



Ten Laws of Boundaries

THE LAW OF CAUSE AND EFFECT

If you smoke, you are likely to develop a smokers cough or even cancer. If you overspend, you will likely get calls from creditors, or worse, may not have money for rent or food. If you exercise regularly, you may have fewer colds and more energy. Establishing boundaries helps an individual learn the law of cause and effect and how to protect themselves in the future.

Sometimes, someone else may step in and pay that credit card bill or deliver groceries. Though this may be done with the best intentions, crossing this boundary may take ones ability to learn and grow. We must all learn to reap what we have sown on our own.

THE LAW OF RESPONSIBILITY

Setting boundaries and being responsible for ones own life is very important. It is not selfish to want to set boundaries and be the best you. However, it is important to continue to love others while also taking care of ourselves.

We cannot feel another"s feelings for them, grow for them, or learn for them - but we can support and care for others, and allow them to do the same for us.

THE LAW OF POWER

You have the power to admit when you need to make a change, without necessarily having the ability to change it yet. You have the power to ask for help. You can call a family member, friend, peer support, doctor, counselor or anyone else that you trust to help you when you need it. You have the power to make the choices that are most positive for you and your life. You have the power to set and enforce new and improved boundaries



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THE LAW OF RESPECT

When setting and enforcing boundaries, we fear others will not respect our boundaries; "They will get angry if I set limits," "They won't accept me if I say no." We may even judge others' boundaries, thinking we know what is best.

If we love and respect others who tell us no, they will then love and respect our no. Our concern should not be what others would do or what we want them to do; they are free to make their own choices.

THE LAW OF MOTIVATION

If what you are doing is taking away more than you are getting back, you are doomed to failure. Some people are motivated to do things for less healthy reasons:

- Fear of loss of love, or abandonment
- Fear of others' anger
- Fear of loneliness
- Guilt
- Payback
- Approval
- Over identification with another's loss or hardship

THE LAW OF EVALUATION

It is important to evaluate the effects of setting boundaries and be responsible to the other person, but that does not mean you should avoid setting a boundary that might hurt or anger someone else. To have boundaries is to have a purposeful life. Sometimes our actions may hurt another, as long as we are not harming them. For example, it may hurt while you are receiving treatment from the dentist but in the long run, the dentist helps, not harms. We need to evaluate the pain our new boundaries cause other people. We need to see that this hurt may possibly be helpful, and sometimes, a great thing we can do for the relationship.



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THE LAW OF PROACTIVITY

For every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction. When working towards boundary changes, it is not uncommon for some people to become very reactive: pent-up rage explodes into strong attempts to reclaim power that was lost in the past.

These reactive phases are necessary, but not sufficient for the establishment of healthy boundaries. You may need to react to find your own boundaries, but once you have found them, it is time to strengthen connections with others as equals.

THE LAW OF ENVY

Envy defines "good" as "what I do not have," and hates the other that has it. We all have envious parts to our personalities, but it becomes destructive when it keeps us perpetually insatiable and dissatisfied. It is difficult to decide what we want and need when we are focused on others. People without boundaries feel empty and unfulfilled. The time and energy they spend looking at other people could be used to take responsibility and do something about it.

THE LAW OF ACTIVITY

An important part of boundary setting is being active and doing the work. It may be hard at times, but without resistance, we cannot gain strength. Think of the example of a bird hatching from an egg. If we break the egg for the bird, it will die. The bird needs to peck its own way of the egg, into the world.



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THE LAW OF EXPOSURE

A personal boundary like is a property line: It defines where you begin and end. Your boundaries define your relation to others. In order for others to honor your boundaries, they need to be made visible and communicated with others. The path to real love is to communicate your boundaries openly.