



**THE 5-STEP
BOUNDARY
SOLUTION[©]**
Clarifier

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In order to identify, create, and maintain effective boundaries you must know your reality, the outcome you want, where you have power to effect change, how to take action, and how to evaluate your results. The 5-Step Boundary Solution© Clarifier is designed to guide you – step by step – through the boundary-setting process.

BOUNDARY SOLUTION STEP 1

*Identify Your Reality**

The first step is **knowing your reality**, or what is true for you about the issue you want to work on. Your reality in the present moment is what you're experiencing with your five senses (*sight, sound, smell, taste, and physical sensations*), what you're *thinking*, and your *emotions*. Identify your reality by asking three simple questions:

1. **Data:** What did I see/hear/experience that could be recorded with a video camera?

2. **Thought:** What is my perception/thought, or what do I "make up" about the data?

3. **Emotion:** What emotions do I feel as a result of the thought I have about the data?
(Check all that apply):

anger

shame

pain

fear

guilt

passion

love

joy

**Adapted from the work of Pia Mellody*

BOUNDARY SOLUTION STEP 2

Identify Your Needs & Create Your Vision

Begin by identifying needs not currently being met with regard to this situation (choose the 2-3 most important needs):

Affection	Mutuality/Give & Take
Authenticity/Genuineness	Order/Reliability
Autonomy/Independence	Peace
Closeness/Touch	Respect
Communication	Safety
Community	Stability
Companionship	Support
Freedom	Trust
Harmony	Other: _____
Honesty	Other: _____

After you've identified the needs, ask *"What is the outcome I want, or what is my vision, with regard to this issue?"*

Your vision should be **specific and measurable** (for example: *I want my partner to call me once a day between 8:00 – 10:00 pm when he/she is out of town*).

BOUNDARY SOLUTION STEP 3

Identify Your Power Center

Do you have the power to create the result you want without asking for help or making a request? If not, can you create the result you want with help from someone else, or does the result require making a request of another person? Are you powerless to create the result?

Check all that apply:

I have the power to create

I need help

I need to make a request

I am powerless

BOUNDARY SOLUTION STEP 4

Take Action

Based on your answer to Boundary Solution Step 3, do **one** of the following:

I have the power to create the outcome

What I need to do to create the desired outcome:

I will complete this Step by (date): _____

I need to ask for help

Seek help from _____ *to create desired outcome.*

I will complete this Step by (date): _____

I need to make a request

What is the *specific* request I need to make? Ask the person if they are willing to:

(the request must be *measurable and clear*).

If agreed on (and applicable), this Step will be completed by (date):

Do nothing

Release the problem because you're powerless to change it, or choose to do nothing because doing nothing is the best course of action (provided you can make this choice without believing you're a victim).

BOUNDARY SOLUTION STEP 5

Evaluate Your Results

If your boundary work was successful, congratulations!

If the boundary missed the mark, ask:

- Did I **follow through** on the action I committed to in Boundary Solution Step 4? If not, recommit or re-evaluate the action.
- If I made a request, **was the agreement clear**? If not, return to Boundary Solution Step 4 and revise the request.
- Was the agreement broken (**boundary violation**)?

If yes, determine how important this issue is to you on a scale of 1-10 (10 being the greatest importance). This issue is a _____ for me. This number will help you determine your next steps.

For **broken agreements and boundary violations**, your options are:

1. Return to Boundary Solution Step 4 and **repeat your request** and/or request a repair or an amends from the other person.
2. Return to Boundary Solution Step 4 and **take necessary action**, if possible, to create the result you want—or get your needs met—without the participation of the other person.
3. **Return to Boundary Solution Step 1** and work Steps 1-4 based on the new issue.
4. Do nothing and **accept powerlessness** (provided you can let go without believing you're a victim).

Additional Notes:



Vicki Tidwell Palmer is the author of *Moving Beyond Betrayal: The 5-Step Boundary Solution for Partners of Sex Addicts*.

Vicki is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW), Certified Sex Addiction Therapist (CSAT), and Somatic Experiencing Practitioner (SEP) in private practice in Houston, Texas. In addition to her training with the International Institute of Trauma and Addiction Professionals (IITAP) and the Somatic Experiencing Trauma Institute (SETI), she has trained extensively with Pia Mellody, one of the pioneers in the treatment of childhood trauma, boundaries, and love addiction.

Vicki offers online courses and workshops for partners of sex addicts and survivors of childhood trauma. She is a blogger for The Huffington Post, as well as her own blog—[Survival Strategies for Partners of Sex Addicts](#)— where she offers expert information and guidance for partners of sex addicts and survivors of intimate partner betrayal. For more about Vicki, [visit her website](#) (vickitidwellpalmer.com).