

# Keller Center Research Report

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# INSIDER: Healthy Boundaries

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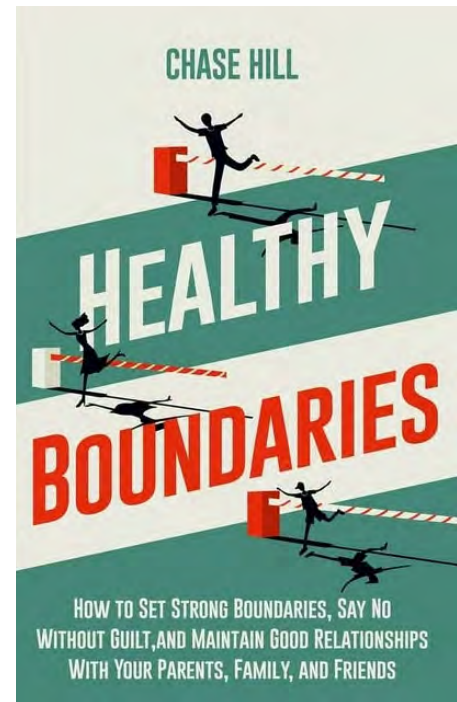
The modern individual has numerous relationships. While relationships range from important, such as a family member, to transient, such as a colleague, all of these relationships can have a significant impact on our lives. As social creatures, humans are most often enriched by the vibrancy of having social connections. Simultaneously, however, these connections on which we depend can also be detrimental to our well-being. Chase Hill, author of *Healthy Boundaries*, describes situations in which relationships are encroaching onto our lives and conditions under which they transition from beneficial to harmful. Hill outlines how to identify when boundaries are disregarded by our families, friends, and coworkers, and the author then offers solutions that can enable us to live healthier, more fulfilling lives.

## THINK POINT #1: Identifying a Need for Boundaries

Boundaries can be categorized as physical, emotional, time, sexual, intellectual, or material. These categories are not a strict classification, nor do they need to be. The first step to achieving a more fulfilling life is to identify if there really is a need for certain boundaries. A common perspective might be that they are unnecessary; however, a simple list of questions in *Healthy Boundaries* can confirm or deny your belief. These questions range from simple, such as, “Do you regularly feel stressed, anxious or overwhelmed?” to more pointed questions like, “Do you resent your loved ones when they ask too much of you?” Taking time to answer each of these questions honestly will allow for careful consideration of one’s situation and determine if there are shortcomings troubling the relationship. One caveat of this is the influence that cultural differences can have on our answers to these questions. These differences may represent intrusions; others will be viewed as a normal, especially when it comes to family. It is important to consider these differences when determining if there is a need for boundaries.

## THINK POINT #2: Workplace Boundaries for Positive Working Environments

The modern work environment is stressful, intensifying with the COVID-19 pandemic as companies transitioned to hybrid or remote work, which enabled professional lives to encroach onto personal lives. Regardless of the environment, the workplace is a well-known stressor for the American workforce with 39% of people indicating that their workload causes them stress and 35% identifying their bosses as the main cause. There are very few professions where excess



stress is justified, since it is a detriment to overall productivity and health. Thus, it is important that boundaries be established in the workplace to maintain a positive environment.

As a supervisor or an employee, it is vital to support boundaries that reduce the instances of racism, bullying, discrimination, unwanted sexual advances, unpaid labor, narcissism, and other aspects that can bring negativity into the office. Doing so will help employees feel comfortable and accepted, promoting cooperation and collaboration. A firm with established boundaries that intend to protect the well-being of its employees will fare better in the long-term and consistently attract talent, especially for younger generations who prioritize mental well-being enter the labor force.

### **THINK POINT #3: Setting Boundaries with Family or in the Workplace**

Setting boundaries with family members is a difficult process. Guilt and shame are common when setting boundaries with family, particularly parents (no matter your age!). There are numerous possible family relationships, but the most significant is the parent-child relationship. Many parents face challenges adapting to the reality of a grown child, even well into the child's adulthood. Parents are unable to imagine themselves with a hands-off approach. However, forgoing such change can result in suffocation and can have negative consequences for other relationships or parts of your life. Thus, it is vital to break control and establish boundaries between your adult life and your parents. The first step is to disrupt the control with disarming phrases such as "As an adult, I am no longer scared of you," or "My feelings are as equally important as yours." These seemingly harsh words can help establish your independence. Afterward, it is important to continue to the conversation with parents to build a new relationship, one that meets your needs and one that is accepted by them. Within this conversation are other considerations: empathize with your parents' feelings, maintain your stance, set consequences, stay persistent, and respect the differences between yourself and your parents. In time, this advice can help parent and child evolve into a productive and healthy relationship.

Workplace boundaries are valuable to maintaining a safe, positive, and productive environment. Boundaries with colleagues and superiors are integral to keeping peace in a stressful environment. The steps to establishing these boundaries are similar to those with family members: use direct statements to address situations that make you feel uncomfortable. At the same time, since this is a professional environment and since employees have responsibilities, it is necessary to determine if the situation is within the realm of your employment contract. If not, then definitely address the situation, even involving Human Resources if necessary. By taking

these steps, you are contributing to the creation of an openly communicative and collaborative workplace that is beneficial for all.

### Real Estate Implications

A real estate firm is just like any other firm in that its employees need a safe, positive workplace. Therefore, it is important that having strong workplace boundaries that allow employees to provide the best services. This is especially important in real estate since it is primarily service based, thus, relying on personal interactions with



clients. A workplace that leaves agents dissatisfied will transfer these feelings to clients and prospects, thus driving them away. Therefore, supervisors must consistently maintain the state of the workplace and investigate complaints to prevent the alienation of employees. Doing so will keep employees happier, healthier, and more willing to dedicate themselves to a firm that they believe in, enhancing your firm's competitive advantage.

While it is important to separate personal and professional lives, advising employees on how they can maintain their personal boundaries too can compound the benefits of having boundaries in the workplace. By pursuing a workplace and environment in which employees can thrive, real estate managers can ensure that clients receive the best services and maintain the success of their firms.

### Recommended Reading

Hill, Chase (2021), *Healthy Boundaries: How to Set Strong Boundaries, Say No Without Guilt, and Maintain Good Relationships with Your Parents, Family, and Friends*, Independently Published.

### About the Author

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Vineet Paidisetty graduated from Baylor University with a Bachelor of Business Administration in Finance and Baylor Business Fellows. During his undergraduate tenure, he engaged in a research internship at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, Texas. Additionally, he served as a Venture Capital Research Intern with Bios Partners in Fort Worth, Texas. Vineet is currently a medical student at the Baylor College of Medicine with an interest in specializing in sports medicine and orthopedics while actively engaging in the healthcare startup arena.



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