



THERAPIST REFRESH

HEALING FOR HEALERS

Monday Mantra * Oct. 29, 2018

Setting and Maintaining Boundaries

A frequent topic of conversation among therapists is about boundaries. We observe relational boundaries with our clients to maintain an ethical and effective therapeutic stance; we also negotiate professional boundaries with our work as a way to prevent burnout or vicarious traumatization, and to give ourselves time to refresh.

The topic of boundaries is vast and something we will explore in Monday Mantras in a variety of ways over time.

Today, we share five tips for setting and maintaining professional boundaries with your work.

1) Have accountability with others.

Whether it's a colleague or a close friend, share with someone your goal of what you want to set boundaries around. Is it saying "yes" to fewer evening sessions? Not taking on extra professional obligations outside of clinical work? Observing a technology sunset after which you no longer check your email? Get an accountability partner and ask them to check in with you regularly about it.

2) Give yourself time to make a decision.

When we make decisions quickly, our emotions can play a disproportionate role in our decision (emotions are faster than thought). Take some time to make big and small decisions about professional boundaries. Perhaps use your accountability partner in your decision-making process for a set period of time. One thing we've tried is to run every decision by our accountability partner before saying yes to it, not necessarily as a way to always get their input but often just as a way to slow ourselves down and be mindful of what is the wisest decision for us.

3) Focus on your “yes.”

As we've reflected on in Monday Mantras before, each “no” you say is creating essential space for you to say “yes” to something else in your life.

4) Be authentic.

Often when we say no to something, we wish we could say yes. Saying no to someone gracefully can include an authentic response and acknowledging that you truly wish you could. Try acknowledging: “I wish I could, but I don’t have any extra space right now.” or “If time allows in the future, I’d be happy to. Check back in with me in a few months.”

5) Note the outcome.

Take a few moments to reflect on the impact this new boundary is having. If something is creating a new positive experience in your life, and you are aware of that, it may be easier to motivate yourself to continue.

We wish you good healing,
Sharon + Carryn