



HOW TO PROTECT YOUR *Energetic Boundaries*

Empaths and HSPs are like the psychic sponges of the world.

We readily feel the feelings of other people. The environments we're in, who we spend time with and the sensory input we're exposed to can greatly affect our internal space, our energy levels, our moods, and even our health.

The more skilled you become at discerning your own feelings from the feelings of others, the easier it will be to draw healthy boundaries to protect your energy and vitality (and sanity). This topic is very close to my heart because, as you might know, I am an empath and an HSP.

What I've discovered is that sometimes we are so consciously and unconsciously dialed into our environment that it can compromise internal peace.

The concept of Auto-Accommodating refers to the unconscious compulsion to avoid conflict or issues even when they are not your own. Sometimes it can present as just wanting to be "helpful," which seems like a nice thing to do unless you can't turn it off.

Let's say you're in a restaurant with a loved one with a beautiful meal in front of you.

Are you aware of everything going on around you? The people's conversations at other tables, the wait staff, maybe even the party of 4 that came in frustrated that they have to wait and are giving the hostess a hard time?

Now let me ask you this...in this scenario, do you find your eyes sweeping the room to check and see which diners are almost ready to leave so as to help "accommodate" the person hassling the hostess? (even if you say nothing, the act of seeking a solution to what is not your problem is the point, here.)

While it might seem like you're being kind and helpful to others (and you might be!), I want to shed light on how the unconscious mechanism of auto-accommodating could be compromising your precious mental and emotional space and what you can do about it.

Auto-accommodating means being in a state of hyper-awareness, that is, being acutely dialed into what is happening around you to see if you can help avoid conflict or correct a problem even if it does not directly relate to you.

If you identify with being an empath or a highly sensitive person, chances are you feel like your "antennas" are up all the time, scanning every room and everyone.

Raise Your Awareness with These Two Activities

Top of Mind

Where are you over-functioning, over-giving or auto-accommodating?

Take the next 24 hours to dial into and then write down every time you jump in OR think about jumping into a “fix” or help in a situation or circumstance that is not your own.

This will give you a clear idea of what situations kick up your need to fix so you can start protecting your precious energy and bandwidth.

Go Deeper - Take an inventory

Step #1 - Make a list including most stress-inducing situations you find yourself in at home, in friendships, with family and work.

- Where are you when you feel totally exhausted and depleted or completely overwhelmed?
- Identify what situations or places activate you.
- Who are you with?

Once you know, you can start to put together a plan for what areas in your life need your attention and make adjustments.

Step #2 - Make a list of people you spend time with:

Think through how you feel around the people you spend time with. Can you identify who drains you? You might even start to feel anxiety when you know you're going to spend time with them...even if you love them.

Remember, being honest with yourself is not doing anything mean or wrong to anyone else.

Be Proactive. Have a Game Plan.

It is important to have a gameplan. This may mean you develop an exit strategy. Setting expectations beforehand can help you stick to this plan and honor your time and energy. Mentioning that you have 20 minutes to catch up, or an hour for lunch before your next appointment, can enforce clear and specific boundaries.

Knowing your boundaries and being unapologetic about them can help you keep a safe distance and not overcommit to anything that may be too draining. It is also a way to deepen the truth and intimacy in your relationships.

Prioritize your comfort in all areas of your life.

When you are highly sensitive, any sensory input that irritates you can take up substantial bandwidth and energy.

You can make small, easy changes in your lifestyle that will take into consideration your preferences for comfort.

There are things you can control in your space like the way things feel, smell, sound, etc.

What is comforting and comfortable for you? Make a list and think through all of your senses as you do. A weighted blanket, low light, soft rugs, and cozy pillows can go a long way in your home to truly make it a place of restoration. You can even think through your wardrobe. Find essential oil blends that calm and soothe you.

4 Boundary Scripts & Scenarios

Q: How can I set a boundary when someone else has an emotional issue so it does not suck me in?

This is a symptom of weak emotional boundaries as well as codependency and a desire to over-function or “fix.” You have to get clear about what is your side of the street.

You can be compassionate without taking on the person's problem, which is not yours to fix.

Saying, *"I am so sorry you are in pain, how can I best support you right now?"* If they say, *"Tell me what to do."* You can say either, *"I don't know what you should do, but do care that you are struggling"* or *"I cannot tell you what to do but if you are interested in what I might do in your situation, I will share that with you."*

Q: How can I say no without compulsively over-explaining or justifying why I am saying no?

You can employ the 24-hour rule here which means simply saying, *"I have a 24 hour decision making policy so I'll get back to you."* If you want to provide context because it is a close relationship, feel free. A boundary statement with context, *"I can't come on Sunday as I have a big presentation on Monday and will be prepping,"* is different than justifying or trying to manipulate the other person into not being angry about your decision.

Q: What do I say to the other person when I find myself in this situation and don't want to or am unable to do what they're asking of me?

You must soothe your little kid because she is the one freaking out about saying no to people. It would be helpful to use one

of the phrases in the, Stop the Auto YES, strategy. If someone then punishes you for saying NO you have to call them out saying something like, *"Ever since I was unable to walk your dog last week, I have not heard from you? I have been wondering if you might be angry with me. For our clarity and to manage expectations, please know that I will do you that favor when I can. We are friends and every kindness we extend each other is a choice and a gift, so please respect my boundary when I say no to you about something."* Some version of this would create clarity.

Q: *I have friends who exhaust me every time we get together for lunch dates. The whole time they talk about their marital or parental issues and we run out of time before they think to ask about me. I look forward to getting together with them and then am disappointed. How do I tell them that I'd enjoy a lighter, more positive and two-way conversation?*

It's not about telling them things need to change, it's about changing your half of the conversation dance. Next time you get together start by saying, *"I have so much I want to share with you and am working on not hiding behind my listening so can I please tell you my news first today?"* Stop waiting for them to ask because ultimately being seen and heard is your responsibility.

with love Terri



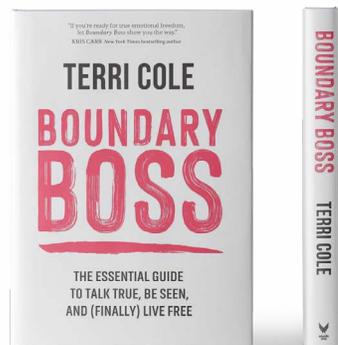
Terri Cole is a licensed psychotherapist and global leading expert in female empowerment. For two decades, Terri has worked with some of the world's most well known personalities from international pop stars to Fortune 500 CEOs.

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*.

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