

# Dealing With Difficult Clients

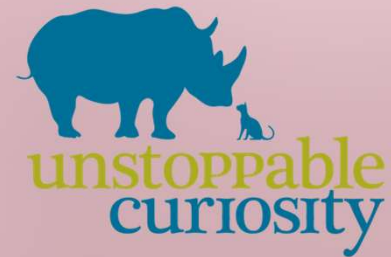
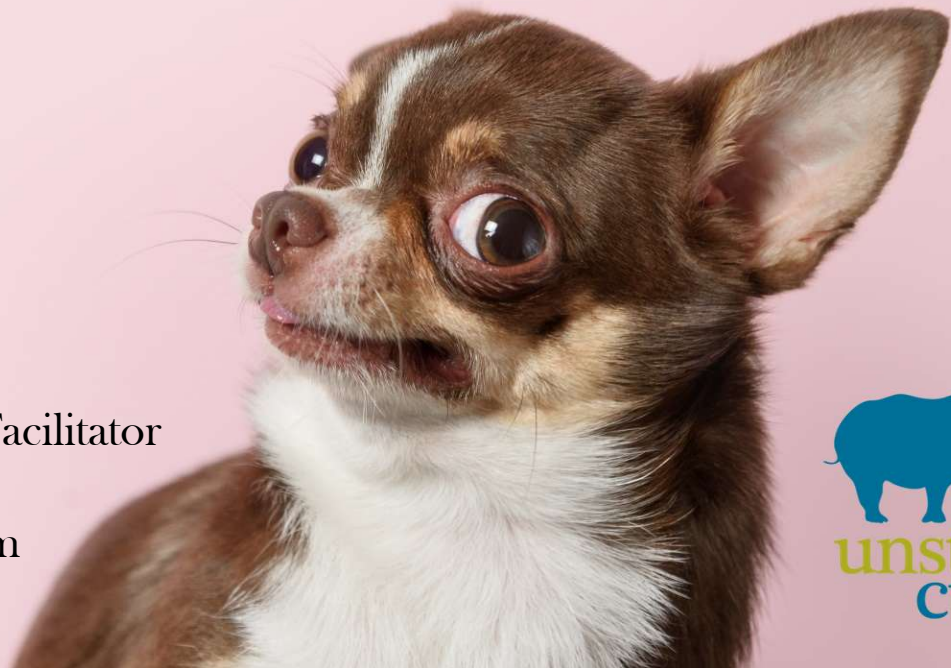


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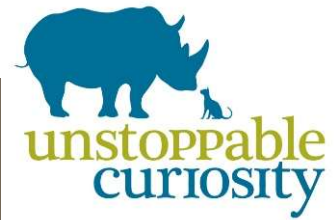
**Chalice Springfield**

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[www.UnstoppableCuriosity.com](http://www.UnstoppableCuriosity.com)



# 4 Things About Me...





# Intentions for the Day:



Have at least  
one take-away.



Be interactive and  
engaging.  
(Even on Zoom!)



Have fun!

# Connection Before Content





# Connection Before Content:

Which One Is the Most Difficult?

1. The **Angry** One
2. The **Ghoster**
3. The **Know-It-All**
4. The **Indecisive** One
5. The **Needy** One  
(High Maintenance)
6. The **Chronic Complainer**
7. The **Overly Emotional** One



LOCATION  
LOCATION  
LOCATION



# Concepts taken from:



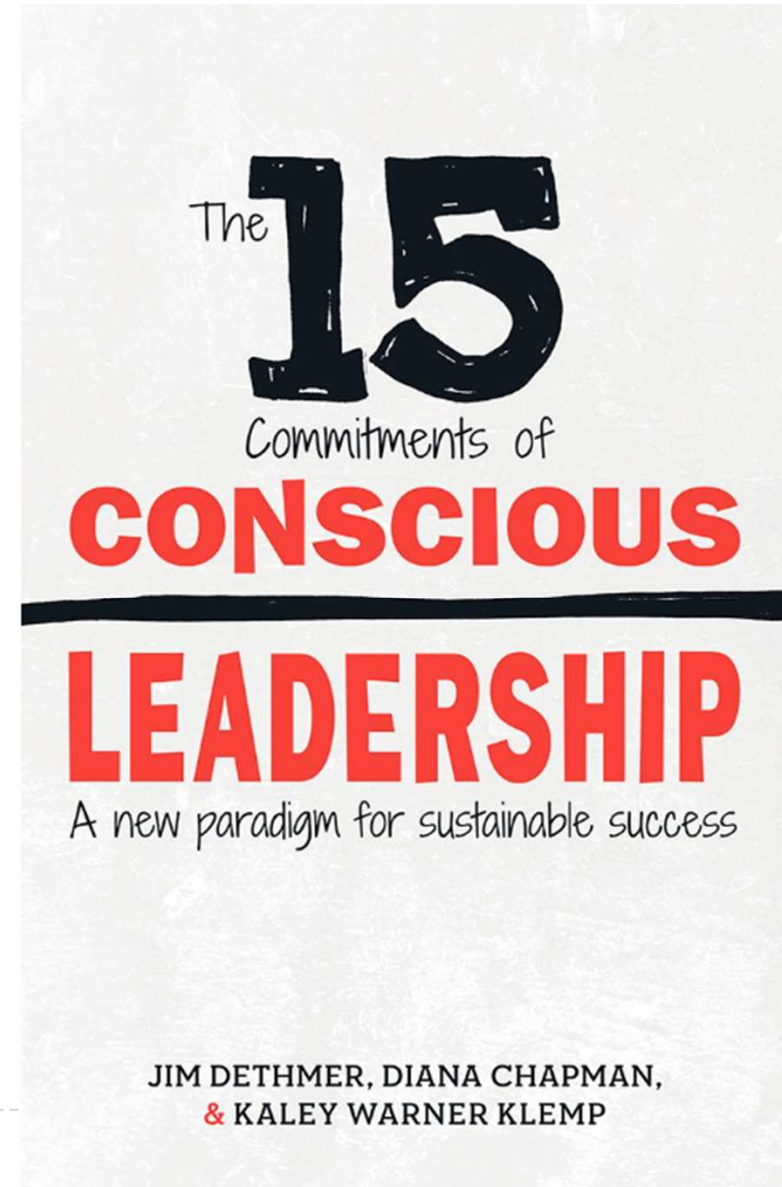
Jim Dethmer

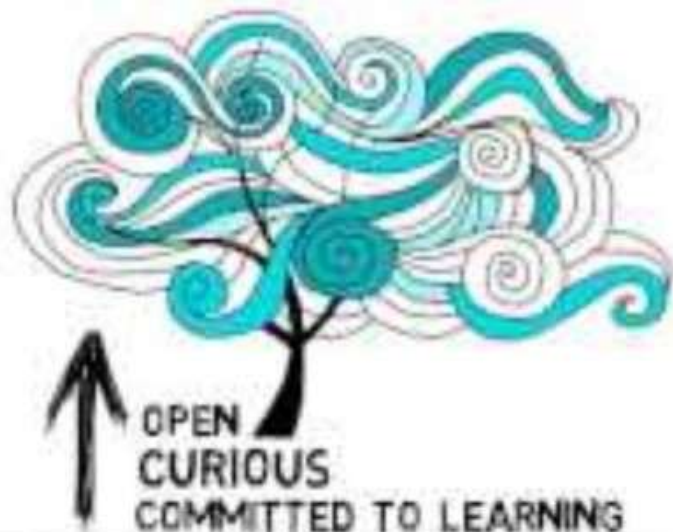


Diana Chapman



Kaley Warner  
Klemp





WHE  
WIP

TTED TO BEING RIGHT  
DEFENSIVE  
CLOSED





# UNDERSTANDING ABOVE VS. BELOW

↑ **Above The Line**

("BY ME")

Responsive / Curious / Growth & Learning

ACCEPTANCE AND TRUST

("TO ME")

Reactive / Defensive / Recycling Drama

RESISTANCE AND THREAT

↓ **Below The Line**

# STATEMENTS TO INDICATE ABOVE OR BELOW...



## Above The Line

### STATEMENTS:

What can I learn from this?  
How is the opposite as true?  
How is this familiar?

I appreciate you for ...  
I take responsibility for...  
I agree to...  
I choose to...  
I created...

How is this for me?  
What I hear you saying...  
My body sensations are...  
I feel...(sad, angry, scared, joyful, creative)

### STATEMENTS:

I/You/They should  
I/You/ They can't  
I'm right/They're wrong  
It's hard  
I'm trying  
It's not my fault

I'm confused  
The "truth" is  
I have to  
You made me  
I'm sorry (with an excuse)  
Always/Never

"Why" questions  
You're not listening to me  
It's no use/I give up  
My way or the highway  
They don't get it



## Below The Line

## STATEMENTS TO INDICATE ABOVE OR BELOW...

**What are your "go-to"  
below the line statements?**

**Which above the line  
statements would you like  
to replace them with?**



# Self-Awareness is Key.



Knowing when you are below the line is more important than being below the line.

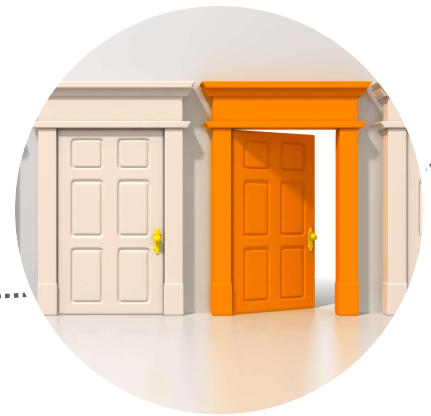
You're in real trouble when you are below the line and actually think you are above the line.



Self-awareness is a muscle we must practice consistently. It's a core element of Emotional Intelligence (EQ), as described by Daniel Goleman.



The first act of self-awareness is to be able to locate yourself in the moment.



Am I open?  
Am I in a state of trust?

Am I closed?  
Or in a state of threat?

# 4 STEPS TO SHIFTING



## **Self-Awareness:**

What is my location?

Where am I?

What's my mindset?



## **Acceptance:**

Can I accept myself for  
being where I am?

Self-compassion

*(NOTE: Adding self-criticism drives us  
further below the line)*

# 4 STEPS TO SHIFTING

- Are you willing to **let go of being right** and focus on learning?
- Are you willing to feel and **process all authentic emotions**?
- Are you willing to **express truths openly and listen consciously**?
- "Am I willing to **shift from blame to ownership**?"
- Are you willing to **stop gossiping** and resolve past issues directly?
- Are you willing to **clean up broken agreements** and make only meaningful commitments?
- Are you willing to shift from entitlement to appreciation and **let go of resentment**?
- Are you willing to **treat this issue lightly, rest**, and let solutions flow effortlessly?
- Are you willing to **consider that the opposite of your story** may also be true?
- Are you willing to **let go of seeking approval, control, or security** externally?
- Are you willing to **release beliefs in scarcity** and embrace abundance?
- Are you willing to **see everyone and everything involved as allies**?
- Are you willing to **move from win/lose thinking** to creating solutions for all?
- If I were willing to shift, **what might I do next**?



## Willingness:

Do I *want to* shift?

Wanting is not willing.

Making a conscious choice  
(owning your yes...or no)

## How will I Shift:

What is one action step you will take and by when?

Shift moves=a) body & blood, b) consciousness

Taken from: Conscious Leadership Group





# #1--IDEAS FOR SHIFTING: BODY & BLOOD (PHYSICAL)



## PRACTICE CONSCIOUS BREATHING.

- Box breathing In for 4, Hold for 4, Out for 4, Hold for 4.
- Make your exhale longer than your inhale.
- Breathe through your nose and into your belly (make a balloon).



## TAKE A PAUSE OR TIME-OUT.

- Pause the meeting and stretch. Make sure to move your body.
- Walk around the room or building.



## MOVE YOUR BODY.

- Radically change your posture.
- Hop on 1 foot & flap your arms while talking about your issue.
- Move your hips in a way they've never moved before while playfully talking about your issue.



## ADDITIONAL BODY SHIFTS.

- Have a 15 second temper tantrum (include your whole body & make noise!).
- Sleeping/napping/quiet/time out.



Taken from: Conscious Leadership Group

## #2--IDEAS FOR SHIFTING: CONSCIOUSNESS



### WONDER. PRACTICE CURIOSITY.

- Wonder (not trying to figure it out).
- Ask open-ended questions that have no "right" answer.
- Make a pleasing humming sound and ask yourself out loud, "hmmmm....I wonder what I can learn from this"...three times.



### BE PLAYFUL.

- Give yourself a name that matches your current attitude (Pessimistic Paul, Crotchety Chalice, Doubtful Dan).
- Make up a Country Song about your issue and sing a line.



### SHIFT TO APPRECIATION OR GRATITUDE.

- Put your attention on the other people involved and say out loud 3 things you genuinely appreciate about them.
- Appreciate something about yourself out loud. If you are with another person, appreciate something about them, also.



### ADDITIONAL BODY SHIFTS.

- Relive death bed scene "What would be said about this situation on your deathbed?" (Prompts deep reflection).
- Speak from the opposite point of view for 1 minute.



Taken from: Conscious Leadership Group

# OUR HIERARCHY OF NEEDS CAN INFLUENCE OUR LINE

People are able to move “up” the hierarchy when their needs in that category have been sufficiently satisfied



## Maslow's hierarchy of needs

Taken from: [thoughtco.com](http://thoughtco.com)



WHAT TYPES  
OF  
DIFFICULT  
PEOPLE  
DO YOU  
ENCOUNTER?



# MAIN TYPES OF DIFFICULT PEOPLE

- **The Aggressive Client:** Confrontational, demanding, and often loud.
- **The Indecisive Client:** Hesitant, unclear, and struggles with decisions.
- **The Demanding Client:** Expects perfection, hard-to-satisfy requests.
- **The Unresponsive Client:** Silent, disengaged, and uncommunicative.
- **The Emotional Client:** Overwhelmed, driven by feelings, easily upset.
- **The Habitually Negative Client:** Pessimistic, critical, and perpetually dissatisfied.



**What type(s) do you  
encounter most frequently?**  
**Chime in the Chat!**



# DIFFICULT PERSON TOOLBOX

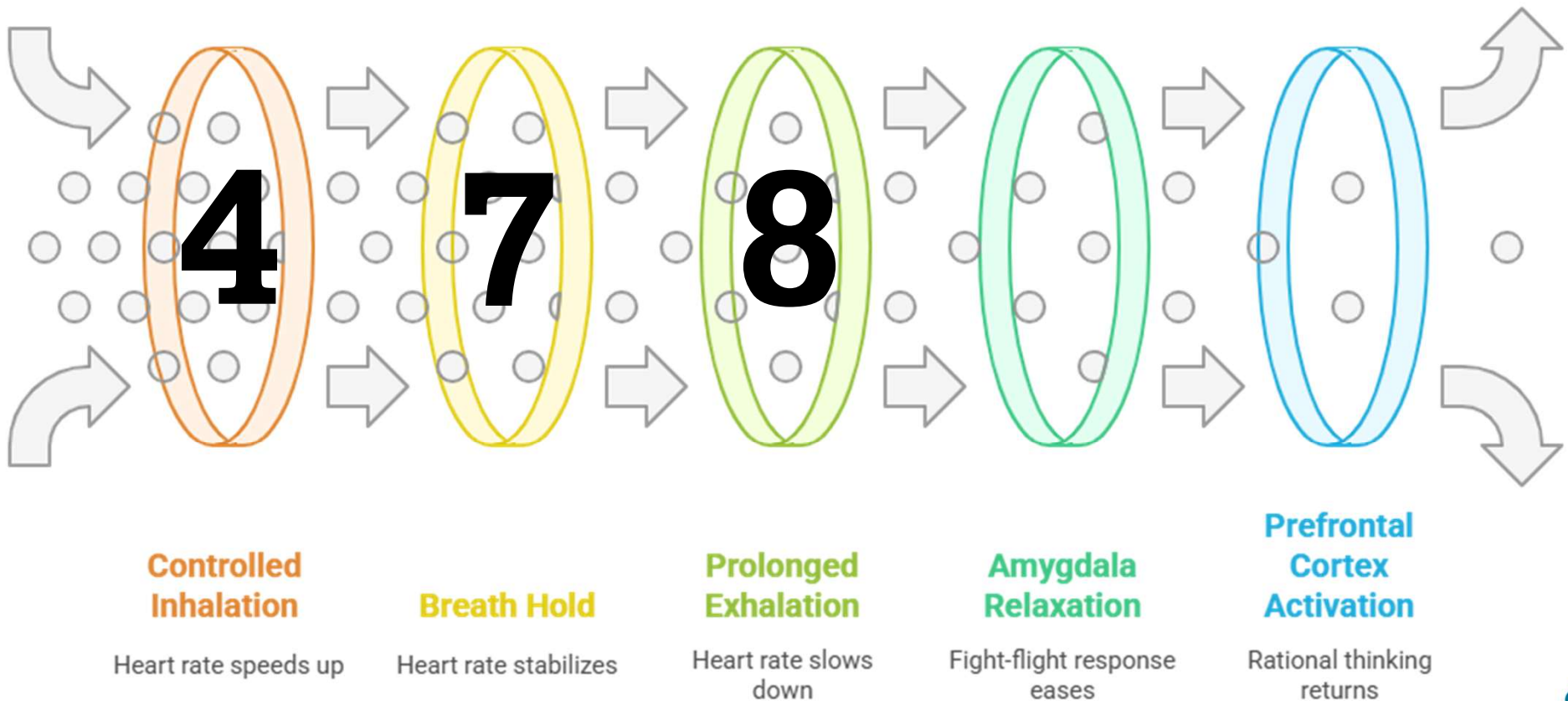




# 1. BREATHE



# JUST BREATHE. (4-7-8 TECHNIQUE)



# THE HAND MODEL OF THE BRAIN:

## What happens when we "flip our lid"

When our brain is working efficiently both the upper and mid brain are communicating effectively. Information comes in and is processed logically. Sometimes too much information is coming in for the Upper brain to process and it disconnects. We "flip our lid" and can no longer access the functions provided by the upper brain

Cerebral cortex

Your brain working in harmony. All parts are connected and talking. The upper part of the brain can be accessed for logic, socialising and reasoning. Our upper brain is hugging our mid brain, making it feel safe

Brain Stem

Reptilian brain  
Basic functions  
Hind brain

Base of Skull

Spinal cord

Upper and lower parts of the brain are no longer connected and talking. Logic no longer influence emotions. You've "flipped your lid"

The Cerebellum  
or Limbic Regions

Hippo campus  
Amygdala  
Mid brain  
"Big feelings"  
"Cave man" brain  
"Downstairs brain"  
Information dump  
from the Central  
Nervous System

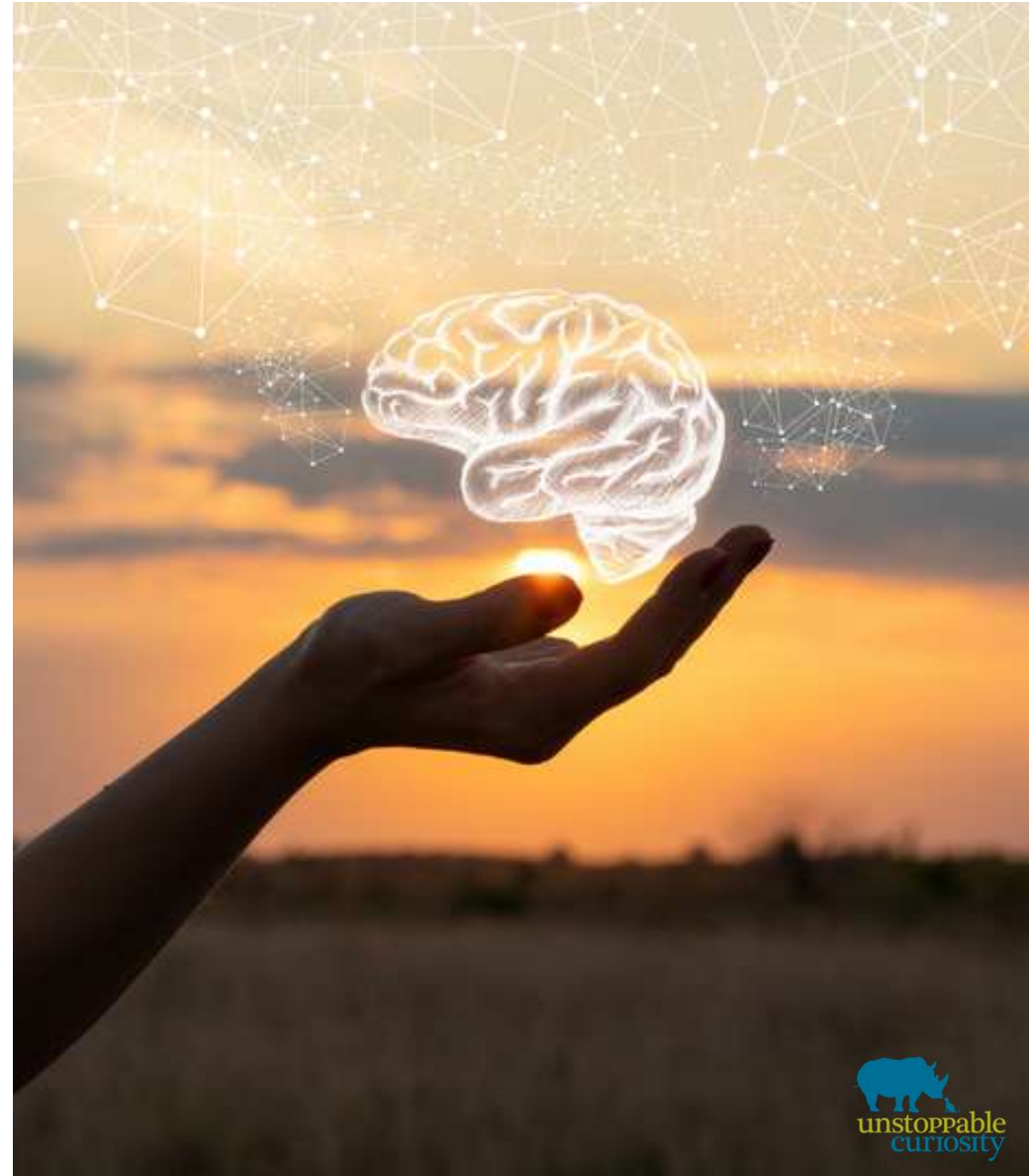
The Cerebrum or Neo Cortex

Cerebral cortex  
Prefrontal cortex  
Upper brain  
"Logic centre"  
"Thinking brain"  
"Upstairs brain"



# SHIFT YOUR BRAIN

*Shift as much of your attention as you can from your amygdala (fight, flight, freeze) to your prefrontal cortex (your body / five senses) for at least 10 seconds (30-60 seconds is even better).*



# 5-4-3-2-1 CALMING TECHNIQUE

## Identify 5 Things to See

Look around and notice five visible objects



## Identify 3 Things to Hear

Listen for three distinct sounds



## Identify 1 Thing to Taste

Focus on one flavor



## Identify 4 Things to Touch

Notice four tactile sensations



## Identify 2 Things to Smell

Detect two different scents





## 2. LISTEN TO CONNECT.

(NOTE: NOT  
JUST HEARING.)

AND...NOT  
JUST TO RESPOND.



# ACTIVE LISTENING SKILLS

## 6 KEY ACTIVE

# Listening Skills

 Center for Creative Leadership®



### 1. Pay attention.

Don't craft your response or wait your turn while listening.



### 2. Withhold judgement.

Be open, suspend judgment, hold any criticisms, avoid interruptions.



### 3. Reflect.

Mirror the other person by paraphrasing key points.



### 4. Clarify.

Don't be shy about asking questions about things that are unclear or ambiguous.



### 5. Summarize.

Restate key themes and be clear on mutual responsibilities and follow up.



### 6. Share.

Active listening is first about understanding the other person, then being understood as the listener.

# YOU MAY NEED TO BRUSH UP IF YOU...



We can all think of situations where we could be better listeners...

Knowing yourself best,  
how would you like to  
**improve your listening**  
skills?

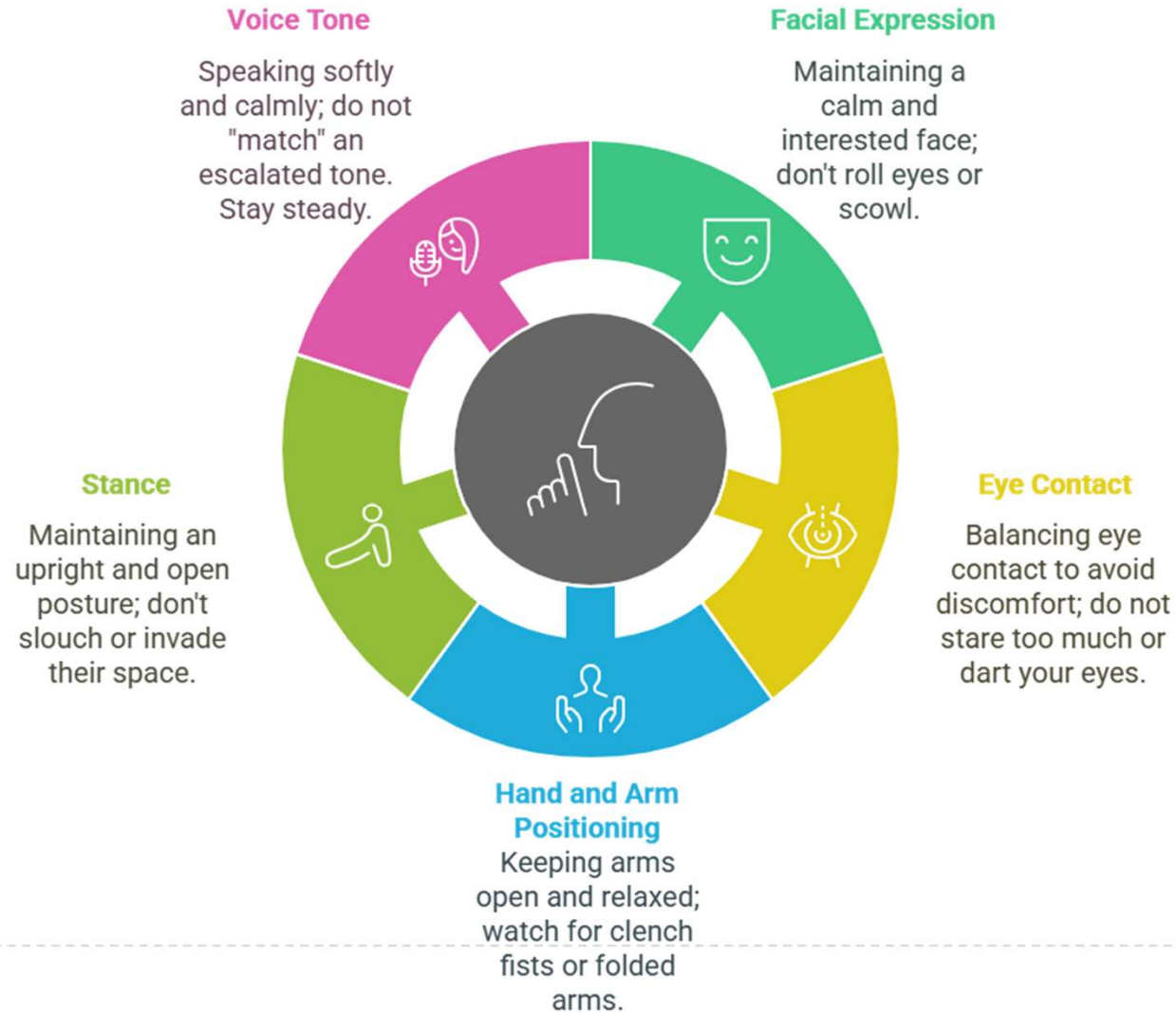
Type it in the chat...



3. PAY  
ATTENTION  
TO YOUR  
NON- VERBALS



# NON-VERBAL GESTURES

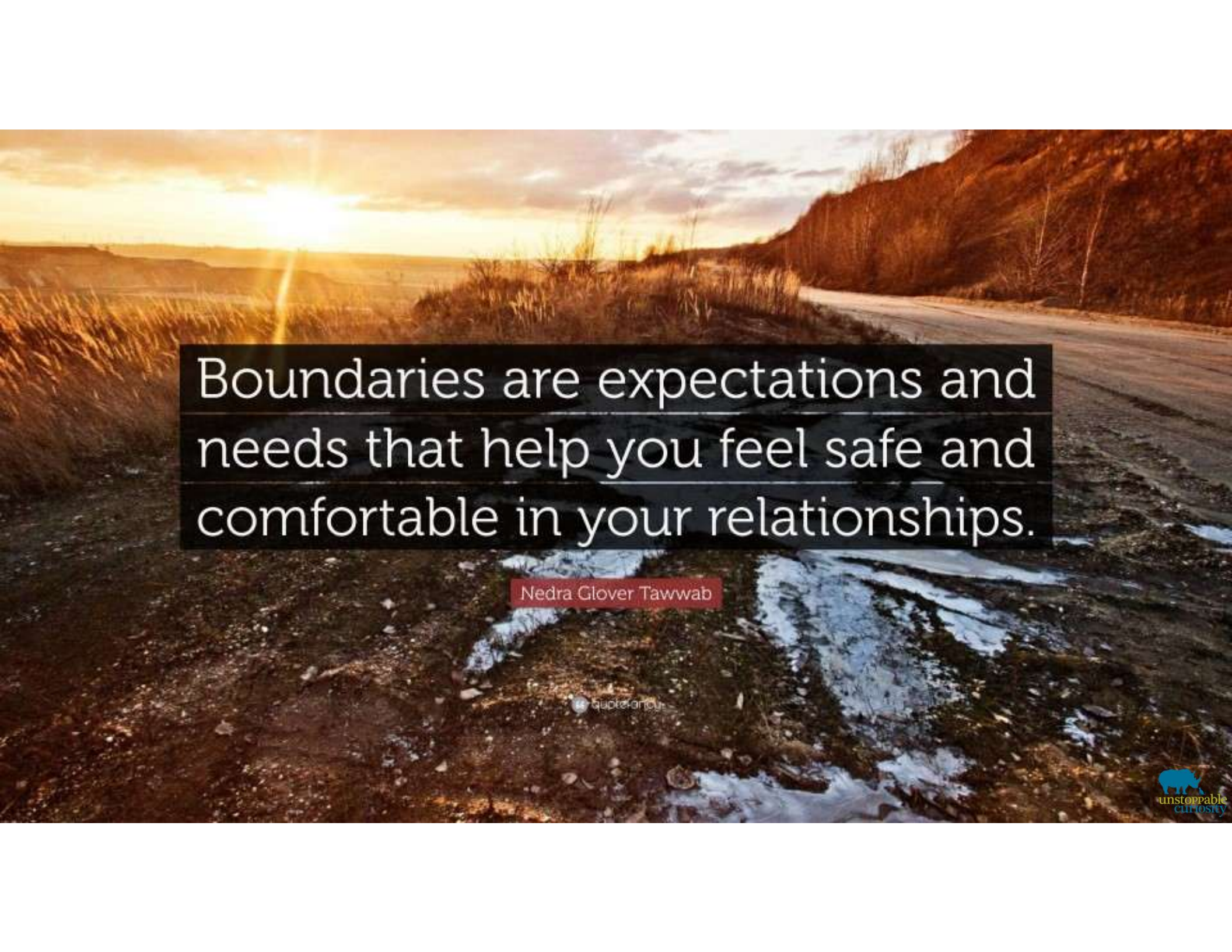




# 4. MAINTAIN HEALTHY BOUNDARIES





A scenic landscape at sunset or sunrise. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a warm, golden glow over the scene. A dirt road winds through the landscape, flanked by tall, dry grass and a hillside. The sky is filled with soft, colorful clouds. The overall mood is peaceful and contemplative.

Boundaries are expectations and needs that help you feel safe and comfortable in your relationships.

Nedra Glover Tawwab

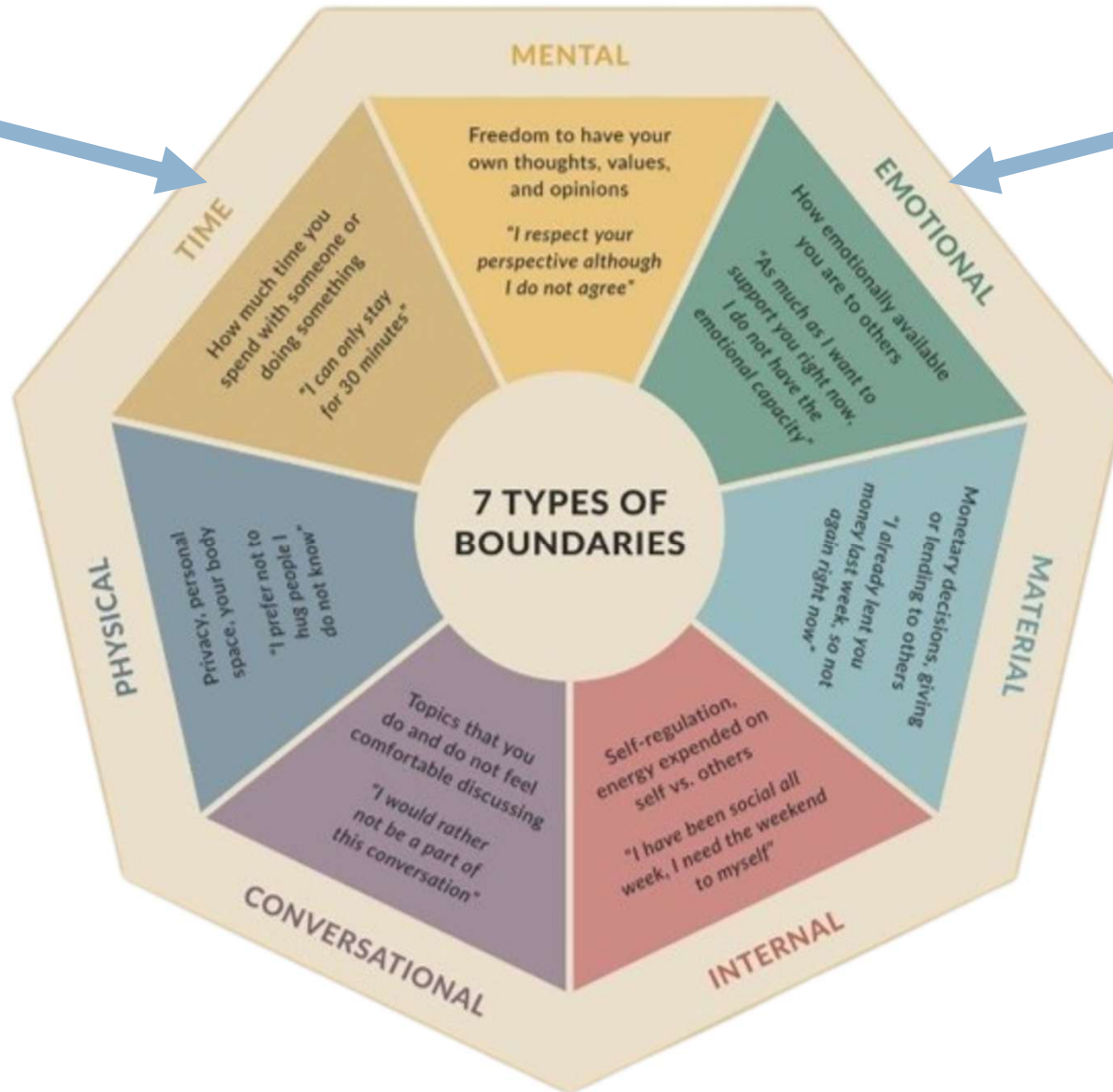
quote-ony

**Managing how much time you allocate to each customer and ensuring that one interaction doesn't overwhelm your day.**

Example: Politely redirect long-winded or repetitive conversations.

"I want to help you resolve this as quickly as possible. Let's focus on the key issue so we can find a solution promptly."

Taken from: Positive Psychology

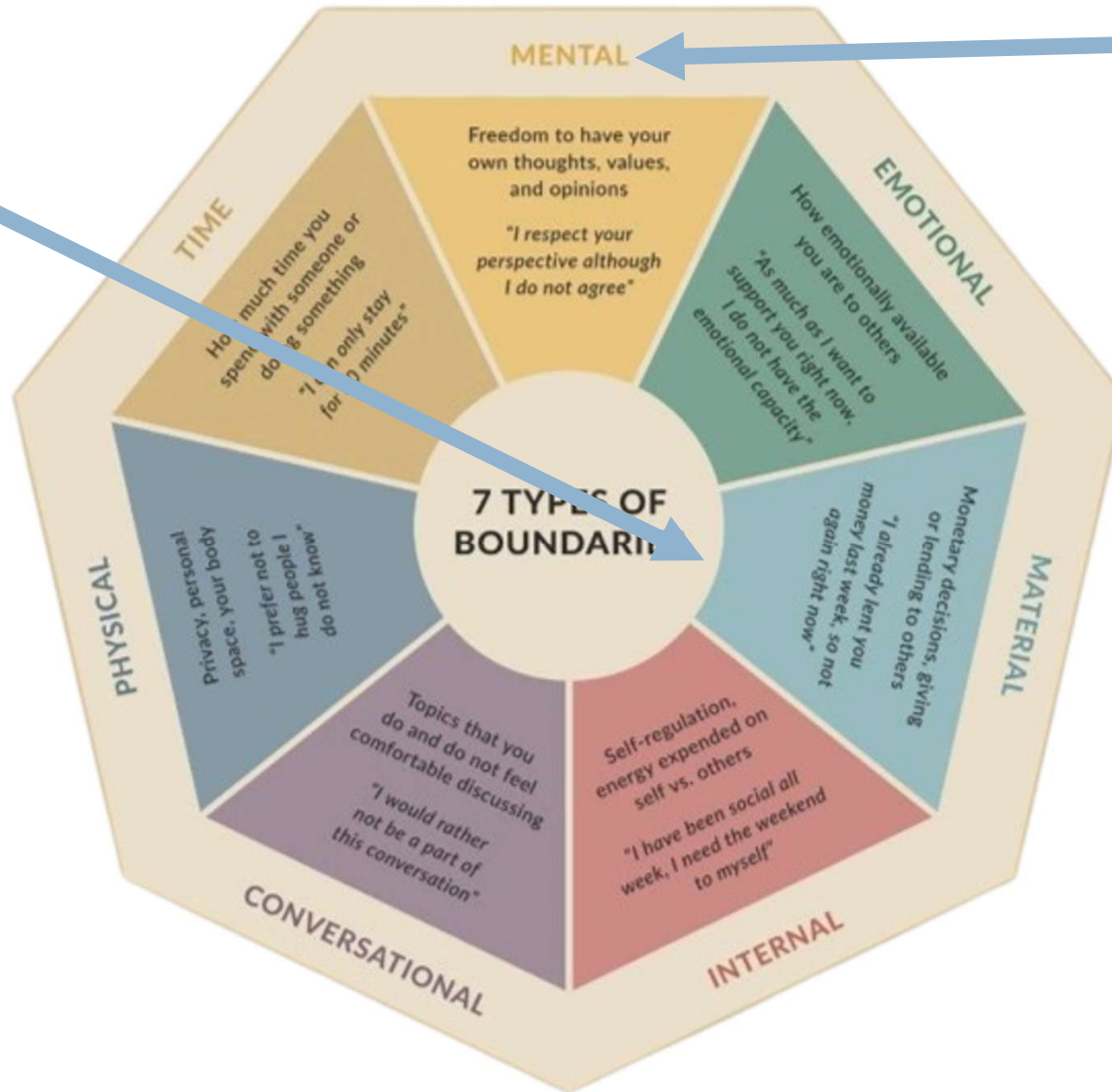


**Ensuring you don't take the customer's emotions personally while still showing empathy.**

Example: Recognize the customer's frustration but separate it from your self-worth.

"I can see that this is upsetting for you. Let's work together to address it."





**Managing the physical or financial resources you offer to customers.**

Example: Be clear about what you can and cannot provide based on company policies.

"I'm unable to offer a full refund, but I can provide store credit or an exchange."

**Protecting your thoughts and mindset to avoid absorbing negativity or unnecessary stress.**

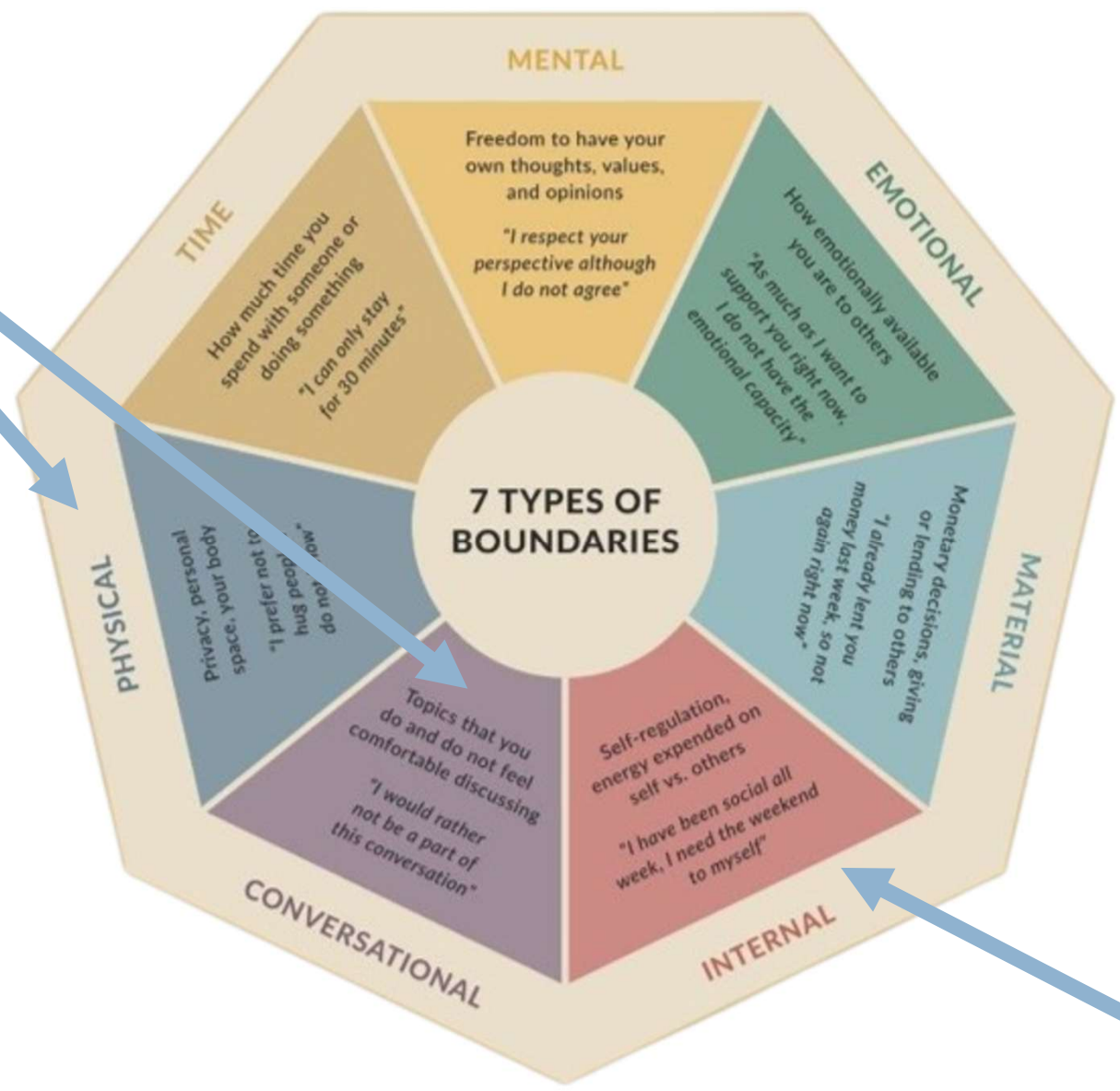
Example: Stay mindful of your emotional triggers and avoid internalizing insults or frustration.

"I hear your concerns, and I'm here to assist, but let's focus on solutions rather than assigning blame."

**Defining what maintaining safety and personal space during face interactions.**  
Example: Address inappropriate safe distance between myself and assistant customer.

"I want to help, but I can't help to help but need to ask you to step back so we can keep this conversation constructive."

Taken from: Positive Psychology



**Protecting your core values and maintaining self-discipline during difficult interactions.**

Example: Stick to company policies and personal integrity, even under pressure.

"While I understand your request, our policy doesn't allow me to do that. Here's what I can do for you."



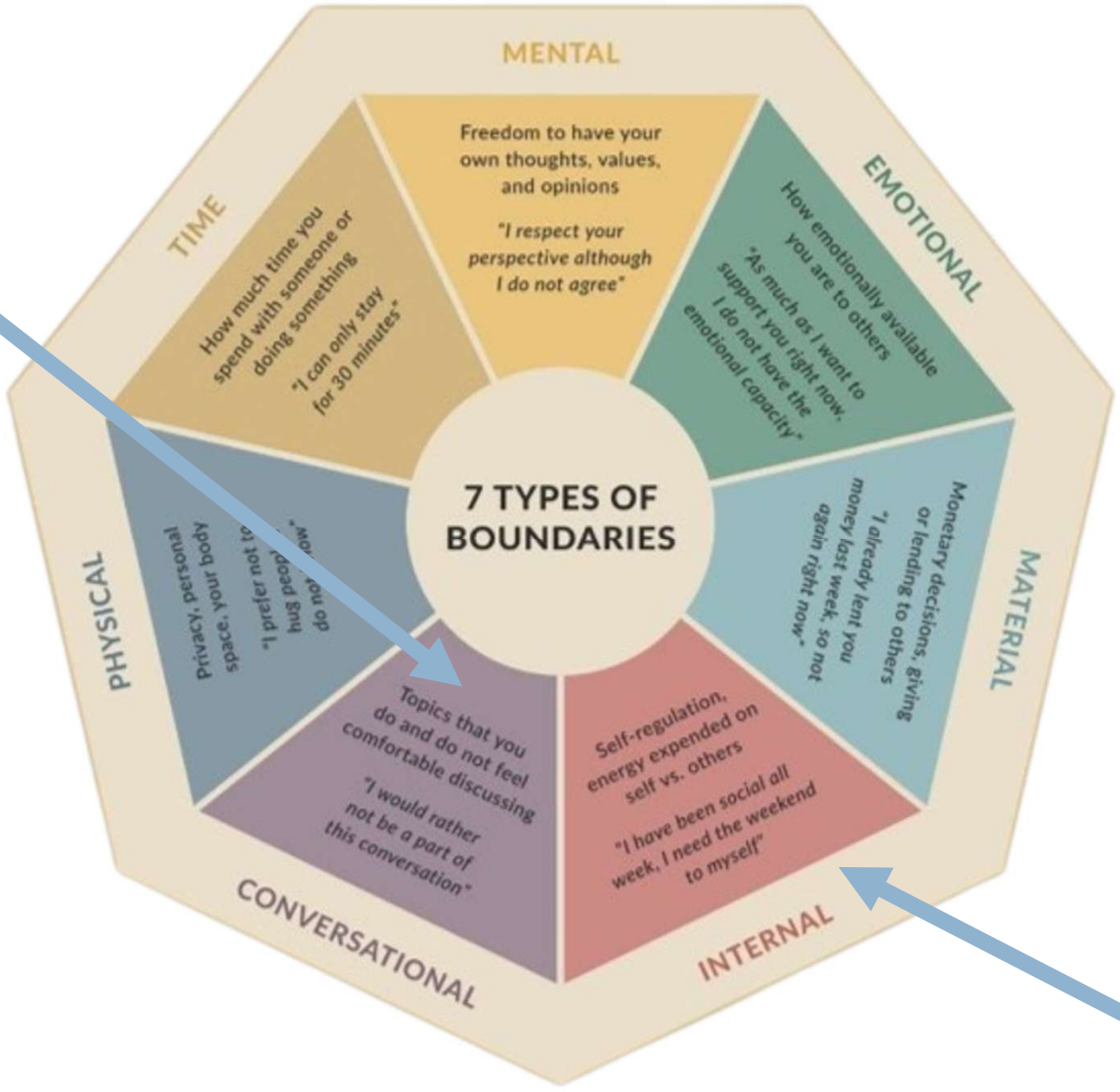


**Defining what topics or language are acceptable in the conversation.**

Example: Address inappropriate comments or language calmly and assertively.

"I want to help, but I cannot do so while we're using disrespectful language. Let's keep this conversation constructive."

Taken from: Positive Psychology



**Protecting your core values and maintaining self-discipline during difficult interactions.**

Example: Stick to company policies and personal integrity, even under pressure.

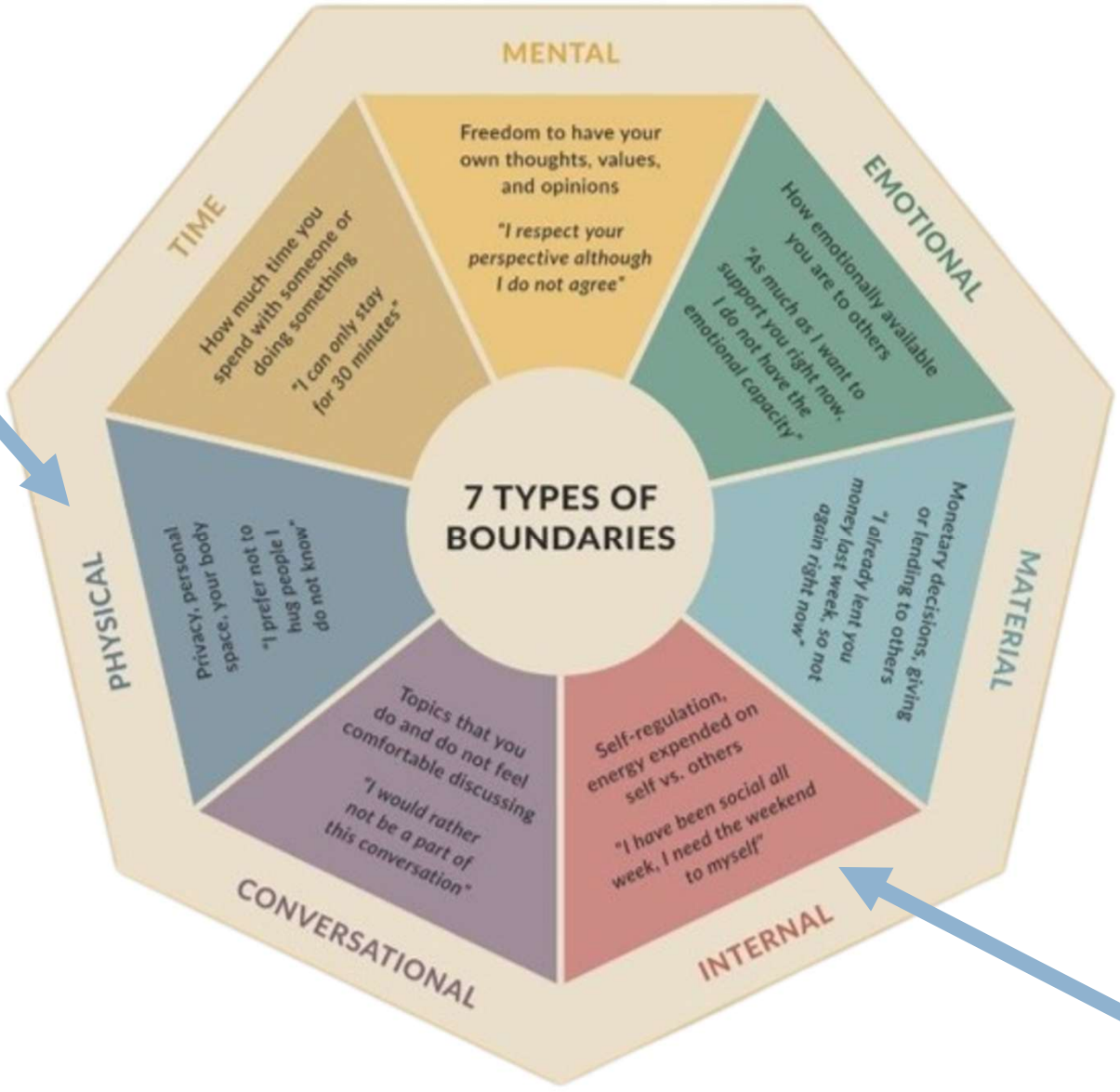
"While I understand your request, our policy doesn't allow me to do that. Here's what I can do for you."



**Maintaining safety and personal space during face-to-face interactions.**

Example: Ensure a safe distance between yourself and an irate customer.

"I'm happy to help, but I need to ask you to take a step back so we can continue calmly."



**Protecting your core values and maintaining self-discipline during difficult interactions.**

Example: Stick to company policies and personal integrity, even under pressure.

"While I understand your request, our policy doesn't allow me to do that. Here's what I can do for you."

## 5. AVOID GETTING HOOKED



# TIP: DON'T TAKE IT PERSONALLY

- ✓ Work hard on: **"Don't take it personally"**  
Remember that someone is most likely mad at the situation, not you. (QTIP=Quit Taking It Personally)  
*From :The Four Agreements "Whatever happens around you, don't take it personally. Nothing other people do is because of you. It is because of themselves. All people live in their own dream, in their own mind; they are in a completely different world from the one we live in. When we take something personally, we make the assumption that they know what is in our world, and we try to impose our world on their world."*
- ✓ **Make up a different "story"** that is more helpful in interacting with the person (you made up the first one...why not make a new one, too?)
- ✓ **Teflon vs. Velcro**  
Our brains have a natural negativity bias to internalize negative experiences more deeply than positive ones
- ✓ **Review & learn** (From: Ignitionapp.com)  
It's good to learn from difficult situations. Take a step back and evaluate what happened. Ask yourself:
  - Why did this problem arise in the first place?
  - What could I/we have done to prevent it?
  - What lessons have I/we learned that we can apply in future?







You Have Your  
Own Backpack.  
Don't Pick Up  
Someone Else's.

Yours Is Heavy  
Enough.



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BE GREEN & GROWING, NOT RIPE AND ROTTEN...

# KEEP GROWING

- ▶ Executive & Life Coaching
- ▶ Training & Speaking
- ▶ Meeting & Retreat Facilitation
- ▶ Workshops & Events





### **Remember...**

It's not you vs. the client  
— it's you + tools vs. the  
challenge!

**One last nudge:**  
**Growth doesn't come  
from avoiding tough  
moments — it comes  
from showing up  
differently in them.**

# Final Thoughts

### **Your Go-To Tools:**

- ★ Breathe before you bite! → Regulate before you respond.
- ★ Locate yourself. → Are you above or below the line?
- ★ Lead with curiosity + empathy. → Seek to understand, not react.
- ★ Set boundaries with kindness and clarity.
- ★ Don't take it personally. (QTIP!) → Their storm ≠ your forecast!



This is all just entertainment if you don't do anything with it. –Mary Morrissey  
**WHAT'S ONE USEFUL TAKE-AWAY YOU'LL USE FROM THIS PRESENTATION?**



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