

# Compassionate Connection Therapy

## Welcome to Your Reflection Space

This worksheet was created with care—for anyone moving through something tender, uncertain, or important. Whether you're processing pain, seeking clarity, rebuilding trust, or simply needing space to breathe, you're welcome here.

These worksheets offer gentle tools for reflection—resources that meet you where you are, without pressure or expectation. They're designed to support emotional exploration at your own pace, in your own way.

The mission is simple: To make emotional support more available in a time when many are struggling. To offer free, compassionate resources with no hidden agenda. To help you reconnect with your own voice, in ways that feel safe and steady.

If this mission resonates, feel free to share it. Post it, print it, pass it along. Your share might be someone's first moment of feeling understood.

These worksheets are offered with care, for personal use only. They're here to support your healing—not to rush it. You don't need to finish every section. You don't need to have all the answers. Take what supports you. Leave what doesn't. Your pace, your process, your wellbeing—these come first.

You're not alone. Even if we've never met, this resource is offered with quiet solidarity—holding space, cheering you on, and believing in your capacity to heal.

## A Gentle Note on Safety

These worksheets are designed for personal reflection. They are not a substitute for therapy or professional treatment.

If you're in therapy, consider sharing this resource with your therapist before exploring. If you're not in therapy, please reflect in a space that feels emotionally and physically safe.

You might choose to explore alongside someone you trust—a friend, partner, or support person. If that isn't available right now, this worksheet can still be a quiet companion. Go gently. In your own time. In your own way.

## Where to Find the Worksheets

If this resource feels meaningful, please share it. Healing is communal—and your share might be someone's first step toward feeling less alone.

These worksheets are shared freely across platforms:

Website: <https://CompassionateConnectionTherapy.co.uk>

Facebook: Compassionate Connection Therapy

TikTok: @rosa.tomassi.bella

Instagram: @connectiontherapyrhl

Let's make emotional support tools free, gentle, and accessible—together.

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## A Note on Contact

These worksheets are shared freely, but individual support cannot be offered through messages or comments. If you need support, please speak with a therapist or someone you trust. These tools are here to guide gentle exploration—not to replace professional care. Thank you for understanding, and for sharing with kindness.

## If You're in Crisis

These worksheets are not for emergencies. If you feel overwhelmed or unsafe, please reach out:

- Samaritans — 116 123 (free, 24/7)
- NHS 111 — urgent mental health advice
- 999 — if you or someone else is at immediate risk

You deserve support, safety, and care.

## Copyright and Usage

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*You are welcome to share this resource with others for support, as long as:*

- *You credit Rosa Tomassi-Bella and Compassionate Connection Therapy*
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### **Boundaries & Self-Protection: An Explorative Worksheet**

#### **Introduction**

Boundaries are not rigid walls designed to shut others out — they are gentle, living lines that help you honour your needs, values, and energy. They are the quiet agreements you make with yourself and with others about how you wish to be treated, how much you can give, and what you need to feel safe. Boundaries protect your emotional, physical, and mental well-being, reminding you that your voice matters, your limits deserve respect, and your presence has value.

When we think of boundaries, it is easy to imagine them as barriers or confrontations. In truth, they are acts of care. They are invitations to healthier relationships, deeper trust, and greater self-compassion. Boundaries are not about pushing people away; they are about creating space where connection can flourish without fear of depletion or harm.

This worksheet is here to support you in exploring boundaries with compassion, curiosity, and gentleness. It is not about perfection or strict rules. It is not about blame or judgment. Instead, it is about noticing what feels safe, reclaiming your space, and practicing self-respect in ways that feel kind and empowering.

As you move through these reflections, remember boundaries are flexible, evolving, and deeply personal. They may shift with time, context, and growth. Each step you take toward understanding and honouring your boundaries is a step toward resilience, clarity, and self-trust. Every pause, every breath, and every act of kindness toward yourself is progress.


Think of boundaries as the soft edges of a garden: they protect what is growing within, while still allowing sunlight, water, and connection to flow in. They are not about shutting life out, but about nurturing the conditions where you can thrive. 🌱

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### How to Use This Worksheet

This worksheet is not a test, nor something to “get right.” It is a gentle companion, here to support you in exploring your boundaries with curiosity and care. You are invited to move through it in whatever way feels safe and manageable for you.

- **Move slowly, at your own pace.** There is no rush. You can pause, return later, or skip sections if they feel too heavy. Healing unfolds in small steps, and each reflection is meaningful.
- **There are no right or wrong answers.** Everything you write or notice is valid. This is not about fixing or proving anything — it is about listening to yourself with gentleness.
- **Use the open questions as invitations.** They are prompts to spark reflection, not instructions. Let them guide you toward what feels most important right now.
- **Try the sentence starters if words feel stuck.** They are here to help you begin, especially when journaling feels daunting. You can adapt them, change them, or leave them behind if they don’t fit.
- **The tiny practices are short and grounding.** They offer simple ways to pause, breathe, and reconnect with yourself. Even a minute of gentle practice can make a difference.
- **The “sciency bits” explain what’s happening inside.** They are included to help you understand your body and brain responses without blame. Knowing the science can bring reassurance: your reactions make sense, and they are part of being human.

Above all, this worksheet is yours. You can shape it, skip it, or return to it whenever you choose. Each moment you spend here is an act of care for yourself. 

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## **Section 1: Understanding Boundaries**

### **Guide**

Boundaries are personal guidelines that help you protect and honour your emotional, physical, and mental space. They are not about control — they are about care. Healthy boundaries allow you to safeguard your time, energy, and well-being, while staying aligned with your values and self-worth.

Boundaries are not rigid rules; they are flexible expressions of self-respect. They remind you that your needs matter and that it is safe to protect your energy. When you set boundaries, you are not rejecting others — you are choosing to honour yourself. This act of care creates space for healthier, more balanced relationships and helps you feel more grounded in your own life.

### **Examples of Boundaries**

- Saying “no” to extra work when you are already stretched.
- Choosing not to share personal details with someone who feels unsafe.
- Taking time alone after social interactions to recharge.
- Letting others know when a topic is off-limits.
- Asking for emotional space when you feel overwhelmed.
- Scheduling rest before committing to new responsibilities.
- Limiting time spent on draining conversations.

### **Open Questions**

1. What does a boundary mean to me in my own words?
2. Where in my life do boundaries feel clear and supportive?
3. Where do they feel blurred or difficult?

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4. How do I know when a boundary has been crossed?
5. What do boundaries allow me to reclaim?

### Sentence Starters

- “A boundary means to me...”
- “I feel clear about boundaries when...”
- “I notice blurred boundaries when...”
- “I know a boundary has been crossed when...”
- “Boundaries allow me to reclaim...”

### Tiny Practice

Write down one boundary you already hold that feels supportive. Celebrate it by noting how it protects your energy. For example: *“I protect my evenings by not checking work emails after 7pm. This helps me rest and recharge.”*

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### Sciency Bit

Boundaries help regulate stress by reducing **cortisol** (the stress hormone) and increasing feelings of safety. Clear boundaries activate the brain's **prefrontal cortex**, which supports decision-making, perspective-taking, and emotional regulation. This means that when you set and honour boundaries, you are not only protecting your energy — you are strengthening your brain's ability to stay calm, balanced, and resilient.

### Section 2: Boundary Check-In

#### Guide

Boundaries can feel different depending on the area of life you are in — family, friendships, work, online spaces, emotional space, or physical space. Some areas may feel supportive and clear, while others may feel blurred, draining, or even unsafe. Checking in with yourself is a way of gently noticing where you feel respected and where you feel stretched too thin.

This process is not about blaming others or criticising yourself. It is about awareness: recognising the places where your energy feels protected, and the places where it feels vulnerable. By noticing these patterns, you give yourself the opportunity to respond with care, to strengthen what supports you, and to gently adjust what feels overwhelming.

#### Examples of Boundaries

- **Family:** Not answering calls late at night to protect your rest.
- **Friendships:** Asking for emotional space when you feel overwhelmed.
- **Work:** Taking a proper lunch break instead of working through it.
- **Online:** Limiting time on social media to protect your focus and mood.
- **Emotional space:** Saying “I need time to think before I respond.”
- **Physical space:** Asking not to be touched without consent.

These examples are not rules — they are possibilities. Your boundaries will look different depending on your needs, values, and circumstances.

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### Open Questions

1. In which areas of life do I feel most respected?
2. Where do I feel unclear or overwhelmed?
3. What situations leave me feeling violated or dismissed?
4. How do I respond when boundaries are crossed?
5. Which area feels most in need of gentle attention right now?

### Sentence Starters

- “I feel respected when...”
- “I feel unclear about boundaries in...”
- “I notice overwhelm when...”
- “I respond to crossed boundaries by...”

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- “The area needing attention is...”

### Tiny Practice

Choose one area of life — family, friendships, work, online, emotional, or physical space — and write a short reflection on what feels off or draining. For example: *“In friendships, I sometimes feel drained when I always listen but rarely share. I want to explore how to balance this more gently.”*

### Sciency Bit

Reflecting on boundaries engages the brain’s **self-awareness networks**, including the prefrontal cortex and anterior cingulate cortex. These areas help you notice patterns, make sense of your experiences, and regulate emotions. By pausing to reflect, you reduce emotional overload, strengthen resilience, and create space for more intentional choices. This practice helps you move from automatic reactions into compassionate responses.

## Section 3: Boundary Discovery

### Guide

Discovery is about gently noticing what boundaries might help you feel safer, more respected, and more supported. It is not about harsh rules or rigid walls — it is about creating clarity that feels kind and sustainable. Boundaries are invitations to care for yourself, to honour your limits, and to communicate your needs in ways that protect your energy.

This stage is about exploration, not perfection. You may find that some boundaries feel easy to imagine, while others feel more challenging. That’s okay. Simply noticing what feels draining or unsafe is already an act of self-awareness. Each boundary you discover is a step toward reclaiming your space and reminding yourself that your needs matter.

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### Examples of Boundaries

- Saying: *“I can’t take on more tasks right now.”*
- Asking colleagues not to gossip about personal matters.
- Requesting honesty and transparency in close relationships.
- Choosing to leave a conversation that feels disrespectful.
- Limiting how much time you spend with people who drain your energy.
- Scheduling quiet time before or after social events.
- Declining invitations when you need rest.
- Asking for clarity when expectations feel unclear.

### Open Questions

1. What do I often say “yes” to, but wish I could say “no”?
2. What behaviours from others make me feel anxious, small, or invisible?
3. What do I need more of — space, honesty, quiet, support?
4. What boundary could help me feel more grounded and safer?
5. How might I express this boundary kindly, without guilt?

### Sentence Starters

- “I often say yes to...”

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- “I feel anxious when...”
- “What I need more of is...”
- “A boundary that could help me is...”
- “I might express this boundary by...”

### Tiny Practice

Write down one boundary you would like to try setting — even if only in your mind for now. Imagine how it might feel to hold that boundary with kindness. For example: *“I will give myself permission to pause before saying yes.”*

### Sciency Bit

Naming boundaries reduces **amygdala reactivity** — the brain’s alarm system that signals danger — and increases clarity in the **hippocampus**, which helps store safe, supportive patterns. This means that when you identify and articulate a boundary, your brain begins to associate safety with self-protection. Over time, this practice strengthens your ability to respond calmly, rather than reactively, and helps you feel more grounded in your choices.

## Section 4: Gentle Practice

### Guide

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Boundaries don't have to be harsh, rigid, or confrontational. They can be expressed in ways that are quiet, firm, and kind. Practicing gentle scripts helps you prepare for moments when you want to protect your energy without feeling pressured to explain or defend yourself. These scripts are not about pushing people away — they are about communicating your needs with clarity and compassion.

Gentle practice is like rehearsing kindness toward yourself. By trying out phrases in advance, you give yourself permission to respond calmly when situations arise. This preparation can ease anxiety, reduce guilt, and remind you that boundaries are acts of care, not rejection.

### Examples of Gentle Scripts

- “I’m not ready to talk about that right now.”
- “I need some time to think before I respond.”
- “That doesn’t feel okay to me.”
- “I’m working on protecting my energy, so I’ll have to pass.”
- “I appreciate the offer, but I need to decline.”
- “I’d like to pause here and revisit this later.”
- “I value our connection, but I need some space right now.”

### Open Questions

1. What words feel safe for me to use when setting a boundary?
2. How can I express a boundary without guilt or apology?
3. What tone of voice feels kind yet firm for me?
4. How do I hope others will respond when I set a boundary?

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5. How can I remind myself that boundaries are acts of care, not rejection?

### Sentence Starters

- “A gentle phrase I can use is...”
- “I can express a boundary without guilt by...”
- “The tone that feels right is...”
- “I hope others respond by...”
- “I remind myself that boundaries are...”

### Tiny Practice

Choose one script from the examples above and adapt it to a situation you’ve faced or might face. For instance: *“When a friend asks me to meet even though I’m exhausted, I can say: ‘I’d love to see you, but I need rest tonight. Let’s plan another time.’”*

### Sciency Bit

Practicing scripts strengthens **neural pathways** for assertive communication. This means your brain becomes more familiar with expressing needs calmly and clearly. Over time, this reduces anxiety, increases confidence, and helps you respond with less hesitation. Rehearsing

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gentle boundaries also lowers activity in the **amygdala** (the brain's alarm system) and engages the **prefrontal cortex**, which supports thoughtful, balanced communication.

### Section 5: Integration & Self-Compassion

#### Guide

Boundaries are not just about the words we speak — they shape how we see ourselves and how we move through the world. Each time you set a boundary, you remind yourself that your needs matter, your time is valuable, and your voice deserves space. Integration means carrying boundaries into daily life with kindness, so they become part of how you care for yourself rather than something you only practice in moments of crisis.

Boundaries are acts of self-respect. They are not selfish, harsh, or unkind — they are gentle reminders that you are worthy of balance, rest, and safety. When you integrate boundaries into your everyday life, you begin to see yourself not as someone who “must endure,” but as someone who is allowed to protect their energy and nurture their wellbeing.

#### Examples of Boundaries in Daily Life

- Saying “no” to a social event when you need rest.
- Taking a pause before replying to a message, giving yourself space to reflect.
- Scheduling quiet time for yourself each week, even if it's just 10 minutes.
- Asking for clarity in work expectations instead of guessing or overextending.
- Sharing only what feels safe in conversations, keeping tender parts of yourself protected.
- Choosing not to engage in arguments that drain your energy.
- Allowing yourself to leave a situation when it feels overwhelming.

#### Open Questions

1. How does setting a boundary shift how I see myself?

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2. Does it help me feel more grounded, confident, or in control?
3. What old beliefs about boundaries am I challenging?
4. What small action can I take this week to honour my limits?
5. How can I celebrate myself for practicing boundaries?

### Sentence Starters

- “Setting a boundary helps me see myself as...”
- “I feel more grounded when...”
- “An old belief I am challenging is...”
- “A small action I can take is...”
- “I celebrate myself by...”

### Tiny Practice

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Choose one small action this week to honour your boundaries. It could be a gentle “no,” a pause before responding, a moment of solitude, or a conversation with someone you trust. Write it down and notice how it feels to commit to this act of care. For example: *“This week, I will give myself permission to pause before saying yes.”*

### Sciency Bit

Self-compassion activates **oxytocin** (the bonding hormone) and **serotonin** (the mood stabiliser), calming the nervous system and fostering emotional safety. When you practice boundaries with compassion, you strengthen trust in yourself and reduce self-criticism. Over time, this builds resilience, helping you recover more quickly from stress and reinforcing the belief that you are worthy of care.

### Closing Reflection

Boundaries are not barriers — they are bridges to self-respect, safety, and care. They are the gentle pathways that connect you back to yourself, reminding you that your needs are worthy and your limits deserve honour. Each time you pause, reflect, and respond with kindness, you are practicing resilience. Even the smallest act of noticing — a breath, a pause, a gentle “no” — is progress.

Healing is not about perfection or never struggling again. It is about walking gently with yourself, especially in moments that feel heavy. It is about honouring your needs without guilt, reclaiming your energy without apology, and offering yourself the compassion you deserved all along.

There will be days when boundaries feel easy, and days when they feel difficult. Both are part of the journey. Each attempt, each reflection, each act of care is evidence of your courage to keep showing up for yourself.

Carry forward this reminder: *“My boundaries are acts of love. They protect my energy, honour my worth, and help me grow with gentleness.”* 