good for me / my family / my self-worth so I'm not engaging (inner boundary)

If your boundaries aren't quite working, some things to reflect on:

- Are they aligned to your values? You're more likely to stick to them if they are.
- Why aren't they being honoured? Are there particular situations that mean you're more likely to break them.
- What is it triggering when they're not in place? What's the impact?
- Are they the best boundaries for right now? Maybe you're trying to stick to a boundary that isn't serving you.
- You can't control other people's behaviour. If you boundaries are related to others, their actions don't mean that you boundaries aren't working.

Remember your boundaries are yours, they're YOUR roadmap and other people's opinion of them isn't your concern. They can be a tricky topic to navigate, especially those that are steeped in emotion and relationships - but that doesn't mean we should avoid them.