

The Cosmic Gatekeeper – Learning to Control Who and What Enters Your Life

You are the guardian of your mind, your body, your heart, and your soul. Only you have the power to decide who and what may enter your world.

(Process Watch: Intelligent Decision Making, Brutal Honesty, I Over E, Internal Focus)

Think about how many times we all say that someone made us angry, made us do something that we didn't want to do, or has ruined our day? Have you noticed how often we all hand over control of our mood, the way we are thinking, and the way we behave to someone else? We spent so much time making sure that we don't surrender that stubborn will of ours, but we quickly surrender control over our own minds as we allow other people to exert their unhealthy influence over us.

In the Cosmic Universe

There is only one unique version of the person who we are. It then, is we, who must become advocates for our own personal well-being. We must be the gatekeepers of our personal, universal world, our own cosmic gatekeepers. We must understand that it is we who and what decide who gets into our world, and who and what stays out of our world.

Dastardly Threats

The world in which we live is full of toxic people and events; those people, places, and things who can enter our lives, and wreak havoc there. Elementary science lessons tell us that even one drop of toxin can have a drastic effect on the purity of an ecosystem. Our internal balance, that is our physical, intellectual, emotional, spiritual attributes represent our personal ecosystem. Even the smallest threats can upset that balance, introducing conflicts, anxiety, somatic difficulties, and emotional unrest. It is so important that we tenaciously guard who and what enters our complex, interconnected network; our Process Way of Life.

Red Flags and the Process Stop Signs

Very often, we have an idea when some person or event should not enter our world. Referring right back to our internal balance attributes, when this happens, we may experience some physical unrest, intellectually we may feel a bit conflicted, emotionally, here comes the anxiety, and spiritually we seem a bit disconnected. Any of these can be a red flag that some person or event should be kept at a distance. Red flags exist for a reason. Not everyone will do well in our own personal ecosystem. Our Process Way of Life is designed around balance, and toxic people and events simply have no reason to be there. So, while guarding your personal cosmic universe, scrutinize potential entrants carefully. If you feel unrest on any level, back up a bit, and rethink the situation. This doesn't mean the person cannot gain admission into your world, it simply means that you need to slow down a bit before you make that happen.

Protecting the Journey

As we proceed in our Process Way of Life, we're going to be making plans that will bring us to our goals, and enhance the quality of our journey. Doing our best to ensure that the owners of the red flags don't penetrate what is becoming a healthy and productive way of living is one of the hallmarks of the program. As one ounce of toxin can be poisonous to the purity of any system, one person or event that we allow to become part of our life can have the same effect. We are working the Process Way of Life program for living. We are ridding ourselves of what does not belong in our lives, we are improving on what we already have, and we have goals regarding what we want to accomplish. We simply cannot allow anyone to interfere with the quality, productivity, and enjoyment of our journey.

Remember, our processes help us learn to trust ourselves, and that depends so much on becoming and staying internally balanced. We want our physical, intellectual, emotional, and spiritual attributes to be as unaffected as possible by external forces. For those of us who are going to be successful in developing and maintaining our happiness, our powers of thought, and our ability to maximize our potential, we need to understand that in this vast cosmic universe, we must become tenacious gatekeepers, protecting our existence from those potentially destructive foreign powers which may threaten our own individual perfection. Never do we follow the broken path of negativity. Never do we incorporate faulty ways of thinking and behaving into our lives. Those negative people, places, and events we see in others are serious growth inhibitors. We avoid them like the deadly process-killing plagues they are.

One of the attributes we are working so hard to acquire is our own internal control. We are doing our level best to reduce the suppressive effects which the external world may have on us. We do not want the external world to control the way we feel, and in the end, the way we behave. We, being the masters of our own destiny, choose who and what may be part of our world, and those who are to be quickly dispatched from our lives. We must always hold ourselves accountable for the way we think, and subsequently the way we behave. We, with open arms, extend loving invitations to those who are a positive influence in our lives, and we quickly remove those who are not. This is just one more important way we love ourselves, and protect the person we are becoming.

Let's Get Functional

- First, we make conscious decisions regarding what types of people and events we want to include in our lives.
- Second, we may include those who meet our specifications, and refuse entrance to those who don't.
- Third, we make every attempt to include positive people and situations in our world. Positive inclusions always yields positive results. Those that are negative, conversely, create negativity.

- Fourth, gatekeeping helps us establish the boundaries we need to keep our lives positive, and productive. Know how you want to live, and who and what can support your plan.
- Fifth, to love yourself, is to protect yourself. Give no one permission to steal who you are from you. Love yourself enough to tenaciously protect yourself from toxic people and events.

Nailing It Down – Next Up

We alone choose who and what gets in, and who and what stays out. We make these decisions based upon our love for the person we are, and our willingness to accept the responsibility to protect that person at all costs. We were born perfect, and our decision to stay perfect, in part, rests on our choice to become our own cosmic, loving gatekeeper. The mantra is: my journey; my way. Next up: Setting personal boundaries is good, but how about learning to defend those boundaries? Here's how.

Chapter 20

Out of Bounds – Setting Boundaries, and learning How to Defend Them

They come and they go. They love to rearrange the parameters of our lives. They are the boundary thieves. Remove your lines from the sand, and take your life back.

(Process Watch: Intelligent Decision Making, Slowing Down Life's Pace, I Over E, Conflict Resolution, Truth Telling)

One of the most difficult concepts to understand regarding our human existence is where we end, and another person begins. Every human being is a distinct and unique life. Our thoughts, decisions, and, behaviors belong to us, and other people should not have the right to willfully impact upon our lives without our permission. All of us have boundaries, and some of us are better at defending them than others. Our goal in this chapter is to understand how to establish those boundaries, how to communicate them to others, how to defend them when necessary, and how to change them for healthy reasons.

Personal boundaries are necessary for all of us. They openly communicate how far we are willing to extend ourselves with any person, and in any given situation. Boundary thievery is what occurs when others, usually against our wishes, or without our understanding of what they are doing, violate those boundaries, pushing past and into our own personal space. Let's call boundaries personally set limitations. When we define a boundary in our personal life, it is there either to help us define how far we are willing to move in any direction, or we establish them for others to see, and respect. We use boundaries as a way of telling others not to move past those limitations. We incorporate boundaries into our lives primarily for emotional and intellectual safety, or mere personal preferences. In some instances, physical safety is also part of the plan.

What's Mine, Stays Mine

All of us have information about ourselves which we like to keep personal, and away from the sightlines of other people. The magnitude of the boundary typically differs depending on how much trust we have in the other person. Boundaries differ from personal walls in that we tend to be very conscious of what our boundaries are. Walls can be unconscious, as we will see later in our presentation. Most of the time, we can communicate our boundaries to significant others in our lives. Also, most of the time, those significant others are respectful, and they will not cross our boundaries. Sometimes, however they are not.

Establishing boundaries can support our four balanced life attributes. There are intellectual boundaries in which information about ourselves is something we prefer that others not know. There are emotional boundaries where we are protecting our feelings, and we're not as willing to share those with others, since they may leave us open and vulnerable. Physical boundaries are often interpreted as not being touched when one does not want to be touched, and in a way that one does not want to be touched. However, a physical boundary can simply mean a defined amount of space that we prefer others not violate. Lastly, there are spiritual boundaries. We don't always set up boundaries that are spiritual, but they may include not allowing verbal spiritual attacks, etc.

The Secretary of Defense, and Healthy Boundary Expansion

It would be foolhardy to think that just because we set boundaries, others are going to cooperate with them. The rest of the world is not always making a commitment to grow along with us. Just because we're setting boundaries doesn't mean they are going to respect them. In fact, the reverse is often true. Boundaries tell us that we can't do something. We tend to not work with limitations very well. So, keep in mind, as you are setting boundaries; you automatically take on the role of defender of those boundaries. Setting a boundary is only the first step in the process. It's important to you, and it's a healthy decision to make, but other people cannot be counted on to be part of your plan. This may occur inadvertently, or they may very consciously choose to violate your boundary. At the very least, they may try to help you to expand it to accommodate their desires. The rule of thumb here is quite simple. If you are setting a boundary, the only time that boundary changes if you, yourself, decide to change it. We don't establish a boundary only to have someone else tear it down. When this happens, it's a clear indication to them that their assault can work, and they will try it again. If you're going to change a boundary, give it some thought first, and have a plan to do so. It's something we call a healthy boundary expansion.

Healthy boundary expansion is something that we should only do because consciously, we want to. It's a choice that has us altering a previous plan. We put that plan into place for a reason. If we are now working without that plan, either we don't need the plan anymore, or we have surrendered it against our will. Peer pressures, relationship issues, our own personal insecurities, fears and risks, and a variety of other motivators can cause us to either expand or eliminate a boundary under pressure. The pressure to expand a boundary is a naturally occurring phenomenon with its energy coming both from inside of us, and from other people. The choice to expand the boundary is not the problem. Doing so under pressure and doing so without a plan is an entirely different story. If you're going to expand a personally set boundary, do so only because you absolutely want to. Don't let someone talk you into it, and never allow someone to pressure you into making a choice that runs counter to a limit you have previously set. You set that limit for a reason.

Don't let someone force you to go in a different direction just because they want you to do so. If you want to make that choice, that's up to you. However, if you're going to do so, take it back to your processes, think it through, make sure that the reason that you are making the change is healthy, and have a plan to move forward. Use your intellect, be honest with yourself, go slow, and get the facts. Move forward only when you feel comfortable about your decision. It's what we call a healthy boundary expansion program. This is moving past our boundaries the right way. Boundaries don't have to be set in stone. In fact, they change as we change. It can be a healthy part of personal growth. We just need to be sure we're setting the parameters, and that they are right for us.

Tell-Tale Signs

How do we know if expanding a boundary is healthy or whether it may hurt us? Anytime we make a change, that process of change will impact on us physically, intellectually, emotionally, and spiritually, on differing levels. So, if you're expanding a boundary and the choice may not be a very good one, expect some conflict and anxiety about the decision. Emotionally, we might be feeling some fear and insecurity. Physically, we can expect increases in restlessness and anxiety. Spiritually, we tend to be pulled away from the peaceful part of our existence. We may experience some inner unrest. Expanding boundaries is not a problem, and in fact, as we grow, it's a very natural progression. Boundaries are normally set at certain times in our lives because that's what we needed at that time. As we grow, however, we change the magnitude and the scope of those boundaries to coincide more realistically with our capabilities now. So, a decision to change a boundary should reflect growth, better understanding of self, and increases in personal security, and self-esteem.

Boundaries in Balance

So, how do we set efficient boundaries? Again, we're going to use our four attributes (physical, intellectual, emotional, spiritual) to make our decisions. Physically, we incorporate boundaries into our lives to protect our bodies. No one should have the right to touch us unless we are giving them permission. Additionally, we never allow anyone to restrain us, strike us, or be physically violent with us in any fashion. We must also make decisions about those whom we have decided may touch us and how they make touch, even if our boundary thieves are well-meaning. Intellectually, remember that our brains are storehouse of information. We will invariably have boundaries which surround what information we keep inside, and what information we allow to become public. This is a simple conscious evaluative process where we decide how much we want to talk about ourselves or anything about us that we believe is important. Emotionally, we all have feelings, and those feelings need to be respected. So, it's important to establish how much of your emotions you are going to surrender to someone. Lastly, the spiritual part of us is usually where we find our inner peace. It's hard to keep inner peace stable when boundaries are being violated, and anxiety and conflict are entering your world.

There are some general rules we all should live by regarding setting healthy boundaries. It's important to understand what you think and how you feel about the people in our lives. We have specific thoughts about people, places, and things, and we feel certain ways about them. These feelings are often formulated using our I Over E formula, as we saw in Chapter 3. Applied here, we already have formulated feelings about others which came from the facts we previously gathered about the people in our lives. From this information we establish how far we are willing

to go with others, and how close we are going to let them become with us. It's almost impossible to set boundaries without understanding both the way we feel about ourselves, and the information and feelings which we are protecting. This doesn't mean that you must know everything about yourself. Boundaries can be all-encompassing like morality and honesty, or they can be very specific and may reflect thoughts or feelings about specific subjects or people. Simply ask yourself how you think, and what you feel in certain situations, and begin applying your boundaries there. If you feel any anxiety, unrest, or question if what you're doing is the right decision to make, you need to slow down, reevaluate the information, and decide how you're going to move ahead.

Boundary establishment and defense take time. We need time to think, to plan, and finally to execute. Never go fast with your boundaries. In fact, that's how the boundary thieves tear down your boundaries. They try to make you go too fast. Always verbalize your boundaries. Let others close to you know where you stand, and how far you're willing to go regarding a specific matter. Try selecting a few people in your life who are important to you, and begin the process with them. Start with those close to you and tell them what you think, how you feel, and how far you're willing to go in any situation. This will help you to start setting your boundaries with safe people, and in safe places. You can branch out to others from there. The last step in the process is to enforce the boundary. Again, the world doesn't always cooperate, and we know this. We'll need to enforce what we have verbalized. That doesn't mean you have to scream at people or become angry with them. It simply means that you'll need to re-verbalize your initial assertion, and let the other people know you are unwilling to move from that point. Then, don't move. If others feel that you are an easy mark, and that you can be swayed to abandon your boundary, they will continue to make attempts to help you reset your boundaries according to their needs. Relax though; they usually give up once they see that you aren't the push-over they thought you were. These are your boundaries, not theirs. Let's keep it that way.

Let's Get Functional

- First, we set boundaries for a reason. If something is important to you, be willing to protect it.
- Second, examine the information that's important to you, set your boundaries based on that information, and then verbalize your boundaries, in no uncertain terms, to others. Keep in mind that the strength of your verbalization will communicate how important that boundary is to you.
- Third, no one has the right to violate your boundary, but do expect that this will happen. Be ready to defend what you are verbalizing. Simply reiterate your point, let the boundary thieves know that there will be no movement, and that you are happy right where you are.
- Fourth, from time to time, you may choose to stretch your boundaries. Make that a part of your personal growth, and a conscious decision after a review of the necessary information.
- Fifth, understand that if you are stretching a boundary which may work against you, you will feel the negative charges coming from your physical, intellectual, emotional, and spiritual attributes. If this happens, reevaluate the information.

- Sixth, if you are going to allow a boundary thief to violate your boundary, be ready to accept the consequences that come with relinquishing control of that part of your life to someone who is being insensitive enough to take it from you.
- Seventh, don't feel guilty about refuting a boundary thief. Really, they'll get over it.
- Eighth, if you're going to stretch a boundary, have a plan to do so, one that protects you, and one that also allows you to enjoy the new territory that will become part of your life. Always refer it back to your processes.

Nailing It Down – Next Up

Boundaries do serve a very important purpose in our lives. They teach others that they must respect us, and they help us to respect ourselves. Make your boundaries a result of good information gathering. Good boundary setting, and defense of those boundaries has the added luxury of helping us to realize that we are important, and that if we are willing to treat ourselves as such, others will also. The mantra is: my space; my rules. Next up: The way we use language is so important, both to us, and in our communication with others. We're going to learn a bit about how to use language to help us create the person we want to be.