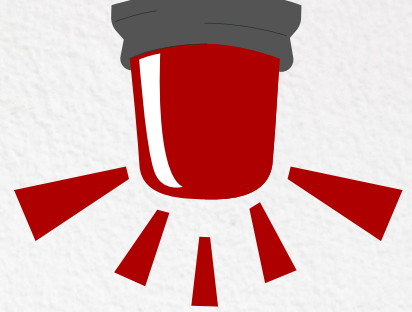




TIPS FOR MAINTAINING BOUNDARIES IN **COMPLICATED** RELATIONSHIPS



1. Get honest about the complexity.

You can't enforce what you haven't defined. Take time to identify what you can and cannot give. Not every relationship allows for the same level of access. Acknowledge the dynamic instead of pretending it's simple.

Exercise: Write a “boundary inventory” for one complicated relationship.

- List what you can give and cannot give.
- Identify areas where the relationship's dynamic challenges your limits.
- Highlight one or two things you want to communicate clearly to protect yourself.



2. Keep your limits sustainable and explanations simple.

Boundaries should protect your well-being, not set you up for failure. Choose limits you can maintain consistently, even when emotions are involved or pressure is applied. Over-explaining often comes from guilt, not necessity. “This doesn’t work for me” is enough.

Exercise: Pick 1 boundary you’ve been avoiding.

- Write a short, clear statement you can use.
- Keep it under one sentence (e.g., “I’m unavailable for late-night texts; I need rest”).
- Read it aloud to yourself; notice if it feels doable and guilt-free.

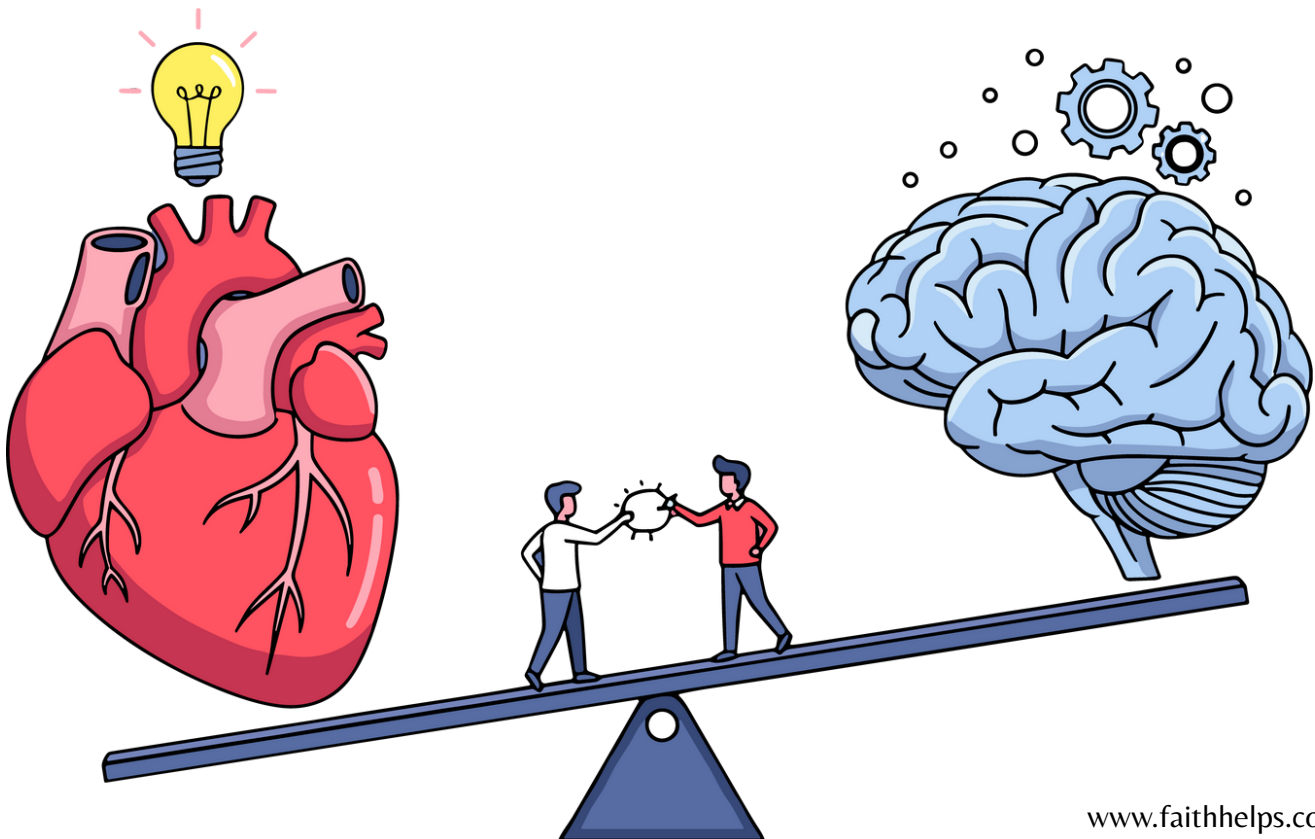


3. Communicate from clarity, not emotion.

Boundary conversations are most effective when you're calm and regulated. Speaking from frustration or guilt can blur your message and invite unnecessary conflict.

Exercise: Practice a boundary conversation script.

- Role-play (alone or with a trusted friend) saying your boundary calmly.
- Focus on stating facts, not emotions.
- Note how it feels to speak clearly without justifying or apologizing.



4. Expect mixed reactions —and don't overcorrect.

Understanding someone's feelings doesn't mean changing your boundary to make them comfortable. You can care about someone's feelings without taking responsibility for fixing them.

Exercise: Identify a boundary you've been tempted to adjust for someone else.

- Write down the person's likely reaction.
- Remind yourself: your boundary is about your well-being, not their comfort.
- Repeat your boundary in writing 3 times to reinforce consistency.



5. Limit access, not compassion.

You can care deeply while still protecting your time, energy, and emotional well-being. Boundaries aren't about shutting people out. They're about managing how much of you is available.

Exercise: Create a “boundary map.”

- Draw a circle with yourself in the center.
- Around the circle, label levels of access for people in your life (e.g., full access, limited access, no access).
- For one person, define what limited access looks like in practical terms (time, energy, communication).



6. Reassess as the relationship evolves.

What worked before may not work now. Healthy boundaries adjust as circumstances change. Consistency teaches others what to expect, while flexibility allows boundaries to evolve as relationships, responsibilities, and seasons change.

Exercise: Set a monthly “boundary check-in.”

- Ask: “Which boundaries are working? Which need adjustment?”
- Note one change you’ll make this month.
- Reflect on how flexibility affects your energy and relationship quality.





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