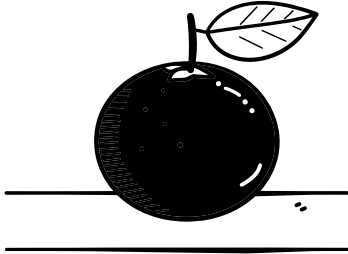


DETOX - Boundary Reset Mini-Guide

A practical framework for leaders who need to reclaim control, end toxic patterns, and protect their time and energy. This guide provides clear, actionable strategies you can implement immediately to reset dynamics that aren't working.



What a Boundary Actually Is



A boundary is not a request. It's not persuasion. It's not explaining why someone should treat you better.

A boundary is: a clear statement of what you will and won't do, and what will happen if the line is crossed.

Most "boundary failures" happen because people think setting a boundary equals having a difficult conversation. It's not. It's making a decision about your own behavior, then communicating it clearly.

❏ **Key insight:** Boundaries are decisions about YOUR actions, not attempts to control others' behavior.

The Boundary Triangle

Use this three-part template to reset ANY recurring dynamic. This structure removes ambiguity — the thing toxic patterns rely on.



Expectation

State the agreement clearly.

"What we agreed on was..."



Boundary

Define what YOU will do going forward.

"What I will do when this comes up again is..."



Consequence

Name the follow-through.

"If the agreement isn't honored, the next step will be..."

Micro-Boundaries for Everyday Protection

These are small, low-risk boundaries you can implement immediately. They aren't confrontational — they're stabilizing. Start with the ones that feel most natural to your situation.

Time Management

- "I can discuss this tomorrow, not tonight."
- "I'm available for 20 minutes; after that I have another commitment."
- "I don't take calls without agenda."

Clarity & Scope

- "I need clarity before taking this on."
- "That's outside my role; who owns it?"
- "I'm not able to respond to Slack after 6pm."



Common Boundary Violations

If you spot these patterns, you're dealing with a system, not an accident. Labeling these patterns gives you leverage and reduces self-doubt.



Selective "forgetting" of agreements

Convenient amnesia about what was decided



Shifting expectations after you commit

The scope changes once you've said yes



Withholding information

Critical details arrive too late to act on



Relying on your guilt or conscientiousness

Weaponizing your sense of responsibility



Triangulation

"X said..." — pulling others into the dynamic



Repeated last-minute "emergencies"

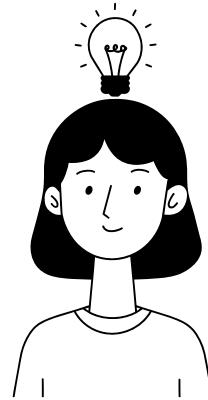
Crises that somehow only land on your desk

Recognition Is the First Step

When you can name what's happening, you stop questioning yourself. These aren't personality conflicts or communication gaps — they're **systematic boundary violations**.

The moment you recognize the pattern is the moment you gain agency. You're no longer reacting; you're observing. And from observation comes strategic action.

You don't need to prove the pattern exists. You just need to respond to it differently.



A 2-Minute Boundary Reset Script

Use this verbatim until it feels natural. Short. Neutral. No emotion for them to push against.

"Just to restate the agreement we made last week...

Going forward, here's what I'll be doing when this comes up again...

And if the agreement isn't followed, here's the next step."

 **Pro tip:** The power is in the simplicity. Don't elaborate, don't justify, don't defend. State and stop.



Quick Self-Check Before Setting a Boundary

Boundaries fail when you set them from depletion or choose consequences you won't keep. Run this checklist first:

Check Your State

Am I hungry, angry, lonely, tired, or stressed? (HALTS)

Do I need a 60-second pause before responding?

Start Small

What is the smallest boundary I can set that changes the pattern?

Micro-changes create momentum without overwhelming you.

Reality-Test the Consequence

What is the consequence I'm actually willing to follow through on?

Empty threats destroy credibility. Choose what you'll enforce.

Implementation Strategy

Week 1: Practice Micro-Boundaries

Start with the lowest-stakes situations. Use scripts for time management and clarity requests. Build the muscle memory.

Week 2: Apply the Triangle

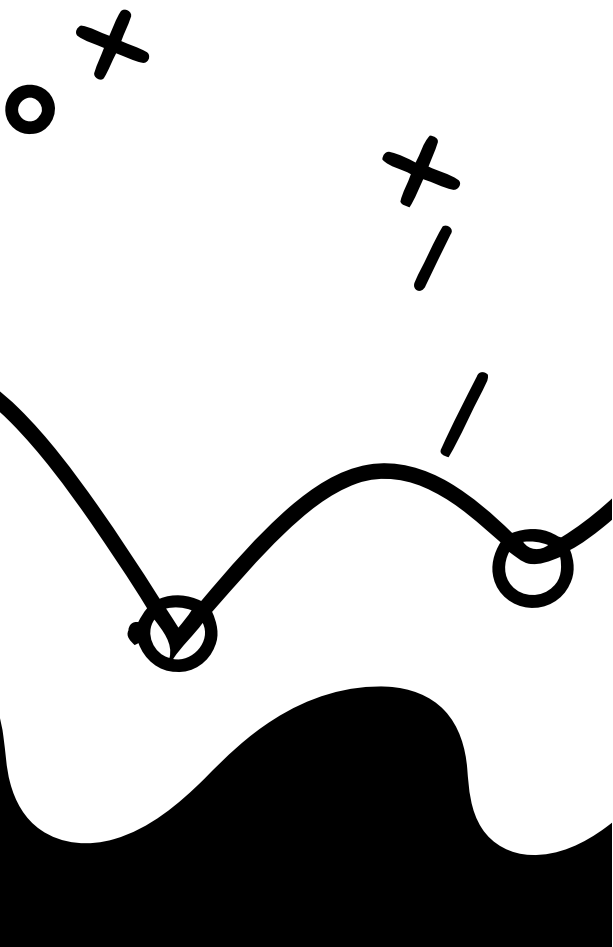
Choose one recurring pattern. Use the Expectation-Boundary-Consequence framework. Document what you say.

Week 3: Strengthen Follow-Through

This is where most people falter. When the line is crossed, implement the consequence. No negotiation, no explanation.

Week 4: Assess and Adjust

What's working? What needs refinement? Boundaries are iterative. Adjust based on results, not guilt.



Your Next Steps



Identify One Pattern

Choose the recurring dynamic that drains you most. Name it clearly.



Write Your Script

Use the Boundary Triangle. Get specific about YOUR actions and consequences.



Deliver It

Say it clearly, once. Then enforce it consistently. Action builds credibility.

Remember: Boundaries aren't about changing other people. They're about **reclaiming your agency** and deciding what you will and won't accept. You already have everything you need to begin.

You've just completed the boundary reset worksheet I walk leaders through at the start of every DETOX engagement.

If you'd like to turn this into a clear plan for protecting your well-being at work—with a live session to map the dynamics, a written boundary and action plan, and personal follow-up—you can schedule a DETOX session here: <https://calendar.app.google/3RvhnQ5sVxVwUWdo7> or visit startuppatterns.com/services.