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THE BOUNDARIES GUIDE · WORKBOOK

Saying no without feeling guilty.

For women who are there for everyone and lose themselves along the way.

16 PAGES 14-DAY JOURNAL PRINTABLE

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BEFORE YOU START

I'm glad you're here.



Maybe you know this: someone asks, and your "yes" is out faster than your thought. Later you feel annoyed, exhausted or you withdraw. And next time it happens again.

In my work with families and women in crisis I have seen this very often. It is almost never a lack of knowledge. What is missing is safety in the body, the safety to stay with yourself when someone is disappointed.

This is not a book to read through. It is a workbook. It helps you recognise your pattern, find sentences that fit you and try them out step by step.

Rumeysa

How to use this workbook

1
Print it out or keep a notebook next to it. Writing works differently from thinking.

2
Take 15 minutes per chapter. Not everything in one evening.

3
Be honest, not perfect. Nobody but you reads this.

4
Then start the 14-day journal. That is where change happens.

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CHAPTER 01

Why boundaries are so hard.

If saying no is hard for you, that is not a character flaw. At some point adapting made sense. It protected you.

1. Your nervous system wants safety

Our body does not cleanly separate real danger from social tension. A disappointed look, a cool tone, an unanswered message: to an alert nervous system this can feel like an alarm. Besides fight, flight and freeze there is a fourth protective response, often called “fawn”: **pleasing, appeasing, adapting.** If you learned early that harmony means safety, you reach for this response automatically.

2. Family rules keep working

Every family has unspoken rules. “We don’t argue.” “What will people think?” “Don’t burden Mum.” As a child you follow them because you want to belong. As an adult these rules often keep running in the background, even though the situation has long changed.

3. Self-worth is tied to performance

Many women have learned: I am valuable when I am needed. Then every no feels like risking your place.

What this means for you

You don’t have to become “stronger”. You can show your body, step by step, that a no is survivable. Every small boundary you set that goes well is a new experience for your nervous system.

Which of these do you recognise? Write one sentence about it.

CHAPTER 02

Self-test: how are your boundaries?

Tick spontaneously. There is no right or wrong. The test is a snapshot, not a diagnosis.

STATEMENT	RARELY 0	SOMETIMES 1	OFTEN 2
1. I say yes before I have thought about whether I want to.	○	○	○
2. When someone is disappointed, I immediately feel guilty.	○	○	○
3. I explain and justify myself at length when I decline something.	○	○	○
4. I take on tasks so there is no trouble.	○	○	○
5. I only notice hours later that something bothered me.	○	○	○
6. I feel responsible for other people’s feelings.	○	○	○
7. I am often exhausted, even though I did “nothing special”.	○	○	○
8. I don’t dare to ask for something I need.	○	○	○
9. I answer messages immediately, even when it doesn’t suit me.	○	○	○
10. I am silently angry at people I have never said no to.	○	○	○
11. I am afraid of being seen as selfish or difficult.	○	○	○
12. My own plans are the first thing I postpone.	○	○	○

My points: _____ of 24

0 to 8 points
You already have a good sense of yourself. Use the workbook to work through single difficult situations.

9 to 16 points
You often give more than is good for you. Chapters 04 to 07 are especially valuable for you.

17 to 24 points
Adapting is a deep pattern for you. Be patient with yourself. Start with very small boundaries, and get support if it weighs on you heavily.

CHAPTER 03

The four kinds of boundaries.

A boundary is not a wall. It is information: this is how I am well, this is how I am not. It shows others how to treat you well.

Physical boundaries

Closeness, touch, space, rest, sleep, food.

Example: "I don't want to be hugged today."

Where do you feel pressure here right now?

Emotional boundaries

Which feelings you carry, which conversations you have, how people speak to you.

Example: "I won't continue talking in this tone."

Where do you feel pressure here right now?

Time boundaries

What you give your time and energy to, breaks, the end of the working day.

Example: "I'm not available on Sundays."

Where do you feel pressure here right now?

Digital and material boundaries

Availability, messages, money, things you lend.

Example: "I no longer answer messages in the evening."

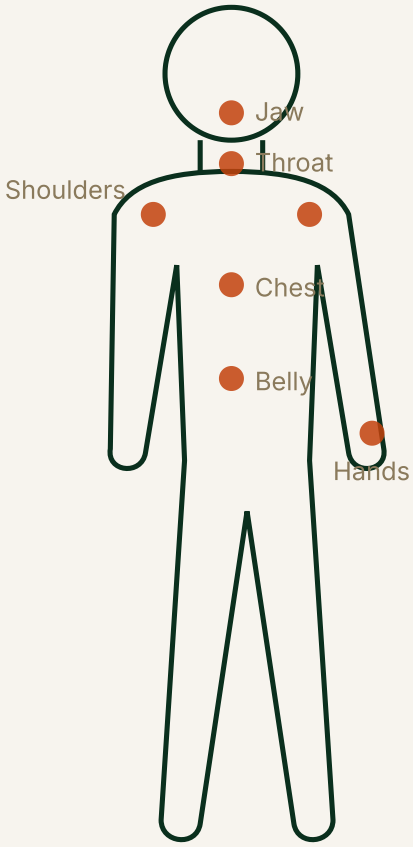
Where do you feel pressure here right now?

Good to know: A boundary is about **your** behaviour, not other people's. "You can't call me anymore" is a demand. "I don't answer the phone after 9 pm" is a boundary. You keep it, no matter how others react.

CHAPTER 04

Your body notices first.

Long before your head thinks “no”, your body has already said it. Noticing these signals early gives you time for an honest answer.



How do you notice that something is too much? Tick.

- [ ] My jaw tightens.
- [ ] My throat gets tight, I clear my throat.
- [ ] My shoulders pull up.
- [ ] My heart beats faster.
- [ ] My stomach tightens or I feel queasy.
- [ ] I smile even though I don’t feel like it.
- [ ] I get tired or feel empty inside.
- [ ] I feel resentment, often only later.
- [ ] Other: _____

Resentment is a signpost

Resentment often appears where a boundary has already been crossed. It is not a bad feeling, it is a message: something here is not okay for you.

With whom or in which situation do you feel these signals most often?

CHAPTER 05

Where your pattern comes from.

We did not choose many of our reactions ourselves. We learned them in our family, often over generations. Recognising this lets you choose anew.

Which sentences did you often hear or sense growing up?

- ☐ "Be nice and don't cause trouble."
- ☐ "Family comes first."
- ☐ "Work first, then fun."
- ☐ "You're the big one / the sensible one."
- ☐ "What will people think?"
- ☐ "Don't make such a fuss."
- ☐ "We don't talk about things like that."
- ☐ "A good girl doesn't talk back."

Which sentence was "law" in your family? Write it down.

Who in your family also hardly ever said no? What happened to that person?

How would you rewrite that sentence for yourself today?

Example: "Don't cause trouble" becomes "I'm allowed to speak up, even if it's uncomfortable for a moment."

A look across generations

In my work I use the genogram for this: a map of your family across three generations. It shows patterns that are hard to see on your own. Often this is the moment guilt gets lighter, because it becomes clear: this did not start with me.

CHAPTER 06

The boundary formula in four steps.

You don’t have to be quick-witted. It is enough to gain a moment of distance and then say clearly what is true for you.

1

Notice

Pay attention to your body signal from chapter 04. That is your starting cue.

2

Pause

Don’t answer right away. One sentence buys you time (see below).

3

Say it clearly

Short, friendly, without a long explanation. Speak about yourself.

4

Hold it

The uncomfortable feeling afterwards is normal. It is not proof that you were wrong.

The most important sentence in this workbook

“Let me think about it and I’ll get back to you by tomorrow.”

This sentence protects you from the automatic yes. In the time afterwards your nervous system can calm down, and you decide consciously.

Explain less

The longer the explanation, the more there is to argue with. One reason is enough, often none is needed. Compare:

Before

“I’m so sorry, I’d really love to, but this week is really busy and I don’t know if I can make it, maybe it could work somehow, but …”

After

“Thank you for thinking of me. This time I’ll say no.”

Write your own “after” version for a situation that is coming up:

CHAPTER 07

30 sentences you can say.

Mark the sentences that feel like you. Read them out loud. A sentence you have said before comes out more easily when it matters.

Buying time

- „ *Let me think about it and get back to you.“*
- „ *I can’t decide that right now.“*
- „ *Let me check my calendar.“*
- „ *I need a moment before I answer.“*
- „ *I’ll answer you tomorrow, calmly.“*

Saying no kindly

- „ *Thanks for the invitation, I won’t be joining this time.“*
- „ *That doesn’t work for me right now.“*
- „ *I don’t want to take that on.“*
- „ *That’s too much for me, I’ll say no.“*
- „ *No, but thank you for asking.“*

Offering a partial yes

- „ *I can’t do the whole day, but I can do an hour.“*
- „ *Not this week, gladly next week.“*
- „ *I can give you the contact, nothing more.“*
- „ *I’ll help you get started, the rest you do yourself.“*

When someone keeps pushing

- *„I understand you're disappointed. My answer stays the same."*
- *„I have made my decision."*
- *„I don't want to discuss this any further."*
- *„As I said: no. (Repeat calmly, without new reasons.)"*

In the family

- *„I love you, and I'm not coming this year."*
- *„I don't want to talk about that over dinner."*
- *„I decide that for my own life."*
- *„I'll call you when I have time."*

At work

- *„If I take this on, what should be left for later?"*
- *„I can do it by Friday, not by today."*
- *„I don't read messages after work."*
- *„That's not my responsibility. Please ask … ."*

In relationships

- *„If you speak to me like that, I will end the conversation."*
- *„I need time for myself tonight."*
- *„It matters to me that we decide this together."*
- *„I don't want you to read my phone."*

My favourite sentence:

CHAPTER 08

Your situations, your answers.

Write down three to six situations where you keep saying yes although you mean no. Start with the easiest one.

SITUATION / PERSON	WHAT I DO SO FAR	WHAT I WANT TO SAY INSTEAD	DIFFICULTY 1 TO 10
Example: a colleague asks on Friday at 4 pm if I can take over her report.	*I say yes and stay late.*	*“I can’t manage that today. I’ll look at it first thing Monday.”*	*6*

Tip: Practise first with situations rated 3 or 4. Every small boundary that works makes the bigger ones easier.

CHAPTER 09

When guilt shows up.

It will come, especially at the beginning. That doesn't mean you did something wrong. It means you did something **new**.

The 90-second exercise

- [ ] **Stop.** Place one hand on your chest or belly.
- [ ] **Breathe out slowly.** 4 seconds in, 6 seconds out. Six rounds.
- [ ] **Name it.** "This is guilt. It feels big, and it will pass."
- [ ] **Remind yourself.** "I can say no and still be a good person."
- [ ] **Stay with your decision.** You don't have to check it again now.

Guilt or responsibility?

Real responsibility

I hurt someone or broke a promise. Then an apology helps.

Old guilt

Someone is disappointed because I took care of myself. Then what helps is: hold it, don't backpedal.

When someone reacts strongly

Some people react to new boundaries with pressure, silence or accusations. That often shows how important the boundary was. Your safety comes first: if you are threatened or afraid, get help. In Germany the **Hilfetelefon Gewalt gegen Frauen** (helpline for violence against women) is free and available around the clock at **116 016**, also in English and Turkish. Elsewhere, please contact your local emergency services.

CHAPTER 10 · WEEK 1

The 14-day boundaries journal.

Two minutes every evening. It's not about setting a big boundary every day. Just noticing counts. For the feeling: 0 = very uncomfortable, 10 = right and calm.

DAY	WHERE DID I FEEL SOMETHING?	WHAT DID I SAY OR DO?	FEELING AFTERWARDS
1			0 · · · · · 10
2			0 · · · · · 10
3			0 · · · · · 10
4			0 · · · · · 10
5			0 · · · · · 10
6			0 · · · · · 10
7			0 · · · · · 10

DAY	WHERE DID I FEEL SOMETHING?	WHAT DID I SAY OR DO?	FEELING AFTERWARDS
8			0 · · · · · 10
9			0 · · · · · 10
10			0 · · · · · 10
11			0 · · · · · 10
12			0 · · · · · 10
13			0 · · · · · 10
14			0 · · · · · 10

What was easier for you in week 2 than in week 1?

AFTER 14 DAYS

Your review.

Which boundary did you set that you are proud of?

What happened when you said no? What had you feared?

With whom is it still hard, and maybe why?

Which one boundary will you set for yourself next month?

Your boundary card

Write your most important sentence on it, cut out the card and put it in your wallet, or take a photo and use it as your lock screen.

My sentence

RUMYONIQ · I'M ALLOWED TO SAY NO.

- - - Cut out - - -

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HOW TO CONTINUE

You can go far on your own. With support often faster.

If you notice that your pattern runs deeper than a workbook can reach, we can look at it together. Calmly, without pressure, via Zoom.

Free introductory call · 25 minutes

You tell me where you are. I tell you honestly whether and how I can help. No obligation.

Clarity session · 45 minutes

We look at one situation or pattern in focus, and you leave with a clear next step.

Packages over several weeks

For example with the genogram: we make visible which family patterns still steer you today, and work on them.

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This workbook does not replace medical or psychotherapeutic treatment. If you are in a very bad place: emergency 112 · in Germany, Telefonseelsorge 0800 111 0 111 or 0800 111 0 222 (free, around the clock) · Hilfetelefon Gewalt gegen Frauen 116 016. © Rumeysa Misir, rumyoniq.de. For private use. Sharing with friends is expressly allowed, selling and publishing are not.