



Boundary Styles in Relationships

YOUR BOUNDARY STYLES

Purpose: To identify situations in which you tend to be underbounded or overbounded or tend to use a pendulum or healthy boundary, and to identify situations in which you want to set a boundary differently.

Directions: Review the characteristics of healthy boundaries found in Chapter 19, "A Somatic Sense of Boundaries," and the characteristics of the other boundary styles found in this chapter. Then follow the prompts below. Take your time to sense how you experience each boundary style physically and describe in the boxes.

1. Situation(s) in which you tend to be *underbounded*

(e.g., those in which you fail to say "no," do things you don't want to do, don't stand up for yourself, reveal too much about yourself or others.)

2. Describe what you experience in your body when you are underbounded.

3. Situation(s) in which you tend to be *overbounded*

(e.g., those in which you feel unnecessarily guarded, mistrustful, secretive, emotionally distant, automatically say "no"):

4. Describe what you experience in your body when you are overbounded.

5. Situation(s) in which you tend to have a *pendulum style*

(e.g., those in which you are too quick to say "yes" and open up, then feel overwhelmed or too open so you withdraw or close down):

6. Describe what you experience in your body when you use a pendulum style boundary.

7. Situation(s) in which you tend to have a *healthy boundary*

(e.g., those in which you can state your preferences, stand up for yourself, say "no" or refuse requests you do not want to meet):

8. Describe what you experience in your body when you use a healthy boundary.

9. Identify a physical element from #8 that you can use as a somatic resource in situations in which you use an overbounded, underbounded or a pendulum boundary (e.g., *My posture is aligned, but not tense, and my breathing is full*). Practice embodying this resource in those situations.