

186. Set Boundaries Find Peace with Nedra Tawwab

[00:00:00] **Nedra Tawwab:** You have to be the consistent party because it is your boundary. And that is really hard. For the person having to implement that boundary, then with boundaries, with difficult people know that you cannot change them. But as I listed there in the book, there are a lot of things you can change about the way that you deal with them.

Diana Hill: You're listening to Nedra Tawwab on psychologists off the clock.

[00:01:00] We are four clinical psychologists here to bring you cutting edge and science-based ideas from psychology to help you flourish in your relationships work and health.

Debbie Sorensen: I'm Dr. Debbie Sorensen, practicing in Mile high Denver, Colorado

Diana Hill: I'm Dr. Diana Hill practicing in seaside, Santa Barbara, California.

Yael Schonbrun: From coast to coast. I'm Dr. Yael Schonbrun, a Boston-based clinical psychologist and assistant professor at Brown University.

Jill Stoddard: And from sunny San Diego, I'm Dr. Jill Stoddard author of Be Mighty and The Big Book Of ACT Metaphors.

Debbie Sorensen: We hope you take what you learn here to build a rich and meaningful life.

Diana Hill: thank you for listening to Psychologists Off the Clock.

Diana Hill: Hey, this is Diana here. I want to let you know about a workshop. I have coming up through insight LA, it's an introduction to act growing psychological flexibility in your life. And it's February 28th from two to five Pacific standard time. We'll be going through the six core processes of act and applying them to your daily life. So check it out on my website at DrDianahill.com under the events page. [00:02:00]

Yael Schonbrun: Psychologist off the clock is happy to be sponsored by Praxis continuing education.

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Diana Hill: Yeah, just looking at it, the lineup. Well, you can always do act immersion with Steve Hayes. That's fantastic. If you want to take a deep dive into acceptance and commitment therapy, I was also excited to see Dennis Tirch and Laura Silberstein. Doing a foundations of compassion focused therapy course for those that want to learn more about CFT.

Debbie Sorensen: you'll see some of our old podcast guests that we've had on the show doing Praxis training So check it out and you'll want to go through our website offtheclockpsych.com to register because you can get a \$25 off discount code for life training events.

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Diana Hill: Hi, this is Diana here with Jill. And today we have Nedra Tawwab on the show and we're talking all about boundaries and I had a great conversation with her. We covered. So many things, everything from how to set boundaries, when you feel really guilty, what to do in terms of boundaries with narcissist or in toxic relationships, how our kids teach us about boundary setting and even how we can set boundaries with our own parents. I'm curious, Jill, what was it like for you to listen to Nedra on boundaries?

Jill Stoddard: Well, I loved this episode. It was chock full of so many things, even boundaries with technology, which is something that I wouldn't have necessarily thought about, which was something you asked her. About and the whole time I kept thinking, I need a Nedra to like, come sit on my shoulder and walk around with me and like be my cheerleader for trying to set boundaries with people. She's so good. Um, and she even talks [00:04:00] about what language to use when you're setting boundaries, which I found. Particularly helpful. Um, and when

she was talking about narcissism, it made me think back to our episode on narcissism episode 98 with Robin Walser and Avigail Lev, where they really were talking about.

The ultimate boundary, which is either cutting off a relationship if that's possible, or what they called gray rocking, which is being as uninteresting as possible. Like try to do whatever you can to not push this person's buttons. And I was thinking, Oh, you know, those are examples of drawing, really strong boundaries made me think of that.

Diana Hill: Yeah. When I talked to Nedra about narcissists or even talked about toxic relationships, she said, sometimes you need to just stay in the relationship and you can put a smile on and then still have a limit without engaging with that person. So sometimes boundaries can be as strict as. I'm not going to [00:05:00] engage because any amount of engagement with you is so toxic to me or gets me all entangled back into the mess that we're in.

Or sometimes boundaries can be just really healthy, soft costs ones. Like when she was talking about her morning routine, I really related to that of carving out the special time for myself. I do that religiously in the morning. It's my time. And it feels like the kindest thing. Thing that I can do for myself.

So ultimately setting boundaries, ourselves, setting bound, the other people is a way to keep us safe in the world.

Jill Stoddard: Yeah. And there was such a wide range. Of what a boundary can look like. And I loved that. She even talked about ultimatums and I think I've always had in my mind, like ultimatums are bad. You should never give someone an ultimatum, but she really kind of reframed that in a way that was, you know, ultimatums are actually another form of a boundary where you're saying I need or expect this and this amount of time.

And if that doesn't happen, This consequence will occur. And then, you know, you have to [00:06:00] follow through with your consequences, whether it's in a relationship or with your children. And I thought, Oh, that's, that's an, that's a much nicer way of thinking about ultimatums because I think of boundaries as being helpful, see and helpful.

Diana Hill: well, I think you play that role sometimes Jill, on our podcast groups. So like behind the scenes, Jill is the one that's saying, okay, by Friday, February 27th, you need to have this done. Actually think you're an example of a really good boundary setter and you do it in a relational way, that makes this feel like we're, we're going to get somewhere because we have these boundaries in place.

And when we don't have these boundaries in place, we just sort of all, you know, it gets really messy. So boundaries actually can also make us feel safer around another person when they have clear boundaries, whether it's in the workplace or the home environment.

Jill Stoddard: Yeah. Well, thank you for saying that. I don't know if my, I don't know if my children would agree, but she also even talked about how having boundaries with kids, even if they don't like it and they kind of rebel against it. Like, of course they [00:07:00] want to eat candy every minute of every day. But us providing those boundaries, even when they don't like it is what makes them feel safe.

Like it's really necessary for them to, to have those.

Diana Hill: I work a lot with people in their twenties and thirties, and they talk about how they wish their parents had healthier boundaries with them, but they actually create that as a kid. A kid's never going to say, put this boundary up for me, mom, but they actually do want it. And it lends to a feeling of security and

Jill Stoddard: Yeah, create some predictability.

Diana Hill: Well, I hope you liked this episode as much as we did, and you can also check out Nedra's new book, which is Set Boundaries, Find Peace

Nedra Tawwab is a licensed therapist and sought after relationship expert, who has practiced relationship therapy for 12 years. And is the founder and owner of the group therapy practice, kaleidoscope counseling. She has been recently featured in the New York times.

The guardian psychology today, self advice and has appeared on [00:08:00] numerous podcasts, including don't keep your day job, do the thing and therapy for black girls. Nature to log. It runs a popular Instagram account, which if you haven't checked it out, go check it out. Yeah. It's just full of resources where she shares practices, tools and reflections for mental health and hosts weekly Q, and A's about boundaries and relationships.

She lives in Charlotte, North Carolina, with her family, and you can connect with her on Instagram at Nedra towag. Which is N E D R a T a w w a B. I'm so excited to talk with her today because we're going to be talking about her upcoming book, set boundaries, find peace, which beyond being beautiful is incredibly full of rich information that you're not going to want to miss.

So welcome nidra. It's so great to meet you in person.

Nedra Tawwab: So much for having me here. I'm so excited for this conversation.

Diana Hill: I'm really excited to unpack boundaries with you today. I'd love for us [00:09:00] just to start with, the role that boundaries play in our mental health. Because one of the things that I've been noticing as I've been reading your book is through the lens of boundaries. When I'm using that with clients, everything seems to show up like anxiety can be a result of poor boundaries.

Uh, resentment can be a result of poor boundaries. So can you talk a little bit about what boundaries are and the role that they play in mental health?

Nedra Tawwab: Yeah. So boundaries are parameters that. And we set for ourselves and our relationships with others. They, our expectations, our needs, our desires and the things that make us feel safe. Boundaries are both verbal and they are actions that we take, um, in a therapeutic setting early on, I started to notice there was this common thing. Of issues. And the underlying issue was boundaries with [00:10:00] work-life balance, with anxiety, with depression, with, um, issues and, and marriages with friendships. And when I would ask some of my clients, you know, have you tried, you know, asking this person to. Maybe not call you at this time or have you tried, you know, maybe not taking on anything else, if you can't handle it, it was just like, this really it's like another, like that's a. And laundry, and it really helped with the anxiety, the depression, the issues, and marital relationships, long-term relationships, dating friendships, all of those things, because. So often we think we have these issues with people and people come to therapy and they're like, here are all my issues with other people. How do I get them to change? And it's like, Whoa, I do not have that power, but [00:11:00] let's talk about what you can do as a person who is in this space with me to shift some things in your life and in your relationships. And so helping them with boundaries has been really. Um, beneficial for them. And a lot of times I don't even use the word boundaries. Like, I'm not like, it's funny because now that I'm on Instagram, my clients have started to use the word. I'm like, you must follow me. I'm not like go and do this boundary, you know, but yeah. Because of my work in these other spaces, they're getting this language, but lots of times it's just us having these conversations and very naturally saying, um, I wonder how you could practice maybe telling them what you need, which is a boundary. Um, and, and using that as a way to minimize some of that anxiety. So next. Um, you're not so frustrated with the interaction. You're not so shifts [00:12:00] about all things might go because you're practicing, um, thing with this, this lens of it's okay. To have boundaries.

Diana Hill: It's so interesting. How you, how you say that setting boundaries is actually going to. Set you free, right? It's going to reduce your anxiety in the longterm. It's going to benefit your relationships, but it's actually high levels of anxiety that sometimes prevents people from setting boundaries in the first one. Okay. So can we talk a little bit before we talk about how to set a boundary? What are some of the barriers for people to actually try this out? Like what do you notice most in your practice and in your work in this area?

Nedra Tawwab: Jumping to the worst case scenario. That is the number one. Go-to. If I say this to them, then they will say this and they have, you know, most people have this whole narrative around how people will respond to them.

Boundary what they will say. And it's, it's really not based on anything. It's not based on past experience with [00:13:00] this person.

It is really just based on the worst thing that can happen. And so with anxiety we have to talk about, is this a real thing or is this like a 1% chance of happening? Let's think about this. Tell me about a time when you ask someone, um, Hey, can you turn down your music a little bit and they yelled at you, like never, that hasn't happened to you.

So that's not a real thing, but it's a huge fear that if you say this thing, Oh my gosh, you're gonna, they're gonna yell at me. And it's like, well, has the person ever yelled at you about anything? And if so, what was that thing? What was your delivery? Because sometimes, you know, maybe you have had this experience in trying to advocate for yourself.

Often they push back. But in most cases we haven't, and we're just afraid of the unknown. We fear that the worst case scenario is true. And instead of taking any action with anxiety, it's just a [00:14:00] continuous thought in your head of the, what if the worst thing that could happen if you were to, you know, maybe set this boundary.

Diana Hill: One of the things that you talked about in your book that resonated. Very deeply with me in terms of my struggles with boundary setting is guilt. And, uh, you, you also say that's also a very common experience that people are afraid that they're going to feel guilty, or how do you get rid of the guilt associated with setting boundaries?

Especially if it's setting boundaries with a loved one or a friend, what's your response to that?

Nedra Tawwab: Guilt is a part of the process. And I know that's really hard to hear, but until you get really comfortable with telling people boundaries because of our programming, you might feel a little bit guilty. We have been, some of us we've been raised in situations where guilt was used as a discipline tool or guilt was used as a way to manipulate you.

And so, yeah, so people, you know, they may say things and [00:15:00] you might feel really bad about, you know, hurting this family member. But the best way to, to deal with the guilt is to consider. All the ways in which this other person has boundaries with you, because very likely they do, um, and use that as motivation and accept that it's okay to have boundaries.

This person has boundaries. And you're, you know, you're wrecking your brain. Like, how do I say this to them? And they've said, tons of things to you, they've violated boundaries. They didn't even know about. So it's, it's okay to say to them this, you know, maybe there's one thing or these two things that, that you need because it's an acceptable piece of a relationship and boundaries does not ruin relationships typically, but a lack of boundaries absolutely.

Will.

Diana Hill: absolutely. I love guilt is part of the process. It's sort of like asking someone to set their alarm early [00:16:00] and not. Feel tired when you wake up, it's like, yeah, you're going to feel tired until you get used to waking up earlier. So I love that it's, it's opening up and allowing for the guilt because the long-term benefit is so huge.

I wanted to read a little section of your book that stood out to me because you have this way, you really model clear communication and the way that you write, whether it's on Instagram or in your book, like. Bullet point to the point, not a lot of explaining and hits you really, um, at a deep level. So you wrote.

You cannot change people, but you can change how you deal with them. What you accept, how you react to them, how often you interact with them, how much space you allow them to take up what you participate in what role they play in your life, what people you have contact with, who you allow in your life and your perspective.

I love that process of really turning that the tables back on the individual in terms of what can, what can you change when you're stuck in a difficult relationship? [00:17:00] So can we talk about boundaries in terms of maybe toxic relationships or difficult relationships? How do you set those boundaries when you know that other person is not going to change?

Nedra Tawwab: Consistency. So the biggest thing with, with difficult relationships and setting boundaries is being consistent because the model. That you let up, they will drop, they will drop it. They will drop it every single time. So if you really want, um, a difficult, um, person or this difficult interaction to subside, you have to be consistent.

And I'm still really hard part because many of us want to set the boundary and forget it. We just want to say, this is what I need and I don't ever want to say it again. You got it. Do it forever. And. It's not likely sometimes, especially when people are questioning your boundaries, they're trying to move you away from them.

They're being resistant to it. You [00:18:00] have to be the consistent party because it is your boundary. And that is really hard. For the person having to implement that boundary, then with boundaries, with difficult people know that you cannot change them. But as I listed there in the book, there are a lot of things you can change about the way that you deal with them.

You can't change them. There's nothing you can do about somebody else's behavior. You can make a request. You can hope that it is an honor, but you can not make them any do anything. So if they are unwilling to change, what will you do? If you want to continue to engage with them, do you want to continue to engage?

Was a person who has problematic behaviors that they're unwilling to change. Those are all choices that you'll have to make in this boundary setting process with difficult people.

Diana Hill: We've had a number of guests on the show that we've been inspired by, and that are offering you our listeners [00:19:00] discounts on their programs. If you go to our website offtheclockpsych.com, you'll be able to find coupon codes for the programs of Dr. Judson Brewer, Dr. Rick Hanson and Jen Lumenlun. So go check it out at, offtheclockpsych.com and start learning today. One of the things that we did is set out a, um, a question to listeners. What should I ask Nedra? And one of the questions that came back had to do with. Difficult relationships that you have to maintain. So for example, you're, co-parenting with your ex and you can't stand them, but you need to keep this relationship going in the service of your kids. How do you respond in situations like that? Or maybe you're in a work situation that's toxic, but you really want to stay at work because it has other benefits for you.

Nedra Tawwab: So in situations where we absolutely have to be there, I'll think we would. Teach sales or relearn what we were probably taught as kids. You don't have [00:20:00] to say everything. You think you can fill it, but you don't have to say it. You don't even have to behave as if you dislike someone, particularly with a co-parent. Sometimes the best thing to do is to be blind. So you are seeing being kind right. Oh, with your keys, your key is see like, wow, he's making a, her, but she's always nice. You know, like you want to be the kind party in these interactions because you don't want it to be like, they're mean to me. And I'm being to them. Your energy is not determined by anyone else's energy. You determined your energy. So I know that my ex has something going on. They're mad at me for leaving. They're mad that. You know, maybe in a situation they don't like whatever that is. That has nothing to do with me. The bigger thing here is my children and for my children, I am willing to. It survived the encounter with my ex of this pass off, or, you know, having to be in the same space because it is 20 minutes out [00:21:00] of my day. And I have a ton of other hours to really get into what I want to do. But right now for my kids, I can do this for my job. I can smile when my boss walks back. Um, I can, and it's it's, I don't think of it as a fake it until you make it, but. It's about energy for me. Like how much energy do I want to give to this person who is on that I have a relationship with, and I don't want them to, um, have all of my, my, my good energy and just, you know, steal parts of my day. I would rather say, you know, this is a small piece of my time of having to interact with this person, you know, 10. 10 15 minutes max. Um, and I will treat it as that. This is a small amount of time and we won't like everybody, we won't and that's okay. And when we do not, do we, do we treat them like we don't or do we say this is a person I do not like, but I can still be kind to this person. [00:22:00]

Diana Hill: The word energy. I heard you right about that. That way, when you were talking about your own personal boundaries, in terms of, uh, being able to choose where you put your energy and putting boundaries around your energy and you devote a whole chapter to boundaries with ourselves. And I was thinking about the pandemic right now, and energy and how it's dispersed in lots of different places.

In some places we don't want it to be going. And, uh, we have, our boundaries are all kind of mixed up in our homes. How do you set boundaries with yourself when it comes to your personal energy? And maybe you can even just talk about that in the context of the pandemic that I think a lot of people are struggling with.

Nedra Tawwab: One boundary I have been religious about is Monday through Friday. I wake up at 5:00 AM and that is before my kids. Um, and I just take about an hour or so to really sit with myself because what I realize is I do better when I have that [00:23:00] time to myself in the morning. When I, um, you know, getting out of bed, like doing stuff and giving energy to other people I'm hopping right into work that does not work well for me.

So as energetic protection doing what's best is waking up it's early. Um, and like you said, you have to, you know, you have to get into it. But that is a time that I feel that I have to myself to kind of gather myself to practice some of my morning routine and then be able to pour into people. Now for some folks who aren't morning people, maybe they could stay up later.

I'm not a fan of staying up late. Um, but sometimes you could do that in the evening. It really just depends on, you know, your sleep schedule. But in being at home, we'd look different and to just be with ourselves. And sometimes that looks like turning your ringer off. It looks like letting the other people in your house know, Hey, I'm going to go to my room for a little bit with a book.

Please do not disturb me. [00:24:00] Um, sometimes it looks like watching a TV show by yourself or doing it with family. So you have to figure out what's working and not working. For your energy as we are at home in this pandemic. And you know, it may shift, it may be, you know, this month you need to do this to feel better in the next month.

It may be something different. So really paying attention to. Those areas that drain you, those areas where you're feeling resentment, those areas where you're being angry and frustrated. Those are very clear indicators that some boundaries are needed in those areas. So follow the energy wherever you're like. Ah, it's like, okay. Something needs to happen there. You're not screaming for no reason before, you know, if someone texts you and you have to say, Oh, what is that? Don't just make that noise and answer the phone, make that noise and think about that. Like I do, I want to answer the phone for, [00:25:00] you know, like, There is something about that connection that I'm not feeling good about? What is that? Is there a conversation that we need to have? Is there a time of day? I need to talk to this person. Is there a length of time that I need to tap out it? Like, what is that? All the energy.

Diana Hill: Yeah, it's a real embodied state of checking in what your body is saying and using that as, as the guide, as opposed to maybe what your head says about, I got to get back to them, or I don't want to get up in the morning because it's too hard, but really looking. Deeper at what is your body saying about what you need?

And, uh, I've spent a lot of years working with individuals with eating disorders. And one of the things, one of the themes that I see in individuals struggling with eating disorders is they set boundaries through their relationships with food. So it's like, I need to set a boundary with my parents. So I'm not going to eat at the meal, or I need to set a physical boundary around my body sexual boundary. So I'm just going to eat a lot. And keep the person out that way. And I'm wondering what, what you see in your practice in terms of ways in which people [00:26:00] inadvertently are setting boundaries, but aren't direct, but then are quite harmful to them. And I know eating is one of them, but I'm sure it happens in a lot of different domains.

Nedra Tawwab: Yeah. So, you know, that kind of goes over to like rigid boundaries where you have these very clear rules about things. And sometimes those rules are not necessarily healthy rooms for you. We want to kind of boundaries that fit the situation that are well thought out and healthy because every boundary is not a good boundary. Some boundaries are actually. Um, counterproductive to the life that you want to live. So definitely evaluating your boundaries. Is this helpful for me? Because unhealthy, you know, eating rules, that's not necessarily a healthy boundary, but I think it's a wonderful example of being able to set boundaries because I've had those sorts of clients where they say, well, I don't have any boundaries. And then they tell me these scenarios where they do have boundaries. I'm like, You do have boundaries. You just have boundaries that [00:27:00] are not working, um, to give you what you want. So let's talk about some, some boundaries that would actually be helpful because restricting your food is not the healthy boundary, but perhaps eating, you know, maybe in a more intuitive way could be a healthier boundary for you. So really thinking about, um, some of the ways they're already doing it and, and. Not affirming that. Yay. You could set boundaries, but yay. You have the ability to set a boundary. So how do we get you to do that in other areas like it's already in you, so you, now you can't say, Oh, I can't set boundaries. Here is proof you're already doing it. So, um, I love it when people bring up these things about, um, I'm going to let anybody eat in my car, but I'm having boundary issues of my, you know, my friendship. I'm like, do you have a very clear boundary about your car? So you

Diana Hill: that boundary. That's a good one.

Nedra Tawwab: Can not eat them. Like even like [00:28:00] people will have it.

It's like, Oh, so you have a very clear boundary here. How about we take that energy and we put it over here towards this friend who keeps talking to you about her boyfriend. How do we set a clear boundary there? Because you are excellent at setting boundaries. When you want to, why are you feeling like you can't in this situation?

Diana Hill: Let's talk a little bit about the languaging of boundaries. What does a clear boundary sound like if someone is setting it?

Nedra Tawwab: Hmm. I really like, I want, I need, um, I desire it would be helpful. Um, no, all of those are really beautiful ways to get started with setting boundaries. Um, some people have said, Oh, I would like to say please, in the beginning and you know, maybe, please, um, helped me with the dishes. Yes. Uh, but you're still saying I need help with the dishes, but if adding, please is helpful, do [00:29:00] that.

Uh, but just really putting that request out there. And when you put it out, there was really good is to give somebody an idea of what you want. It is not very helpful to say to someone I don't like that you don't help me. What are they supposed to do? We give them a shit. So I need help with, um, I would like it is, but not just signed like problem, because the problem is not enough. People really don't know the solution. You give people a problem and they're like, I thought I was doing what would be helpful. I thought I was, you know, helping you out if you know what you need tell people. And if you don't, maybe you could discover it together. But if, you know, share that information. So people aren't doing these things that you don't know.

Diana Hill: Oh, or that you're resentful that they're not reading your mind accurately, which I think shows up a lot in like couple of [00:30:00] relationships that they should know what you. Want your household to be like, or is that being really direct and clear? I think for a lot of people, they, they fear that because they fear that it sounds mean, or it sounds aggressive. And what you're really talking about here is the difference between assertiveness aggressiveness and pacivity. Can you outline sort of what those, like with the subtle differences, how, you know, if you're being assertive.

Nedra Tawwab: Is clearly stating what you need in a direct way. Being passive is having a need and not verbalizing. What that need is being passive. Aggressive is typically having a need, knowing that you have a need and think out in a way, um, that could be. Oh, gosh, that could be seen as being angry, I'm sabotaging or trying to be harmful to the other person. So, um, I'm [00:31:00] really upset at you. I won't tell you I'm upset, but I won't talk to you for two days. So having those behaviors and not really saying that you, you feel away about something denying it, but feeling it and knowing that you feel it and then aggressive is, um, Being really pushy about what your need

is, you know, yelling, screaming, telling people off, um, forcing them to do something.

I find that when we are new to setting limits with other people, one of the things that happens is we go from passive to aggressive and it's because we've gotten to this place of like, I am so frustrated with people taking advantage of me that. And it's like, okay, now, no. So please don't do that. Please gently say to this person, this is what I need, because we can go too far in our attempt to set limits with other people.

And again, they had no [00:32:00] clue, especially when. You've been allowing something to occur for a long length of time, which we typically do for 14 years. We'll let somebody take advantages of us. And then one day we wake up and we're like, Hey, you can't do this thing anymore. And they're like, what? I've been doing this for 14 years.

What do you mean? And so we're like, Oh my gosh, I'm so offended. And it's like, yeah. So. This is new to them. Like this is new. This is something that has been okay. So there is going to be a process of them learning this new thing about you. Allow them the time to really digest this information. Don't immediately get upset that they aren't on the same page as you, because they didn't know this was a shock to them.

This is something you've been thinking about for some time, but they have not thought about this.

Diana Hill: Over the holidays, when I was reading your book, my mom came over and we got into a heated conversation about the holidays, and I whipped out your book and said, I'm setting boundaries. And it was that example of [00:33:00] like going over the edge into now I'm the, the boundary queen in the, in the rigidity of boundaries, because I had been passive in this area.

And so it's finding that that middle path that is assertive and clear and kind, but also holds the limit up. One of the other listener questionnaires that we had was, uh, one of the, one of the other questions that we had from listeners was about narcissist. I'm sorry, you get this question all the time, but how do you set boundaries with a narcissist

Nedra Tawwab: With narcissists, the real boundary setting happens with yourself because these are folks who, um, They will work to sabotage your boundaries. Right? Um, that's a part of that dynamic of being a narcissist. So the boundaries within is really with yourself. It goes back to you cannot change be one. I know sometimes [00:34:00] when people are narcissistic, they have very difficult behaviors.

And so we're constantly like I'm going to try to get them to do this thing, or I'm going to try to get them to do that thing. And really, they don't want to do any of the things because it's not a problem for them. It's a problem for you. And as a part of being narcissistic, they are not thinking about you as much as you are thinking about you.

And so. You need to figure out how to be in this relationship with this person in a very bounded way. If you're going to continue to do that. And that goes to, uh, maybe there are certain timeframes parameters you need to, you know, maybe speak to this person or rules of engagement, but you cannot treat.

A relationship with someone who is narcissistic as you would with someone who is not because some of the things just clinically, they will not be able to understand and digest and [00:35:00] in the way that you need them to, it's not personal. Um, they are not seeking to harm you necessarily. Uh, but it is just something that is a byproduct of them being self-absorbed.

Diana Hill: one of the things that you talk about in the book that I was actually really curious how you were going to respond, uh, is about ultimatums and you hear different things in therapy, like never set an ultimatum, or you need to set an ultimatum.

You need to, you know, but you had, uh, an interesting take on ultimatums. Can you talk a little bit about setting ultimatums with people?

Nedra Tawwab: I don't think that ultimatums are a bad thing. I don't, I think they are a bad thing when we are using them to trick people. If we say, if you don't, if you don't do this tomorrow by five, I'm going to do so. And so, and then we don't do so-and-so. It's like we didn't use an automated, we use trickery. Um, if you really want to have a good automate them, you have to be willing to stick to it. So I'm going to give you 30 [00:36:00] days to do X, Y, and Z. And at the end of that time, this is going to be my firm boundary. I will not be able to loan you money anymore for your bills. So at the end of 30 days, you have to have this thing together and guess what? If they do it, or if they don't, your rule is the same.

Like you won't help them. And you're, you're not doing it to hurt them, but to, to show them that. You want them to be self-sufficient and a part of them being self-sufficient is a learning how to lean more on their re other resources to gather resources on their own without the support of you. So if you set that also Beetham, you really have to stick with it is not a bad thing, but I think the challenge with ultimatums is.

We go back and forth and then we're upset at this other person. I'm like, I gave them an ultimatum and they didn't listen to it. It's like, yeah, well, you didn't stick to your automate. And was it really an automated or was it a way [00:37:00] to try to encourage them to change this behavior? Because lots of, if you stick with, and a lot of times people will, they'll get on board, like, Oh, wow.

She's not playing anymore. But if you, if you are inconsistent with your Automato, they just repeat the behavior.

Diana Hill: Well, it makes me think a lot. What about parenting and consequences? I mean, ultimately you're talking about stating clearly what the consequence of that behavior is, and then following through with the

consequences. And a lot of times I think parents, they state. Okay. Here's the ultimatum or here's the consequence, but then they don't follow through with it. And then it leads to a lot of frustration, in terms of parenting. Can you talk about boundaries with kids, both, how you set boundaries as a parent, but also how you're teaching? I know you're a mom to two young girls and I think listeners will want to know how is she teaching her kids to set boundaries with others.

Nedra Tawwab: PowerMax kids teaching me, um, teaching me about boundaries. They're setting boundaries with me. I have a four year old [00:38:00] who, um, she likes to dress herself. She likes to have her own unique style. And if I try to put her on Jane, she's like, no, I'm not wearing jeans, kick, kick, kick, kick, kick. I only want to wear leggings.

So she is showing me her boundaries around what feels good on her bodies. And what are that? Um, because I don't, I don't, there's no rule that you have to wear JS. There's no rule, there's no law. It's, you know, it may be my preference, but I think that it. As long as you have on pants, when it's cold outside, I don't care what they're made of.

Um, so we're not going to do an ego trip thing here. So if you want to wear leggings, have at it. And I think sometimes because we are parents and because we are adults, we will try to make the kids do things that aren't even really important to us. I really don't care. What type of pant material she wears.

I don't. Now, there are things that are important that you can't just eat candy. [00:39:00] You know, that it'd be a very clear boundary, but there are some other things where it's like, this is not a situation where I really want to exercise the boundary because it's not life changing. It's not going to move anything in here, but if you could eat candy all day, yes, we'll have a cavity.

There is an issue, um, with eating candy. So. Being really clear about what is a healthy boundary with kids and what are things that we're just doing, because that's what we were taught. What things do we need to get up, get rid of? Cause it really, it, it doesn't apply to the kid or it just doesn't matter.

Um, with kids, I think they have their own unique set of boundaries and we should really encourage them to have that. I am very. Um, aware of kids saying things like, I don't want to hug you. I don't want to kiss this person and that sort of stuff. Okay. You don't want to have to, I don't want to teach you that when you feel uncomfortable in your body [00:40:00] doing something that you have to do in any way, that's not a message you're going to get from me.

So if you don't want to hug cousins, so and so, or I T. You don't have to, and I hope that they don't take it personal, but you don't have to do that because you should be able to show affection when you want to, when it comes naturally. And most times kids do right. And so just allowing them to have those boundaries of personal space, having the boundary of being able to say things without being punished for speaking up is really important.

But, uh, Yeah, I think with kids, um, one of my biggest boundaries as a parent is bedtime that we are so like, Hey, 75 that's, you know, because I'm like, I am not anybody's mama at nine o'clock

Diana Hill: It's because you're waking up at five, you're setting your boundary with yourself. So you've got to set with your kids yeah.

Nedra Tawwab: I am not a mama. Like I, Oh, I'm going to listen to some music. I'm getting [00:41:00] ready for whatever I'm doing. It's like it be sleep. You know, like I need that time to recharge because I have given so much throughout the day that this is now, my time is healthy for us to have this separation. Um, and I think, you know, It depends on, you know, where you are, what your boundaries are as a parent.

That's not a rule that everybody should follow, but I say that, you know, you have to figure out what your rhythm is. Um, and as a parent, it is important to have those boundaries and it makes the kids feel safe. It makes them feel safe to know that you care enough. To say, this is, this is healthy for you.

This is unhealthy for you. Hey, too much TV time. Let's go play. Like it, it feels like while someone loves and cares for me enough, maybe not in those moments when they're having a tantrum about not being able to do the thing, but in hindsight, they will be able to see that I was loved in a very structured way.

Okay.

[00:42:00]

Diana Hill: Yeah, the boundaries are really the ultimate form of love with your children. And in so many ways, there's these long-term benefits that will trickle down from that. Everything from protective factors, from abuse, from others, both as children, but later on, as they become young adults, how to set their boundaries and limits around that, to their own sense of, um, Clarity around listening to their bodies and their own needs and not having to listen to other things outside of them to tell them what's right for them, because you're already fostering that as children, by you listening to them.

That's really beautiful.

Nedra Tawwab: Yeah. I remember when my kids were babies and you feed them and you could touch their stomach and you could feel it like hard, like, okay. They've had enough as they get older, we don't have it anymore. Right. Like you can tell if you had too much food us to go off what you say. So if you say I'm full, I'm like, okay, stop eating.

I don't want you to eat beyond, you know, your hungry points. So just really [00:43:00] teaching you how to be intuitive about what your needs are, because I don't know. And so I have to trust that, you know, when you've had enough, so really teaching them the skills around, you know, your body better than me. If you're not, if you say your nose hurts, then it hurts.

I can't say, Oh no, you know, your body.

Diana Hill: So I'm going to turn the tables a little bit and say, okay. Okay. So what about setting boundaries with parents? Because you talk about, uh, you,

because I think he wrote you become an adult when you set boundaries with your parents. And that's one of the areas that no matter how old you are, it is hard. It is hard.

I'm a 42 year old woman. I still have a hard time doing it. So how do we set boundaries with our parents or in-laws with what does a healthy boundary look like in that area?

Nedra Tawwab: So the, the challenge with parents is we used to be their kids. And so we feel have that like floating authority over our is like, this is my mom. She can tell me to go to bed. No, she [00:44:00] cannot 42, you know? So you have to remember that you're an adult. Too. And that's a part of becoming adult, really learning how to build that adult connection with your payments and not being a child anymore, but being their child.

So I am your child, but I'm not a child. And so, because we are both adults, there will be some different rules of engagement when I was. Well, all of that made sense. But now at 42, these are the things that we are deciding to do in my home and your home. You had your own rules and these are the rules for my hall. And that's, you know, that is a process that happens that unfolds over years with your parents. Like as things come up, when you get married, when you have kids, when you know, you're introduced to, you know, these extended family dynamics, things are continuously unfolding, but. No, that you have a right to [00:45:00] have boundaries in any relationships and because you can have one in any relationship that also means with your parents.

Diana Hill: Yeah. Okay. Another area of boundaries that I see a lot in my practice more than ever is boundaries with technology. And here you are in Instagram guru, you have a lot of followers that are connecting with you through Instagram. So there's lots of benefits to technology and being engaged in this way, but then we also need to set our own boundaries with it. So what do you suggest for your clients that maybe find themselves using more than they want to.

Nedra Tawwab: I think that, you know, phones have developed so many beautiful technologies around, um, limiting the time that you use on these things. And I know within Instagram they have like a timer and you could say, you know, I want to use it for an hour and a half and then it'll pop up and you'll have five minutes left.

[00:46:00] Um, and then it'll, you know, Kind of let you know, you're out of time for the day. And then on that iPhone, they have it where they will cut the app off completely after a certain amount of time. Now here's the thing. We are humans and we can always bypass that, right? Like, no, I'm not ready to quit. Um, so what's typically helpful is limiting your exposure to something.

So if you could sleep with your phone outside your room and limit. Your ability to wake up and get right on your phone. If you can have a few hours in the day where you like have your phone in another room where you keep it on the

charger. So you're not as engaged on the phone. If you could make some rules around, like when I'm eating dinner, when I'm talking to other people, like these sorts of things that these are, you know, no phone times that could be really helpful.

And I think optimally. Figuring out what you're getting from spending. Um, Whatever amount of [00:47:00] time on, um, on social media, because sometimes it is connection because it is like a texting thing. Now all your friends are on there, so your DNA in them, you're sending them pictures. So it is like a communication thing.

And that is okay. So figure out what limit works for you. Do you even need a limit because everyone does it and I am. I'm a huge proponent of curating a fee that really speaks to what you need. I didn't realize that round until now, but it's very Dr. Seuss of me, but, uh, but yes, curating a fee that is representative of what you want, because sometimes we have a lot of things that we follow and they're just sucking our energy, like, Oh my gosh, why did they post it as, or I hate this person.

It's like, okay. Yeah. Unfollow knew, do whatever you need to do. So when you look at your Instagram fee, it's like, this is stuff I want to see. This is stuff that [00:48:00] fills me up. There's lights me up. It's not all of this negative stuff. So being really conscious about what you're following, um, and not just following stuff.

And I know that's really hard in the book I talk about. You know, like your coworker saying, like, what's your social media handle. Like those, those situations where it's like, Oh my gosh, I don't want to follow you. And, and you know, maybe saying something like, um, let me get you my number and say it so we can, you know, we can kind of fire off with texts, back and forth about something.

So really, you know, changing the topic a little bit and giving them some information. But maybe not that because there are some people. We just don't want to follow them. And you know, when we don't, it could be seen as offensive. It could be seen as something as like, what does this mean? Why does, and it's really personal.

I personally, I like to look at very specific things and sometimes only a certain amount of those things. Like I love being a therapist. I love following therapists accounts. [00:49:00] Do I need to follow 500? No, you know, if you're the find a good, you know, 10 I'm like, okay, that's good. You know, for me, it's about ratio. Like I like a little bit of this, a little bit of that, and that is a beautiful theme for me. So figuring out what works for you and what doesn't just looking through your, your list of folks that you follow and saying, like, I feel good when I see this, I don't feel good when I see this and, and using that information accordingly could be very helpful.

Diana Hill: it's sort of like how I stock my kitchen. Right. So if I have certain things available in my kitchen and my kids are going to eat them and it's up to me. As to whether or not I'm PR I'm the one that's purchasing the food. So what

am I going to purchase in my kitchen? That my, that my kids have healthy snacks.

There's fun snacks. There's a variety of snacks, but they're all things that I feel good about at the end of the day, them having available. And I think that. Yes, there's an element. I love that example of maybe having to say no to following someone, but you're setting a boundary there [00:50:00] and it's uncomfortable to set boundaries sometimes.

But the benefit to you in the long run, , is worth it. And, and I think with technology playing such a big role in our lives, now we need to get clearer around what our values are, are around technology and.

Just the same way we do with our shopping lists or , what shows we watch. We can make choices that are beneficial to us. So I love that. And, uh, I certainly have enjoyed, I was mentioning to, I just joined Instagram. I'm like the last. Person ever to come over to this world just like three months ago.

And I have found reading your posts to be incredibly inspiring and have a different quality. It's like, I get a different feeling in my body I can hear your voice for one, cause I've heard you now. But, but when I read them, I feel something different. I feel empowered. I feel clear. And then I'm able to use what I've learned from you, maybe in a session with a client, maybe with a friend, maybe it's a boundary that I need to set with myself right now. And for me [00:51:00] that's a good use of my time. To read this, whereas there's other things on there that I can feel myself going down into negative spiraling, and that's not a good use of my time.

So we listen in our bodies will tell us, uh, where to go with that.

Nedra Tawwab: Yeah, what's interesting is. I started using Instagram about three years ago when I created this account prior to this, I think I've had Instagram, but I didn't actually have it on my phone. Like I would put it on there. Look, somebody say, Hey, I posted a picture. I look at the picture, didn't take the app back off my phone.

Cause I didn't really like Instagram. Um, and then when I started using it professionally, um, I thought there is good to be had in this space. And my biggest fear around it was what I heard from my friends, from my clients. And, you know, just stories I read about, Oh, you could be more depressed and all of this stuff.

And I said, you know, I don't think it has to be that. I think it can be a space where people are getting some wellness [00:52:00] stuff, they're learning more about stuff, but that kind of stuff has to be created. And so we have to, you know, use the space for what we need. And sometimes, you know, maybe we need to find a new pair of shoes.

Sometimes we need to figure out a new hairstyle. And so just making sure that if you are using it for what you need is. Such a helpful way to look at social media.

Diana Hill: Yeah. Thank you. And thank you for all your free offerings in that domain. It's a lot of work. I know you're putting out there.

Nedra Tawwab: You're welcome.

Diana Hill: So as we close up, I guess I have one last question for you, which is, um, just more of like an in a, in a personal realm of how boundary setting for you has changed your life. And what are your hopes for others based on what you've learned about boundaries for yourself.

Nedra Tawwab: Yeah, I'm still learning. I'm still learning. And I think that is the biggest. [00:53:00] Thing that I've learned that I'm still learning, like, as situation comes up, it requires new boundaries. So it's not like you get to this space where you're like, bye. And the all knowing of boundaries, it's like, no stuff still comes up.

And I have to think about my, Ooh, is this aggressive? Is this assertive? Ooh, am I being rigid here and just being open? So the process of continuously, yeah. Practicing boundaries. That has been the biggest thing for me, because with so many things, it's like, you want to master it and we can't master something. That's a practice and boundaries are a practice.

Diana Hill: Beautiful. Thank you. And Andrea, it's been such a pleasure to have you on, and I hope that everyone will check out your book, set boundaries, find peace, and also check out your Instagram account at an address to swab. And it's just a treat to have you here. Thank you for your time.

Nedra Tawwab: You're welcome. [00:54:00]

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