



Setting Boundaries

Whether you're casually hooking up or have been going out for a while now, setting boundaries is an important part of any relationship. It's good for both individuals to be on the same page. To have the healthiest relationship, both partners should know each other's wants, goals, fears and limits. You should feel comfortable communicating your honest needs to your partner without being afraid of what he or she might do in response. If your partner tells you that your needs are stupid, gets angry with you or goes against what you're comfortable with, then your partner may not be showing you the respect you deserve.

Talking about your boundaries with your partner is a great way to make sure that both of your needs are being met and you feel safe in your relationship. Here are some things to think about when setting boundaries in your relationship:



Emotional

- **The L Word:** Saying "I love you" happens for different people and different times in a relationship. If your partner says it and you don't feel that way yet, don't feel bad -- you may just not be ready yet. Let your partner know how it made you feel when they said it and tell them your own goals for the relationship.
- **Time Apart:** As great as it is to want to spend a lot of time with your partner, remember that it's important to have some time away from each other too. Both you and your partner should be free to hang out with friends (male or female) or family without having to get permission. It's also healthy to spend time by yourself doing things that you enjoy or that help you relax. You should be able to tell your partner when you need to do things on your own instead of feeling trapped into spending all of your time together.



Physical

- **Take Your Time:** Don't rush it if you're not ready. Getting physical with your partner doesn't have to happen all at once if you're not ready. In a healthy relationship, both partners know how far each other wants to go and they communicate to each other if something changes. There isn't a rule book that says you have to go so far by a certain age or at any given time in a relationship, so take things at your own pace.
- **Sex Isn't Currency:** You don't owe your partner anything. Just because your partner takes you out to dinner, buys you a gift or says "I love you" doesn't mean you owe them anything in response. It isn't fair for your partner to claim that you don't care about them because you won't "go all the way." Even if you've done it before, you are never required to do it just because your partner is pressuring you. Remember, no means no.



Digital

- **Passwords are Private:** Even if you trust your partner, sharing passwords for your phone and website accounts isn't always the best idea. Just like you should be able to spend time by yourself, you are entitled to your own digital privacy. Giving your partner access to your Facebook or Twitter allows them to post anything they want without getting your permission first. They can also see everyone that you talk to, which may cause unwarranted jealousy, especially if there isn't anything going on. Just to be safe, your password should be something that only you know so you know you always have control of your information.
- **Photos and Sexting:** Similarly to your physical boundaries, it's important to have digital boundaries about what you're comfortable sending via text message. Once you've hit send on a photo or text, you lose control over who sees it. If your partner sends you an inappropriate picture and demands that you send one back, you should be able to express to them that you aren't comfortable sharing that over text message without them getting angry or threatening you.

Boundaries are all about respect.

You and your partner **should know what is too far in all aspects of your relationship so that both of you feel safe. Do you have a question about setting boundaries in your own relationship? Call, chat or text us and we'll talk it out with you.**



live
chat

peer advocates are
available to chat at
www.loveisrespect.org

sms

text **loveis** to **22522**



call **1.866.331.9474**
(1.866.331.8453 TTY)