



Change Your Focus, Change Your Life

Law of Attraction and Boundaries

By Silver Rose

I've been giving a good deal of thought lately to the topic of "boundaries," those things psychologists tell us are good to have when involved in relationships with people (interestingly, when involved in relationships with pets they're hardly ever necessary!)

The Law of Attraction says you attract more of what you focus on. It seems to me that, when setting a boundary, we are saying, *"This is as far as you're allowed to go and no further!"* The focus is on what we DON'T want.

Instead of **setting boundaries**, which sound so ominous and limiting, I wonder if it might be better to **share desires**, or "wants".

Notice the difference between,

"I don't allow people to yell at me," and
"I want to hear what you have to say so could you speak in a calmer tone of voice?"

"Don't ask me to work overtime. I'm not available." OR
"I am happy to be here for a full 8 hours between 8-5pm."

We have been trained for years to attempt to push away the things we don't want instead of replacing them with the desire for something more positive. You rarely hear two people who are yelling at each other saying what they WANT the other to do. It's generally about what they want the other to STOP doing. Even if they are saying, *"I want you to pick up that piece of paper right now!"* the underlying theme is, *"I want you to stop defying me."*

Have you noticed that what you resist persists?

Boundaries are neither good nor bad. It is simply useful to ask whether or not they are effective. If someone tells us they don't like it when we do a certain thing, we become hyper-sensitive to it and often end up doing it because we're trying so hard not to. Our attention is completely on what we're not supposed to do and somehow it shows up. (Don't think of a blue rhinoceros! You're thinking of one, aren't you? I told you DON'T!!) That is how the **Law of Attraction** works. You get more of what you focus on.

Yesterday, I taught a management class and suggested that the easiest way to discover how employees want to be managed is to simply ask them. For many in the room, it was a revolutionary idea. It had simply never occurred to them to go directly to the source for information. They were reading books and taking classes when the answers they sought had been within easy reach every single day.

Similarly, it would be effective in relationships to ask the other person, *"In order for us to have a positive relationship, how do you like to be treated?"*

Granted, the other person may react in complete shock. It's not a question we get asked enough and it can be jarring at first. However, it's a very useful question. Each of us comes with internal "user manuals" that we've developed over the years for how to best interact with us. Just as with any piece of equipment (and yes, there are parts of us that are "machinery"), if the wrong buttons get pushed, we don't get the results we want. If you push the "eject" button on a DVD player when you want to watch a movie, you are not going to see the movie, even though that was your intention.

It's the same with people. As we progress through time (a clever euphemism for aging), we learn what works and what doesn't with regard to our own needs. If we can clearly communicate that information to those around us, our relationships will be richer and far less stressful.

Of course, we *could* tell them before they even ask us. Employees could go to managers and say, *"I know you want me to produce the best work for this department. Here is how to interact most effectively with me."* In turn, employees could ask their managers how to work most effectively with them.

If making them guess was more fun, I would strongly urge you to do it. However, as I look around, I can see that most of us are poor at guessing how others need and want to be treated. If we were better guessers, there wouldn't be so much strain in relationships.

Try it on for size. As with anything I suggest, you can always go back to how you were doing it.

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Silver Rose works with organizations who want to develop self-managed and happy employees and with individuals who want to love their work.

She can be reached at 877-840-5416 or by email, Silver@SilverSpeaks.com