

## HEALTHY BOUNDARIES

**HEALTHY BOUNDARIES ARE ABSOLUTELY VITAL IN DEVELOPING HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS AND HELP US CONNECT EMOTIONALLY AND BECOME TRULY INTIMATE WITH OTHERS WHILE WE (AND OTHERS) ARE STILL ABLE TO MAINTAIN OUR OWN SEPARATE AND UNIQUE IDENTITIES AS INDIVIDUALS**

Unhealthy boundaries can be too loose or too rigid. If they're too loose, we become enmeshed with others and people-pleasing and codependent; if they're too rigid, we feel little or no real emotional connection to the other people in our lives. Boundaries allow us to maintain necessary and healthy limits with those around us. Not understanding what healthy boundaries are or not maintaining healthy boundaries in a relationship, especially an intimate one, is a recipe for disaster. In addition, not having clarity about your boundaries also sets the stage for anger, resentment, anxiety, depression, and emotional distance and estrangement in you and others, whether your boundaries are too loose or too rigid.

**The first step** in developing healthy boundaries means that you need to recognize and then clearly acknowledge to yourself that you are truly separate from other people (and they from you)

**The second step** involves getting to know your **"True Self"** which means re-writing your destructive life script and discovering who you really are and who want to be at your core (see the "empowerment" articles on this website for more about this). This includes an awareness of:

- **YOUR THOUGHTS, OPINIONS, FEELINGS, WANTS, NEEDS, DESIRES, DREAMS & ASPIRATIONS, GOALS, VALUES, PREFERENCES, LIKES & DISLIKES, INTERESTS, EXPECTATIONS, CHARACTER DEFECTS & SHORTCOMINGS, "SHADOW SIDE," FEARS & INSECURITIES, VULNERABILITIES, AND RESENTMENTS**

**The third step** is to work actively to accept and really trust and continue to stay in touch with this **"True Self"** you have discovered within yourself

**The fourth step** is to determine, clarify, and maintain your personal limits through the development and use of knowledge of self, self-care, and assertiveness, communication, and conflict resolution skills

- **FOR YOURSELF**
- **WITH OTHERS**

**The final step** is to consistently and clearly communicate who you really are to other people in a sincere, open, and genuine way through both your words and your actions

- This means being who you truly are no matter whom you're with or what the situation is

In the section on this website entitled *Some Examples of Unhealthy and Healthy Boundaries in Relationships With Other People* (in *"Quick Facts"*), there are some specific examples of unhealthy and healthy boundaries. Look through the lists in that section to see if there are some areas you need to work to change within yourself.