

# **12 Steps to Setting Boundaries with Adult Children**

1. Sometimes, with our children, the transition to healthy independence does not happen easily. Children growing up in a stressful environment may fear or resist independence.
2. By setting boundaries, you are helping both yourself and your grown children continue to develop into responsible individuals who honor each other.
3. Boundaries help to define who is responsible for what and to establish what resources are available (and which are not).
4. Setting boundaries with grown children can be a challenge. Adult kids may still see you as fully available to them. If you are codependent you may even want to be the same responsible, responsive parent you have always been.
5. Although they will always be your children, you cannot treat them as children when they become adults. If you do, you may inadvertently create pitfalls that ultimately interfere with their emerging independence.
6. By setting boundaries your adult children will learn essential skills. Emotionally, they will develop confidence in their abilities to take care of things for themselves and feel better about themselves.
7. When setting boundaries, you need to set clear expectations that foster respect for each other and the relationship you share.

8. In setting boundaries consider your own needs and preferences.
9. Be clear in expressing your needs and preferences.
10. Address your guilt. When you cannot meet your grown child's complete needs or requests, you may contend with guilt. As guilt shows up, remind yourself of your decision-making process and your reasons for the boundaries you are setting.
11. After you state your boundaries to your grown child, they will resist. Staying centered as you speak about the new boundary is important.
12. Explain what is possible. The good news about boundaries is that they not only set limits, they also help everyone see what is possible. Boundaries are not necessarily a total "no"; they are an essential clarification of what is and is not feasible for you to do or give.