



Boundaries and Self-Awareness

If you were ill or incapacitated:

- Would you accept help from others?
- How would the help have to be offered in order for you to accept it?
- What kinds of help would you accept? What kind of help would you not accept?
- Who might you accept help from and what would that look like?

If your personal experience has been one when you were seriously ill or incapacitated:

- Did you accept help from others? How did that make you feel?
- How was the help offered in order for you to accept it?
- What kinds of help did you accept? What kind of help did you NOT accept?
- Who did you accept help from and what did that help look like?

If you were to offer assistance to other and they didn't seem interested or seemed to give you mixed messages:

- What would you think?
- How would you feel?
- What would you do?



Are you Clear About Your Boundaries?

Place true or false in from of each statement:

- _____ I often feel angry but I never know why.
- _____ I often feel other people take advantage of me.
- _____ I find it easier to feel other people's pain than my own.
- _____ I often pretend to agree with people when I really don't.
- _____ I am likely to change my plans to suit others.
- _____ I find it difficult to say no, particularly to my parents or my children.
- _____ I often blame myself when things are not going well in a relationship.
- _____ I often feel responsible for the actions of others.
- _____ I find it easier to give support to others than to receive support.
- _____ I often wish the phone wouldn't ring and people would leave me alone.

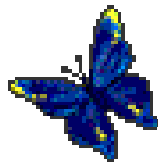
If you answered true to most of the above perhaps you need to clarify your personal boundaries.



Boundaries

One day a man found a caterpillar all wound up in its cocoon. He watched the caterpillar struggling from within the cocoon and realized the caterpillar had changed into a butterfly and was about to break through the cocoon.

Daily the man watched the struggle.
He wanted to help the butterfly.



Finally, the man could no longer watch the struggle and with his penknife he made a small slit through the cocoon, being very careful not to damage the wings of the butterfly. The Butterfly was released and flew high into the sky, floating on the winds. Its wings were so beautifully decorated with majestic colors. Suddenly the butterfly fell to the ground and died.

Moral: *What is most important is the struggle with in the cocoon. The challenge is what strengthens us for life. As caregivers, it may be painful to watch someone working through their grief. However as concerned caregivers we need to allow and support their growth. It is the struggle that will help the person to find meaning in their life again.*

Unknown.



Boundaries

A boundary indicates how far we can go in a relationship with all participants in the relationship being comfortable. It indicates where me and my physical and emotional or mental space ends and where yours begins.

Types of Boundaries

Physical

Physical Closeness

Privacy

Experiences

Eye Contact

Emotional

Decisions

Beliefs

Responsibilities

Spiritual

Spirituality

Personal

Religion

Characteristics of Healthy Boundaries

Presence: We are aware of the boundaries that we established and the boundaries that we have decided to let go.

Responsibility: We are responsible for our own actions, feelings and behaviors. We are responsible for the consequences of our actions. We do not take responsibility for other people and their actions.

Empowerment: We recognize that we cannot change anyone else. We can make changes in our own lives. To empower is to give the other person the power to control their own lives and to make their own choices. To enable is to allow the other person's behavior to continue, even though it isn't acceptable behavior to you. **Maintenance:** We reassess our boundaries based on what our current situation is.

Respect: We respect other people and their boundaries. We have learned to accept other people's "no"

Firmness: We ensure that our boundaries are firm and protective.

Flexibility: We keep our boundaries flexible to allow for healthy relationships.

Freedom: We do all these things so that through our boundaries we gain the freedom to give and to receive love and care in our relationships.



Boundaries are NOT –

Hurtful to others or us. Boundaries should protect us. When they are not established, feelings of resentment will build and the relationship will be destroyed. A boundary may be temporary or permanent.

Walls. A boundary is not a wall unless there was a choice to not be in a relationship with someone. A boundary is permeable and flexible. A wall is creative when someone has chosen an “all or nothing” type relationship.

