

Tips for Setting Healthy Boundaries:

- ◆ When you identify the need to set a boundary, do it clearly, preferably without anger and in as few words as possible. Do not justify, apologize for, or rationalize the boundary you are setting. **DO NOT ARGUE!** Just set the boundary simply, calmly, firmly and clearly.
- ◆ You can't set a boundary and take care of someone else's feelings at the same time. You are not responsible for the other person's reaction to the boundary you are setting. Your only responsibility to the other person is to set the boundary in a respectful way, meaning assertively not aggressively.
- ◆ If you are not used to setting boundaries, you may initially feel shame, selfish and/or embarrassed when you set one. **DO IT ANYWAY**, and tell yourself you have a right to take care of yourself. Healthy people in healthy relationships do it every day.
- ◆ When you feel anger or resentment, or find yourself whining or complaining, you probably need to set a boundary. Listen to yourself. When you are confident you can set healthy boundaries, you will have less need to put up walls to others.
- ◆ When you set boundaries, you will be tested by some. Plan on it. Expect it. But be firm. You should not set a boundary then apology for it or undo it with verbal or nonverbal behaviors that send the message, "You don't have to respect my boundaries." Many people with low self-esteem sabotage their own boundary setting by sending a mixed message. Be firm and direct.
- ◆ Reasonably healthy people will respect your boundaries; toxic persons may not. Be prepared to be firm about your boundaries when they are not being respected. If necessary put up a wall, which may mean ending a relationship, getting an Ex-Parte Order, and/or sending a no-contact letter.
- ◆ You will set boundaries when you are ready. It's your growth in your own time frame, not what someone else tells you. Let your counselor or support group help you with pace and process. Remember, progress not perfection.
- ◆ Develop a support system of people who respect what you are trying to do. Eliminate toxic persons from your life.
- ◆ Listen to your feelings. Ask yourself: What hurts and what feels good? Learn to trust, honor, value, and listen to your **true self** by turning the antenna inward toward your feelings.
- ◆ Setting healthy boundaries allows your **true self** to emerge – and what an exciting journey that can be.

