

Tech Boundaries Workbook

Tech boundaries are **lines you draw on purpose** — not moods you white-knuckle, not a phone ban, not disappearing from people you care about.

This workbook walks through four boundaries — one per week, fifteen minutes each.

Audit the leak

What this means: A leak is not only doom-scrolling (though that counts). It is any tech habit that drains you while still looking *reasonable* — a client Slack ping during focus, inbox "just checking," a notification badge that will not let you rest.

Question: Where is tech taking more than it gives?

15-minute audit (start here)

- Pick **one surface** only — do not audit your whole life at once:
 Phone Inbox / email Calendar One app: _____
- List **three real interactions from yesterday** on that surface. Be specific: app name, time of day, what pulled you in.
- Mark each **take** or **give** using the guide below.
- Circle **one take** you will name out loud this week (to yourself, a collaborator, or in a status line).

#	What happened (yesterday)	Take or give?
1	_____	_____
2	_____	_____
3	_____	_____

Take or give? (how to decide)

	Give	Take
Feel	You close the app calmer or clearer	You close it vaguely worse
Time	Bounded — you chose the window	"Quick check" became twenty minutes
After	Creative work or rest is still possible	You need recovery from the recovery

Short version: **Give** = bounded, calmer, you can still create or rest. **Take** = sprawled, worse after, recovery from the recovery.

Take / give matrix (add more rows if you need them)

Interaction (app, channel, habit)	Take or give?	Notes
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

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What counts as a leak?

Include at least one **personal** habit and one **shared/collaborative** ping if both exist.

Source	Example take
Your apps	Canva tweak during deep work; Gmail "just checking" outside your batch window
Client / collaborator channels	Slack ping during a protected block
Platform defaults	Badge or dot that feels like a verdict on your worth
Values / vendors	Shared tool you did not choose but still live inside

Top 3 drains this week

1. _____ (personal / shared)
2. _____
3. _____

When the audit stings — NAA (Notice · Adjust · Acknowledge)

This is **not** a detox and **not** pass/fail. You noticed a **take**. That is useful data.

Step	Ask yourself	Write one line
Notice	What happened? How did I feel after I closed the app?	
Adjust	One small change I can try (mute, batch window, notification off, folder move)	
Acknowledge	What still ships? What feels even slightly better?	

Worked example:

- **Notice:** Slack ping during illustration; closed the app feeling behind and guilty. **Take.**
- **Adjust:** Mute Slack after 6pm; add status line with my reply window.
- **Acknowledge:** Client work still ships; evening belongs to me again more often.

Scripts for naming a take

Pick one. Say it out loud, paste it, or adapt the blanks.

To yourself:

This ping felt urgent. It wasn't. I'm closing the app and returning at _____.

To a collaborator:

I saw your message — I'm in a focus block until _____. I'll reply properly in my next _____ window.

Slack / status line:

In deep work until _____. Urgent: _____. Everything else: next batch window.

One take I will name out loud

Decline the wrong tools (*includes honest return*)

What this means: Declining a tool is not quitting. Picking one back up is not failure. Sometimes the drain was never the app — it was leaving it open all day, or a dashboard that became a second job. You are allowed to update the record when the math changes.

Question: What can you remove, archive, stop pretending — or **pick up again** because it still fits?

15-minute tool pass (start here)

1. Pick **one tool** from last week's audit that marked **take** — or one subscription you've been quietly side-eyeing.
2. Choose **one move** (see guide below): remove, archive, honest return, or KEEP with a new boundary.
3. Write a **one-line why** — cost, energy, values, or "fits when bounded."
4. Log it. One move this week is enough.

Four moves (not "delete everything")

Move	Choose when...	Example
Remove	Costs more energy or money than it returns	Cancel a subscription; delete an app you dread opening
Archive	Done for now; might inspire later	Finished client folder → Archive/ in Google Drive
Honest return	Audit says yes again; shame stays out	Calendar booking — back with two event types, not twelve
KEEP (bounded)	Right tool, wrong window last year	Canva — shop admin hours only, not during deep work

Short version: You are not collecting tools like trophies. Keep what runs. Drop what doesn't. Return without apology when it fits.

No-code moves that count

You do not need scripts or automations for this to be real.

Move	What it looks like
Folder move	Finished work → archive folder; notice the relief on your desktop
Desktop sweep	Three files off the active surface
Simpler return	Same app, fewer knobs — not a migration project
Time-box	App stays — but only in a named window (shop admin, email batch)
Project cap	Todoist (or similar) — three lists max: what ships <i>this week</i>

Tool cycling log

Tool / platform	Move (remove · archive · return · KEEP bounded)	One-line why	Date

When tool guilt shows up — read this first

Choosing a tool is not a moral event. Neither is leaving one or going back.

Old script	Better script
"I failed at decluttering."	"I ran the audit again."
"I shouldn't need this tool."	"This tool costs _____ and returns _____ — today's math says keep."
"Going back means I wasted time."	"Leaving taught me what I actually need."
"Switching tools makes me disloyal."	"My files travel. I choose where I open them."
"Everyone else manages without boundaries."	"My window is how I show up well later."
"If I mute this, they'll think I'm flaky."	"Named availability is reliability, not neglect."
"I need every tool I subscribed to."	"I pay for what I use on purpose — or I cancel on purpose."
"Declining this app means I'm behind."	"I'm protecting the work that actually ships."
"I should be reachable 24/7 to be professional."	"Clear beats instant. My window is on my calendar and my signature."

When the choice stings — NAA for tools

Step	Ask yourself	Write one line

Step	Ask yourself	Write one line
Notice	What tool guilt am I carrying? (failure, waste, disloyalty?)	
Adjust	One move: cancel, archive, simplify, time-box, or honest return	
Acknowledge	What still ships? What mental space returned?	

Worked example:

- **Notice:** Notion dashboard stale; maintaining it ate illustration time. **Take.**
- **Adjust:** Archived old boards to Google Drive; Todoist for *this week's* deliverables only.
- **Acknowledge:** Client work still ships. The organized life was costing the creative one.

This week's one move

Remove Archive Honest return KEEP (bounded)

What: _____

Why today: _____

Draw communication lines

What this means: You are not ghosting when you batch messages. Silence **without a map** reads as neglect. A clear response window reads as professionalism — for you *and* the person waiting. People are not mind readers.

Question: Where can you be reached, how fast, on which channel?

15-minute comms pass (start here)

1. Pick **one channel** that spiked guilt this week (Slack, email, shop DMs, family texts).
2. Write your **response window** in one plain sentence: days, times, and what "urgent" means for you.
3. Copy **one script** below into where people actually look (signature, onboarding doc, Slack status, link-in-bio).
4. Fill the channel map for your **top three channels only** — not every app you own.

My response window (one sentence)

Without a map vs. with a map

Without a map	With a map
They ping; you read at 9pm; you feel rude for not answering	They know your window; you answer in batch without the midnight tax
"Are they ignoring me?"	"Oh — they're in a focus block until 2pm. I'll queue this."

Without a map

With a map

You become the integration layer for every channel

Each channel has a job and a speed

Your response window is a boundary, not an apology.

Channel map

Include **solo** channels and **shared/collaborative** spaces (client Slack, project board, etc.).

Channel	For what	Response window	Urgent? (Y/N)	Notification setting

When async feels rude — NAA for comms

Step	Ask yourself	Write one line
Notice	When did I feel mean for not replying instantly? What channel?	
Adjust	One script pasted publicly; one notification setting changed	
Acknowledge	Who relaxed once the map was visible? What guilt lost fuel?	

Worked example:

- **Notice:** Read brand Slack at 8pm; typed, deleted, lay awake feeling uncaring.
- **Adjust:** Added batch window to onboarding doc + Gmail signature; muted Slack after 6pm.
- **Acknowledge:** Brand manager replied *"thank god — I didn't want to ping you at night either."*

Scripts (adapt to your voice)

Pick one to paste this week. Fill the blanks. You can sound like you.

Not right now:

Thanks for reaching out — I'm not available for a real reply right now. I read messages during _____ on weekdays. If urgent: _____. Otherwise I'll reply in my next window.

Here's when I respond:

I batch messages _____. You haven't been ignored — you're queued for my next window.

Use this channel instead:

For _____, fastest path: _____. For everything else: _____.

Deep work — onboarding / calendar:

When you see [project name — focus block] on my calendar, I'm in deep work. I'll reply in my next _____ window. Urgent: _____.

Mid-block Slack ping:

Got this — I'm in a focus block until _____. I'll read properly at _____.

"Quick call?" → async:

I can't jump on a call right now. Send _____ in writing and I'll respond during _____.

Slack status (short):

Focus block until _____ · replies _____ · urgent: _____

After-hours deferral:

I don't read _____ after _____. If it's urgent, _____. Otherwise I'll see this in my next window.

Email signature one-liner:

I batch email _____. For faster booking/files: _____.

Shop / social DM → email:

Thanks for reaching out! For shop orders and client work, email is best: _____. I read it during _____.

Family / household boundary:

I'm offline for focus until _____. If it's an emergency, call. Otherwise I'll text back when I'm done.

Where I pasted mine

Email signature Bio Autoresponder Link-in-bio Onboarding doc Slack status Other:

Protect creative fire

What this means: Creative fire is not a reward you earn after everything else is done. It is deep work on the calendar **like a real meeting** — titled with the project name so collaborators know what the block is for. Missed blocks happen. The failure mode is not missing once; it is **never putting it back**.

Question: What block is non-negotiable for deep work?

15-minute block setup (start here)

1. Pick **one project** that needs uninterrupted time this week (name it — not "work stuff").
2. Schedule **one block** (60–90 minutes). Title the calendar event with the **project name**, not "focus time."
3. Tell **one person** — or add one line to onboarding — what that calendar block means.
4. Plan your **exit**: stop when the block ends, even mid-task. Showing up once counts.

Project I'm protecting this week Day / time Who knows this block is real?

Protected block ritual (simple version)

Step	What to do
Calendar	Block titled with the project — same visibility as a client call
Phone	Another room; not on the desk

Step	What to do
One app surface	Deep-work file open — not Slack, inbox, and design tool in the same hour
Exit	Stop when the block ends. Put the next block on the calendar before guilt sets in

Match your energy (three modes)

Honest beats heroic. Pick the mode you're in — don't force high-energy performance on a low-energy body.

Mode	When I'm here...	What gets attention	Boundary
High		Deep client / creative work	Protected block; comms closed
Medium		Email batch, admin graphics, file handoffs	Batched — not mixed into deep block
Low		Rest, reading, recovery	No inbox; notifications stay muted

Protected block planner

Day	Time	Project (name it)	Defended? (Y/N)	If no — why?

Non-negotiables (write your versions)

- Deep work cutoff (e.g. no client tools after ___ pm): _____
- Rest rule (e.g. laptop closed before ___ am): _____
- One notification I'll turn off during blocks: _____

When the block gets interrupted — NAA for creative fire

Step	Ask yourself	Write one line
Notice	What ate the block? (ping, guilt, moved it for someone else?)	
Adjust	One change: mute, visible calendar title, script in onboarding, phone out of room	
Acknowledge	Did the work still ship? Did I put the <i>next</i> block back?	

Worked example:

- **Notice:** Moved "focus time" for a quick Slack ask; illustration leaked into evening.
- **Adjust:** Renamed block [*Client*] — *illustration*] on shared calendar; muted Slack during block.
- **Acknowledge:** Fewer ambiguous pings — not because people got nicer, because the **map got clearer**.

Scripts when the block gets challenged

Client asks to move the block:

I can move _____ if something is truly urgent — otherwise this block protects delivery for _____. What works in my next window?

Guilt after saying no to a ping:

I wasn't rude. I was protecting the block I put on the calendar on purpose.

Ending on time (even mid-task):

The block ends at _____. I'll pick this up at the next scheduled block — that's how it ships without burning out.

Boundary map (one page)

What this is: One sketch of where you are reachable, what is protected, and what counts as an exception. No perfection required — a rough map beats a vague intention.

Sketch your lines — channels, times, exceptions.

REACHABLE HERE	NOT HERE / NOT NOW
PROTECTED BLOCKS	EXCEPTIONS (name them)

NAA quick reference

Full walkthrough in **Audit the leak** above.

Step	Prompt
Notice	What happened? Take or give? Write it down — no judgment.
Adjust	One microscopic change (setting, folder, face-down phone, batch window).
Acknowledge	What still ships? What feels different now?

Weekly check-in (15 min)

What this is: Maintenance, not a test. Fifteen minutes to notice what held, what leaked, and one small adjustment for next week.

Best time: Friday afternoon or Sunday evening.

1. **Boundaries:** Which held? Where did I leak? One adjustment for next week: _____
 2. **Tools:** Any decline, archive, return, or bounded KEEP to log? _____
 3. **Comms:** Did my response windows work for me — and for the people waiting? _____
 4. **Creative fire:** Did the protected block happen? If not, why? (schedule, guilt, nobody knew the map?)

 5. **One intention** for next week — single sentence, not an overhaul: _____
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Four boundaries at a glance

Boundary	15-min action
Audit the leak	Take/give on one surface
Decline / return	One move with a why
Communication lines	One script pasted publicly
Protect creative fire	One calendar block defended