



Boundary Awareness

We often get into trouble where boundaries are concerned due to a common mindset— “I don’t want to upset him/her by mentioning it” (“it” being what we are concerned about; in other words, whatever does not feel right).

This avoidance of facing reality usually starts in the courtship stage and then keeps on compounding from there. Often this confusion starts in our childhood when we are too often made to feel responsible for our parent’s emotional, and at times physical, needs. Such parent-child dynamics can distort healthy relationship boundaries.

When children’s feelings, individuality and personal space are not considered or respected by their carers, in adulthood there is then a tendency to have difficulty perceiving, understanding and implementing healthy personal boundaries.

Another common reason is that we are naturally a caring/feeling type of person who becomes overly concerned about the needs of others (often the neediness of others rather than genuine needs, or they don’t need us to fuss over them, but we are compelled to do so) and in the process neglects our own needs.

The surest way to find out what you have in a relationship is to speak up!

If our potential partners have good self-esteem and self-awareness, then they will be grateful to us for bringing any inappropriate behaviour to their attention. They will naturally want to address it for the benefit of all concerned. They will have a natural humility about them. They will know what it means to take care of themselves. They will be able to respond in this way on a consistent basis. If they run into some personal difficulty, they will want to face any issues and overcome them. They will see and know the benefit of continually learning and growing. If this is the case, you have good prospects for relationship harmony.

On the other hand, our potential partners may be in the grip of unconscious self-destructive programs (negative childhood conditioning perhaps, or pride/power issues). When an issue is brought up, they may react negatively, such as with denial or blame. They will be controlled by pride or self-neglect. They will have difficulty honestly facing personal issues and remain emotionally

immature as a result. If our potential partner is frequently caught in this negative mindset, then we have a recipe for continual relationship conflict.

If your present situation is similar to this second example, then you have some work ahead of you. That work starts with looking squarely at yourself, because, like it or not, you played a major part in getting yourself into this situation. Don't despair. Accept your humanness. Open your heart to your vulnerable self and get on with repairing your confusion, healing your emotional wounds and learning better relationship skills. This is what the 5-Step Process for Healing, Self-empowerment and Wisdom is for.

When we get on with healing and growing, we are in a better position to effectively reach out to our partner and pay attention to how our partner responds. It can take a little time and patience to establish some common understanding around what needs to change to move a relationship forward. Most of us want to grow and improve our relationships, but are just unsure as to how to go about it.

Sometimes though, we need to learn to honour and care for ourselves enough to recognize when a relationship is destructive and take steps to do what it takes to protect ourselves and create a better life for ourselves.