

Shadow Rock Adult Spiritual Formation
Pastoral Care Basics ~ Summer 2020

Boundary Setting

What is a boundary?

- A protective awareness around our personal identity
- A defining practice: a boundary helps us remember *what is me* and *what is not me*
- An understanding around how far we can go in a relationship with comfort, physically and psychologically.

Why do we need them?

- Boundaries protect us.
- Boundaries help us take responsibility for ourselves by defining what we are and are not responsible for.
- Boundaries protect others.
- Respecting others' boundaries allows them to make their own decisions.

Kinds of boundaries:

- Environmental boundaries such as doorways
- Role boundaries
- Process boundaries – such as agreeing to ground rules, starting on time, communication expectations, availability
- Interpersonal physical boundaries (“do we hug?”)
- Interpersonal emotional/spiritual/psychological boundaries: how much do we share of ourselves with whom and in what settings?

Some considerations:

1. Why are you disclosing this information or sharing this opinion/advice? Who benefits from your sharing and why?
2. What secondary messages might people receive?
3. What do you disclose without speaking (dress, body language, presentation, bumper stickers ☺)? This might include relationship status, gender, language...
4. Is this disclosure your decision to make? Who else is involved?
5. If you're sharing advice or opinion, is this your call to make? What happens if you share? What happens if you do not?
6. Are there identities and power dynamics at work? Are you fully respecting the authority and autonomy of the other person?

7. What boundaries have you established for yourself already in similar situations?

What are some ways we preserve our boundaries?

Words

Nonverbal communication

Emotional distance

Physical distance

Time apart

Consequences

Fears can keep us from setting or managing boundaries in healthy ways.

- Fear of abandonment
- Fear of anger
- Fear of loneliness
- Fear of being unlovable
- Guilt
- Unworthiness
- Disapproval
- Fear of hurting others

Think about the healthiest practices for these situations...

Who shares information with whom? Who offers guidance? How will we interact?

1. Shadow Rock phone volunteer and preschool families
2. Church youth leader and teenaged participant
3. Shadow Rock staff member and congregant who is also a friend
4. Church board member and their spouse who is also a congregant

