
My AwesomeAF Healthy Boundary Handbook

**wisdom, context, conversation
frameworks + tools for people-pleasers +
joy seekers**

**created with love by
Nina L. Kovner, Passion Squared**



PassionSquared. 

A note to my 12 year old self

Dear Nina-

I know you are in a ton of pain. I know things seem so fucking confusing and dark right now. I know all you want is to be seen, loved, accepted, and protected. I am sorry you feel unsafe. I am sorry your internal and external boundaries have been repeatedly violated. No kid should have to go through this shit.

What I also know is you are gonna have a pretty rough time growing up in a boundary-less environment. You are going to morph into whatever people want you to be. You will believe being perfect equals being loved. You are going to put others' needs ahead of your own. You are going to seek love and connection at all costs. You are going to try to fill that gut-wrenching emptiness with addictions, obsessions, perfectionism, workaholism, and dangerous behavior.

But Nina, I want you to know that I see you. I understand why you feel this way. I recognize how deeply you long to be loved and accepted for who you authentically are. I know how badly you have tried to find comfort and relief outside of yourself; in people, places, and things.

Please listen to me... it will get better. It will. But omg you are gonna have to dig fucking deep. You are gonna grow yourself up with the help of a ton of people who love you. And you just won't even believe how awesome your life is going to be. Your pain will become your purpose.

Nina, please hang on. You matter. I love you.

A Note About Notes

If you have ever been in treatment or under the care of a therapist you are familiar with the power of writing notes like this.

They can apply to self, like this one, or to a lost loved one, a betrayal, a hurt, a broken relationship.

This process is powerful and painful.

If you feel safe to do so, I recommend you write a note to your 12-year-old self in the context of this healthy boundary work.

If you are feeling unsure, unsafe, or struggling mentally, check in with a mental health professional before doing any of this type of writing.

This particular note I wrote when I created this book in 2019 to this day is one of the most impactful ones I've written.

It hurts, it stings and it also inspires me to keep moving forward.

Self-awareness is a gift, and one of the purposes of creating this handbook for you.

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Purchase Agreement

Let's set a little context before you begin...

There is a big misconception that having healthy boundaries is similar to being mean, king boss, cold, unemotional, my way or the highway. That is actually the opposite of what healthy boundaries look like.

The truth is, practicing healthy boundaries is the most loving, kind, compassionate thing we can do for ourselves and others.

As Brene Brown says, we are hardwired for connection. And the only way we can authentically connect is through honest and clear communication.

If you feel you are being mean or guilty for practicing healthy boundaries, that is a possible red flag that you have some codependence to work on.

With all that said, there are some people, places and things that are simply toxic, unsafe and unhealthy for you. You will need to determine that.

Also, be mindful this is very difficult to navigate when you are dealing with narcissists and gas lighters. Please work with a therapist on those situations.



The Result of Healthy Boundaries

**Less anger, angst, and
resentment**

Free time to do what you love

**Increased self-worth, love,
esteem, and acceptance**

Empowerment

Authenticity

More courage

Effective leadership

Healthier relationships

Happier team + clients



Why I made this for you (+me)

I see you struggle.

Whether it's handling a no show, pricing negotiation, charging your worth, saying no, a tough discussion with a team member or leader, it doesn't have to be such a fucking struggle. Healthy boundaries are usually what's missing in these situations.

I want you to feel more joy.

Life is so very short. The sooner you begin to practice healthy boundaries, the more joy you will feel. Period. And you deserve to feel some fucking joy.

Real empowerment is freedom.

Freedom from fear, the struggle, the anxiety, the angst, the sleepless nights, the pain, sadness, suffering + freedom from knowing you have NO control over others. Healthy boundaries empower you to get back in the drivers seat of your biz , brand + life.



Repeat After Me

**I only have control over
my own thoughts,
feelings, actions, and
reactions.**

**I cannot control other
people, places or things.**

**I accept we all have our
own feelings, thoughts,
projections, and
experiences.**



My Personal Boundary Experience

I did not learn about boundaries until I was 41 and I had the privilege of doing deep codependency work at one of the world's leading treatment centers which I reference throughout this book.

Living a boundary-less life almost killed me + created so much angst.

I still struggle, um, hello, I'm a fucking "can't we all just get along" love addict Libra.



My Personal Boundary Experience

When I entered treatment in 2007, I was told my emotional age was 12. The year when I began experiencing immense physical and emotional abuse.

I am a recovering codependent, and I need this book as much as you do.

Having unhealthy boundaries and/or no boundaries cost me a lot; friendships, jobs, and partners.

The shit and abuse I allowed were unreal. Some days, it still makes me sad.



A Note of Caution

Growing up emotionally is very painful, difficult, and a lifelong process. This book is intended to support your bigger healing journey, not replace it.

Boundary-less people do not like boundaries. Ask for what you want and need and let go of the outcome.

I am writing this book from experience in treatment, therapy, and real biz + life situations.

I am not a therapist or expert. Please seek out professional support. Resources will be provided towards the end.



**You can choose
courage or you can
choose comfort, but
you cannot choose
both!**

-Brené Brown



WTF are boundaries?

To begin to understand boundaries, we must first understand codependence.

Pia Mellody, the founder of The Meadows Recovery, says...

"In our culture, many practices that have commonly been associated with "normal" parenting actually impair development and growth.

This impairment can lead to developmental immaturity, or what I call codependence."



Codependency Core Symptoms by Pia Mellody

Difficulty experiencing appropriate levels of self-esteem.

Difficulty acknowledging and meeting our own wants and needs.

Difficulty setting functional boundaries.

Difficulty owning our own reality.

Difficulty experiencing and expressing our own reality moderately.



Personal Boundary Systems by Pia Mellody

A personal boundary system is an internal mechanism that both protects as well as contains an individual's body, mind, emotions, and behavior.

It serves three purposes.

To help an individual to protect themselves from being victimized.

To prevent an individual from being an offender.

To give an individual a sense of self.



Types of Boundaries by Pia Mellody

Internal Boundaries

Your thinking, feelings, and behaviors.

Example: Gossiping about a person or sharing secrets that are not yours to share.

External Boundaries

Your physical space, touch, and consent.

Example: Touching or moving a person's personal or professional belongings.



Boundary Violations by Pia Mellody

Internal Boundary Violations

Yelling + screaming

Name calling

Ridiculing

Lying

Breaking a commitment

Patronizing

Telling others who they should be or what they should do

Negative control

Being sarcastic

Shaming a person

External Boundary Violations

Standing too close to a person without consent

Touching a person without consent

Getting into a person's belongings without consent

Listening to a persons conversation without consent

Not allowing a person their own privacy/violating a persons privacy



Daring to set boundaries is about having the courage to love ourselves, even when we risk disappointing others.

-Brené Brown

Boundaries As Emoji's

No Boundaries

You put everyone's needs ahead of your own, no matter the situation or consequences + TMI all over the place. You are likely resentful and blame others for your own choices.



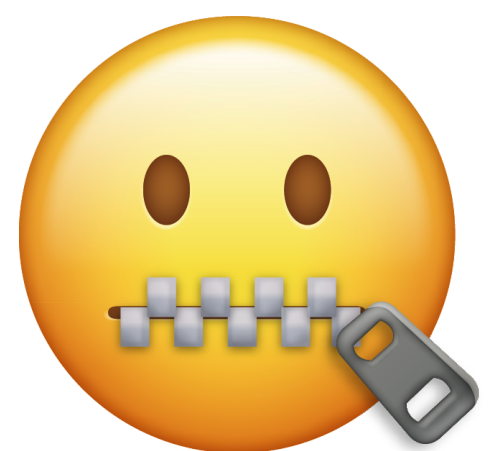
Healthy Boundaries

You understand in order to stay happy, healthy, and safe, you engage in courageous conversations to protect your space, time and energy. You respect others' spaces, energies, and needs.



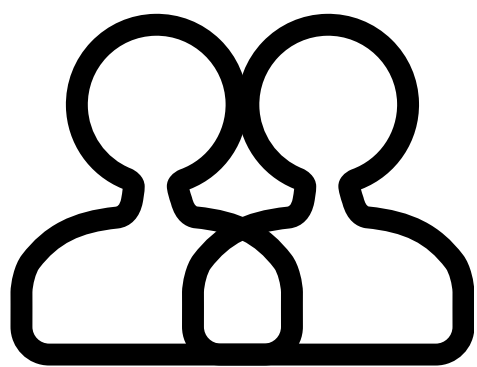
Walls

You struggle with self-worth and have decided it's easier to put up walls and shut people out than to have healthy conversations and relationships.



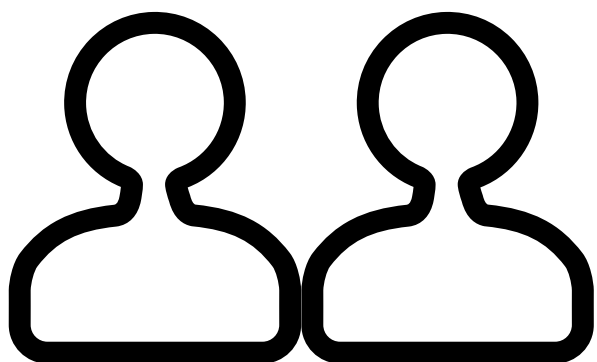
Differences in Dependence

I always thought independence was the goal until I learned about interdependence. WOW!



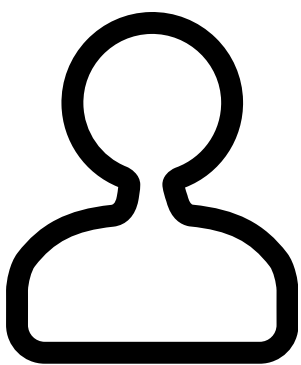
Codependent

I cannot tell the difference between where you end and I begin. I cannot breathe without you. Your needs are more important than my well-being.



Interdependent

I see you. I honor and accept your individual process and experiences. I love you and love me. I cherish connection.



Independendent

I do not need anyone. People suck. Fuck everyone.



How healthy boundaries help you as a human + leader.

Stay true to your vision.

Keep your brand focused.

Stay aligned with your values.

Lead with love.

Coach with courage.

Charge your worth.

Protect your energy.

Control your schedule.

Create more time + space.

Communicate with clients/team.

Reduce anxiety.

Build-self worth.



Think of a time you were unclear or had a leader, friend, partner who was unclear. The experience left you confused, misunderstood, stressed or angry.

What was the result of that confusion and/or miscommunication?



Notes

Notes



The Conversation Frameworks

You may be thinking, all of this theory is nice Nina however how do I handle the day-to-day issues I face in my business and life?

Good question, on the next several pages you will see some common conversations and what no boundary and healthy boundary responses look and feel like.

Use these as frameworks for you to create your own.

It takes practice. And courage. And you got this!

And be sure to use the conversation cards that came with this book for when you need a little refresh.





Healthy Boundary Conversation Framework

Try using this framework when you are facing a difficult or uncomfortable conversation, you know, the ones you try to ignore or avoid.

What is the situation?

How am I feeling right now?

How do I want to feel?

What outcome am I seeking?

My unhealthy boundary response

My healthy boundary response

My next steps

What were the results of using healthy boundaries in this situation?

Biz Boundaries IRL

Situation

Team member consistently breaks business agreements (rules)

No Boundary Response

Do nothing. Avoid. Make excuses for them.

Healthy Boundary Response

Be clear the team member understands the agreements.

Ask them how they are doing, what is happening with them, and what type of support do they need to adhere to the agreements.

If they ask for support, be clear with what you can provide, and keep your promise.

Ask them how they will ensure they can adhere to the agreements and be clear about what the consequences are if they do not.

The Conversation

Before you begin the chat, be sure you have consent and are in a safe, neutral space.

You: Nina, I noticed you came in 15 minutes late three times last week. I wanted to check in and see what is happening and how you are feeling.

When you come in late, I make up that you are struggling with something and I feel disrespected.

Nina: I know, it's just, there is so much happening at home and I didn't want to tell you because I don't want to be fired. I'm sorry.

You: Nina, your wellness and happiness are a priority to me along with you adhering to our agreements. What can I do to support you in showing up on time?

Nina: I guess just knowing that I can talk to you and doing my best to not bring my drama into work. Also, could I have next Wednesday off to take care of these things?

You: You can always talk to me. I'm happy to hear you are aware of the impact of your lateness and lack of communication. Yes, you can have next Wednesday off. I understand life happens. I also need to be clear that you understand if you come in late one more time we must part ways which would make me super sad. Do you understand?

Nina: Yes, I do. I really love it here and I am committing to showing up on time and if for any reason I cannot, I will communicate with you honestly and clearly.

You: Thank you Nina. We value you as a team member and want you to be able to stay.

Biz Boundaries IRL

Situation

A client is abusive and/or does not respect your boundaries.

No Boundary Response

Do nothing. Avoid. Make excuses for them.

Healthy Boundary Response

Contact client via writing letting them know you have decided you are not a good fit for them and thank them for their business.

Depending on the situation, if you feel they would be a good client for someone else, in your written communication you can provide them a referral. Again, this is very situation-dependent.

Do not reply to their response, no matter what it is. It will likely be ugly, as boundary-less people do not like boundaries, duh.

The Conversation

Before you write your note to the client, take time to process your feels and thoughts. You are in the driver's seat. Do not rush this.

You: Hi Nina. I wanted to reach out to let you know that after careful consideration I realized we are not a good fit for each other. Thank you for being my client. I wish you all the best.

Client: This is disappointing and shocking. What happened?

You (if it's an abusive client): NO RESPONSE!

Client: You suck I am writing a 1 star Yelp review right now.

You: NO RESPONSE.

You (if it's a first time broken boundary): We have had 5 discussions about showing up to your appointment on time. What I make up about that is you have no respect for me, my time or my business. I am sure there is someone out there that can work with your schedule.

Client: OMG I am so sorry, I had no idea you were so upset. I promise to show up on time. I promise. Please take me back.

You: Your response here will be directly connected to how much longer you will accept this type of behavior. One time, two times, maybe, five time showing up late is a pattern that is not likely to change.

Biz Boundaries IRL

Situation

A client says you are too expensive.

No Boundary Response

Offer them a discount. Make excuses for them. Put them on blast on social media.

Healthy Boundary Response

Communicate your brand promise and experience to the client and let them know you may simply not be a good fit for them.

If it feels right to you, ask them about their budget and offer them some referrals that better fit their budget.

The Conversation

Before you respond, take a BIG deep breath and remember that not everyone is meant for you and it's perfectly OK for clients to inquire about pricing and determine you are too expensive for THEM.

You: Hi Nina, thank you so much for sharing your feelings with me.

My promise is to ensure you have a relaxing, enjoyable experience which means I only book one client every three hours. This is for sure a premium service. I am happy to help you find a stylist within your budget if you would like help. Thank you!

Client: OMG thank you, that is so nice of you! Yes, I would love some referrals. Thank you. I expected you to block me, LOL

You: Hi Nina. Here are 3 referrals for you. I wish you all the best. Thank you!

Biz Boundaries IRL

Situation

A client says your price increase is insane.

No Boundary Response

Offer them a discount. Make excuses for them. Put them on blast on social media.

Healthy Boundary Response

Communicate your brand promise and experience to the client and let them know you understand if the experience you offer is no longer within their budget.

If relevant and desired, offer them some solutions such as changing their style to a lower maintenance look which would require fewer visits and come out to the same annual costs.

Offer clients a referral to someone who is more within their budget.

The Conversation

Before you have this conversation, take a moment to get grounded and remember you have carefully considered your price increase and it is warranted and you are worth it.

You: Hi Nina, your experience and loyalty mean the world to me and I totally understand that my services may no longer be within your budget.

You: You are currently a vivid, every 4-week client. We could move you into a lower maintenance color that would only require an every 8-week visit which would end up being the same yearly budget you have now. How does that fit for you?

Client: That is INSANE. I want to be a unicorn.

You: I understand. And as you are aware, being a unicorn is super high maintenance. I can refer you to another vivid specialist. Would that interest you?

Client: Sure.

You: Awesome, here is their info. Thank you so much for being a client. I will miss you but totally understand. And if your budget ever changes, you are always welcome back.

If your client says yes to the idea of changing their style, book a consultation and YAY.

Communicating A Price Change

Before you share your new pricing, take a big step back and check in with your feelings. Do you believe your experience warrants the price you are charging? Are you clear on your brand purpose, promise, and people? Are you prepared for the one or two inevitable upset clients? You must first believe what you are doing is right. If you do not, you will get stuck in a codependency spiral.

Healthy Boundary

Dear Clients-

We hope this note finds you well and enjoying your holiday.

Delivering a joyful experience for you is so important to us and in order for us to ensure you are getting the best possible service, we are making some price changes. [Click here](#) to see our new pricing beginning January 1.

If you have any questions, please reach out. We love hearing from you.

Thank you for being an awesome client.

Love, Us.

Communicating A Price Change

Before you share your new pricing, take a big step back and check in with your feelings. Do you believe your experience warrants the price you are charging? Are you clear on your brand purpose, promise, and people? Are you prepared for the one or two inevitable upset clients? You must first believe what you are doing is right. If you do not, you will get stuck in a codependency spiral.

No Boundary

Dear Clients-

I hate to share this with you but I just cannot keep my prices the same.

Costs have gone up, I cannot afford rent or health insurance, too many clients are no showing and I do not get paid if I do not have clients.

I know that it seems expensive but I have held off for so long and I just got a big bill that needs to be paid.

I am so sorry but I am forced to do this. If you have a problem with this, please reach out, and maybe I can work a deal for you.

Thank you for being an awesome client.

Love, Me.

Biz Boundaries IRL

Situation

A client texts you at midnight and will not use your online booking system.

No Boundary Response

Do nothing. Make excuses for them. Ignore it. Respond to the texts angrily.

Healthy Boundary Response

Ensure your client understands your booking system clearly. Check and see if you have provided clear instructions on your new client intake forms, on your website, Yelp page, social pages, etc.

Many times this is simply a matter of not understanding.

Remember, just because someone texts you, there is no need to respond immediately. You get to choose when you respond. Period.

The Conversation

Before you have this conversation, be sure your client is 100% clear on the process to book with you.

You: Hi Nina, I saw your text from last night about making an appointment. Here is the link to book. Looking forward to seeing you!

Client: Can't I just book with you via this text. Just put my name on your books.

You: The booking system is the only way to book with me as I want to ensure you get your preferred day and time, along with getting your text confirmation and reminders. If you need help using our system, I am happy to send over a little video.

Client: Fine.

You: Thank you! Have an awesome day.

If the client does not agree to use your booking system, you then have to make a decision if you are OK, really OK, with them texting you at midnight. If you are not, then the next step is to let the client know you do not have availability for them and you are happy to refer them to a business that is a better fit.

Biz Boundaries IRL

Situation

A team member is trying to gossip/talk shit about another team member to you.

No Boundary Response

Do nothing. Listen to them. Spread the gossip.

Healthy Boundary Response

Gossip is highly destructive, hurtful, unkind, and a major boundary violation.

Simply let the gossipier know you are not interested in having this conversation and if they have an issue with someone, you suggest they speak directly to the person.

The Conversation

This is BIG. Only you can stop the spread of hurtful and hateful gossip.

Team Member: OMG Nina, I gotta tell you about the shit Courage did yesterday. You are not gonna believe it.

You: Hey, I know we have talked shit and gossiped together in the past, but I no longer want to be part of those conversations. I appreciate you respecting my boundary on this.

Team Member: What happened? That's so lame. Just listen.

You: No thank you. (walk away!)

You: Hey, I am not interested in hearing what Courage did. Have you spoken to them about it?

Team Member: OMG no, I don't want them to know I know.

You: It would be super kind of you to talk to them. If it was me, I would want to know.

Team Member: Fine. I will try to go gossip/talk shit elsewhere.

Biz Boundaries IRL

Situation

A leader called you out and shamed you in a team meeting.

No Boundary Response

Do nothing. Make excuses for them. Brush it off. Minimize it.

Healthy Boundary Response

Shaming is abusive. Period. You do not need to accept it or normalize it. It is wrong.

Take some time to breathe and get grounded.

Ask the leader to have a one on one.

Express your concern and sadness around how you were treated and how it made you feel.

You do not have to accept this. But you also need to understand you may be working at the wrong business if

The Conversation

Shaming is not OK. You do not need to suck it up or make excuses for those who are boundary-less and unkind.

You: Hi Nina. I would like to talk to you about our team meeting.

Leader: Yes, Nina, let's chat, what's up?

You: When you pointed at me and made fun of me being the salon slob, I felt shamed, embarrassed, and humiliated.

Leader: OMG I was just joking, I am so sorry.

You: It didn't feel like a joke. What I make up about this is that you are resentful or angry at me but you never once asked to talk to me privately.

Leader: I am so sorry. I actually have been a bit angry because I feel like all I do all day is clean up after you.

You: I feel your angry energy every day and ask that you come to me when you are angry and not shame me in a team meeting. It is not acceptable to me.

Leader: You are absolutely right. Thank you for bringing this to my attention. I am committing to do better. Thank you.

If the leader pushes back and does not take responsibility for their part, you need to understand you are working for someone who does not understand boundaries. You need to decide if that is OK with you.

Biz Boundaries IRL

Situation

A client calls and says you must fit them in for a service.

No Boundary Response

Squeeze them in. Feel resentful. Negatively impact other clients.

Healthy Boundary Response

Being mindful that we all have different priorities is KEY here.

You can offer clients your available days and times. They can choose to take them or not.

You can tighten your pre-booking process so this situation happens less often.

You can choose to squeeze people in, knowing it is your choice and taking responsibility for the impact of that choice.

The Conversation

We all have different priorities and definitions of urgent. Just because it is urgent for them, does not make it urgent for you.

Client: OMG I just went onto your online booking app and it says you have no openings til December 5. Can you get me in before that?

You: Hi Nina, I am fully booked until December 5th. If that day and the times shown work for you, please book it before someone else does.

Client: But I have a party to go to and I need my hair done.

You: Oh Nina, I wish I had an opening. If you would like I can put you on our cancellation list. If anything opens up we will call you.

Client: That's disappointing. I am a loyal client.

You: Nina, I value you as a client so much, this in no way changes that. I simply do not have availability. I do have the name of another stylist who may be able to accommodate you. Would you like their info?

Client: No, I am taking my business somewhere else.

You: I completely understand. I'm sorry my availability doesn't work for you. Have a beautiful holiday. You are always welcome back if you choose. Thank you for being an awesome client.

Biz Boundaries IRL

Situation

A client no show's with no explanation or follow up.

No Boundary Response

Rant on social media. Do nothing. Change your business agreements because one person no showed. Be resentful and take it out on others.

Healthy Boundary Response

Stuff happens. Clients no show. Clients cancel. It happens. It is part of business. Please remember that

Communicating with the client kindly and clearly about your business agreements is key. Never assume they read the fine print on your website or watched your Highlight on Instagram.

Only you can determine how to do business with you. Only you can hold that boundary and agreement with your clients. Remember though, having a clear system (confirmations, reminders) can help eliminate this problem.

The Conversation

Before you respond, be sure your client is OK and that you have had time to get centered and grounded.

You: Hi Nina, I wanted to check in to see if you are OK as I was expecting you at 2 pm for your service.

Client: OMG, I am so sorry. I never got a reminder and somehow completely screwed this up on my calendar. Ugh, I feel awful.

You: I'm so happy you are OK, I was worried. I emailed you but it must have landed in spam. Here is a link to rebook. See you soon!

OR

You: I am so happy you are OK, I was worried. A text reminder did go out last week, yesterday, and this morning. Did you get those reminders? Here is a link to our business agreements. I want to be sure you are clear on our no show policy.

Client: Ugh, I missed all those texts. I really am sorry.

You: I understand. Here is a link to our booking agreement. Thank you!

OR

Client: Yes, I got all the texts but I had an opportunity to go on vacation. Sorry.

You: Nina, I truly appreciate you as a client. Respecting our booking agreement is very important so I can ensure all my clients get the best experience possible. I need to be assured you will respect our agreement. Enjoy your vacation.

Biz Boundaries IRL

Situation

A client cancels last minute.

No Boundary Response

Rant on social media. Do nothing. Change your business agreements because one person no showed. Be resentful and take it out on others. Provide a long explanation about not being able to pay your bills.

Healthy Boundary Response

Stuff happens. Clients no show. Clients cancel. It happens. It is part of business. Please remember that

Communicating with the client kindly and clearly about your business agreements is key. Never assume they read the fine print on your website or watched your Highlight on Instagram.

Only you can determine how to do business with you. Only you can hold that boundary and agreement with your clients. Having a clear system (confirmations, reminders) can help eliminate this problem.

The Conversation

Before you respond, take a big long deep breath and get grounded.

You: Hi Nina, I saw you just canceled your appointment.

Client: Yep, sorry, I got busy.

You: I understand how busy you are and want to be sure you understand our booking agreement. Here is a link if you would like to read it. Since this is your first late cancellation, I will waive the fee. Please be sure you go online to get rebooked. Have an awesome day!

OR

You: Nina, I get it that things come up. Since this is your 3rd late cancellation, you will see a fee charge on your statement. Please use this link to rebook. Thank you! Have an awesome day.

Client: WTF, why are you charging me a fee? I got busy.

You: When you became a client you agreed and signed our booking agreement. Here is the link for you to review.

Client: Fine. Disappointed.

OR

You: Hi Nina, I saw you just late canceled your appointment. As you agreed when you became a client, the 4th time you late cancel we can no longer book you which really bums me out. I wish you all the best.

Client: WTF? You suck.

You: No response!

Biz Boundaries IRL



Situation

A brand asks you to make content for them for free.

No Boundary Response

**Say yes even though you are angry.
Talk shit about the brand.**

Healthy Boundary Response

Depending on your goals and objectives, you may or may not want to give a brand free content

If you do want to provide free content, then be clear with the brand what you are willing to create for them, the timelines, and your expectations of the relationship.

If you do not want to create free content for them, you have every right to gracefully decline the offer.

Remember, not every "opportunity" is an opportunity.

Also remember, for some, exposure is valuable. For others, it's insulting.

The Conversation

Before you respond, get clear on what outcome you are seeking. Be clear, kind, and firm.

Brand: Hi Nina, we love your Instagram and would like to see if you are interested in making content for us?

You: OMG thank you, that means so much to me. Clearly, I love your brand and what it stands for. Can you give me some more details such as the type of content, the frequency, your expectations, and budget?

Brand: Well, we do not have a budget but we have a ton of followers and you will get so much exposure.

You: I am so grateful for the offer and understand that some artists want and need exposure. That is not the case for me. If anything changes, please let me know. Thank you again for thinking of me.

OR

You: I understand. While I cannot commit to a specific amount of content, I am happy to send you some stuff from time to time. Thank you for the opportunity.

OR

You: I understand. I work best with clear guidelines and expectations. When you have more information, I am happy to chat. Thank you!

Biz Boundaries IRL



Situation

A company asks you to speak for free.

No Boundary Response

**Say yes even though you are angry.
Talk shit about the company.**

Healthy Boundary Response

Depending on your goals and objectives, you may or may not want to speak for free.

If you see value in the opportunity, then be clear with the company on what you are willing to do for them, the timelines, and your expectations of the relationship.

If you do not want to speak for free, you have every right to gracefully decline the offer.

Remember, not every "opportunity" is an opportunity.

Also remember, for some, exposure is valuable. For others, it's insulting.

The Conversation

Before you respond, get clear on what outcome you are seeking. Be clear, kind, and firm.

Company: Hi Nina, we would like to invite you to give a talk at our event.

You: OMG thank you, that means so much to me. I love your company. What type of talk? Who is the audience? What are the dates? What is your budget?

Company: Well, we do not have a budget but we have a ton of customers and you will get so much exposure.

You: I am so grateful for the offer and understand that some educators want and need exposure. That is not the case for me. If anything changes, please let me know. Thank you again for thinking of me.

OR

You: Your event sounds awesome. Do you have a budget for expenses like travel, hotel, and food? If so, I am interested in chatting.

Company: No, we have no budget.

You: While I would LOVE to be there and so appreciate the offer, this is not an investment I can make at this time. If anything changes, please let me know. Thank you!

Life Boundaries IRL



Situation

A family member wants to talk politics and you have very different belief systems.

No Boundary Response

Engage in the conversation and feel unsafe, attacked, and angry.

Healthy Boundary Response

You are under no obligation to engage in conversations that threaten your safety, well-being, and peace.

Do your best to breathe and not be reactive.

If you need time to respond, excuse yourself, take a moment, get grounded, and come back when you feel ready to respond.

The Conversation

Before you respond, get clear on what outcome you are seeking. Be clear, kind, and firm.

Family Member: OMG did you see that story about the President on the News?

You: No, I did not. This is not a topic I want to discuss with you.

Family Member: Snowflake!

You: When you call me a snowflake I feel attacked, unseen, and judged. Please do not call me names.

Family Member: You are being so sensitive.

You: If you cannot respect my need for not being called names, I will need to leave. Can you stop?

Family Member: I do not want you to leave, I love you. I will do better. I am sorry.

You: Thank you.

OR

You: I asked you not to call me names. You did it two times in a row. I feel unsafe when that happens. In order to take care of myself, I'll be heading out now.

Family Member: But we are sorry. We will stop.

You: Thank you. I need some time to process that. I will see you real soon.

Life Boundaries IRL



Situation

A friend calls and asks you to join them for dinner.

No Boundary Response

Say yes, even though you are exhausted and have already overcommitted yourself.

Healthy Boundary Response

You can love your friend, be there for them, hold space for them, and still decline the invite.

When engaging in these conversations, remember that the most loving thing you can do for yourself and others is self-care.

If you really do not want to go, offer another date for you to get together.

The Conversation

Before you respond, get clear on what outcome you are seeking. Be clear, kind, and firm.

Friend: Hi Nina, I miss you so much. Let's go to dinner tonight, I already made a reservation for us.

You: Hi friend, OMG I miss you too. Tonight does not work for me, can we do Friday?

Friend: Seriously? I feel like you don't care about me.

You: I love you and care about you a fuck ton. Tonight just is not going to work for me. Can you do Friday?

Friend: No.

You: I understand. Let me know more days that work. I can't wait to see you and catch up. Love you.

Friend: K.

You: Does Friday work?

Friend: Sure

You: YAY, see you Friday. Love you.

Life Boundaries IRL

Situation

A loved one texts you and says we need to talk and you are with a client.

No Boundary Response

Leave your client and respond with OMG what's wrong?

Healthy Boundary Response

Remember, we are all walking around with our own feelings, issues, and priorities. Just because someone texts you does not mean you need to respond immediately (unless it's an emergency of course).

When someone says we need to talk, our human brains usually go to the worst possible issue, situation or problem.

Do your best in these situations to be where your feet are, and wait until you have information to then decide how to act, react or feel. HardAF, I know. Just try.

The Conversation

Before you respond, get clear on what outcome you are seeking. Be where your feet are and listen with curiosity.

Loved One: We need to talk.

You: Hi love, I was with a client and just saw this. Can we make some time tonight to chat? I have another client coming in right now.

Loved One: No, I need to talk to you now.

You: Is it an emergency?

Loved One: No. Just call me.

You: I love you and understand you want to talk. I can call you after my next client. How does 4 work for you?

Loved One: Call me now.

You: I am not able to do that. I can call you at 4.

Loved One: K.

You: Talk to you at 4. I love you.

OR

Loved One: I'll just text you what I want to talk about.

You: When you text me like this what I make up is that you do not respect my time at work. Having healthy communication with you is so important to me. I want to be there for you but I will not have these conversations via text message.

Loved One: K.

Life Boundaries IRL

Situation

A friend/family/partner does not respect your gender pronouns.

No Boundary Response

Say nothing. Make excuses for them. Minimize the impact it has on your identity.

Healthy Boundary Response

Your gender pronouns are how you identify and are not to be minimized.

It is important for you to feel seen, respected, and worthy of your truth.

It is possible for people to misgender folks simply by not knowing or understanding, but once you have been clear with your pronouns, there is no excuse for people to deliberately misgender you.

My pronouns are she/her.

What are yours?

The Conversation

Before you respond, take some time to breathe, get grounded and clear on the outcome you are seeking and how you want to feel.

**Family/Friend/Partner To Others:
(assuming your gender pronouns are they/them)
So I just talked to Nina and she is being so weird today.**

Others: Nina uses they/them pronouns, not she.

Family/Friend/Partner: That is so confusing. I don't get it.

Others: It's not yours to understand if you choose not to, but it is yours to respect. Nina goes by they/them.

Family/Friend/Partner: Ok, I will try. Thank you for reminding me.

OR

You: Friend, my pronouns are they/them, and I just heard you say she. When you use my pronouns I feel seen, heard, and that I matter.

Friend: OMG I am so sorry. You are absolutely right. I see you and respect you. I will do better.

My Awesome Boundaries Framework

As you begin practicing healthy boundaries, writing out what you want to say helps. It may take a few tries to get it to where you feel grounded and focused enough to have the conversation you have been avoiding.

The Framework of Questions, Feels, Outcomes

What outcome am I seeking from this conversation?

Is it safe to have this conversation?

What is the objective of this conversation?

How am I feeling?

Where are those feelings coming from?

How can I communicate clearly and kindly?

Am I prepared for the conversation to not meet the outcome I desire?

What will happen if I do not have this conversation?

Talking Boundary Framework by Pia Mellody

**“When I heard you say...
What I make up about that/What I think about that is...
And about that, I feel...”**

**”Or even a simple I-statement:
“I feel..... when... because...”**

Healthy Boundaries On Social Media

In the era of social + digital, we have all experienced major boundary failures. Those failures can be super destructive, unkind, and borderline bullying. We have a framework for you.

Framework for Social Media

Before you post ask yourself the following questions:

- 1. Why am I posting this?**
- 2. What is my intention?**
- 3. Does this post add value to my people/audience/community?**
- 4. Am I posting this to seek attention?**
- 5. Is this post targeted at an individual?**

After doing your very best to answer these questions honestly, you can decide whether or not to post.

The same goes for commenting on other people's posts.

If you find you are feeling angry, revengeful or simply wanting attention, please seek guidance from a friend or therapist to help process those feelings. TMI is a boundary violation when your intention is harmful or attention-seeking.

Healthy Boundaries On Social Media

From taking breaks to using the tools available, there are many ways you can still engage on the socials, practice healthy boundaries and also protect your peace.

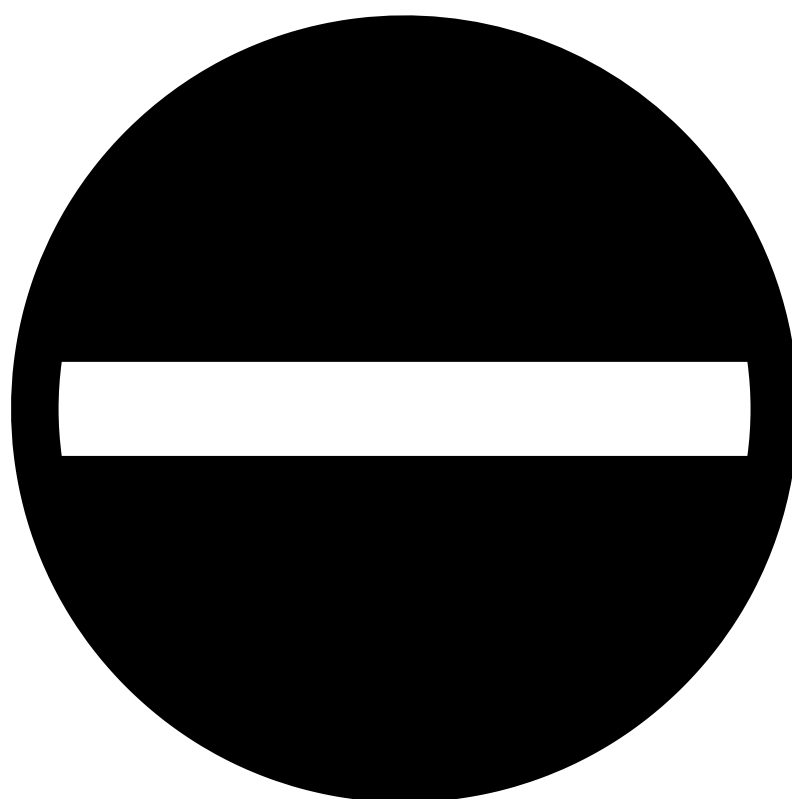
Consider taking weekly breaks, 24 hours in a row, 1 time per week.

Consider taking extended breaks, possibly once a quarter. On the following pages, you will see an example of how we handled our 2021 extended break.

Consider using the Do Not Disturb or Focus features on your mobile device.

Consider turning off notifications.

Consider using the mute, unfollow and snooze features available on Facebook and Instagram.



EXTENDED **social break**

December 1 2021-January 2 2022



@passionsquared

We will be
off of all social
platforms until
January 3, 2022



@passionsquared

We will remain **active
with our clients in **A**
School, on the people
passion purpose **podcast**
+ through The Weekly
Dose of Awesome
newsletter**



@passionsquared

Newsletter Sign Up

**Click on the link in our bio to subscribe to
The Weekly Dose Of Awesome**

people passion purpose podcast

**You can listen to the podcast wherever you
enjoy your podcasts**

A School New Member Enrollment

**Click on the link in our bio to get on the early
notification list. Doors open January 3, 2022**

Our Email

awesome@passionsquared.net



@passionsquared

**Please take care of you,
your loved ones and your
mental health. Your
presence here matters
and **we love you.****



@passionsquared

**This break is not about the platforms
or the problematic parts of social.**

**It's about my need as a leader +
coach to create space to **focus,**
process + create.**

Sometimes we simply need space.

And quiet time.

This is that.



@passionsquared

Thank you for your trust,
support, and love during
this break and always.
GratefulAF for you. - Nina



@passionsquared



My Social Media Breaks Plan



Your Next Steps

Be kind and gentle with your process.

Healing, growing, and healthy boundary setting is very uncomfortable. Very.

Take your time.

Practice with a friend or coach you trust

Get the help you need now with the resources you have. You deserve to feel more joy. Believe it

When you have a boundary slip, acknowledge it, own it, and learn from it. You are human and you will fuck shit up. We all do.

Watch your self-talk and self-compassion. You are gonna need to be extra compassionate with yourself and others.



Resources for Continuing Your Healthy Boundary Journey

Find A Therapist in the USA

psychologytoday.com/us/therapists

Find A Therapist Canada

psychologytoday.com/ca/therapists

LGBTQ Therapy Resources

Trevor Support Center

thetrevorproject.org/resources/trevor-support-center/

National Queer and Trans Therapists of Color Network

nqttcn.com/directory

Rehab for Codependency and Addiction

The Meadows Recovery

themeadows.com

Online Therapy

Talkspace.com

Books

Codependent No More- Melody Beattie

Facing Codependency- Pia Mellody

Daring Greatly- Brene Brown

The Gifts of Imperfection- Brene Brown

Dare To Lead- Brene Brown

Glossary of Important Words

(taken from Merriam Webster dictionary unless otherwise noted)

Codependency- dependence on the needs of or control by another

People Pleaser- a person who has an emotional need to please others often at the expense of his or her own needs or desires

Empath- one who experiences the emotions of others

Empathy-how to communicate that deep love for people in a way so that people know that they are not alone- Brene Brown

Compassion- a deeply held belief that we are inextricably connected to each other by something rooted in love and goodness- Brene Brown

Boundaries- Boundary systems are invisible and symbolic “force fields” that have three purposes: (1) to keep people from coming into our space and abusing us, (2) to keep us from going into the space of others and abusing them, and (3) to give each of us a way to embody our sense of “who we are”- Pia Mellody

Trauma-a deeply distressing or disturbing experience.

Gossip-a person who habitually reveals personal or sensational facts about others

Narcissist- an extremely self-centered person who has an exaggerated sense of self-importance

Gaslighting- to attempt to make (someone) believe that he or she is going insane (as by subjecting that person to a series of experiences that have no rational explanation)

Taking Boundary- Reframing your thoughts in order to work through the feelings of guilt, communicate with the individual in order to be heard and not to manipulate a particular response or reaction.

Empathy vs. Sympathy by Brene Brown

Empathy and sympathy are often grouped together, but they are very different

Empathy is a skill that can bring people together and make people feel included, while sympathy creates an uneven power dynamic and can lead to more isolation and disconnection.



[Click here to watch](#)

People Pleasing Is Not The Same As Awesome Client Care

This is super important.

**You can create and deliver
awesome experiences in your
business and be a good friend,
partner, and community member.
Yes, do all the things that make
that possible.**

**That is not people-pleasing, it's
simply being an awesome
business/friend/partner.**

**People-pleasing is when you put
others' needs ahead of your own
and at the expense of your well-
being.**

**It builds resentment. Anger.
Anxiety. Victim mentality. All the
things that move you away from
joy, not towards it.**

Healthy Boundary Affirmation

I care about you. And I care about me.

And in order to care for and about you, I need to ensure:

I feel safe.

I am clear on what I need.

My needs are met + respected.

I know I need to believe my needs are important and deserve respect before YOU will believe it.

I understand it is my responsibility to show people how I want to be treated.

I also understand that some folks will not like me. It's OK.

I need to like me more than I need you to like me.

But I still want you to like me, but not in exchange for me not liking me.



**Some final words,
with love, for you.**

You are worthy of experiencing love.

**Your presence and energy are worthy
of protection.**

You are perfectly imperfect.

You are deserving of feeling joy.

You are a gift.

You matter.

And you are so fucking loved.

**Practicing healthy boundaries is
super uncomfortable at first.**

**Then it becomes still uncomfortable
but less than the time before. You are
gonna fuck up. I do. Cause we are
human.**

**Progress is what we are seeking, not
perfection.**

Progress not perfection.

GratefulAF

I would not have been able to create this for you without the love and support of my inner circle, supporters, mentors + mental health team.

This work is a culmination of 55 years and 14 of those being in recovery. It's inspired by my own codependence and intense desire to keep healing and growing through this messy, beautiful, imperfect journey.

A big shout out of gratitude to:

The Meadows Recovery

Pia Mellody

Dr. Nancy Sobel

Nigel Sampson

Melody Beattie

Brene Brown

Clients + Friends of Passion Squared

My precious family + friends, both blood and chosen.

My fur babies, Faith + Courage

Magical Oregon

About The Author

Nina L Kovner is the Chief Awesomeness Empowerer at Passion Squared, a company she began in 2012 that empowers creatives in the areas of brand development, leadership, online/offline marketing and personal empowerment.

Born and raised in Los Angeles, Nina took a big leap of faith and left her big executive career in 2009 to journey more deeply within and live her purpose.

Nina resides in magical Portland Oregon with her fur babies Faith + Courage.

**You can find Nina on the gram
@passionsquared**

**To learn more about Passion Squared programs + services, visit
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