

Hello there. Thank you for joining me today, I am extremely excited about this topic today. We're talking about boundaries and creating healthy boundaries. And as a quick aside, I'll tell you that in my office here, I'm looking out my window right now and my puppies are outside, and they are staying within the boundary of our yard. And the reason that they are doing that is because we have an invisible fence. We literally have these white flags all around our yard, that mark off where they can go and where they cannot go. And I remember that I used to think that having an invisible fence was probably not the nicest thing to do for animals. And I have since changed my stance on that because it is so healthy for them to have the entire yard to run around in to be safe within and to know where not to go. They know their boundaries.

So, I thought that that was apropos that I'm watching them with their healthy boundaries, as we get to talk about healthy boundaries within our relationships with people in our lives. And this is something that we talk about a lot in coaching and in our Healthy Leader programs, because drumroll, we live in a world with other people who, just like our puppies, and just like us, have a tendency to cross boundaries, especially if they don't know what they are.

So, let's start off by defining what a boundary is. Now, when I looked it up in the dictionary, it said something that indicates a fixed limit or extent. And I like that definition because it covers three main areas, it says something, and that is you in this case, first of all, that indicates that means that there is an indication of some sort, a fixed limit or an extent that indicates a thing, an area. And the way that I'd like for you to think about your boundaries is that you are that thing you are responsible for indicating for identifying a fixed limit around an area.

Now when we think about an area in terms of my yard and the little white flags around it, it's easy to see the boundaries. There's a dividing line between my yard and then the sidewalk and where the dogs are allowed to go and where they're not allowed to go. And we can identify and understand boundaries in general that people have with their physical space with their homes with their yards with their office. And we even have signs and markings on roads and traffic signals and different ways that we indicate rules or extents or limits in our physical environment.

So, I want for you to think about that area of that physical space, like your yard or car or your office is one area. And then there's also this physical area of your body. And that is the most private and personal area that you have. And so, you have boundaries around that as well. And then there are the areas of your mind and your emotions. And this is where it starts to get a little tricky. Because nobody can see what is going on in your mind or in your heart. And you have to indicate or express what your boundaries are in terms of how you would like to interact with .

other people

And so, when you set a boundary for your physical space, your mental space, or your emotional space, you get to indicate to other people what those limits are. And this is really important because you are the one who gets to clarify your boundaries about you, not other people. And so, I'd like for you to think about your boundaries in terms of your mental, emotional, and physical limits. And this is a really important distinction because often we make our boundaries about other people and how they should behave and what they should do what they can do when they cannot do. And that is not what a boundary is. A boundary is your indication of your areas and you creating requests and circumstances around your boundaries. So, a boundary is about you and your mental emotional and physical areas and the limits that you create in your relationships so that you can take care of you.

Now this is easier said than done. Because often we are not clear about our boundaries because we don't want to rock the boat. Or we don't want other people to feel bad or we want people to like us. I was just speaking with a client who lives close to their in laws and their in laws have a habit of just dropping in whenever they want. And they just don't drop in they do that quick little baby knock and then walk in. And when they first moved there when my client first moved there, it was kind of fun. It was okay. But then it became a problem. She felt like they were interrupting their physical space, the space in their home. And she started to feel resentful about it. But she still hasn't said anything. And when I asked her why she hadn't set this boundary, she said, well, I haven't yet. And now they're used to it. And I don't want to hurt their feelings. I don't want them to think that something is wrong, or that something has changed. But I do you want to set my boundary. And by not saying anything, really what she is doing is she's hurting their relationship, because she said, I can even feel myself feeling resentful when we've invited them over. Like, the way that I'm thinking about them has changed, because I feel like they are violating my boundaries. So, as we talked about it, she realized that they were not violating any boundaries, because she had not indicated them. So, she needs to be clear, we need to be clear about what those boundaries are and indicate them and communicate them.

So that brings us to the formula for creating healthy boundaries. And I want you to just remember, QRS, that's the formula right there. Q R S, and the Q stands for question. The R stands for request. And then the S stands for setting boundaries, Q R. S. So, let's start with the Q in terms of the question. And the way I want you to think about this is there's no question it is crystal clear as to what your boundary is. And that means that you need to be clear about what your boundary is. And in the instance, with the in laws coming in the boundary is the door, the physical door, and to

not cross that physical boundary. And so, you might also have a physical boundary for your office space. And then of course, there's the physical boundary of your body. And this is a big one, and in the post COVID area in terms of touch and hugging and shaking hands. And I was just experiencing this when I was at church this past weekend. And one of the things that we do at the end of the service is we all gather around, hold hands, and sing the peace song. Now, sometimes even before COVID, people were not comfortable with that. And so, they would back out of the circle and just stand in the back. And now post COVID, during COVID, whatever you want to call it, maybe there are people who used to be okay with it, but they're not okay anymore, we have to be clear about what is okay with us and set those physical boundaries. I absolutely love, love, love the connection at the end of church and, and singing that song with other people. And when I went back, I was thinking, Am I okay with this, and I needed to make a new decision about what I wanted to do in terms of holding hands.

So, the first piece of this is within ourselves is to have no question about what the boundary is. Because if we don't know what the boundary is, then we certainly cannot do the second step, which is to request for someone to honor our boundaries. So, we have to make sure that there is no question that we are clear within ourselves about what our boundaries are. And that brings us to the second part, which is to make a request to have the courage to request that someone honor our boundaries. And again, that's easier said than done, because it's not always easy to let people know what your boundaries are. And there are a lot of ways to make requests, you can say it out loud, or you can be a little more subtle about it. And the church example, I can make it clear that I am not going to hold hands by walking to the back of the room, I don't need to say out loud, I'm going to request that you not hold my hand, I just move away. And then also in a similar example, through the churches that you know, everybody likes to hug. And so, I can make it clear. If I want to that I'm not going to hug someone by waving ahead of time or putting my hand out to shake their hand. And that is a way to make a request without saying again out loud. No thanks. Please don't hug me, I prefer that you not hug me.

I also had a battalion commander when I was in the military who would use silence really well, to make requests. We would be in a staff meeting, and he would be talking, and somebody would interrupt or interject or say something and all he would do is stop talking. He would just wait. And it became very clear very quickly that he did not want to be interrupted. He didn't have to say I would like to make a request that you stop interrupting me when I'm talking. But very naturally, just by being silent when he was interrupted people would pick up on the fact that that was a request that he would make. And the great thing about the way that he did it is that he wasn't giving them the evil eye or had a disgusted look on his face. He was simply stop. Listen to what

they were saying. He might even take a few notes and he might even didn't say I will definitely get to that. But then he would continue on with what he was saying. So, I thought that was a great example for how you can make a request without having to verbally articulated.

Now, he easily could have made that request, I'd like to request that you wait until I'm done before you speak. And that's totally fine. And it's interesting that often in military speak, when we are in meetings, we're doing zoom calls now. And I'm working with veterans and a military person will be talking when they're done talking, they'll say over. And that indicates that they are done talking. And I love that because it makes it really clear when they are done. And I want to bring that into the civilian world so that we all can practice setting boundaries around not interrupting one another and just say over. And then an example of the in-laws and example request would be, we'd like to request that you knock on the door and not just come in and just wait for us to answer the door. Or better yet, we would love it if you could call before you even come to the door, or what however you would like to define it.

So, making a request is extremely powerful. It's powerful, because it takes courage for you to say out loud, or to indicate what your boundaries are. And this is something that many of us choose not to do, because it's so much easier to just be resentful about people interrupting us or be resentful about our in laws coming over and to just kind of moan about that, versus having the courage to say what our boundaries are. And in order to make that request, you again, have to know what they are, there has to be no question to what those boundaries are.

And the key concept that I want to highlight here is the difference between being powerful and being forceful. Making a request is really powerful. It comes from self-awareness, self-respect, courage, confidence, that is very different than being forceful. Being forceful sounds like do not interrupt me do not come over to my house without knocking. And sometimes we resort to force because we are so annoying, or so exasperated, that we're just like don't do that. And so, if we have the courage to create a request at the get go, then we don't have to resort to that force, we don't have to go to that extreme. So, making requests is extremely powerful. So that's the second part of having healthy boundaries.

And then the third piece is to actually set the boundary. That's the S and the QRS. And setting a boundary is all about communicating it properly, and then also following through. And what we're doing here is being clear about our consequences. So, I'm going to take a moment here to take the energy out of the word consequences, the definition of a consequence is great, it is the result, or the effect of an action or condition, that's it, I'm going to say that, again, it's just the result, or the

effect of an action or a condition. And so, if we talk about consequences like that, it's just the result. It's just black and white, we just keep it very clean. And I want you to think about it like that, as well. It's just a simple statement that allows you to make your boundaries clear, there's no drama, it's just a statement.

And this is where the power comes in, instead of being forceful. And so, this is the formula that we can use to set a boundary. And we only need to set the boundary if our requests are not honored. If we said Hey, we'd really like for you to call before you come in or not before you come in, and then they don't and they keep quote unquote violating that boundary. Now it's your opportunity to set your boundaries. And so, the formula goes like this, if X then I will A and the X stands for if this happens in the external environment, then I will A I will take this action. If this happens, then I will take this action.

So, for example, if you raise your voice, then I will leave the room. If you come over without calling first, then we're not going to answer the door. If the client continues to berate my team, then I will have one discussion with them and then I will terminate the contract. So, you can see that it is just a very simple if X then I will take a particular action. And this is an important part to setting boundaries. If this thing happens in the external environment, then what I will do is this, that's very clean. It's simple. It's black and white. And it's a great way to take the drama out of the situation. It truly is that simple. And it is very easy to use that formula to not just set a boundary but to try to manipulate and so I want to be sure that we are distinguishing between setting a boundary versus manipulating or threatening people.

So, there's a difference between if you raise your voice, then I'm going to leave and if you raise your voice at me, then I'm going to leave. You see the difference. The intention there is for me to get you to lower your voice. That's a threat. I'm talking and saying do something, I'm still using that formula. If you do X, then I'm going to leave, but I'm doing it in a way that is trying to get you to change your behavior. I can also do that in the inline example by saying, if you keep coming into my house, then I'm going to lock the door. Very different, same formula, but the energy is extremely different.

So, we want to be really clear about the way that we use the formula and that we're doing that not to threaten or manipulate people. But just to be really clear about what our boundaries are. Notice that the boundaries have those two parts, if X happens, which is dependent on the environment, then I will do this, that is a boundary, and the focus is on how I will respond. And that is very, very different than using a threat. When we set a boundary, it's about us what we are going to do, when

we use the formula to make a threat, we're just trying to manipulate what other people do. And there's a lot of negative energy around that. And it's easy to use a formula to do that. So, I love using the word consequence on purpose to remind myself that setting boundaries can be difficult, and it can be hard to do. But really what we're doing here is being truthful and clear about the only thing that we really can control and that is ourselves, we're being clear about the consequences about what we will do in our results. And when we threaten, the emphasis is on the other people and their behavior, and we are then focused on them and not on us.

And a great example of this from the last episode, we were talking about manuals, and how we have manuals for other people I was discussing my kids and how, when they were younger, the rule was that there were no phones at the table while they were eating. So if I am going to set a healthy consequence or healthy boundary around that, then I would say, hey, listen, if you're going to bring your phone to the table, which you can do, if you want to, I want you to know that I'm going to take them away, that's very different energy than if you bring the phone to the table one more time that I'm going to take it away from you. Same formula, different energy. So, you can see that the energy is really different. And it impacts your relationship and impacts the way that you feel and how it feels to set a boundary.

So, the second key part to setting a boundary is having follow through once you set your boundary you absolutely 100% have to follow through. And that is why those first two parts of setting boundaries, the Q and the R, because you're there's no question that you've made, the request is so important, you have to be clear about what it is that you want and what is right for you. In certain relationships, you're going to have different boundaries and different relationships. So, there's got to be no question, you get to spend time thinking about them and deciding what those boundaries are. And then give people the courtesy of sharing them through requests, whether it is verbally or non-verbally. And then when people choose to ignore or forget or not follow through on your boundaries, then you are responsible for following through on your action. And that means that you take the phone away, that you lock the door that you release the client. And this is where it can get uncomfortable, and also extremely empowering. And it is great for your relationships.

It is going to be uncomfortable. When you're in laws ask after all this time, now you're locking the door. And in that moment when the question mark is hanging there in the air, that precise moment is where you get to muster all of your compassion and all of your courage and lovingly say, I understand it's different than it was. It is really important for us to have privacy as a family, I hope that you can understand. And in that moment, you are clear that there is no question about



what it is that you want, and you've made a request and you've set a boundary. And even in the midst of the awkwardness, I want you to know that that will also feel really good and just extremely empowering, because you have followed through on what is important to you and have created a boundary that truly is the best for you.

And this is great for your relationship with your in laws and your spouse and your children. Because now you are telling the truth you are modeling healthy boundaries and healthy relationships and setting boundaries in one area makes it much easier to set boundaries and others in that same relationship and then also gives you practice doing it in other relationships and when you create healthy boundaries, it creates space for trust and intimacy that cannot exist when there is anger and resentment.

So that is the formula for setting healthy boundaries if X then I will A if this happens then I will take this action. Now I have given you a simple formula to create healthy boundaries. And I like to say that simple does not mean easy. And it certainly does not. Setting boundaries takes practice. So, I encourage you to start small. Think about a situation that you currently have in your life where you would like to set a healthy boundary and go through this process of question request and setting and go through this process of ensuring that there's no question as to what your boundaries are, and then request as necessary when you need and walk through this QRS process for creating healthy boundaries. Make sure that you're clear about your own boundaries, that there's no question what they are, and then practice creating requests. And then properly setting your boundaries.

Not setting healthy boundaries is one of the biggest ways that we, unknowingly sabotage our relationships, and we also self-sabotage, we create drama, and we spend a lot of energy focusing on other people, and what they should do and how they should behave and what they should be doing. When really and truly, we can use that energy to focus on what we can control. And that is us. We use this concept of creating and setting healthy boundaries as a tool to lead ourselves and being able to set healthy boundaries sets us up ahead of time to do just that, to be the best version of ourselves in all of our relationships, no matter what people are doing, whether they are honoring your request or not.

So now you have the formula for creating boundaries, healthy boundaries in your relationships. So, try it out, start small. And remember that this is a practice, and I would love to support you in that practice. So, I want to let you know that we are getting ready to open up our Healthy Leader Inner Circle to all leaders. We used to have the program just open to private clients and clients

that I've worked with in corporate teams. And this summer, we are opening it up to everyone so be on the lookout for that. If you'd like to get on the waitlist for the Inner Circle, send us an email at [hello@thewellness.coach](mailto:hello@thewellness.coach) so you can be the first one to know so go forth and create use your leadership skills your mind your heart and your actions to create healthy boundaries, healthy relationships, and the most amazing life that you absolutely deserve.

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