

Boundaries

Point of the Assignment: 1) To understand the concept of boundaries. 2) To see how the lack of boundaries negatively impacts time management. 3) To give strategies for setting appropriate boundaries with others.

Definition: Boundaries are invisible property lines that mark those things for which we are responsible. In other words, boundaries define who we are and who we are not.

According to the author, there are a few types of boundaries:

Physical boundaries determine who may touch us and under what circumstances.

Mental boundaries give us the freedom to have our own thoughts and opinions.

Emotional boundaries help us to deal with our own emotions and disengage from the harmful, manipulative emotions of others.

Note: One more added by your professor:

Time boundaries help us to register that we have a right to determine how we will spend our time.

Excerpt from the book: (Page 29)

Indivisible Property Lines and Responsibility

“In the physical world, boundaries are easy to see. Fences, signs, walls, moats with alligators, manicured lawns, or hedges are all physical boundaries. In their differing appearances, they give the same message: THIS IS WHERE MY PROPERTY BEGINS. The owner of the property is legally responsible for what happens on his or her property. Non-owners are not responsible for the property.”

“Me and Not Me”

“Boundaries define us. They define what is me and what is not me. A boundary shows me where I end and someone else begins, leading me to a sense of ownership. Knowing what I am to own and take responsibility for gives me freedom. If I know where my yard begins and ends, I am free to do with it what I like. Taking responsibility for my life opens up many different options. However, if I do not “own” my life, my choices and options become very limited.”

Examples of boundaries

Skin – basic example is your physical skin.

Words – you can create good protective fences with your words – NO.

Truth – knowing the truth about yourself.

Geographical distance – keeping yourself away from dangerous or unhealthy people

Time – Taking time off from a person, or a project, can be a way of regaining ownership over some out-of-control aspect of your life where boundaries need to be set.

Boundaries

Emotional distance – Emotional distance is a temporary boundary to give your heart the space it needs to be safe; it is never a permanent way of living.

Other people – you need to depend on others to help you set and keep boundaries.

Consequences – Trespassing on other people's property carries consequences.

Boundary Problems

Compliant – Saying “yes” to the bad

Avoidants – Saying “no” to the good

Controllers – Not respecting others' boundaries

Nonresponsives – Not hearing the needs of others

Loosely adapted from Cloud, H. and Townsend, J. (1992). Boundaries. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

Professor's Note: People Who May Struggle with Boundary Problems:

There are a few possible causes of struggling with boundaries.

1. People **who have been abused** have learned that their boundaries do not matter (*the authors state this is the primary root of the problem*)
2. People who come from **collectivistic cultures** where it is normal and appropriate to have one's life and identity inter-mixed with others (i.e. family members).
3. Certain **personality types** may also struggle with boundaries:
 - a. **Feelers** (feeling preferences) sometimes have a hard time saying “no” because they don't want to hurt other peoples' feelings.
 - b. **Idealists** (iNtuitive & Feeling) tend to struggle with setting emotional boundaries due to their ability to empathize and/or wanting to help or please others.
 - c. **Guardians** (Sensing & Judging) tend to feel responsible for providing for other peoples' physical needs due to their natural sense of responsibility.

Boundaries and Time Management

Based on experience in working with students and other people trying to succeed at the journey of education and pursuing their dream jobs, I have noticed something: Often people, who struggle with time management, also tend to struggle with having healthy boundaries – knowing what they should take ownership for, and what they should not.

Having healthy boundaries directly impacts time management. A person who has difficulty saying “no” will find that their best-laid plans for using their time effectively will be constantly overridden by other people's emergencies, interruptions, priorities, and activities. (Remember Steven Covey's Quadrant III – Urgent /Not Important?) Being able to distinguish the difference between a Quadrant I – Urgent & Important, and a Quadrant III, requires understanding where **you end**, and **they begin** (having healthy boundaries). Only then, will you be able to spend most of your time in Quadrant II – Important/Not Urgent. **That is how you can pro-actively move from a life of crisis response to crises prevention.**

Now, turn to the following pages, from the attached from Becoming a Master Student.* The section “**25 Ways to get the most out of now: Getting Focused When You Study**”, (Pgs. 91 &

Boundaries

92) lists five tips designed to help you learn to set boundaries with other people. Can you recognize them? List them below:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

(Check your answers –The correct answers are listed on the last page of this document. Be sure to check your answers, because you will not receive credit for this assignment until you get this section correct.)

After learning about boundaries, answer the following questions:

Do you find that you have difficulty in this area?	Yes / No
Do you ever feel like your life is out of control?	Yes / No
Do you feel like you spend much of your time in Quadrant I or Quadrant III	Yes / No

If you answered yes to any of these questions, then you may struggle with boundary issues.

If you feel you do struggle with being able to set boundaries with other people, identify the source from “**Professor’s Note: People Who May Struggle with Boundary Problems**” above. What source(s) (*abuse, culture, personality, or a combination*) cause you to struggle? Explain your response.

Note: Another tip added by your professor:

Sometimes setting boundaries can be challenging when, for various reasons, we may want to say, “Yes,” but need to say “No.” When you find yourself needing to set boundaries with someone by saying “No” to a request, you may consider an alternative as a form of boundary setting, saying: “**No, ...but here is what I CAN do for you...**” Then you decide what you are willing and able to give.

Practice applying this idea to a situation you are facing now, or have faced in the past. Give an example of a situation where you may want to say “Yes,” but need to say, “No”:

What is your alternative response?

“No, but I CAN...” _____

Boundaries

Based on the information provided, what can you do to improve your boundaries?

Test your understanding:

What is the main point of this assignment?

Why were you expected to do this exercise?

What type of person would need to do this exercise?

How well do you fit the profile of the person for whom this assignment was created?

Reflection: (*Write down your response after completing this assignment.*)

Answers to “*Ways to handle the rest of the world.*” & Boundaries:

1. Agree with living mates about study time
2. Get off the phone
3. Learn to say “no”
4. Hang a “do not disturb” sign on your door
5. Manage interruptions