

Boundaries for Independent Studio Teachers

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I. What is a Boundary?

A. a limit that defines where one thing ends and another begins

“A boundary is a limit that protects the integrity of your day, your energy and spirit, and the health of your relationships” - Anne Katherine, in *Where to Draw the Line* p14

B. Remember what we can control and what we can't

- i. **A Request** asks someone else to change their actions
- ii. **A Rule** dictates someone else's actions/behaviors
- iii. **A Boundary** describe what actions we will take

Effective boundaries focus on the things we can control, rather than the things we can't

Example:

i. Request: please don't play on the piano while I'm talking

ii. Boundary: if you play on the piano when I'm talking, I will close the lid to help your fingers stay quiet

C. Boundaries require action

Merely communicating a boundary isn't a guarantee it will be followed. Enforcing boundaries requires action on our part

How do you know it's time for a boundary checkup?

If you find yourself...

- *Saying yes to requests while secretly feeling resentful*
- *Feeling like you go out of your way for others without getting similar support in return*
- *Feeling a need to over-explain or justify your policies*
- *Feeling a sense of dread when its time to teach*
- *Consistently feeling drained after a lesson*

... then it might be time to reassess your boundaries

II. How to set effective boundaries

A. Contemplation

- i. State the problem using neutral language



Remember the video camera rule

- ii. Dig deeper



What's the problem here?

Why does it bother me?

Or : What am I afraid will happen if I don't take action?

- iii. Identify your ideal outcome



If possible, look for outcomes that will meet both your needs and the other party's

B. Communication

"Ineffective communication leads to weak boundary skills" - Terri Cole, in *Boundary Boss* p20

i. Examples of ineffective communication:

- *not telling anyone your expectations*
- *communicating indirectly or passive aggressively*
- *agreeing on the outside while feeling resentment on the inside*

ii. Effective Communication tips:

a. Assume positive intent

b. Lead with empathy and validation

c. Keep it simple

d. Consider who needs to hear this boundary, and what format makes sense for the situation

C. Clear Course of Action

- i. include clear guidelines on what action(s) the other party can expect from you

III. General Tips

A. Be prepared to accept a no

B. Give yourself permission to say no

We feel uncomfortable when people ask because we haven't given ourselves permission to say no

C. Always remember what is and is not in your control

IV. Resources

Books on boundary setting:

- *Boundaries* by Cloud and Townsend
- *Set Boundaries, Find Peace* by Nedra Glover Tawwab
- *Boundary Boss* by Terri Cole
- *Where to Draw the Line* by Anne Katherine

Books on communication skills:

- *Non-Violent Communication* by Marshall B. Rosenberg

Websites on music teaching policies

- www.composecreate.com (Wendy Stevens)

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