

PROACTIVE  
BOUNDARIES

at Work



## TOP OF MIND EXERCISE:

For the next 24 hours make a list of the people, experiences, feelings, circumstances, and situations that are stressful right now or causing you some resentment around your workday or work routine.

Try not to judge yourself as you're writing, just keep a list. Once you know, you can start to put together a plan for what areas in your life need your attention and make adjustments.

## GO DEEPER - CREATE A PROACTIVE BUSINESS BOUNDARY PLAN

### #1: Take a Business Boundary Inventory

Use the tool on the next few pages to take an honest inventory of how you are currently working and communicating and how you would like it to be.

The point of this exercise is to get you off "auto-pilot" so you can make conscious decisions for yourself and your working preferences.

Start with:

- Where do you work from? (Home, Office, workspace, public spaces)
- What time of day are you most productive?
- Do you like working alone or with other people physically nearby?

## PROACTIVE BOUNDARIES AT WORK

<b>CURRENTLY</b>	<b>YOUR PREFERENCE</b>
What hours do you currently work?	What are your preferred work hours?
How do people currently contact you? (email, SMS, FB Messenger, phone, Slack, Voxer)	How would you prefer they contact you?
What activities do you take time out during your workday to do? (exercising, dropping off kids, grocery shopping, etc.)	What activities do you want to build into your daily schedule?

## PROACTIVE BOUNDARIES AT WORK

<p>Do you use some sort of a “do not disturb” system or indicator during the day? Can anyone contact you at any time?</p>	<p>Do you prefer to have a schedule and time blocked out for specific tasks or interactions? If so, what hours are optimal for what activities?</p>
<p>How do you respond to email and text messages, full sentences, or as few words as possible?</p>	<p>How would you like to respond to emails and other messages?</p>
<p>Do you get a heads-up from people before they call?</p>	<p>Do you want a heads-up before they call?</p>

## PROACTIVE BOUNDARIES AT WORK

How quickly do you respond to messages and emails?	How quickly would you like to respond?
How do people currently book meetings with you?	Is there anything you'd like to change about it?
Other... (fill in your own)	

**Once you have completed this, do the following journaling exercise to dig deeper.**

**1.** Think about what kind of work/business experience you really want, on a daily basis. Based on your answers above, write the narrative of your ideal day, from morning till night. Be as specific as possible.

For example:

How many hours do you want to work? What does your office (or home office if you work virtually) look like? What type of people are your coworkers, team members or collaborators? How do you feel when you are working? How much money are you making? Are you deeply engaged, inspired, excited, energized? Write it all out.

**2.** What is getting in the way?

Without judging or blaming, list the TOP THREE things in your life right now that are preventing you from creating the business day flow you described in #1. (Be specific and provide as much detail as possible.)

Allow yourself the time and space to put thoughts into words (which makes you more accountable and, therefore, more likely to act upon them).

Building a daily structure of your preferences and desires that is also aligned with how you want to feel is a valuable exercise that is worth your time and effort.

### **SMALL CHANGES = BIG IMPACT**

Giving yourself permission to change your mind, change your process, and prioritize your true desires is the key to THRIVING instead of simply SURVIVING each business day.

### **#2: Create your Boundary Boss Proactive Guide for Engagement to share with your coworkers and clients.**

For every business relationship you have (coworker, employee, client, collaborator), create a proactive guide for engagement.

By clearly stating your preferred way of communicating, time frames, due dates, etc you will be successfully managing expectations and creating a scenario for success.

By being clear up front, you remove the mistake of making assumptions about what people should or should not know. This ensures that everyone is on the same page (because you have written the page!)

When you share your Proactive Guide with your coworkers and clients, you can include the following and anything else specific to your business and best practices.

- Where you work from:
- Your Timezone:
- Your work hours (and when you are not available)
- Your typical response time to requests that are not emergencies
- The preferred way to contact you:
  - Phone
  - Email
  - Other

Add your preferences from your inventory above and any pertinent information regarding due dates, payment particulars, and anything else that impacts the working relationship.

## SCENARIOS & SCRIPTS

### **Q. How can I delegate at work without coming off as bossy, controlling, demanding, or mean?**

This response is rooted in fear-based thinking. Appropriately and effectively delegating (and NOT behaving bossy, controlling, demanding, or mean) has everything to do with the energy with which you delegate. If you expect a positive response and delegate with confidence, you are more likely to get a positive response. If you do it with an apology or fear energy, people will respond with anger or resentment. This comes back to fear of what people who work for you think about you or in general what other people think about you. This shift means putting the focus on what YOU think and stopping the incessant search for external validation. As Don Miguel Ruiz says in the four agreements, everyone is living in their own nightmare, meaning they're experiencing their *own* repeating boundary realities (or transference to you) so you can only work to be clear about what your intention is, not the way someone else will perceive it.

### **Q. How to set boundaries at work and ask for more money, take the time off that is owed to me and leave my work at work instead of having it dominate my life?**

You can use the Boundary Boss Proactive Guide here as well. Identify the point person with whom you need to communicate your vacation request etc and contact them early and often. This will normalize the interaction.

Leaving work at work is another matter that involves strengthening your internal boundaries and understanding how past unresolved material and experiences might be negatively impacting your ability to strike a healthy work/life balance. (This is covered in chapter 5 of the Boundary Boss book under the section, "The 3 Qs for Clarity - Decoding transference in Real Life.)

**Q. Dealing with difficult clients. How do you stand your ground when they continuously demand more and react in rude and condescending ways, even when I've firmly enforced what my contract says? And when push comes to shove, how do you eloquently let them go?**

Your Boundary Boss Proactive Guide you created above can help BEFORE you get into a contract with a client. When they try to cross your boundary repeatedly, keep referring them to the agreement. Use the same language every time, "Betty, what you are asking is out of the purview of our contract so I will need to decline or we will have to renegotiate a higher rate." If you decide to let them go mid-project you can say, "Betty, I have communicated with you respectfully over a dozen times and your insistence on pushing my team past our agreed upon limits without proper compensation has led me to exercise the termination clause in our signed agreement." If they try to come back for a different project, "Sorry, Betty but I am unavailable." If she pushes by asking why or gets hostile, you can say, "Betty, I am not interested in working with you again. I wish you the best." #ByeBossyBetty





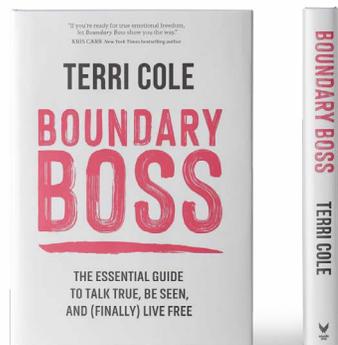
Terri Cole is a licensed psychotherapist and global leading expert in female empowerment. For two decades, Terri has worked with some of the world's most well known personalities from international pop stars to Fortune 500 CEOs.

Terri has a gift for making complex psychological concepts accessible, and then actionable so that clients and students achieve sustainable change i.e. true transformation.

She empowers over 250,000 people weekly through her blog, social media platform, signature courses, *Real Love Revolution™* and *Boundary Bootcamp™* and her popular podcast, *The Terri Cole Show*.

Terri is also the author of *Boundary Boss - The Essential Guide to Talk True, Be Seen and (Finally) Live Free* (April 2021).

[www.boundarybossbook.com](http://www.boundarybossbook.com)



[WWW.TERRICOLE.COM](http://WWW.TERRICOLE.COM)

COPYRIGHT © 2021 TERRI COLE

