

OCEAN RITUAL

YOUR FREE WELLBEING RESOURCE

# Small Boundaries, More Breathing Room

A practical guide to expressing capacity  
with clarity and care

Wellness, Made a Ritual

# A boundary starts with your capacity

## WHAT A BOUNDARY CAN DO

A boundary explains your availability or the action you can take. It does not control another person's response or guarantee agreement. You can be clear and still feel uncomfortable.

## CHOOSE A SAFE, ORDINARY SITUATION

Start with a low-risk request or invitation. If you fear threats, control or retaliation, do not use this exercise to confront someone. Seek confidential trusted or specialist support; keep private notes secure if needed.

## NAME THE LIMIT

Consider time, energy and real responsibilities. Decide what you can offer, rather than preparing a long defence. A pause to decide is also an option.

## MAKE THE SENTENCE SPECIFIC

Use "I can..." or "I cannot..." with the action or time. An alternative is optional. Keep the wording respectful and direct. Rehearsing privately is a complete activity.

## HOLD ROOM FOR A RESPONSE

The other person may disagree. You can repeat your limit briefly or end a safe conversation. Where contracts, work duties or necessary care are involved, seek appropriate advice and discuss arrangements rather than assuming a script changes those responsibilities.

# Sentences you can make your own

## WHEN YOU NEED TIME

“Let me check what I can manage. I will reply tomorrow.” Only offer a reply time you can realistically keep.

## WHEN YOUR TIME IS LIMITED

“I can help for ten minutes, but I cannot take on the whole task.” If ten minutes is not available, choose a different limit.

## WHEN YOU NEED TO DECLINE

“I cannot do that this week.” You do not have to offer another option if none is feasible.

## WHEN YOU NEED A DIFFERENT ARRANGEMENT

“I need the plan earlier so I can prepare. Can we agree when it will be shared?” A request invites agreement; it is not a guarantee.

## WHEN WORK PRIORITIES CONFLICT

“With the time available, I can finish A or B by Friday. Which should take priority?” Discuss realistic workload with the person responsible.

## KEEP IT BELIEVABLE

Choose words that sound like you. These examples support everyday communication; they are not instructions for handling abuse, disputes or clinical concerns.

# My boundary practice page

Short notes are enough. Skip any prompt or use a notebook.

## THE ORDINARY SITUATION; IS IT SAFE TO PRACTISE?

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## WHAT I CAN REALISTICALLY OFFER

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## MY SENTENCE AND AN OPTIONAL ALTERNATIVE

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## PRIVATE REHEARSAL OR NEXT STEP; SUPPORT I MAY NEED

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# After the conversation

Short notes are enough. Skip any prompt or use a notebook.

## WHAT HAPPENED, DESCRIBED WITHOUT JUDGING MYSELF

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## WHAT WAS WITHIN MY CONTROL AND WHAT WAS NOT

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## KEEP, ADAPT OR SEEK SUPPORT

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## A FAIR REMINDER TO MYSELF

Example: I communicated my capacity; agreement is not guaranteed.

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# Make it your own ritual

## KEEP IT MANAGEABLE

Repeat only what helps. Adapt to your energy, disability, responsibilities and existing healthcare advice. These tools are not tests of wellbeing, productivity or recovery.

## EXPLORE A LONGER GUIDE

For more reflection on preferences, needs and everyday confidence, explore Find the 30-Day Self-Worth & Confidence Programme in the programme collection on the Ocean Ritual website. Choose the support that fits your needs; no further purchase is needed to use this free resource.

## WHEN MORE HELP IS USEFUL

If stress, low mood or anxiety persists or affects daily life, speak to a GP or qualified professional. New or concerning physical symptoms need assessment. UK: NHS 111 for urgent non-emergency advice; 999 for immediate danger or an emergency. Elsewhere use local services.

## SOURCES AND USE

Background: Centre for Clinical Interventions, Assertiveness resources. [cci.health.wa.gov.au/Resources/Looking-After-Yourself/Assertiveness](https://cci.health.wa.gov.au/Resources/Looking-After-Yourself/Assertiveness). Checked 13 October 2026. Activities and worksheets are original educational examples; source organisations do not endorse Ocean Ritual. This resource is not therapy or individual clinical advice and does not guarantee results. © 2026 Ocean Ritual. Free personal use; print for yourself. Please direct others to the original download rather than reselling or redistributing the PDF.