

*Setting Boundaries
with an
Open Heart Workshop*

*Creating a life of
balance, peace, and harmony
that works best for you
and all your relationships.*

Setting Boundaries with an Open Heart

1. *What are boundaries?*

- Boundaries are the Terms with which we engage with others to make sure our relationships are healthy - and that we're clear on what a healthy relationship/ interaction looks and feels like.
- Boundaries are about being clear on how we want to live our lives, how to have balance in our lives, feel our best, and be at peace.
- We aren't clear about what we want.
- Always playing defense or (worse) rolling over and agreeing and then regretting it.
- Creating a Terms of Engagement document.
- TOE should to be flexible for you - boundaries not walls.
- 5 Regrets of the Dying - #1 - *I wish I'd had the courage to live a life true to myself, not the life others expected of me."*

2. *Why We Need to Set Boundaries and the Unintended Consequences of Not Doing it?*

- How will they know if we don't tell them?
- False dichotomy of suffering.
- We keep repeating this cycle of pain and suffering.
- Our thoughts become really ugly - fueled by fear (ego).
- All this suffering because we don't know how to tell others what we need.
- Your ego is always giving you bad advice.

Consequences of Not Setting Boundaries

Circle some of the words that describe how you **feel** when you don't set boundaries?

HELPLESS

FEARFUL

ANGRY

RESENTFUL

THREATENED

DEFENSIVE

TRAPPED

UNHAPPY

WORRIED

BITTER

IRRITATED

UPSET

FRUSTRATED

PAINFUL

TIRED

ANXIOUS

TENSE

UNCOMFORTABLE

DEPLETED

ASHAMED

CONFLICTED

OVERWHELMED

GUILTY

STRESSED

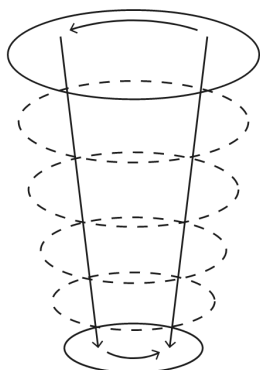
Being OK with Setting Boundaries means learning to follow the right path. Who's Telling You the Truth? Your Ego or Your Heart?



EGO



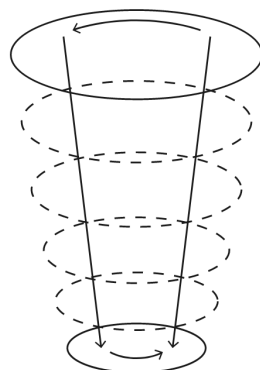
HEART



- Distorts
- Exaggerates
- Irrational
- Helpless



**PROLONGS
SUFFERING**



- Understanding
- Clarity
- Rational
- Courage



**ENDS
SUFFERING**

Instructions:

1. Write down the challenge you're having and what your ego is saying (first two columns).
2. Before you fill in the third column, it's important to gain access to the wisdom of your heart. You can do one of two practices (or both):

- Heart-Centered Breath
- Loving Kindness Meditation (helpful for really challenging situations/people)

Describe the situation in which you want to set a boundary but you're not	What does your ego say?	What does your heart say?

Buddhist Forgiveness Prayer:

*For anyone I have harmed, either knowingly or unknowingly,
through my own confusions, fears, and desires,
I ask for your forgiveness.*

*For anyone that has harmed me, either knowingly or unknowingly,
through their own confusions, fears, and desires,
I forgive them.*

*If there is anything I am not yet ready to forgive,
I forgive myself for that.*

*And for all the little ways I harm myself,
negate, doubt, belittle, judge and criticize,
I forgive myself for that too.*

Are you an Introvert, Ambivert, or Extrovert?

Quiz

With each statement circle a number from 1 - 5 of how much you agree:

1 = don't agree 3 = sometimes agree 5 = strongly agree
2 = slightly agree 4 = mostly agree

1. I typically feel drained after socializing.

1 2 3 4 5

2. Just the thought of socializing makes me uncomfortable and looking for a way out.

1 2 3 4 5

3. I love having a weekend without any plans.

1 2 3 4 5

4. I prefer spending time alone.

1 2 3 4 5

5. When socializing I prefer to sit back and observe, rather than being the center of attention.

1 2 3 4 5

6. I enjoy deep meaningful conversations over small-talk.

1 2 3 4 5

7. I prefer to have a small group of close friends versus a large social circle.

1 2 3 4 5

Total up your answers: _____

If you scored between 28 and 35 - you are likely an *introvert*.

Introverts tend to feel drained by social interaction and need time alone to recharge (this has more to do with your neurochemistry, it just physically drains you). Introverts often prefer having a smaller circle of close friends and enjoy quiet environments. It's important for introverts to protect their schedule - non-introverts do not understand needing time alone to recharge. When you do schedule social engagements, make sure there is ample time to recharge before and after. Set time limits on social engagements.

If you scored between 14 and 27 - you are likely an *ambivert*.

Ambiverts have a balance of introverted and extroverted qualities. They can feel energized by social interaction, but also need some alone time to recharge. Ambiverts often enjoy a mix of quiet and lively environments and can adapt well to different situations. Setting boundaries for ambiverts is tricky, you might over schedule when feeling a bit more extroverted only to find you regret it later when the introvert in you comes out. Keep this in mind when scheduling - add some flexibility by "penciling" in some activities so you can bow out gracefully should you need to recharge.

If you scored between 7 and 13 - you are likely an *extrovert*.

Extroverts feel energized by social interaction and rarely need alone time - in fact, alone time can be very draining for an extrovert. While extroverts love being around people, they can also get pulled into too many directions - it's good for you to know your limits and when it's too much.

What words best describe how you want your life to **feel**?

PEACEFUL

ENGAGED

BUSY

SPACIOUS

EXCITED

TRANQUIL

QUIET

OPEN

SPONTANEOUS

FAST

FREE

ACTIVE

DARING

ON THE MOVE

PURPOSEFUL

EXTRAVAGANT

HARMONIOUS

STEADY

BALANCED

ADVENTUROUS

SLOW

Terms of Engagement

What's most important to you?	
What do you need to feel your best?	
What makes you truly happy?	
Are you an introvert/ extrovert/ambivert?	
What kinds of activities do you like to do?	
In what ways do you enjoy engaging with others?	
How important is socializing to you?	
Do you want/need any boundaries around socializing, if so where, what, who?	
What activities would you put time on (setting a boundary with time)?	
What qualities do you value in a friendship?	
What relationships are most important to you and how do you want to nurture them?	

Which kinds of technological communication do you prefer? Calls, texts, voice clips, messenger, Zoom calls...	
Which kinds of communication do you wish to avoid and what are the consequences of doing it?	
What boundaries would you put around types of conversations and language you don't want to engage in? (political, Covid, gossip, vulgarity, flirty, negative/derogatory speech)	
What would make you break a boundary?	
What boundaries do you need to have with yourself around social media, YouTube, Netflix, checking the news, checking your phone...?	
What boundaries do you need to have in place to make sure you are living true to yourself?	

The Practice of Setting Boundaries

Guidelines

1. **Pause** - take a conscious breath, breathing into the heart and remembering your TOE (this will give you confidence). This is an important step to prevent the ego arising, creating resistance, fear, and tension.
2. **Speak slowly, with kindness.** Speaking slowly feels safe, and gives you time to speak clearly and confidently. USE "I" statements.
3. **When the interaction is over, consciously breathe into your heart.** This is the part we fear the most - afterwards rehashing what we said, what they think... This is the ego's last place to try and get us to stop setting boundaries. Your practice is to be aware of this, and breathe into your heart until you feel grounded and open.

Try your best not to apologize and give excuses - you don't need to defend yourself.*

**Reasons are not the same as excuses:*

We don't want to become so rigid that we can't ever explain what's going on or even throw in the occasional "sorry friend." Use your judgment - know when it's appropriate to give a little more detail and even where it feels right to use the word "sorry" but without the wishy-washiness of being unsure or afraid.

Examples of words to use when setting boundaries.

Being invited to social engagements

- *I so appreciate you including me...:*
 - *Let me check my schedule and get back to you*
 - *I'm really cutting back on making any new plans right now*
 - *I'm really trying to slow down and have as few plans as possible on my calendar*
 - *I don't go out in the evenings*
 - *I like to keep my evenings quiet*

If you're very much an introvert, as I am, and if on your TOE helping others is a way you enjoy connecting - then feel free to add "but if you ever need help, please reach out, I'll drop whatever I'm doing to help - I'm a good bad weather friend." Just make sure this is what you genuinely mean. I say this because it's what I genuinely mean. Everything you say should be genuine.

You're in a hurry

- *I hope you know how important you are to me, and I'd love to stay and chat but right now I have to...*
- *Whatever you have to say is very important to me, and I want to be here for you, but right now I have to...*

Communicating your needs

- *I know it's not your intention to...*
 - *ignore me, but when you look at your phone I feel hurt, and I feel distance between us instead of feeling close*
 - *cut me off, but it hurts when you do this, and I feel more distance between us and this isn't what I want for us*
 - *hurt me, but when you speak to me like that it doesn't feel good, I feel a lot of distance being created between us, not what I want*
 - *offend me...*

Topics you don't want to discuss

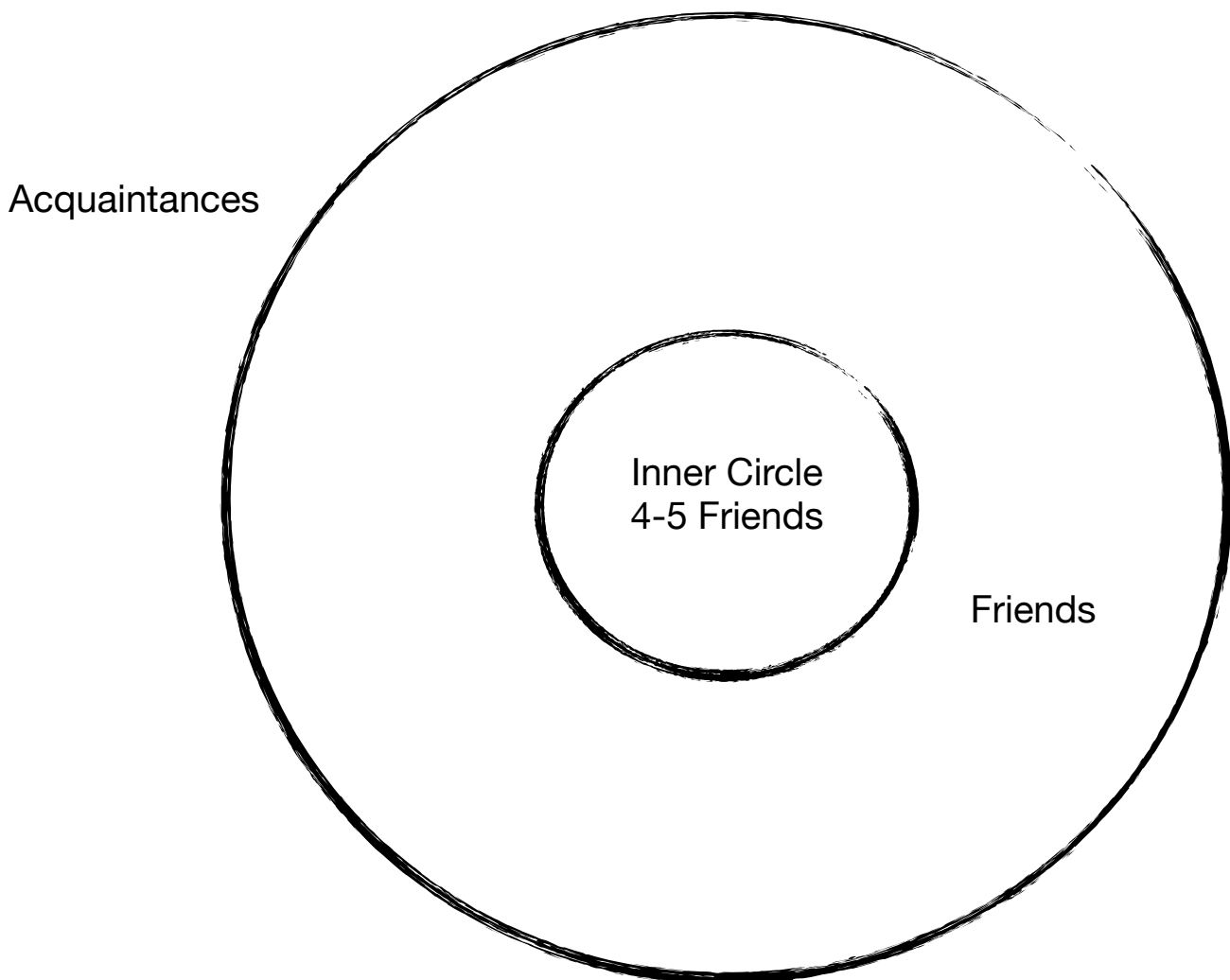
- *I'd prefer not to discuss this topic - I'd rather hear about how you're doing*
- *Sometimes you might let them finish speaking (on a topic you don't want to discuss) and simply say, "that's interesting - on a different note..."*
- *You know I think the world of you, but I just don't want to have this conversation...*
- *Around gossip specifically you might say, "Have you discussed this with them?"*

Boundaries around 24/7 availability through technology

- Put your phone on Do Not Disturb as a permanent setting for certain hours
- Turn off notifications for messages/WhatsApp/email/FB/INST
- Don't feel the need to respond to every message as soon as it comes in

Not everyone is in your inner circle

- The number of people we know is not natural
- Know who is in your inner circle, who you want to be in your inner circle - these are the relationships we want to nurture - you can't be everything to everyone
- Friends in your inner circle should get different priorities than less close friends and acquaintances.



Signs of a toxic relationship

- You feel drained around them
- You dread seeing their name on your phone when they call
- You never initiate invitations to see them
- They are often critical of you and your choices
- You feel they judge you and don't let you be who you are
- They try to manipulate you/control you/guilt you
- *Loyalty is not a good reason to stay in an unhealthy relationship!*

How to end a toxic relationship/friendship

- Once you've identified a toxic relationship and you've tried to set boundaries but they don't honor them - it's time to say goodbye.
 - Is it possible to allow the relationship to end naturally by not reaching out and not being available?
 - If this isn't possible, what is the best way for you to communicate that you wish to end the relationship?
 - write a letter or email (best with people that have narcissistic qualities*), speak in person, text
 - Go back to Section 3 of Setting Boundaries - your Ego or your Heart. Do the practices to help you write out the main points of why you want this relationship to end, and use that as a guide to help you communicate why you're ending the relationship (don't accuse - *I know it's not your intention... use I statements*)
 - *Even when someone is toxic we still want to keep an open heart - so we don't harbor resentment. Do the meditations and say the Forgiveness Prayer - remember if you are setting a boundary, you want to keep your heart open so that you are not burdened any longer.*

**People with narcissistic qualities will always try to turn it on you, they will not be happy about this - that's not your problem. This is why it's best to just send an email or letter. Sending the letter/email is for what you feel you need to say, they won't hear any of it - they won't accept it - they will accuse you of being the problem. This is why, of course, you are ending the relationship! Just know they will throw a tantrum, expect it. And still do your best to keep your heart open to them - they are suffering. But you can't allow them to treat you badly either.*

When someone is setting boundaries with you

- Thank them, let them know you appreciate their honesty - it took courage for them to set a boundary with you.
- In most situations, let's say a friend that "isn't making any new plans right now or asks can we not discuss politics" - it's not a big deal, we get it and there's no hard feelings - but other times, depending on who it is, it can hurt a bit.

There are two things you should do:

1. Breathe into the hurt feelings in your body, create some space for them, continue staying with the physical sensations of hurt until you feel a little more relaxed around them - do this every time the hurt arises.
2. Do some introspection, after breathing into the hurt feelings. What was their boundary? Was it really about them or about me? Was I being too needy? Judging them? Cutting them off? Gossiping or bringing up political conversations too much?
Anytime the fear or hurt arises, come back into the body and breathe so this can be a constructive introspection - helping you to be a better person, friend, coworker, partner...

It's a balance of nurturing the hurt so you can reflect with wisdom and compassion.

Final Notes

- Not everyone is going to appreciate you setting boundaries - expect that.
- Most people greatly respect it.
- Learning to set boundaries is a practice. Sometimes you'll take two steps forward and sometimes three steps back. That's OK, its how we learn. Like anything else you'll get better at it the more you do it.
- Setting boundaries is very much about our **attitude, see it as empowering and freeing** - learning to be OK with that little bit of discomfort up front because you are clear about the long-term benefits of living your life the way you want to live it.

Benefits of Setting Boundaries

Circle some of the words that describe how you think you would **feel** if you set boundaries more often?

IN CONTROL

HAPPY

SPACIOUS

OPEN

RELAXED

FREE

CALM

STRONG

POWERFUL

COURAGEOUS

COMPASSIONATE

CONFIDENT

EQUANIMOUS

HEALTHY

CARING

SINCERE

HONEST

WORTHY

POSITIVE

PEACEFUL

HARMONIOUS

WISE

BALANCED

CENTERED