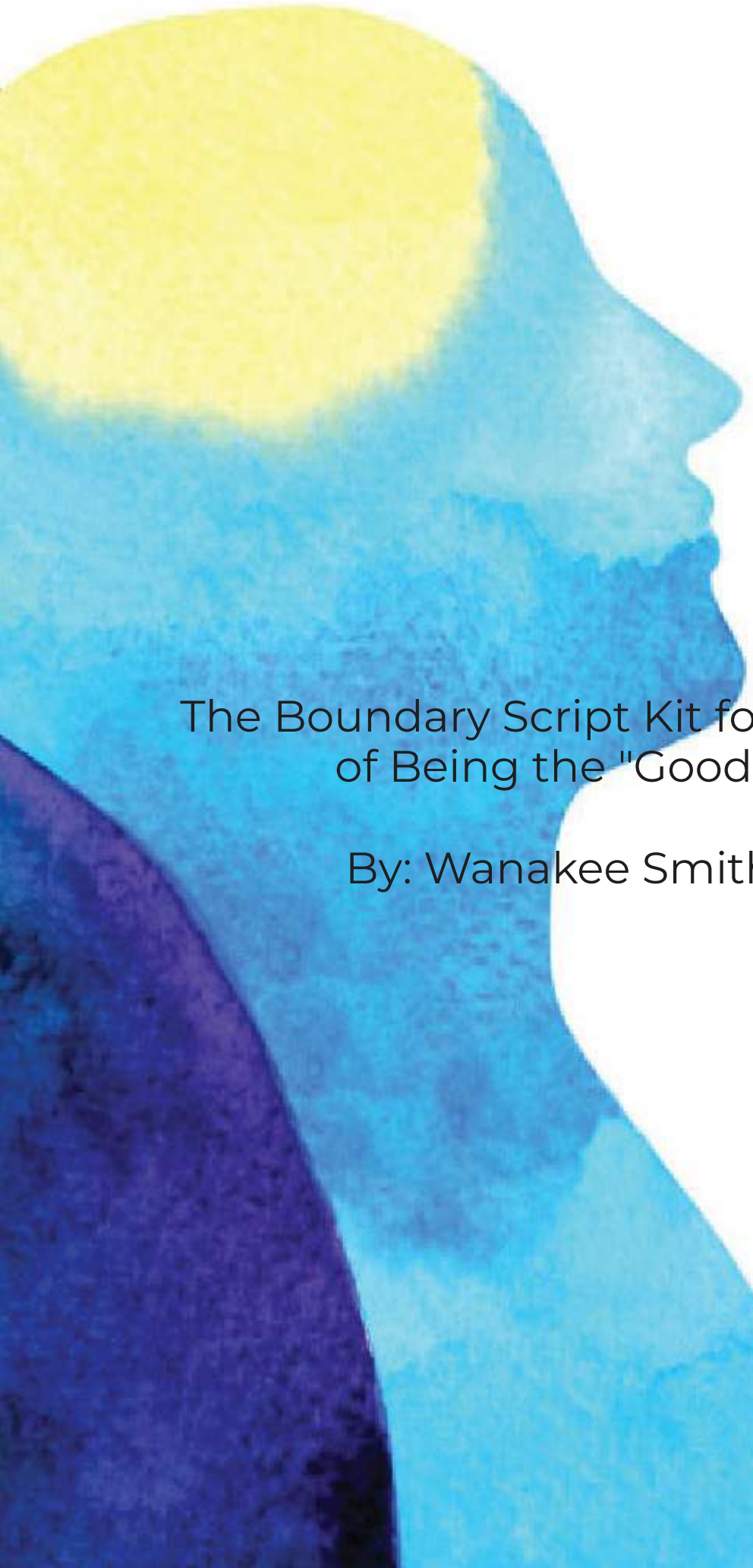


The Boundary Script Kit for Adults Tired of Being the "Good Child"

By: Wanakee Smith, LPC

Intro

Setting boundaries with emotionally immature parents can feel like learning a new language. These scripts are designed to be **neutral, firm, and brief**, focusing on your autonomy rather than trying to change their behavior. If you've ever left a conversation feeling guilty, drained or like you said too much, this guide is for you.

How to Use:

You don't need to memorize anything. Skim, find your situation, and use the script that fits.



Communicating Expectations

Use these when you need to establish how and when you will interact.

On Communication Frequency:

Parent: “You never call me.”

Your response: "I love staying in touch, but I can’t answer the phone while I’m at work. I’ll check in with you on Sunday afternoons instead."

What this says: My time is just as valuable as yours. Just because I don’t answer the phone every time doesn’t mean I don’t care. Use this when your parent is trying to guilt trip you into over communication

On Unsolicited Advice:

Parent: “You need to…”

Your response:"I appreciate that you’re trying to help, but I’ve got this handled. If I need a second opinion, I’ll be sure to ask."

What this says: I can make my own decisions and just because you give me advice, doesn’t mean I have to follow it. Thanks but no thanks

On Guilt-Tripping:

Parent: “I was looking forward to you coming. I guess there are more important things than seeing your family.”

Your response: "I understand you’re disappointed that I can't make it, but my decision is final. Let’s look at the calendar for next month."

What this says: Spending time with family is not a metric or a unit of measurement to show how much I care.

On Making Decisions:

Parent: “This is what you should do…”

Your response: "I’m not looking for feedback on this right now; I’m just sharing the news with you."

What this says: I’m an adult and only I have to live with the consequences of my decisions. I trust myself.

On Privacy:

Parent: “I don’t know what you see in him/her.”

Your response: "I’m not comfortable sharing the details of my finances/relationship/health right now. Let’s talk about [Alternative Topic] instead."

What this says: I can have a private life and a relationship with my parents. I don’t have to disclose in order to feel accepted.

Managing Conflict & Reactivity

Impeding a "blow-up" requires staying calm and exiting the cycle of escalation.

On Raised Voices:

Parents: “<uncontrollable yelling>”

Your response: "I want to hear what you have to say, but I can’t do it when you’re yelling. I’m going to hang up now, and we can try again when things are calmer."

What this says: I refuse to take part in an unproductive screaming match. I want us both to be heard.

On Being Put in the Middle:

Parents: “Let me tell you what [sibling/spouse] did.”

Your response: "I’m not comfortable being the messenger between you and [Other Parent/Sibling]. You’ll need to speak with them directly."

What this says: Gossip is not something I want to partake in. Open communication is effective for all parties involved.

On Criticism:

Parent: “You’ve put on a lot of weight. You let yourself go.”

Your response: "It hurts my feelings when you comment on my appearance. If it happens again, I’m going to end our visit for today."

What it says: My feelings are hurt but I can continue to communicate effectively and maturely without exchanging insults.

On Deflecting Blame:

Parent: “You never care about my feelings. You do things on purpose to hurt me.”

Your response: "I hear that you're upset, but I’m not responsible for how you feel. I am responsible for my own actions."

What this says: We are all responsible for our own feelings and actions. I am not this heartless person I am accused of being.

On "Walking on Eggshells":

Parent: “Come over here and talk to me!”

Your response: "I can see you're frustrated, but I’m not going to argue about this. I’m going to step into the other room for a bit."

What this says: I understand that arguing pointlessly is hindering the situation instead of helping. Nothing will get accomplished by having unhealthy communication

Physical & Time Boundaries

These scripts help protect your physical space and personal schedule.

On Unannounced Visits:

Parent: “I saw your car was home and decided to stop by.”

Your response: "I really value my private time at home. Please call and check with me at least a day in advance before coming over."

What this says: Your spare time and my spare time may be different. Giving head's up before coming over respects my time and space.

On Staying Late:

Parent: “Every time you come over, you leave early.”

Your response: "It’s been great seeing you, but I’m heading out at 8:00 PM to make sure I get enough sleep for tomorrow."

What this says: Guilting me into negotiating my time boundaries is not ok.

On Holiday Pressure:

Parents: “You should want to see your parents for the holidays.”

Your response: "We’ve decided to spend Christmas morning at our own house this year to start our own traditions. We can come over for dessert in the evening."

What this says: My decision to stay home with my spouse and/or my children cannot be swayed by guilt. Sometimes the family you make is more important than the family you come from.

On Topic Changes:

Parent: “You need to listen to me and follow my advice.”

Your response: "We’ve already discussed this several times and my answer hasn't changed. I’m moving on from this topic now."

What this says: I can handle the consequences of this decision.

On Personal Responsibility:

Parent: “I feel so depressed all the time. You don’t care that I’m struggling.”

Your response: "I know this is a tough situation for you, but I can’t be the one to fix it. Have you considered talking to a professional or a friend about it?"

What this says: Take responsibility for your mental health and well-being. I have. If your parent is struggling with mental illness, encourage them to see a professional.

When You Need to Say Less (But Mean More)

Short, clean mic-drop responses:

–"That doesn't work for me."

–"I'm not available for that."

–"No."

–"I've already answered that."

–"We're not doing this today/right now."

–"I'm going to end this conversation now."

A Note on the "Broken Record" Technique

When dealing with emotionally immature individuals, they may try to negotiate your boundary. You do not need to provide a new explanation. Simply repeat your initial statement:

"I understand, but as I said, I'm not available to talk about this today."

By staying consistent, you teach them that your boundaries are not "suggestions"—they are the new rules of engagement. You are allowed to choose peace, even if they don't understand it.

About me:

This guide was created by a licensed counselor who believes you don’t have to earn basic respect. All too often in sessions, I have clients explain to me how setting and enforcing boundaries in their life has caused feelings of anxiousness, guilt, disappointment and even psychosomatic symptoms such as stomach ulcers and hypertension. Boundaries are often conditioned from childhood and if we take an honest look, we can trace back to where it all started from. Self-reflection is an essential tool for healing from things we don’t quite understand. Cheers to your journey!



The Boundary Script Kit for Adults Tired...

Break free from the cycle of guilt and exhaustion with "The Boundary Script Kit for Adults Tired of Being the 'Good Child'." This practical guide provides concise scripts to help you assert your autonomy while navigating conversations with emotionally immature parents. Designed by a licensed counselor, it empowers you to maintain your peace and establish healthy boundaries without the weight of obligation.

