

# Why we should set healthy boundaries in friendships

**SHANUM SARKAR**

Boundaries are psychological demarcations that protect the integrity of a person or help them set realistic limits on participation in a relationship or activity. In other words, boundaries establish where your space ends and someone else's begins, like an invisible fence around the perimeter of a yard.

Due in part to media exposure and conventional therapy, our minds have been socially conditioned to think of boundaries in the context of romantic and professional relationships only. Boundaries often feel abstract, especially when it comes to platonic relationships.

Friendships can be taxing when they have no bounds. Healthy boundaries in friendships are the limits we place around our time, emotions, body, and mental health to stay resilient and content with who we are. But how do we know when to set boundaries?

Like an internal compass, boundaries all tend to begin with a gut feeling that tells us when we have the time or energy to devote to something, and when we need to say no.

Before we begin to set boundaries, it is important to delineate them to ourselves concretely. A good way to go about visualising our boundaries can be to write them down, as this can help us achieve greater clarity on where we want to draw the line between us and other people.

Setting up boundaries in our mind and assuming the people around us would know them instinctively, without us actually sharing them with the people, is a grave mistake we often tend to make.

Boundaries are rooted in clear communication. And fortunately, once someone is aware of them, most people will respect them and apologise if they accidentally cross the line. Not everyone will understand or respect our boundaries initially, but it is essential to stand firm in our own decision while kindly reminding people of our needs.

Saying no doesn't always require an apology or an explanation. However, it is important to pay attention to how we can shift these conversations to clearly draw a boundary instead of leaving the person hanging.

However, setting boundaries is in no way an easy task. It can be uncomfortable to talk about seemingly small issues. Things go up a notch for people pleasers with an innate fear of rejection.

Even though it can be an intimidating concept, any relationship that's good for us will likely flourish after we set healthy boundaries. A friend worth keeping will understand our need to have appropriate boundaries, and the process is integral for any friendship that's going to withstand the test of time. If a friend continues to overstep our boundaries after we've spelt it out to them countless times, it may be time to acknowledge that the friendship might not be worth another shot. For the sake of our mental well-being, it is crucial to understand that after all the work from our end, there should be no regrets in taking a step back from the friendship for good.

*Shanum closely resembles a raccoon, send her reasons to cut down on caffeine at shanum-sarkar18@gmail.com*



# University instructors need to do better as teachers

**RAIAN ABEDIN**

As a struggling university student, having to deal with a poor instructor is my worst nightmare. With every new semester, I dread having my grade and education fall into the hands of an instructor who, in spite of plenty of expertise in their field, struggles to communicate meaning to students. The university course load may be difficult, but the true source of strife here usually comes from unhelpful instructors who struggle to deliver a proper lecture.

There is no prospective help coming in from the outside, the instructor and the few textbooks are usually what we have to learn all the required material from, and yet with every passing class, it feels evident that none of the lectures are designed to communicate complex concepts to students. But then, why does it have to be like this?

To answer this, I think it's important to understand the fundamental difference between a university instructor and a school teacher. For school teachers, their primary job – the very reason they are hired – is to teach students to the best of their abilities. While this does not mean that all teachers are bound to be the symbol of excellent mentorship, chances are a lot of them will be adequate in their given responsibility.

University instructors, on the other hand, are hired not just as teachers. They tend to be hired more for their research output and for their ability to produce research publications by working with students. Even lecturers, in many cases, are typically not given opportunities unless they can show thorough research work, but rarely are their teaching skills questioned. This is where we run into a major problem: a good researcher need not be a good teacher, and university instructors that can be both are not as common as one may think.

The problem, obviously, is not limited to just that definition. But the lack of teaching experience many university instructors have often becomes apparent when they attempt to teach a class. In my experience, I have witnessed instructors who fail to recognise the level at which their students may be at, making their lectures far more complex than they should be. I have also seen many instructors who are universally considered to be awful teachers, going off by just reading the lecture slides out loud and adding nothing of value. The management and research work these instructors put in for the university, however, is very clearly more important than their teaching capabilities. And thus, they are never at risk of losing their jobs.

Of course, it is absolutely important for a university student to be independent when it comes to academics, yet that should only come as an additional quality that students may utilise on top of the help provided by the course instructor. There is no reason for a student to be berated for not learning something when, in truth, so many of these lecturers and professors exist only as part-time teachers. And if even the system refuses to acknowledge their inadequacy, how can a university be a space for cultivating learning?

Give Raian your favourite electrolyte/chocolate milk suggestions at IG: @raian\_is\_burning



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