



Why Boundary Advice Keeps Ending Marriages

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Boundaries shouldn't have to be a stepping stone towards divorce, but that's how they often end up being used. This episode explores some common themes in teachings about boundaries that may explain this anecdotal trend.

THE FOUR PROBLEMS, AND WHAT A BOUNDARY SHOULD DO INSTEAD

1

The trigger is just a feeling.

Ask how you know when you need a boundary and the answer is, in short, when you feel like it. But a recurring problem causing recurring feelings is often proof of personality differences, not an unsalvageable marriage.

Instead: a trigger you can actually define, before you reach for the boundary.

2

Limit + consequence contradicts “what you can control”

First you're told you are responsible for what happens “inside your own fence.” Then you are told the boundary is a limit plus a consequence. But don't consequences make you look at their side of the fence?

Instead: a way to enforce boundaries that isn't driven by punishing your spouse.

3

Lots of talk about setting boundaries. Not much about lifting them.

Page upon page about the need for boundaries, how big your boundaries should be, and how to hold your ground when your partner doesn't like it... Then the question of relieving the boundary or re-unifying the relationship get an offhand mention at best.

Instead: a clear boundary end-point, so you both know the path to relief.

4

The boundary is pointed out of the marriage.

Not every boundary has to be a divorce ultimatum. But so many people are teaching about boundaries after going through divorce, that there is an inevitable pull in that direction. One way or another, boundaries end up framed as an intermediary step before divorce, rather than a way to build up a marriage.

Instead: done from a posture of leaning in, tilted toward the marriage.

“The boundary shouldn't be done to divide our property lines apart. It should be defined safety for our property lines to be neighboring to each other.”

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