

Respect My Boundaries (Secondary)

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 avoid one of your other friends, and it made you feel awkward and disrespectful. Maybe a bully told you to email him screenshots of your math homework, and it made you feel powerless and anxious. 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 set guidelines, or boundaries, about what we will or will not do in challenging situations. Some example boundaries are:

- I won't cheat or let people cheat off me,
- I won't keep silent when I see someone being bullied in person or 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 taking 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 use an assertive statement to protect your boundary.

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 that I won't let someone cheat off of me. To be ready for this situation, I prepared this three-part assertive statement: "I know you forgot to do your homework, but I don't feel comfortable letting you cheat off me. I will help you if you don't understand the work, but I won't let you copy my work."

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