

## ***Boundaries with kids - Barbara Silva - Reflection Paper.***

### **#1: Kids need parents with boundaries**

This topic of the book stood out to me because I've been currently dealing with this subject with my 3-year-old. Sometimes she does things she is not supposed to and my first reaction is to blame her and not to think about my contributions for that to be happening, like the author mentions. One of the aspects of this book that has really intrigued me is how I need to work on my boundaries. I've definitely been teaching my daughter some boundaries. However, I've not been modeling boundaries that well. As the author mentions, "modeling goes on all the time, not only when you are on 'parenting mode'", and that is very hard. I'm still in the process of self-differentiation with my mother, as we are still very enmeshed, and setting clear boundaries has been one of the biggest struggles I've encountered in my adult life. I know my daughter is observing and learning from my modeling so reading about it was a good reminder that I need to keep working on it.

### **#2: Internalizing boundaries**

The author talks about 3 ways of learning boundaries; teaching, modeling, and internalizing. I really enjoy reading this book as it gave me a lot of practical tips on boundaries. I was struggling a lot on teaching boundaries to my daughter because training boundaries do not consist of words alone. After reading this book and understanding how it actually works makes a whole lot more sense. No Amount of lecture could teach my daughter boundaries if I do not help her internalize it and make it into an experience. So from now on, I'm starting to use the tips on the charts and giving her more chores around the house (age appropriate), and being more firm with rules and consequences. By doing so, I'm trying to create experiences for boundaries to be internalized and not only wasting my breath.

### **#3: The law of power**

In chapter 6, the author talks about power and that is such a theme in our family. My daughter, husband, and mom seem to share personality A type with all its traits. One of these traits is definitely having a choleric temperament which leads them to think they can intimidate anyone with their powerful attitude, anger, and/or loudness. Thus, reading this chapter has been a huge enlightening on how to deal with them, especially my daughter who still doesn't know how to regulate her anger emotions. She definitely thinks she has all the power in the world to do anything she puts her mind to. I love that she is determined. However, I need to channel that, and have the correct response. On page 96, there are tips on how to handle these episodes so I can help her give up her illusion that she has so much power when she is angry. As the author mentions, teaching a child that she is not that powerful but she is also not powerless is essential in constructing her identity without illusions. I wrote on my agenda, "Limit omnipotence, but encourage Autonomy". I want my daughter to have a reality-based understanding so she can grow up knowing that she is capable of things, and free, but also knowing that she is not almighty. When getting dressed, I usually choose two or three different outfits and let her pick one out of the three so she is not powerless over her dressing (so important for her these days) but she is also not the boss.

### **#4: Pain can be a gift**

I found chapter nine so rich and powerful that I was in tears at some point. Pain is so necessary, and oh how hard it is to go through but it is of immeasurable worth. We parents, I think especially moms, tend to want to rescue our kids from any pain. As mammals, protectors, and nurturers we want to keep them safe. However, if we look at the animals, and learn from them, we will see that at some point they expose their offspring to pain so they can grow and survive.

Same needs to be applied to us humans. Unfortunately, these days pain is being avoided at any cost, and it is leading our new generation to extraordinary problems. I pray to God every day to spare my daughter from unnecessary pain. However, I also ask him to give her a realistic life because I do not want her to grow up thinking life is only happiness. Unfortunately, I've learned life is painful, as the author mentions, a child will only develop frustration tolerance by going through frustration. "Frustration and painful moments of discipline help a child learn to delay gratification," then the author goes on and says that learning delay gratification is one of the most important traits a person can have in life. I'm praying to God and also trying my best not to rescue my daughter from her pain, and frustrations. As hard as it could be for me as a mother, I need to let her go through her own little frustrations and learn from them. Today at pick up from daycare she asked a friend for a hug and the friend said no. My instincts as a mother wanted to interrupt the two and asked the friend to be nicer and hug instead just so my daughter wouldn't have to deal with the rejection. However, I saw that moment as a great opportunity for her to learn frustration. She came to me and complained that nobody wanted to give her a hug. I explained to her that people need their space, and that they don't feel like hugging right now. She stopped for a couple of seconds, looked at me, and said "momma, sometimes I also don't want to hug my friends, that's ok, let's go home". Wow! I was amazed by her attitude. I'm so glad I did not rescue her from that moment and interfered with my own "pain".

#### **#5: Require Initiative and Problem solving**

This topic was so important. I learned that my overactivity will contribute to my child's overpassivity. Isn't it like that in our marriages? When one person over works the other one under works. If I do everything for my daughter, she will not do things on her own, and eventually not develop any responsibility. I know for a fact that it is hard while we are teaching them

responsibility, but I'm sure I'll reap the fruits of it. In a couple of years, I do not want to be doing any work that belongs to my children for them. I also want my children to be able to seek help, to be able to be geared towards relationships and not isolation as passivity tends to bring people to. If I really value relationships, I need to start helping my children to become more active in seeking help, and trying even when knowing the task can be difficult.

#### **#6: Grow in boundaries personally**

This topic goes back to the beginning of the book for me. Reaching the end of the book, I've been asking God to please help me with my own struggles. I've looked at the overwhelming reality that I need to continuously work on myself. I need to keep doing the hard work. I need to stop fearing conflicts and guilt, and saying no to people. First obvious reason is my own personal mental health/relationship. Secondly, my kids are constantly watching me and learning from me. Like the author mentions, kids are good at sensing a hypocrite.

#### **#7: Am I too late?**

I love the very last point the author makes. He says it is never too late to bring change to our kids' lives. I sometimes struggle with this because I keep thinking that my daughter is almost turning four and her personality traits and character are almost fully formed. But I'll hold on to the tips of this book that I need to bring a sense of structure to my home as a spiritual matter. I've decided to raise my kids righteously and even though the path is difficult, it's not too late and I'll take charge as a parent and lead them to the right path.