



The Broken Record Technique

Boundary setting is one way to reduce the stress in your life. There are lots of boundaries and many ways to set them. The broken record technique is a tool to use with the person who pulls you into endless arguments that go nowhere. The main principle is repetition. Like a broken record, which continually loops back to the same spot, using the same words repeatedly to convey your message is an effective response.

Step 1: Vent.

Sit down by yourself with a pad of paper and a pen and write down everything you have to say to this person about this situation. Just dump it all out in print.

Step 2: Clear your head.

Go get a drink of water and stretch your legs. Take a short walk, switch over the laundry, or do a few lunges.

Step 3: Find your words.

Re-read your writing and narrow down what you have to say to 3-4 sentences. Seriously, keep it short.

Step 4: Make a note.

Write your statement down where you can easily find it. Post it inside a cupboard door or make a note on your phone.

Step 5: Put it into practice.

The next time this person starts this conversation read them the short statement. As far as possible, speak calmly and with kindness. Repeat it. Repeat the sentences in a new order. Repeat it again.

Step 6: Troubleshooting.

When the person gets frustrated and says, “You said that! Don’t you have anything else to say?” See step 5. If you become uncomfortable with the person’s words or demeanor, say “I am done with this conversation.” Walk away if you can. The next time they bring up the topic, repeat step 5.