



# Creating and Maintaining Boundaries

By Anne and Crystal





## Creating and Maintaining Boundaries: WHAT DO BOUNDARIES LOOK LIKE?

- BOUNDARIES define where an individual ENDS, and another individual BEGINS like a Property Line separating two plots of land.
- IT helps define who an individual is in a relationship. Such as, when a person confronts another about a problem, it sets boundaries.
- Boundaries define WHO an individual is in RELATIONSHIP.
- ALSO, Boundaries protect people from INJURY or HARM
- Clear boundaries to protect one's VALUES, FEELINGS, TIME, ENERGY, and ATTITUDES.
- To have clear Boundaries, An individual must know what one's values, beliefs, and feelings.
- Poor BOUNDARIES cause a person to be easily controlled, manipulated by the demands of others, and it affects one's self-esteem or belief in self.

4. Recognize that boundaries change



**BOUNDARIES:** The result of not having good BOUNDARIES in a relationship is having CONNECTION without TRUTH. An individual with experience with bad experiences in relationships avoids conflict and confrontation.

**FEAR OF THE FOLLOWING THINGS PREVENTS ONE FROM CREATING GOOD HEALTHY BOUNDARIES:**

1. Losing the relationship – A person will withdraw emotionally or physically out of fear.
2. Being the object of anger – An individual does not want to receive another's rage and anger or blame about being confronted.
3. Being Hurtful – An individual may be fearful of hurting another's feelings
4. Being perceived as bad – A overall desire to be seen as NICE, KIND, and LOVING

**NOTE: THESE FEARS PREVENT US FROM CREATING HEALTHY BOUNDARIES AND HAVING CONVERSATIONS WITH THOSE INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE CROSSING OUR BOUNDARY LIFE OR INFLICTING THEIR VALUES ON US.**

**BOUNDARIES AND CONFRONTATION:** An essential part of BOUNDARIES is having a frank conversation with family and friends and an honest confrontation.

Question: Have you ever had someone confront you about something in love, and what was the result?

Example: You are overworked, taking on too many responsibilities, undervaluing friends or family, or being perceived as selfish. Did someone tell you the truth in LOVE?

What are the benefits of having that difficult conversation?

(ALWAYS confront with I feel statements or MY PERCEPTION. An individual cannot argue with how another feeling, but feelings are not always accurate)

1. Preserving LOVE - Confrontation works best when it is served with LOVE. One does not comfort out of fear of losing the relationship, but a relationship based on fear cannot grow.
2. Resolving Alienation - Healthy confrontation preserves a relationship and brings disconnected people together. The extent to which two people in a relationship can bring up and resolve issues is a critical marker of the soundness of the relationship.
3. Empowering - Confrontation brings empowerment, the ability to make choices and changes in a relationship.
4. Solves a Problem - Boundary conversations are essential. Because those conversations address and resolve an issue that keeps two people apart or is hurtful to someone.

## Boundaries: Difficult Conversations continued...

5. Building Growth – Healthy Conversations help people grow emotionally, relationally, and spiritually. A healthy conversation with an individual causes change either another person will change, or the individual will bring up the subject with the understanding they their perception was incorrect.
6. Clarifying Reality – Good confrontations help people to see another person for who they are, not just one's perception. AGAIN, Feelings and Perceptions are not always reality.
7. Avoid being Part of the Problem – AS the saying goes...*If you are not part of the solution, you part of the problem.* Sometimes when in a relationship with a person with severe pain or behavior. A friend will enable the others' issues unknowingly. If an individual lives in a vacuum and is unaware of how their actions affect other people, the kindest thing a friend can do is have that brutal confrontation and address the problem.
8. *CAUTION be aware of other MOTIVES* – IT is essential to have that conversation with other people about boundaries but do not confront an individual to fix or change that person or punish or get revenge.  
Confrontations must be done in LOVE and evaluate your motives...

## ACTIVITY: MAKE A BOUNDARY (Space BOUNDARY)

GET in Groups of 3 or 4. Practice telling the other people in your group what is your space BOUNDARY. Have a person invade that boundary and nicely correct that individual.

Take turns on who sets the boundary. WHO invades the boundary and observers.

NEEDED for activity outside sidewalk chalks inside YARN/Rope to make a boundary.



# Boundaries: Be Emotionally Present

It is essential to communicate in a way that one would be heard.

1. **Be Warm** – Remember, Confrontations are uncomfortable; one does not need to be angry, detached, or distant from the other person. Wait until you are calm and not fearful of presenting your feelings to the other person in a safe, comfortable location.
2. **It is a conversation, not a Lecture** – Even though the individual may be passionate about what they want to say or nervous, ample time must be given to the other individual to speak. The person may not have thought about the issues, so they will need time to think and respond.
3. **Connect Even with Differences** – STAY Present in the here and now. Not only when one agrees. It is essential that even if one disagrees, the conversation continues. STAY calm and give a safe environment to have this conversation. DO NOT get angry.
4. **Discomfort versus Injury** – IT is essential to be aware of. If the conversation is just uncomfortable, stay the course. HOWEVER, IF the conversation is causing you injury, emotionally guard your heart.
5. **Observe Yourself** – Monitor your nonverbal communication. What are you communicating? Are your arms crossed or open? Are you sleeping and looking uninterested? So much one shares in nonverbal.

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# ACTIVE Listening



## Confrontation Continued...

### **Be Clear about YOU and I in your conversation.**

EXAMPLE: SAY what you want. NOTE: You have not taken us out for a while, or You probably need a night out to dinner.

INSTEAD SAY: I do not want to cook dinner tonight, and I would like to go out to dinner.

CAUTION: IF one does not communicate clearly, the other individual may feel like they are being controlled or manipulated. **My** comments are better than **Your** comments. Your comments put walls up, making it harder to hear the message being communicated.

1. *Look at it Empathically* - try to understand the other person's viewpoint and feelings.
2. *Be Clear in your Mind* - Think about what needs to be said in context, not You. Journal or get help from a friend to ensure you are clear in what needs to be communicated.
3. *Speak from Your NEED, NOT theirs-*
4. *Deal with Any Fears of Separateness* - You are a separate person. "I want" and "I need" may seem complicated, but one must be clear or take time to get an understanding of their dreams, values, desires, and feelings separate from one's spouse, children, parents, or peers.
5. *BE Humble - Important to remember. No one has control over another human being. Saying I want or needs are asking another individual for something. It is a humble position. STAY away from WE. Keep the conversation in I context.*

# Boundaries and Communication

**Clarify the Problem** - Do not get distracted. If you are communicating, do singularly focused if the conversation starts with EVERY TIME AND YOU. The chance of the other person will not hear what is being spoken but will start thinking of defense.

1. *Clarify the Nature of the problem* - Make the issue understandable. GIVE the context, where, when, who was involved, and precisely what happened.
2. *Clarify the Effects of the Problem* - HOW this problem affects your relationship with this individual. EXAMPLE a mother-in-law critical of her daughter-in-law. EXAMPLE: If the mother-in-law is vital, the daughter-in-law feels hurt because she seeks to please the individual, the kids do not understand why someone is rude to their mother, and it may explain why the family does not visit so frequently. It is a loss for all involved in this relationship.
3. *Clarify your desire for Change* - DO not talk about negative aspects of the problem but about how one would like to resolve the issue—the relationship matters. Give suggestions on ways that the situation could resolve and be other to the others individuals' requests as well.

# Boundaries and Communication

Stay on TASK....

1. *Be Prepared* - DO not be surprised by the person you are trying to communicate becoming defensive or deflecting.
2. *Hear Them Out to a Point* - Always give the individual you are trying to communicate with an opportunity to feel heard and understood. However, *TO a POINT, WHEN THE PERSON IS OPEN TO FEEDBACK and ready to listen to yours*. The conversation needs to end in case of a charter issue, and the person blames you or makes another excuse. It is not emotionally good to continue.
3. *Make Several Attempts to Get Back on Task* - Listen, be empathetic, and return to the issue of discussion. Example: I would like to return to ...I want to return to ...I was saying about this...Do not give up. Be persistent because this is about the relationship.
4. *Make the Defensiveness an Issue* - Talk to the person about the defensiveness, such as; "I have noticed that every time I talk about our problem about.....it seems you get angry or change the subject. BE CLEAR of the ownership you are taking but return to the issue trying to help the individual not feel judged.
5. *Practice with Others* - Role play and practice with others will help one feel prepared for the conversation.

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# Boundaries and Communication

Use the Formula; when you DO “A the issue,” I feel “B name the feeling.”

1. *Concentrate on Feelings, NOT thoughts* - EXAMPLE: When you negate my words, I feel hurt and disconnected from you.
2. *Identify Your Feelings* - It is hard to identify what one feels, especially between hurt, anger, sadness, frustration, and anxiety. It is good to work with friends that know you to help you understand your feeling.
3. *Stick to Your Experience* -In the conversation, stay with what you, the individual, are experiencing. Do not assume knowledge of the other feelings. For example, to say, When you negate my words, I feel alone and unloved.
4. *Avoid the Statement “You MAKE me Feel...”* - This is untrue; a person can influence feelings or emotions but not control one's feelings or emotions. One chooses how much power to give others.
5. *Own Your Part of the Feelings* - NO one can control other individuals' emotions. An excellent way to speak to another; EXAMPLE: Last night, I felt attacked and embarrassed when you made fun of my dress at the party.
6. **BE Specific, Specific, AGAIN SPECIFIC** - Give specific information about actions, behaviors, and attitudes to allow the individual to understand the discussed incident. EXAMPLE: When you joked about my weight, I felt hurt.

**When you say ‘A,’ I feel ‘B’ is, at heart, not only a way of confronting but reaching out to the other person.**

# Boundaries and Communication

**Affirm and Validate** - Affirm and validate the people one intends to confront so that that individual knows their value in the relationship.

1. How to Affirm and Validate - Genuinely, Notice and vocalize what the individual does well or is meaningful. *Be on their side*. Example: I enjoy the time we spend together. A thing that would make it even better is if we left on time. When I am late, I feel rushed.
2. Be Genuine - It is essential to work together with the other individual to solve the problem. Externalize the problem.

**Apologize for Your Part in the Problem** - Do not do it from a deficit balance when confronting. MEANING Do not face someone if you win that individual an apology first.

**Avoid “SHOULD”** - the word feels judgmental, associated with shame or control. BETTER example, “It would have helped me if you had called when you knew you would be late. Please do that next time so that I can ensure the time.

**BE an Emissary of CHANGE or BE Specific** - EXAMPLE NOT - YOU are so irresponsible EXAMPLE of WHAT to do *I feel there are many times when you leave things undone. I want to talk about our paying the \_\_\_\_\_ bill on time and how to resolve this.*

# Boundaries and Communication

It is Important to Tell People What you Want - People do not always get what they need or want in a relationship.  
However, it is possible if that individual knows how to communicate their desires.

Know whose Want it is and Who is Responsible for it

What BOUNDARIES IS NOT...not limit setting, saying no, to stop something destructive from happening.  
**BOUNDARIES IS AN Individual taking responsibility for the good things you want to happen.**

**BE Clear, and BE Direct use I statement...**

*An example of Good I statements, I would like it if we could talk more than we have been talking. I would like to know more about what is going on with you. I feel out of touch.*

*Example of NOT good statements, You don't ever really talk to me very much. YOU leave me in total darkness. It seems like you would want to tell me things if we were close.*

*ANOTHER EXAMPLE of a NOT great statement, It seems like you don't care, judging from how much you talk to Me.*

*PUT yourself in the position of the other person. How would they feel?*



EXAMPLE of NOT good communication.



# ■ Boundaries and Communication

*Making someone aware of a problem*

1. **Presume the person is innocent** - being innocent and unaware is far from being resistant, defensive, or blaming.
2. **BE humble** - humility involves perceiving yourself as you are, with both weaknesses and strengths.
3. **Empathize** - Identify other feelings.
4. **Find out how unaware is unaware** - some individuals have little awareness. They lack understanding of what they are doing to others in their life.
5. **Be Direct** - USE a direct approach to communicating with another individual about the problem.
6. **ALSO BE Specific** - USE examples such as Wednesday, I asked you to pick up Chad from his baseball practice, but Julie had to bring him home because you did not show up.
7. **MAKE a person aware of the effects of their behavior** -
  - The effect on the person you are talking to about the issue. SUCH as. HOW one's actions get in the way of one's dreams or desires.
  - The effects on me ...example, you hurt my feelings when you are critical.
  - Also affects other relationships with children, friends, parents, neighbors, and coworkers.

# Boundaries and Communication

## *Stopping a behavior*

- 1. Prepare before you Confront - act justly, act mercifully, and be humble.*
- 2. Know when to confront and let go - it is not always worth it.*
- 3. Clarify your motives - know why it is to help the individual, a relationship, another person, or a third party. Why? What are your reasons?*
- 4. Understand three possible reactions to confrontation. - First, It may go well. -Second, You may face resistance, defensiveness, or opposition, or - Third, Resistance and retaliation.*
- 5. Choose the right time and place.*
- 6. React with Shades of Intensity - full intensity or none. BE emotionally prepared*
- 7. Distinguish between What you prefer and What's wrong*
- 8. Avoid the Line WE need to talk. It causes anxiety.*
- 9. Affirm Something GOOD - I love it when you...I want to hear from you...*
- 10. GET specific and BE Clear - separate it... you ... the other person... the issue.*
- 11. Listen and Seek to understand*
- 12. Speak to feelings, Then Return to the Issue*
- 13. Request Specific Change (Measurable, manageable)*
- 14. If Limits Apply, Communicate Them - limits on oneself, I will not allow myself to go out when I feel taken for granted...AGAIN I can only control Myself, not the other person.*

# Boundaries and Communication

## STOPING Behavior Continued...

15. *Planning for after the Conversation* - When working with an individual who has promised change but does not and returns to the undesired behavior. AN example, ASK the individual what to do if the behavior happens again to their ideas. SUCH AS, HOW about if I tell you if I notice it again. Will you be open to hearing that?
16. Look for Buy -such as trust and reconciliation for each person's responsibility toward the issue.
17. BE Patient - but not ALWAYS - BE careful; some issues, such as physical, emotional, or drug abuse, require a person to have limits and guards. CHANGE does not always happen.
18. Stay in Control of Yourself
19. AS "How Can I do this? Sometimes defensiveness can shut down the process. ASK permission to give feedback and be clear that you do not want to hurt the individual.
20. Get to the Real Issue - even when the other person tries to change the conversation.
21. Get Clarification to be positive that an agreement has been made.
22. Don't Go IT alone

# Boundaries and Communication

## Dealing with Blame, Counterattack, and other Problems

1. The Feedback-Resistance Problem - it is hard to accept the truth. Some individuals avoid confrontation.
2. Shooting the Messenger - defensive with just the statement
3. Rationalization - makes excuses for bad behavior
4. Minimization - example It is not that bad.
5. Blame - another person or situation
6. Denial - no problem exists
7. Projection - This individual may give others responsibility for their issue.
8. A Multi-Tasking Resister - some individuals combine the following approaches in resistance.

## Dealing with Resistance

1. Show Grace and Love
2. Don't react to Reactions
3. Make the defensiveness the Issue
4. Listen and Contain
5. Look for Your Contribution
6. Speak of the Effect on You
7. Confront defensiveness from an Adult Position
8. Admit Helplessness - let them win because you cannot make the individual see your side.
9. Being Right versus Doing the Right Thing - if confrontation is approached as a debate, tell the truth and do not insist on any agreement.
10. Persist and Give IT TIME - Persistence and time allow confrontation to do its work.
11. Have consequences Ready if Needed - If the person takes no ownership and chooses not to change. The relationship cannot continue as decisions must be made to protect your emotions.

# Perception and Boundaries



## References

Cloud, H., & Townsend, J. S. (2003). *Boundaries face to face: How to have that difficult conversation you've been avoiding* (First ed.). Zondervan.