

Boundaries in Relationships Resources: A Review

A boundary is a personal line indicating what we are responsible for and what we are not. Lack of boundaries in relationships leads to confusion and pain, especially when one person has unreasonable expectations of the other. Romantic illusions that the right person will automatically solve all our problems and take away all our unhappiness inevitably lead to disappointment and frustration. Healthy relationships require us to set and communicate healthy boundaries, balancing both freedom and responsibility. Failure to do so may lead to resentment and bitterness. A lack of healthy boundaries is also evident when we unfairly blame other people for our problems or act like a victim. Dr. Henry Cloud and Dr. John Townsend have written a number of books and created resources to help us understand and apply this important concept. These materials may be purchased at the website www.cloudtownsend.com/Boundaries (click on Store under Quick Links in upper right-hand corner) or at bookstores or online booksellers. Companion workbooks are available for group or individual study.

Boundaries in Marriage: Understanding the Choices That Make or Break Relationships, by Dr. Henry Cloud and Dr. John Townsend (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1999) This Biblically-based material emphasizes how freedom and responsibility can help couples grow in their marriages. Relationships are strengthened when the individuals in them understand the consequences of their actions; take responsibility for their own feelings, attitudes, values, and behavior; realize that while they cannot change the other, they can influence the other by changing their own behavior; demonstrate respect for each other; make choices based on love, not on fear; take action to solve problems based on their values, wants, and needs; communicate clearly; and listen compassionately.

Boundaries in Marriage Workbook: Understanding the Choices That Make or Break Relationships, by Dr. Henry Cloud and Dr. John Townsend (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000) A companion piece to the authors' book with the same name, which was published in 1999, this workbook provides reflection questions to help those reading the book apply its teachings to themselves and their relationships. "Boundaries are basically about self-control. Boundaries are not something you 'set on' another person. Boundaries are about yourself." (page 24) This workbook would be very effective for use by individuals, couples, or small groups.

Boundaries in Marriage curriculum kit, by Dr. Henry Cloud and Dr. John Townsend (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan), available for purchase at the website www.cloudtownsend.com. A Leader's Guide and DVD with video segments for eight one-hour group sessions helps couples learn about the boundaries that can "make or break a relationship."

Boundaries with Kids: How Healthy Choices Grow Healthy Children, by Dr. Henry Cloud and Dr. John Townsend (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1998) The authors provide guidance for raising your children to take responsibility for their actions, attitudes, and emotions. Readers can learn how to set limits while still being a loving parent, to bring control to an out-of-control family life, and to define appropriate boundaries and consequences for your children. The last chapter walks parents through the steps of making a plan, presenting it to the child, negotiating, and following through.

Boundaries: When to say YES, How to say NO to take control of your life, by Dr. Henry Cloud and Dr. John Townsend (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2008) Having clear boundaries is essential to a healthy, balanced lifestyle. A boundary, a personal line delineating those things for which we are responsible, may be physical, mental, emotional, and/or spiritual. The authors offer biblically-based guidance on setting healthy boundaries with our parents, spouses, children, friends, co-workers, and even with ourselves. (Amazon review)

Beyond Boundaries: Learning to Trust Again in Relationships, by Dr. John Townsend (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011) Whether you're trying to restore a current relationship or begin a new one, Townsend gives practical tools for establishing trust and finding the intimacy you long for. *Beyond Boundaries* will help you reinstate closeness with someone who broke your trust; discern when true change has occurred; reestablish appropriate connections in strained relationships; create a safe environment that helps you trust; and restore former relationships to a healthy dynamic. (Amazon review)

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