

# Setting Boundaries with Inner Children

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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."

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

I have had many people ask me what I mean when I refer to setting boundaries for my inner children. People who have asked for examples, for how it looks on a practical level to set a boundary with an inner child.

Several years ago, when I first had a crude web site of 30 or so pages of content explaining my beliefs and my perspective on both the disease and the recovery process, I would get e-mails from people asking me for further explanations. I started getting so many e-mails that answering them was taking too much time and energy. I knew that I had to take some action to take care of myself and to set some boundaries about where I expended my time and energy.

One day while I was working on a reply to a person who had written saying that it would really help to have an concrete and explicit example of how to set a boundary with an inner child, an interesting thing happened that is a perfect illustration of how my process works - and how I apply 12 step principles in my process.

I was trying to figure out a simple, easy way to explain the process, and my writing just was not flowing. So I gave up.

Actually what I did was work my program. I have found that when I am feeling blocked, when I catch myself trying to force the process when it is not flowing, that I need to let go. I needed to let go of my belief that I had to answer that question right there and then. I needed to accept that it was not flowing and be willing to let go of what I wanted to happen so that I could be open to seeing what the Universe had in store for me.

So, I closed my word processing document, took a deep breath and asked for guidance. This has been a very valuable tool for me in my process. I let go of my expectations, my agenda, take a deep breath to get myself into my body in the moment. Once I am present in the now - instead of caught up in trying to control how my day is unfolding - then I will get a message from the Universe about what my Higher Power's plan is for the next thing for me to do.

In this case, I noticed a book and tape set that I had packaged ready to ship off to England. So, I decided to take a walk to the post office to mail the package and check my mail. As I was walking to the post office I was observing what was going on around me and within me - just being in the moment observing.

I got an idea during that walk to start posting question and answer pages on my site. Then I could address the questions in a way that would be helpful to more than just the person who had asked - thus utilizing my time and energy in a more efficient manner. (Today, with close to 150 pages of content on my site, I can refer people to specific pages that may help them - but I still budget 8 to 10 hours a week for answering e-mail.)

As the idea appeared and took shape in my mind, a perfect example of setting some internal boundaries took place in my inner process. I got the answer to the dilemma about how to take care of myself in relationship to e-mail questions - and internally then had to set some boundaries in relationship to the idea. (This process is so fascinating and magical sometimes, I really Love it - most of the time.)

So, I am walking to the post office exploring the idea of this new type of web page and the following interaction took place within me (in my inner reality these are fleeting thoughts rather than a formal conversation.)

ego/critical parent: "Your giving away all of this information for free and meanwhile you can't even pay your rent. That's really stupid"

Magical thinking inner child (who believes in fairy tales): "Oh, but we're going to be rewarded. All kinds of good things are going to happen - including getting a lot of money."

Adult on Spiritual Path: "Now, settle down you two. In the first place, it is very important and wonderful to give away what I have been given - that is how to keep the energy flowing - and that is what works, it is what I need to do for me/us. And I am going to do it because it feels good, it feels right - like the next thing in front of me to do. We'll worry about the rent when it is time to pay the rent - for today, for this moment, we will do what feels right for today. And I need to tell you that our reward may just be to feel good about what we're doing - and if that is all there is, that is still a wonderful gift. On top of that we are getting positive feedback from all over - and that is a great bonus. There may never be a lot of money, but that is not important. There is enough money for today. And we are very blessed to have something to do today that is fulfilling and makes us happy."

So I set a boundary with the critical parent by not buying into the criticism, I set a boundary with my inner child by not building up expectations of some kind of reward, and I work my recovery program by focusing on the half of the glass that is full (my needs that have been met) and being grateful for the gifts I have been given, instead of allowing the disease to focus on fear and scarcity, on the half that is empty (my wants that have not been met.)

The purpose of doing the inner child healing work is to improve the quality of my life today - not to reach a destination or reward. Today, I have choices about how I respond to my internal process. Today, I can let go of the future and the past

for this moment, which gives me the freedom to be happy and joyous in the moment for quite a few of the moments of my day.

Go to The Inner Children that need Boundaries