



Boundaries Intelligence Introduction: Overview of the NICE™ Boundaries Method

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Personal Boundary Defined

A boundary is any limit I need to honor that enables me to love or work with you without resentment and with integrity.

A limit is what fits and doesn't fit for me. Very simple example of a "limit:" It "fits" for me to get at least 7½ hours of sleep a night because when I get less than that, I tend to feel tired, have more difficulty concentrating, and have less patience the next day. So, when I violate this boundary, this knowledge of what fits for me, my ability to love and work with others is diminished.

Boundaries Intelligence

Knowing how to recognize what fits and doesn't fit for us is a form of Inner Listening that is absolutely vital across the boards in life. To the extent that we don't know, or don't honor, what fits and doesn't fit for us, we are missing the internal input we need for handling a vast range of life situations.

By "vast range of life situations, I mean:

- Living a balanced life that is in integrity with our life mission.
- Preventing our life energy from draining out of us.
- Preventing ourselves from taking on other people's energy, issues or responsibilities (that is, being codependent).
- Dealing with overbearing, self-centered, narcissistic, controlling or tyrannical people.
- Be assertive.
- Avoiding becoming resentful or angry.
- Being good at holding people accountable as a boss, supervisor, coach or mentor.
- Exercising healthy personal power.
- Building collaborative solutions and commitments you can count on in healthy relationships of all kinds.
- Succeeding in negotiations or creating reliable new agreements to deal with recurring problems.
- Developing truly healthy self-esteem.
- Become a great leader.

When a life skill affects so many areas of healthy human functioning, it seems to me that it must be one of the basic forms of Psychological Intelligence. Boundaries Intelligence could be considered a specialized version of Emotional Intelligence.

The Four Key Elements of Boundaries Intelligence

1. **Notice** when you have a boundary
2. **Identify** your true boundary
3. **Commit** to honoring your boundary's core intention
4. **Enact** your boundary through some combination of inner strengthening and outer actions

These four elements also turn out to be steps in a sequence of honoring a boundary. First, notice when you have a boundary, next identify what it really is, then commit to honoring it despite the risks, and finally enact it through an optimal combination of inner and outer strategies for honoring that boundary.

BOUNDARIES INTELLIGENCE ELEMENT #1: NOTICE

We all have our own unique set of inner cues that tell us when we have a boundary we need to honor. You can think of your inner cues as your personalized *Boundary Alert* mechanism.

Most of us are either unaware of our personal Boundary Alert cues or we are used to talking ourselves out of listening to these cues. **Learning how to recognize and respond to our Boundary Alerts at low levels of intensity is the first key aspect of Boundaries Intelligence.**

Consider following questions related to this Boundaries Intelligence dimension:

- 1) How well and how often are you able to recognize your own personal set of Boundary Alert cues?
- 2) How often, or in what situations, do you talk yourself out of paying attention to your Boundary Alert cues?
- 3) How often, in what situations, or with whom, do your Boundary Alert cues have to become uncomfortably loud before you become willing to pay attention to them?

BOUNDARIES INTELLIGENCE ELEMENT #2: IDENTIFY

Knowing how to **Notice** our Boundary Alert cues is not the same as knowing what our boundary is. Adding to the difficulty of identifying boundaries is the problem that most people confuse *positions* and *solutions* with boundaries.

Our true boundary is something I call a *Core Intention*. A Core Intention is the heart of what we most want to have come from the position or solution we believe we want another person to agree with. In other words, our Core Intention is the most important *result* we want from a solution we propose or a position we take. **Being able to identify your Core Intention is the second key aspect of Boundaries Intelligence.**

Consider the following question related to this Boundaries Intelligence dimension: Do you know how to accurately discover your Core Intention by looking beneath your Boundary Alert cues, feelings, postures/positions, and solutions?

BOUNDARIES INTELLIGENCE ELEMENT #3: COMMIT

Even when we **Notice** our Boundary Alert cues at low levels of intensity, and know how to **Identify** the Core Intention of our boundary, that does not guarantee that we will honor it.

You see, boundaries are risky business, and on some level we all know this. Being authentic is risky! The problem is that NOT being authentic is *also* risky!

Knowing how to effectively commit to living in integrity with your boundaries, through Holding the Risks with Grace, is the third key aspect of Boundaries Intelligence.

*Consider the following question related to this Boundaries Intelligence dimension: Do you have a powerful and reliable way to make yourself larger than the risks in **both** directions with grace, so you can establish deep and full inner permission to live in integrity with your boundaries? (I call this **Holding the Risks with Grace**.)*

BOUNDARIES INTELLIGENCE ELEMENT #4: ENACT

Once we **Commit** to a boundary, through establishing inner permission to live in integrity with it, we are ready to select and enact the most effective *strategies* for honoring it in that particular situation.

Two sets of strategies are needed in order to enact a Core Intention. **Internal Boundaries Strategies** are “energy boundaries” we establish within ourselves so that our energy field supports our boundary, even if we don’t say a word to another person about it. **External Boundaries Strategies** are the “communication strategies” we select for establishing your boundary with another person, and in order to discover how much collaboration we can create in honoring both of our boundaries in this situation.

This combination of Inner & Outer Boundary Enactment Strategies forms the fourth key aspect of Boundaries Intelligence.

Consider the following questions related to this Boundaries Intelligence dimension:

- 1) Do you know how to reliably establish strong internal Energy Boundaries that enable you to support your own boundaries even without someone else’s cooperation or knowledge?
- 2) Do you know how to determine the lowest level of intensity needed to communicate your boundaries in various situations?
- 3) Do you know how to communicate them compassionately and gracefully, and yet from a place of personal strength?
- 4) Do you know how to collaborate with another person to find a solution that honors both your Core Intention and theirs?

Boundaries Myths: What Boundaries Are NOT

MOST PEOPLE THINK OF A BOUNDARY AS A:

- Position, line drawn in the sand or ultimatum
- Solution

Boundaries are what live underneath positions, NOT the positions themselves.

Boundaries are intentions that solutions are attempts to honor, NOT the solutions themselves.

Boundaries open the door for solutions to be discovered, NOT the solutions themselves.

Boundaries

Core Intention: The Heart of a True Boundary

A Core Intention is what I hope to get from a position or solution. A Core Intention represents what is at the heart of what fits and doesn't fit for me. A Core Intention is integrity personified.

EXAMPLE

Suppose you and I decide to spend tomorrow evening together. Tomorrow evening arrives and when we meet I announce to you that what I have decided we'll see such and such a movie. You reply that you're not at all interested in seeing that movie. I reply by saying, "Well, that's just my boundary." I'm sure you would agree that this kind of "boundary bashing" would create a problem in our friendship!

What is the mistake this example illustrates? It is that I told you my solution *rather than* revealing to you my true boundary. That's sort of like telling you a joke by going straight to the punch line without first telling the story that makes the punch line funny. Doing that disorients people! It doesn't enable them to "love or work with one another without resentment and with integrity," which, as you now know, is part of my definition of a healthy personal boundary.

In contrast, let's do "take two" with this scenario. Tomorrow night arrives and because I have already checked inside myself to discover my limits (what fits and doesn't fit for me), I have identified something called my Core Intention. Let's say that I feel extremely tired after having spent the last two days giving my Boundaries Intelligence Training workshop. I've been on my feet all day and have put out a lot of energy. I check inside and ask my tiredness what it needs. After a few initial "rough draft" responses, let's say I discover that what fits for me tonight is to recharge my batteries, and that what best fits to help me recharge my batteries on this particular evening is to be passively entertained without my having to be on my feet. That is an example of a Core Intention, rather than a specific solution.

CORE INTENTIONS SPAWN MULTIPLE SOLUTIONS

If I instead go straight to solutions and decide the form in which *you* will honor my Core Intention when we get together, this could cause a real problem between us, no? This is why *solutions are not boundaries. Solutions are forms in which boundaries are honored.* (In truth, a Core Intention opens the door to discovering *multiple* solutions that could meet that intention, not merely one solution.)

So, instead of my telling you what we will be doing tonight as though that solution is my boundary (i.e., that we are going to go see such and such movie because “that’s just my boundary”), I simply tell you how I am feeling, what my limits are, and the general sorts of things that fit for me this evening because of this (i.e., my Core Intention). I then follow that by asking you to tell me the same sort of thing about you. And then we brainstorm together to discover how we can spend the evening together in a way that honors both your Core Intention and mine.

Boundaries are not rigid solutions, but rather Core Intentions making it possible for us to honor a boundary we have in any of a number of different ways, depending on what fits and doesn’t fit for the other person.

TRUE BOUNDARIES ARE EXPRESSIONS OF INTEGRITY & PERSONAL POWER

Honoring our true boundaries through staying true to our Core Intentions enables us to build connection and collaboration with others and prevents us from resenting the other person or sacrificing our own integrity in order to love or work with the other person.

This is one of the ways that developing Boundary Intelligence enables us to come into right relationship with our personal power.

Learning how to identify our Core Intention is an art form. The better we become at doing this, the more we will be able to help others identify their Core Intention. When you and the other person understand one another’s Core Intention, that’s when problem-solving, negotiation and conflict resolution magic can start happening!

Boundaries Secret #1: It’s Impossible to NOT Have Boundaries

Boundaries are inevitable not optional. It is impossible to NOT have boundaries. We all have boundaries because we all have things we respond to with an inner “yes” and an inner “no.” In other words, we all have things that ‘fit’ and don’t ‘fit’ for us: all of us have limits!

Even though everyone has boundaries, each of us has the ability to be awake or asleep about them. Each of us has the ability to learn how to identify our true boundary or to continue confusing positions or solutions with boundaries. Each of us is responsible for our choices about the strategies we use to communicate and honor our boundaries.

We can be aware of our boundaries or we can ignore them. We can be aware of our boundaries and honor them in clean and direct ways or we can leak them out sideways (passive-aggressively, indirectly, or overly-aggressively).

However, the one thing we can’t do with boundaries is not have them! Since boundaries are inevitable, a question to ask yourself is, “How much Boundaries Intelligence do I currently have and how valuable would it be to further develop my Boundaries Intelligence?”

Boundaries Secret #2: Boundaries Are the Greatest Anger Prevention Tool Ever Made

Boundaries are actually the purest form of anger that exists, even though boundaries are not usually referred to as anger. Think about it. Boundaries are about yes and no, delight and ouch. The simplest and purest forms of anger are “no” and “ouch.” When we learn to pay attention to and honor our “no” or “ouch,” we don’t have to escalate into the agitated state people more commonly refer to as anger. Learning to control your anger (anger management) can be a very good thing. Learning to pay attention to your boundaries so you can prevent yourself from becoming resentful or angry is even better!

Boundaries Secret #3: You Can’t Ignore a Boundary Without Paying a Price

The price we pay is this: **a boundary ignored is a boundary violated.** In other words, if I ignore a boundary of mine, I teach *you* to ignore it too. And when you ignore my boundaries, you will step all over me, often without even knowing it!

When a boundary is violated, the connection between us & the other person is disrupted. This can happen in any of four ways: me ignoring my own boundaries, me training the other person to ignore my boundaries, the other person ignoring his/her boundaries, or the other person training me to ignore his/her boundaries.

So, the price we pay for ignoring our boundaries is that we live out of integrity with ourself, we teach others to violate us without even knowing they’re doing that, and we violate other people’s boundaries without even knowing we’re doing so. In other words, ignoring our boundaries causes our relationships to deteriorate – both personal and work relationships.

Boundaries Secret #4: We Are Willing to Pay a Price for Ignoring a Boundary Because Living in Integrity With Boundaries is Risky

Here is the risk:

- ❑ **Nothing reveals the truth about the upper ceilings (that is, limitations) of closeness or collaboration in a relationship more quickly or effectively than a boundary.**

The truth about relationships that boundaries reveal is the upper limit on the amount of closeness or collaboration that will be possible in that relationship, at least regarding the particular issue the boundary is about. You see, when we accurately **Identify** our true boundary and **Enact** it cleanly and compassionately, we very quickly find out the extent to which the other person is willing to collaborate with us to find ways to honor both our Core Intention and their own! **The more willing and able two people are to do this, the more loving their personal relationship will become and the more collaborative and effective their working relationship will become.** The less willing another person is to do this with us – or the less willing we are to do this with another person – the more limited that relationship will be, in terms of love and intimacy and/or collaboration and effectiveness.

Boundaries Secret #5: Don't Honor a Boundary of Yours Until You Are Ready to Discover the Truth About the Relationship

Nothing exposes the truth about a relationship more powerfully or rapidly than a boundary. And when this truth is exposed, it can be mighty painful or difficult if you were hoping for more closeness or collaboration and don't want to have your hopes dashed!

The upper ceiling on intimacy or collaboration in a relationship is determined by the person who is least willing to be self-responsible, and/or to develop basic human intelligences such as Boundaries Intelligence, and/or clear away his/her own baggage that interferes with closeness and collaboration. **This is a law of relationships that is as reliable as the laws of physics.**

This why knowing how to recognize and deal with the risks we take in honoring our boundary is a crucial part of Boundaries Intelligence.

Boundaries Are Extremely Powerful Tools

That's why it is vital that people develop *all four* elements of Boundaries Intelligence. The more powerful a tool is, the more important it is to be adept at using it well, so we can use that tool in service of love and collaboration, rather than inadvertently turning it into a "weapon of mass destruction!"

How Does One Become Good at Utilizing This Form of Personal Power for Good?

The key to wisely and compassionately using the personal power that Boundaries Intelligence provides is knowing how to select the most useful method and intensity level for enacting and/or communicating our boundary.

Some of us are already fairly good at **Noticing** when we have a boundary or **Identifying** what it really is or **Committing** to our boundary despite the risks we just touched upon. These are the first three key elements of Boundaries Intelligence.

But have you ever noticed that when it came to honoring your boundary, you were too meek about it to be effective... *or* you came on stronger than was needed and had to do "damage control" later?

One of the biggest reasons people don't use their boundaries power wisely is that they don't know how to select the most useful boundaries enactment strategy and/or how to communicate their boundary at the optimal level of intensity.

THERE ARE THREE BASIC BOUNDARIES ENACTMENT STRATEGIES

1. Energy Boundaries
2. Words
3. Action

When people don't know which to use in each situation, they are in danger of either selling themselves short or damaging to the relationship or the outcome.

THERE ARE ALSO FIVE BASIC LEVELS OF INTENSITY IN BOUNDARIES ENACTMENT

1. Energetic
2. Disclosing Discontent
3. Change Requests
4. Choice-Consequences menu
5. Action without words.

MOST CONFLICTS ESCALATE FOR TWO REASONS

1. One or both people have confused positions and solutions with their true boundary.
2. People don't know how to select and enact the most appropriate level of boundary intensity for the situation.

Each of the five intensity levels in Boundaries Enactment serves its own unique purpose that is more and less effective under various circumstances. Wellness coaches and their clients would be wise to explore the following questions in this regard:

1. Are you adept at each of these five boundary intensity levels?
2. Do you know when it's best to use which one?
3. Do you have enough faith in your abilities so you won't be steered off course when the other person doesn't know what you know about boundaries?

Summary

The four key Boundaries Intelligence elements we have touched on during our brief time together are: **Notice**, **Identify**, **Commit** and **Enact**.

1. **Noticing** when you have a boundary is the first key element of Boundaries Intelligence.
2. **Accurately** identifying your true boundary is the second key element of Boundaries Intelligence.
3. **Committing** to your boundary once you are ready to take the risks that are built into honoring it is the third key element of Boundaries Intelligence.
4. **Enacting** your boundary most useful method and most effective level of intensity is the fourth key element of Boundaries Intelligence.

The first letters of each of these four Boundaries Intelligence keys – **Notice**, **Identify**, **Commit** and **Enact** – form the acronym for my Boundaries Intelligence training program: **NICE**. This is an apt acronym because true boundaries really are about being nice, since they are limits I need to honor in order to love or work with you without resentment and with integrity. True boundaries are about being NICE, rather being than abrasive, narcissistic (self-centered), controlling... or pretending we don't have any boundaries.

The better we are with each of these four key Boundaries Intelligence elements, the less susceptible we become to being manipulated by others and the more we become able to assist others in dealing with boundaries issue in ways that promote love or collaboration with us!

Your Boundaries Intelligence Assessment Sheet

The Four Key Elements of Boundaries Intelligence

1. **Notice** when you have a boundary
2. **Identify** your true boundary (“Core Intention”)
3. **Commit** to honoring your boundary’s core intention despite the risks
4. **Enact** your boundary through some combination of inner strengthening and outer actions

Boundaries Intelligence Element #1: Notice

- How *familiar* are you with your personal Boundary Alert cues?
- How often and how quickly do you tend to *recognize* your personal Boundary Alert cues?
- How often, in what situations, or with whom, do you *talk yourself out of* paying attention to your Boundary Alert cues (or do you not recognize them at all)?
- How often, in what situations, or with whom, do your Boundary Alert cues have to become *uncomfortably loud* before you become willing to pay attention to them?

Boundaries Intelligence Element #2: Identify

- How good are you at accurately identifying your *Core Intention* when you look beneath your Boundary Alert cues, feelings, postures/positions, and solutions?

Boundaries Intelligence Element #3: Commit

- Do you have an effective and reliable way to make yourself larger than the *risks* of honoring your Core Intention AND the risks of not honoring your Core Intention, so that you have full inner permission to live in integrity with your boundaries?

Boundaries Intelligence Element #4: Enact

- How good are you at establishing strong reliable internal *Energy Boundaries* that enable you to support your own boundaries even without someone else’s cooperation or knowledge? With whom, or in what situations, do you have the greatest difficulty with this?
- How good are you at accurately determining the lowest *level of intensity* needed to communicate your boundaries in various situations? With whom, or in what situations, do you have the greatest difficulty with this?
- How good are you at *communicating* your boundaries compassionately and gracefully, while also with personal power? With whom, or in what situations, do you have the greatest difficulty with this?
- How effective are you at *collaborating* with others to discover solutions that simultaneously honor both your Core Intention and theirs? With whom, or in what situations, do you have the greatest difficulty with this?

The answers to these questions will show you the aspect(s) of Boundaries Intelligence to focus on developing, as well as the part(s) of the NICE™ Boundaries Training eWorkbook on which to concentrate. You will find information about this downloadable workbook, as well as other relevant resources on the next page.

Willingness Works Resources for Building Boundaries Intelligence

BOUNDARIES INTELLIGENCE INTRODUCTORY ECOURSE

This **free** five-lesson eCourse introduces you to the NICE™ Boundaries Method for developing your Boundaries Intelligence. Register at www.TheNewIQ.com/ecourses and one lesson a day will arrive in your e-mail box for five days. Read each lesson when convenient for you.

NICE™ BOUNDARIES EWORKBOOK

This one-of-a-kind comprehensive 60 page manual takes you, step-by-step, through developing all four key elements of Boundaries Intelligence, through mastering the NICE™ Boundaries Method. Extensive worksheets make it even easier for you to complete the exercises. Also included is a worksheet pulling all four elements together to help you effectively deal with your real life boundaries situations. You can download this PDF file from the Willingness Works website and then read it on your computer, print it on your computer printer, or download it to your iPod® or other portable data-reading device so you can access it on-the-go wherever you happen to be. For more information or to order, go to www.TheNewIQ.com/boundaries, (US\$29.95)

NICE™ BOUNDARIES CD SET

(All-new updated version coming soon. Go to www.TheNewIQ.com/contact, and ask to be notified when it is released.)

INNER CRITIC FREEDOM INTRODUCTORY ECOURSE

This **free** five-lesson eCourse shows you how to get the upper hand with your Inner Critic. Register at www.TheNewIQ.com/ecourses and one lesson a day will arrive in your e-mail box for five days. Read each lesson when convenient for you!

FROM INNER CRITIC TO INNER HELPER EWORKBOOK

This complete 90+ page manual on developing internal boundaries takes you through a powerful and unique four-step process for getting the upper hand with your Inner Critic. Extensive step-by-step exercises guide your way. Also included is a worksheet pulling all four steps together to help you effectively deal with your Inner Critic in real life situations. Once you download this PDF you can read it on your computer or print it on your computer printer. To purchase and instantly download your copy, go to www.TheNewIQ.com/critic (US\$29.95)

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About Integrity Revolution, Willingness Works® & Dr. Gruder

***The massive integrity problems we have today
are the direct result of massively distorted ideas
about what creates personal, career and relationship fulfillment.
The most powerful way you can start helping to
restore integrity in society is to create life success
around the principles of "Integrity-Centered Life Fulfillment."***

Integrity Revolution, LLC, leads a revolution in personal, relationship, societal and leadership **integrity** through providing individuals, leaders and helping professionals with **practical perspectives and potent tools** for upgrading personal wellbeing and **authenticity**, co-creating fulfilling and productive **relationships**, and solving our **collective** challenges. Willingness Works® is one of its brands.

The New IQ Web Site, www.TheNewIQ.com, offers what may well be the first truly practical guide to Integrity-Centered Life Fulfillment in today's world, providing a "unified field theory" integrating psychology, spirituality, biology and the human energy system...in service of love, healing and personal, relationship, leadership & societal integrity.

To subscribe to Dr. Gruder's free **IntegriTips Bulletins**, go to www.TheNewIQ.com. Each issue contains a link enabling you to change your private contact information or remove yourself any time you wish. All of your contact information remains private and is never loaned, rented or sold to others.

David Gruder, Ph.D., is the Executive Director of Integrity Revolution, LLC and Willingness Works®, and was the Founding President of the Association for Comprehensive Energy Psychology. Dually licensed in California as a psychologist (PSY 9266) & marriage & family therapist (MFT 18889), he has written six books, including the double-award-winning *The New IQ: How Integrity Intelligence Serves You, Your Relationships and Our World* and its companion, *The New IQ Integrity Makeover Workbook* (details at www.TheNewIQ.com/book). He has also produced over seventy audio sets. While developing his future books and recordings he provides keynotes, training programs and consulting worldwide for leaders, businesses, helping professionals, universities and the public. Dr. Gruder's home base is San Diego, California. Visit the Events section at www.TheNewIQ.com for his schedule. To invite him to present to your business, organization or conference, go to www.TheNewIQ.com/contact.

Disclaimer: Since receiving his doctorate in clinical psychology in 1982, Dr. David Gruder has searched for the finest personal development resources available. Those that worked incredibly well on him, he brought to his clients. Those that worked incredibly well for his clients, he talks about in his books, recordings and presentations. The information and recommendations in these handouts and the accompanying recording are provided with the intention of helping people more effectively utilize appropriate professionals to achieve their goals. They are in no way intended as substitutes for seeking appropriate professional assistance for physical, psychological, spiritual, relationship, career, or other life challenges. Rather, you are strongly encouraged to use this material to collaborate more effectively with mainstream and alternative mental health & physical health care providers, certified coaches, recovery programs, and religious or spiritual advisors.

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