

BOUNDARIES

"The purpose of having boundaries is to protect and take care of ourselves. We need to be able to tell other people when they are acting in ways that are not acceptable to us. A first step is starting to know that we have a right to protect and defend ourselves. That we have not only the right, but the duty to take responsibility for how we allow others to treat us."

"It is important to state our feelings out loud and to precede the feeling with "I feel." (When we say "I am angry, I'm hurt, etc." we are stating that the feeling is who we are. Emotions do not define us, they are a form of internal communication that help us to understand ourselves. They are a vital part of our being - as a component of the whole.) This is owning the feeling. It is important to do for ourselves. By stating the feeling out loud we are affirming that we have a right to feelings. We are affirming it to ourselves - and taking responsibility for owning ourselves and our reality. Rather the other person can hear us and understand is not as important as hearing ourselves and understanding that we have a right to our feelings. It is vitally important to own our own voice. To own our right to speak up for ourselves."

"Setting boundaries is not a more sophisticated way of manipulation - although some people will say they are setting boundaries, when in fact they are attempting to manipulate. The difference between setting a boundary in a healthy way and manipulating is: **when we set a boundary we let go of the outcome.**"

"It is impossible to have a healthy relationship with someone who has no boundaries, with someone who cannot communicate directly, and honestly. Learning how to set boundaries is a necessary step in learning to be a friend to ourselves. It is our responsibility to take care of ourselves - to protect ourselves when it is necessary. It is impossible to learn to be Loving to ourselves without owning our self - and owning our rights and responsibilities as co-creators of our lives."

It is vital to learn to respect and honor our selves, so that we can awaken to the need to have boundaries that let other people know that we deserve and demand respect.

Boundaries define limits, mark off dividing lines. The purpose of a boundary is to make clear separations between different turf, different territory.

When you

I feel

I want

Since I am powerless over you, I will take this action to protect myself if you behave in this way.

It is not OK to hit me, ever." "It is not acceptable to call me certain names
We all deserve to be treated with respect and dignity. "And we always have a choice. If someone sticks a gun in my face and says, "Your money or your life!" I have a choice. I may not like my choice but I have one. In life we often don't like our choices because we don't know what the outcome is going to be and we are terrified of doing it 'wrong.'

Even with life events that occur in a way that we seemingly don't have a choice over (being laid off work, the car breaking down, a flood, etc.) we still have a choice over how we respond to those events. We can choose to see things that feel like, and seem to be, tragic as opportunities for growth. We can choose to focus on the half of the glass that is full and be grateful for it or to focus on the half that is empty and be the victim of it. We have a choice about where we focus our minds." **(Source: Robert Burney, Codependence: *The Dance of Wounded Souls*)**

NASCAR drivers win races by staying within the lines around the track and meeting rules regarding the car. Musicians in a band play according to a common key, rhythm and tempo. Both acknowledge boundaries set up to govern their behavior.

Boundaries may appear harsh or controlling. In actuality, they provide the framework for you to become your personal best.

Boundaries Matter

Boundaries are a good thing. If you have observed them well, your efforts can be acknowledged as real achievements. No points are given when you are out of bounds or for a shot after the whistle; no standing ovation comes for a monologue that ignores the script.

Boundaries also help protect the players. In hockey, a strong elbow check is a foul; the penalty is a shot or time in the box.

Heart Boundaries

Emotions might confuse or overwhelm you at times. New emotions can sometimes be difficult to understand

Emotions, however, offer a choice. You can control your emotions and rule them rather than allowing them to rule you. Even emotions need boundaries. It is a matter of taking charge of your own life. This responsibility is an important task of your teenage years and it continues to be important, no matter how old you are.

Body Boundaries

No one deserves to be treated abusively. No one deserves to be lied to and betrayed.

There are basically three parts to a boundary. The first two are setting the boundary - the third is what you will do to defend that boundary.

It is not enough to just set boundaries - it is necessary to be willing to do whatever it takes to enforce them. You need to be willing to go to any length, do whatever it takes to protect yourself.

If you set boundaries and do not enforce them, it gives the other person an excuse to continue with the same old behavior.

Examples of Setting Boundaries

- ➔ You don't have a right to tell me what to think, or invalidate my feelings."
- ➔ "Don't vent your anger on me, I won't have it."
- ➔ "This is mine, you don't have a right to use it as yours."
- ➔ "I won't accept your belittling jokes, your criticism or your condescending attitude toward me."
- ➔ "I won't be disrespected - If you won't respect me, then stay away."
- ➔ "Keep your hands off me."
- ➔ "Stop doing that... or I'll leave" [report you; file charges etc.]
- ➔ "Don't try to tell me what to do."
- ➔ "If we're going to have a working relationship, I need honesty, respect and equality."
- ➔ "I need to communicate when we have a misunderstanding."
- ➔ "I need openness and sharing in a relationship - your withholding is making our relationship not satisfying to me." (**Source: *Self-Empowerment through Setting Personal Boundaries*, <http://www.heart-2-heart.ca/men/page14.html>)**)