

Boundaries Series Lesson Nine: Boundaries with Toxic Parents

Toxic Parent Relationships

Here are some suggestions for setting boundaries with toxic parents:

- 1. RECOGNIZE THE TOXICITY:** Acknowledge and understand that your parents' behavior is toxic and harmful. This awareness is essential for validating your need to set boundaries and protect yourself from further harm. The awareness that you come from a dysfunctional family or a toxic system informs your “why”.
- 2. PRIORITIZE YOUR WELL-BEING:** Understand that your mental and emotional well-being should be your top priority. It helps when we recognize that setting boundaries is not selfish but rather an act of self-care and self-preservation.
- 3. CLEARLY COMMUNICATE YOUR BOUNDARIES:** Clearly and assertively communicate your boundaries to your parents. Use "I" statements to express your needs and concerns, emphasizing how their behavior affects you. Be firm, yet respectful, and avoid getting drawn into arguments or defending your boundaries excessively.
- 4. BE PREPARED FOR RESISTANCE:** Toxic parents may resist or disregard your boundaries. Remember that their negative reaction is not a reflection of your worth or the validity of your boundaries.
- 5. SET CONSEQUENCES:** Establish consequences for crossing your boundaries. Communicate these consequences to your parents and be prepared to follow through with them if necessary.
- 6. SEEK SUPPORT FROM OTHERS:** Reach out to a trusted friend, family member, or therapist for support and guidance. Discussing your experiences with someone who understands can provide validation, perspective, and practical advice.
- 7. LIMIT CONTACT OR GO NO-CONTACT IF NECESSARY:** In extreme cases where the toxicity is severe and ongoing, you may need to limit or cut off contact with your parents for your own well-being. This decision should be made after prayer, and careful consideration and may require ongoing support from professionals and a strong support network.
- 8. PRACTICE SELF-CARE:** Engage in activities that promote self-care and emotional healing. This can include therapy, mindfulness practices, pursuing hobbies, and surrounding yourself with positive and supportive people.