



HOW PEOPLE WITH DIFFERING BOUNDARIES ACT & REACT

People with Healthy Boundaries

- Are willing to say no, to let others know when they're stepping on their toes, but are also willing to say yes.
- Have the ability to make requests and to seek alternatives when others must say no to them.
- Have a strong sense of identity and self-respect.
- Make appropriate self-disclosure; reveal information about themselves gradually, as mutual sharing takes place and trust develops.
- Expect shared responsibility for relationships.
- Recognize when a problem is theirs or another person's. When it is not their problem, they do not jump in to rescue the other person.
- Do not tolerate disrespect or abuse.

People with Rigid Boundaries

- Tend to say no if a request is going to involve close interaction.
- Have very strong defenses to protect themselves from getting close to people. May pick fights, for example, or stay so busy that they have no time for one-on-one relationships.
- Avoid closeness because they fear either abandonment (being left alone) or engulfment (being smothered).
- Make little or no self-disclosure, perhaps preferring to draw the other person out.
- Inability to identify your feelings and what you want / need.
- Have very few close relationships, though they may have many acquaintances.

People with “Collapsed” or No Boundaries

- Can't say no because of fear of abandonment or rejection.
- Share too much personal information too soon.
- Take on other people's feelings rather than just feeling empathy.
- Have a high tolerance for abuse and being treated with disrespect.
- Believe they “must have deserved it” when treated badly
- Will do anything to avoid conflict.
- Have no ability to see flaws in others because they're focused on being what they think other people want them to be.
- Have no sense of self, who they are, what they believe, etc.