BOUNDARIES THAT INCLUDE YOU

Six sentences for when "sure" is about to escape your mouth.

A boundary does not need to be a speech. Most of the time, it is simply clear information about what you are available for and what you are not.

The difficulty is that many of us only remember we have limits after we have already said yes, rearranged the weekend and quietly started resenting everyone involved.

Before you answer, try this first: "Let me think about it and get back to you."

SIX SENTENCES YOU CAN ACTUALLY USE

I need time. "Let me check and get back to you."

The answer is no. "I can't this time."

I can help, but not that much. "I can do X, not Y."

Work is already full. "I'm at capacity. What should move if this needs to come in?"

It can wait until tomorrow. "I'm offline now. I'll look at this tomorrow."

This conversation needs to stop. "I'm going to leave this here for now."

AFTER YOU SAY IT

This is the part where your brain may suddenly decide the boundary requires supporting documents, witness statements and a fourteen-paragraph explanation.

- Do not rush to fill the silence.
- Do not add an apology unless you genuinely owe one.
- If they push, repeat the sentence once. You are allowed to become boring.
- If you need more time, take more time.

Ask yourself: Am I saying yes because I want to — or because I do not want them to be disappointed?

A boundary is not punishment. It is information. It tells other people where you end, what you can offer, and what you cannot.

You do not need to become harder. You just need to stop volunteering yourself before checking whether you are actually available.