

Intro (Are we there yet) And Chapter 1

Chapter One: The Roadblock You Don't See Coming

Picture this: You're driving on the highway of life. Windows down, playlist bumping, feeling like a modern-day philosopher in yoga pants. Then—bam—someone swerves into your lane. A text lights up your screen: *"Hey, can you help me reorganize my garage this weekend?"* You say yes. You always say yes. But that "sure!" feels like agreeing to a three-hour therapy session with a stranger you're paying out of pocket. By sundown, your head buzzes like a rattlesnake in a blender. Your throat tightens. Your gut knots into a pretzel. You didn't slam on the brakes when you should have. Again.

Welcome to the **emotional gridlock**.

This isn't a tale about being a "bad" person. It's about recognizing the potholes in your highway—those silent collisions where your energy gets t-boned by someone else's needs. For years, I wore my overcommitment like a badge of honor. I'd smile through my grind, nod in all the right places, and leave conversations clutching a suitcase full of someone else's baggage. I was the *"good girl"* GPS in everyone's life, but my own dashboard screamed "check engine" in neon. Ever been there? That post-small-talk fog isn't just awkward. It's your soul waving

a white flag, begging you to pull over and ask: *“Why does saying ‘no’ feel like swerving into a ditch?”*

Let’s dissect the crash scene.

Why You’re White-Knuckling Through Life’s Carpool Lane

Emotional boundaries aren’t abstract fluff—they’re the actual seatbelts of your well-being. Yet, most of us treat them like optional gadgets in the car: “Eh, I’ll install them later.” Spoiler: That later usually comes with a therapist’s bill. Society wires us to confuse self-sacrifice with strength. We’re sold a myth that kindness equals compliance: *“Smile. Bury the rage. Let people park in your lane. Don’t rock the curb.”*

I once let this myth drive my life. I ghosted my own needs like they were exes I’d rather avoid. Until the day my body forced me to stop. Imagine this: midnight, flopped on a couch with a heating pad on my stomach. Not sick. Just exhausted—like I’d run a marathon while carrying a stranger’s luggage. That’s when I realized: **overgiving isn’t generosity. It’s emotional theft.**

Neuroscience backs this up: Chronically ignoring your needs triggers your amygdala, the brain’s smoke alarm, to freak out over everything. Chronic stress? Check. Burnout? Double check. Joy? Parked in a garage with no exit sign.

The Map to Your Emotional Detour Begins With *You*

Setting boundaries isn’t about building a brick wall. It’s about installing road signs—**Stop, Yield, Detour**—to guide who gets access to your energy, time, and emotional gas tank.

Take the “Stop” sign. My friend Jess once asked me to proofread her

divorce papers at 10 p.m. on a weeknight. Pre-boundary-me? I'd have said yes and stared at red pen until 2 a.m., bitter and resentful. Now I hit a hard "Stop." *"Jess, I can't tonight. Let's schedule this."* Result? She respected me more, and I slept like a million bucks.

Or the "Yield" sign: When my dad calls and I'm mid-meltdown, I redirect the traffic. *"Can we chat tomorrow when I'm less frazzled?"* It's not a rejection. It's merging with dignity.

Here's the kicker: **Your boundaries are not up for debate.** They're your personal speed limit. Speeding leads to fines; ignoring leads to emotional highway robbery.

The Cultural Speed Trap: When "Nice" Becomes a License for Burnout

We've all heard the script: "Nice girls make coffee. Strong women smile through the grind. Real adults don't rock the boat." This is the equivalent of driving 80 mph in a school zone—the damage is inevitable, and often to *you*.

I call it the **"good girl" myth**—that idea that your worth is tied to how much you accommodate others. It's the reason I once hosted a holiday dinner for 12 while nursing a sinus infection. My reward? Someone asked if I'd made a dessert "to add some cheer." I wanted to hurl a turkey leg. Instead, I hurled my boundary: *"Next year, potluck."* The room went silent. Then? Someone brought a pie and said, "Thank you for saving me three hours."

Turns out, the road to health isn't paved with self-abandonment. It's built with signs that say: *"Private property. Enter with permission."*

Your First Exit: Mapping the Terrain Ahead

This isn't just your average self-help pity party. It's a rebellious road trip where you reclaim the wheel and toss the backseat drivers their own steering wheels. In the chapters to come, we'll navigate the detours and breakdowns—because let's be real, this journey isn't all sunshine and Spotify playlists. There *will* be flat tires. There *will* be wrong turns. But with every sign you install, you'll reroute stress, dodge burnout, and find the off-ramps to freedom.

So here's your starter toolkit:

Map your terrain. What's draining your tank? Write down the interactions that left you foggy this week.

Set emergency exits. When someone demands more than you can give, practice saying: *"Let me think about that."* Then decide *your* answer.

Reclaim the radio. Your needs get the mic. Turn up the volume.

The highway to health isn't scenic because of how it looks. It's breathtaking because you *finally* get to drive. Buckle up. We're about to hit turbulence—and the view from the other side? Exhilarating.

Introduction : Are We There Yet?

(Story starts here! This is your new Intro!)

This was supposed to be the road trip of a lifetime—the culmination of years of dreaming and planning, an experience to be etched in time. Standing in your driveway with your traveling companions, you soak in the brilliant morning light, heart racing with excitement. This is it. The asphalt unspools before you like a limitless promise. But barely an hour into the journey, the car begins to shudder. A faint knocking rumbles from the engine—a sound no one else hears, or perhaps they're just

choosing to ignore it. You press your palm to the dashboard to steady it, your pulse syncing with the irregular vibration. The map app chirps, "Merge left in 500 feet," but your lane feels unstable, the lines smudged. Suddenly, the thrill of the open road collides with a nagging question: When did driving stop feeling like freedom and start feeling like a performance? The kind where you smile at every exit sign, hum along to everyone else's playlist, and pretend you haven't been mapping detours around your own needs since mile one.

This is the moment the book leans in and asks: What happens when you keep revving the engine on fumes? That knocking sound isn't just metal; it's the physical echo of overgiving. It's the buzzing in your head, the clenched jaw, and the phantom weight of someone else's expectations pressing against your ribcage. Neuroscience calls it chronic stress. Evolution wired us to detect predators, but no one warned you that your amygdala would treat a third "Sure, I'll help" this week like a five-alarm fire. The car lurches onto the shoulder, steam hissing from the hood. You blink at your passengers—why aren't they panicking? That's when you realize: this book isn't a roadside rescue. It's a toolkit. It's here to help you open the hood, stare down the engine of your own making, and recognize the difference between a temporary flat tire and the slow-motion collapse of a system that forgot how to say "enough."

As you pack the car with the precision of a seasoned Tetris master, your friend Cece finally makes her grand entrance—fashionably late. She arrives with a mountain of luggage that rivals an international baggage claim: three suitcases, two overstuffed duffel bags, a backpack, and an oversized purse that appears to defy the laws of physics.

The trunk becomes a high-stakes puzzle board as you struggle to wedge these "extra pieces" into the limited space. Twenty minutes into the drive, you glance over at Cece. She has already made herself at home in the passenger seat, her bare feet propped up on the dashboard as she twists to find the perfect selfie angle.

Mustering your courage, you ask her to lower her feet. She responds with a nonchalant shrug. "I'm capturing memories, and my pedicure is totally Instagram-worthy." You swallow your annoyance, taking small solace in the fact that, at least for now, she isn't documenting your growing exasperation.

The engine purrs as the highway opens up, offering an exhilarating taste of freedom. But then, right on cue, the universe throws a wrench in the gears. Leroy cries out from the back seat, "Oh crap! I totally forgot my wallet." You curse under your breath, scanning the horizon for the next exit to make a reluctant U-turn.

While you wait for Leroy to retrieve his wallet, Cece dramatically unfurls a laminated itinerary. "We're already behind schedule, and we haven't even reached our first stop!" she laments. "If we don't make up the time, we'll miss our reservation!"

Your curiosity is piqued, and you inquire about this mysterious reservation. "What reservation?" you ask.

"I booked a table at this seafood place that's supposed to be uh-mazing," she replies. "Didn't I mention it in the group text? You'll thank me later."

You're silently dreading the thought of a seafood feast, but before you can object, Leroy returns to his seat, and you're back on the road. Now in charge of the playlist, Cece rolls down the windows and blasts a song you despise. Your hair whips into your face, obscuring your vision as you struggle to focus on the road.

Suddenly, Leroy turns into an impromptu GPS, shouting directions over the music far too late for you to react. City traffic is merciless, and the road quickly becomes a symphony of honking horns as you make a frantic veer toward the exit, heart pounding.

In the backseat, David gasps and grips the headrest as if bracing for impact. You clench your jaw, knuckles white against the steering wheel, determined to keep your cool. Somehow, you make the exit safely, only to hear Leroy mutter, "Wait... I think it was actually the next one."

Meanwhile, Cece calculates aloud that this accidental detour will cost another eight precious minutes. When you spot a charming antique market on the roadside and suggest pulling over, her response is swift and condescending: "There's no way we're missing our mileage target on Day 1! Besides, that place looks sketchy."

You swallow your frustration. This trip was supposed to be about spontaneous adventures, but you choose to keep the peace. Reluctantly, you pass by the market. After a few more hours of driving on a highway of silent resentment, you finally arrive at the seafood restaurant.

Dinner is a tense affair. Your mind drifts to questions like, "How much longer will we be here?" and the eternal plea, "Are we there yet?" Eventually, you hit the highway again, and an oppressive silence descends upon the car. To break the monotony, David rolls down his window ever so slightly, unleashing an obnoxious, thrumming vibration

that threatens your remaining sanity.

Before you can utter a word, you catch a glimpse of David in the rearview mirror. He looks pale, his breaths coming in rapid, shallow gasps.

"David, are you okay?" you inquire, genuine concern in your voice.

Instead of an answer, he delivers a spectacular, catastrophic performance, unleashing a torrent of motion-sickness vomit all over the backseat.

I know what you're thinking. *"Who on earth would go on a road trip with these people?! That would never happen to me!" Or would it?*

Many of us are surrounded by people like Cece, Leroy, and David—people who violate our time, emotions, and energy, ultimately keeping us from the life we've planned.

Have you ever encountered someone who takes far more than they give? Someone with a remarkable ability to obstruct your path or hinder your pursuit of a fulfilling life? These individuals, often called "Energy Vampires," are all too common. You might recognize them by your body's physical reaction after an encounter: profound exhaustion, sudden irritability, or a deep sense of disconnection from your true self. It feels as if they've thrown a monkey wrench into the finely-tuned gears of your life, leaving you with the monumental task of realigning your dreams.

Beware of the insidious forces that can drain your energy and deplete you. Watch out for these five critical actions and behaviors lurking in your life.

(1) Drama Kings and Queens: For these people, drama is oxygen. Every situation is a grand production, and they move

from one manufactured crisis to the next as if they're starring in a reality TV show. While it might be entertaining to watch from a distance, living in their orbit is exhausting. Common phrases include: "I can't believe this is happening to me," or "This is literally the worst day ever."

(2) Blame Throwers: These individuals refuse to take responsibility. When faced with a setback, they look for someone else to point at rather than a solution to focus on. They can identify 99 problems but won't offer a single fix. Listen for: "If you had just listened to me," or "It's not my fault."

(3) Passive-Aggressive Ninjas: They use manipulation to disrupt your energy through silent treatments, backhanded compliments, sarcasm, or ultimatums. Their goal is to leave you feeling guilty or obligated until you succumb to their demands. Watch out for: "I don't want to be a burden, but..." or "Oh sure, go ahead and do whatever you want."

(4) Entitlement Enforcers: They believe they deserve your time, resources, and attention without reciprocation. They don't ask for permission; they assume it's their prerogative. They're happy to use guilt to ensure they get exactly what they want. They might say: "I shouldn't have to wait," or "You owe me this."

Common phrases start like "I shouldn't have to wait in this line like everybody else," " "You owe me this because," or "I deserve this."

(5) One-Up Wonders: No matter what you've done, they've done it better—or worse. Their experiences are always more vibrant, more successful, or more miserable than yours. They can't listen without interrupting to share their own "superior" knowledge.

Common lines: "You think that's a big deal?" or "Let me tell you about the time I..."

Common phrases start like, " Let me tell you about the time when I" "You think that's a big deal?" " I've done that a million times before." "You think you're tired? Try being ... "

If we fail to address these Energy Vampires, they will continue to ride shotgun through every stretch of our life's journey. They don't just disrupt our happiness; they erode our health and stifle our potential. Their presence isn't a mere nuisance—it's a direct threat to our well-being. Protecting yourself isn't optional; it's vital.

But there is another way—one that allows you to live in harmony with your true self without necessarily severing every tie. The key lies in one powerful concept:

Setting and communicating Healthy Boundaries.

Boundaries are the guiding markers of the road. They ensure you maintain your autonomy and safeguard your well-being while coexisting with others. It isn't about building a wall to shut people out; it's about creating a safe space for you to thrive.

When we set healthy boundaries, we take charge of who and what is allowed in our car (and our life) and determine when and where they are welcome. CeCe, David, and Leroy may still be part of our lives, but that doesn't mean they automatically earn an invitation to join us on our dream road trip.

By setting these limits, you're not only taking command of the direction you want your life to take, but you're also reclaiming your power. You're doing so without guilt or resentment, and that's a liberating feeling.

As you initiate this voyage of self-discovery and growth, remember that establishing boundaries isn't a one-time event but an ongoing practice. It requires self-awareness, assertiveness, and the willingness to communicate your needs and expectations. It may not always be easy, but the rewards are immeasurable—greater happiness, improved relationships, and the freedom to become the person you genuinely want to be.

Love this!

(Took these next few paragraphs from your original Intro)

For many of us, a gap exists between the life we're currently living and the one we truly desire. We crave more time to indulge in our passions, unwavering emotional resilience in the face of challenges, and boundless energy to radiate positivity and presence with our loved ones. Our ideal lives are vibrant and purposeful, brimming with adventures waiting to be received. In this state, we are confident, bold, transparent, and unapologetically ourselves. And as we approach the end of our lives, we refuse to look back with regret. Introspection is the direction, and we eagerly embrace it. .

The enigma we face is not how to transform ourselves into the person we aspire to be, but rather to travel the path to become that person. That person who is confident, empowered, kind, communicative, and possesses an adventurous spirit, among other outstanding qualities. We need to overcome the distance between who we are presently and who we want to be, and begin living that ideal life right now.

Underneath it all lies a fear that we may never attain the person we long to be, a fear of not knowing the path to reach that ideal self, or perhaps, a fear of not possessing the strength and bravery required to

embody that vision. The dread lingers that a haunting sensation will envelop us when we eventually reach the end of our excursion—a sense that we settled when we could have reached our dreams.

If you're yearning to live life to its fullest right now but are unsure how to proceed, this book is your compass. Behind many of your life's desires lies a precise path leading to your goals and ambitions. Like any road trip, you're likely to encounter obstacles along the way. Still, one significant barrier that could impede your journey toward fulfilling your aspirations is the absence of healthy boundaries.

Without boundaries, your precious energy—energy that could be dedicated to becoming the person you want to be—dissipates. Before you know it, you are devoid of time, emotional capacity, and vitality to live your life purposefully. Instead, it all gets expended on others or pursuits that don't merit it.

Without vigilance, these individuals, or endeavors will persist in depleting you, ensuring you are left with nothing for yourself. It isn't because they're inherently malicious but because others will invariably prioritize their interests over yours without robust, healthy boundaries.

Boundaries are the invisible walls we construct, delineating what we will and won't permit in our lives. While various reasons prompt us to establish boundaries, their true purpose is their transformative effect on our lives.

Healthy boundaries aren't solely about safeguarding against toxic influences but also about placing you squarely in the driver's seat of your life. They encourage you to seize control, select your path (and all its delightful pit stops), set your own pace, and guide yourself onto what

I affectionately call "the highway to health."

"Boundaries are the avenues through which you infuse the freedom of an open road into your daily existence." **DD Let's make this quote to the side also ... it is a great quote!

Setting healthy boundaries might seem daunting, and I can attest to this from personal experience. That's precisely why I've developed a protocol for setting boundaries—to simplify the process as much as possible. You won't struggle with

questions like "Where should I establish boundaries?" or "How do I communicate them without hurting people?" We'll address it all together.

By the culmination of this transformative quest, you'll find yourself cruising along the highway of health, thinking, "At last! THIS is the exhilarating ride I want to experience!"

CHAPTER 1: Rules of the Road: The Importance of Boundaries

Chapter 1: Rules of the Road - Why Boundaries Matter

I wasn't taught about boundaries growing up—unless you count, "Don't talk to strangers," or "Never get in a white van with a man offering candy." That was the whole curriculum. We had rules, sure—curfews, chores, Sunday best, and "don't you dare talk during church."

But no one taught me what to do when I said yes, but everything in my body whispered no.

No one explained the emotional weight of a simple question, or that feeling you get after a conversation where you've smiled, nodded, agreed—then left feeling foggy, depleted, or like you were carrying someone else's emotional baggage home with you. For me, it wasn't a tight chest. It was the buzzing in my head. The lump in my throat. The way my stomach twisted even though I hadn't eaten. I'd push it all down, breathe through it, and keep going—because that's what “good” girls do, right?

No one told me those were triggers. Messages from my body saying, “This doesn't feel right.”

My nervous system had been waving red flags for years.

But instead of recognizing the signals, I kept overriding them—out of fear of conflict. Out of guilt. Out of not wanting to seem selfish or be labeled “overly sensitive,” God forbid I be too much. (Too emotional. Too reactive. Too intense. Too honest. Pick your poison.) I didn't want to rock the boat—I just wanted to be invited onboard.

And people-pleasing? It didn't just become second nature... It felt like the 11th commandment. Thou shalt keep everyone comfortable—no matter what it costs you.

I didn't learn boundaries—I learned how to smile through discomfort, suppress what I felt, and second-guess my own instincts. My childhood was beautiful. Loving. Supportive. But no one taught me about emotional triggers. No one helped me name fear, understand how it shows up in the body, or gave me the tools to recognize when something just didn't feel right. Before FOMO was a buzzword or bullying had a

name, I was already navigating the quiet pressure of unhealthy dynamics—in dating, in friendships, in family, in the workplace. I didn't know what I didn't know. I just knew something felt off... and I kept showing up anyway.

And then life handed me a loss so sudden, so shattering, it broke every illusion I had about what being “strong” for everyone else really meant. It forced me to stop. To feel. To listen. That story's coming — and when it does, you'll understand why I'll never stop talking about boundaries.

But first, we need to talk about why they matter. Because boundaries aren't just about saying no or avoiding burnout. They're how you stop white-knuckling life and start driving it with purpose.

They're the rules of the road that protect your time, your emotions, and your energy — so you can live your way, not theirs.

Boundaries Set You Up for Success in Four Game-Changing Ways:

They help define your identity.

They inspire respect from others.

They create clear expectations in your relationships.

They're the ultimate expression of kindness—to yourself and others.

Let's take a closer look at each one:

1. Boundaries Help Define Your Identity

At its core, setting a boundary is an act of self-definition. It's not just about pushing others away; it's about pulling your authentic self into the

light.

Much of who we are wasn't chosen; it was inherited, projected, or absorbed. Psychologist Dr. Shahram Heshmat points out that our identity often develops through the lens of how others see us—parents, teachers, and peers. From a young age, we are shaped by what we're praised for, punished for, and expected to become.

Have you ever caught yourself speaking and realized, *Wait, that's my mother's voice—not mine*? Or felt a pull toward a bold new path, only to hold back because you were once told you were "too sensitive" or "not the creative type"?

We begin editing ourselves to fit roles we never auditioned for. The version of us that others prefer slowly becomes the version we perform every day.

Healthy boundaries flip the script. They serve as a reminder: you get to decide who you are and how you show up in the world.

They allow you to say: That's not me anymore. To make space for who you're becoming, not just who you've been expected to be.

They help you reclaim the driver's seat of your life—and finally take the wheel.

2. Boundaries Inspire Respect from Others

When you set boundaries and honor them, something powerful happens: you show the world exactly what self-respect looks like. And the world takes notice.

Self-respect isn't about ego. It's about energy.

It's about declaring: My time matters. My peace matters. *I* matter.

And when people see you valuing yourself, they adjust how they treat you.

Research confirms that confident people are perceived as more competent and trustworthy. That's not just bravado—it's boundary work. Real confidence radiates when you consistently choose what honors your energy.

Think of someone you admire—an influencer, a leader, a friend. Their respect doesn't come from people-pleasing people. It comes from presence, from grounded clarity. They're not perfect—but they're not afraid to say, "This is what I need."

When you embody that kind of respect, others reflect it back.

The truth is, when you stop overgiving and start honoring your limits, people either rise to meet them or they exit the car.

3. Boundaries Create Clear Expectations in Relationships

You teach people how to treat you by what you tolerate. Without boundaries, we send mixed signals—and then feel crushed when people don't read our minds or match our effort.

Let's be real: saying yes when we mean no leads to resentment. And resentment always finds a way to leak—through silence, sarcasm, shutdowns, or explosive moments that seem “out of nowhere.”

Boundaries are the opposite of emotional whiplash.

They create consistency. Safety. Trust.

When you're clear with your limits, others don't have to tiptoe or guess. They know what you're available for and what you're not. That clarity builds stronger relationships—not weaker ones.

Because when people understand your “no,” they also learn how powerful your “yes” really is.

4. Boundaries Are the Ultimate Act of Kindness

We often think setting boundaries is selfish. But in reality, it's one of the most generous things you can do.

Why? Because when you're clear and protected, you show up better.

You're not giving from fumes. You're not resenting the people you love. You're not drained, distracted, or distant.

You're present. You're real. You're available—on your terms.

Boundaries make space for grace. For patience. For love that isn't laced with martyrdom or silent expectations.

They let you say: "I care about you enough to be honest with you. And I care about myself enough to honor what I need."

And that's not just kind—it's courageous.

Boundaries aren't walls. They're road signs. They tell the world where you begin and end—and they help you stay in your lane with power, peace, and purpose.

In the next chapter, we'll explore where your boundaries may be breaking down... and how to build them back stronger than ever.

Let's get back in the driver's seat.

But why is it such a vital practice for living fully?

Boundaries set you up for success in four significant ways: **(I'll make a new branded graphic to replace the one that follows this list**

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They help you define your identity.

They inspire respect from others.

They create clear expectations in your relationships.

They are the ultimate expression of kindness towards yourself and others.

All of these things Boundaries lay the groundwork for a healthier relationship with yourself and others. With that strong foundation, you'll go further in your wanderlust life, and better yet, you'll enjoy the ride.

😊

Let's take a look at each of these individually ...

1. Healthy boundaries help you to define your identity.

At its core, setting boundaries determines the person you desire to be. This process involves making conscious choices about who and what you permit into your life.

Many facets of our identities aren't indeed our own; they've been assigned or projected onto us by others. Associate professor Dr. Shahram Heshmat suggests that our identities may develop indirectly, influenced by parents, peers, and role models. Young individuals often mold their identities based on how they believe their parents perceive them.

Take a moment to reflect on your identity. Can you distinguish the parts that don't quite feel like "you"? Perhaps your body reacts with heat when someone cuts you off in traffic, and you find yourself uttering

phrases that echo your dad's. Maybe you've dismissed specific career paths or creative pursuits because you've always been told you're more "left-brained." Or it could be that you harbor certain beliefs about your physical appearance due to teasing by a childhood friend. If we aren't attentive, someone else may exert more influence over our identity than we do ourselves—effectively taking the wheel of our lives. We end up becoming the person they want us to be rather than staying true to who we are.

If you've ever altered yourself in a relationship to fit your partner, you understand how devitalizing and disheartening this can be. Over time, you might feel like an imposter in your own life. Establishing healthy boundaries illuminates your bona fide self, empowering you to become the person you want to be. Boundaries and veracity go hand in hand. The better you understand your true self, the more effectively you can engage with the world, or to continue the highway metaphor, the more skilled a driver you become.

From time to time, we all bend some rules of the road, just as in life. Sometimes, it's neglecting to come to a complete stop at a stop sign, and other times it's exceeding the speed limit. We might take on more than we should or forsake self-care for seemingly more urgent matters. However, just as you'd never contemplate intentionally rear-ending a slow driver in front of you, there are specific rules in life that you wouldn't (or shouldn't) ever consider breaking. When establishing healthy boundaries, you decide which rules can be flexed and which must be adhered to without compromise. Your choices unmistakably reflect your identity.

Setting boundaries empowers you to become the most genuine and

complete version of yourself in everything you do. It elevates how you interact with the world and consequently impacts how the world responds to you.

Healthy boundaries are not merely protective barriers—they are the foundation of self-definition. At their essence, they represent deliberate choices about who and what we allow to shape our lives, directly influencing the person we strive to become. Too often, our identities are unconsciously sculpted by external forces: parents, peers, societal expectations. As Dr. Shahram Heshmat observes, identity can develop indirectly, molded by the projections of others. Consider how children internalize their parents' perceptions, gradually adopting those lenses as their own.

Pause and examine your own sense of self. How much of it feels authentically yours? Perhaps you notice inherited reactions—a flash of heat when cut off in traffic, echoing your father's temper. Or unexplored passions dismissed because you've been labeled “left-brained,” your creativity stifled by someone else's narrative. Maybe deeply held beliefs about your appearance trace back to a childhood friend's teasing. Without conscious reflection, these borrowed fragments risk becoming the blueprint of your identity, leaving you a passenger in your own life, steered by others' agendas.

This dissonance manifests painfully in relationships where we contort ourselves to fit another's vision. Over time, the erosion of self becomes unbearable; you feel unmoored, performing a version of you that rings hollow. Boundaries, however, act as a compass. They are not rigid walls but discerning filters that clarify your values, needs, and aspirations. Like a driver mastering the road, they enable you to navigate life with

intentionality—knowing when to pause at a stop sign, when to accelerate, and which lines must never be crossed.

Critically, boundaries demand discernment. Some rules bend without consequence, while others safeguard our core integrity. Just as a driver never considers intentionally causing harm, certain life boundaries are inviolable. By defining them, you reclaim ownership of your story. You become the author, not the ghostwriter, of your identity.

The result is transformative. Living within self-defined boundaries fosters authenticity, deepening how you engage with the world—and how the world, in turn, meets you. You move from surviving to thriving, from mimicry to self-actualization. In setting these limits, you don't restrict your existence; you focus it, channeling your energy into becoming the fullest expression of who you truly are.

2. Setting boundaries inspires respect from others.

(We have this

quote in a side box of the page. Please check quote as I adjusted it from last version.)

As you create and honor these boundaries, a remarkable transformation unfolds—self-love flourishes and is a force to be reckoned with.

It isn't solely about indulging in occasional bubble baths or shopping sprees (though those are undeniably enjoyable!). It's about wholeheartedly and unreservedly embracing self-love by prioritizing your own needs.

Self-respect often manifests as a commitment to honoring what you undisputedly need and following through on your goals. Once this love

and respect for yourself takes root, others will treat you with the same regard, bolstering your confidence to stay firmly on your way to health. And let's be honest, confidence is a trait everyone desires.

Interestingly, we naturally treat individuals differently who are confident. Dr. Vivek Nityananda, a research associate at Newcastle University, conducted a study revealing that people who project self-assurance in their actions and behaviors are perceived as high performers by their peers. From an evolutionary standpoint, recognizing confidence in others helped our ancestors select strong mates or dependable hunting companions. In the modern world, confidence indicates someone who could be a valuable business associate, coach, or romantic partner.

Consider social media influencers, particularly those in the "fitspo" realm. These individuals use various platforms to inspire, educate, and motivate others to adopt healthier lifestyles through exercise and balanced nutrition programs or memberships. Their confidence radiates through the screen, making them influential figures in the lives of many. Confidence is a powerful trait that opens doors and invites respect from those around us.

Here is the link <https://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=Fitspo>)

As you exhibit unrelenting respect for yourself by cherishing your time, emotions, and energy (more on how to achieve this later!), you're not just setting an example - you're igniting a potent signal to others about how you expect to be treated.

They'll see that you hold yourself and those around you to elevated standards, and they'll understand what it takes to earn that coveted seat

riding shotgun in your metaphorical car.

Consider this analogy: Picture yourself driving behind someone who habitually brakes too suddenly or waits until the very last second to use their turn signal. You may feel annoyed and frustrated with their disregard for their safety and others. In response, you may be tempted to cut them off or make unexpected turns, essentially mirroring their lack of respect.

Imagine encountering a driver who diligently checks their mirrors, decelerates predictably, and provides ample notice with their turn signals. You'd likely reciprocate their considerate behavior. They've demonstrated respect for their own safety and yours, prompting you to do the same in return.

Now, let's bring this concept to the workplace. Think about a coworker who consistently takes on extra responsibilities and workloads. They say yes to every project that comes their way, volunteer for overtime, and organize office events. They complete all their tasks even when they sacrifice sleep, lunch breaks, or personal time. Others continue to pile on more requests because they've shown a willingness to blur boundaries around time and work. They feel comfortable assigning additional responsibilities because this coworker has proven they'll get the job done. Unfortunately, this constant cycle leaves them perpetually overwhelmed and lacking in self-care.

Conversely, you may have another coworker who handles their workload efficiently and meets deadlines consistently. However, they occasionally decline project offers to ensure they have enough personal time or to recharge their energy, practicing a healthy work-life balance. As a result, colleagues think twice before making unnecessary demands

on their time. They wouldn't feel right submitting work late or making last-minute requests. This individual's self-respect influences those around them to take notice and treat them with the same respect. Add Aretha Franklin's song, 'R-E-S-P-E-C-T,' to your road trip playlist!

3. Setting boundaries is not just a benefit for you; it's also a gift to others.

By steadfastly upholding your boundaries, you offer a clear picture of what others can anticipate from you and what you expect from them. Boundaries serve as guardians of our energy. Have you ever said yes to excessive commitments only to drown in obligations and overbooking? In such situations, some people resort to canceling everything, while others push through with a lingering bitterness that taints their interactions, negatively affecting those in their orbit.

This vacillation between over-commitment and a resolve to avoid agreeing to anything ever again is a telltale sign of a lack of boundaries. This pattern breeds emotional turmoil and confuses the people around us. Can a friend ask us to commit to hosting a weekly kids' playdate or volunteering at our child's school? Can a teacher request our presence as a chaperone on a field trip or to work the concession stand during football season? And what about colleagues who seek volunteers for charity events or participation in professional associations? Can a boss or coworker assume we'll respond to messages after hours or over the weekend? Then there's the family, daring to inquire about holiday plans.

If those around us are unaware of our boundaries, they will naturally gravitate towards choices that serve their interests rather than ours. They'll assume we operate by their same rules, and it's easy to feel taken advantage of.

However, when you establish and communicate healthy boundaries, those around you understand what to expect, aligning their actions with your guidelines. They no longer feel like tiptoeing around you or making unreasonable demands. For instance, if you proactively share that you're committed to assisting a family member in need every other Friday, your loved ones comprehend your availability. Clearly defining your boundaries promotes confidence within your relationships and may even deepen them. Moreover, your positive example might empower those in your circle to establish their boundaries.

4. Setting healthy boundaries champions kindness to yourself and others.

Above all, when you respect yourself, your time, emotions, and energy, you not only empower your own growth but also become more attuned to and considerate of others' boundaries.

Consider this scenario: you oversleep, spill coffee on your white blouse, and find yourself running late for work. In such a situation, you will likely resent the slow driver ahead of you. You might mutter curses, attempt aggressive maneuvers to pass them, or lay on the horn in frustration.

However, picture an alternate reality: you efficiently complete your morning routine, enjoy a cup (or five, who's counting?) of coffee with your partner, and leave for work on time. In this scenario, you're more inclined to look at the sluggish driver in front of you and notice the "Student Driver" sign on the car's roof. You may consider that the student driver is learning the rules of the road and navigating cautiously to gain confidence that only experience delivers. You'd likely display more patience with their driving and enjoy the ride. Why? Because

you've respected boundaries that rejuvenate your demeanor and actions.

Your kindness and consideration for others will soar to new heights. And it's easy to recognize that this benefits everyone involved.

Setting healthy boundaries ranks among the most powerful actions you can take for yourself and those around you. Yet, it's not always a straightforward task. In the next chapter, we will explore which areas of your life could benefit from healthy boundaries, followed by strategies to establish them. Before you know it, you'll be cruising smoothly along the highway to health.

CHAPTER 2

We've established why boundaries are vital. They are the guardrails on the highway of life, keeping you on track through every twist and turn without plunging into pandemonium. Before you can install these protections, you have to identify exactly where they're needed.

Three vital areas of your daily life likely need boundary TLC: your time, your emotions, and your energy. Think of these as the primary signposts guiding your way. When they're ignored, it's like driving without GPS—you'll eventually find yourself in a cornfield when you were aiming for the beach. Let's get to work.

Your Time - Where the Hours Magically Vanish

Have you ever found yourself on autopilot, arriving at work or school with no memory of the drive? It's the same fog that descends when you've spent an hour mindlessly scrolling through social media, or when you hit a milestone birthday and wonder, "Where did the decades go?"

Does life sometimes feel this way, too? It's eerily similar to looking up from your social media feed, and an hour has vanished when you meant to spend just five minutes scrolling. Or you celebrate a birthday and wonder, "Where did the decades go? What have I been doing with my life?"

Time is like sand in an hourglass—once it slips away, it's gone forever. To regain control of this finite resource, we need what I call "time mindfulness." It is the active antidote to sleepwalking through your own life.

Time mindfulness is like flipping the switch from zombie mode to placing you in the driver's seat of your life. You're no longer a passive passenger; you're the captain of your ship, the maestro of your symphony, the grand poobah of... well, you get the idea.

Everyone grapples with the fact that there are only 24 hours in a day. However, once you inaugurate the necessary parameters, your time may not feel as constrained. Healthy boundaries safeguard what matters most to you and clearly delineate what you're willing and unwilling to invest your time in.

Think of healthy boundaries as the bouncers for your schedule, deciding who gets in and who stays on the curb. This might mean closing your work email at 6:00 PM, enforcing a digital curfew, or declaring weekends a sacred space for family and friends. .

In a world that moves like a caffeinated hummingbird, technology promises connection but often delivers deep disconnection. The lead suspect in this digital drama is the ever-present smartphone. We've all seen the driver with their eyes glued to a glowing screen while zooming down the highway—it's a hazard on the road, and it's just as dangerous in the grander scheme of your life.

The damage inflicted by cell phones isn't confined to the asphalt and metal of the highway. It sneaks into the quiet corners of your everyday life where you least expect it. The constant pinging of notifications disrupts your peace, the endless scroll steals your precious minutes, and the FOMO (Fear of Missing Out) gnaws at your contentment.

Have you ever noticed that an increasing number of individuals, yourself included, have developed an almost inseparable bond with their smartphones? During conversations, they surreptitiously steal glances at their glowing screens, often oblivious to the exasperated eye-rolls they elicit from the living, breathing souls sitting right beside them. It's as if they're unwittingly vying for the dubious title of 'Most Likely to Surrender Social Awareness Cues.'

The genuine concern here isn't the devices but the conspicuous lack

of awareness accompanying this behavior.

Creating healthy boundaries around your time involves identifying areas that require more structure to support your life goals.

But how do you figure out where these time boundaries should go? No need for a magic 8-ball; just ask yourself a few questions:



DD**(I thought of questions that have two parts to them! Thoughts? Please note this section is the ONLY one that has this. If you believe it is helpful or like it for the reader, please advise and I'll make it happen for the other 2 sections.)

What three distractions or time-wasting activities prevent me from starting my day with my ideal morning routine?

Do I have clear priorities and goals for spending my time, or am I constantly allowing others or external circumstances to dictate my

schedule and agenda?

(Circle one that applies to you.)

Am I saying “yes” to people or plans that overextend my time out of obligation or guilt rather than genuine desire or interest?

Yes or No

What technology or digital distractions am I allowing to consume my time and attention instead of being present with the people I love?

Am I scheduling time for fundamental self-care practices, such as exercise, mindfulness, sleep, or leisure activities?

Yes or No

Am I frequently running late to work, meetings or missing deadlines because I underestimate how much time I need to show up?

Yes or No

Am I constantly multitasking or trying to do too many things at once, which often results in decreased productivity and effectiveness?

Yes or No

Here are some more examples using road trip metaphors:

Am I driving my own car, or am I a passenger in someone else's car, letting them control the direction and pace of my adventure?

Am I making room for unexpected detours and spontaneous adventures, or am I rigidly adhering to my plan and missing out on opportunities for growth and exploration?

What “specific” passengers or distractions tend to disrupt my productivity, self-care, and family time, and how can I minimize their impact?

What pit stops can I schedule daily to help me stay energized and creative?

When I feel like I’m losing direction or focus, what “road signs” or cues can I look for to help get me back on track?

These questions can elucidate what boundaries will help protect your time. You may have noticed that they all drive towards the same underlying question: "What (or who) do I allow to violate my time?" I use "allow" very deliberately because your answers are things you can control. Your life is an intimate space, and who or what you allow into it is entirely your choice. And that's excellent news because it means you can initiate changes!

Mobile Mayhem

On the road, cell phone usage endangers your physical well-being and that of others. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) reports that driving while texting is six times more dangerous than driving drunk. Did you know that reading or sending a text takes your eyes off the road for about five seconds? The potential for chaos is staggering, isn't it? The same distraction can apply to your personal and professional life.

The 5-Second Challenge:

It takes 7 seconds to make a first impression but only 5 to lose your way. Let's place this as a quote on the side too.

Visualize yourself behind the wheel of your car, driving at 55 MPH, and you look away to read or answer a text. In those 5 seconds, you'd cover the length of a football field, utterly blind to what's in front of you. Consider this:

Picture missing five seconds of a meaningful conversation with your loved ones. Overlooking a crucial detail during an essential meeting at work. Envision the potential impact of not being fully present for a mere five seconds when making a critical decision.

These few seconds may appear fleeting, yet they wield the power to shape your personal and professional trajectory. The distractions that divert your focus from what matters extend far beyond the road. Recognize the value of these moments, and you'll gain a newfound appreciation for the importance of staying fully engaged in your daily life.

Remember, every second counts, and how you choose to invest those precious moments will alter the landscape of your life.

So, let's focus on how time mindfulness can salvage our relationships and sanity.

This is where our “time mindfulness” concept can make a real difference. When you feel the impulse to grab your phone, pause and ask yourself why. Is it a conscious decision aligned with your life's goals and values, or am I on autopilot? Go even deeper to notice whether your

decision is requisite or respectful. These small moments of reflection can help you regain control over your irreplaceable time and steer clear of the hazards of mobile mayhem.

And if this phone addiction has you in its clutches, don't fret. Tools are at your disposal, like apps that track your usage, screen time records, and even alarms that sound when you reach your daily limit.

The respect you earn when you give your full attention to those around you isn't just for them; it's for you, too. So, let's commit to being more present on the road and in life. Buckle up; the ride's about to get intriguing!



TOURIST INFO CENTER

APPS TO HELP YOU WITH TIME BOUNDARIES

- **Screen Time** (comes pre-installed on iPhones!); Allows you to set time limits for apps and phone use in general and sends weekly reports of screen time.
- **Cold Turkey Blocker**: Choose websites and apps to block during select focus periods
- **Mindful Browsing**: Provides gentle reminders when you click on browsing time-wasting sites
- **DriveMode**: Silences texts, calls, and alerts while you drive

Let's make our own blue highway sign for the above. I don't believe the tourist center is a fit for this one yet blue is the highway sign for a service! Maybe the graphic could be a wellness or well-being center or info.

Consider setting boundaries to reclaim your time from the clutches of distraction. Texting and calls become off-limits when I'm behind the wheel, ensuring my safety. Likewise, around 8 PM, my phone finds a quiet corner at home, allowing me to preserve my peace.

Yet, not just the phones nibble away at our precious moments. The relentless work hours that trespass into family time, meetings stretching beyond their welcome, and the constant stream of inquiries from your partner as you desperately try to concentrate are all-time thieves in disguise. Perhaps it's the reality TV show you never really liked. Yet everyone is watching it (hello FOMO), those obligatory book club meetings that find you several chapters behind, now feeling more like a job than a pleasure, not to mention the Sisyphean task of tidying up your kids' or dog's scattered toys.

An infinite array of demands clamor for your attention, underscoring the need for sturdy boundaries. Your time is a finite and invaluable resource.

But here's the twist: your time is a valuable resource and only has a limited supply on this spinning blue planet. You have the privilege to be selective about how and to whom you give it.

Your Emotions

In the beautiful mural that is our life, emotions are the vivid colors that paint our experiences. Each day, we encounter a whirlwind of stimuli – from the headlines that grab our attention to the conversations

that shape our views and even the peculiarities of strangers lining up in a frenzy to board their flight. These interactions are the sparks that ignite our emotional furnace. In response, we experience a spectrum of emotions: joy, fear, anger, sadness, ambivalence, gratitude, benevolence, confidence, and a kaleidoscope of others.

Emotions are our constant companions, subtly influencing the course of our thoughts and behaviors. Many of us tend to be less familiar with this area of our lives. Did you know that, on average, we experience one or more emotions a staggering 90% of the time?

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4689475/> Our lives are, at their core, an emotional ecosystem, a living, breathing realm where feelings ebb and flow. Apparently, we didn't learn everything we needed to know in kindergarten!

Even in healthcare, where nurses, social workers, and therapists set emotional boundaries as a best practice, the emotional landscape is still profoundly impactful. These professionals understand the crucial role emotions play in their work.

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9539887/>

Yet, within this vibrant diversity of emotions, a subtler truth emerges – life's relentless barrage of circumstances can leave us emotionally drained, impacting our decision-making abilities. Emotional exhaustion can cloud our judgment like a fog that descends upon us.

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6119549/>

You can, however, shield your emotional energy, ensuring it remains supportive and sustainable rather than dispersed and depleted. Boundaries are your armor against the emotional onslaught of toxic people, draining subjects, and anything else that jeopardizes your emotional well-being. To determine what emotional boundaries you need, pay attention to the emotional landscape of your days by asking the following questions:



Am I taking responsibility for my emotions and their impact on others,
OR am I blaming external factors and circumstances?

Circle one that best applies to you

Am I practicing self-compassion and giving myself grace when I
experience challenging emotions?

Yes or No

Are my emotions influencing my decision-making in a productive or
destructive way?

Circle the one that best describes you

When, where, and with whom do I feel defensive or reactive?

When _____

Where _____

Who _____

When facing a significant personal or professional setback, do I know how to practice emotional resilience exercises for my grief and disappointment?

Yes or No

How do you react when someone tries to guilt-trip or emotionally blackmail you? Do you find yourself manipulated and disheartened, or do you maintain confidence in the firm boundaries you've established to safeguard your emotional well-being?

How do you feel when someone disrespects your time by being consistently late (in personal or professional environments)?

Which purpose does holding onto resentment serve my well-being, healing or hindering?

*****DD ... if you think that it may resonate better with reversing hindering or healing ... please do so.***

Do I tend to over-apologize?

Yes or No



Yara Heary, a psychologist based in Perth, Australia, sheds light on a fascinating cultural perspective related to over-apologizing. She

suggests that the tendency to over-apologize can be influenced by the society or community one belongs to. 'When we examine this behavior across genders, we find that women tend to engage in it more frequently than men, especially in patriarchal societies,' explains Heary.

<https://psychcentral.com/lib/why-you-cant-stop-apologizing-even-when-youre-clearly-not-at-fault#thank-you-vs-sorry>

In such societies, individuals, particularly women, often grapple with doubts about their abilities, their self-worth, and their right to occupy space in their environments. Over-apologizing can emerge as a behavioral manifestation of these doubts. In these settings, the constant need to apologize may arise from a complex interplay of cultural expectations and personal insecurities. It's as if they've unknowingly entered a never-ending roadwork zone on the highway of their lives, with 'Sorry' signs dotting the route, making it challenging to navigate smoothly.

As a thought-provoking example, a decade-old study suggests that women tend to apologize more frequently than men, (<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/20855900/>), reinforcing Heary's observation. You may recall the viral 2017 commercial from Pantene, the 'Sorry, Not Sorry' campaign, which humorously spotlighted this phenomenon. It highlighted the prevalence of women apologizing unnecessarily due to societal conditioning.

<https://youtu.be/TcGKxLJ4ZGI?si=SUE4lU5gPvSXylAZ>

Moreover, excessive apologizing may not just be a behavioral habit; it can be linked to various health implications. Research in these settings has suggested that over-apologizing may correlate with depression, social anxiety, generalized anxiety disorder, obsessive-compulsive

disorder, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). So, it's not just a matter of politeness but also a potential indicator of one's emotional well-being.

In popular culture, we can take a page out of NCIS Special Agent Gibbs' book and remember his Rule #6: 'Never say you're sorry. It's a sign of weakness.' While this may be a fictional character's maxim, it underscores the importance of understanding when and how to apologize and when it may be more appropriate to assert one's boundaries with confidence.

But fear not, for in the realm of emotions, boundaries are the compass that guides us. Just as you wouldn't willingly bring your least favorite person along for an adventure, enduring their ceaseless nagging or unsolicited advice, you needn't carry the emotional baggage of those who sow negativity and drama in your life.

You know the ones – the chronic complainers and opinionated voices on social media, the relentless purveyors of doom and gloom in the news, and the cynical coworkers whose criticisms know no bounds. These emotional hitchhikers can turn your journey into a tumultuous ride.

Consider a world where you curate your emotional entourage. A world where you decide who rides shotgun on your voyage through life. The good news is you get to exercise that power. You can set emotional boundaries like you'd establish a "no entry" sign for these emotional hijackers.

You needn't justify these boundaries to anyone. They are your emotional sanctuaries, and you have the authority to create and uphold them as you see fit. Like a protective shield, these sanctuaries safeguard your emotional well-being and offer the inner peace essential to thrive in a world brimming with emotions.



TOURIST INFO CENTER

APPS TO HELP YOU WITH EMOTIONAL BOUNDARIES

- **Happify:** Features activities and games proven to reduce stress and negative thoughts
- **Headspace:** Provides guided meditations
- **Superbetter:** Uses game play to build real-life resilience

*** Same idea as above with tourist info signs, make our own. I inserted a well-being center sign to use as a gauge. Open to ideas, well-being info, zen zone, etc.***

Your Energy

Have you ever met someone and instantly felt a connection like you've known each other for lifetimes? That's the energy you crave in your life - positive, flowing, and invigorating. The kind of connection that fills your soul and fuels your spirit.

You've also experienced the opposite, haven't you? That person who, in just a brief encounter, seems to have a gift for exhausting you before any conversation even starts. That is the energy to protect yourself from or limit your interaction with others. Think of it like a tiny leak in the tire of your metaphorical car; it'll leave you flat.

Consider the relentless 24-hour news cycle, a never-ending stream of disheartening stories mixed with trivial content no one truly needs. It has become a constant background noise, filling our TVs, social media, news apps, streaming platforms, podcasts, and smartwatch alerts. Overwhelming, right? It's important to stay informed, but it's time to take control if you find yourself derailing.

Your positive energy is a powerful force, a magnet that attracts like-minded individuals and opportunities. It's more than just a feeling; it's a potent influence on your mental and physical well-being. Here's why it's crucial to preserve it:

In Your **Personal** Life:

Reduces Stress and Anxiety: Positive people tend to handle stress more effectively, focusing on solutions rather than dwelling on problems. This approach makes stress less daunting and easier to manage.

Improves Mental Health: Staying positive can enhance your mental health by reducing stress, anxiety, and depression. Positive emotions, like joy and gratitude, create a positive feedback loop, forming new neural pathways that reinforce positive thinking and behavior.

Increases Confidence & Motivation: Good vibes make you feel more confident and boost motivation, helping you work toward and achieve your goals. Your brain rewards accomplishments with dopamine, a neurotransmitter that promotes happiness and motivation.

Boosts Physical Health: Research has revealed that a positive outlook can have physical health benefits, such as enhancing the immune system, reducing inflammation, and lowering the risk of chronic diseases like heart disease and diabetes.

In Your **Professional** Life:

Increased Productivity and Creativity: Good vibes in the workplace increase productivity and creativity, making it a thriving innovation hub. It's the energy that fuels a successful team project.

Employee Engagement and Profitability: Good vibes increase employee engagement and profitability. It builds stronger relationships with colleagues and improves customer satisfaction. The magic ingredient turns a regular business meeting into a collaborative and successful endeavor.

Professional Drive and Focus: Good vibes enhance motivation and help maintain focus in your career. They're like finding the right frequency on your radio to hear your favorite upbeat song or catch that sports channel, steering clear of the unfulfilled static in professional relationships. It's time to switch the dial and find your harmony!

As discussed in Chapter 1, recognizing the behaviors of different energy vampires is an imperative initial step to protect your energy. Remember, setting boundaries for the people you spend time with is also perfectly acceptable. Whether it's a colleague, a family member, or an old friend who drains your energy, even those you love can deplete your reserves. Christiane Northrup, MD, aptly calls these people "energy vampires." They often seek out positive individuals who exude kindness and patience, expecting them to be an unending energy source. Here's the catch: being constantly around such individuals, be it a relative, romantic partner, or boss, can result in a sense of depletion and unwanted chronic stress, leading to a host of physical and mental ailments.

Remember, I'm not suggesting you make dramatic scenes when

setting boundaries. Sometimes, you don't even need to voice your limits; just take a step back and safeguard your energy for the things that truly matter.

Consider these points when evaluating where you may need energy boundaries:



Do I notice a dip in my energy when trying to keep up with others' expectations?

Yes or No

Am I actively focusing on positive self-talk and reframing the negative to attract and keep my good energy?

Yes or No

Am I attentive to specific environments that drain my energy?

Yes or No

Am I actively endorsing the energy vampires in my life or reconsidering the people I surround myself with personally, socially, or professionally? Refer to page 6 for energy vampire descriptions.

Circle one that best describes you

What types of conversations or interactions leave me feeling enervated?

What thoughts or beliefs contribute to my negative energy?

Why would making gratitude a default setting in my life be a sustainable energy source?

Do I prioritize spending time in nature and connecting with the world around me to nurture and recharge my energy?

Yes or No

***DD I did not include road trip metaphor questions with emotions or energy ... do you think all we need is the one for time or shall I get a few for emotions and energy?

Reflect on the types of conversations or interactions that leave you feeling drained with your time, emotions, and energy, and then utilize the metaphorical stoplight below to steer your decisions, select the appropriate courses of action for your path, and get ready for the rubber to hit the road to your better future!