

Boundaries Fun Sheet

The only way to train people to respect your boundaries is to set them and keep them.



The Request: _____

Healthy boundaries are necessary for living a fulfilling life. This is ESPECIALLY TRUE for us as artists, who need the time to become the best we can be.

If you're struggling with a request someone has made of you, try this *fun sheet* to figure out if you need to draw a boundary instead of helping someone else.

The chart on page 2 and the diagram on page 3 are visual tools to help you decide whether you need to draw a boundary when someone asks for a "piece of you" by asking for your time, energy, or talent.

Directions: Fill in as many spaces as you can think of in the columns of the chart on page 2. Then, try to convert any CONS to NEUTRALS or PROS by adjusting the request to fit your needs, as well.

The goal is to get as many items out of CONS as possible. Of course, turning a CON into a PRO is best, but sometimes the most you can achieve is to make it a NEUTRAL.

NEUTRALS can tip the scales either way. They can fulfill a need and support a "YES," or add to your feeling of heaviness, constriction, or contraction. See how many NEUTRALS you can turn into PROS.

Say, for example, you listed "I'll get paid" in the neutral column. You need money to survive, getting paid at least fills a need. But, if the pay is for work unrelated to your "dream job," is there an assignment you can do for this client closer to that dream job? If you can make that change, put it in the "HECK YEAH" Zone of the PROS column.

Move as many items as possible to the PROS column by asking for adjustments.

Make sure you get as much information as possible before you agree to a request. If a freelance gig pays well for example, but the client will be calling you at all hours because they expect unlimited access for paying you so well, you need to know.

When you've done all you can do to optimize the situation, go to the diagram on page 2 and put an "X" in a box for each space you filled in for that category.

If one of your *cons* is a straight-up "I don't want to do this" then it's a firm but loving, "No," unless you can CONVERT it to a NEUTRAL or a PRO with requests of your own.

Doing a request doesn't mean you can't get something in return.

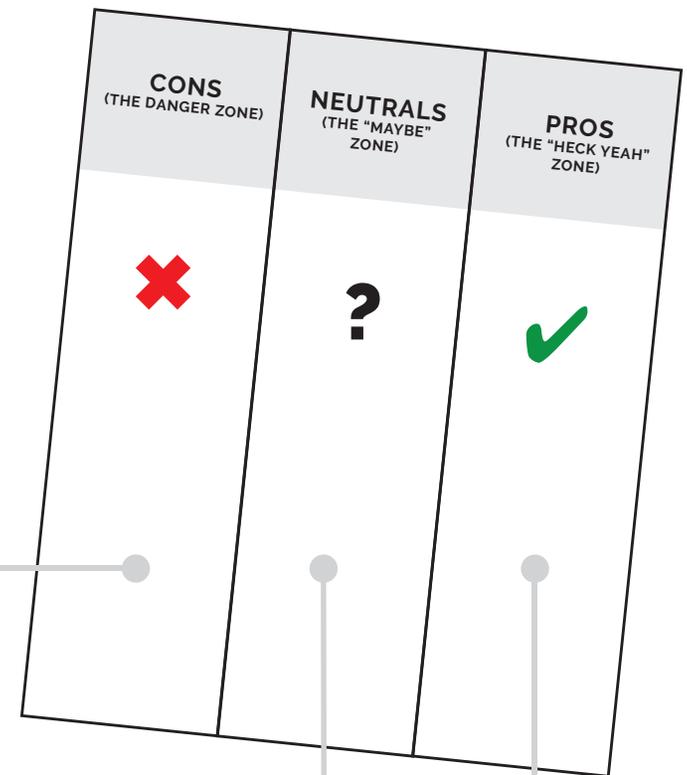
THE DANGER ZONE

The **CONS** go in the Danger Zone. These are the ways agreeing to this request interferes with your goals or needs *or just feels bad*.

Subjective SHAMING SHOULDs go in this column, too, such as, "I really *should* be a good friend." **SHAMING SHOULDs are harmful.**

THE "MAYBE" ZONE

This is where your NEUTRALS go. While they are often objective reasons you "should" do something, be careful not to "*should all over yourself*." **If the shoulds still leave you torn, they may not be enough.** Make sure anything in these boxes at the very least meets your needs without adding to your stress.



THE "HECK YEAH" ZONE

This is where your **PROS** go. List how agreeing to the request helps fill a need or goal of *yours*.

See how many items you can move to this column from either of the other two by asking for a concession.

Boundaries Fun Sheet

The only way to train people to respect your boundaries is to set them and keep them.



The Request: _____

Directions: Fill in as many spaces as you can think of in the columns below. Then try to convert the negatives to neutrals or positives by asking for something you need in return. If you can move it, cross out the original item and move it over.

Remember: When someone makes a request of you, you're allowed to ask for something **you** want or need. **You're also allowed to say "No" if you really want to say "No."**

When you've done all you can do to optimize the situation, go to the diagram on page 2 and put an "X" in a box for each space you filled in for that category.

CONS: THE DANGER ZONE List the CONS and SHAMING SHOULD (these are based in guilt). Then move as many items out of this column as you can by asking for adjustments to make each aspect neutral or positive.	NEUTRALS: THE "MAYBE" ZONE List the NEUTRALS (OBJECTIVE SHOULD) that have left you undecided. Then move as many items out of this column into the PROS Zone by asking for something you need or want.	PROS: THE "HECK YEAH" ZONE List the HECK YEAHS here, as well as anything you were able to adjust to make ideal that you took out of another column.

Check here if you've done this "favor" for the same person in the past and they promised they wouldn't ask again. If they are a **"Repeat Boundary Offender,"** fill four boxes in the DANGER Zone on the next page. This tells you the request should probably be denied.

Boundaries Fun Sheet

The only way to train people to respect your boundaries is to set them and keep them.



The Request: _____

The DANGER Zone [CONS]

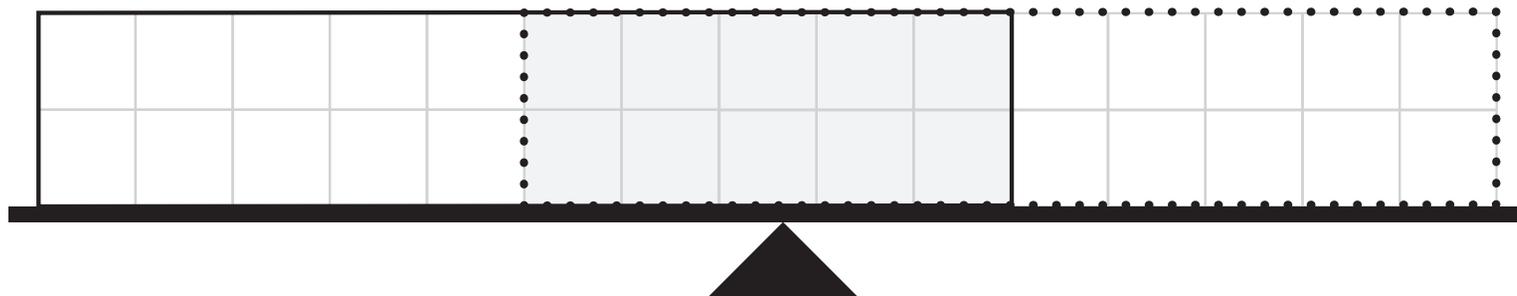
This is where the **CONS** go that interfere with your goals or needs or just feels bad.

The MAYBE Zone [NEUTRAL]

This area is for the **OBJECTIVE SHOULD**s that have left you undecided that you couldn't convert to PROS.

The HECK YEAH Zone [PROS]

This is where your **PROS** go that help fill a need, want, or goal of yours.



Directions: Put an "X" in a box on the diagram for each item noted on the chart from the previous page after you've converted as many negatives to neutrals or positives as possible.

Hopefully, you'll end up without any negatives when it's time to fill in the scale. The idea is to minimize the negatives to make someone else's request worth your time, energy, and talent.

When you're done, look at what your diagram is telling you about the best way to respond to the request. Picture yourself responding according to what the diagram is indicating.

How does it FEEL? Expansive is a "YES," and contracted is a "NO."

Considerations: If your scale is weighed too negatively and there's no way to improve the balance by asking for a concession of your own, it's a "No," *and that's okay.*

Maybe you can suggest a solution that fulfills the requester's needs *that doesn't involve you, just to be helpful.* Even if you can't, a "No" is a "No."

You are training this person to respect your boundaries, so don't say "yes" if it's a "no."

Remember: If this is not the first time this request has been made of you by this person, even though you told them last time that "it was the last time," put four "X"s across the bottom of the Danger Zone. *These cannot be converted to neutrals or positives, and you should probably say "No" with love.*

Boundaries Fun Sheet

The only way to train people to respect your boundaries is to set them and keep them.



The Request: My colleague Janet wants "give" me her freelance graphic design client. She's vague as to why, she's just acting like it's a "gift" and keeps saying how "awesome" the client is.

Directions: Fill in as many spaces as you can think of in the columns below. Then try to convert the negatives to neutrals or positives by asking for something you need in return. If you can move it, cross out the original item and move it over.

Remember: When someone makes a request of you, you're allowed to ask for something **you** want or need. **You're also allowed to say "No" if you really want to say "No."**

When you've done all you can do to optimize the situation, go to the diagram on page 2 and put an "X" in a box for each space you filled in for that category.

CONS: THE DANGER ZONE List the CONS and SHAMING SHOULD (these are based in guilt). Then move as many items out of this column as you can by asking for adjustments to make each aspect neutral or positive.	NEUTRALS: THE "MAYBE" ZONE List the NEUTRALS (OBJECTIVE SHOULD) that have left you undecided. Then move as many items out of this column into the PROS Zone by asking for something you need or want.	PROS: THE "HECK YEAH" ZONE List the HECK YEAHS here, as well as anything you were able to adjust to make ideal that you took out of another column.
I already have a day job or side-gig that I'm trying to reduce hours on to make my art.	Janet claims it will only require 10 hours a week.	I can drop a current client who's causing too much stress for these 10 hours a week instead.
I'm exhausted already.	The pay is more than what my existing clients pay.	I can work less and get paid more (so long as I really drop that high-stress client to take the work).
Even though it's freelance work, it's pulling me away from my fine art goals.	It's good for my reputation as a reliable, skilled freelancer.	
The idea of more commercial work feels like contraction, not expansion.	If it will be steady enough for me to drop one of my current clients who's high-stress, it's a neutral.	
I have a show coming up I will barely have time to be ready for as it is.	It could work if I can start after my show opens.	
I can't get clarity from Janet about why she doesn't want this client for herself — could be problem client.	Reason Janet is giving up client must be something that won't cause me stress working with them.	I have confirmed the client pays on time, is respectful, and communicates clearly.

Check here if you've done this "favor" for the same person in the past and they promised they wouldn't ask again. If they are a **"Repeat Boundary Offender,"** fill four boxes in the DANGER Zone on the next page. This tells you the request should probably be denied.

Boundaries Fun Sheet

The only way to train people to respect your boundaries is to set them and keep them.

EXAMPLE



The Request: My colleague Janet wants "give" me her freelance graphic design client. She's vague as to why, she's just acting like it's a "gift" and keeps saying how "awesome" the client is.

The DANGER Zone [CONS]

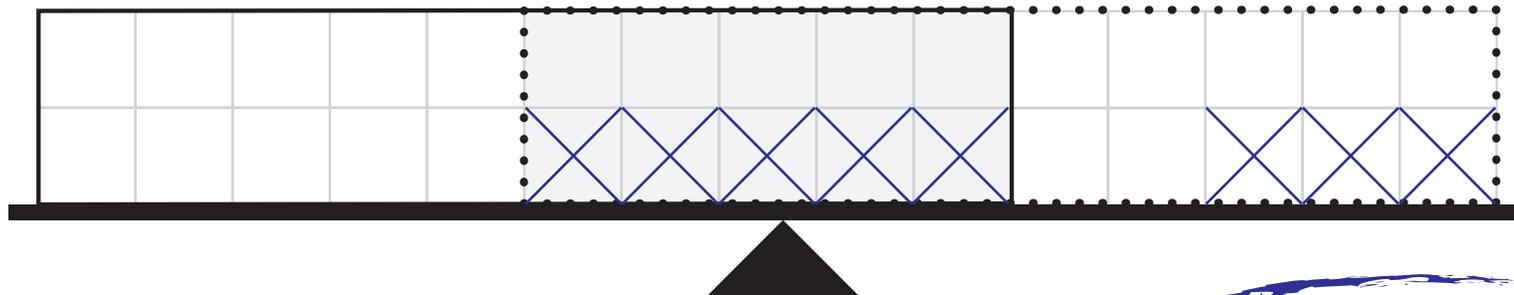
This is where the **CONS** go that interfere with your goals or needs or just feels bad.

The MAYBE Zone [NEUTRAL]

This area is for the **OBJECTIVE SHOULDs** that have left you undecided that you couldn't convert to PROS.

The HECK YEAH Zone [PROS]

This is where your **PROS** go that help fill a need, want, or goal of yours.



Directions: Put an "X" in a box on the diagram for each item noted on the chart from the previous page after you've converted as many negatives to neutrals or positives as possible.

Hopefully, you'll end up without any negatives when it's time to fill in the scale. The idea is to minimize the negatives to make someone else's request worth your time, energy, and talent.

When you're done, look at what your diagram is telling you about the best way to respond to the request. Picture yourself responding according to what the diagram is indicating.

How does it FEEL? Expansive is a "YES," and contracted is a "NO."

Considerations: The balance scale is weighted to help you see the way to improve the balance by asking a question of your own, "and that's okay." Maybe you can suggest a solution for fulfillment that doesn't involve you, just to make sure if you can't, a "No" is a "No."

You are training this person to respect your boundaries, so don't say "yes" if it's a "no."

Remember: If this is not the first time this request has been made of you by this person, even though you told them last time that "it was the last time," put four "X"s across the bottom of the Danger Zone. These cannot be converted to neutrals or positives, and you should probably say "No" with love.

My conclusion: This one doesn't look too bad, so long as it doesn't feel constricting to me and I now want to say "YES!" Remember, it's ALWAYS up to you!