

# Healthy Boundaries, Healthy Self

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## *Summary*

Setting healthy boundaries for our self and with others is essential to good mental health. Working with material from her clinical practice in Lexington, VA and books – *Disentangle, When You've Lost Your Self in Someone Else* (2011) and *My Life as a Border Collie, Freedom from Codependency* (2012) - Nancy will teach practical boundary-setting skills in three areas of work: Listening to Self, Interacting with Others, and Being with Self as we Interact with Others.

## *Abstract*

Setting healthy boundaries for our self and with others is essential to good mental health, *and* setting healthy boundaries can be a challenge to many. Anxiety and depression can both be related to poor boundary setting with individuals over-extending themselves and/or allowing others to press past their boundaries. Effective parenting involves good boundary setting as does involvement in healthy adult relationships. We are involved in boundary setting on a daily basis from personal decisions, such as how many hours to work today, to more far-reaching decisions, such as limit-setting our children or deciding whether to stay in a particular relationship.

Our difficulties in setting healthy boundaries come from various sources, ranging from not being aware that we need to and can set a boundary to being fearful of the repercussions of setting a boundary. Fears of displeasing others, making them mad, or even being abandoned by them come into play. So we slide into boundary setting sideways with indirect threats that we are not ready to enforce. We say, “If you do that, then I will \_\_\_\_\_,” and we never mention it again even when the unacceptable behavior has recurred. In our doing this, we are eroding our relationship and, equally important, eroding our sense of self.

Healthy boundary setting involves three areas of skills which are all based out of a healthy connection with self. Too often our boundary setting does not start with this connection with self. We simply do not tune into our self first. Either we do not remember to check in with our self at all and set no boundary - even though we may be full of symptoms such as anger, frustration, exhaustion, and hopelessness – or we let some boundary come flying out of our mouth without knowing if we mean it and can enforce it.

## *Content*

This session will **first** work with the participants to understand boundary setting from this **healthy connection with self**. Both verbal and visual tools will be used to demonstrate boundary violations and to give the participants ready-visuals that encourage and facilitate healthy boundaries.

The session will **then** teach **skills in all three areas of boundary setting**:

- **Listening to Self**

Slow Down

Listen to You (Cognitive, Emotional, Physical, and Spiritual)

Use “I” Statements

Make Statements Rather than Ask Questions

Set Your Boundary

- **Interacting with Others**

State Your Boundary

Stick with Your Limits

Say Things Once

Say Things Cleanly and without Extensive Discussion

Stick to the Topic

Stay in the Present

Listen to the Other Person

- **Being with Self as We Interact with Others**

Be Careful of Defending, Justifying, and Convincing

Be Conscious and Observing of Your Self

Learn When to Stop

Stop

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