

Elysse Beasley, M.A., L.P.C., provides counseling for individuals, couples, children and families

■ By Menda Holmes

Setting and maintaining proper boundaries is the key to healthy, satisfying relationships. "Good boundaries are essential in our relationships with our spouse, children, co-workers, and friends. You set a boundary by first defining what you will or will not do. Next, you set consequences. Then most importantly, you enforce the consequences. There are two kinds of consequences. Natural consequences are built in. For example, if you don't do your laundry, you won't have clean clothes. Logical consequences have to be put in place if the natural consequences are too severe, especially with children. The natural consequence of playing in traffic is too severe, so a logical consequence that fits the circumstance needs to be applied," Ms. Beasley says.

"The closer the emotional tie, the more challenging it becomes to set boundaries. If you promise your child

"You must see genuine change before boundaries are adjusted."

a trip to the mall if the cleans his room, you don't take him to the mall until the room is cleaned. Otherwise you're paying off on an IOU. The mall is the payment and you don't accept IOUs, you accept

actual work. This also applies to adult relationships. For example, if a spouse has a drinking problem and is abusive towards other family members, the rest of the family may need to separate from that person until he cleans up his act. You don't let him back into your life just because he says he will change. You must see genuine change before boundaries are adjusted. If their words don't match their actions believe their actions every time."

Dr Martha Stout describes how important the rule of threes is when considering a new relationship. "If a

person lies to you once, maybe it's a misunderstanding. If they lie again, it may involve a serious mistake. The third lie means you're dealing with a liar, and deceit is the lynchpin of conscienceless behavior." The proper boundary here is to cut your losses (time, money, emotions, etc.) and get out. Often times people stay in co-dependent relationships longer than they should because of all kinds of fears; fear of abandonment, fear of being alone, and fear of not being loved. Because of these fears they want to believe the excuses and they forget that actions speak louder than

"We always have choices."

words. The solution is to build your contentment level, so you don't need a romantic, emotional rela-

tionship so desperately. That way you are available for safer, healthier relationships. Another way to protect your self is to build a circle of safe, supportive friendships. These are people whose opinions you trust, who have your best interests at heart, and can see clearly for you when you can't see things for your self. Change is hard work, but the payoff of peace, contentment, and self-esteem is worth it.

"Power is not something you demand or deserve, it is something you express."

"We always have choices. Others will do what they're going to do, but we have hundreds of different responses to any situation," Ms Beasley relates. Boundaries are not manipulative. By setting boundaries, we show self-control

by limiting how we will allow ourselves to be treated. We must not interrupt the process of reaping and sowing in someone's life. When we allow someone to avoid the natural or logical consequences of their behavior, we are interrupting this process and enabling them by reinforcing the wrong behavior.

We must be proactive and anticipate what someone will do based on past experience with this person. Then we take time to think it through and respond proactively rather than reacting. Dr. Henry Cloud and Dr. John Townsend describe the proactive person in their book Boundaries. "Proactive people do not demand rights, they live them. Power is not something you demand or deserve, it's something you express. The ultimate expression of power is love; it is the ability not to express power but to restrain it."

In addition to individual, family, and couple counseling, Ms Beasley also does psychological testing, including IQ and achievement tests, vocational testing, and testing for ADHD. She also implements employee assistance programs.



Elysse Beasley has been extremely successful in helping me overcome co-dependency and panic attacks through our sessions. Elysse helped me change my faulty thinking patterns and gave me an understanding and insight that continues to affect change in my life. She has impressed me with her professional yet down-to-earth manner of relating to me, and I know that through that relationship she has given me that tools to do what I need to for myself and my relationships with others. Elysse is as much a wonderfully insightful counselor as she is a truly caring and empathetic person. - Student

When nothing is for sure, there is Elysse Beasley! She is an essential part of my well being. She has taught me the importance of healthy relationships, helped me understand myself, and provided a light when all things seemed dark. - JC

Services Available:

- Parenting of teen-agers training
- Psychological Testing
- Bereavement Counseling
- Career Counseling
- Hypnotherapy

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Feature Member of the Month