

“Staying on My Side of the Tennis Net”

Tennis net and tennis court, I use as a visual/mental lens to view my relationship functioning

Every relationship functions like a tennis game

There are several combinations of player positions and net or no net

If there is **NO NET**

- Little respect
- Intrusiveness
- Dependency
- Codependency
- Enmeshment
- No boundaries
- I don't know where I end, and you begin

If they are on my side of the net

- Parent's say "I hope you don't date her, she is not your type" or other enmeshment statements, "you weren't taught to do those things" "I expect you to come on Christmas eve and see your grandparents"
- Friend says, "you're not going to Bob's party are you he is just so gross" "Tammy just told me off, so WE just won't talk to her anymore"

Enmeshment statements will always be them jumping over the net to my side or ripping down the net

They assume everything I feel and think and know is theirs

- Access
- Comment on
- Judge
- Evaluate
- Is open to change with their influence

Also, their anxiety is often the trigger for enmeshment and jumping over the net

I can't say no, because they are emotionally too close---
then I feel guilty

Parents are often on our side of the net, parents often do not respect a child growing up, or respect a child's adulthood.

Let's describe me on their side of the net

- I obsess about them, worry about them
- I caretake
- Over-function
- Try to fix
- Search for solutions for them
- Over sympathize
- "Feel their Feelings"

E.g. Let's take a parent/child example...

It is so easy to become enmeshed with our children and overfunction for them (due to our own issues and our fears and anxieties)

The child get's bullied at school. We then start to fret, worry, call the school, sign them up for martial arts classes, we talk about it all the time with our spouse.

We can even be so engrossed in fixing and overfunctioning we don't even ask the child how they felt and what they thought they should do about it.

WE HAVE JUMPED OVER THE NET

So, what is a healthy, adult, self-differentiated way to stay on our side of the net and keep them on their side of the net?

- Inner boundaries, my life is mine and I share it as I choose, I answer the questions I choose to answer and despite feeling guilty I stand firm that I care for self, first
- Outer boundaries, saying I talked to my friend about it, or my coach or therapist, or I've got it handled, I don't feel comfortable with that question right now...can I answer anything else? (Like your pay..)

- Resist changing them, letting them be enmeshed, letting them feel whatever they want to feel or believe whatever they want to believe.
- Focus on changing yourself and how you function, not on how they function in the relationship
- Focus on what you want, you believe, you need, you feel, and your comfort zone
- Give yourself a voice
- Observe and not absorb the other

Listen but don't internalize

- Keep their feelings, judgements, criticisms ON THEIR SIDE of the net
- Keep your guts in you and their guts in them
- Pretend to self-differentiate
- Do the right thing for you even if you don't feel it or have fears
- Resolve your fears
- Remember whatever they do won't make your pants fall down
- Coke a cola them
- What would Betty do?
- They are only Joann not MOTHER

Hope you got some great tips

Look for more Going Deeper Videos on my exclusive content

Thanks Guys Have a great day

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