

A STARTER GUIDE

The Authentic Self Builder: Setting Boundaries with Narcissistic Parents

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Step Into What's Possible

*Do you find it hard to say "no" to your parents?
Do they guilt you for protecting your time, energy, money, or relationships?*

Narcissistic parenting can leave lasting effects, including people-pleasing, difficulty setting boundaries, self-doubt, excessive guilt or shame, and anxiety or depression.

When a child's needs, feelings, or independence are ignored or dismissed, they grow up believing that boundaries are unsafe, pointless, or selfish.

This often shows up in the form of guilt-tripping, shaming, invasions of privacy, or making love and approval feel conditional.

Over time, children internalize the message that saying "no" only leads to conflict, withdrawal, or rejection.

As adults, this can leave them struggling to recognize their limits, afraid to voice their needs, and anxious about putting themselves first in relationships.



See yourself in these patterns? This brief guide will help you gain clarity and take your first step toward healthy boundaries.

Common Traits and Behaviors of Narcissistic Parents

*This list is not intended for diagnosis but to help you recognize potential patterns that may have influenced your upbringing and relationships.

Traits / Behaviors	How They May Show Up
Lack of empathy	Unable to recognize or validate their child's feelings.
Conditional love	Affection or approval depends on achievement or obedience.
Control and manipulation	Using guilt, shame, or threats to maintain authority.
Focus on image	Prioritizing how the family looks to others over the child's needs.
Criticism and blame	Quick to highlight flaws while rarely acknowledging strengths.
Emotional volatility	Unpredictable mood swings that keep children on edge.
Boundary violations	Ignoring privacy, autonomy, or individuality.
Favoritism and scapegoating	Playing siblings against each other or designating a "golden child" and a "problem child."
Excessive expectations	Pressuring children to excel in ways that serve the parent's ego.
Dismissal or minimization	Brushing off the child's experiences, pain, or accomplishments.

Checklist: Signs of Poor Boundaries with Parents

- ✓ I feel guilty or anxious when I say “no” to them.
- ✓ They frequently dismiss or minimize my feelings.
- ✓ My privacy is often ignored or disrespected.
- ✓ I feel responsible for managing their emotions or happiness.
- ✓ They use guilt, shame, or criticism to influence my choices.
- ✓ I often put their needs ahead of my own, even when it harms me.
- ✓ They react negatively when I try to assert independence.
- ✓ I leave interactions with them feeling drained, small, or unheard.
- ✓ I second-guess my decisions because I fear their reaction.
- ✓ I avoid them yet still feel obligated to please them.

Did any of those feel familiar to you?

The good news is that boundaries are not fixed traits. They are skills that can be learned, practiced, and strengthened over time.

Benefits of Learning to Set Boundaries with Narcissistic Parents



Emotional protection

Reduces guilt, shame, and constant criticism.



Mental clarity

Frees you from confusion, gaslighting, and self-doubt.



Improved self-esteem

Reinforces your right to be respected and valued.



Healthier relationships

Prevents old toxic patterns from spilling into friendships, work, or romantic partnerships.



Greater independence

Allows you to make choices based on your needs, not parental pressure.



Stress reduction

Creates distance from emotional chaos and drama.



Empowerment

Gives you confidence in saying "no" and standing by your decisions.



Personal growth

Helps you rediscover your authentic self, separate from your parent's control.



Stronger resilience

Builds skills to handle difficult people and situations beyond family.



Peace of mind - Offers a sense of safety, stability, and freedom to live life on your terms.

Let's Learn About Boundaries.

Understanding Boundaries

- Boundaries let us know where we end and where others begin - physically, emotionally, and psychologically. At the same time, boundaries are also the meeting points where we connect and interact with others.
- Boundaries are meant for safety and protection, not for rejection or conflict.
- Boundaries can shift and adapt as people, relationships, and situations change.

Communicating Boundaries

- Boundaries often need to be communicated repeatedly.
- Clear, calm communication paired with consistent follow-through shows others you mean what you say.
- It is important to keep your message simple and clear. You don't need to over-explain or defend your choice.

Remember

- When you set a boundary, you are simply sharing your needs and preferences and making a respectful request.
- Remember that you are an adult with your own rights, needs, and responsibilities, separate from the role you had as a child.
- Being someone's child does not mean you are owned or that you owe them unconditional compliance.
- Parents may need gentle reminders or guidance to adjust and learn how to respect you as an adult.

Steps to Setting Healthy Boundaries

1. Notice the discomfort

Q. Which actions or words from your parent leave you feeling drained, resentful, or uncomfortable?

Q. If you were in an ideal relationship with your parent, how would it be different from your current relationship with them?

2. Write down a few boundaries you would like to have with your parent, along with the reason each one matters to you.

Use simple starters, such as "I need..." "I prefer..."

Example: *"I need my mom to check with me before making plans for us to hang out. My time and energy are mine to manage, and I want to care for myself and my priorities."*

3. Communicate boundaries

⇒ Choose your approach

- Directly state your boundary clearly and respectfully.
- Use I-Statements, focusing on your feelings and needs.
- Offer a mutually acceptable alternative if possible.
- With your actions, either with or without verbal communication

⇒ Write a short script or phrase you can use when the situation arises.

⇒ Practice saying it out loud a few times, using a clear and calm voice. Stand or sit tall, and let your body carry a sense of confidence as you speak.

⇒ Express your needs and preferences, along with your plan for consequences if your boundaries aren't respected. Then follow through with your plan and repeat as needed.

⇒ Expect pushback, and resist giving in by seeking support and reminding yourself of your values and your rights.

Discover the Freedom of Living as Your True Self.



Imagine saying “no” to your parents without the weight of guilt, and holding them accountable for their hurtful or irresponsible behaviors by confidently walking away.

Imagine choosing to spend your time with people who help you feel valued and worthy, without having to sacrifice your own needs.

Self-Paced Course

The Authentic Self Builder: Setting Boundaries with Narcissistic Parents

This 6 chapter, 19-lesson program goes far beyond what you see in this brief guide. Along with self-reflection prompts, guided practice recordings, and downloadable worksheets, the full course offers in-depth learning and step-by-step exercises to help you set boundaries with confidence and reclaim your voice and power.

Learn More at beyondnarcissisticparenting.com

*You deserve the freedom to live as your true self
and that life is within reach.*

Take the first step toward it by joining our course today.