

Constructing Your Personal Bill of Rights

Here's some ideas of how you can go about developing your own Bill of Rights, also known as setting boundaries.

Start Small: Look through the list and at first circle the statements that grab your attention. From that list, pick a couple that you would like to incorporate into your life. You can even start with just one statement, play with it, get used to the idea of it, try it out, and then add others as your confidence grows!

Rewrite the statement if needed and make it *yours*. Read the statement out loud, and reflect: "Do I *really* believe this now?" If the answer is "No" or "I'm not sure," ask yourself "Why not?" What doesn't feel right about the statement? What would happen if you owned that belief – include the positive and the negative? The thoughts and feelings coming up will make great tapping targets.

Acknowledge that you while you may not have been taught some of these beliefs as a child, you can adopt them today. Affirming your personal rights repeatedly will help free you of old inhibitions and distorted beliefs, and empower you to learn how to be firmly assertive (vs. aggressive or submissive) with others in a clear, positive, and respectful way.

Remember, You'll set boundaries when you are ready and not a minute sooner. There is a satisfying side to setting boundaries... you'll find that you're attracting people into your life who value you as you value yourself.

I HAVE THE RIGHT TO:

- To ask for what I want.
- To refuse requests or demands I can't meet.
- To express all of my feelings, positive or negative.
- To change my mind.
- To make mistakes and not have to be perfect.
- To follow my own values and standards.
- To say no to anything when I feel I am not ready, it is unsafe, or it violates my values.
- To have no contact with someone who hurts me physically or emotionally and I have a right to take whatever steps are necessary to achieve this.
- To determine my own priorities.
- To *not* be responsible for others' behavior, actions, feelings, or problems.
- To expect honesty from others.
- To be angry at someone I love.
- To be uniquely myself.
- To feel scared and say "I'm afraid."

- To say “I don’t know.”
- To *not* give excuses or reasons for my behavior.
- To make decisions based on my feelings.
- To my own needs for personal space and time.
- To time alone even if others want me to spend it with them
- To be playful and frivolous.
- To be healthier than those around me.
- To be in a *non*-abusive environment.
- To be trusted and not have my integrity questioned. If my trust was deliberately violated by anyone I have a right to choose to walk away and have my choice respected. Or I can choose to carefully assess my risks and allow the person to try to rebuild my trust. In that case I have a right to let the person know the boundaries required to do this.
- To hold others accountable for their own behavior and not let them shift the blame to me.
- To **NOT** let others use guilt or pity or shame to manipulate me. I am only responsible for my **OWN** behavior.
- To **NOT** feel guilty for not behaving as others might want me to or for not giving others what they expect from me.
- To make friends and be comfortable around people.
- To change and grow.
- To forgive others and to forgive myself.
- To decide what I want to share with others about matters that concern me and that is determined by what feels right to me--not what they want.
- To grieve over actual or threatened losses
- To be flexible and comfortable with doing so
- To grieve over what I didn't get that I needed or what I got that I didn't need or want – and to let it go once I have
- To have my needs and wants respected by others.
- To be treated with dignity and respect.
- To be Happy! :)

(some of this material was taken from The Anxiety & Phobia Workbook and additional great resources.)