



BOUNDARIES FOR ACTORS

YES/NO/MAYBE LIST

By Carly DW Bones

It can be easier to confidently claim your boundaries when you have a clear sense of what they are before you are in a pressured moment. Look over this list and be honest with yourself about what aligns with your needs and your integrity as an artist and a human. There are no wrong answers. What boundaries do you need to claim in order to take care of your physical, mental, emotional and spiritual health? No one else can give you your own answers.

Healthy boundaries as an actor can help you to have a sustainable career and to show up fully to do your best work. Your answers might change some over time, so do a check in a few times a year with this list as a guide. No one else needs to see this list, though you are welcome to share it with folks you are working with if that is helpful to you. You may even want to fill this out once for theatre projects and once for film projects, because your boundaries might change depending on the medium you're working in. Your answers don't need to look like anyone else's. Take what you find useful, leave what doesn't serve you, and feel free to add on.

Mark "YES" if this is something that you consent to with ease for an acting role/project.

Mark "NO" if this is a hard boundary that you do not want to do for an acting role/project.

Mark "MAYBE" if it really depends on the specifics - and elaborate in the section below!

Role that requires a full body hug/embrace YES NO MAYBE

Role that requires another actor touching my face YES NO MAYBE

Role that requires another actor touching my hair YES NO MAYBE

Role that requires kissing on the face (mouth on cheek/forehead) YES NO MAYBE

Role that requires kissing mouth on mouth YES NO MAYBE

- Role that requires open mouth/tongue kissing YES NO MAYBE
- Role that requires kissing mouth on skin (below the head) YES NO MAYBE
- Role that requires me to undress on stage/film YES NO MAYBE
- Role that requires me to wear see-through clothing YES NO MAYBE
- Role that requires me to be in underwear/lingerie/etc. YES NO MAYBE
- Role that requires me to be topless YES NO MAYBE
- Role that requires me to be fully nude YES NO MAYBE
- Role that requires me to change without a dressing room YES NO MAYBE
- Role requiring intimacy w/out an ID/IC or intimacy trained director YES NO MAYBE
- Role that requires simulated penetrative (vaginal, anal) sex YES NO MAYBE
- Role that requires simulated oral (mouth) sex YES NO MAYBE
- Role that requires simulated manual (hand) sex YES NO MAYBE
- Role the requires simulated BDSM/Kink YES NO MAYBE
- Role that requires simulated group sex YES NO MAYBE
- Role that requires physical groping YES NO MAYBE
- Role that requires simulated sexual violence YES NO MAYBE
- Role that involves improvised physicality YES NO MAYBE
- Role that stereotypes my _____
(gender, race, class, body, weight/size, sexuality, religion, disability, mental illness, profession, etc.) YES NO MAYBE
- Role that contributes to stereotyping a marginalized group YES NO MAYBE
- Role that stereotypes _____ YES NO MAYBE

- Project where I am the only _____ in the cast
(POC, woman, trans person, Black person, etc.) YES NO MAYBE
- Role that explores _____ trauma
(sexual, racialized, gender-based, medical, etc.) YES NO MAYBE
- Role/project that asks me to access my own personal trauma YES NO MAYBE
- Role that requires me to eat _____ YES NO MAYBE
- Role that requires me to smoke YES NO MAYBE
- Role that requires me to get wet YES NO MAYBE
- Role that requires me to cut or change my hair YES NO MAYBE
- Role that requires me to lose weight YES NO MAYBE
- Role that requires me to gain weight YES NO MAYBE
- Role that requires my character to call another character a slur
(racial, gendered, sexual, religious, etc.) YES NO MAYBE
- Role that requires my character to be called a slur YES NO MAYBE
- Role where my character speaks sexually explicit language YES NO MAYBE
- Role where my character is on the receiving end of sexually explicit language YES NO MAYBE
- Role where my character experiences simulated violence YES NO MAYBE
- Role where my character enacts simulated violence YES NO MAYBE
- Role that explores intimate partner violence YES NO MAYBE
- Role that explores suicide/suicidal ideation YES NO MAYBE
- Role that explores self harm YES NO MAYBE

- Role that explores disordered eating YES NO MAYBE
- Role that explores death and death-related grief YES NO MAYBE
- Role that requires simulated drug use YES NO MAYBE
- Role/project that asks me to work for free YES NO MAYBE
- Project that asks me to stay beyond the agreed time/schedule YES NO MAYBE
- Project that asks me to advertise on my personal social media YES NO MAYBE
- Role/project the uses my face/voice to sell _____ YES NO MAYBE
- Role/project that uses my face/voice to make money for _____ YES NO MAYBE
- Immersive show where audience can initiate touch w/ actors YES NO MAYBE
- Immersive show where actors can initiate touch w/ audience YES NO MAYBE
- Immersive show where alcohol is served to audience YES NO MAYBE
- Immersive show that requires me to be partially/fully nude YES NO MAYBE
- Immersive show where I am alone with an audience member YES NO MAYBE

ADD YOUR OWN:

- _____ YES NO MAYBE
- _____ YES NO MAYBE
- _____ YES NO MAYBE
- _____ YES NO MAYBE
- _____ YES NO MAYBE
- _____ YES NO MAYBE
- _____ YES NO MAYBE

Practice Out Loud!

Practice saying some of these phrases out loud - to yourself, to the mirror, to a friend or roommate or fellow actor or your cat. Fill in the blanks with boundaries you have or situations you can imagine coming up. It can feel silly or cheesy at first, but saying these words out loud in a low stakes environment can help you build confidence to speak up for yourself in moments where it might be more challenging to assert your boundaries and needs. Practice helps build a kind of muscle memory that you can call upon later when there's something bigger at stake. This exercise can help you activate and realize the power of your words, and the power you wield when you tap into clear confident communication. Give it a go!

"Is _____ negotiable? I love this role but I have a hard boundary around _____."

"How are you planning to stage _____? I'd like to have some more information so I can make an informed decision before accepting this role/project."

"Will there be an intimacy choreographer/director/coordinator on board for staging _____? Or is the director specifically trained in intimacy practices? I need some more information about this before I can consent to working on this project/accept this role."

"Can you tell me a bit more about why _____ is necessary to your vision for this story?"

"Actually, _____ is a hard boundary that I have for my work. How do you think we can creatively work around it and still tell this story/realize your vision/complete this assignment?"

"While working on _____ I discovered that _____ is actually a boundary for me. How do you think we can adjust to work with respect to that discovery? Thank you so much for hearing me on this."

"I need to let you know that _____ violates a boundary that I have already communicated. If we want to continue working together, we need to address _____. What I will need to move forward is _____. Let me know if that is doable for you so we can figure out the next steps."

"Who is the point person for me to talk to in the case that a boundary I state is being ignored or pushed? I'm not anticipating this happening, but it will make me feel safer to know in advance who I should go to directly to address this in case it comes up."