

ABCs of Wisdom
B-Boundaries

Excerpts from my E-book

Boundaries Do Not Limit, They Liberate

What if I told you—this one topic can change your life forever? Healthy boundaries bring a sense of security and well-being to those who have them. Women often have difficulty establishing boundaries. Unhealthy or nonexistent boundaries are the source of many of the issues that I notice when I coach women. Boundaries are also the source of many of the difficulties that I notice when I talk with single mothers.

What are boundaries?

We usually think of boundaries as fences or barriers to keep us out of an area or to keep children and pets in. Personal boundaries come as the result of healthy thinking and a strong self-esteem. When you are sure of yourself and have confidence you will not have too much trouble setting boundaries. And when you do you will free yourself to spend your energies as you should and not in ways that others demand you do.

Do you tend to let yourself be pushed around? Do you give in even when it goes against your better judgment? At work do you know what your responsibilities are? Or do you find yourself taking on responsibilities of others when asked? Are you the one your coworkers ask to cover for them because they know you can't say no? Are you a people pleaser to your own detriment?

Psychological boundaries are the thoughts and opinions that we hold. Do you shift yours when under pressure from others? Do you allow yourself to be controlled by the opinions of others? Or are you on the other side of the fence—you try to force your own way of thinking on others?

To build healthy boundaries in your life you will need to do some serious self-reflection. Our motivations will reveal a great deal about our setting of boundaries and how we react to those with whom we interact. I've known women who thought they were serving others when, in fact, they were performing with the desire for approval and admiration from others. It's the motivation that tells the tale.

Difficulties often start in childhood.

Women's difficulties often begin in childhood. Child abuse crosses the most personal of boundaries—skin. Our earliest boundary is our skin. It is our largest organ and protects us. When a young child is physically or sexually abused their physical boundary is violated. From the child's point of view she has no boundaries. She learned early she wasn't allowed to say no. In too many cases when the child told her mother, the mother refused to believe her. This compounds the problem. Some overcome this, but for many it is a lifelong struggle. Others may suffer with weak boundaries and troublesome relationships.

The child grows into adolescence believing she doesn't have a right to have personal boundaries. She gets confused about sexuality. Healthy boundaries have to do with responsibility for one's self and limit setting. If a little girl has never been treated with respect she isn't likely to respect herself. This leads to a host of other issues in later life.

Boundaries are good for us.

Healthy personal boundaries keep us from bad habits, help us eat healthy, and prevent illness. They also build respect on the job and establish clear expectations.

A wise woman establishes healthy personal boundaries.