

Meeting in a Box: Boundaries

Purpose - How to set boundaries to be healthy in your relationships

Description- A healthy delineation between what we will accept and what we will not accept.

Conversation Starters - How did we experience healthy boundaries (or not) during our own childhood?

Quote –

"Before I had my child, I thought I knew all boundaries of myself, that I understood the limits of my heart, your love is inexhaustible" - Uma Thurman

"We love to overlook boundaries which we do not wish to pass" - Samuel Johnson

Activities

Describe an unacceptable behavior or event where you felt wronged, taken advantage of, fearful, challenged, disappointed, abused or compromised.

- Which feeling above describes it?
- What was your response?
- Could you define a boundary to help you the next time a similar situation occurs?
- Is it reasonable? Can you live with it?
- How often do you break your "line in the sand?" Why?
- What could you have done differently in the example you come up with?

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Resources

Is This Mine? By My3Sunz

Seeking Serenity blog post on www.parentpathway.com

The saying “if you put on a hula hoop, all things that happen inside the hula hoop belong to me and everything outside the hula hoop belongs to them” has given me a visual that is easy to remember. It’s also been a concept that gets stronger for me as time goes by. As if a callous, well worn protective Teflon membrane surrounds my “taking it personally feelings” underneath, the hula hoop concept helps me answer quite simply “is this mine?”

What I’m really doing is re-learning how to decipher interactions with people who unintentionally place their drama into my life. Sometimes I have a part in it (inside the hula hoop) and sometimes I’m caught off guard but have no responsibility over it (outside my hula hoop). For example, without them asking, my default is to jump in and try to save someone because they are uncomfortable, unhappy or annoyed at something or someone. That is a definite example of “inside my hula hoop”! Although not my business I have to recognize that my uncomfortable feelings are just that, mine. This awareness helps me accept my feelings which include those “rescue desires” but my action is to do nothing. My feelings are inside my hula hoop, so this is definitely an inside job of which I can control.

But people in my life can be very manipulative and cunning in their actions. They can transition from sharing their unhappiness, misery or angst about something or someone into requesting, if not demanding, I do something about it! “Outside my hula hoop”! I have to recognize that I can’t control people trying to get into my hula hoop and the situation, no matter how uncomfortable for me, does not require me to allow

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BLOG continued...

entry...or to leave my hoop and enter theirs.... If I can hold my ground in a loving way, acceptance comes in; an accepting attitude is much better than a resentful, fearful or angry one! And no response or a form of listening acknowledgement is the only kind of action required.

I recall those times people (landlords, relatives, employers, friends) would call me about the status of what one of my sons had done, rarely pleasant. I took the situation as if I were the one that did it. A force so strong wanted me to go and “clean that up” and “apologize” or “make excuses”. Today, I’m better at handling the “outside the hula hoop” matters but they still come up and it doesn’t necessarily center around addiction or my sons. I’m learning that it’s a part of life and it’s what many people do, but my reaction is what has changed. I not only improve at recognizing outside the hula hoop situations, I begin to see my part in it and can address my feelings and actions.

If you haven’t pulled out your hula hoop, give it a whirl! It takes practice to keep it spinning effortlessly!

Books:

Learning to Say No: Establishing Healthy Boundaries, by Carla Wills-Brandon
