

Title: Part 3 – Better Boundaries: Frustration to Freedom

I remember it clearly...

The ketchup bottle was in my hand one second and flying towards his head in the next.

Don't worry, the bottle was plastic, and I missed, but I still could have hurt him, and the whole experience scared the crap out of me.

At that moment, my act of violence woke me up. I thought I must be going out of my mind. How could I possibly get to a point where I was willing to cause physical harm to another human being?

When I think back to just before I threw the bottle...

I called him selfish, inconsiderate, cruel, etc. I had set many boundaries with him, none of which he honored, and I was frustrated and angry.

Why did I throw the bottle at him?

Yup, you guessed it. As discussed in [part two](#) of this article series, I was justified because I used my cultural compass.

That compass led me to believe he was a jerk and wrong and should be punished for his disrespectful actions.

And all that judgment stimulated my righteousness which "made" me feel frustration and anger.

And since I was at a complete loss for what else to do to get my needs met, the ketchup bottle seemed like a viable option.

It wasn't until I was divorcing him and looking for ways to reduce my stress, grief, and anger that I found Nonviolent Communication.

As I listened to the facilitator – who, some years later, became my second husband – I saw another possibility.

I got a glimpse of my inner compass, the one that would guide me to a whole new way of thinking and a completely new way of being.

LOST IN THE WOODS,
WITHOUT A GUIDE WE
STUMBLE BLINDLY,
TRYING TO DECIDE
WHICH WAY TO TURN,
WHICH PATH TO TAKE
OUR FATE UNCERTAIN,
OUR FUTURE AT
STAKE.

BUT WITH A COMPASS,
A TRUE NORTH STAR
WE FIND OUR WAY,
NO MATTER HOW FAR
WE WALK WITH
PURPOSE, OUR STEPS
ARE SURE OUR
DESTINATION, NO
LONGER OBSCURE.



This compass brought me to a place where I found new options, took new actions, stopped defending myself and justifying my position, and could finally just relax.

From that moment on...

I began learning how to use this new internal guidance device.

This inner compass now gives me a grounded sense of confidence, helps me trust myself and my decisions, and allows me to move more spontaneously through life.

With this new compass, I now know I'm safe because no matter what's happening around me, I can find my way out of the woods and emerge centered and more peaceful.

So, are you ready to chuck the good/bad right/wrong approach to

boundary-setting and learn how to use your inner compass as a guide?

I bet you are since it's taken three articles to get here. Lol

So here's how we're gonna do it...

Let's explore where the new compass might take us by re-examining one of the examples we used in [part two](#).

Remember John and his roommate Peter.

Peter was the one that left dishes in the sink longer than John enjoyed. With the old compass, John thought Peter was inconsiderate and self-absorbed.

Now let's use the internal compass and see where it leads.

Imagine that the internal compass only uses feelings, needs, and values to guide our thoughts and actions.

Since this compass doesn't include the typical cultural training as its guidance system, *we don't need to justify our position to ask for what we want.*

Now, John walks into the house after work and sees dishes in the sink *again*.

John and Peter have already had the initial conversation where John asked him if he would wash his dishes immediately after he eats. Peter said yes, *but he hadn't.*

What might John think if he only has his feelings, needs, and values to guide his thoughts?

Well, maybe he's *tired* and a little *discouraged* because it's not much fun to come home to dishes in the sink, **especially after he's talked to Peter, and Peter, is not keeping his agreement.**

Because John is using his inner compass, we know he doesn't think Peter is inconsiderate...

But what does John think about Peter now?

With only feelings, needs, and values to guide him, John might think Peter is just another human trying to meet his needs.

This might come to mind because John deeply **values caring and consideration.**

With that as his guide, he asked Peter,

"What prevented you from washing the dishes right after you ate as you had agreed?"

Did you notice any blaming, judging, or shaming in that question?

None, right? But here's the thing...

This conversation would go pretty well if both people were committed to using their internal compass.

Peter would answer the question, maybe saying he got busy doing something else and forgot or that he realized he enjoys being spontaneous and didn't want to wash the dishes right after eating.

With this new information...

John and Peter would develop different strategies that might work better for both of them.

And they would either find something that satisfied them, or they would go to the next level...

Meaning looking for other possibilities.

Perhaps, John would decide to wash the dishes himself whenever

it bugs him, or one of them may choose to move out and find their own place. Etc.

It's hard to know how it would go until they had the conversation. Either way, it would definitely be better for both of them without all the judging, blaming, and shaming.

But here's the other thing...

Not everybody uses the same compass.

Suppose Peter was still using he's cultural compass. He might get defensive and start justifying his position no matter what John said or how he said it.

At that point, John, now the only one using his internal compass, would have to slow down and keep remembering he's committed to staying focused on feelings, needs, and values.

He would likely empathize frequently with himself and Peter, stays as present as possible, and do his best to help facilitate him and Peter to come up with strategies that work for both of them.

It would be great if everyone was playing the same game, using the same rules, *but that's not the reality.*

So, if you find yourself in a relationship where you're the only one using your internal compass, don't worry.

Taking this approach may not be perfect...

But it's still a whole lot more satisfying and effective than the cultural compass you're probably using now.

With this new guidance system, you can powerfully take ownership of your feelings, needs, and values without blaming or judging yourself or others.

You can ask for help getting your needs met, learn to empathize

with, and communicate in a way that aligns with what you value most.

Of course, this process takes practice and will not lead to what you think is a perfect resolution every time.

Commitment and the willingness to confront uncomfortable feelings and maybe even challenge the status quo are required.

But when you intend to follow your inner compass and use it as a guide, it can bring you a deep sense of groundedness, clarity, and peace.

You will trust yourself more, and as you practice, you will begin to make choices and choose actions that feel much better and more align with your most genuine and authentic self.

So, give it a chance, and if you have already started following your internal compass, don't give up. **I promise it's worth every bit of your time and effort.**

With love,
Beth

PS, to help you practice, and overcome any challenges and navigate the obstacles that might come your way, I have created the: **The Better Boundary Checklist: How to Overcome Challenges and Navigate Obstacles.**

So, if you'd like support in maintaining a sense of connection and understanding with yourself and others, even during conflict, download your checklist here:

<https://incitecoachingacademy.com/the-better-boundary-checklist/>

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