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# Internal Boundaries - The Key to Emotional Balance

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"It was vitally important for me to learn how to have internal boundaries so that I could lovingly parent (which, of course, includes setting boundaries for) my inner children, tell the critical parent/disease voice to shut up, and start accessing the emotional energy of Truth, Beauty, Joy, Light, and Love. It was by learning internal boundaries that I could begin to achieve some integration and balance in my life, and transform my experience of life into an adventure that is enjoyable and exciting most of the time."

Quote from Codependence: The Dance of Wounded Souls{xtypo\_info}

The first time I am conscious of hearing the term "internal boundaries" was in a Co-Dependents Anonymous meeting sometime in 1990 or 91. It resonated with me at the time as being an important term. It wasn't until a few years later that I really started focusing on the concept and how it could be applied to recovery from childhood wounding.

Now, as I look back, I can see that internal boundaries were the key from the beginning. Internal boundaries could also be described as self-discipline or taking responsibility or growing up. They are what is necessary for any real growth to occur. It is necessary for an alcoholic to start having internal boundaries in order to stop drinking - for anyone to stop any addictive, compulsive, or obsessive behavior.

In order to start changing our behavior it is necessary to have an internal boundary with the child in us who wants immediate gratification/immediate relief from the feelings. In order to change what we are doing so we can change what we are getting - it is necessary to start having some internal boundaries with ourselves.

Terms like self-discipline or responsibility carried for me the shame and guilt of the dysfunctional society I grew up in - whereas internal boundaries was a much cleaner term, and a much more accurately focused term. I came to focus on internal boundaries in my private therapy practice and in my personal recovery - and found application of the concept to be powerful and effective in starting to help myself and others become more integrated and balanced.

The key, in terms of the concept of internal boundaries as I use it and apply it, is to set those boundaries from a loving place instead of from a shaming and judgmental place. We all learned to try to control our behavior and feelings with shame, guilt, and fear because those were the tools used in our society. The critical parent voice is the part of us that is

attempting to have internal boundaries through shame, criticism, and fear of consequences.

To set internal boundaries from shame and fear is dysfunctional in the long term. When we try to control our behavior out of shame and fear it doesn't work because we end up rebelling against that attempted control. We rebel by acting out in the self abusive ways that we are shaming ourselves for in the first place. Thus the codependent cycle of shame, blame, and self abuse is fed by the very shame and fear messages that we are using to try to stop it.

The reason we rebel is because when we are shaming and abusing ourselves we are betraying ourselves - and on some deep level we know that is not right. The rebel in us fights against this self abuse - but at the same time because we are reacting out of dysfunctional programming, the rebel within has become allied with the very addictions and dysfunctional behavior we are trying to stop with the shame. On the highest level the rebel within is trying to get us to be True to our True self - but because of our dysfunctional programming, it identifies the ways we learned to protect and nurture ourselves, the ways we learned to go unconscious to the pain, as our ally instead of as self abusive behaviors.

Part of the task in recovery, is to learn to realign our defense system with healing and Love instead of with self destruction. We need to retrain the rebel to fight the good fight on behalf of what is healthy and aligned with growth - instead of aligned with unconsciousness.

This is part of the process of learning to be our own best friend, our own protector, our own Loving parent. By learning how to have internal boundaries we can fight the good fight in a way that serves us instead of hurts us.

When we get into recovery, we are given access to a new tool box. A tool box full of tools that work in our best interest. A big part of making progress in recovery is transitioning from using our old tool box - the tools we learned growing to cope with the pain and go unconscious - to learning how to use the new tools.

This of course, is possible because we are becoming more conscious of our inner process. We are observing ourselves enough to start understanding our patterns and triggers. As we raise our consciousness and become aware of our reactions, we can begin to consciously start setting internal boundaries out of Love rather than fear and shame.

Those boundaries include: a boundary within the mental to help us tell the critical parent voice to shut up and start owning our power to reprogram our intellectual paradigm and change our perspective on our self and life; a boundary between the mental and emotional so that we can learn to feel and release the feelings while not buying into the false beliefs; a boundary within the emotional so that we can start discerning with more clarity which emotional reactions coming from the wounded parts of us - and which are intuitive messages from our Spirit; and boundaries that help us separate being from behavior, so that we can start affirming our worth as beings while recognizing that we can change any behavior that is dysfunctional, any behavior patterns that do not work to help us be happy and enjoy life.

Go to Co-creation, empowerment, and self-Love through Conscious Internal Boundaries