

BOUNDARIES: WHAT ARE THEY AND WHY DO I NEED THEM?

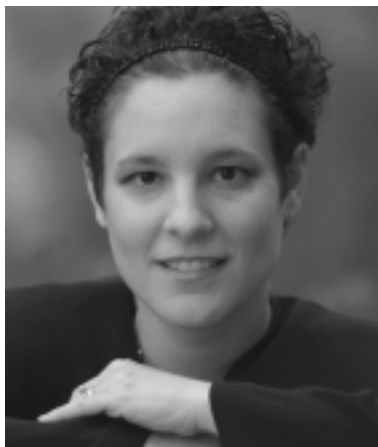
I like this simple definition of boundaries: “Where you end and I begin.” Boundaries are limits that we can set with other people to let them know:

- “This is how far I am willing to go.”
- “This is what I will or won’t do for you.”
- “This is what I will not tolerate from you.”

For example, let’s say you have a friend who wants you to look after her kids more than you would like to. Perhaps you don’t mind doing it occasionally; but not every week like she wants. You could set a boundary with her by saying, “Julie – I really enjoy looking after your kids on occasion, but I have a very full schedule and can only do it once a month maximum.” This is letting her know what you will and won’t do for her and how far you are willing to go.

10 SIGNS OF UNHEALTHY BOUNDARIES

- #1: Talking at an intimate level at the first meeting.
- #2: Falling in love with a new acquaintance.
- #3: Going against personal values or rights to please others.
- #4: Touching a person without asking.
- #5: Allowing someone to take as much as they can from you.
- #6: Letting others direct your life.
- #7: Falling apart so someone will take care of you.
- #8: Accepting food, gifts, touch, or sex that you don’t want.
- #9: Being overwhelmed by a person- preoccupied with thoughts of them.
- #10: Letting others describe your reality and/or define who you are.



Esther Kane, MSW, RCC, relocated to the Comox Valley nearly two years ago from Vancouver. She is in full-time private practise as a psychotherapist in Courtenay at the Rosewall Wellness Centre. She has also just completed her first book entitled, “What Your Mama Can’t Teach You: Older Women’s Wisdom for the New Generation,” which is a guidebook to womanhood for teenage girls.

Esther has over a decade of experience counselling people with a multitude of different presenting problems. She is trained as a Family Therapist and works with individuals, couples, and families.

To book a session or to set up a free 15-minute phone consultation, call Esther at (250) 338-1800. Or e-mail her at: esther@estherkane.com. You can check out her detailed website at: www.estherkane.com

5 TIPS FOR SETTING BOUNDARIES WITH OTHERS

1. *When you identify that you need to set a limit with someone, do it clearly, preferably without anger, and in as few words as possible. Avoid justifying, rationalizing, or apologizing. Offer a brief explanation, if it makes sense to do that. We cannot maintain intimate relationships until we can tell others what hurts us and what feels good.*
2. *You cannot simultaneously set a boundary and take care of another person's feelings. The two acts are mutually exclusive.*
3. *You will probably feel ashamed and afraid when you set boundaries. Do it anyway. People may not know that they are trespassing. Also, people don't respect others whom they can use. People use those they can use, and respect people they cannot use. Healthy limits benefit everyone. Children and adults will feel more comfortable around you if you have strong boundaries.*
4. *Anger, rage, complaining, and whining are clues to boundaries we need to set. The things we say we can't stand, don't like, feel angry about, and hate may be areas crying out for boundaries. When we feel those strong feelings, they are indicators of problems, like a flashing red light on the car dashboard. As well, shame and fear may be the barrier we need to break through to take care of ourselves. Other clues that we may need to set a boundary are feeling threatened, "suffocated," or victimized by someone. We may need to get angry to set a boundary, but we don't need to stay resentful to enforce it.*
5. *We'll be tested when we set boundaries. Plan on it. It doesn't do any good to set a boundary until we're ready to enforce it. Often, the key to boundaries isn't convincing other people we have limits – it's convincing ourselves! Once we really know what our limits are, it won't be difficult to convince others. In fact, people often sense when we've reached our limit. We'll stop attracting so many boundary invaders. Things will change when we decide to change.*

"WELLNESS WEDNESDAY" WORKSHOPS

Sign up for one or more of these affordable and helpful fall workshops through Courtenay Recreation by calling 338-5371. Do it soon – they fill up quickly!

"Why Diets Don't Work"

October 19, 7-8:30 p.m., Filberg Centre; Evergreen Lounge, Cost: \$15

Are you tired of being on a diet roller-coaster? Come to this workshop and gain the tools needed to develop a healthy and satisfying relationship with food and your body so that you never have to diet again.

"Food and Mood"

November 9, 7-8:30 p.m., Filberg Centre; Evergreen Lounge, Cost: \$20

Do you eat when you're sad, mad, or even glad? Come to this workshop and learn how food and mood are connected and what you can do to stop eating when your body isn't hungry.

"Self-Care for Women"

December 7, 7-9 p.m., Filberg Centre; Evergreen Lounge, Cost: \$20

Do you know that you should do nice things for yourself, but feel you never have the time? Give yourself 2 hours of "It's all about me" time and experience how good it feels to nurture yourself. You are worth it!

Esther Kane, MSW, RCC
250.338.1800



esther@estherkane.com
www.estherkane.com