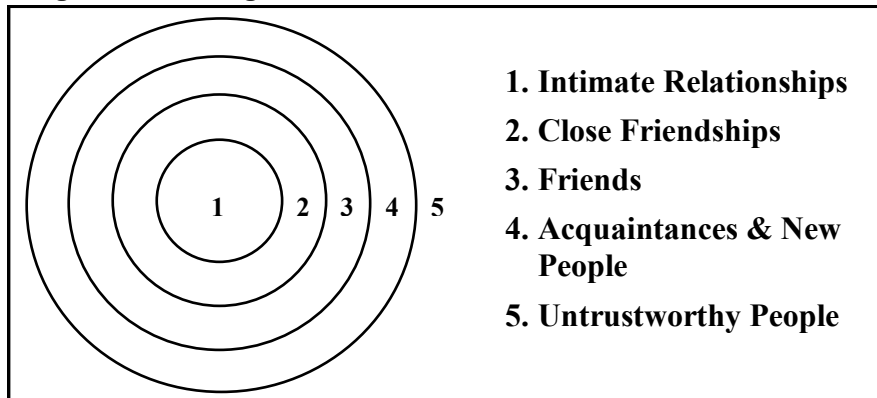




Appropriate Boundaries

The diagram below maps out a graded set of boundaries that will give you insight into the way you look after your own wellbeing. There are five boundary categories ranging from those to whom you feel closest, to those with whom you would rather not spend time.

Diagram 3. Assessing Boundaries



1. Intimate Relationships

These are the people that you trust the most and feel safest and most happy with. They are the people you reveal yourself to the most. These people Love you and accept you as you are and are there for you through thick and thin. Such people truly honour you and respect you.

2. Close Friends

These are the people you spend a good amount of time with. They are people that you feel relaxed with and are comfortable to have around. They are friends that you can trust and depend on.

3. Friends

These are people you know for one reason or another that you feel comfortable with and whose company you enjoy. You may work with them or see them once in a while to socialize.

4. Acquaintances

These are people that you bump into now and then. You don't know

them very well. You feel comfortable with them on the surface. They may or may not be potential friends. They can also be people you see often but don't connect with for one reason or another. This can also be the boundary where you meet and assess new people.

5. Untrustworthy People

These are people you know and experience difficulty with due to their confusion and lack of integrity. You don't feel emotionally or physically safe with them for whatever reason. You may have had a connection with them, or you still do, but they create disruption in your life. You may have tried to heal the differences but found the person to be dishonest in what they say and do. They may project their fear and insecurity onto you in the form of emotional manipulations such as anger, guilt, seduction, dependency, blame and so on.

Now spend some time placing all the people you know, including family, into one of these five categories. Be aware that this is not about judging people. It is about honestly facing up to the reality of the connection you have with that person, even a family member. There are no shoulds or shouldn'ts. You are not obligated to have someone in category one, for example, just because they are your relative or partner. You are the sole authority where your inner-sanctum is concerned. This is about learning to discern where to place appropriate relationship boundaries for your highest good. You are the loving guardian, the responsible carer of your own vulnerable human self. As an adult, no one else can assume this role for you, even if they think they should.

There may be the occasional person that you would like to have closer but they are not due to your own inappropriate behaviour. Instead of judging yourself about this, look at ways that you can better manage yourself to be the friend that you would like to be.