




**GOOD LIFE
RECOVERY**

Healthy Boundaries in Recovery

Sue Diamond, M.A.
 Founder/Director Good Life Recovery
www.goodlifercovery.ca

What is a Boundary?

- ❖ It is a psychological and emotional term for knowing where you stop and someone else starts.
- ❖ It's about being connected to what you are thinking and feeling and having the ability to stay inside your own skin.
- ❖ It's about saying "no" when you mean "no" and "yes" when you mean yes.



**GOOD LIFE
RECOVERY**

Why We Need Healthy Boundaries

They create:

- ❖ a healthy sense of self.
- ❖ a respect for yourself and others.
- ❖ a sense of safety.
- ❖ a feeling of being grounded and in control.



**GOOD LIFE
RECOVERY**

Types of Healthy Boundaries

1. Boundaries around thoughts.
2. Boundaries around feelings.
3. Boundaries around behavior.
4. Boundaries around relationships- spirituality.



Thought Boundaries

So many people who struggle with addiction, also struggle with a pattern of negative thinking:

- ❖ catastrophizing
- ❖ cup half empty
- ❖ cynical
- ❖ critical
- ❖ judgmental



Emotional Boundaries

People with a predisposition to addiction often go to one of two extremes with their feelings:

- ❖ exaggerate their feelings.
- ❖ hurt, disappointment or fear take over.
- ❖ anger is acted out on others or self.

OR

- ❖ emotionally numb.
- ❖ can't feel anything; live in your head.
- ❖ other people's emotional concerns are dismissed.
- ❖ don't invest emotionally with partner.



Behavioral Boundaries

When in our addiction, our behavior is often out of control, shameful and hurtful to others.

If we are not careful, we can continue to act in similar ways in sobriety:

- ❖ being a know it all
- ❖ over controlling of others
- ❖ yelling; shaming
- ❖ breaking commitments
- ❖ isolating – won't ask for help
- ❖ act like a victim; sulk, silent scorn



Relational (Spiritual) Boundaries

Many addicts did not learn to have a healthy relationship to themselves to others, or to a Higher Power. More often they:

- ❖ put themselves down, especially when feeling vulnerable.
- ❖ refuse to support their own growth; instead focus on failure.
- ❖ struggle with true intimacy.
- ❖ resist a meaningful connection to a Higher Power.
- ❖ are toxically self-reliant.



Establishing Healthy Boundaries in Recovery

Thoughts:

1. Be conscious of what you are thinking/saying to yourself.
2. Stop all critical, cynical or catastrophic thoughts by: (imagine a stop sign; or put duct tape on the mouth of that critical voice)

Engaging in supportive self-talk:


"no, that's not true"; "I'm am worthy"; "I can do this"; "I am a good person"; "No one is perfect"
 "her/him not calling does not mean it's over".



Establishing Healthy Boundaries in Recovery

Emotions:

1. Become aware of what you are feeling and learn to "name it to tame it".
"Everyone gets hurt from time to time, I will survive."
2. Take responsibility for managing your emotions so that they are not spilling them out on everyone around you. Stop reacting.
3. Check your moods, apply self-care so others don't need to suffer: go for a walk to calm down, meditate; talk to a supportive friend.




Establishing Healthy Boundaries in Recovery

Behavior:

The road to hell was paved with good intentions:
Actions Speak Louder than Words


1. Practice being kind, even if you don't feel it.
2. Ask yourself, "Am I a bringer of harmony or disharmony?"
3. When faced with a dilemma, do the next right thing.
4. Remember to orient to 'being of service', rather than "this doesn't work for me".
5. Help others, which is the best way of helping yourself.



Establishing Healthy Boundaries in Recovery

Relationships:

1. Think about how you can be a friend to yourself.
2. Acknowledge your efforts while continuing to do better.
3. Find one person you can tell all to.
4. Get a support group where you can feel a part of.
5. Spend time in prayer and/or meditation to find how you feel a connection to something bigger than you.



Growth Task:

List one thing you will commit to doing to set:

1. A boundary around negative thinking.
2. A boundary around excessive or nonexistent emotions.
3. A boundary around hurtful behavior (self and/or others).
4. A boundary around toxic relationship patterns.