

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 Page: Compassionate Connection Therapy

TikTok: @rosa.tomassi.bella

Instagram: @connectiontherapyrhy1

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*
- *You do not alter the content in any way*
- *You do not use it for commercial purposes or financial gain*

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THE BOUNDARIES WORKBOOK

A gentle guide to protecting your energy, voice, and emotional wellbeing

INTRODUCTION

Boundaries are not about shutting people out or becoming harder to reach. They're about staying connected to yourself — your needs, your limits, your values, and your emotional wellbeing. They can offer a sense of steadiness, clarity, and self-respect, helping you move through the world in ways that feel more aligned with who you are.

People come to boundaries from many different experiences. Some grew up with clear models of healthy communication; others didn't. Some learned to speak up easily; others learned to stay quiet to keep the peace. Some were encouraged to express their needs; others were taught — directly or indirectly — to minimise them. Whatever your history has been, it makes sense that boundaries might feel confusing, unfamiliar, or emotionally charged.

You might be exploring boundaries because something in your life feels out of balance. You might be feeling stretched thin, unsure how to say no, or uncertain about what you need. Or you might simply be curious about how to care for yourself in a more grounded, sustainable way. There is no single reason people come to this work — and all reasons are valid.

This workbook is a space to explore your relationship with boundaries gently and without judgement. You don't need to have clear answers. You don't need to feel confident or assertive. You don't need to know exactly what your boundaries are. You're simply invited to notice what feels supportive, what feels uncomfortable, and what helps you feel more like yourself.

There is no pressure here. No expectations. No “right way” to move through this.

Take your time. Take what resonates. Leave what doesn't. You're welcome to pause, return later, or skip anything that feels too much right now. This is your space — and your pace matters.

HOW TO USE THIS WORKBOOK

This workbook is here to support you gently and without pressure. It's designed to help you explore your relationship with boundaries in a way that feels safe, manageable, and grounded.

Below is a simple guide to help you move through it in a way that honours your needs.

Moving Through the Sections

- You can move through the sections in order or choose the ones that feel most relevant today.
- You don't need to complete everything.
- You can revisit sections as many times as you like — your answers may shift over time, and that's completely okay.
- You're welcome to pause at any point. There is no timeline.

Using the Open Questions

- These questions are invitations to explore your experiences, patterns, and needs with more depth.
- You can write your answers, think about them quietly, or simply notice what arises.
- Your responses can be brief or detailed — whatever feels manageable.
- If a question feels too big, too activating, or too unclear, you can skip it or return to it later.
- There is no expectation to answer every question. They are here to support reflection, not to test you.

Using the Sentence Starters

- These are especially helpful when the open questions feel overwhelming or hard to approach.
- They offer a gentler, more structured way to begin — like a soft doorway into reflection.
- You can complete them with a single word, a phrase, or a longer reflection.
- You can use them instead of the open questions, alongside them, or as warm-ups before deeper exploration.

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- If you feel stuck, these starters can help you find your footing.

Letting Your Responses Be Imperfect

- Your reflections don't need to be tidy, consistent, or complete.
- This is a space for noticing, not performing.
- You're allowed to change your mind, contradict yourself, or return to an answer later with new insight.
- Your internal experience is allowed to be messy, layered, or unclear — that's part of the work.

Pausing When Needed

- If emotions rise, you can pause at any time.
- Take a breath, stretch, drink water, or step away.
- You can return only when you feel ready — or not at all.
- Your wellbeing comes first, always.

✿ SECTION 1 — Understanding What Boundaries Mean to You

☛ A Gentle Guide

Everyone's relationship with boundaries develops differently. For some, boundaries were clearly modelled and encouraged. For others, they may have been unclear, inconsistent, or rarely talked about. Many people find that their early environments — family, culture, community, school, friendships — shaped how comfortable they feel expressing needs, limits, or preferences. You might recognise certain patterns from your past, or you might simply have a sense that boundaries feel unfamiliar or complicated without knowing exactly why.

This section isn't about assuming what your experiences were or assigning blame. It's about gently exploring the influences that may have shaped how you understand boundaries today. You're invited to reflect on what you were taught (directly or indirectly), what you observed, and what you internalised — with curiosity rather than judgement.

If any of the questions feel too broad, you can narrow them down. For example:

- Instead of "What messages did you receive?" you might ask, "What was encouraged or discouraged in my home or community?"
- Instead of "What roles did I learn?" you might ask, "How did I tend to show up around others?"
- Instead of "What do I wish I'd been taught?" you might ask, "What would have helped me feel more supported or understood?"

There is no right or wrong way to explore this. You're simply noticing the landscape you grew from — at your own pace, in your own way.

☛ Open Questions

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- What messages did you receive — spoken or unspoken — about needs, limits, or saying no?
- How did the people around you tend to respond when you expressed discomfort, disagreement, or emotion?
- What roles did you naturally or repeatedly find yourself taking on (e.g., listener, helper, peacekeeper, achiever, observer)?
- How did those roles influence what you felt comfortable asking for or expressing?
- What do you wish you had understood earlier about boundaries, choice, or emotional safety?

Sentence Starters

- “Growing up, I learned that I should...”

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- “I often felt that my needs were...”
- “A message I absorbed about boundaries was...”
- “I wish someone had told me that...”
- “I’m beginning to realise that I deserved...”
- “A role I learned to play was...”
- “I coped by...”

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You can complete these with a single word, a phrase, or a longer reflection.

Tiny Practice

Place a hand over your heart. Take one slow, steady breath. If it feels okay, think gently:

“My needs have always mattered.” “I’m allowed to understand myself without blaming myself.”

A Sciency Bit

Early experiences can influence how the brain interprets boundaries. When boundaries were unclear, discouraged, or inconsistently responded to, the nervous system may learn to prioritise harmony, safety, or predictability over self-expression. These patterns often develop as protective strategies, not personal flaws. With awareness and gentle practice, the brain can form new associations — ones that support clearer communication, emotional safety, and self-respect.

SECTION 2 — Noticing Where Boundaries Feel Hard

A Gentle Guide

Finding boundaries difficult is not a sign that you’re weak, incapable, or “bad at communicating.” Many people discover that boundaries feel challenging for reasons that aren’t immediately obvious — reasons shaped by personality, past experiences, cultural expectations, family dynamics, or simply the roles they’ve grown used to taking on. For some, speaking up feels natural; for others, it can feel unfamiliar, uncomfortable, or emotionally risky.

Sometimes people notice that saying no brings up guilt. Sometimes they feel responsible for keeping the peace. Sometimes they worry about being misunderstood or causing tension. And

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sometimes the difficulty isn't emotional at all — it's simply that boundaries were never clearly modelled, discussed, or encouraged. Whatever your experience has been, it makes sense that certain situations might feel harder than others.

This section is here to help you gently explore the places where boundaries feel confusing, overwhelming, or tender. You're not being asked to fix anything or push yourself into situations that feel unsafe. You're simply noticing the patterns: the moments when you hesitate, the situations that drain you, the interactions that leave you unsure, or the internal signals that arise when you consider saying no.

If any question feels too broad, you can narrow it down. For example:

- Instead of “Where do I feel drained?” you might ask, “Who leaves me feeling tired after a short interaction?”
- Instead of “Where do I feel unsure what’s allowed?” you might ask, “Where do I second-guess myself the most?”
- Instead of “What situations make me anxious?” you might ask, “When does my body tense before I even speak?”

This is not about judging yourself. It’s about understanding the places where your boundaries feel delicate — so you can meet those parts of yourself with care.

Open Questions

- Where do you feel most drained, overwhelmed, or overextended — emotionally, mentally, or physically?
- Are there people who regularly push past your limits, even unintentionally?

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- What situations make you feel guilty, anxious, or responsible when you say no?
- Where do you feel unsure about what's "allowed" — in your family, culture, friendships, or relationships?
- What patterns do you notice in moments when you stay silent, agree too quickly, or ignore your own discomfort?

Sentence Starters

- "I often struggle to speak up when..."
- "I feel guilty saying no to..."
- "A situation that leaves me drained is..."

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- “I tend to overextend myself when...”
- “I worry that setting boundaries will...”
- “I notice I go quiet when...”
- “I feel pressure to say yes when...”

You can complete these with a single word, a phrase, or a longer reflection.

Tiny Practice

Think of one moment recently when you felt uncomfortable but stayed quiet. No judgement. No analysis. Just acknowledge it gently.

If it feels okay, whisper internally:

“That was hard. And I understand why.” “I did what I needed to feel safe in that moment.”

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A Sciency Bit

The brain and nervous system are shaped by repetition and experience. If you've often found yourself in situations where staying quiet felt safer, easier, or more predictable, your body may have learned to associate self-expression with uncertainty or discomfort. This isn't a flaw — it's a protective response. With awareness and gentle practice, the nervous system can learn that expressing needs and limits is safe, possible, and allowed.

SECTION 3 — Imagining What Healthy Boundaries Could Look Like

A Gentle Guide

Healthy boundaries are not about shutting people out or becoming rigid. They're about creating enough space for you to stay connected to yourself *while* staying connected to others. A healthy boundary is simply a clear expression of what supports your wellbeing — what helps you feel safe, respected, and emotionally steady. It doesn't need to be loud, dramatic, or confrontational. Often, the boundaries that make the biggest difference are quiet, consistent, and rooted in self-respect.

For many people, imagining a boundary can feel unfamiliar or uncertain. You might not have had many opportunities to practice them, or you may still be figuring out what feels comfortable for you. You might not yet know what a boundary could sound like — and that's completely okay. This section is here to help you explore what healthy boundaries *could* look like in your life, in a way that feels gentle, flexible, and doable.

A healthy boundary might sound like:

- “I need a moment to think before I respond.”
- “I can’t take that on right now.”
- “I’m not comfortable with that.”

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- “I need some time alone this evening.”
- “I’m happy to help, but I can’t do it immediately.”

A boundary might protect:

- your emotional energy
- your time
- your mental health
- your sense of identity
- your physical space
- your capacity to show up authentically

A boundary might honour values like:

- honesty
- rest
- autonomy
- respect
- balance
- emotional safety

If any of the questions feel too broad, you can narrow them down. For example:

- Instead of “What would a healthy boundary sound like?” try “What’s one sentence I wish I could say?”
- Instead of “What would this boundary protect?” try “What part of me feels vulnerable here?”
- Instead of “What values does this honour?” try “What matters to me in this situation?”

There is no pressure to get this perfect. You’re simply exploring possibilities — noticing what feels supportive, what feels protective, and what feels true for you.

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Open Questions

- What would a healthy boundary sound like for you — in your tone, your language, your way of speaking?
- How would it feel in your body to express this boundary — grounding, shaky, relieving, tense, empowering?
- What would this boundary protect — your time, energy, emotions, identity, sense of safety?
- What values does this boundary honour — honesty, rest, respect, autonomy, balance?
- What might shift in your relationships or daily life if this boundary were respected?

Sentence Starters

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- “A boundary that feels important to me is...”
- “I would feel more grounded if I could say...”
- “This boundary would protect...”
- “I’m learning that I need...”
- “I feel more like myself when...”
- “A gentle limit I want to try is...”
- “I would feel safer if...”

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You can complete these with a single word, a phrase, or a longer reflection.

Tiny Practice

Imagine saying one gentle boundary out loud — even if only in your mind. Notice what happens in your body:

- Does your chest tighten?
- Does your breath deepen?
- Do your shoulders lift or soften?
- Do you feel fear, relief, strength, or uncertainty?

Whatever arises is valid. Your body is simply responding to something new.

A Sciency Bit

Imagining a boundary activates many of the same neural pathways as practicing it in real life. This kind of mental rehearsal helps the brain build familiarity, reduces the stress response associated with speaking up, and increases your sense of safety over time. Even imagining a boundary is a meaningful step toward being able to express it.

SECTION 4 — Exploring Your Emotional Safety in Relationships

A Gentle Guide

Emotional safety is often an important part of how boundaries form and how they're expressed. When you feel safe — understood, respected, and able to show up as yourself — it can feel easier to communicate your needs or preferences. You might notice that you don't

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have to overthink your words, brace for a reaction, or adjust yourself to fit someone else's expectations. Safety creates room for honesty, connection, and ease.

When emotional safety feels uncertain, boundaries can feel more complicated. Some people notice themselves becoming quieter, more cautious, or more attentive to others' reactions. Others might feel responsible for keeping interactions smooth or worry about being misunderstood. These responses aren't flaws — they're often protective strategies that helped you navigate past or present dynamics as best you could.

This section invites you to gently explore what emotional safety looks like *for you*. Not what it "should" look like, not what others expect, but what your body and experience recognise as steadiness, comfort, or ease. You're not being asked to judge your relationships or label anyone as "good" or "bad." You're simply noticing patterns: who softens you, who tightens you, who drains you, who steadies you, and what expectations shape how you show up.

If any question feels too broad, you can narrow it down. For example:

- Instead of "Which relationships feel grounding?" try "Who helps me breathe more easily?"
- Instead of "What expectations do I place on myself?" try "What pressure do I feel when I'm with certain people?"
- Instead of "What helps me feel safe?" try "What small behaviours from others help me relax?"

There is no right or wrong answer. You're simply learning the language of your own safety.

Open Questions

- Which relationships help you feel grounded, understood, or more like yourself?

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- Which relationships feel unpredictable, draining, confusing, or emotionally demanding?
- What expectations do you place on yourself around others — to be calm, helpful, agreeable, strong, quiet, available?
- What expectations do others place on you — spoken or unspoken?
- What helps you feel emotionally safe — tone, consistency, honesty, gentleness, space, predictability?

Sentence Starters

- “I feel most myself when I’m with...”
- “A relationship that feels complicated is...”

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- “I tend to expect myself to...”
- “I wish others understood that...”
- “I feel safer when...”
- “I notice I tense up when...”
- “I feel more grounded around people who...”

You can complete these with a single word, a phrase, or a longer reflection.

Tiny Practice

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Bring to mind one person — past or present — who helps you feel more like yourself. Notice what qualities in them feel grounding: their tone, their steadiness, their humour, their presence, their patience. Let yourself acknowledge, without pressure or expectation:

“This connection supports me.” “I’m allowed to value what feels safe.”

A Sciency Bit

Supportive relationships can help regulate the nervous system. When someone is consistent, respectful, and emotionally attuned, your brain often releases calming signals that lower stress hormones and increase resilience. In contrast, unpredictable or emotionally intense interactions can activate the brain’s threat response, making it harder to express needs or hold boundaries. Understanding these patterns can help you recognise what your nervous system needs to feel steady and safe.

SECTION 5 — Practicing One Gentle Boundary

A Gentle Guide

Boundaries don’t have to be big, bold, or dramatic to matter. Often, the boundaries that create the most meaningful change are the smallest ones — the quiet pauses, the gentle “not right now,” the moment you give yourself permission to take a breath before responding. Even a single act of honouring your energy can begin to shift how you relate to yourself and others.

For many people, the idea of setting a boundary can feel uncertain or overwhelming. You might imagine different reactions, feel unsure about how to phrase things, or wonder whether you’re “allowed” to take up space. These feelings are common, and they make sense. That’s why this section focuses on *one* gentle boundary — something small, doable, and kind. You’re not being asked to transform your relationships or suddenly become assertive. You’re simply choosing one place where you can practice honouring yourself in a way that feels safe enough.

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A gentle boundary might look like:

- pausing before replying to a message
- taking a short break when you feel overstimulated
- saying “I’ll get back to you” instead of answering immediately
- stepping away from a draining conversation
- choosing not to explain your no
- protecting your quiet time
- asking for a moment to think

If any question feels too broad, you can narrow it down. For example:

- Instead of “What boundary could help?” try “What would make tomorrow feel 5% easier?”
- Instead of “What support do I need?” try “Who helps me feel steadier?”
- Instead of “How might it feel?” try “What emotion do I imagine showing up first?”

This isn’t about perfection or getting it “right.” It’s simply about beginning — gently, thoughtfully, and at your own pace.

Open Questions

- What situation regularly leaves you feeling drained, overwhelmed, or overstretched?
- What small boundary — even a tiny one — could help you feel more in control or more grounded?

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- How might it feel to honour this boundary once, even briefly?
- What support (internal or external) would help you follow through — a reminder, a phrase, a person, a pause?
- What would you like to remind yourself if this boundary feels difficult, uncomfortable, or unfamiliar?



Sentence Starters

- “One boundary I want to practice is...”
- “It would help me to...”
- “I feel more grounded when I...”

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- “I want to remind myself that...”
- “A small step I can take is...”
- “If this feels hard, I’ll tell myself...”
- “I know this boundary matters because...”

You can complete these with a single word, a phrase, or a longer reflection.

Tiny Practice

Write down one boundary you want to try — something small, gentle, and doable. Circle it.
Take a slow breath. If it feels okay, say quietly:

“This is a beginning.” “I’m allowed to start small.”

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A Sciency Bit

Small behavioural changes can create new neural pathways. When you practice even one gentle boundary, your brain begins to learn that expressing needs is safe, possible, and allowed. Over time, these small acts of self-protection can reduce the stress response associated with speaking up and increase your sense of agency and emotional steadiness. In other words: tiny boundaries can create meaningful shifts.

CLOSING

You've taken time to explore your needs, your limits, and the patterns that shape how you move through relationships — and that matters. This kind of reflection asks for honesty, patience, and a gentle willingness to look inward. Boundaries work isn't about becoming distant or difficult. It's about finding ways to care for yourself that feel steady, respectful, and sustainable. It's about recognising that your energy is worth tending to, your voice deserves room, and your wellbeing is not something you have to set aside.

There's no expectation to get this perfect. You don't need to change everything at once. You're allowed to take small steps. You're allowed to move slowly. You're allowed to protect your peace, even if others don't fully understand what you're choosing or why it feels important.

Every boundary you explore — even the ones you only imagine, even the ones you practice quietly inside yourself — is an act of self-respect. It's a way of saying, *“My needs matter. My feelings matter. I matter.”*

You are learning. You are growing. And you are allowed to take up space.