

# 23 Boundary Scripts

## to Take Back Your Life

### **1. On refusing something:**

"I'm not taking that on" or "My schedule won't allow that."

### **2. No longer baking that special labor-intensive dish:**

"I'm not going to be bringing [favorite dish] this year. I can bring a pie or a cheese tray, which would you prefer." If they say, "The party will be ruined if you don't bring it" say, "I'd hate to think the entire party would be ruined because of one dish. I won't be bringing it, would you prefer the pie or the cheese tray?" Don't explain why, just restate what you WILL do.

### **3.No more free professional advice/services:**

"I'm no longer giving out free legal advice" or "I'm no longer giving out free haircuts" or "I'm no longer giving out free coaching"

### **4. Principles over personalities:**

Volatile person wants to take over the responsibility for an event for her group and the former event treasurer wants to tell her no way! Instead, the boundary is that treasurer goes to former event planners and says, "What are our standards for handing over the seed money for the event to a new group of people?" without mentioning the name of the volatile person because it's about principles over personalities. That is, they want to make objective policies about who takes over, not policies in reaction to a person they don't want to take over

### **5.Telling someone to back off:**

If a friend is trying to 'toughen you up' say, "I don't need to be toughened up. I need love." BONUS: Be proactive and call that friend to say those things, don't wait until the next time you see her or when it 'comes up.' The sooner you do it, the more ease you have.

**6. When you don't want to hear about your ex from friends:**

"I don't want updates about [ex]."

**7. Keeping work at work and home at home with friend/colleague:**

When working with a close friend, say "I'd rather that we talk about work at work and home at home."

**8. No longer tolerating drunken behavior 1:**

"I love spending time with you when you're sober. If you drink, I'll leave" then leave if they drink.

**9. No longer tolerating drunken behavior 2:**

"I love you and miss you. I can't sleep in here when you've been drinking."

**10. On putting things where they belong:**

"Please put the towel back on the rack" or "Please don't put that there." Restate as many times as necessary.

**11. On making meaningful contributions:**

Ask what projects are coming up, then say, "These are my areas of interest, \_\_\_ and \_\_\_. That's where I can contribute meaningfully."

**12. Focusing on the family where there's an ongoing crisis:**

"I have an ongoing family emergency that I don't want to talk about. There's no end in sight so I can't say when I'll be available again."

**13. When you don't know how to respond:**

"I don't know what to say."

**14. On managing your time:**

"As much as I'd like to stay longer, I can only stay until 7:00" or "I only have 15 minutes." If they ask why you can't stay longer say, "I just can't" with no further explanation (it's none of their business!)

**15. On refusing help:**

"Thanks for offering, I'm going to take care of that myself" or "I'd rather handle it myself, thank you."

**16. Reinforcing your standards:**

Say, "I'm not seeing any progress here" rather than getting into the details of what they did or did not do or berating them (i.e., describe what you're seeing without a value judgment).

**17. Getting someone out of your house 1:**

"I know you're uncomfortable going back to your place, and I feel for you. I also need my space. You can stay for one more week then you'll have to find another place to stay or move back home."

**18. Getting someone out of your house 2:**

"If your things are still here on November 30th, the junk haulers will be here to remove them. I don't want it to come to that, but it will."

**19. When someone relies on you more than is comfortable:**

"Here's what I can do, \_\_\_"

**20. When he invites others to come on a pre-planned date with you:**

"I'd prefer to go with you and not with your friends" or "I'll let it go this time, but in the future please ask before inviting others on our dates."

**21. Setting standards for a new relationship:**

“I’d really like to hear from you regularly, but texting multiple times a day won’t work for me. How about if we check in once in the morning and once in the evening on the days we don’t see each other?”

**22. To stop the gossip:**

“I’m no longer going to talk about X” or “I’d like to hear about you and what’s going on with you.”

**23. Use fewer words:**

The less you say, the less opportunity there is for them to pick apart what you say. For example, don’t say, “Next Thursday I have to go to the X and then the Y, and I also have to A, B, C.” Instead say, “I won’t be there next Thursday.” If they ask why, say, “I just won’t” or “I don’t want to get into it.” It’s none of their business!