

Relationship Boundaries

We All Have Our Deal Breakers

By Frank Kermit, Relationships



We all have boundaries. We all have that line that must never be crossed. This is beyond what we have as preferences for the way we like to be treated. This has to do with absolutes in what we can and cannot handle in our intimate relationships.

Where some people make mistakes, is in how they communicate their boundaries. The **BIGGEST** boundary mistake that people make is: not really knowing what their own boundaries are.

You cannot enforce a boundary that you don't know you have. You have to wait until someone crosses it to know it is there. Usually by that time, it is too late. The boundary was crossed, and the distain for your partner has found a nest to fester in.

The question of whether or not you need to expand on one of your boundaries comes down to whether or not you are content with the consequences of having your boundary. If you are content with your boundary and are happily handling the consequences of your boundary, then it is no ones business. However if you are not content with your boundary, like for example, if you feel that it limits you in ways that you want to expand on, then, and only then, do you push through your boundaries.

For example, lets say that it is your boundary that you will never take part in a particular activity like swimming in the ocean. Regardless if that boundary comes from not knowing how to swim, a situated knowledge you have about the pollution levels of the ocean front areas of the area you live in, or because you watched Jaws as a child and learned not to go into the water; the source of your boundary is not relevant. You have a right to your boundary. However, the consequences of that boundary might be that you are unable to fully take part in some group activities that you are invited too, such as a picnic by the sea held by one of your social circles. Now, if you have no problem with missing out on social activities that you feel forbidden to do because of your boundary, then it really is no one's business. However, if you feel that you are suffering because of your boundary, and in this example, if could be that you feel you lost an opportunity to better connect with someone that spent their day doing water sports, you will have a choice to make. Either you expand on your boundaries and work on being more open to new experiences (dealing with whatever may have been the source of it), or you simply accept that your boundary is going to cost you, and write off the losses as an acceptable cost. Only you can make that accounting.

Something that is very important in understanding your own boundaries is that, although you have a right to have your own boundary, and to enforce your own boundary in how you want others to treat you, it does not include the right to enforce your boundary on others to have the same boundary that you do.

An audience at a movie theatre watching a movie with multiple sex scenes might make your feel uncomfortable, to the point where you would walk out of the theater. That is your right as it is crossing a personal boundary for you. However, just because you do not like it, does not make it OK for you to expect, nor demand that the rest of the audience get up and walk out as well. See the difference? Bare in mind this is the norm for situations where no lines of violence are cross. An "R-rated" movie with multiple sex scenes may not be to your liking, but it certainly does not cross any lines of violence. Everyone there, including the actors in the movie are adults offering consent.

You are the only person that has an obligation to enforce your boundary. If it is your boundary, it is your responsibility. Unless there is a legal issue involved where it is about the protection of your safety in public spaces, it is going to be up to you to enforce your boundary. Think about your boundaries as a preference with such importance, that you cannot bear to be without that boundary. Yet at the same time, it could be just a preference to someone else, and it may even be the exact opposite of what a third person can handle. Boundaries are personal. When entering a relationship, it is important that beyond the romance, there are your rules about what you can handle to manage in your love life.

One of the common concepts I see as a Relationship Coach is people allowing their boundaries to be trampled on because they are afraid of being alone. They will tolerate their partner's behaviors, even if it goes against their own values and boundaries, because they would rather be emotionally violated in a relationship, than not to have ANY relationship at all. In the short term, this can work to keep you from being alone...but it never quite deals with the deepening sense of loneliness that continues to grow inside you. When your main partner violates your emotional needs by constantly crossing your boundaries, the emptiness that swells within you eventually engulfs your sense of self. Long term, it is simply impossible to maintain your own emotional health in a relationship where you never enforce your own personal boundaries.

Boundaries are a good thing. They keep you safe. They keep you from trusting the wrong people who would do you harm. They help you survive. Every boundary has consequences. You have a right to your boundary, but part of having any boundary is that it comes with the automatic consequence that not everyone will share your boundary, and that it may limit the things you can do and who you connect with. Where you draw that line, and what you are willing to sacrifice is up to you. Just please be careful that you do not sacrifice yourself in the process by either not enforcing your boundaries enough, or having boundaries that are too rigid for you to enjoy connecting with others in life.

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