

Title:

Part 2 – Better Boundaries: Going Beyond Judgment, Shame and Blame

Sometimes the world can seem like a dense forest, where we can easily get lost and disoriented, unsure where to turn.

So many decisions and seemingly so little time to make them.

This lack of direction can be stressful and even overwhelming. In these moments, it is tempting to protect ourselves by creating boundaries that would guard us against all possible troubles that may lie ahead and keep us on track until we find our way out of the woods.

But as you read in [part one](#) of this article series, these boundaries can often do more harm than good, creating an us-against-them mentality and opening a chasm between you and the people in your life.

So, what's the alternative? How do we find our way through the woods without getting lost?

Let's stick with the compass metaphor and dig into the options...

Even with traditional boundaries, we use a compass to guide our actions. But the one we use is our external compass, built with our cultural conditioning and societal norms.

As we explored in [part one](#), traditional boundaries are rooted in judgment, shame, and blame – I'm **right**, and you're **wrong**, you **shouldn't** be doing what you're doing, it's **bad**, and I have the **right** to make you stop.

This dynamic creates unnecessary tension and defensiveness for everyone involved.

But what's with all the judgment, shame, and blame?

Without getting too far into the weeds... it's a consequence of our good/bad right/wrong cultural paradigm.

In other words, this paradigm is like a pair of glasses that help us see and interpret the world around us.

The right/wrong paradigm has been used throughout history as a means of social control and can also be used to maintain power dynamics within a society.

Blame and shame are used by those in charge to control and manipulate those not in power, creating a culture of repression where people are afraid to speak out or express themselves because they will be judged or blamed.

Additionally, it can lead to discrimination and exclusion, as certain groups may be unfairly targeted or marginalized based on race, gender, or sexuality.

The optimistic view is that using judgment, shame, and blame was the only method they could think of to help create civil and orderly societies and ensure people followed the rules and didn't harm others.

This power dynamic is why when we use our external cultural compass to create our boundaries, we have no choice but to incorporate judgment, shame, and blame into the mix.

It's all we know and the only game in town.

Through that cultural lens, we believe the blame game is necessary to protect our well-being.

It doesn't have to be this way...

But before we're willing to get a new compass, we need to know that the one we're using is broken.

Let's dive into some examples and see where that damaged compass leads us: (Look for the shame, blame, judgment, and justification words. I highlighted them using **bold**, underlined, and *italicized* text.)

Imagine John's roommate, Peter, keeps leaving dirty dishes in the sink. John has repeatedly asked Peter to clean up after himself but with no luck because Peter has not changed his behavior which is driving John crazy.

Since John only has the external cultural compass to guide his thoughts and actions, he justifies his anger by thinking, "Peter is **lazy** and **inconsiderate**."

"He never cleans up after himself, and it's not fair that I have to live in a **pigsty** because he's **self-absorbed** and doesn't care about anyone else."

John decides his roommate is **wrong** and **should** change or else.

He sets his boundary and tells his roommate, "You need to clean up right after you eat, or I'll start keeping all the dishes in my room, and you can eat off paper plates."

How do you think Peter would react when he hears this?

Well, let's take a look...

In this paradigm, Peter would defend himself and justify his actions and may think John is **controlling** and **overreacting**.

Peter also might think that John needs to value his time and understand that he has other things going on.

Peter would probably also sense that John was judging and blaming him, which could lead to more tension and resentment in the living space.

Sadly, when using this external cultural compass as a guide, boundaries are typically set from a place of **justified** anger or upset.

You see, in a good/bad right/wrong paradigm, you better be able to justify what you want or what you're doing because otherwise, YOU are the one that's selfish, intolerant, judgmental, inconsiderate, anal, too picky, etc.

So, you better figure out how the other person is **wrong** and what they "are" so you can be **right**.

OK, your turn?

In this next story, see if you can spot the justification and find the judging, blaming, and shaming words.

Sarah's colleague Marcus constantly interrupts her during meetings and does not let her finish her thoughts.

Sarah thinks to herself, "How rude! This guy is so arrogant. He thinks his opinions are more important than mine and doesn't value anything I have to say."

She sets a boundary and tells Marcus, "Please don't interrupt me when I'm speaking. It's disrespectful."

Marcus thinks, "Who does she think she is making rules and trying to dominate the conversation? She has no authority over me."

"How dare she judge me; she is the disrespectful one."

Did you pick out all the judging and blaming words?

Can you see how all this judgment, shame, and blame from both of them could lead to a breakdown in collaboration and teamwork or worse?

These examples illustrate how our cultural compass often leads us to more division and conflict, even if we intend to create more peace and harmony.

Do you see why it might be time for a new compass?

Stay tuned for part three because I'll show you where to find your internal compass and how it can lead you to profound connection and more understanding rather than separation and resentment.

I'll also explain how to use your new compass to create Better Boundaries that will serve and support your life, feel good to develop, are easy to express, and are more satisfying for everyone involved.

Until next time...

With love,
Beth

~~~~~

**Did you enjoy this article:**

If you would like to receive more articles like this one, please consider subscribing to our newsletter by following this link:

<https://incitecoachingacademy.com/newsletter-sign-up-hub-m/>

You'll receive weekly-ish updates with exclusive content, uplifting stories, and actionable advice to help you tap into your inner wisdom, cultivate healthy habits, create deeper connections with those around you, and support a world that works for everyone.

~~~~~

Reprint request:

This article is copyright ©2022 Beth Banning. All rights reserved. You are welcome to reprint this articles in E-Newsletters or on your website or in a printed journal as long as you include the appropriate attribution and make the link at the end active. Thank you for honoring this copyright.

Author Beth Banning, ©2022 all rights reserved. Reprinted with permission only. This article and others, along with free resources, are available at <https://www.incitecoachingacademy.com>