



How to Use Boundaries in Marriage: 2 Words, 3 Steps

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**A boundary should let you say no to the behavior, and still say yes to the marriage.
Love unites this entire approach.**

CONDITIONAL

Not unconditional. Against a specific behavior you can articulate truthfully.

Ask: What is the repeated disregard for safety here?

It can be intentional, reckless, or compulsive. It still counts.

PROTECTIVE

Not punitive. You are trying to identify the smallest thing that still keeps you safe.

Ask two things:

1. What is the smallest thing she could do to show regard for safety?
2. If she won't do that, what is the smallest thing I can do to mitigate harm?

BEFORE YOU REACH FOR IT

Standards are the good things you want in your marriage; boundaries are the bad things you won't allow. Unmet standards often don't require all three steps.

- 1 **Express the hurt. Ask for buy-in.**
Start in good faith. Assume she doesn't realise.

"When you do that, it really hurts me. It makes me feel unsafe in this specific way."

- 2 **The boundary of insistence.**
Name the smallest thing she could do. This one still depends on her.

"I'm going to have to insist we do this differently."

- 3 **The boundary of refusal.**
Name the smallest thing you will do. This one is yours to control.

"If you won't do that, then here is what I won't do."

HOW TO LIFT THE BOUNDARY

What she does: meets your boundary of insistence.

What you do: say thank you, stay committed, and don't immediately push for buy-in.

If you're in physical danger, please get third-party help.

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