

Managing Boundaries: Scripts & Frameworks

TL;DR · QUICK SUMMARY

- Boundaries protect your energy, time and wellbeing; they're not about being difficult.
- A simple framework: notice, name, and communicate the boundary clearly.
- You don't need to justify a boundary extensively to make it valid.
- Practising a few go-to scripts makes boundaries easier to hold in the moment.

A Note Before You Read On

This resource offers general guidance and reflects common experience, not professional, legal, medical or financial advice. It is not a substitute for employment law, HR policy, occupational health guidance, or individual professional assessment. Every person's experience of neurodivergence is different, so please adapt anything here to your own situation. The Uniquely Wired Network does not accept liability for decisions, actions or outcomes arising from the use of this material. If you need advice specific to your circumstances, please consult a qualified professional (e.g. HR, legal, medical, or financial advisor).

Why This Matters

Many neurodivergent people (especially those who mask) find boundary-setting particularly hard, often from years of prioritising others' comfort over their own needs.

What This Might Look Like

- Saying yes to extra tasks even when already at capacity.
- Struggling to end conversations or meetings that are overrunning.
- Feeling guilty after asserting a need, even a reasonable one.

A Simple Boundary Framework

- Notice: pay attention to early signs of discomfort, overwhelm, or resentment; these often signal a boundary is needed.
- Name: get clear (even just to yourself) on what the boundary actually is.
- Communicate: state it clearly, calmly and without over-explaining.

Boundary Scripts for Common Situations

- Declining extra work: "I'm at capacity right now. Could this wait, or could something else move?"
- Ending an overrunning meeting: "I need to head off for another commitment. Can we pick this up separately?"
- Protecting focus time: "I'm not available for calls during this block, happy to catch up straight after."
- Declining social invitations: "Thanks for thinking of me. I'm going to sit this one out."

Helpful Phrases You Can Borrow

You don't have to use these exact words. Take what fits and leave the rest.

"I want to be upfront that I can't take this on right now without dropping something else."

"I need to keep this time protected. Can we find another slot?"

Quick Tips

- A boundary doesn't need a long explanation to be valid.
- Short, calm and consistent beats long and apologetic.
- It's okay if a boundary feels uncomfortable at first; that fades with practice.
- Boundaries can be adjusted over time as your needs or capacity change.
- You can hold a boundary kindly; firmness and warmth aren't mutually exclusive.
- If a boundary is repeatedly ignored, that's useful information about the relationship or workplace.

Want to Know More?

- See our companion guide: “Managing Energy: Spoons & Burnout Cycles”; boundaries are often about protecting energy.
- A therapist or coach experienced with ND clients can help build boundary-setting skills further.

Before You Go

Setting boundaries gets easier with practice; it's a skill, not a fixed personality trait.

Protecting your own capacity isn't selfish; it's what lets you keep showing up sustainably.