

Boundary Violations in Relationships

This is unacceptable in relationships. Individuals need to do their own work to learn why these violations happen — and how to stop them.

YELLING AND SCREAMING

We can always take a time-out and walk away.

“There is nothing that harshness does that loving kindness doesn’t do better.”

— Terry Real

NAME CALLING

Any sentence that begins with, “You are a _____”

SHAMING AND HUMILIATING

Communicating that someone is a bad or worthless person. Shaming behaviors include ridiculing, mocking, being sarcastic, or patronizing the other person.

TELLING ANOTHER ADULT WHAT THEY SHOULD DO

Unless you are someone’s boss, therapist, or advisor, you have no right telling another grown person what he or she needs to do. (This is different than requesting they do something.) The same goes for telling someone else how they should think or feel.

MAKING CONTRACTS AND BREAKING THEM

Saying you are sorry yet repeating the same bad behavior is a form of manipulation.

LYING

Being dishonest with your partner weakens the bonds of trust and connection.

MANIPULATING

Creating undue influence through mental distortion or emotional exploitation, with the intention to seize power, control, benefits, and/or privileges at another individual’s expense.

EXTERNALLY DRIVEN SELF-ESTEEM

We want our healthy self-esteem to come from within. This is achieved through self-awareness activities such as meditation, therapy work, and journaling.

PERFORMANCE-BASED ESTEEM

- “I have worth based on what I do.”
- In adulthood, this may show up as “workaholic.”
- In childhood, this may be overachiever behavior.

ATTRIBUTE-BASED ESTEEM

- “I have worth because of what I have.”
- In adulthood, this is greed.
- In childhood, this is material goods.

OTHER-BASED ESTEEM

- “I have worth because you think I do.”
- In adulthood, this may show up as love addiction.
- In childhood, this is when children see a parent’s pride of their child as a reflection of themselves.

HEALTHY SELF-ESTEEM

- All people have equal value, worth, and dignity.
- Your essential worth comes internally; it cannot be earned or unearned.
- Your self-esteem is yours at birth, and it’s yours until you die. Make sure to nourish it.
- View yourself with warm regards, despite any flaws or imperfections:
 - I matter. - I am not better than anyone else.
 - I am enough. - I am not worse than anyone else.
 - I am of equal value.