

BOUNDARIES WHERE YOU END AND I BEGIN

By Anne Katherine

Boundary – a limit or edge that defines you as separate from others. A boundary is a limit that promotes *integrity*.

- ✓ Injury or other organisms can breach this limit. If the breach is severe enough or if the invading organism is toxic or hostile the host organism can die.

Boundaries bring order to our lives.

- ✓ Strengthening boundaries brings a clearer sense of self and our relationship to others.
- ✓ Boundaries empower us to determine how we will be treated by others.
- ✓ Without clear emotional boundaries we are vulnerable to physical violation.

Prime Violations

- ✓ Violations of intrusion – may be physical, emotional, asking questions that are too personal
- ✓ Violations of distance – not enough physical closeness given the context of the relationship

Just because we have let someone do something in the past we don't have to let them do it again.

Creating an emotional boundary – get to know yourself better. Effective feedback of our emotions.

- ✓ Our feelings give us rich information about the world – whether it is safe or dangerous.
- ✓ Feelings connect us with meaning. When our feelings are warmly met, when we are encouraged to talk about them when a parent correctly interprets our facial expression, our body language and the feelings connected with it, our understanding of our inner selves grows. **Learning about and connecting with feelings is essential for complete boundary development.**

Mirror – children need feedback when they are growing up in order to differentiate. If parents are too distant the child may adapt in several different ways.

- ✓ Become a loner, fill themselves with someone else's identity or agenda, be a workaholic.

Ways parents use their children:

- ✓ Expecting the child to take care of the parent.
- ✓ Asking the child to make adult decisions.
- ✓ Enmeshing with the child.
- ✓ Misusing the child in order to feel powerful or to express anger.

Strengthening boundaries

- ✓ Say “no”
- ✓ The freedom to say “Yes”

- ✓ Support for our personal process
- ✓ Acceptance of differences
- ✓ Enhancement of our uniqueness
- ✓ Permission for expression

Harming to boundaries

- ✓ Ridicule
- ✓ Contempt
- ✓ Derision
- ✓ Sarcasm
- ✓ Belittling feelings
- ✓ Stifling communication
- ✓ Heavy judgment
- ✓ Arbitrariness
- ✓ Need to overpower
- ✓ Any kind of abuse
- ✓ Abandonment
- ✓ Threat
- ✓ Insecurity
- ✓ Being someone you are not-pretending you agree when you do not, concealing your true feelings, doing something you don't want to do, pushing yourself beyond your limits, working too hard or too long, doing too much for others, not resting when tired, ignoring your needs, not eating right, too much or too little time alone, using chemicals to avoid yourself, using compulsions to avoid yourself.