

Boundaries

First Parish Church of Stow and Acton, MA, January 2019

Opening Words and Chalice Lighting

“To face the world's shadows, a chalice of light,
To face the world's coldness, a chalice of warmth,
To face the world's terrors, a chalice of courage,
To face the world's turmoil, a chalice of peace,
May its glow fill our spirits, our hearts, and our lives.”

- *Lindsay Bates*

Check-in/Sharing: This is the time to mention briefly any major issues or events on your mind that you would like to share. Please invite members to register for 2019 SGM groups and brainstorm future topic suggestions.

Topic: Boundaries

When thinking of boundaries, one can think of the analogy of a medieval castle surrounded by a moat. Boundaries are the drawbridge connecting the feudal lord and lady in the castle to the wider world. Generally, the drawbridge of the castle is down, and people and goods can travel into and out of the castle unimpeded. However, when danger is sensed, the drawbridge raises up, protecting the inhabitants.

It may be wise for us to make our boundaries more rigid when we sense danger to our physical, emotional, or psychological well-being. However, just like with the castle analogy, if the drawbridge is perpetually raised, the castle becomes foul inside. How do we find the balance?

“Argue for your limitations, and sure enough, they’re yours.” - *Richard Bach*

“People are lonely because they build walls instead of bridges.” - *Joseph Ford Newton*

“Just as we expect others to value our boundaries, it’s equally important for us to respect the boundaries of others.” - *Laurie Buchanan*

“Life truly lived is a risky business, and if one puts up too many fences against risk, one ends by shutting out life itself.” - *Kenneth S. Davis*

“Normally, he liked boundaries...but right now, he felt like rules were made to be broken and consequences were miles and miles away.” - *Heather Burch*

“While we can offer our guidance and a shoulder to cry on, our responsibility does not lie in fixing others and their problems.” – *Aletheia Luna*

“Compassionate people ask for what they need. They say no when they need to, and when they say yes, they mean it. They’re compassionate because their boundaries keep them out of resentment.” - *Brené Brown*

“No is a complete sentence.” - *Anne Lamont*

“You cannot set boundaries and take care of someone else’s feelings at the same time.” - *Anonymous*

Possible Questions for Discussion:

- Growing up in my family of origin, how were my physical, temporal, mental, spiritual, and emotional boundaries respected or not? How has this affected my boundary-setting capabilities as an adult?
- Do I have situations in which my boundaries are working for me? Or some in which my boundaries are not quite what I would like them to be?
- Would I describe any of my boundaries as fluid, flexible, changeable, and removable? Any as non-existent? Any as too solid and rigid?
- In the past, what situations have caused me to set a boundary I did not know was lacking, or conversely, caused me to loosen a boundary that may have impeded my growth?
- What have been my experiences in discerning unacceptable behavior and setting limits with others? With myself?
- Can I share a time when I tried to “fix” or resisted “fixing” someone else’s problem?

(Group will take a few minutes to consider topic and questions and then share).

Wrapping Up: How did you like this topic and session?

Closing Words

“Before sunlight can shine through a window, the blinds must be raised.”
- *American proverb*