

# THE ART OF *SOFT* SEPARATION

• FOR THE PEOPLE YOU  
CAN'T—OR DON'T WANT TO—AVOID.

• HOW TO STAY  
*CONNECTED*  
WITHOUT LOSING  
YOURSELF.



Why “soft separation”?

Soft separation is a practice for keeping people in your life without losing yourself in the relationship.

So often, when a situation becomes difficult, people feel like their only options are to keep tolerating what hurts them or to cut off completely.

But sometimes we go to those extremes because we haven't been given the tools to do anything else.

What if there were another way?

# Accept What Is

Some people are going to remain part of your life.  
You may love them.

Work with them.

Be related to them.

Share responsibilities with them.

Or simply continue crossing paths.

**And you may never get the apology,  
understanding, or change you hoped for.**

Soft separation begins when you stop making  
your peace dependent on those things.

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**YOU CAN ACCEPT WHAT IS  
WITHOUT DECIDING  
THAT IT HAS TO STAY THIS WAY FOREVER.**

01

# Care Without Carrying

**It's not about caring less. It's about carrying less.**

You can still love deeply.

Still care.

Still show up.

Still hope.

Still pray.

Still want the relationship.

But you don't have to carry the weight of their choices, emotions, reactions, opinions, or the entire burden of the relationship.

You can care without carrying it all.

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# Not About Changing THEM

**You can change how you approach the situation or relationship.**

Maybe you stop over-explaining.

Maybe you stop analyzing every comment.

Maybe you stop trying to get them to understand.

Maybe you stop having the same conversation hoping for a different response.

Maybe you simply stop taking everything so personally.

You're not necessarily changing the relationship.

You're changing your participation in it.

# A PRACTICE NOT AN ANNOUNCEMENT

You don't have to tell someone:

"I'm setting a boundary with you."

You don't need them to understand your new approach.

You don't need their agreement.

You don't need them to recognize what you're doing.

Because if you're changing your behavior in order to get them to behave differently, you're still trying to control the outcome.

**SOFT SEPARATION IS SOMETHING YOU PRACTICE, NOT  
SOMETHING YOU HAVE TO ANNOUNCE.**

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# STOP DEFENDING YOURSELF

**They question your decision.**

**You explain.**

**They question your actions.**

**You explain.**

**They challenge their perception of what you did  
—or didn't do.**

**You explain even more.**

**Before long, you're not simply communicating.  
You're building a case for yourself.**

**SOFT SEPARATION:**

**GIVE A CLEAR ANSWER WHEN IT'S NEEDED.**

**THEN LET YOUR CHOICE—OR YOUR ACTIONS—STAND.**

**YOU DON'T HAVE TO KEEP PRESENTING EVIDENCE.**

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# STOP THE CYCLE

Some conversations and situations aren't moving toward understanding, resolution, or agreement. (And possibly never will.)

You explain.

They respond.

You clarify.

They bring up something old—or something else altogether.

You defend your point.

They challenge it again.

And the cycle begins again.

Not every disagreement needs to be resolved.

Not every situation needs another explanation.

Sometimes the healthiest response is simply to recognize, *we're not getting anywhere here.*

**SOFT SEPRATION IS WHERE YOU CAN AGREE TO DISAGREE.  
OR SAY, " I DON'T REMEMBER IT THAT WAY, AND THAT'S OKAY."**

**YOU CAN STEP AWAY FROM THE CYCLE—  
GIVE YOURSELF PERMISSION TO STEP OUT OF IT!.**

**NEXT** →

06

# STOP KEEPING SCORE

**You may think:**

**“If I treat them respectfully, eventually they’ll treat me the same.”**

**Sometimes they won’t.**

**Your kindness doesn’t guarantee theirs.**

**Your maturity doesn’t guarantee theirs.**

**Your good behavior doesn’t guarantee theirs.**

**You can remain a person of integrity without turning your integrity into a transaction.**

**SOFT SEPARATION:**

**KEEP YOUR STANDARDS BECAUSE THEY BELONG TO YOU—  
NOT BECAUSE YOU’RE WAITING FOR SOMEONE ELSE TO MATCH THEM.**

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07

# YOU GET TO DECIDE THE ACCESS

*YOU CAN LIMIT ACCESS WITHOUT CLOSING YOUR HEART*

You may not want to remove someone from your life completely.  
But that doesn't mean they get unlimited access to you.

You get to decide:

When you respond.

Where you interact.

How much time you spend together.

What you share.

Which conversations you participate in.

What advice or insights to accept.

**SOFT SEPARATION:  
KEEP THE CONNECTION, BUT CHOOSE  
THE ACCESS THAT'S HEALTHY.**

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08

# STAY KIND. STAY CLEAR.

**YOU DON'T HAVE TO BECOME HARD  
BECAUSE THE SITUATION IS HARD.**

You can keep a soft heart.

You can remain a kind person.

Because that's who you are—not because they've earned it.

You may not be able to choose the people or circumstances around you. But you can choose how you want to show up in the situation.

Whether you're navigating a difficult relationship, work environment, boss, coworker, neighbor, church, or community group, pause before you enter the conversation, interaction, or situation and **have a vision for the person you want to be in it**

**SOFT SEPARATION:**

**KEEP YOUR HEART SOFT.**

**STAY CLEAR ABOUT WHAT IS YOURS.**

**CHOOSE TO SHOW UP AS THE PERSON YOU WANT TO BE,  
EVEN WHEN THE SITUATION IS HARD.**

**NEXT** →

09

# MAKE ROOM FOR YOUR BEAUTIFUL LIFE

**THE FULLER YOUR OWN LIFE BECOMES, THE LESS ROOM SOMEONE  
ELSE'S OPINION OR BEHAVIOR TAKES UP INSIDE IT.**

**One of the healthiest forms of soft  
separation isn't avoiding someone or  
“quiet quitting.” It's remembering that their  
behavior doesn't have to become the main  
event of your life.**

**Your family.**

**Your work.**

**Your dreams.**

**Your goals.**

**Your interests.**

**Your friendships.**

**Your routines.**

**That's what really matters. Focus on that.**

**SOFT SEPARATION:  
AFTER AN UNPLEASANT INTERACTION,  
RETURN YOUR ATTENTION TO SOMETHING THAT GIVES  
LIFE BACK TO YOU.**

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It isn't about caring less.

It isn't about walking away.

It isn't about changing someone else.

It's about learning to create healthy space between **what is happening around you** and **how you choose to show up.**

You can love.

You can care.

You can stay connected.

You can remain present.

**Without losing yourself in the process.**

Sometimes the most loving thing you can do is change **your relationship to the relationship.**

**The goal isn't to remove people or situations from your life.**

**It's to learn how to hold them differently.**

*That is the Art of Separating*