

# The Beauty of Conflict Tools: Boundary-ing



## Full Episode Transcript

With Your Hosts

**CrisMarie Campbell and Susan Clarke**

# The Beauty of Conflict Tools: Boundary-ing

CrisMarie: Welcome to The Beauty of Conflict, a podcast about how to deal with conflict at work, at home and everywhere else in your life. Hi, I'm CrisMarie.

Susan: And I'm Susan. We run a company called Thrive, and we specialize in conflict resolution, communication and building strong, thriving teams and relationships. Conflict shows up in our lives in so many ways. Most people, unfortunately, are not very good at handling conflict. Most people have never been taught the right tools for dealing with conflict, and then it leads to unnecessary friction, arguments, passive aggressive emails, tears, hurtful comments, stuck-ness, all kinds of things we don't want. We're on a mission to change all of that.

CrisMarie: We've spent the last 20 years teaching our clients how to handle conflict in a whole new way. We're here to show you that conflict doesn't have to be scary and overwhelming. With the right tools, you can turn a moment of conflict into a moment of reinvention. Conflict can pave the way into a beautiful new system at work, a new way of leading your team, a new way of parenting, a new chapter of your marriage where you feel more connected than ever before. Conflict can lead to beautiful things.

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CrisMarie: This mini podcast is on boundary-ing, or the boundary process.

Susan: Well one, we think in our culture, there's a lot of ways that people think about boundaries. And all too often, I think one of the ways they do, it's like, I'm really telling you what I don't want you to do. And that is, in some vernaculars is considered a boundary. We actually don't think of that as boundary. We think that's more of a wall.

And so what we want to do in this five-minute period is sort of define what we mean by boundaries and then give you a few techniques for how you can support yourself in making clear what your boundaries are and then supporting your own boundary.

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CrisMarie: And a boundary, how you know you need a boundary is actually when you connect to your body. And if you're cringing inside, that's an indicator that you need to look at what is a boundary.

Susan: And the other time is to pay attention to when you start to feel resentful. Because nine times out of 10, resentment really - you think it has something to do with the other person. It usually has something to do with you, and it's a good time to check in and see where am I not taking care of my boundaries.

CrisMarie: So what a boundary is, it's about self-definition. Me defining what I want and what I don't want inside of me. It's not about self-defense. It's about using current information, not about predicting with past information.

Susan: It's about making choices and it's not about an obligation or rule. That's a big one for me. I sometimes make rules out of everything.

CrisMarie: And it really, boundaries are about curiosity and flexibility, versus I set this in place and it never changes.

Susan: And here's a big one. It's about being body-aware. Not just up in my thinking, exclusively in my thought-based thinking.

CrisMarie: And it's really about creating contact and dialogue with the other person, rather than here I'm going to give you a monologue or I'm going to threaten you, or I'm going to demand that you do something.

Susan: It's also - what a boundary is, it's you saying this is me. That's that notion of self-defining, versus you saying this is what you have to do.

CrisMarie: And that's so often where people get confused. And when we're helping people and couples, individuals look at their boundaries, it's looking at where do you regularly get frustrated or annoyed or upset, and looking at how is this related to a core value for you. Something that is really important for you.

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Susan: I wanted to start with something just even simple, like a lot of times, I tend to be somebody who has a pretty passionate voice. Let's just call it loud. And so what can happen or did happen earlier, CrisMarie would say to me, "You can't talk to me that way, or you can't yell at me."

CrisMarie: That's not a boundary statement.

Susan: And I think that's not an uncommon one that you have probably said. And what's really different when she said, "I don't like it when you're that loud. When your voice goes up, I..."

CrisMarie: But what happens is I get scared because really, so underlying that is a value of safety and security that was getting triggered when - because my dad yelled and it was violent back then, that was velcroed together.

Susan: So the key though is instead of making it about me being different, she's saying I don't like loud volumes. Very different than you have to be quieter.

CrisMarie: And how I could take care of my boundary if Susan was wanting to speak or talk in a loud voice is I could back up, which I did, or even we had one person that we were working with who put on headphones. He was very sensitive to sound and that was one way that he took care of his boundary because it got too loud.

Susan: And you could still hear the actual words, but he didn't hear it at the same volume. So you see, very different. So the key with boundary-ing is one, getting clear for yourself, even if you hear yourself saying, "You have to drive differently," or, "You have to do this differently," see if you can turn it around and say what is it that I'm actually wanting? Okay, I want someone who drives slower, someone who doesn't whip around cars. I can start to recognize - that's me self-defining and looking at what it is in traffic that may make me uncomfortable.

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CrisMarie: And it's a very conversation to say, "Hey, I'm uncomfortable the way you're driving." That's a statement. I feel more settled and safe when we go slower.

Susan: Very simple things.

CrisMarie: And it doesn't mean that Susan has to change or the other person has to change. I might decide, you know what, I'm going to drive from now on, or I'm going to take my own car. Those are different ways that I can take care of my boundary.

We had some woman who wanted to travel and her husband didn't want to travel. He wanted to stay home, and it was really about aliveness and adventure for her. So rather than she try to convince her husband to travel, eventually, she just started doing international travel all on her own.

Susan: So you see, there's many ways if you can recognize what it is you really want and need, then it becomes a boundary-ing statement and you can take care of your own boundary, instead of trying to change the other person.

CrisMarie: We have an in-depth chapter on this in our book, the Beauty of Conflict.

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CrisMarie: Well, thank you for listening to the Beauty of Conflict Podcast. If you're dealing with a difficult situation in your life or work, remember, every conflict is a chance for you to be vulnerable and curious, and find creative solutions that you hadn't considered before, and make your situation even better.

Beautiful breakthroughs can be born out of conflict. We've seen this happen thousands of times over the last 20 years, and we know this is possible for everyone, including you. We're grateful you listen to this show and we're rooting for you.

## **The Beauty of Conflict Tools: Boundary-ing**

Susan: And if you enjoy this show, please tell a few friends and/or post a five-star review on iTunes. Your review helps new listeners discover this show, and more people listening to this show means less friction and arguing and suffering out in the world, so that's a great thing for everyone.

And also, if you'd like to find out more about us or have us work with your team, speak at your event, or coach with you, go to our website at [www.thriveinc.com](http://www.thriveinc.com) to read out articles, join our newsletters, reach out to us, and learn more about us. Thanks again for listening. We hope you have a peaceful, productive, and beautiful day.