

Brightside Counseling Services, LLC



7009 S. Potomac St., Ste. 109 • Centennial, CO 80112
<http://www.brightsidecounseling.net> • 303.353.9226



July 2013

WORD OF THE MONTH

Personal Boundaries

Guidelines, rules or limits that a person creates to identify for him/herself what are reasonable, safe and permissible ways for other people to behave around them and how they will respond when someone steps outside those limits. They are built out of a mix of beliefs, opinions, attitudes, past experiences and social learning.

WORDS OF WISDOM

“When we fail to set boundaries and hold people accountable, we feel used and mistreated. This is why we sometimes attack who they are, which is far more hurtful than addressing a behavior or a choice.”

— Brené Brown

“No” is a complete sentence.”

— Anne Lamott

“Tolerance is nothing more than patience with boundaries.”

— Shannon L. Alder

July



In the month of July, the birthstone is a Ruby. The red color is caused mainly by the presence of the element chromium. Its name comes from *ruber*, Latin for red. It is also considered one of the four precious stones.

July's birth flower is the Larkspur. Derived from the Greek word "delphis" meaning dolphin, delphinium is its scientific name. The Larkspur symbolizes an open heart and ardent attachment.

They come in different colors which represent:

- White signifies a happy-go-lucky nature
- Pink represents fickleness
- Purple is often indicative of sweet disposition and first love

The Larkspur symbolized a desire for laughter and a pure heart in the Victorian language of flowers.

HIGHLIGHTS

Monthly Celebrations

- National Picnic Month
- National Recreation Month
- National Ice Cream Month
- Independence Day (July 4)
- Cheer up the lonely Day (July 11)
- Pick Blueberries Day (July 14)
- Fresh Spinach Day (July 16)
- Disneyland opened 1955 (July 17)
- National Cheesecake Day (July 30)

Astrological Signs:

Cancer: June 21- July 22

Cancer is a mysterious sign, filled with contradictions. They want security and comfort yet seeks new adventures. They are very helpful to others yet sometimes can be cranky and indifferent. Cancer has a driving, forceful personality that can be easily hidden beneath a calm, and cool exterior. They are very unpredictable. With cancer, there is always something more that meets the eye.

Leo: July 23-August 21

Leo is very independent but they need something to control and someone to admire them and appreciate them. They are fully capable of being greatly successful on their own but they are much happier if they have an audience and a following of people who look up to them. They would prefer not be alone.

SETTING UP BOUNDARIES

Before we dive into setting boundaries, we first need to know what boundaries are. Found in Wikipedia, guidelines, rules or limits that a person creates to identify for him/herself what are reasonable, safe and permissible ways for other people to behave around them and how they will respond when someone steps outside those limits. They are built out of a mix of beliefs, opinions, attitudes, past experiences and social learning. So, what does this mean?

What are boundaries?

Every thing on this Earth has boundaries. Be it the Bear who won't let anything come close to her cubs, a dog who doesn't like to be touched on the backside, or a human who breaks up with their significant other because they don't like being yelled at. All of these examples define some sort of boundary. In addition, there are different types of boundaries; physical and emotional. Physical boundaries are those that deal with proximity. How do you feel when someone (especially someone you don't know well) is too close to you? There is usually this "yucky" feeling and you want to move away until you feel comfortable again. These feelings change with different people in your life and that is perfectly okay. Our emotional boundaries are defined by how we allow others to interact with us. Are we okay with people yelling at us? How do we perceive respect?

Most importantly, it is your right to set boundaries, to change your mind about any of them and to have our decisions about what our boundaries are respected.

Why do I need boundaries?

Boundaries define who we are and how we are connected and separate from others. Boundaries give us a sense of order and control over our lives. Healthy boundaries are empowering in that they set limits on what we will and will not tolerate from others. They allow us to bounce back from situations in which our limits are violated through awareness of our own needs and how to defend those needs. Empowerment comes not only from knowing how to protect ourselves but also from knowing that we will protect ourselves.

Boundaries develop throughout the course of our lives, beginning with our earliest interactions with the world. Our caretakers can promote healthy boundaries through encouraging individuation, which is the process of developing a clear identity that is separate from the identity of the caretaker. Conversely, a caretaker can also encourage non-existent or unhealthy boundaries. Unhealthy boundaries come in a variety of forms - boundaries can be set both too close, resulting in enmeshed boundaries. Enmeshment occurs when our uniqueness and individuality are not respected. Enmeshed families demand that all members exist for one another and sacrifice themselves in the interest of sharing the same beliefs, values, and opinions. However, boundaries can also be set too far away, resulting in little connection with the outside world. In order to determine where boundaries are, we have to get close enough to others to feel their presence. We learn about our limits by testing them.

Healthy emotional boundaries lead to greater emotional health. Boundaries allow us to take care of ourselves and to defend our own beliefs, values, and needs. Boundaries allow us to say "No" to others and to act in our own best interest. Boundaries allow us to give to others without sacrificing too much of ourselves. Boundaries are highly individualized - they can be firm or flexible, close, or distant. They also vary by country and culture. Good boundaries necessitate attention and maintenance.

SETTING UP BOUNDARIES CONT.

What are the steps?

Step one is to really find out who you are. What do you love? What do you hate? How do you feel in many situations in your life? Take stock of moments when you feel angry, hurt, disrespected, powerless, bitter or offended. When you are having these emotions, you can assume that an undefined boundary may have been crossed. Define these boundaries to yourself, so that you can begin to identify your own personal boundary preferences. Everyone is different. Focus on what feels right to you.

Step two involves learning about communication and using it. There is a blog about [communication](#) where you can learn the different techniques. So, communicate clearly. Know that your feelings are no less important than anyone else's. You must gain the courage to clearly, firmly let people know that they are crossing a boundary that you do not feel comfortable with them crossing. Many times, people don't realize that they are crossing a boundary. Make sure that you bring it up to them immediately, so that they understand exactly what you are talking about. If you try to talk to them about something that happened months ago, they may not be as receptive, or even remember the instance.

Step three is to be consistent. It is very hard for human beings to unlearn behavior. Once people think that it is okay to treat you a certain way, they may need to be reminded more than once or twice that certain behavior is unacceptable to you. Stay on the course, and do not fall into old habits of excusing behavior that hurts you. We may fall into a pattern of, it's just easier to let it happen than to remind and explain about it. It will take work and people may push back but know that it will get easier. And, if you are consistent, it will happen faster.

Step four is to say, "No." Never be afraid to say no. Yes, you will feel guilty in some cases. But you must know your limits. If you give everything to everyone else, you will have little for yourself at the end of the day. If you need rest, then take your rest. If you have important plans, don't cancel them. This does not mean that you can't do favors for friends and family. It simply means that you have to give yourself permission to put yourself first when you need to. Don't feel guilty for not taking responsibility for everyone else's problems.

Lastly, step five is to give positive reinforcement. If you see that people are making changes in their behavior toward you, thank them for their support. Show them that you appreciate them for having enough respect for you to not cross your boundaries. Positive reinforcement will definitely help both of you to stay on track.

Good Luck and set some boundaries!

