

Bill of Rights for Adult Children of Emotionally Immature Parents

(Gibson, 2019)

1. The Right to Set Limits

I have the right to set limits on your hurtful or exploitative behavior. I have the right to break off any interaction in which I feel pressured or coerced. I have the right to stop anything long before I feel exhausted.

I have the right to call a halt to any interaction I don't find enjoyable. I have the right to say no to anything without a good reason.

2. The Right Not to be Emotionally Coerced

I have the right to not be your rescuer.

I have the right to ask you to get help from someone else. I have the right to not fix your problems.

I have the right to let you manage your own self-esteem without my input. I have the right to let you manage your own distress.

I have the right to refuse to feel guilty.

3. The Right to Emotional Autonomy and Mental Freedom

I have the right to feel or think *anything*.

I have the right to no ridicule or mockery of my values, ideas, or interests.

4. The Right to Know How I Feel

I have the right to know whether I love you or not. I am not obligated to love you because you feel bad or I am related to you.

I have the right not to disconnect from myself to make things easier on others. I have the right to be bothered by how I'm treated.

5. The Right to Clear Communications

I have the right to say anything as long as I do it in a non-violent, non-abusive way. I have the right to ask to be listened to.

I have the right to speak up and tell you if my feelings are hurt.

I have the right to be told what you want from me without assuming I should know.

6. The Right to Choose What's Best for Me

I have the right to leave whenever I want.

I have the right not to visit if it's not a good time for me.

I have the right to opt out of any activity or get-togethers I don't find enjoyable. I have the right to make my own decisions, without self-doubt.

7. The Right to Live Life My Own Way

I have the right to take action even if you don't think it's a good idea. I have the right to spend my energy and time on what I find important.

I have the right to trust my inner experiences, and take my aspirations seriously. I have the right to take all the time I need, and not be rushed.

I have the right to refuse to feel shame.

8. The Right to Equal Importance and Respect

I have the right to be considered just as important as you.

I have the right to live my life, and not be shamed by anyone.

I have the right to be treated respectfully as an independent adult.

9. The Right to Put My Own Health and Well-Being First

I have the right to thrive, not just survive.

I have the right to take time for myself to do things I really enjoy.

I have the right to decide how much energy and attention I give to other people. I have the right to take time to think things over.

10. The Right to Love and Protect Myself

I have the right to self-compassion when I make mistakes.

I have the right to change my self-concept when it no longer fits.

I have the right to preserve the time and space necessary to nourish and protect my inner world. I have the right to treat myself nicely and with loving-kindness.

I have the right to be free of self-criticism, and to fully accept my individuality. I have the right to be me.

Reference

Lindsay C. Gibson, Psy.D. (2019). *Recovering from emotionally immature parents: Practical tools to establish boundaries and reclaim your emotional autonomy*. New Harbinger Publications.