

## **BOUNDARIES, RIGHTS AND HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP**

Setting boundaries means that we are taking responsibility, being adults and demanding equality and respect in relationships.

Setting boundaries reflects our right to say NO to those things that aren't right for us.

Setting boundaries is about learning to take care of ourselves, no matter what happens, where we go or who we're with.

Boundaries emerge from a deep sense of our personal rights; especially the right to be ourselves and take care of ourselves.

Boundaries emerge as we learn to value, trust and listen to ourselves.

Boundaries emerge from a belief that what we want, need, like and dislike is important.

Boundaries emerge from deep decisions about what we believe we deserve and don't deserve.

### **TIPS FOR SETTING BOUNDARIES**

Anger, rage, complaining, whining, and feeling threatened, "suffocated" or victimized are clues to boundaries you need to set.

When you identify a need to set a boundary or a limit with someone, do it clearly, preferably without anger and in as few words as possible.

You cannot simultaneously set a limit with someone and take care of their feelings – they may be hurt, angry or disappointed with you.

You'll probably be ashamed and afraid when you set boundaries.

Be prepared to follow through by acting in congruence with the boundaries you set.

You'll be tested when you set boundaries.

Some people are happy to respect your boundaries.

A support system can be helpful as you strive to establish and enforce boundaries.

You set boundaries when you are ready and not a minute sooner.

There's a satisfying side to setting boundaries – it feels good.

## EXAMPLES OF SETTING BOUNDARIES

“You don’t have a right to tell me what to think, or invalidate my feelings.”

“Don’t vent your anger on me, I won’t have it.”

“This is mine; you don’t have a right to use it as yours.”

“I won’t accept your belittling jokes, your criticism or your condescending attitude toward me.”

“I won’t be disrespected – if you don’t respect me, then stay away.”

“Keep your hands off me.”

“Stop doing that...or I’ll leave; report you; file charges, (etc.).”

“Don’t try to tell me what to do.”

“If we’re going to have a working relationship, I need honesty, respect and equality.”

“I need to communicate when we have a misunderstanding.”

“I need openness and sharing in a relationship – your withholding is making our relationship not satisfying for me.”

## HOW TO MAINTAIN YOUR PERSONAL BOUNDARIES

**Ask directly for what you want.** This shows who you are to others.

**Nurture yourself and your integrity.** This creates an inner, intuitive sense that lets you know when a relationship has become hurtful, abusive, or invasive.

**Be objective about others’ behavior toward you** without getting caught in their drama.

**Maintain a bottom line** – a limit to how many times you allow someone to say no, lie, disappoint, or betray you before you will admit the painful reality and move on.

**Change the focus of trust from others to yourself.** Don’t put yourself in someone else’s hands or expect infallibility. Trust that you can allow others to be normally human and still have satisfying intimacy.

## **AFFIRMATIONS OF SOME BASIC RIGHTS**

Nobody has the right to know my mind or my business or to tell me what to think, what to feel or what to do.

I have a right to my own thoughts, feelings, values and beliefs.

What I share with others about matters that concern me is determined by what feels right to me – not what they want.

If people are abusive or disrespectful to me, I have a right to tell them so, to ask them to stop and to avoid them.

I don't have to be nice to people who aren't nice to me.

I don't need abuse or to be disrespected.

I have a need and right to love myself, respect myself and to stand up for myself.

I always have a right to express what I feel and think for myself, as long as I don't try to tell others what's right for them.

I have a right to be who I am and to harmlessly live my own life regardless of whether others don't like it.

I don't have to feel guilty for not behaving as others might want me to or for not giving others what they expect from me.

I accept myself just as I am in the moment with whatever thoughts and feelings I have.

I accept my right to make mistakes – otherwise I couldn't learn and grow.

I accept my right to my imperfection and shortcomings and don't feel guilty for not being perfect.

I believe that no matter what, I am a loving child of God who is loved, forgiven, safe and destined to God's eternal life and blessings.