



# Emotions & Boundaries Kit

A kit for emotional awareness, journaling, and healthy boundaries.

Designed for Reflection and Growth

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# **Table of Contents**

**1. Introduction & Purpose**

**2. How to Utilize This Workbook**

**3. Essential Concepts**

**4. Exercises for Emotions & Awareness**

**5. Integration and Journal Reflection**

**6. Identifying and Practicing Boundaries  
by Emotions**

**7. Resources and References**

**8. Copyright and Usage Notice**

# Emotions & Boundaries Kit

A guided workbook for those who struggle to identify emotions and speak up for their needs.

## Introduction & Purpose

This workbook is designed for individuals who struggle to identify and articulate their emotions, and who often feel unsure of what to say or how to say it when boundaries are needed. Emotions are not random or wrong; they are pieces of information about our needs, values, and limits. When we miss or ignore those signals, we may experience overwhelm, burnout, anxiety, or difficulty feeling seen and heard.

### **This kit will help you:**

- Recognize and name your feelings, even when they seem confusing or all mixed together.
- Understand what your emotions may be telling you about your needs.
- Develop language and scripts you can use to express your feelings and boundaries clearly and kindly.
- Practice setting and maintaining healthy boundaries in different situations.

**This resource can be used on its own or alongside therapy, coaching, or other supports. It is educational and not a replacement for mental health treatment. Work through the material at a pace that feels right for you, and remember: learning to speak your emotions and needs is a skill that gets easier with practice.**

# How to Use This Workbook

This resource is flexible and self-paced. There is no right or wrong way to use it. Some suggestions:

- Start by reading the sections in order, or skip to the parts that resonate most with you.
- Take your time with each exercise. Pause, reflect, and write freely without judging your answers.
- Use the scripts and prompts to practice saying your feelings and needs out loud. You can rehearse with a friend, therapist, or even in front of a mirror.
- Return to sections whenever you need a refresher. Emotional awareness and boundary-setting are skills you can build over time.

**If any exercise brings up strong emotions, pause and take a few deep breaths. Ground yourself by noticing five things you can see and feel around you. It's okay to move slowly and seek support if needed.**

# Key Concepts

## **Boundaries**

Boundaries are the limits we set to protect our time, energy, emotions, and values. They help us know what is okay and not okay for us. Healthy boundaries allow you to stay connected to others while still honoring your own needs.

## **Emotional Awareness**

Emotional awareness means being able to notice and name your feelings. This includes paying attention to physical sensations (tight chest, lump in your throat), thoughts, and behaviors connected to emotions. Learning words for emotions like "frustrated," "lonely," or "hopeful" can make it easier to talk about them.

## **Emotional Regulation**

Emotional regulation is the skill of managing your reactions so they match your values and goals. It doesn't mean suppressing or ignoring how you feel. Instead, it involves slowing down, grounding yourself, and choosing how to respond rather than react automatically.

## **Emotional Intelligence**

Emotional intelligence combines self-awareness, empathy, and communication. It involves

understanding your own emotions and recognizing emotions in others. Building emotional intelligence helps you navigate relationships and make decisions that align with your values.

# Exercises for Emotions & Awareness

## Why Emotions Matter

Emotions are signals. They let you know when you need rest, connection, safety, or change. If you've learned to ignore or push away your feelings, it can be hard to hear what your body and mind are trying to tell you. Recognizing your emotions doesn't make you weak—it helps you understand yourself and make choices that support your well-being.

## When you listen to your emotions, you can:

- Identify unmet needs and take steps to meet them.
- Notice when a boundary has been crossed or honored.
- Make decisions that align with your values rather than people-pleasing or avoiding conflict.
- Communicate with others more clearly and authentically.

By learning to name your feelings, you take the first step toward caring for yourself and building stronger relationships with others.

# EMOTIONS WHEEL



## CORE EMOTIONS & FEELING WORDS

Below are the eight primary emotions and commonly associated feeling words.

<b>Joy</b>	happy, excited, grateful, proud, playful, content, hopeful, inspired, amused, delighted, thrilled, peaceful
<b>Trust</b>	safe, respected, understood, connected, loyal, cared for, secure, belonging, valued, supported, faithful, admired
<b>Fear</b>	anxious, scared, worried, nervous, insecure, overwhelmed, helpless, doubtful, hesitant, panicked, terrified, frozen
<b>Surprise</b>	startled, shocked, amazed, confused, stunned, astonished, bewildered, disoriented, rattled
<b>Sadness</b>	lonely, hurt, sad, disappointed, grieving, hopeless, rejected, abandoned, discouraged, heavy, melancholy, heartbroken
<b>Disgust</b>	repulsed, judgmental, contempt, embarrassed, ashamed, revolted, nauseated, offended
<b>Anger</b>	frustrated, irritated, angry, resentful, rageful, annoyed, bitter, furious, betrayed, violated, infuriated
<b>Anticipation</b>	curious, eager, excited, hopeful, vigilant, alert, expectant, impatient

## **EXTENDED EMOTIONS LEXICON (60+ Words)**

Use these words to articulate complex emotional states

### **Challenging:**

**inadequate, numb, guilty, jealous,  
envious, powerless, trapped, exhausted,  
burned out, invisible, dismissed, manipulated, pressured,  
rushed, judged, criticized, misunderstood, tolerated, used**

### **Internal:**

**defensive, stubborn, righteous, vindictive, smug,  
superior, inferior, unworthy, unlovable, empty, lost,  
directionless, stuck, restless, bored, apathetic, detached**

### **Hyper-Arousal:**

**performative, people-pleasing, perfectionistic,  
self-critical, tense, on edge, hypervigilant, distrustful, suspicious**

### **Restorative:**

**optimistic, relieved, calm, centered, grounded,  
authentic, alive, passionate, affectionate, loving, tender,  
compassionate, empathetic, sympathetic, generous, forgiving**

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<b>If you feel...</b>	<b>Ask yourself this...</b>
<b>Overwhelmed -</b>	
	What is one small thing I could say no to today that would give me 10 minutes of breathing room?
<b>Resentful -</b>	
	Who am I doing this for, and what did I really want to say instead of yes?
<b>Guilty -</b>	
	If I gave myself the same compassion I give my friend, what would I tell myself right now?
<b>Exhausted -</b>	
	What part of my week is draining me the most, and how long have I been ignoring that?
<b>Lonely -</b>	
	Who is one person I could text right now that would feel good to reconnect with?
<b>Anxious -</b>	
	What is the very next tiny step I can take that feels safe?
<b>Nervous -</b>	
	When is the last time I remember feeling something strongly? What was happening then?
<b>Ashamed -</b>	
	If my best friend told me they did the exact same thing, what would I say to them?
<b>Irritated -</b>	
	What need of mine is not being met right now?
<b>Invisible -</b>	
	Where in my life do I most want to be seen right now?
<b>People-pleasing -</b>	
	What would I do this week if nobody's approval was on the line?

**If you feel...**

**Ask yourself this...**

**Resentful (Family) -**

**What old role am I still playing that no longer fits?**

**Content -**

**What am I enjoying right now that I want to pause and fully notice?**

**Grateful -**

**Who or what made today even 1% easier?**

**Safe -**

**Where in my body do I feel calm right now?**

**Hurt -**

**What did I need in that moment that I didn't get?**

**Defensive -**

**What am I afraid people will think if I let my guard down?**

**Jealous -**

**What does this jealousy show me that I want more of?**

**Peaceful -**

**What helped create this peaceful moment so I can recreate it?**

**Frustrated -**

**What expectation did I have that reality didn't meet?**

**Empathic -**

**Whose feelings am I carrying that aren't mine to fix?**

**Pressured -**

**If I had zero external deadlines this week, what would I choose to do?**

**Accepted -**

**Who sees me exactly as I am and still chooses me?**

**If you feel...**

**Ask yourself this...**

**Trapped -**

**What boundary could I set that would give me a little more freedom?**

**Proud -**

**What is something I did this week that younger-me would be amazed by?**

**Curious -**

**What am I genuinely wanting to learn more about right now?**

**Loved -**

**What is one way love showed up for me recently?**

## Identifying and Practicing Boundaries by Emotions

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Scripts to help you communicate your needs based on your emotional state.

### JOY

- "I'm really enjoying this space I'm in. I'm keeping my plate light so I can stay grounded."
- "I'm not adding anything new right now - I want to protect the rhythm I've built."
- "Thanks for thinking of me. I'm choosing commitments that align with my energy this week."
- "I appreciate the invite, but I'm honoring the rest and peace I'm finally feeling."
- "I'm keeping my social time limited because life finally feels balanced."

### TRUST

- "I trust you, so I want to be clear - I can't take this on right now."
- "I feel safe being honest: I need more notice before I commit."
- "I care about our relationship, so I want to name this early: I'm feeling stretched."
- "I need reassurance around expectations so I don't overextend."
- "I trust you enough to say no without guilt, so that's what I'm doing here."

### FEAR

- "I can't continue this conversation right now. I need space to feel grounded."
- "My nervous system is at capacity - I can't take anything else on."
- "I don't feel comfortable with this. Let's revisit it later."
- "This dynamic feels activating for me. I'm stepping back until I'm regulated."
- "I'm not saying yes to anything that compromises my emotional safety."

### SURPRISE

- "That's really last-minute for me. I need time to consider it."
- "I wasn't expecting this request, and I'm not available to respond now."
- "I need time to process new information before giving an answer."
- "This came out of nowhere for me - I'll get back to you once I'm centered."
- "I don't make quick decisions under pressure. I'll follow up later."

### SADNESS

- "I'm moving a little slower emotionally right now. I need gentler expectations."
- "I'm not in a space to support others today - I'm supporting myself."
- "I'm grieving and need more downtime than usual."
- "I don't have capacity for heavy conversations today."
- "I care, but I need space to feel what I'm feeling before I engage."

### DISGUST

- "That comment didn't sit right with me. I'm asking that we not repeat it."
- "I'm not comfortable with this behavior - it needs to stop."
- "This crosses a line for me. I won't participate further."
- "I'm ending this interaction—the tone isn't okay with me."
- "That wasn't respectful, so I'm stepping away."

### ANGER

- "I'm irritated and don't want to communicate from that place. Let's pause."
- "I'm not available for conflict-driven conversations."
- "I need you to respect my boundary the first time I state it."
- "This is my limit, and I'm holding it."
- "I'm not repeating myself - this boundary stands."

### ANTICIPATION

- "My week is already full—I'm not committing to anything else."
- "I'm preparing for a busy period and keeping my bandwidth tight."
- "I know I'll need downtime, so I'm saying no now to protect that."
- "I won't be available for extra emotional labor this week."
- "I'm pre-setting boundaries so I don't burn out later."

# Important Information

**This workbook is for educational and informational purposes only. It does not provide therapy, counseling, or medical advice, and it is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure, or prevent any mental health condition. If you are experiencing significant distress, trauma-related symptoms, or thoughts of self-harm, please reach out to a licensed mental health professional or call the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline (U.S.).**

**Exploring your emotions and boundaries may bring up strong or unexpected feelings. You are encouraged to pause whenever you need to, breathe deeply, and seek support from a trusted friend, family member, or professional. Working with a therapist can be especially helpful as you use this workbook and learn to identify and communicate your emotions.**

# Resources & References

**American Psychological Association. (2023). Emotional regulation.**

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