

# The Need for Boundaries in Separation and Unity



The ability to create boundaries is an important aspect of the process of individuation. In the absence of boundaries we would experience an instantaneous psychological, emotional, and physical death. If we did not have a layer of skin around our body, we would be vulnerable to harmful elements and too sensitive to live. All organisms have boundaries, beginning with a single cell, in order to exist as a separate unit in life. Our boundaries cannot be too tightly sealed, because this would obstruct our relationship with our environment. Biological cells have a membrane that is semi-permeable, meaning certain materials are able to pass through it. This enables it to receive nourishment from its environment while protecting the inside of the cell. If our skin was too thick it would be unable to absorb or secrete, and our sense of touch would be compromised.

## Importance of Psychological Boundaries

Boundaries are a problem for many people for different reasons. Some do not define them strongly enough. Others, out of various fears, fortify themselves with excessive boundaries and effectively live isolated from others and their societies.

It is very important to strive for healthy boundaries, whatever level one is at. However, establishing and maintaining natural boundaries is only really possible from a conscious and awakened state. Correct boundaries are both open and self-contained, somewhat similar in concept to the semi-permeable membranes of single-cell life forms. In this way, energy is able to flow freely between the organism of a single individual and the world. One can then seek the right balance in the permeability of one's boundaries in one's relationship with others.

Our boundaries are ordinarily established individually on different personal levels: physical, mental, emotional and spiritual. Our ability to manage such boundaries is directly linked to our psychological makeup and the integrity of our personality. For instance, in terms of mental boundaries, there are people who lack confidence in their own ideas and views of the world, have no clear ideas of their own, and are easily

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influenced by others. They lack conviction and a sense of boundaries between their own mind and the minds of other people. In these cases, the lack of self-confidence inhibits their ability to set appropriate mental boundaries.

In terms of emotional boundaries, it is common for some people to be too easily affected by the emotions of others. They are unable to separate their own feelings from those of other people. This makes them vulnerable to absorbing others' emotions, which results in their being emotionally confused. Then, at the other end of the spectrum, there are others who are emotionally or mentally cut off from the world, such as those suffering from autism, who cannot experience any true empathy, sharing, or compassion.

It is important to have some capacity for empathy, but for many people, feeling what others are feeling requires them to identify with the other person to the extent of losing a sense of their own boundaries. This is an incorrect way of being empathetic. To feel others in a genuine empathetic sense requires us to be rooted in our own subjective existence, otherwise our empathy is unconscious and false, and can be harmful to us, as we become too open to the negative or confused energies of others.

It is common among those who do so-called healing, channeling or other psychic work to be able to identify fully with their clients. They use their psychic abilities to step out of their boundaries and experience some kind of unity with the other person. Unfortunately, when their receptivity is not rooted in their true self, such practices can result in hefty spiritual and psychological damage to their own self.

### **Respecting One Another's Boundaries**

In addition to defining our own boundaries, we must also respect the boundaries of others. Some people are pushy and insensitive concerning others' space, and this can be very disturbing. Such people do not understand other people's need for personal space, as they are usually not in touch with their own boundaries. Often they are the ones who are constantly seeking the attention of others or distractions for themselves, and they are not themselves aware of the benefits of privacy and of being alone.

Some people talk too much and do not know how to listen, while others are too receptive of other's talk and absorb too much. There are also people who may be aware of when it is appropriate to have a positive influence on others, but are too shy to reach out and do so. Because of their lack of confidence, they are unable to connect with the other person and communicate at a mental or emotional level. When one is autistic or socially isolated, other people appear as if at a distance, and their boundaries seem like impenetrably thick walls. Such isolated people cannot break through their own boundaries and communicate on a person-to-person level, bridging what they perceive as an abyss between themselves and the other people's boundaries.

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The art of maintaining correct boundaries is especially relevant in our social interactions. One should be open to others, but not allow them to intrude into, or violate, one's own space. When that happens, it is important for one to activate a stronger energetic internal boundary to maintain some distance from the intruding individual. We are all familiar with feeling trapped by someone who does not stop talking and, even though we are desperate to get away from them, it seems impossible to do so without causing offence. What is actually occurring is that this person is mentally attacking you and damaging you energetically with their noisy mind. In such situations you must either stop the person or leave. There are times when being nice and polite is the wrong approach.

Everyone knows that some people are like emotional and energetic vampires, and just to be anywhere near them is draining. Such people have no inner life, and are so desperate for attention or affection that their very presence violates the unwritten standards of etiquette respecting others' personal boundaries. These people are often mentally confused and emotionally disturbed.

People who talk too much or who drain others emotionally are almost always unconscious of what they are doing. If there seems the possibility they could be open to changing, one could gently help them become more aware of their behavior and the effects they are having on others. The awareness and understanding on their own should help them gradually to reduce the problem. Unfortunately, those who may be receptive to such empathetic advice are usually in the minority, and the next best option — to preserve one's own boundaries and protect oneself — is to minimize or avoid contact with such people. In cases where they need professional care, that job is best left to the appropriate professionals.

In situations where some contact with such unconscious and energetically negative people is unavoidable, it is best to maintain a stance of being closed mentally, emotionally and spiritually. While the essence of such people (which they are not in touch with) may be alright, the energies from their personality and behavior are unconscious and confused. Generally, for such time as one is in their presence, it may be possible that a balance can be found in which one can still keep one's heart open to their essence, while at the same time not indulging or agreeing with their words, behavior or energies, and remaining closed to those.

### **Boundaries in Romantic Relationships**

The issue of boundaries is very important in romantic relationships. It can be unbearable when your partner is overly needy, constantly wanting attention and insensitive to your boundaries. On the other extreme, one partner may be emotionally closed to the other, keeping too much personal space to minimize any involvement. In both of these cases communication is necessary to resolve what is essentially a conflict of needs and avoid unnecessary frustration or misunderstanding. Even when emotional and physical needs

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are mutually respected and harmonious in a relationship, for it to be truly healthy and sustainable, each of the two people must also be in touch with their aloneness.

### The Limitations of Ego's Boundaries

As regards our human self, there are two levels on which to maintain our boundaries: in the mind and in the emotions. An example of crossing such boundaries mentally would be when someone tries to convince you of something you are closed to. Letting the other person verbally assault you in this way is a sign that you are not protecting your own boundaries. On an emotional level, a similar crossing of boundaries occurs when one person has excessive emotional dependence on another, and the other person keeps letting this happen. This is usually referred to as co-dependence. Countless examples of people either failing to protect their own boundaries, or of being insensitive to the boundaries of others, can be seen in everyday life.

Even though boundaries are crucial in order to survive physically and psychologically on the level of personality in this world, ego itself is innately confused about asserting boundaries because of its insubstantial and fragmented sense of self. It does not have a clear dividing line defining the territories of its subjectivity; its boundaries are at best only approximate and often fluctuate widely according to different circumstances and situations. Our personality is a by-product of continual interactions with society and the outer world, and it does not really have a life of its own, other than the constant internal processing of external experiences and information.

So, to truly establish boundaries we must develop a deeper connection to the light of me. This means that, before we are really able to define our boundaries, we must first know who we are.

### Spiritual Practice and Isolation

One of the side effects of working with pure subjectivity can be a sense of isolation from creation. As one practices self-remembrance and surrendering to I am, there is always a danger of becoming overly isolated from the world and others. This is not really a problem so long as it is just a temporary stage in our evolution. There is always a period in each seeker's path of going into a period of seclusion or on retreat in order to stabilize the awakened self. But then there must come a time when we go beyond a high level of exclusively internal focus and integrate our inner realization with the world. This is the time in which we move from the awakening of our subjectivity to unity with the world of manifestation in order to realize true oneness of both inner and outer dimensions.

For an awakened person to discover his natural boundaries, he must, above all, find the balance between his inner and outer consciousness. Inner consciousness on its own pulls one inside too much, while outer consciousness on its own results in one losing oneself in the external relative reality. The soul is a being who exists between realms, bridging them

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through her expanded unity consciousness. An important part of her purpose is to learn the art of living as a human from the depth of her unconditional self. She must know when it is appropriate to be mentally open to other people and, when faced with negativity or damaging energies from others, to be mentally closed.

The same principle applies to having the heart. Even though the heart of the soul is always open, the human dimension of it — which is connected to human emotions experienced through the feeling me — is not meant to be open at all times, as this could be detrimental to her energetic and spiritual wellbeing. The human heart has its own intelligence and instinctive wisdom which tells it when it is right for it to be open and to express human love and compassion. It also understands the importance of keeping the heart at the human level closed when confronted with negative or insincere people.

For the soul, the creation of her boundaries on a psychological level works in the same way as for the personal human level, but with the additional dimensions of her light and pure subjectivity also to be taken into account. Although her light of me serves as the source of her unconditional strength, she also needs to protect it, as it is vulnerable to harm from forces of lower intelligence. She must find the appropriate equilibrium between being firmly established in pure subjectivity while being flexibly open in the relative dimension.

As the soul reaches samadhi in the inner realm and attains unity with the unmanifested, her inner being reaches a higher level of transparency and freedom from this world. Because of the transparency, unconscious energies cannot touch her, they can no longer attach themselves to her light. It is as if she has become like a sieve to negative influences; they seem to pass right through her, leaving no traces on her immaculate nature.

However, while it is true that the human level also becomes empowered by being infused into the soul, this human aspect continues to be vulnerable to disturbances from subconscious negative energies of the world. This is why, even after reaching samadhi, one has to continue to be protective in the world and maintain positive boundaries between oneself and others.

Living as an awakened being is something of an art — a balancing act between the embodiment of the perfection of our original nature and dealing appropriately with the transparent imperfection one continues to have in the human realm.

### **Boundaries and Openness**

Seekers often indiscriminately open up to all kinds of individuals who claim to be awakened or enlightened, and this can be spiritually dangerous. Some of these are no more than pseudo-teachers who connect with dark energies or who channel confused or strange entities they do not really understand. Even in more traditional places of worship, one should be cautious, because parasitic energies can be attracted to the unconscious

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devotion of the people who frequent them. Such sacred places as Mount Kailash, in Tibet, or Arunachala, at Thiruvannamalai in Tamil Nadu, India, attract numerous negative presences that are drawn there by the open energies of devotees. It is best not to practice any unconscious devotion which is disconnected from the light of our pure subjectivity, or one may get more than one has bargained for.

People have been aware of dark energies and presences since time immemorial. They have created magical rituals and mantras or spells as means of shielding themselves against real or imaginary 'evil'. As other means of protection, some people pray to deities, make the sign of cross, visualize light surrounding their bodies, wear amulets, or put magical symbols in front of their houses. Whether these devices are just superstitions which make them feel safer or actually have some protective value is a subject for another discussion. One thing is certain: our real protection lies in the depth of our relationship with our inner self – in solidifying our identity, embodying our light, while remaining cautiously flexible in how open we are to the collective and universal subconscious and unconscious.

Maintaining appropriate boundaries is not in conflict with being trusting and open. Although we each need to learn how to protect ourself when living in the dimension of forgetfulness, we also need to learn how to live beyond self-protection, with an openness to life. An important example is that a seeker has to be energetically open to his spiritual teacher so as to be able to receive help, but such openness should only take place once the seeker is confident that his teacher is genuinely guiding him from the place of light and true consciousness. Ultimately, we need boundaries that are both clearly defined but also fully transparent, open to natural unity with all that is.

### Transparent Boundaries of the Soul

The soul comes into existence by isolating her essence from the lower personality self. The process of separating the real from the unreal within our subjectivity is like churning cream to separate the pure butter from it. Forming our inner boundaries is an integral part of the spiritual individuation of our higher self. It is only in this way that we can establish our pure subjectivity and embody our light.

Our soul not only has clearly defined boundaries in her relationship with the world, but she also has natural boundaries within the realm of universal subjectivity. Why does a soul need to have boundaries if she becomes one with the divine? It is because she would cease to exist without these boundaries. Even in the ocean, each molecule of water must have a well-defined atomic structure so that, in unison with all the other molecules, they can create the vast body of water. Without these boundaries there could be no ocean. The boundaries of the soul in the inner realm expand into absence, because she is constantly merging with transcendental reality. Here, boundaries are not only defined by her presence, but by her unending samadhi in the beloved. While she is dissolving in the beyond, she must also simultaneously and incessantly embody her light of pure

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individuality. Should she fail in continually maintaining the boundaries of her subjectivity, she would lose herself, fall into negative absence and fail to realize true unity with the ultimate reality.

The concept of boundaries is also very important in better understanding the process of the individual awakening of each center of the soul. For instance, when pure me of consciousness is awakened, it has to be embodied in the context of its samadhi in I am. In attaining this state, pure me is separated from everything else and thus has become isolated as a field of pure subjectivity. Where this is not achieved explains why seekers who awaken awareness without having any sense of boundaries are unable to establish a new identity within their spacious expanded state. Their subjectivity has not formed sufficient, if any, boundaries of individuality and, as a result, has not reached the correct relationship with I am. If pure me does not realize its boundaries, we can never arrive at a correct unity with universal reality.

Each dimension of the soul has to establish its inner boundaries, each pure me — of consciousness, heart and being —, as well as conscious me. Unless their respective identities are properly isolated from the others, they cannot be awakened and established. Only then can we begin to unify them with each other into a single organism of the complete soul. But, even though all of the centers must merge with each other, they continue to maintain their unique qualities and can still be experienced individually. This means their boundaries are not fully dissolved, but rather become transparent and permeable as respects each other, so that there is free flow of energy and pure attention between them all.

### The Art of Living from the Soul

Even though we solidify our identity and empower our light through awakening, we also become more sensitive to the energies of unconsciousness. In many respects, someone on the spiritual path needs to take even more care of themselves than people living normal lives who remain identified with being their personalities. Living on the level of the mind is a kind of automatic protection against the negative energies of others, because the mind on its own is already so full and busy that almost nothing more can enter it. This makes the usual mind impermeable to both light and darkness. Only when one has a connection to light, can one actually be truly disturbed by other people, because for the first time one has a precious depth of inestimable value beyond the normal shallow mind. The favorable side to this is that having a connection to our light means we can also be receptive to positive gifts from the external, since the world experienced from the soul has many more blessings and treasures available to it than are possible for the unawakened.

The soul's boundaries for an awakened person are usually brought into play as a natural by-product of the embodiment of their pure nature and the centralization of consciousness. However, because one still needs to connect to the world on a human level, additional boundaries still have to be set for one's human body, mind and emotions.

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Energetic disturbances of one's soul from others' negativity or unconscious lower energies usually come through one's psychological channel. This means that, even though one has embodied one's pure consciousness, one's mind is still vulnerable to negative subconscious mental energies if it is too open. And, from the mind, such negative energies will then pervade one's consciousness. Some seekers are overly open, confident, and even generous in their relationships with the world. After one experiences the initial awakening, one might feel invincible, but one soon learns through hard experience how much more vulnerable one has become.

A common problem is that many seekers lack sensitivity and often do not appreciate that they have been letting others' negative energies disturb them on an internal level for some time. As they have not been aware of these disturbances coming from others or through their own subconscious, these negative energies will continue accumulating until it is extremely hard to get rid of them. One way to do this is to attend a longer retreat, on which, after some days of concentrated practice, the cloud of negative subconscious energy may be dissolved.

The sensitive quality of our awakened inner consciousness is of enormous importance in cultivating our pure nature, and it is of vital importance that we set suitable boundaries at our worldly level to guard it against contamination or regression. In a worst case scenario, the awakened state can be lost entirely if one fails to protect one's inner light sufficiently against the energies of unconsciousness.

The ability to create our boundaries on the levels of the human and the soul is an important part of our evolution. The motivation for setting those boundaries should not be from fear of being harmed (even though this fear is warranted), but rather because these boundaries ensure a stronger and deeper relationship with our individual existence. Each one of us has been given the gift of individuality. This has not happened by chance, but so we can become the star of me illuminating the infinite sky of creation with the priceless light of clearly defined subjectivity. Carefully guarding and nourishing this light offers a precious opportunity of reaching the complete embodiment of who we really are.

Blessings,

Anadi

*For a full glossary of terminology, please visit our website: [www.anaditeaching.com/glossary](http://www.anaditeaching.com/glossary)*