

**Ain't I A Woman: A Dialogue for Womxn and Femmes of Color
on Being “Enough” as Professionals
UC Davis Aggies Leading the Way, 2019**

Presented by Sara Blair-Medeiros, M.Ed. and Cecily Nelson-Alford, M.A.

Key Areas to Protect Using Boundaries

Just as we have property we preserve and protect with physical boundaries, there are several key areas of our lives that should be protected by personal boundaries:

Your Time – In today’s world, time is an important and valuable asset. We often feel we never have enough time to focus on what’s really important in our lives yet time is often what we least protect through effective boundaries. Do you have friends who drop by unexpectedly? Do you have co-workers or employees who demand your time in unreasonable ways? Do you have tasks that could just as easily be completed by someone else? These are examples of violators of our time boundaries.

Your Emotions – Your emotions are where your love and caring come from. This should be well-protected. Often, people in our lives may say or do hurtful things (often unintentional) that can damage our emotions and our hearts. Has someone in your life made hurtful remarks or comments? Been thoughtless? These are examples of violations of our emotional boundaries.

Your Energy – Your energy is the well-spring from which you function. This energy can come from many sources; your “alone time”, your inner peace, activities that invigorate you, etc. When others do or say things that rob you of this energy (such as invade your privacy, create turmoil, make unreasonable demands, keep you from prayer, meditation, etc.), you are less likely to function effectively.

Your Personal Values or Other Areas of Importance to You – Anything in your life that is important to you (such as your personal values, needs, family, etc.) can be areas that can benefit from effective boundaries. What other areas of your life need boundaries?

Tips for Setting Boundaries

- Schedule lunch times in calendars and keeping that time. Plan a lunch date with a colleague if you have to commit to someone else in order to not schedule over it.
- Put a tagline in your email signature stating that you stop checking it after a particular time/on weekends.
- Identify your priorities. Use personal goals, values, and even your position description to assess how your time *should* be spent. Now ask, does this additional task take away from my priorities, including what I was hired to do?
- Practice saying “no, but...” maybe you can’t fully commit to something, but you can support in a smaller way.
- Learn to let go. Ask yourself, “what is the worst that can I happen if I don’t...” Chances are, the world will still keep turning.

Understanding and Creating Your Personal Boundaries

In the space provided, list at least 2 boundaries (either from the key areas above or other areas in your life) that need strengthening. In the space next to the boundary, identify a potential solution to that boundary issue. The solution could be anything from having a conversation with the offender to removing yourself from the situation.

The boundary being crossed is.....	The action I will take is...
<i>Example: I find that I am constantly filling in the gaps for a white colleague who is not pulling their weight.</i>	<i>Provide direct feedback to my colleague, talk with my supervisor, and let go when their tasks are not done.</i>

Adapted from "Drawing Effective Personal Boundaries" by Bradley Davidson, MS, SPHR. Your Personal and Professional Life Coach Copyright 2009

Resources

Books

"Self-Compassion: The Proven Power of Being Kind to Yourself" -- Kristin Neff

"The Gifts of Imperfection: Let Go of Who You Think You're Supposed to Be and Embrace Who You Are" -- Brene Brown

"Believe Bigger: Discover the Path to Your Life Purpose" -- Marshawn Evans Daniels

"The Book of Joy" -- Dalai Lama and Desmond Tutu

"Succulent Wild Woman" -- SARK

"Year of Yes: How to Dance It Out, Stand in the Sun, and Be Your Own Person" -- Shonda Rhimes

Podcasts

Put Yourself First by Kat Horrocks

Self Service by Girlboss Radio

Black Girl in Om by Lauren Ash and Deun Ivory

Bitter Brown Femmes by Ruben and Cassandra

Online Resources

Self-Care Pledges for Black Womxn:

<https://www.essence.com/lifestyle/health-wellness/self-care-pledges-2018-women-better-life#1283990>

Self Compassion Test:

<http://self-compassion.org/test-how-self-compassionate-you-are/>

Online magazine, blog, and self-care course:

<http://thebodyisnotanapology.com>

Loving Kindness Meditation

*TIP: Record this script in your own voice and listen on your earbuds.

Sit comfortably in your chair. Close your eyes if you feel comfortable or find a fixed spot to focus your gaze.

Take a few deep breaths and begin to relax your body into your seat. Scan for any tension in your body and allow it to soften. Pay attention to any judgements or assumptions that may be coming up and try to clear your mind and focus on your breath.

The goal of this meditation is to send care, tenderness and warmth to yourself by softening and breaking down barriers that we feel inwardly.

As you breathe, try to generate kindness towards yourself. If you notice judgement or criticalness try to imagine strength, safety and general well-being for yourself.

As you breathe in and out, state the following phrases silently to yourself and try to get in touch with the intention behind each statement—

May I be free of harm and danger

May I be safe and protected

May I be free of mental suffering and distress

May I be able to live peacefully and with ease

May I be free of physical pain and suffering

May I have good health and strength

May I accept myself as I am and be able to live happily