

PERSONAL BOUNDARIES

A personal boundary system protects and contains a person during intimate contact. When an individual protects himself, he keeps himself from being a victim, which is an act of self-esteem. When he contains himself, he keeps himself from being offensive which is respectful of the people he is being intimate with. Personal boundaries also enable an individual to identify who he is.

Functional intimacy occurs when one receives the reality of another or expresses his reality without being too vulnerable or invulnerable. When an individual has no boundaries, he will be offensive in his expression of self and be too vulnerable when receiving the reality of another. When he has a wall for a boundary system, he prevents meaningful intimate exchange and is invulnerable.

There are two components to a personal boundary system, the external boundary and the internal boundary. The external boundary protects and contains the body and is used in physical and sexual intimacy. The internal boundary protects and contains the mind and emotions and is used during intellectual/emotional intimacy.

The external boundaries exist when either one of the external boundary statements is put into action. For example, when someone asks you if they can hug you and you think about whether you want a hug from him or not before answering. Or when you want to give someone a hug, you get permission to hug him before you do so.

The internal boundary is operational when either the listening or the talking boundary is activated. You activate the talking boundary whenever you speak and consciously follow the guidelines as you speak. You activate the listening boundary whenever you are listening to another person talking and as you listen you follow the guidelines.

When focusing on any one of the three containment parts of the boundary system there is a focus on the boundary violations with an effort not to commit any of those violations.

BOUNDARIES

DEFINITION: A system of limit setting that protects a person from being a victim and contains a person so that he/she is not offensive to others.

PURPOSE: To contain and protect a person's reality during intimacy and to establish identity.

REALITY:

BODY	...or what we look like
THINKING	...or how we give meaning to incoming data
FEELINGS	...or our emotions
BEHAVIOR	...or what we do or don't do

COMPONENTS:

EXTERNAL SYSTEM contains and protects the body and controls distance and touch

External Physical Boundary

- **Protection:** I have the right to control how close you get to me and whether you get to touch me and/or my personal property.
- **Containment:** The same is true for you.

External Sexual Boundary

- **Protection:** When someone is approaching me sexually, I have the right to control with whom, when, where and how I am going to be sexual.
- **Containment:** Others have the same right to do so with me.

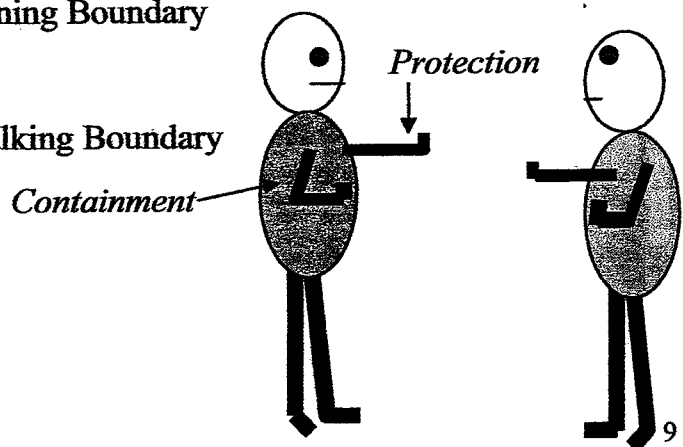
INTERNAL SYSTEM contains and protects the thinking, feelings and behavior and acts like a block or filter

Internal Listening Boundary

- **Protection:** Use of the Listening Boundary

Internal Talking Boundary

- **Containment:** Use of the Talking Boundary



BOUNDARY VIOLATIONS

Internal Boundary Violations:

- By word or deed indicate that another person is worth less.
- Yelling or screaming at another.
- Ridiculing another.
- Lying.
- Breaking a commitment for no reason.
- Attempting to control another.
- Being sarcastic while being intimate.
- Manipulating.
- Interrupting.

External Physical Boundary Violations:

- Standing in another's personal space without his/her permission.
- Touching a person without his/her permission.
- Getting into a person's belongings and living space such as one's purse, wallet, mail, and closet without his/her permission.
- Listening to a person's personal conversation or telephone conversations without his/her permission.
- Not allowing a person to have privacy or violating a person's right to privacy.
- Exposing others to contagious illness.
- Smoking around nonsmokers in an identified non-smoking area.

Sexual Boundary Violations:

- Engaging a person sexually without his/her permission.
- Insisting on having your way sexually in the face of another's "NO."
- Demanding unsafe sexual practices.
- Exposing others to sexual experience without his/her permission.
- Sexually shaming another person.

BOUNDARY EVALUATION

	NO BOUNDARIES	WALLS	FUNCTIONAL
1. EXTERNAL PHYSICAL: Protecting Self Containing Self	Does not stop others from standing in their face, touching or getting in private property	Never lets others get near or touch them or their private property	Lets others know how close they can stand and whether or not self or private property can be touched
	Stands in others' face, touches others and their private things without permission	Never approaches people for physical contact	Respectful of others private space and does not touch without permission
2. EXTERNAL SEXUAL: Protective Containing	When being approached sexually, rarely sets limits on other person's sexual behavior or energy	Never responds to others sexual approach or sexual energy	Determines who, when, where, and how they will be sexual when others are approaching them
	Engages with others sexually without their permission; rarely contains their sexual energy	Never approaches others sexually or releases sexual energy	Does not engage people sexually without their permission; can contain or release their sexual energy as is appropriate
3. INTERNAL: Listening (Protective) Talking (Containing)	Often reactive to others thoughts and emotions; Takes the blame	Never listens to what is important to others; Avoids empathy	Sorts through what others are saying and feeling; only takes in and has feelings about the truth as they know it
	Often says whatever comes to mind and does not contain emotions; Gives the blame	Does not tell others what is important to them; Avoids expressing emotions	Talks clearly, but in a politic and diplomatic manner; releases their emotions with moderation

Format for Talking/Listening When Using the Internal Boundary

TALKING

1. Set your external physical boundary in order to be more comfortable as you talk.
2. Remind yourself not to blame.
3. Remind yourself you are sharing to be known, not to control or manipulate.
4. Remind yourself to regulate your emotions as you speak (breath work).
5. State what happened or what you want to share without using words that are demeaning (Sensory Input).
6. State what you believe or made up about number 4 (Thoughts).
7. State how you feel or made yourself feel regarding number 5 (Emotion).
8. State what you did regarding number 4 and number 5.
9. State how you would prefer things to be if that is appropriate. If negotiation is required, start this process as follows: identify the problem; propose various solutions; choose one solution and put it into action. Evaluate the results to determine if further negotiation is necessary.

Note: It is easier for someone to be less defensive as a listener if you use the phrases "made up about that" and "made myself feel about that."

LISTENING

1. Set your external boundary in order to be more comfortable as you listen.
2. Remind yourself not to take the blame.
3. Remind yourself that you are listening to find out who the other person is, not to formulate your defense.
4. Remind yourself to regulate your emotions as you listen (breath work) and to monitor the emotions of the person speaking.
5. Review that you protect yourself as you listen by determining if what is being said is "true," "not true," "questionable," or a boundary violation.
6. If what you are hearing is "true," open your boundary, take it in and have your feelings about it.
7. If what you are hearing is "not true" work at keeping your boundary closed. If you have let it in, notice what you are feeling (pain, anger, joy, shame, passion, love, guilt, or fear) but don't attach to the feeling/s - actively work to push them out i.e., "this is not about me."
8. If what you are hearing is "questionable," when the person is finished talking, ask for the data you need in order to decide if it is "true" or "not true." Ask for the data in four sentences or less without complaining, blaming or explaining why you need the data. This helps the other person listen.
9. If you are experiencing a boundary violation, stand up for yourself, confront the boundary violation, and tell them to stop.
10. Evaluate what you have heard to determine if negotiation is necessary.

FEEDBACK LOOP

SENSORY DATA:

(Observable Behavior)

- *When I Saw...*
- *When I Heard...*

THOUGHTS:

(Always Speak From The “I” Position)

- *What I Make Up About That is...*
- *What I Believe About That is...*
- *What That Has Triggered From My Past is...*

EMOTIONS:

(Emotions Are Generated From Our Thoughts)

- *And about that I am feeling...*

IN THE FUTURE:

(Vulnerable Request)

- *What I Would Like/Prefer is...*

EIGHT BASIC EMOTIONS...**THEIR GIFTS**

ANGER	RESENTMENT IRRITATION FRUSTRATION	ASSERTIVENESS STRENGTH ENERGY	ALL OVER BODY POWER ENERGY
FEAR	APPREHENSION OVERWHELMED THREATENED	PRESERVATION WISDOM PROTECTION	STOMACH UPPER CHEST SUFFOCATION
PAIN	HURT PITY SAD LONELY	HEALING GROWTH AWARENESS	LOWER CHEST AND HEART HURTING
JOY	HAPPY ELATED HOPEFUL	ABUNDANCE HAPPINESS GRATITUDE	ALL OVER BODY LIGHTNESS
PASSION	ENTHUSIASM DESIRE ZEST	APPETITE ENERGY EXCITEMENT	ALL OVER BODY ENERGIZED RECHARGED SPONTANANEOUS
LOVE	AFFECTION TENDERNESS COMPASSION WARMTH	CONNECTION LIFE SPIRITUALITY	HEART SWELLING WARMTH
SHAME	EMBARRASSMENT HUMBLE EXPOSED	HUMILITY CONTAINMENT HUMANITY	FACE, NECK AND/OR UPPER CHEST WARM HOT RED
GUILT	REGRETFUL CONTRITE REMORSEFUL	VALUES AMENDS CONTAINMENT	GUT GNAWING SENSATION

FEEDBACK FORMAT

When I heard you say...

Repeat what the person said literally.

**What I made up about that
is...**

*State your perception, interpretation,
thought, reality.*

And about that I feel...

Share your emotions

**ANGER FEAR JOY PASSION
SHAME PAIN LOVE GUILT**

LISTENING FORMAT

BREATHE ~BREATHE~BREATHE

Remind yourself that this person is risking being intimate by telling you what he is thinking and feeling.

**LOOK DIRECTLY AT THE OTHER PERSON
AND SAY TO YOURSELF, "I AM SIMPLY
FINDING OUT WHO THIS PERSON IS."**

**LISTEN TO THE PERSON'S THOUGHTS AND
DECIDE IF YOU AGREE WITH HIM OR NOT.**

- | | |
|-----------|---|
| YES | Let yourself feel emotion. |
| NO | Notice that two people can experience different realities and that's okay. |
| ?? | Notice any confusion and don't make yourself miserable. Ask for additional data if necessary. |

INITIAL RESPONSE AFTER USING THE LISTENING BOUNDARY

“TRUE” I HAVE THE SAME PERCEPTION AND
ABOUT THAT I FEEL... (EMOTION)

“NOT TRUE” I HAVE A DIFFERENT PERCEPTION.
WOULD YOU LIKE TO HEAR WHAT I
THINK?

“QUESTIONABLE” I'M CONFUSED CAN YOU GIVE
ME MORE INFORMATION
REGARDING...