3 tips to set better work/life boundaries — and stick to them

A lot of times people set firm boundaries in their mind — but let them slide in the moment. Here are tips to follow through. Video transcript:

Daniel Martin: These days, many people have more say in when, where, and how they work than ever before.

That flexibility can come at a price.

While organizations are talking more about work/life balance and self-care, the reality is that the lines between work and life are disappearing and many people are working more hours with higher expectations.

Here are some tips that have worked for me to set — and stick to — boundaries:

First, identify *where* **you need to set stronger boundaries.** Get specific and ask yourself: *What are the requests that cause me resentment or frustration? What sort of experiences leave you wondering if the effort was worth it — or if it was really as urgent as the person said it was?*

Those are the situations causing you stress, so those are the places to focus on new boundaries.

Next, remind yourself that you deserve these boundaries.

You aren't setting them because you are lazy or greedy or 'not a team player'. Work/life boundaries keep you healthy, productive, and engaged in all aspects of your life. Fight back against that feeling that you haven't done enough.

When I start to feel guilty about my boundaries, I remind myself of the value I've brought my team, company, and clients. And the value I plan to bring them tomorrow or when I return from being out of office.

Then, instead of *asking***,** *inform* **others that you have a boundary.**

Often, people set firm boundaries in their heads, but end up almost asking for permission when delivering that message to others. You might mean: *"I'm not available after 5:30,"* but you say: *"I'm only available until 5:30 … if that works for you."*

I caught myself doing this when setting my out-of-office message the last time I took a vacation. I included my number and an invitation to contact me if needed. I had to remind myself: The world will not burn without me, then I deleted it.

Just say: *"I'm out of the office and will respond to your message when I return."* If you want to show your dedication, then explain who else people can reach out to for help while you're out.

Thinking through your boundaries proactively not only helps you stick to them, but it will be better for you and your team in the long run.