

What's Mine vs. What's Not

Clarifying emotional responsibility in difficult relationships

This worksheet is designed to help you sort out what is actually your responsibility in difficult interactions—and what is not. Many people experience distress not only because of what others do, but because they feel responsible for managing other people's emotions, reactions, or outcomes.

When responsibility becomes unclear, people often overextend themselves, apologize excessively, explain too much, or stay in situations that feel harmful or draining. This worksheet helps you create clearer internal boundaries so you can respond with less guilt and more self-respect.

Why Emotional Responsibility Gets Blurry

Some people were taught—explicitly or implicitly—that keeping the peace is their job. Others learned that saying no, setting limits, or disappointing someone could lead to conflict, rejection, or punishment.

Over time, this can lead to taking responsibility for things that are not actually within your control, such as another person's mood, reactions, or willingness to understand you.

Clear emotional boundaries do not require confrontation. Often, they begin internally—by deciding what you will and will not take responsibility for.

Sorting Responsibility

Use the sections below to sort out what belongs to you and what belongs to the other person. This is not about blame. It is about accuracy.

What Is My Responsibility	What Is Not My Responsibility
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• My behavior and tone• Whether I communicate clearly• Whether I act in line with my values• Whether I protect my own limits <p>Add your own:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Other people's emotions• How others interpret my words• Whether someone agrees with me• Fixing someone else's discomfort <p>Add your own:</p>

My Patterns With Responsibility

Situations where I take on too much responsibility:

Examples: conflict, silence, disappointment, authority figures, family dynamics

What I tend to do when I feel responsible:

Examples: over-explain, apologize, stay quiet, fix, avoid, give in

Practicing Internal Boundaries

Internal boundaries are decisions you make for yourself. They do not require the other person to agree, understand, or change.

One situation where I can practice a clearer boundary:

What I will take responsibility for in that situation:

What I will remind myself is not my responsibility:

Working With Guilt (Without Giving Up Boundaries)

Feeling guilt does not automatically mean you have done something wrong. Guilt often shows up when you change a long-standing pattern, even when the change is healthy.

When guilt shows up, I can remind myself:

One compassionate statement I can practice:

Examples: "I can care without fixing." "I am allowed to have limits."

Closing Reflection

Clear responsibility is not about distancing yourself from others—it is about relating to them in a way that does not require self-erasure.

One boundary reminder I want to carry forward:
