The Boundary Script Cheat-Sheet

Calm, clear words for the moments when 'no' feels hard.

The 3-part formula

1. Acknowledge the person or request. **2. State** your boundary simply, without over-explaining. **3. Offer** an alternative only if you genuinely want to. A boundary is a statement about what you will do, not an order about what they must do.

Work

Situation	What you can say
Extra task when you are full	Thanks for thinking of me. I can't take this on without dropping something else. Which priority should move?
After-hours messages	I'll reply to this first thing tomorrow morning.
Meeting overload	I can join the first 20 minutes. Could you send me notes on the rest?

Family and friends

Situation	What you can say
Unasked advice	I know you care. I'm not looking for advice right now, just someone to listen.
Last-minute plans	I'd love to see you, but I need that evening to rest. Can we do Saturday instead?
Lending money or favours	I'm not able to do that, but I hope it works out.
Intrusive questions	I'm not ready to talk about that. Let's talk about something else.

When they push back

Situation	What you can say
They ask why	I'd rather not go into details, but my answer is still no.
They get upset	I can see this is disappointing. My answer hasn't changed, and I'm happy to talk when we're both calm.
They keep pushing	I've given my answer. I'm going to end this conversation now.

Before you speak: a 30-second check

Breathe out slowly. Ask: 'What do I need here?' Keep your tone steady, your sentence short, and let silence do some of the work. Guilt after a boundary is common and usually fades. It does not mean you were wrong.