

091 Boo, You Need Boundaries!



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Rachel Rodgers

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You have to be okay with disappointing others. Sometimes people won't like your boundary, they may even be offended or hurt by it. That's okay, it's not your job to make everyone comfortable and you aren't responsible for everyone's feelings.

Welcome to the *Hello Seven Podcast*. I'm your host, Rachel Rodgers, wife, mother of four children, a lover of Beyoncé, coffee drinker, and afro-wearer, and I just happen to be the CEO of a seven-figure business. I am on a mission to help every woman I meet become a millionaire. If you want to make more money, you are in the right place. Let's get it going.

I have a question for you. How much time do you spend taking care of other people's needs? And by other people I mean your spouse, boss, friends, co-workers, clients, and children. Yes, even your children. This is the trap that so many women are caught in every day. We bobble between other people's needs like the tiny pinball in an arcade machine.

As a species we women must stop giving away our power. When we allow other people's desires to take precedence over our own, we become so accustomed to the world telling us what to do that we can no longer hear our own voices. That ends now. The solution, Million Dollar Boundaries.

In today's episode to thank all of you for the support you have given me throughout my entire book writing and launch process, I'm doing a free reading of another chapter of my book, Chapter 4, Million Dollar Boundaries.

So here's the plan, by the end of this episode you will learn how gender inequality at home and at work gets in the way of women's ability to build wealth. You will understand how to stop giving away your power by setting and actually enforcing Million Dollar Boundaries. You will find out how to reclaim your power for your own purposes, and how to invest in your power to build everything you want for yourself including wealth. You will

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understand why setting boundaries is not only crucial for yourself, but also for each young woman and girl who is watching and learning from you.

But before we dive in, I have an important announcement to make. It has been an amazing, beautiful, hectic whirlwind of a few months for me and my team at Hello Seven. We worked our asses off to launch the book in May. And thanks to you, all of my faithful listeners, readers, and friends in the Hello Seven universe, we made it a bestseller and it's having an impact on so many. From the bottom of my heart thank you so much for all of your support.

But to be very honest with y'all mama is tired. Okay? I need a break. And I believe that rest is a revolutionary practice that all of us, and especially black women need to reclaim. So I am going to be taking a break from the Hello Seven podcast for a little while. But don't worry. In July we'll be re-releasing some of our favorite OG, very best episodes, and I will be back with a vengeance in the fall. For now enjoy learning about setting and enforcing those Million Dollar Boundaries. I hope doing so will change your life as much as it has changed mine.

Chapter 4, Million Dollar Boundaries.

A girl should be two things, who and what she wants, Coco Chanel. Bitch you need boundaries at home. Whether you are a mom or not. The women I know tolerate a great deal of manipulation.

My friend Miriam is a great example. She'll say to me that she can't leave work on time to pick up her son, but that's not really true. Miriam could negotiate getting out of work earlier but she doesn't, even though picking up her son on time after school is really important to her and she gets charged \$1 for every minute she's late. Instead, Miriam tolerates the boss keeping her late despite knowing she's got somewhere to be.

By doing so she gives him power over her schedule. Night after night, Miriam is running to her car and driving like a bat out of Hades trying to get

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to her son's school on time, rather than setting a boundary with her boss. Why does Miriam do this?

Again, because the patriarchal society we all exist in has taught us to prioritize others over ourselves. It's also taught us not to use our voice to speak up and ask for what we want. I implore you to stop letting people dump all over you. Whether that's a boss emailing you at night, or a partner who expects you to do all the housework.

When I was growing up both of my parents had full time jobs, but only my mom was hustling home to make dinner. She was the only one doing laundry and cleaning. But there was no reason that my father didn't have to do household work, except that she was a woman and he was a man. And this unfair division of labor persists today.

A perfect example is my client, Kendra. She lives with her boyfriend Jack. Both Kendra and Jack have full time jobs, but Kendra has a substantially longer commute, like two hours each way. She leaves at 6am for work and comes back at 8pm. But guess who is making dinner. Jack literally comes home at 6pm and sits on the couch doing nothing, waiting for Kendra to arrive home and start making dinner at 8pm.

Dinner is not done until 9pm every night, so all Kendra has time to do is eat and crash. And then she does it all again the next day. And she spends every weekend running errands and doing the housework she didn't have a chance to do during the week.

That's ridiculous, but it's not unusual. I can count the number of times a client has said something like, "My partner is great. He cooks once or twice a week." As if that's something to write home about. We are so accustomed to doing everything that if a male partner does any one domestic thing, we're impressed.

We women need to wholly reject the idea that our household won't run unless we do everything. That outdated belief, along with the idea that

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we're not a good mom or a good wife unless we do all the domestic labor related to our children and our household is a lie. It's simply not true.

So my question for you is, what are you tolerating at home? Are you letting your children run a nightly guilt trip on you when you work the same hours as your husband who somehow escapes ever getting a guilt trip from the kids? Are your housemates watching the dishes pile up as if dish washing is a science only you are capable of doing?

Are you the one arranging all the play dates, fielding all the emails from your children's school, doing the laundry, the dishes, the cleaning, and managing to make sure the toothpaste magically never runs out? Yet your partner never so much as offers to make you a cup of coffee.

Are you everybody's domestic bitch delivering a plethora of snacks, cold beverages, and a variety of sandwiches? Some with wheat bread, some gluten free, some with crust trimmed off one with precisely three slices of turkey to suit every family member's exacting specifications while they lay on the couch and relax? Something you never have time to do.

It is well documented that working women handle the vast majority of the second shift, the work that greets women when we come home from work. A study of more than 8,500 heterosexual couples conducted by the University College of London found that women did the bulk of domestic work in 93% of the couples surveyed. When both parties worked full time, women were five times more likely to spend at least 20 hours per week doing household chores.

Even in the case of women breadwinners things do not improve. A study of the effects of earning inequality on household chores among American dual earner couples found that in cases where the wife's income is higher than her male partners, the men did even less housework than male breadwinners.

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The visible household work cooking dinner, washing dishes, folding laundry, lint rolling dog hair off the sofa cushions is not the only problem. There is also an invisible workload that is placed on women. According to sociologist Susan Waltzer the Invisible workload includes the intellectual, mental, and emotional work of childcare and household maintenance.

Women do more of the learning and information processing, like researching pediatricians. Women do more worrying, like wondering if their child is hitting his developmental milestones. And they do more organizing and delegating, like deciding when the mattress needs to be flipped or what to cook for dinner. Even when their male partners helped out by doing their fair share of chores and errands, it was the women who noticed what needed to be done.

In other words, women do all the thinking about the household and its management. A joint study by Arizona State University and Oklahoma State University found that 90% of the women they surveyed felt solely responsible for management of the household.

House managers who run the households of high net worth individuals routinely make \$100,000 or more. So when you serve as de facto house manager for your household, know that you are performing a second full time job in which people who do this professionally are paid six figures.

And we're not done. Are you tired yet? I'm exhausted and frankly pissed just thinking about all the work and responsibility women take on nowadays.

Women not only manage their household, but most are also solely responsible for the emotional wellbeing of their children. Mothers are often the first responders to their children's distress. It's no wonder that so many women are under earning. We are burned out and exhausted from all the multitasking, context switching which costs you 23 minutes every time you

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are interrupted, and sheer volume of responsibility our society expects us to accomplish every day.

According to the ASU OSU joint study, the women they surveyed felt overwhelmed with their role as parents, had little time for themselves, and felt exhausted. No shit. And this issue isn't limited to domestic life. It happens in the workplace too. You also need boundaries at work.

As a young law student I was selected to work in a prestigious Law Clinic representing elderly and disabled clients in housing and social services cases. The clinic was overseen by a professor named Paul whom I really liked. On the first day of orientation Paul introduced himself as a typical old gay man who loves Broadway. I was a fan.

In the clinic, Paul paired us with a partner and then assigned cases to us. I had several partners throughout the year, all of whom were white men. At the time, my law school as a whole was mostly white men. No surprise there. Paul was a good professor and really cared about our clients. But I noticed he would always give me a hard time and would let my white male counterparts get away with murder. Even when my team would win a case, he would still critique me and say that I could have done better.

One day I went to court to argue for an elderly woman whose landlord wanted to evict her. The facts were on our side and I had done my due diligence. I had been working on the case for weeks with little to no help from my partner on the assignment. Still, I was confident that we would win the case for our client.

But when I showed up the opposing attorney representing the landlord with his stack of files, fancy suit, and Ferragamo loafers looked me up and down as if I were not a worthy opponent. He refused to speak to me and demanded instead to confer with my supervisor.

When Paul arrived at court instead of standing up for me, he excluded me from further discussions regarding my client. Paul then went before the

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judge and delivered my winning argument robbing me of the opportunity to represent the client that I had worked so hard for.

After we won the case using the argument, I had put together Paul had the audacity to say that I could have been better prepared. He said I needed to incorporate more thinking time into my argument preparation. In other words, Paul felt that in addition to doing all the work, I needed to spend time just sitting and pondering my client's case.

Perhaps this is what my white male colleagues were doing while I hustled my heart out for our client. They were very busy sitting and thinking, something they had time to do because I did all the freaking work. There was no pat on the back. No Good job, Rachel. Instead, Paul decided to use this massive victory for our client as a time to tell me about all the ways in which I remained inadequate.

I was fuming. I worked so hard in that clinic and carried the lion's share of the load while my various partners used the time to study for other classes, a luxury they could only afford because they knew they could rely on me to get the job done. I remember walking out of Paul's office afterwards, hot tears burning in my eyes because I was so angry. Not only was I angry, but I felt misused and maybe even betrayed by a man I trusted and for whom I had worked hard.

As I fiercely stomped down the hallway in a rage, I passed a large photo of me that hung in the hallway of this institution. As one of the few women of color on campus I was asked to pose for a few photos as a new student. I didn't realize at the time that I was being asked to be the literal poster child for diversity at this school. My photos were in every brochure and featured on the law school website to serve as evidence that brown people go here.

As I angrily walked past that blown up photo of me hanging on the wall, I finally realized the extent to which I had been misused by my school. The institution was gaining power by draining mine. I realized in my senior year

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the exact reason I had thought about transferring to a different law school so many times. I was tolerating a school that recruited brown people and wanted us here as a show of diversity, but then didn't actually put the effort in to make our experience here equitable.

That moment of clarity was worth the feelings of betrayal. Right there in that hallway I made a promise to myself, there will never be another old white guy who tells me what to do again, never. I'm proud to say that I kept that promise. That promise is what led me to build my own company and become a wealthy bad-ass woman.

Women are complicit. So what about you? What are you tolerating at work? Are you allowing your boss to call you early in the morning, late at night, and every weekend? Are you sleeping with your smartphone under your pillow in case your supervisor has a new idea he wants to share at 3am? Have you taken on a whole host of new responsibilities without the promised raise that was supposed to accompany that pile of additional work?

Are you allowing your co-workers to keep dumping work on you that he should be doing himself? Are you raising your hand or being picked to handle ordering the mint chocolate ice cream cake for Ronald's birthday celebration at the office? Just because you're a woman and therefore responsible for womanly office duties like party planning, and cake ordering and gift coordination, and napkins selecting? A male colleague couldn't possibly be asked to handle such a task. After all, he's got important work to do.

In summary, society has some destructive notions about women. We are not treated as equals at home or at work. We are treated as a dumping ground for all the work that men are taught not to do. And that absolutely includes systemic sexism built into our politics, our laws, and our institutions.

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And yet women are complicit. We are participating in our own oppression. We allow others to fritter away our time to make their priorities more important than our priorities, to access our unending labor without proper remuneration or respect.

This is excellent news for you. Because if you have been a willing participant in the constant gender inequality that gets in the way of your goals and dreams, then you also have the power to stop doing that. You have the power to say no. You have the power to stop participating. You have the power to reclaim your time, attention, and labor for your own benefit. Boundaries are the solution.

There are a lot of misconceptions about boundaries. Many people think a boundary is about controlling what other people do to you and around you. That is not true. Boundaries are not about controlling other people in any way. Try as I might to tell my toddler to stop whacking the spoonful of mashed potatoes out of my hand when I'm trying to feed him, he just keeps doing it. I can't control him any more than you can control your boss, your romantic partner, or your bestie who insists on going back to her shitty ex for the seventh time, sigh.

But what you can do is decide how you are going to behave and what you are going to do in response to any given situation. You do not set a boundary to control other people's behavior. Boundaries aren't about saying no to other people. Boundaries are about saying yes to yourself.

That's where my boundary comes in with my toddler. When he whacks a spoonful of food out of my hand and it winds up all over my clothes and floor, I get to decide what my reaction will be. I get to decide what I will do when he does that. And my decision is to tell him no, stop feeding him, and take him out of his highchair. Mealtime over.

Now he understands that when he whacks food out of my hand, I'm going to assume he doesn't want to eat and immediately end mealtime. Because

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I do this consistently, he has stopped whacking food out of my hand when I'm trying to feed him because he wants to actually eat. He understands that if he wants to eat, he needs to eat the food on the spoon and stop covering me in mashed potatoes.

In this situation I use a boundary to say yes to my sanity, and no to wearing mashed potatoes every time my kid has a meal. The same goes for your boss, your honey, and your best friend. If you stop answering the phone when your boss calls late at night, your boss will probably stop calling you after hours. And even if he doesn't, who cares, you are no longer pulled into non-emergency work situations at 9pm. Problem solved.

If you and your honey agree that you will cook and they will clean but you keep winding up cleaning the disastrous kitchen every night before bed, then you can choose to stop cooking for them or stop cleaning up after dinner. You can't make them clean, but you can stop doing the cooking you never wanted to do in the first place. No anger, no fighting, no attempt to control others. Just a boundary and your own freedom from a situation that isn't working for you.

Same with your girlfriend who calls you every time her ex breaks her heart again. But who keeps getting back with said heartbreaking ex. You can't make her stop seeing this guy, but you can stop being the person she events to every time he does something crappy. You pick up the phone and she flies into yet another story about how he did her wrong. You gently interrupt and say, "Hey sis, I'm sorry that happened. But unfortunately, I can't talk about that right now. Let's talk another time, bye."

This is what it looks like to be a woman with boundaries. You don't need to be controlling. You don't need to get angry, although you can. And screaming and crying are totally optional. All you need is an enforced boundary to protect your heart, your time, your joy, your labor, your sanity and your money. You know why? Because it's not anyone else's job to protect you.

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No one else could possibly know all the ways in which you might need protecting. Your boss, your partner, and your best friend can't read your mind. They don't necessarily know what you want, what you need, or what is making you unhappy. You are the only one who knows that with certainty.

Maybe your boss thinks you will be excited about his new ideas and want to hear about them right away even after work hours. Maybe your partner got the impression that you love cleaning the kitchen because they saw you play music and dance while you did dishes and wiped down the counters. They didn't realize that this was your coping mechanism for not murdering them.

Maybe your bestie thinks you find her relationship drama entertaining, and you enjoy listening to her never ending saga. And maybe you used to but have lost patience for it lately. Hell, maybe my toddler is trying to make me laugh when he swats a spoonful of mashed potatoes out of my hand. Who knows? Honestly, it doesn't matter. What matters is that you have million dollar boundaries to protect your time, your money, your effort, your labor, your love, your happiness, and your overall wellbeing.

It's also important to note that when you set a boundary don't do it to piss someone off, to get even, or to make someone else suffer. Set a boundary because it serves you, not because it hurts someone else.

For example, the wrong way to set a boundary in the scenario where you cook and your partner is supposed to clean would be to refuse to go to the concert that your partner has been looking forward to just to make them suffer. You really wanted to go to the concert but you are setting this boundary to teach them a lesson.

Can we not? This is not a boundary This is petty rubbish. This kind of behavior will not protect you or serve you, it will cause you and your partner to suffer, nobody wins. Also, it's just plain childish, and you are a grown ass

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woman. Don't set boundaries to make someone else suffer, set boundaries to prevent your own suffering.

Enforcing your Million Dollar Boundaries. Now that you understand what million dollar boundaries are and the important role they play in your life, let's discuss how to enforce them. This is where women often experience challenges with setting boundaries. Many of us are happy to set a boundary and can even handle the communication of that boundary. But struggle when it comes to enforce that boundary.

I used to see this in my law practice all the time. When I was practicing law, I regularly represented women business owners who had been stiffed by a client. In most of these cases the business owner had performed many, many hours of work and then their client failed to pay them. They would ask me if I could help them collect the money they were owed. And I told them I could. But I always had a few questions for them to answer before I began.

My first question was always, "When was the last time you reached out to your client and asked them to pay you?" When asked this question 80% of my clients would say, "I haven't." I'd stare at the phone blankly thinking I must have heard them wrong, I'd ask again. "So you never reached out to your clients to let them know the payment is late and request payment?" And they would shock me by confirming their previous answer, "No, I have not."

I had this conversation with enough business owners to know that a lot of women struggle with having hard conversations. It's not just my clients. When it comes to negative feedback one study found that 69% of women opted not to share.

Many of my clients who were brave enough to build successful businesses would rather pay a lawyer than have to call or email their customer and request payment for services rendered. And at least some of these cases, their customers may not have even realized that their payment was late. A

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clear direct conversation could have resolved at least 50% of these late payments and subsequent cash flow problems for my clients.

But the mere idea of having that conversation was too terrifying. All these business owners had a clear boundary with their clients in the form of payment terms included in their contracts. When they worked with a new customer, the customer would agree and sign the contract. Which told them when and how much to pay and what would happen if they didn't, like late fees, being reported to credit bureaus, work not being delivered and so on.

So the boundary line was set, but it was not enforced. When these business owners did not receive payment on time, they didn't do any of the things that they said they would do. They didn't enforce late payments, they didn't enforce late fees, they didn't stop delivering the work, and they didn't report the client to credit bureaus. They didn't even make a phone call or send an email reminding the client to pay. As a result, the boundary did not accomplish its goal and these business owners were not protected by it.

The sad truth is that you are better off not communicating a boundary at all than stating a boundary and not enforcing it. An unenforced boundary sends a message to the person that you are a pushover or otherwise somebody whose boundaries they don't have to bother respecting because there will be no consequences. They know that you won't keep the promises you made to yourself. This is why it is incredibly important to always enforce your boundaries even when it's scary.

Why is boundary setting challenging for some women? Why did so many of my female business owner clients refuse to enforce their payment terms with their customers? Because women are socialized to be nice. And being nice often gets interpreted as being responsible for everyone else's feelings, even at our own expense.

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To enforce your boundaries there are a few mindset shifts you have to undergo. Clearly you will have to learn to be less nice. Nice is not going to help you accomplish your life's purpose. If you are being nice when you don't want to be, you're really just lying. In order to enforce your boundaries, you may also have to be less generous. It's important to acknowledge the difference between being generous and being taken advantage of.

I use my own feelings as a guidepost. If I am enjoying being generous, I keep doing it. If I'm not enjoying it, I don't. Being generous should feel energizing and empowering. If it feels exhausting and oppressive, stop. Be a joyful giver or don't give.

As a wealthy woman I am asked for my money, time, and resources every day. I have had to get very comfortable with saying no. Otherwise I would spend all my time making other people's goals and priorities happen at the expense of my own. At first it was uncomfortable to have to tell people no all the time. I used to explain all the reasons I couldn't. Sometimes I would exaggerate so that my reasons for saying no sounded really solid.

What a waste of energy. The truth is that I just didn't want to do it in most cases. And while I may have had many reasons for saying no, I was not obligated to explain myself. No is a complete sentence.

And that brings me to the last consequence of enforcing your boundaries. You have to be okay with disappointing others. Sometimes people won't like your boundary. They may even be offended or hurt by it. That's okay. It's not your job to make everyone comfortable and you aren't responsible for everyone's feelings. Let other people be responsible for their own feelings just as you are being responsible for your own feelings by setting and maintaining clearly communicated boundaries.

Here's what I know for sure. You can't be an economic powerhouse and be liked by everyone. It's not going to happen. In fact, it's probably impossible

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in our patriarchal society. Make no mistake, prioritizing niceness and therefore failing to enforce your boundaries is costing you money.

A research study led by professors from the University of Notre Dame, Cornell University, and the University of Western Ontario found that agreeable women earn less than those who are disagreeable. On average, the study found that agreeable women made \$3,213 less per year than disagreeable ones.

In addition, the study also found that disagreeable people are seen as more competent. Enforce your million dollar boundaries, and you will find that you are more respected, more powerful, and more wealthy.

Chapter summary, women do the lion's share of both visible and invisible domestic labor and this gets in the way of our ability to build wealth. Women also get the short end of the stick in the workplace, causing our labor to not be properly remunerated and respected.

These widespread societal issues related to women's labor lead to exhaustion, depression, and feelings of inadequacy in women. The solution is to set clearly communicated boundaries to protect ourselves from other people's actions and mistreatments by saying yes to what we do want and no to what we don't want. Once communicated, boundaries must be enforced to properly serve their purpose.

Thanks for listening. Now, before you go, it's an incredibly exciting time here at Hello Seven. That's because my new book *We Should All Be Millionaires: A Woman's Guide to Earning More Building Wealth and Gaining Economic Power* is on bookshelves now. You can pick it up from Amazon, Target, Barnes and Noble, or your favorite Black-owned independent bookstore.

When you buy you'll be getting my playbook on how to make million dollar decisions, how to increase your income right now no matter what your current profession, and no matter what's going on in the economy. And why

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earning more money as a woman is not selfish or greedy, but in fact a revolutionary act that brings the economy into balance and creates a better world for all.

Go to helloseven.co/book for more information and links. Go get the book now.