

# BALANCED BOUNDARY SKILLS

Creating healthy, balanced boundaries



**Boundaries in relationships work both ways: they create healthy relationships and are created by healthy relationships.**

Mark Manson

Boundaries draw a 'line in the sand.' Without boundaries our 'Sense of Self' gets lost and enmeshed in the needs and expectations of others. Your boundaries differentiate you from others, giving you self-worth and self-trust.

We also need boundaries to foster and maintain healthy relationships. Boundaries establish what we feel okay with and don't feel okay with, and

thus, boundaries establish safety and trust, essential relationship ingredients.

Without balanced boundaries, we will inevitably experience anxiety, relationship distress, insecurities, resentment, selflessness or selfishness, lack of purpose, people-pleasing, emptiness, low confidence, enmeshment, codependency and more.

# BALANCE

Balanced boundaries require self awareness to ensure we are not falling towards avoidant or complaint boundaries. Our emotions (inner compass and alarm-system) tells us what we like or don't like, what's in alignment with our values, or not, what we truly want and need, how much space or closeness we need with others, and more.



## **COMPLIANT/POROUS**

Says Yes to the Bad  
Difficulty Saying No  
Avoids Feeling Guilt/Shame  
Fears Disappointing Others  
Over-gives/Over-involved  
Co/Counterdependent  
Unaware of Own Needs  
Hyper Focus on Others Needs  
Abandonment Phobia  
Compromises Own Values  
Not Being Needed Ignites Anxiety  
Resentment in Self & Others  
Preoccupied Attachment Style

## **HEALTHY/BALANCED**

Says No to what Feels Bad  
Says Yes to what Feels Healthy  
Processes Emotions Skillfully  
Sets Expectations Accordingly  
Balanced Giving and Receiving  
Interdependent  
Aware of Own Needs & Limits  
Focus on Self and Others Needs  
Creates Trust and Reciprocity  
Aligns with Own Values  
Appreciates Giving and Receiving  
Communicates Needs & Limits  
Secure Attachment Style

## **AVOIDANT/RIGID**

Says No to the Good  
Difficulty Saying Yes/Receiving  
Avoids Feeling Vulnerable/Needy  
Fears of Being Disappointed  
Under-receives/Avoids Help  
Co/Counterdependent  
Unaware of Own Needs  
Hyper Focus on Others Needs  
Engulfment Phobia  
Compromises Own Values  
Having Needs Ignites Anxiety  
Resentment in Self & Others  
Dismissive Attachment Style

**CAN BE BOTH AT SAME TIME OR TEETER TO EITHER EXTREME**

Disorganized or Fearful Avoidant Attachment Style

"We can't really love until we have boundaries - otherwise we love out of compliance or guilt. And we can't really be productive at work without boundaries - otherwise we're so busy following others' agendas that we're double-minded and unstable."

Henry Cloud, PhD

# BOUNDARY BENEFITS





# BALANCED BOUNDARIES

## Creating fulfilling self-worth and loving relationships

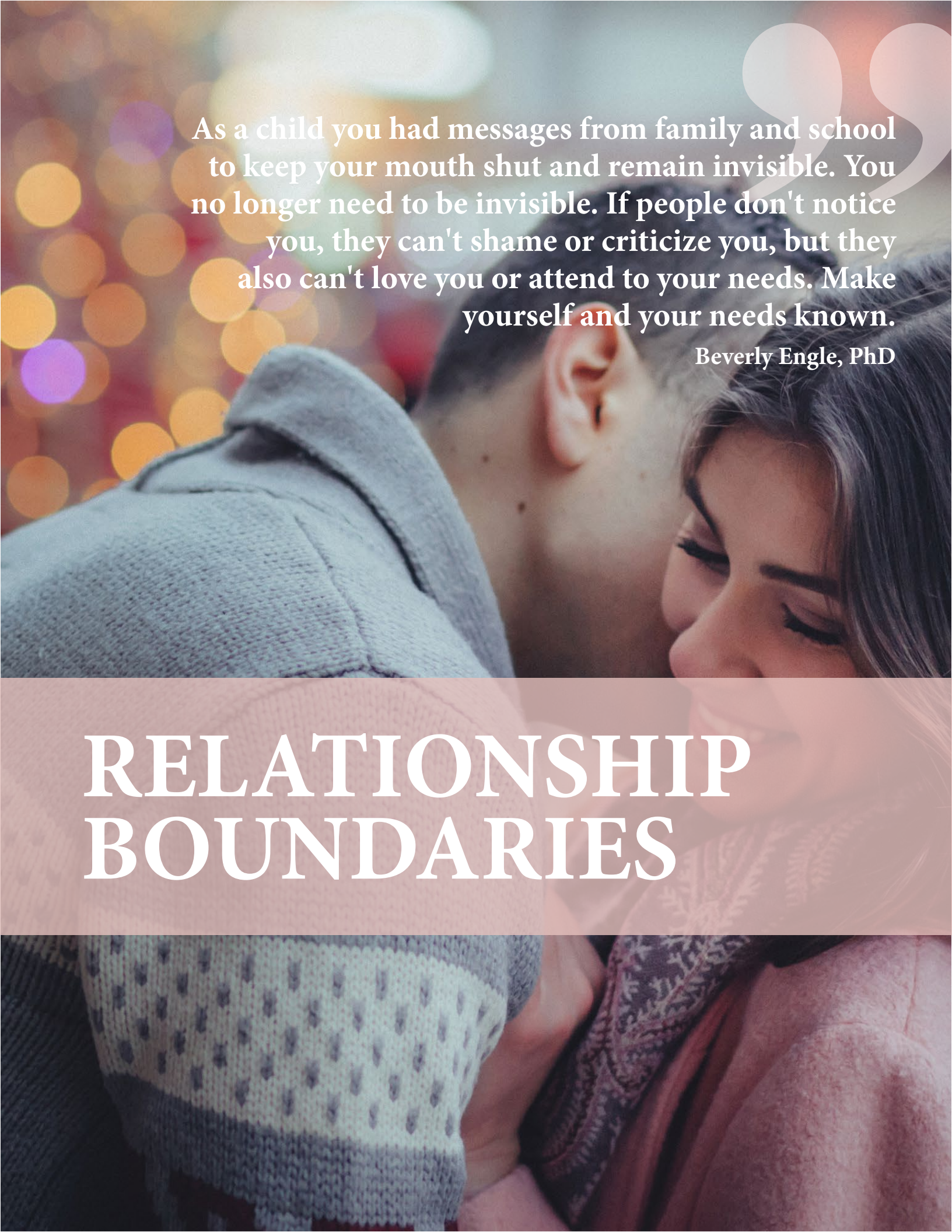
Boundaries play a large part in self-worth, family and relationship health. If you don't honor your own needs and limits, you are setting yourself up for feeling anxiety, disrespected, unappreciated, unloved, and even feeling unlovable, resulting in painful cycles of blaming others, feeling powerless, resentful, angry, disappointed, and even depressed.

Lacking boundaries stems from childhood. We're taught to be 'good,' quiet and compliant in school and at home. As if the less needs and wants we ask for, the more we get praise and approval, resulting in a backward belief that being boundary-less leads to love, respect and joy.

Boundaries are also not just about you – they're also about honoring your partner. We need space for both partners' individuality as well as interdependence. Additionally, setting boundaries is self-care, and honoring your partner's boundaries is relational care.





A close-up photograph of a man and a woman embracing. The man is on the left, wearing a grey sweater, and the woman is on the right, wearing a pink sweater. They are both looking down and smiling softly. The background is filled with out-of-focus, colorful bokeh lights in shades of yellow, orange, and purple. A large, faint white quotation mark is visible in the upper right corner.

As a child you had messages from family and school to keep your mouth shut and remain invisible. You no longer need to be invisible. If people don't notice you, they can't shame or criticize you, but they also can't love you or attend to your needs. Make yourself and your needs known.

Beverly Engle, PhD

# RELATIONSHIP BOUNDARIES



Boundary problems are NOT just the inability to say no. Understanding, establishing and maintaining healthy boundaries is essential for our well-being. Boundaries allow for a "Sense of Self," by defining 'what is me' and 'what is not me.'

In the physical world, boundaries are clear. Fences, walls, yards, etc. Non-physical boundaries, are not as clear, yet they are just as important. They allow for healthy, trusting connections, while keeping you protected in many ways. Boundaries build a foundation of self-trust and self-love.



**Boundaries are what you let in and what you put out.**

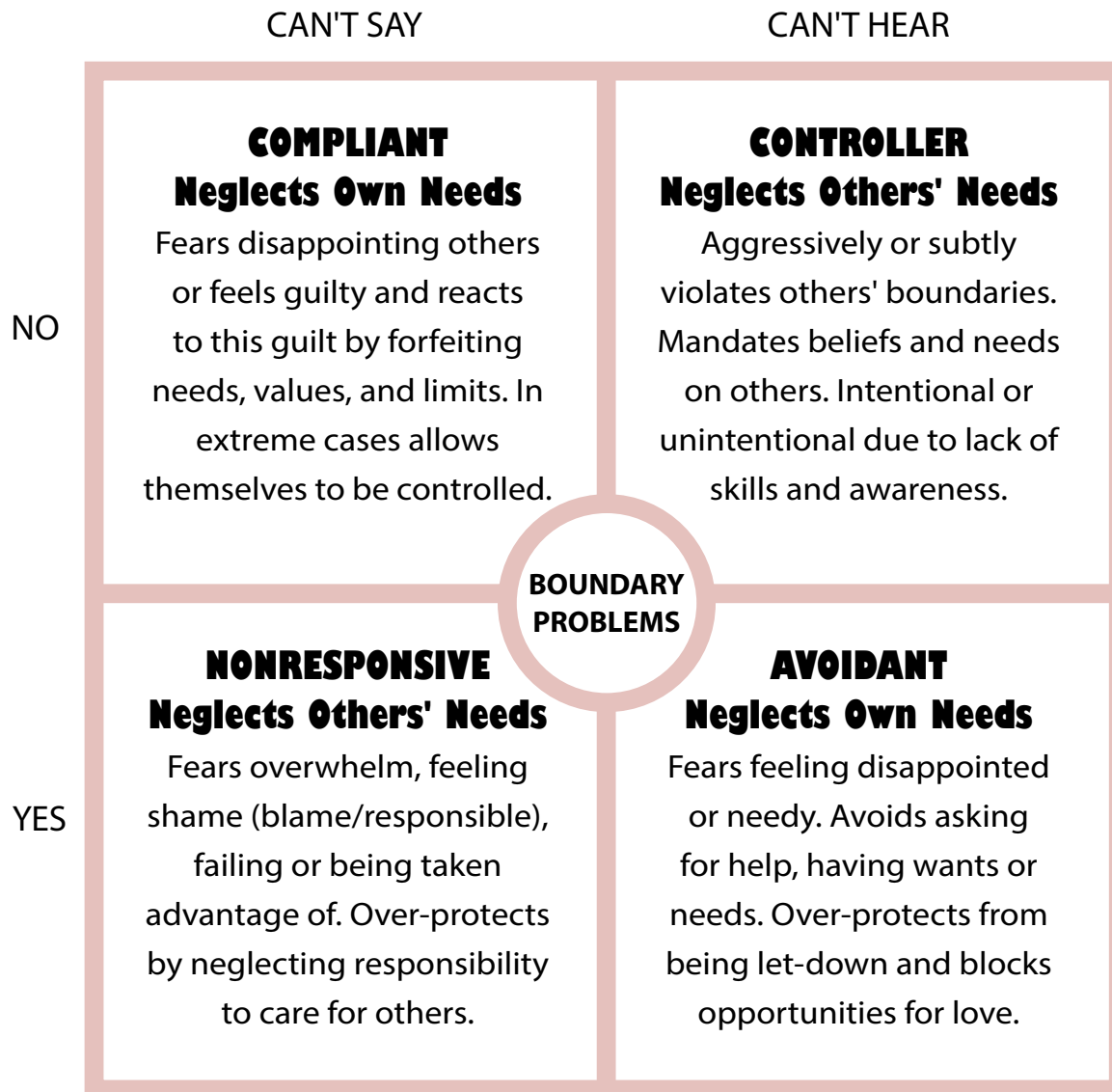
What's more, if you have boundary problems, it's likely you'll attract others who have boundary problems, causing complex dysfunction, codependency and narcissistic patterns.

# 4 BOUNDARY PROBLEMS

Our loving heart, like our physical one, needs inflow and outflow. If we have boundary problems we are left feeling unloved and resentful. We won't feel the joy of caring for others, robbing us from genuine connection.

Many people do not take ownership for how they resist LOVE. They have a lot of love around them but do not realize that their loneliness is a result of their own lack of responsiveness.

Henry Cloud, PhD





**Boundaries are a  
function of self-respect  
and self-love.**

Brene Brown, PhD

## Compliant / Porous: Can't Say No

- Extreme people-pleasing, codependency, hypervigilant, anxious
- Melt to demands and needs of others, lose sense of self
- Chameleon, changing values, needs, likes and dislikes to accommodate others
- Fear others' anger, walks on eggshells, compliance
- Fear of feeling guilt/shame for failing to help or make others feel better
- Controlled by an overstrict, critical conscience, 'Inner Critic' and self-condemnation

Describe an experience in which you wished you had said "No" or set a limit, but didn't.

What maladaptive strategies have you used to **avoid** disappointing others (taking the blame, lying, putting-up with maltreatment, loyal to a fault, helping people that hurt you, not setting limits, etc.)?

As you were growing up, what did you learn about communicating your likes, dislikes, wants, needs, and about setting limits and saying 'No'?





**Walls keep everybody  
out. Boundaries teach  
them where the door is.**

Mark Groves

## Avoidant / Rigid: Can't Hear Yes

- Avoids asking for help (triggers feelings of vulnerability, anxiety, shame or 'neediness')
- Rigid boundaries to avoid receiving (compliments, acts of service, gifts, comforting touch, etc.)
- Difficulty recognizing own needs and wants
- Withdraw and isolate when feeling needy, loath feeling like a burden
- Boundaries more like walls than fences

What value do you see in allowing others' to help you and care for you?

Is it difficult for you to ask for and receive help? Describe a time you asked a friend or family member for help. What was the result?

Growing up, what did you learn about asking for what you want and need, and asking for help?



**You are not required to  
set yourself on fire to  
keep others warm.**

## **Controller: Can't Hear No**

- Feel automatic need to control others to avoid feeling helpless or powerless
- WE CAN ALL EXHIBIT SIGNS OF CONTROLLING BEHAVIORS AT TIMES
- Fear unpredictability of others' love so they attempt to control people in order to feel 'loved'
- Fear others' boundaries and independence will result in abandonment (all-or-nothing thinking)
- Subconscious deep belief that self-worth and lovability depends on others' compliance

In what relationships and situations have you been perceived as Controlling? Why was it important for you to have control? What did you fear would happen if you stopped controlling?

We are Controlling, even if unintentional, when we project responsibility and blame our feelings on others: 'You hurt me,' 'You make me feel unloved,' or 'When you do that, I feel jealous.' Describe a time someone made you responsible for their emotions? How did it feel? How did you respond?

It's our responsibility to identify and understand our emotions, so we may communicate our real wants, needs or limits. If we're feeling unloved, we may need to say, 'I want to do something fun tonight' or 'I'd love a hug right now!' Do you see how this is connecting, rather than controlling?

## Nonresponsive: Can't Say Yes

- Loath own 'neediness' and projects this loathing onto others' needs and wants in relationship
- Low tolerance (and even critical) of others' needs, wants or expectations
- Programmed to be overly-absorbed in their own needs as if survival is dependent on it
- Sets rigid boundaries against the responsibility to love and care for others
- Fear feeling pressured, engulfed or overwhelmed by the needs of others
- Stems from childhood to adapt to a parent that over-shared, raged, overly expressed emotions, or made you responsible for their needs and feelings. To protect from enmeshment, children build a defensive wall. In adulthood, this walls off from fulfilling, connected relationships with reciprocity

Have you experienced a Nonresponsive, someone who 'barely shows up' in relationship? How did it feel? What did you hope for? What was missing?

## Nonresponsive/Controller with Compliant Results in Narcissistic Patterns

**A Controlling/Nonresponsive has a hard time looking past themselves (a form of narcissism).**

- When a rescuing, Compliant meets an insensitive Controller/Nonresponsive they form the classic Codependent Relationship (both partners are codependent, as narcissistic behaviors only exist within the context of compliance)
- Compliant, who are trained from childhood to have few wants or needs, take over-responsibility
- It takes one person in the relationship to communicate boundaries to dissolve the codependent/narcissistic dynamic, and provide opportunity for giving and receiving, loving and connecting

**Important Note: The best way to prevent a Narcissistic Relationship is ensuring you're in tune with your wants, needs and limits and communicating them. This keeps your relationship safe from forming a Codependent/Narcissistic Pattern and keeps you safe from Narcissist Personality Disordered people.** There is a small percentage of the population with Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD), who present as incapable of the introspection and empathy needed to learn how to create and respond to the reciprocity required for an interdependent, healthy, loving, respectful, safe relationship. NPD is a a serious, life-long, mental health condition and is not curable.



# IDENTIFY

## BOUNDARY PROBLEMS

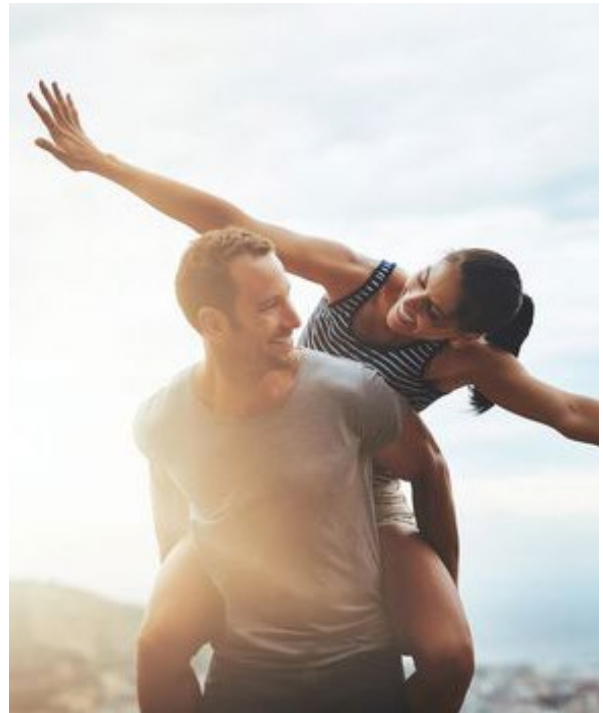
Oversharing, only to feel let-down or exposed  
Take on others' problems as your own  
Unaware of another invading your boundaries  
Preoccupied, controlling, mind-reading others  
Use sex to try forcing trust with new partner  
Give to avoid feeling guilt or like you're bad  
Loath others that clearly ask for their wants  
Can't say No, afraid of feeling guilty or 'bad'  
Feel disconnected, unclear of your purpose  
Expect others to respond perfectly to feelings  
Codependent and/or controlling relationships  
Neglect yourself, your needs, wants, self-care  
High tolerance for abuse in relationships  
Passive aggressive/aggressive communication  
Justify, Argue, Defend, Explain (JADE)  
Unclear expectations and unclear boundaries  
Absorb feelings of others and feel responsible  
Avoid asking for help and feeling burdensome  
Compromise your values to be liked  
Expect others to guess what you want or need  
Feel taken advantage of and resentful

## HEALTHY, BALANCED BOUNDARIES

Appropriate sharing of self with those you trust  
Ask if they want your advice or how you can help  
Notice feeling angry when boundaries are violated  
Respect what others say at face value, ask questions  
Choose to have sex when you feel enough trust  
Choose to give and enjoy how good it feels to give  
Respect others that clearly ask for their wants  
Can say No or Yes, and ok with others saying No  
Trust your perspectives, values and goals  
Realize many ppl don't have Emotional Health Skills  
Interdependent, reciprocity, both stating needs  
#1 job is taking care of yourself, needs and wants  
Protective boundaries and LEAVE if abuse continues  
Clearly communicate your unarguable truth, wants  
Clearly communicate your needs without JADE-ing  
See others as-is, set boundaries based on behaviors  
Empathize, yet not responsible for others' feelings  
Ask for help, even when it feels vulnerable  
Live in alignment with your values, highest good  
100% responsibility for stating wants and needs  
Realize resentment is your inner-alarm system that tells you you're over-giving, your expectations are too high, or you aren't communicating your genuine wants, needs and limits

# SOLVING BOUNDARY PROBLEMS

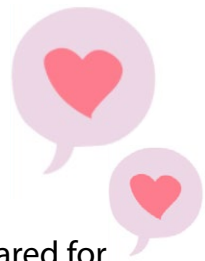
We thrive in relationships when we feel cherished and appreciated with a freedom to be ourselves. Where both people have room to express their needs and wants, and to have the support to meet those needs. This is possible when we're responsible for knowing and communicating our needs and wants (rather than complaining and blaming).



## Creating trusting, respecting relationships with loved-ones, friends and even coworkers

### **ENSURE WE TAKE 100% RESPONSIBILITY (POWER) TO**

- Understand and process our own emotions and perceptions (pg 36)
- Know our own needs, wants and limits (boundaries)
- Communicate our own needs, wants and limits (boundaries)
- Ask others what they need to feel loved, respected, supported and cared for



### **ALLOW OTHERS TO HAVE 100% RESPONSIBILITY (POWER) TO**

- Understand, process their emotions and perceptions without fixing or criticizing
- Know their own needs, wants and limits (boundaries)
- Communicate their own needs, wants and limits (boundaries) without making assumptions, 'rescuing' or criticizing them (Openhearted Listening and Respect at Face Value, even if you think their words are misguided)

# MAKING BOUNDARY PROBLEMS

Unspoken expectations  
are premeditated  
resentments.

Neil Strauss

There are a few surefire ways to make boundary problems that erode your self-worth and relationships. Here are examples:

- Putting your raw, protective emotions, perceptions on others, and expecting them to fully understand, validate or somehow figure out how to 'fix' things and make these feelings go away.
- Complaining, blaming or JADE-ing your feelings, beliefs, values of right vs wrong, etc., instead of processing your emotions and communicating with boundaries (genuine wants, needs and limits).
- Trying to get others to Understand Why you feel the way you do instead of Understanding How you can feel better.

## *power-under*

### **TAKING LESS THAN 100% RESPONSIBILITY (dumping and blaming)**

- Failing to understand and process our own emotions and perceptions
- Blaming others for our emotions, perceptions, 'You hurt me' 'You don't respect me'
- Failing to communicate our own needs, wants, expectations, limits (boundaries)
- Expecting others to 'guess' our own needs, wants and limits (boundaries)
- Complaining about or resenting others for not giving us what we need and want

## *power-over*

### **TAKING ON MORE THAN 100% RESPONSIBILITY (controlling and enmeshing)**

- Trying to understand and process others' emotions and perceptions for them
- Argue about who's emotions and perceptions are right or wrong, healthy or not
- Trying to 'fix' or apologize for others' emotions and perceptions
- Making assumptions instead of asking others to what their needs and wants are
- Expecting yourself to know what others need to feel loved, respected, 'rescued,' supported and cared for, instead of asking them



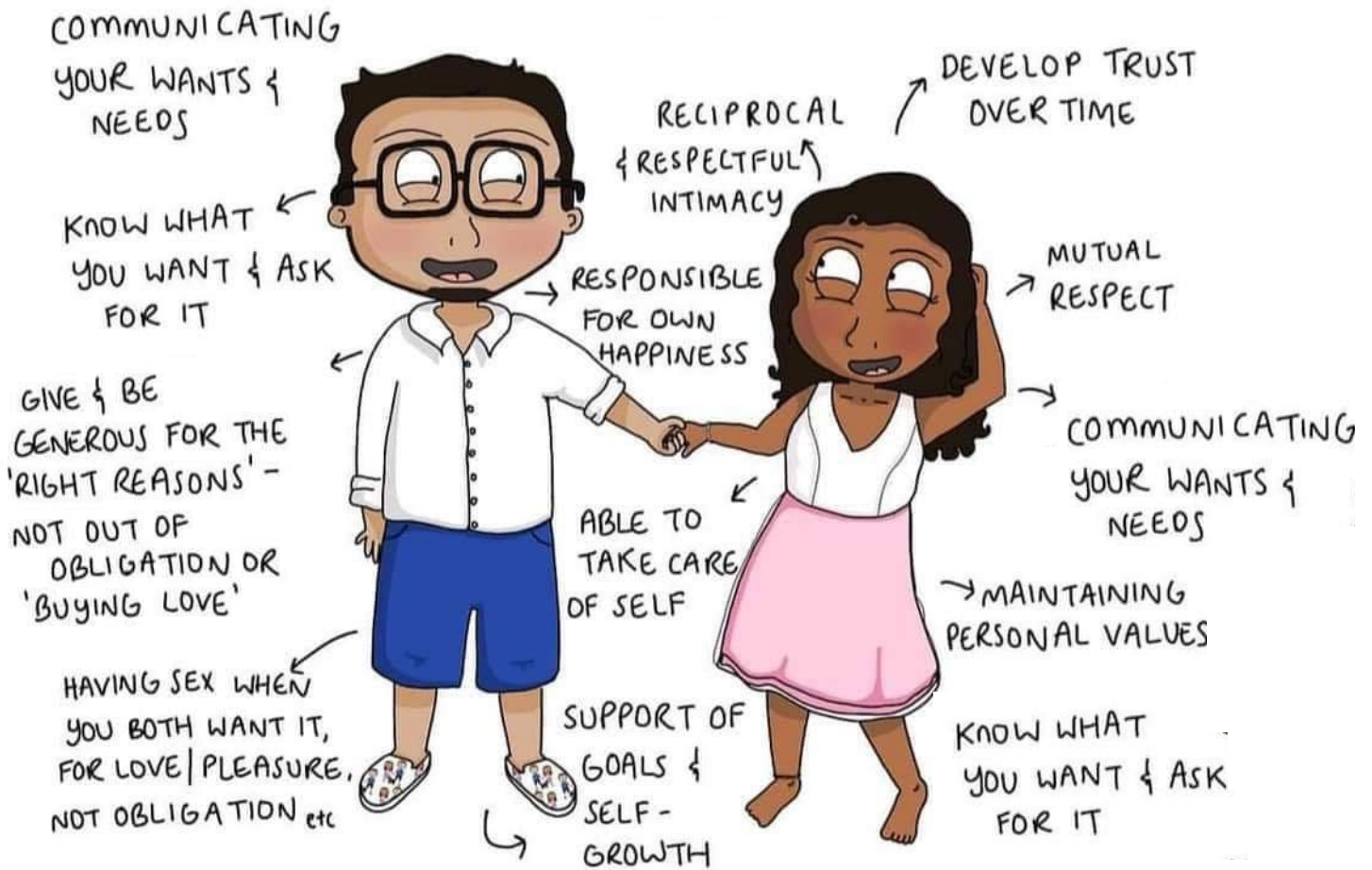


**Boundaries are the distance at which I can love you and me simultaneously**

Prentis Hemphill

# BALANCED INTERDEPENDENCE

Healthy Boundaries to Build Trust, Respect and Love



# BOUNDARY STATEMENTS

*Communicating a boundary involves speaking clearly and with forthrightness.*

**Be impeccable with your word. Speak Your Unarguable Truth.**

Ensure you are truly speaking your needs and limits, and that they are 100% within your power. Boundaries are **not** about telling others what to do.



I CAN HELP, BUT I CANNOT DO THIS FOR YOU



I WILL NOT BE AROUND YOU IF YOU YELL



I NEED TIME TO PROCESS THIS, SO WE CAN TALK ABOUT THIS FRIDAY



I NEED, WANT, OR HAVE THIS SPECIFIC LIMIT



I HAVE THOUGHT ABOUT THIS AND THIS IS MY STANCE ON THIS



HELP ME UNDERSTAND HOW I CAN HELP YOU



I LIKE WHEN YOU \_\_\_\_\_  
I DON'T LIKE WHEN YOU \_\_\_\_\_  
I'D LOVE TO TRY \_\_\_\_\_



NO  
WITHOUT J.A.D.E. (JUSTIFY, ARGUE,  
DEFEND, EXPLAIN)



I HEAR YOU. THANK YOU FOR SHARING YOUR VIEW, OPINION, FEELINGS

# RELATIONAL BOUNDARY LAYERS

## 1 SKIN AND PHYSICAL TOUCH

The most basic boundary that defines who you are. As an infant, you slowly learn that you are separate from your mother who embraces you. If you have been neglected physical comfort or physically violated, you may have difficulty establishing your rightful boundaries and/or asking for what you need in order to feel loved and comforted. With boundaries you build your capacity to ask for what you need to feel close and cared for.

## 2 PHYSICAL (CLOSENESS AND SPACE)

Asking for what you need for closeness and for space is vital. "I'd love a hug right now." Also, physically removing yourself from a situation or person maintains healthy boundaries. Give yourself permission to create space WHENEVER YOU WANT! There's no need to JADE (justify, argue, defend or explain) why. "I'm going to enjoy a 10 minute walk" or "I need time to process what you've said and would like to talk about this tomorrow." Asserting your needs for closeness and space is an essential action step that sends a clear message to yourself and others: I'm caring for myself. I'm caring for our relationship.

## 3 WORDS AND COMMUNICATION

The word "No" is the most basic boundary-setting tool we have. It protects you. Your words let you know where you stand and thus build 'edges' that help identify you and thus give you a sense of Self. "I do not like when you raise your voice at me" provides a clear message about your values and rules within the context of communicating and relating. Stating your needs and limits builds self-trust and self-esteem.

**What makes one person feel loved will not make another person feel loved. We must discover and speak each other's Love Language: Physical Touch, Acts of Service, Words of Affirmation, Thoughtful Gifts, Quality Time.**

Gary Chapman, PhD



## 4 TIME

Your time is one of your most precious resources, if not the MOST important. Giving your time to someone is a gift. Give your time and presence wisely. Give yourself permission to take time away from someone or a project as needed. If you feel resentful, overwhelmed, confused or depressed this is a clear message you need time to relax or be free to enjoy activities. Even a few minutes makes a difference.

If you feel you've been spending too much time with someone, give yourself time and space. This time apart is an important part of relationships. Use "I" statements to state your needs, such as "I am going to enjoy some me time."

## 5 CONSEQUENCES

We need to back up our boundaries with consequences. This gives them strength, power, and a tangible quality. Do not enable irresponsible behavior or maltreatment.

You can save a marriage by not only stating your boundaries, but also following through. For example, "If you raise your voice at me again, I will file for a separation." Rather than JADE-ing, nagging or enabling, which builds resentment and erodes love. Same goes for parenting adult children, "I will not loan you more money until you pay me back the \$300 you owe me first."

**Your personal boundaries protect the inner core of your identity and your right to choices... boundaries define your soul and they help you to guard it and maintain it.**

Henry Cloud, PhD

**We cannot control what emotions or circumstances we will experience next, but we can choose how we will respond to them.**

Gary Zukav

## **6** EMOTIONAL: RESPONDING TO OTHERS

We feel close, fulfilling emotional connection (and 'feel good' hormones and neurochemicals like oxytocin) by listening and responding with curiosity and care. Unfortunately, there is a common false belief that being a caring partner, friend or family member means you should get into their emotions with them, fix them, or take responsibility (blame) for their emotions, making us defensive, grappling to make their emotions 'better'.

Either way this pulls us into emotional enmeshment, a confusing place of blurry boundaries, defensiveness (self-protective and self-ish), JADE-ing, disempowerment and loss of self, as we try to make their emotions go away, spiraling into more enmeshment and protective emotions.

**Emotions can be contagious, especially if we don't have emotional boundaries skills. We feel compelled to make others feel better, as others' distress, makes us feel distressed, so when they feel better, we feel better. Unfortunately, trying to make other adults feel "better" (wanting to change or control their emotional experience so you can feel a "better") is selfish and pulls you into anxiety-producing emotional enmeshment, defensiveness, disrespect and disconnection.**

With emotional boundaries, we can stay on solid ground, providing respect, presence, support, and empowerment to others as they navigate turbulent emotions and rough life experiences. Win win. These tools provide emotional connection and balanced boundaries at the same time:

- Openhearted Listening
- Respect at Face Value
- Understand How not Why

It is important to understand more about what emotions are and how they can either connect us or disconnect us. The following two pages provide a helpful overview.



Our physiological systems, including our emotional system, are personal processes, like blood circulation, digestion, breathing. We don't feel the need to defend, repress, or blame others for these processes, like we do our emotions. Can you imagine? **"You made me digest!"** That's how ridiculous and disempowering it is for us to blame others for our emotions, like **"You made me mad!"** or **"You make me jealous."**



**Anyone gets to feel anything, anytime, for any reason.**

Julia Colwell, PhD

What makes our emotional system much different than other systems is it tells us about external threats and our social connection needs. Instead of feeling hungry for food, we get hungry for affection, appreciation, support, inspiration, a sense of purpose and belonging. Just to name a few of our social connection needs.

Our emotions impact our posture, facial expressions, voice tone and more, offering

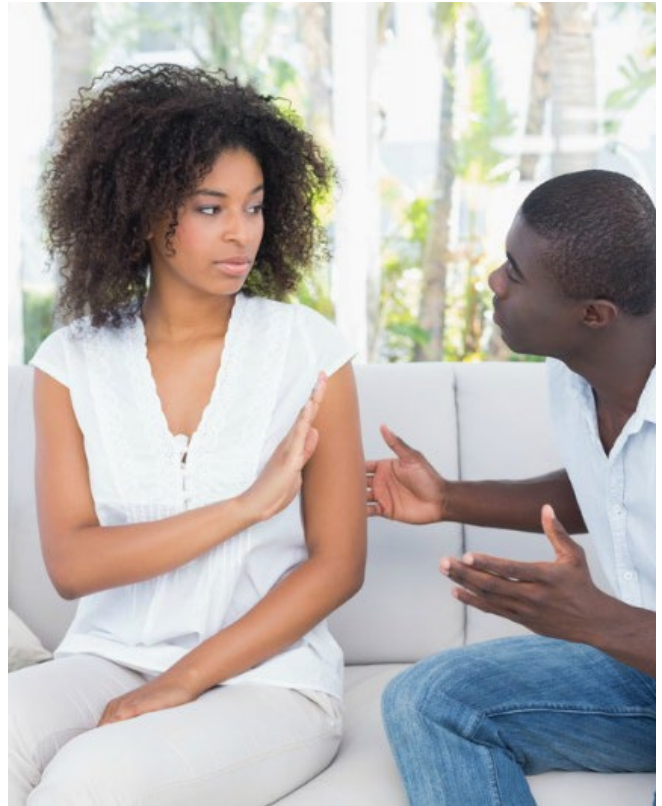


instant cues to what we're feeling. This open-loop nature of our emotional system means others are impacted by our state and we are impacted by theirs, back and forth. This resonance allows parents to tune in to what their children are experiencing and needing. As adults, it feels good when loved-ones notice our emotional signals, fostering trust, safety, connection and hormones, like oxytocin and serotonin.

However, there is an aspect to this empathy that stands at the heart of most relationship distress and dysfunction. When loved-ones have emotions, we may

try to make them feel better, as others' distress, can make us feel distressed and when they feel better, we feel better.

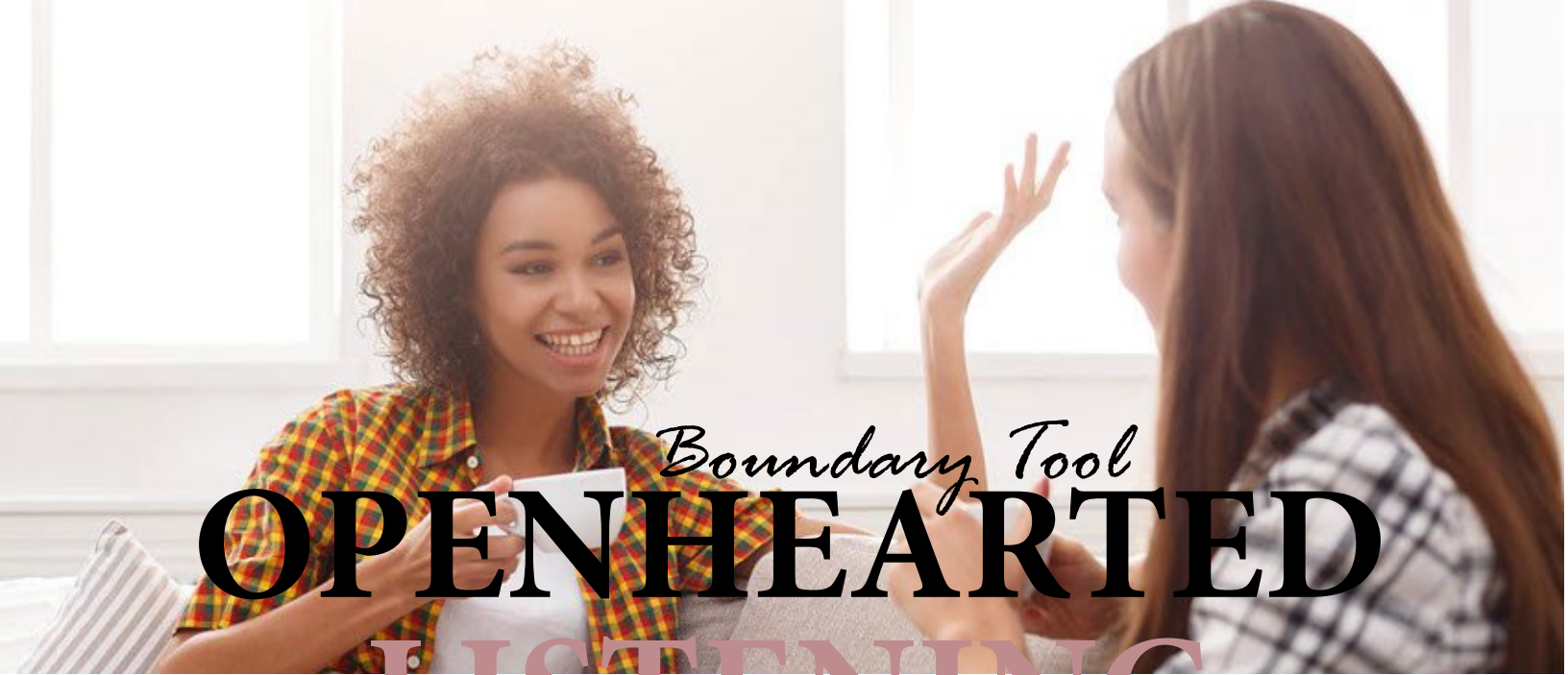
Without boundaries, we may jump in **to make other adults feel "better" (wanting to change or control their emotions so you can selfishly feel "better")**, landing you in emotional enmeshment, a confusing, anxiety-producing place of blurry boundaries, parental-like enabling, codependency, conflict, disempowerment, resentment, and disconnection, triggering even more painful protective emotions. This causes havoc, especially with our romantic partner.



## We are the source of what we are feeling.

It might seem like someone 'made you' mad, scared, jealous, etc. Nope. You create your own emotions within. Blaming them on others is toxic. Plus, all those times you didn't 100% own and allow emotions to move through your body (from childhood to now) means you have unprocessed emotions. Instead of blaming others, every trigger is an opportunity to process emotions (heal) through, understand what you need or want from yourself or others, and clearly communicate your needs and wants.





*Boundary Tool*

# OPENHEARTED LISTENING

We feel emotionally connected with when we feel seen, heard, valued and respected. Thus, the best way to help anyone, including yourself, to feel "better" is to offer connection, by literally: seeing them; hearing them; valuing them; respecting them as an individual with their unique emotions and perceptions. Caution: Don't put up with, respond to, or react to angry outbursts, attacks or name-calling. State something like, "I need to take space away now" and take at least 10 minutes away.

You have the Intent to Learn and are curious about what they are saying.

Decide if you're available to provide the gift of your time and presence or not.

Feel your feelings and allow them to move (process) through your body.

Anyone gets to feel anything, anytime, for any reason. Don't try to 'fix' or make their emotions go away.

Remind yourself, other people's emotions have nothing to do with you, even if they are telling you they do.

Ask if they want help, advice or your ideas, rather than 'fixing' or 'rescuing'

Ask questions to Understand How they can feel better and get needs met, instead of trying to Understand Why.

Ask if they want your psychological interpretations before giving them. "You're doing this to please your father," or "You have issues around addiction."

Remind yourself, when we're upset, our systems mostly need to calm down. A hug can do wonders, and much more effective than talking.



**There are only two possible intentions in any given moment: the Intent to Learn [connecting] or the Intent to Protect [disconnecting]**

Margaret Paul, PhD

# SIGNS YOU ARE **NOT** OPENHEARTED **LISTENING**

You have the Intent to Protect, detecting blame, planning counterarguments

JADE-ing (Justifying, Arguing, Defending, Explaining) *see next page*

Finding errors or areas to criticize

Preparing to fix, rather than asking if they want your advice or fixing

Reacting with defenses, shutting down, spacing out, scrolling on your phone

Making assumptions or mind-reading instead of asking questions and Respecting Words at Face Value

Giving your unsolicited psychological interpretations. "You're doing this to please your father," or "You have issues around addiction."

Resenting listening instead of stating your need to listen later

Joining in the boxing ring to fight back, instead of letting them shadow box

Stuffing your feelings, instead of allowing them to flow through you

Apologizing for their bad day or anything else that isn't directly your fault isn't helpful (placating/rescuing)



# DON'T J.A.D.E.

## Justifying, Arguing, Defending, Explaining

### IMPACT OF J.A.D.E.

- Erodes your confidence and lowers others' confidence and trust in you
- Sinks you into the Dreaded Drama Triangle (victim/hurt role)
- Waters down your boundaries, choices and values
- Anxiety, confusion and 'smoke & mirrors' effect for those that want to care for you, as they try to meander and guess what you truly need
- Shrinks your sense of self-worth, self-respect, self-trust
- Gives ammunition to boundary-violators, addicts and narcissists
- Perpetuates people-pleasing, compliance (FAWN) and poor boundaries
- Perpetuates feeling unlovable and unworthy of having needs and limits

*The only exception is with children, as explaining, teaching and helping kids understand why we have certain choices, values, rules, expectations and limits in place is important.*

### IDENTIFY YOUR SIGNS OF J.A.D.E.

I am drawn into arguments that seem to go nowhere, but I think I need to defend myself.

I jump to respond to accusations I know are false or based on someone else's perception.

I argue or defend my choices, feelings, values, or limits instead of clearly stating them.

I sink into justifying/explaining my feelings or choices, instead of taking 100% responsibility.

I try to make others understand **why** I feel the way I do, instead of working together to understand **how** I can feel better by ensuring I'm getting my needs and wants met.

I tend to complain or blame others for my feelings or for not getting my needs met.



# RESPECT AT FACE VALUE

## *Boundary Tool*

### **JADE-ing (dumping back)**



Well you hurt me all the time.

I see. Thanks for your honesty.

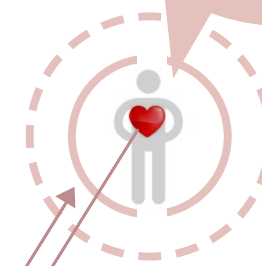


### **COMPLAINING, BLAMING, DUMPING RESPONSIBILITY ON OTHERS**

You hurt my feelings.

I feel unloved/  
sad/alone.

You don't respect me.



### *Boundary Tool* **RESPECT AT FACE VALUE**

- Emotional boundaries and self-respect
- Provides respect and connection
- Allows others to have 100% responsibility (power) for their own emotions and for communicating their own needs and wants

Oh no! I'm so sorry! I feel awful.

### **RESCUING/PLACATING (emotional enmeshment)**





# UNDERSTAND HOW NOT WHY

## *Boundary Tool*

### TRYING TO UNDERSTAND WHY (dumping back)

Really?! **Why**  
would you  
feel that way?

Help me  
understand **How**  
I can respect/  
love/help you.

### *Boundary Tool*

#### UNDERSTAND HOW, NOT WHY

- Emotional boundaries and self-respect
- Provides respect and connection
- Allows others to have 100% responsibility (power) for their own emotions and for communicating their own needs and wants

### COMPLAINING, BLAMING, DUMPING RESPONSIBILITY ON OTHERS

You hurt my  
feelings.

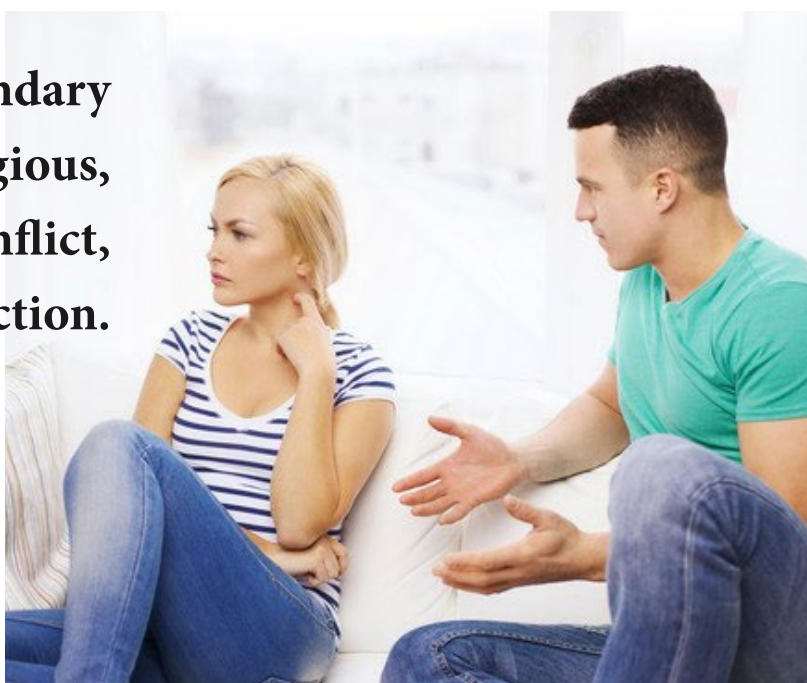
I feel unloved/  
sad/alone.

You don't  
respect me.

Relax and  
breath. Feel  
happy!

### RESCUING/PLACATING (emotional enmeshment)

**Without emotional boundary tools, emotions are contagious, causing enmeshment, conflict, shut-down and disconnection.**



### Example One

- You feel upset. I try to help soothe you with advice, 'cheer up!' or placating, 'oh I'm sorry.' You automatically feel like there's something wrong with how you're feeling. So you feel more upset, 'broken' or 'weak.' So I try to help and fix more, until we're in a tug-of-war about the right versus wrongness of your perceptions and emotional experience. If this continues, you ultimately have to get away from me to actually take care of yourself. This long-term pattern erodes relationship.

### Example Two

- I'm in distress and venting about an issue. Without emotional boundary tools, you absorb this distress and feel nervous system activation in your own emotional system and do not like the way it feels (protective emotions like shame, anxiety, and anger). So you offer me suggestions and advice. Even if I like this advice, I'm still feeling the same emotional distress due to what I was originally venting about. You perceive my unchanged mood as sign of weakness or disrespect. Now we're both irritated with me, so I try to placate you by trying harder to please you, or JADE-ing why I feel the way I do. However, making you understand why I feel the way I do is virtually impossible, and not even the point, as it has nothing to do with what I truly want and need, so frustration builds. I eventually I run out of steam and may give up, shut down, fight back, feel resentment, or feel even crappier about myself. Then, our frustration with me gets worse as both of us feel disempowered and helpless, trying to have power over fixing the other, instead of connecting within, taking 100% responsibility (power) for our own emotional processing and communicating from this place, sharing our genuine needs, wants and limits, that would create real connection, love and respect.



**When people set boundaries with you, it's their attempt to continue the relationship with you. It's not an attempt to hurt you.**

Elizabeth Earnshaw

## 7 EMOTIONAL: SHARING YOURSELF

**Emotional connection is not blaming or venting our emotions at others.** Connecting emotionally is the deepest level of relating. Emotional connection is sharing aspects of self, such as your likes, dislikes, joys and sorrows, dreams, perspectives, travels, interests, values, needs and desires... and on and on... that allow for opportunities to build closeness, respect and trust.

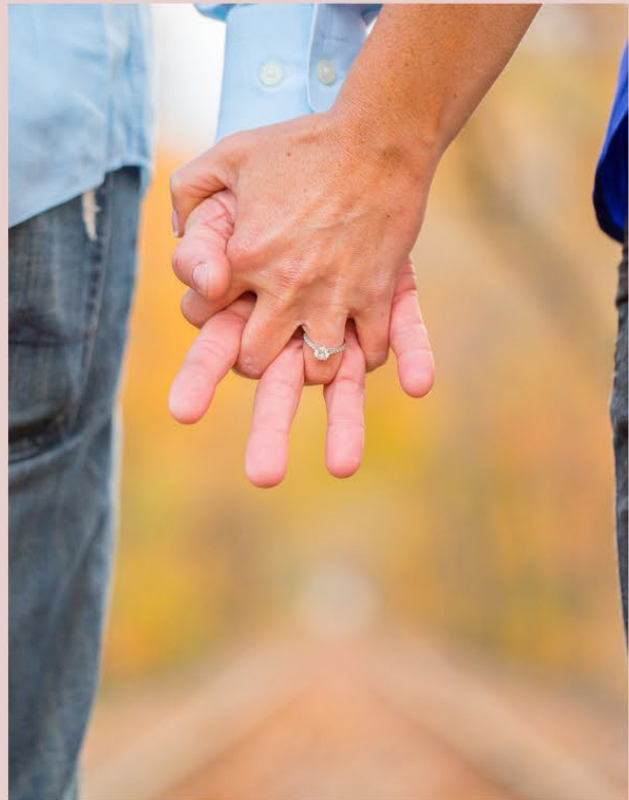
It's our job to discern (based on past experiences) who is capable of connecting with us at richer, deeper-levels of authenticity and vulnerability. We set ourselves up for disappointment, oversharing, feeling exposed, heart-break, resentment, anger, pain, and self-resentment, if we share parts of ourselves with people (including parents and family) who are not capable of meeting us at deeper, higher levels of self-sharing. Unfortunately, many people lack Emotional Health Skills and Boundaries skills in our society today. This does not make them bad people. This also does not mean the relationship is doomed. Remember, healthy boundaries create healthy, fulfilling relationships.

If you've been let-down, shamed, betrayed or hurt by someone, you may give them small sharing opportunities, as they possibly rebuild trust by meeting your needs over time. Do not be too quick to force trust in the name of forgiveness, as this is a form of self-neglect and forces you to have Complaint Boundaries, betraying your needed boundaries.



Emotional connection is sharing aspects of yourself, such as your feelings of likes and dislikes, experiences, dreams, interests, wants, values and limits. Sharing allows for closeness, respect, trust and love, feeling seen, heard and valued, as you open up, hoping the other person handles your sharing of self with care.

Rather than sacrificing boundaries, shrinking or feeling unworthy of needs and wants, we need to limit what we share and expect from each person, based on our experiences of how trustworthy and capable they are of care-fully handling our wants, and the gifts of our self-sharing.



**We connect with others at the level we're connected with ourselves.**

Notice how listening is a lot safer than sharing! For example, perhaps you're ok with listening to your sister's political views and secrets, but you know from past experiences that she isn't trustworthy to keep your secrets.



## But... aren't I supposed to share all my 'genuine feelings'? **No!**

There is a common false belief that we are supposed to share all of our emotions and feelings with loved-ones to foster emotional connection, love and respect. As if we need to "share our genuine emotions" "be authentic" and "courageously vulnerable."



Attempts to abide by these extreme, boundary-less beliefs, expressing your emotions at others, hoping to get connection, love and respect, inevitably results in resentment, anger, conflict, shame, disappointment, anxiety and despair, rendering you powerless over your own emotional processing and well-being and blocking opportunities to create connection.

### *disconnecting*

EXPRESSING PROTECTIVE EMOTIONS  
BLAMING, DUMPING, SHAMING, CRITICIZING

**MAKE OTHERS RESPONSIBLE FOR YOUR EMOTIONS  
MAKING OTHERS GUESS YOUR WANTS/NEEDS**

- You made me mad!
- You don't spend any time with me.
- I feel hurt. You let me down.
- You should appreciate me more.
- I feel jealous when you do that and you make me scared you'll leave me.

### *connecting*

PROCESSING PROTECTIVE EMOTIONS  
COMMUNICATING WANTS, NEEDS, LIMITS

**TAKE 100% RESPONSIBILITY FOR OWN EMOTIONS  
COMMUNICATING TO CREATE CONNECTION**

- Speak your Unarguable Truth
- I want to spend more time together.
- I need/want/expect \_\_\_\_\_
- I'd love to feel extra appreciated.  
Anything important I can do for you?
- I trust you and feel lucky to have you.

**If you want a better marriage, you'll need to give up making a project out of changing the relationship or partner and instead make a project out of expressing your own wants and needs.**

Jenny Brown, PhD

*enmeshing*  
**CODEPENDENCY THINKING**

BLURRY BOUNDARIES

COMPLIANCE and ANXIETY

I see you are mad and it's my fault and responsibility to fix your mad feelings.

I hear what you're saying but you should \_\_\_\_\_. I know what's best for you.

I'm helping you. Here's my advice and what to do.

I don't want to lose you or disappoint you so I will only focus on your needs.

I see you are sad and I need to 'fix' your feelings and 'rescue' you.

It is my job to mindread, figure out what you're really thinking and needing.

*empowering*  
**INTERDEPENDENCY THINKING**

BALANCED BOUNDARIES

RESPECT and TRUST

I see. What are you needing from me? **OR** I need to take time away to process this.

I hear what you're saying. Thank you for being honest (Respect at Face Value).

I want to help. How can I help? What can I do?

I need to honor and speak my own needs and wants, while honoring yours.

I'm here and will sit in this discomfort with you (Openhearted Listening).

I can ask and it's your job to tell me what you need. We can also work together to decipher needs.

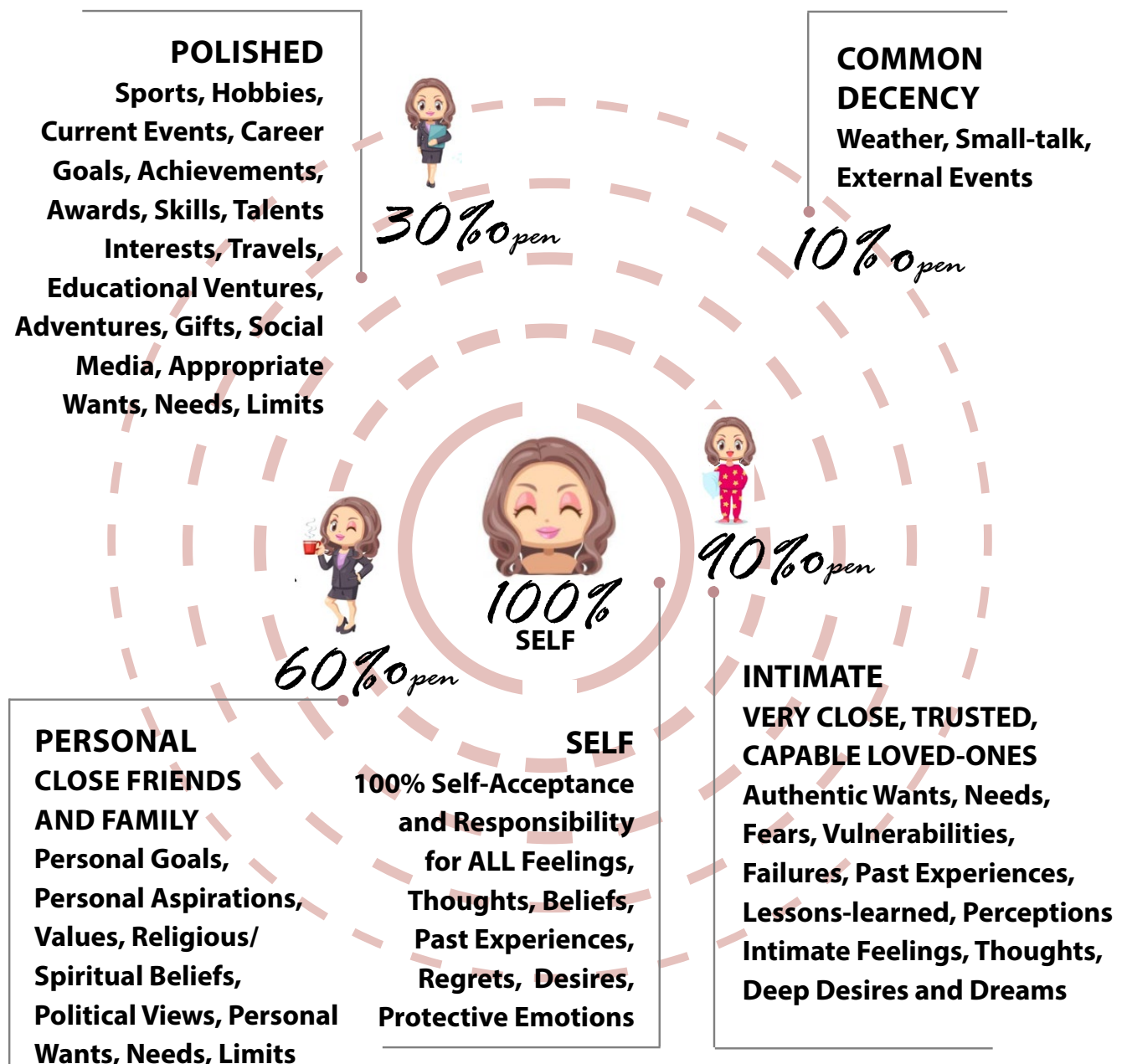
Individuals set boundaries to feel safe, respected, and heard.

Pamela Cummings

# EMOTIONALLY SHARING YOURSELF

## Being Mindful of How Much You're Sharing with Others

This provides a guideline for conscious emotional boundary setting. It is not meant to be followed exactly.



# SET EXPECTATIONS *and sharing* OFF EXPERIENCES *with each person*

## Boundary Levels: Sharing Yourself with Others

It's common for people to lack emotional health skills nowadays, even our partner! You may find that sharing 'authentic feelings' causes more conflict than connection with most people. This is OK! Modify your level of sharing and expectations based on your experiences with each person. Enjoy fulfilling friendships and relationships based on how capable each person is of connecting with certain topics and levels of sharing.

- At what level am I choosing to share?
- What am I expecting from this person?
- How have they responded in the past?
- Did they criticize, 'fix' or JADE?
- Did they make it about themselves?
- Did I feel seen, heard, valued, respected?
- Why do I want to share this right now?
- What do I really want or need right now?
- Is this an ideal time and place?



### **SELF** ALONG WITH GOD, SPIRITUALITY, ART

100% Self-Acceptance, Unconditional Love for ALL Feelings, Emotions, Inner Child, Desires, Thoughts, Beliefs, Compassion for ALL Experiences, Regrets, Lessons-learned

### **INTIMATE** VERY CLOSE, TRUSTED, EMOTIONALLY MATURE, CAPABLE LOVED-ONES, THERAPIST, PARTNER

*You may only have one or a few of these people in your life*  
Authentic Wants, Needs, Fears, Vulnerabilities, Failures, Past Experiences, Lessons-learned, Ideas, Some Perceptions, Some Feelings, Thoughts, Deep Desires and Dreams



### **PERSONAL** CLOSE FAMILY & FRIENDS, MAYBE PARTNER

*Share aspects that have shown to be safe and satisfying topics*

Personal Goals, Personal Aspirations, Values, Religious/Spiritual Beliefs, Political Views, Personal Wants, Needs, Limits, Perceptions, Opinions, Some Past Experiences



### **POLISHED** COWORKERS, MOST FRIENDS & PEOPLE, DATES

*Share aspects that you can connect on and enjoy talking about*

Sports, Hobbies, Current Events, Career Goals, Achievements, Awards, Skills, Talents, Interests, Travels, Educational Ventures, Adventures, Gifts, Social Media, Appropriate Wants, Needs, Limits, Boundaries



### **COMMON DECENCY** STRANGERS, SOME CO-WORKERS, PEOPLE YOU DO NOT LIKE, HAVE TREATED YOU POORLY OR BEEN INCAPABLE OF HIGHER LEVELS OF SAFELY SHARING

Weather, Small-talk, External Events, Sports



# SET EXPECTATIONS *and sharing* OFF EXPERIENCES *with each person*

Person's Name (could be anyone from a family member, partner to a friend, co-worker, etc.)

Describe this person's overall demeanor, typical mood, and 'vibe.'

Do I typically enjoy spending time with him/her at this point (this can always change later, people grow!)?

Why is this person important to me? What do I value about him/her?

What personality traits do I like or dislike about this person (be honest, not just 'nice')?

How much time do I REALLY want to spend with this person? How many days a week, month, year? Which specific holidays, events, etc. How often do I want to converse with this person - text, phone, in-person?

What topics of conversation and aspects of myself have been enjoyable with this person in the past?

What aspects have caused toxicity, judging, shaming, fighting? What has been painfully ignored/neglected?

Am I letting people-pleasing, guilt or loneliness make me over-share aspects of myself with him/her?

Do I feel comfortable sharing my feelings, opinions, interests with this person? Where do I want to set limits?

Has this person respected my clearly stated needs and limits in the past? Where do I need to draw the line?

Using page 29 and your answers, describe aspects you enjoy and feel comfortable sharing, aspects you don't want to share, the level this person is capable of connecting with you at this point, and additional thoughts.

# PROCESS EMOTIONS UNDERSTAND YOUR REAL NEEDS, WANTS, LIMITS

Every Protective Emotion has a purpose. With Emotional Health Skills you can identify what your current emotions are pointing to and understand your wants, needs and boundaries. Then decide if and when you need to communicate your needs, wants and boundaries.



## MAD EMOTIONS

ANGER, BLAME, RESENTMENT, ENVY

### Alarms for These Possible Needs

- Set Boundary or Limit
- Protect Safety and Survival
- Protect Values and Valuables
- Protect Loved-ones
- Feeling Respected and Valued
- Action Plan to Overcome Obstacles



## FEAR EMOTIONS

WORRY, JEALOUSY, ANXIETY, WHAT IF'S

### Alerts for These Possible Needs

- Complete Tasks
- Escape Route or Plans to Leave
- Plan for Future and What if's
- Consistency and Routine
- Prevent Possible Losses or Threats
- Clarity and Understand Unknowns



## SAD EMOTIONS

LOSS, DISAPPOINTMENT, LONELY, HURT

### Slows You for These Possible Needs

- Acceptance of What Is
- Healing, Crying, Releasing
- Relaxation, Self-Care, Rejuvenation
- Realistic Expectations
- Trust
- Comfort and Support



## SHAME EMOTIONS

BELONGING, INSECURITIES, SHOULD'S

### Collapses You for These Possible Needs

- Align with Morals and Values
- Sense of Belonging
- Sense of Responsibility and Influence
- Remorse and Learning Lessons
- Atonement, Apologizing to Self or Others
- Self-Compassion, Self-Worth, Lovability

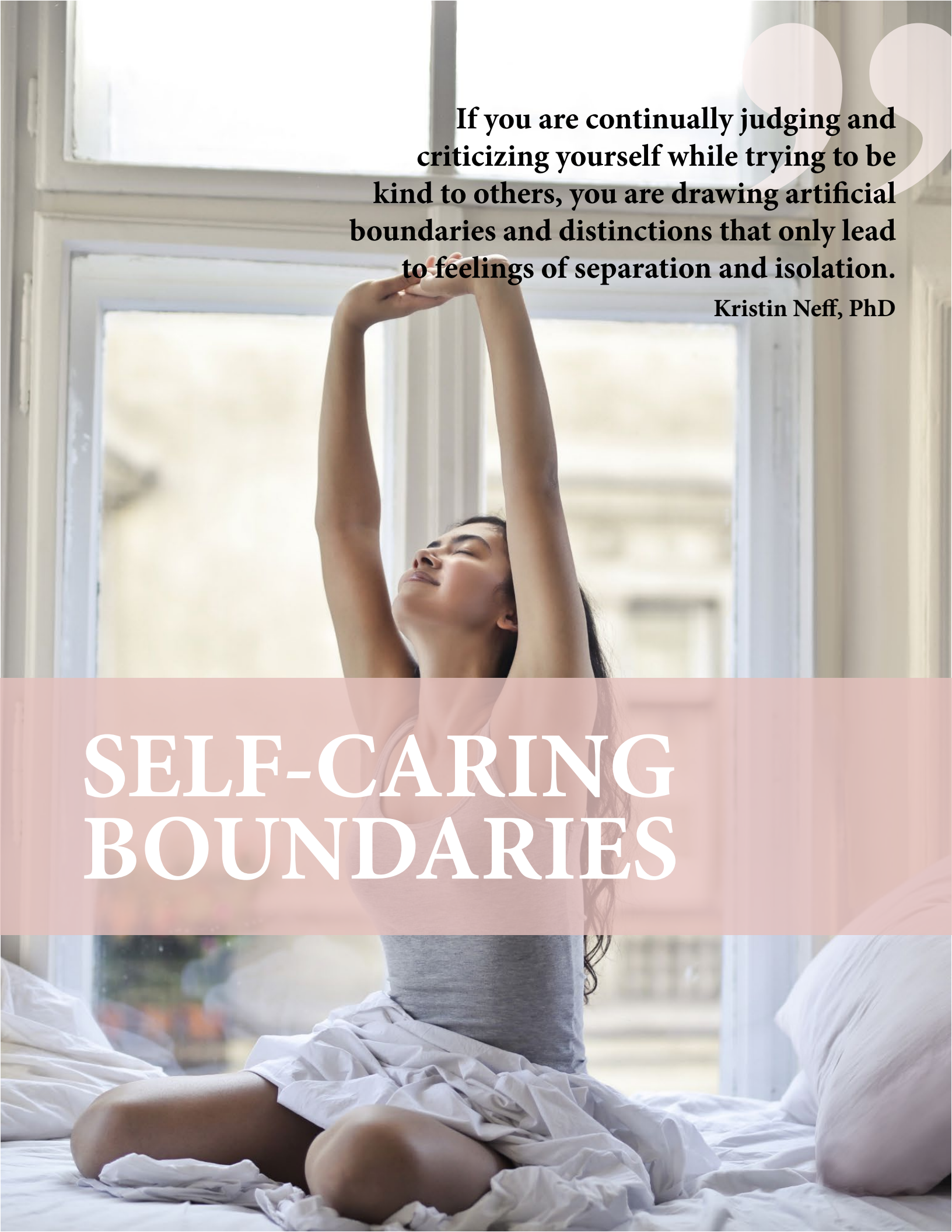
# CONTRASTING TO UNDERSTAND YOUR REAL NEEDS, WANTS, LIMITS

Contrasting: Use What You Don't Want to Figure Out What You Do Want

Aspects I'm not liking recently, or even hating

Opposite (likely what I truly want or need)





**If you are continually judging and criticizing yourself while trying to be kind to others, you are drawing artificial boundaries and distinctions that only lead to feelings of separation and isolation.**

**Kristin Neff, PhD**

# SELF-CARING BOUNDARIES

Creating conscious boundaries honors yourself, your needs, values, desires and limitations. Boundaries serve as a tangible, actualized method to protect yourself and prioritize your well-being. This naturally builds your self-worth and cultivates self-trust, as you show yourself you are worthy of protecting and prioritizing yourself.



## Set healthy boundaries with everyone, including yourself.

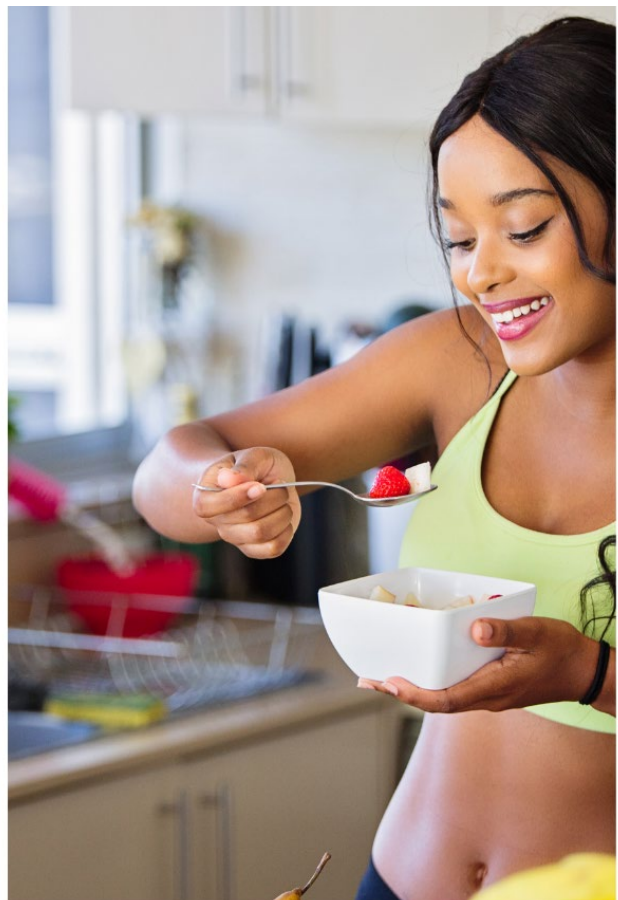
Another component to feeling good about ourselves, and thriving with emotional health is ensuring we're getting our connection needs met.

We need a sense of belonging and purpose, we need to feel seen, heard, respected and valued by loved-ones. Knowing and communicating boundaries is an empowering way to fulfill connection needs, foster self-worth and self-esteem.

Boundaries are both relational, in terms of what we need from others, and internal, in terms of what we need and expect from ourselves.

Internal boundaries are self-caring. They evolve and change based on your values, interests and desires, your likes and dislikes, your regrets and lessons learned, your aspirations and goals.

Internal boundaries work best when they are planned and proactive, agreed upon by yourself, realistic, aligned with your values, and slightly flexible with room for adjustments and improvements.

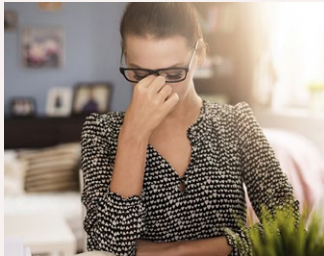


# COMPONENTS



## IDENTIFY WHAT NEEDS STRUCTURE

What areas in your life need limits and structure? Money, relationships, daily routine, physical health, self-care, nutrition, etc.



## PRIORITIZE BOUNDARIES

Don't try to set too many boundaries all at once, as this can backfire. Prioritize what's most important to you right now.



## SELF-COMPASSION ACCOUNTABILITY

It's counter-productive to expect perfection. Studies show self-kindness, not berating makes us more apt to attain goals.



## INCREMENTAL CHANGES

Adjust limits gradually. For example, if you're trying to snack less at night, move your time back by 15 mins until you reach your goal.



## BE SPECIFIC AND TANGIBLE

What you expect of yourself is most achievable when it's specific. Clarity is motivating and sets you up for success.



## REFLECT YOUR CORE VALUES

Identify your values as you establish your boundaries, goals and expectations of yourself to ensure they are aligned.





*examples*  
**SELF-CARE BOUNDARIES**

<b>I VALUE</b>	<b>SO I NEED</b>	<b>&amp; WILL HONOR BY</b>
My self-worth	To say 'no' when it's not a true 'yes'	Staying true to myself even if I felt guilty
Energy and clarity	Personal time	Have a firm morning ritual
Time with boyfriend	To test my limits	Taking action when I'm afraid
Honesty	To be real with myself and others	Addressing and adjusting
To not be stressed paying my bills every month	Stick to my budget	Rewarding myself by getting to spend \$50 every month
Financial security	Only buying what's on my shopping list	No impulse buying at Target
Creative time	Time to do whatever I feel like that's creative	Every Saturday I get to use all day to be creative
Clean closet and organized clothes	Cleaner closet, instead of clothes on the floor	Do full laundry every Friday night
A fit body that feels healthy	Run every day for 30 minutes	Even when I don't feel like running, I need to
Health and preventing disease	No alcohol on weeknights	No alcohol in house, except wine on weekends





# SELF-CARE BOUNDARIES

I VALUE	SO I NEED	& WILL HONOR BY

# DAILY GOALS

DAILY GOAL

ACTION STEPS

1

2

3

DAILY GOAL

ACTION STEPS

1

2

3

DAILY GOAL

ACTION STEPS

1

2

3

People with weak boundaries often have a hard time saying no. Even saying no to yourself can be uncomfortable at times, as bad habits provide a sense of short-term comfort. But the discomfort of saying no is far less draining and self-deprecating than doing something you truly don't want to do.

Henry Cloud, PhD

