

Respect My Boundaries (Elementary)

Has anybody ever asked you to do something you didn't want to do, but you didn't know how to tell them no? Maybe a friend asked you to stop talking to a different friend, and it made you feel confused and sad. Maybe a friend asked to copy the answers on your math quiz, and it made you feel nervous and guilty. We can prepare for speaking up in situations like these by using the strategy ***respect my boundaries***.

When we use the strategy ***respect my boundaries***, we make rules, or boundaries, about what we will or will not do in challenging situations. Some example boundaries are:

- I won't let people cheat off me,
- I won't watch someone being bullied and not say anything (even if it is online), and
- I won't take things that aren't mine without asking.

We need boundaries so that we can stay happy and healthy. You know a boundary has been crossed when you feel regret or shame as it is happening.

Use the strategy ***respect my boundaries*** by doing the following steps:

1. Think about past situations where you felt uncomfortable or uneasy with something that you were asked to do.
2. Identify your boundary by using the sentence "I won't [blank] when [blank]."
3. Think about what you'll say if your boundary is crossed, and develop an assertive statement.

Thinking about your boundaries and your responses in advance will help you be ready for challenging situations. When you use the strategy ***respect my boundaries***, you know and can explain the things you won't do.

For example, one of my boundaries is "I won't stay quiet if someone calls other people bad names." When I am in a situation where someone is saying mean things, I use an assertive statement like "I know you are angry, but it makes me feel bad when you call other people mean names. Let's be nice when we talk about other people."

Knowing your boundaries and respecting them will help you know what to do when people cross them.