

Therapy Chat Episode 307



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[00:00:00] Therapy Chat Podcast Episode 307.

[00:00:04] **Announcer:** This is the Therapy Chat Podcast with Laura Reagan LCSW-C. The information shared in this podcast is not a substitute for seeking help from a licensed mental health professional. And now here's your host, Laura Reagan LCSW-C.

[00:00:34] **Laura Reagan:** Thank you to Sunset Lake CBD for sponsoring this week's episode. Use promo code: "CHAT" for 20% off your entire order at sunsetlakecbd.com. Sunset lake CBD is a farmer owned, small business that shifts crafts CBD products directly from their farm outside of Burlington, Vermont to your door. Sunset lake CBD has something for everyone.

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[00:01:13] Remember use promo code, "CHAT," to get 20% off your entire order at sunsetlakecbd.com.

[00:01:23] Hey everyone. It's me. Laura Reagan just wanted to make sure that you know about what I've got going on this summer. I don't think I've really talked about it much here, which is silly, but in case you didn't hear, I did start a second podcast called Trauma Chat, which is really for anyone who wants to understand what trauma is and how it shows up in our lives.

[00:01:49] As you've heard me say, if you've listened to this show, I've mentioned a million times that people tend to think that trauma is something that happens [00:02:00] to someone else, something horrific and unthinkable unspeakable. And that is true, trauma is that, but it's also experiences that are very commonly shared among many of us, most of us. On Trauma Chat, I break down what trauma is in hopefully understandable language that's not stigmatizing. I know I couldn't have possibly captured every thought there is about trauma and every aspect of trauma and how it shows up, but I hope that Trauma Chat will

be helpful to people who really don't understand what trauma is, and may be wondering, 'do I have trauma?' Or wanting to better understand what someone they care about is going through. And most importantly, how to get help if you have experienced trauma- what to look for, how to describe your experiences, or how to find the words that name what you've been through so that you can then connect with [00:03:00] whatever type of resource support, whether it's therapy, or a podcast that you'd like to listen to, to learn more about it or an article, another website. This is my hope in creating Trauma Chat. And the second part of that is the new Trauma Therapist Network community that I'm creating. It's unbelievable to say this because I've been laboring behind the scenes to bring this to you for a long time, starting in around 2018 is when I first had the idea.

[00:03:32] And then the process of getting from there to here has been slow and with many twists and turns, but I'm creating a community for people who have experienced trauma to find help, for trauma therapists to find other trauma therapists to network with and refer to, and gather and collaborate and share ideas and hopefully come together in person in [00:04:00] gatherings that I don't know if there'll be able to happen in 2021, but maybe by 2022, we can have in-person gatherings of trauma therapists to provide support to one another and combat the isolation of trauma work. Even if you work in a large agency or group practice, trauma work is so isolating. It's just part of the nature of it and connecting with other people who. It's so valuable. The participants in my trauma therapists consult groups share how useful they find them to be because we're in our offices doing our work, and then we go home and it can be really hard to receive the same kind of support that you give to your clients.

[00:04:43] So I hope that Trauma Therapist Network will be a useful resource for you, whether you are trying to find more information about trauma, or if you are a trauma therapist yourself.

[00:04:55] To learn more, please go to traumatherapistnetwork.com. The [00:05:00] website is not live yet as of June 28th when I'm recording this, but it will be live by August 1st, if all goes well.

[00:05:09] And hopefully there may be even a soft launch before, a beta version. So please go to traumatherapistnetwork.com, where you can find a free download and sign up to be notified as soon as it officially goes live, whether you are a therapist or just someone who wants to learn more about trauma, there's a download there for you, different ones for each group.

[00:05:33] And I hope that this resource that I've really created from the heart will bring healing to more people. I really want people who have experienced trauma to be able to find the right kind of support. And that's why I created the Trauma Therapist Network. I hope you will join me there. Like I said, you can get more information by going to www.traumatherapistnetwork.com where you [00:06:00] can sign up to be notified as soon as the official website goes live which will be in August of 2021. If you're hearing this after August, 2021, go there and hopefully you will find the site and you'll see everything that it

has to offer. I cannot wait. This is such a labor of love, something that I've really poured my heart into. And I'm just so excited for you to see it.

[00:06:23] Thank you so much for your support.

[00:06:29] Hi, welcome back to Therapy Chat. I'm your host, Laura Reagan. Today I am excited to speak with someone who has been a frequent guest on Therapy Chat. I replay her episodes often. She's actually been my guest three times prior to today, Sharon Martin. Sharon Martin LCSW is a licensed psychotherapist specializing in codependency recovery with an online practice serving California residents.

[00:06:56] For the past 20 years, she's been helping perfectionists and people- [00:07:00] pleasers overcome self doubt and shame, embrace their imperfections, learn to set boundaries, and reclaim their self-worth. Sharon writes the blog, Conquering Codependency for Psychology Today, and she's the author of the CBT Workbook for Perfectionism and The Better Boundaries Workbook, both books are excellent and I've referred to Sharon as one of my favorite resources in episode 300. So if you're curious about what resources I love and frequently recommend for people who have experienced trauma check out episode 300, you can find all the past episodes of Therapy Chat on traumatherapistnetwork.com. This week, Sharon and I talked about her new book: The Better Boundaries Workbook, and how family dynamics influence our comfort level with setting boundaries and with speaking up for what we need. And she talks about [00:08:00] how people can learn to set boundaries. It's not as easy as it seems, so I hope you will enjoy our discussion. And thank you as always for listening to Therapy Chat.

[00:08:10] Welcome back to Therapy Chat. I'm your host, Laura Reagan. And today I'm so happy to be speaking again with my friend and colleague, someone I greatly admire, Sharon Martin LCSW. Sharon, thanks so much for coming back to Therapy Chat.

[00:08:29] **Sharon Martin:** Oh my pleasure I love Therapy Chat! I love listening to it. I love being on it so it's all fabulous!

[00:08:36] **Laura Reagan:** Thank you, that's so sweet for you to say and I really do admire your work. I'm always recommending your blogs, your website, and your books. And if I lived in California, I'd be probably referring people to you all the time. But, you know, I still tell people about you for that purpose, but mainly recommending all of your resources so excited to talk about your newest one, your new [00:09:00] book, which just came out called Better Boundaries.

[00:09:03] **Sharon Martin:** That's right. I'm excited to dive into that topic. I think it's really useful, really good stuff for people to be thinking about how they can improve their boundaries and sort of where they're stuck points are and how to overcome them.

[00:09:19] I think it's just a nice sort of segway with some of the other things that we've talked about on the podcast. And some of the other things that I do in my work is really

helping people, I think, part of it is being able to assert yourself and ask for what you need and understand why that's hard for so many of us, like what are some of those messages that we've gotten over the years that it's not okay to have any needs or to ask for anything like there's something wrong with that as if we should be sort of magical beings who don't need anything or don't want anything. And helping people realize that is [00:10:00] unrealistic and it's not good for us to have that mindset and that there actually are ways for us to be in relationship with people in a way where we can be sort of true to yourself that you can actually be your own self and know who you are and what you need, and be able to communicate that in that in a way that feels like it's kind, and it's not overly needy or it's something that you're doing that's wrong, but that this is a perfectly normal thing to do. And one of the things that I talk about a lot specifically about boundaries is that setting boundaries is a skillset that we have to learn. And most of us never learned specifically how to communicate our boundaries, how to ask for what we need. And that's something that we can learn.

[00:10:50] We need to learn the skills and then we need to practice them. Often I think about this, just like learning how to drive a car, or learning how to cook. Those are things that we [00:11:00] don't just know how to do, but usually somebody teaches us or we watch other people doing it. You have trial and error. We do things. And then we make adjustments and there's a lot of that in anything really that relates to interpersonal communication and we make adjustments, partly as we get to know ourselves better and understand what works for us, but of course, then we also need to make adjustments depending on who it is that we're talking with, who it is, we're setting a boundary with, we need to keep that in mind that our approach might need to be different with different people or in different circumstances. So that's an overview of, I think some of the highlights of what we're talking about, when we're talking about boundaries and why that's important for us.

[00:11:45] Yeah. Awesome. Thank you for talking about that. Already sparking so many thoughts and ideas in my mind, but I was thinking about how, like, you said it's a set of skills that we either learn or don't learn in [00:12:00] some ways we may learn one thing, but it doesn't really feel right to us, I think. And so I'm thinking about how family dynamics really factor into what we expect of other people, the way we communicate, and how comfortable we may feel speaking up for what we need. Yeah, absolutely. One of the exercises or things that we deal with in the book is taking a look at what those dynamics were in the family that you grow up in and thinking about what boundaries did you learn? And this is sort of an over-simplification of this because of course, real family dynamics are, they vary over time and they're not static. But you can think about just really simply these categories, which is, did your family have what I would say, are weak boundaries, where there was a lack of boundaries, which means, there weren't [00:13:00] clear expectations or maybe rules for children. There wasn't a sense of privacy or being able to be an individual person. So, so we have that lack of boundaries. And then there's also families that have overly rigid boundaries. So there have sort of too much, and you might sort of think of this, like there's a wall that's erected and it doesn't bend. It doesn't change, like, perhaps you can think about if you were growing up either the, the rules and expectations for you as a child were always the same, no matter how old you got, or maybe if you had a much younger, much older sibling that your parents expected the same thing from both of you. And there,

wasn't an understanding that as children grow up, the boundaries need to change. The expectations need to change because they have different needs and they can do different things. So in a family where there's a lot of rigid boundaries, you're going to have really strict [00:14:00] rules and consequences that don't change.

[00:14:04] There can also be a sense of that it's difficult for like outsiders to come into that system. It's almost as if there's not a lot of trust or there's sort of a suspiciousness of other people, that it doesn't feel safe to let people in. So it's almost as if that family system is sort of over protected versus the weak system doesn't have enough protection.

[00:14:28] So kids in a family where there's weak boundaries might actually feel unsafe. Like there's, it could literally be that there are too many unsafe people coming into the family. You come home from school and there's a new person sitting at the kitchen table, talking to your mother, and you're like, who the heck is this stranger? I don't know who this is. This doesn't feel safe.

[00:14:51] Situations where there's a lot of sort of people coming and going would be one scenario. And then the other thing which I think is actually very common is that [00:15:00] people get a mix of these two. They have times or situations where the boundaries are lacking and they have times and situations where boundaries are too rigid.

[00:15:08] And again, that can be very confusing because none of it is that healthy middle ground that we're really looking for which is some stability, there's some predictability, there's that safety in being able to set limits with other people to say, no, I don't want to do that. Or no, that's not okay with me. There's not a sense of safety and being able to say, this is what I believe, or this is who I am. And to know that will be accepted. The love is unconditional, which is what we're really looking for kids in the, in a sort of a safe, growing up experience.

[00:15:46] **Laura Reagan:** Yeah. Yeah. That's as you talk about it, well, I'll say this about boundaries. I remember when I first heard the word, I can remember it because I had never heard of it before that. And when I heard of it, I was like, I [00:16:00] don't understand what is this? And I remember someone said, Read Codependent No More, and I was like, well, that doesn't sound like something I would want to read. And so I did not. And then someone else said it's where you end and I begin and I'm like, I don't get that. So what does that tell you about

[00:16:17] **Sharon Martin:** Well I don't think that's unusual Laura I mean, it's funny that you bring that up because I was talking to somebody else recently. And just sort of mentioning that I don't remember when I first heard that term, but I certainly know it's not a concept that anybody talked about when I was growing up. And I don't know if, I think that's probably changing a little bit as we get a little bit more savvy about some of these issues and understanding them.

[00:16:46] But still, I think it's probably the minority of families who are actually having conversations, using those words. And I think boundaries is a good word because it

encompasses a lot and especially for [00:17:00] adults, when we're talking about kids we'll often use like a word, like rules or limits interchangeably, um, with boundaries.

[00:17:08] But it's actually only one element of the boundary because what we want to remember is the boundaries go both ways. So the parents might be setting rules and limits as a form of boundary, but the child should also be able to set limits and say to other people, again, in an age appropriate, fashion, that they can assert what they need and what's okay for them.

[00:17:33] One example that people have I think started talking about is the idea of sometimes what happens with really little kids like toddlers or preschoolers is their parents will say, you know, go and give Susie a hug goodbye and the notion that maybe we shouldn't push that. Like that should be a choice that we could give even a two or three-year-old that if they don't want to give Susie a hug, that that should be [00:18:00] okay.

[00:18:01] And again, this is some of the things that we learn about what we are supposed to do, and whether we can say no or not. And most of us are not going to remember an experience like that from when we are or two or three, but of course, our body remembers and it sort of gets into our unconscious and some of the beliefs that we ultimately carry with us into adulthood.

[00:18:26] And if those kinds of things happen repeatedly, we start to learn that I can't say no. Or maybe you did say no, and your parent had a very negative reaction and said no, you do it. Or you're going in time out or, you know, something where it was clear that was not a choice that you were able to even say no to this very simple thing that involves your physical body and respecting the notion that children have a sense of what's right for them. I don't mean that to say that parents [00:19:00] shouldn't ever of course tell the children what to do because we do need our parents, especially little kids to keep us safe, but the truth is that parents don't always know the right things to do either.

[00:19:12] And I think, in that example, there's certainly no real harm that is going to come if your child doesn't give the other child a hug goodbye. And it might be the kind of place to begin, listening to a child, and letting them have a boundary about what they do with their own bodies.

[00:19:30] **Laura Reagan:** Yeah. Because what we know is that for that example, that's really about consent. And if you don't teach children that both, that they have a Voice to choose whether or not to consent in situations, it, it carries across the board, right? It's not just about being forced to hug someone they don't want to hug, they don't feel comfortable hugging, but it's about, understanding that their voice matters [00:20:00] because one of the, one of the big things in that, you know what I'm going to say, I'm going to talk about sexual assault. So content warning, but just one of the things that in sexual assault prevention that we say is teach children that they have yes and no are words that they can use and also teaching them the right names for their body parts too. But that's, I'm not gonna go into sexual assault prevention, but really important.

[00:20:30] **Sharon Martin:** There is a connection there. And I did know you were going to go there because I know you do a lot of work in that area, but yeah so it also just reminds me of my own personal experience growing up really with the idea of it was important to do what other people told me to do. It was important to listen to adults and follow rules, sort of indiscriminately. And again, I don't mean to say that we shouldn't be teaching kids across [00:21:00] the board not to follow rules or listen to adults, but I think for me, sort of this idea of being overly compliant without sort of a critical thought process about does this actually makes sense, does this feel right to me on sort of an intuitive level even has not necessarily served me all that well, because I think that is the situation that, that sort of proceeded, my struggles with the feeling like it's not okay to speak up and say that, something doesn't sit well with me, or I have a different opinion or this doesn't make sense to me. I don't feel safe in this situation. And again, it just in a very general sense. I think we also need, not just for children, but for adults as well, to be able to feel like we have that right. It's okay for us to have limits whether that's the saying no, or again, asserting a different opinion, saying I disagree with you on that, [00:22:00] because that's important to our sense of self in a really basic way. We've talked about there's a sense sense of safety that's very important, but there's also, I think, a pretty deep need for us to be sort of true to who we really are.

[00:22:17] And it, it's hard to describe, I guess, this, you know exactly what happens when we are continuing to push down, our own voice. Because again, it ends up stopping in difficult situations in a number of different ways. One is that it can be an unsafe physically situation physically, but it also, definitely you'll end up in relationships that are just not fulfilling where you feel like, you're sort of oppressed in some way, because you can't be yourself.

[00:22:50] But yes, I think it sort of carries us into this carries into different relationships in all kinds of situations, not just even our personal [00:23:00] relationships. I'm also thinking about how that shows up, like in a work situation. And again, not feeling like your opinion matters or your idea matters.

[00:23:10] **Laura Reagan:** Like forcing yourself to to stay in a job that you hate because you should like it or whatever. It's like, you learn to disregard your own feelings about a situation.

[00:23:21] **Sharon Martin:** Yeah, you do. And then you're sort of dismissing that there's something important that maybe you could contribute to the conversation. I was thinking about like a work situation where maybe you have an idea for a project or a product or a change that would be helpful. And if you don't feel like that's valued, that people want to hear from you, and you're always staying silent, I mean, that's a loss potentially for everybody, right? There's a sense, right that like, this doesn't feel good to me, but I think everybody else misses out because you probably have some good ideas.

[00:23:58] I think everybody has some good [00:24:00] ideas.

[00:24:00] **Laura Reagan:** We all have something to contribute.

[00:24:04] **Sharon Martin:** Yes. And that idea of like that everybody's voice matters. And again, I think this can think about the same kind of dynamics in a family situation as well. Right, the how does the entire family miss out if one one or a couple of people are not feeling they can't participate in that conversation, the decision making that's going on.

[00:24:30] **Laura Reagan:** Hey everybody. I wanted to take a quick minute to tell you about my experience with Sunset Lake CBD. I first tried CBD when my integrative doctor recommended it for chronic neck pain and tension that tends to wake me up at night. I really like Sunset Lake CBD's products. The full spectrum, CBD tincture is mild tasting compared to others I've tried, and I find it works quickly. It doesn't feel sedating, but it does have a pleasant calming effect. And I also like the CBD gummies, they taste good and they work well. So if you're [00:25:00] looking for a craft CBD product that comes directly from a farm outside Burlington Vermont that's a producer for Ben and Jerry's ice cream, you're going to want to check out Sunset Lake CBD. And remember, Therapy Chat listeners get 20% off using the promo code, "CHAT." So go to [sunsetlakecbd.com](https://www.sunsetlakecbd.com) and use the promo code, "CHAT."

[00:25:23] Yeah. Yeah. And I'm thinking something about conformity too, like when you have to comply, it means deviation from the normal not be tolerated. It's like you have to be a certain way so then the flavor of each unique person is not being expressed, which hurts them, and the whole group loses out by not knowing that person for who they really are and what they really bring to all the relationships.

[00:25:51] **Sharon Martin:** Yes. That's a nice segue that I don't know that I really thought about it quite in quite that way before, but it really has that flavor of [00:26:00] being inclusive and what the benefit is of inviting everybody's voice and finding value in that. And, you know, if you're the person who's in a leadership position thinking about how you can encourage that.

[00:26:15] But if you're not, also thinking about how can you make your voice heard, and then of course we get, I think too thinking about the flip side of that, which is what happens when I try to do that? And it's not well received because of course this is partly why people don't do it right either.

[00:26:36] Right they've tried and it's gone poorly, or they've just learned by watching other people and seeing what happens when other people speak up and, I think that's what often happened to me is you get the sense from seeing what's going on. I was always very much an observer and you take in a lot of information and you see where it's not okay for [00:27:00] people to have a different opinion. And then you don't take the chance because you already have that sense like this group of people does not want to hear a different point of view or they don't want to hear, you know, no, I don't, I don't want to do that. So right then you're conforming.

[00:27:16] You're really, you're going through those motions, but you know, it's not right.

[00:27:20] **Laura Reagan:** Yeah. Yeah when you said and seeing what happens when other people speak up, it made me think about like in a family dynamic where there's a lot of harsh communication. And you may have one child in the family who's like, sort of can't really contain themselves and they're always getting in trouble. And so the other child, or one of the other children is just really being so perfect just to be safe from what they see happening to their sibling, but inside they're terrified. I mean, I know, I can remember as a kid, I was a super rule follower, but I was still constantly [00:28:00] worried about getting in trouble even though I never got in trouble.

[00:28:03] **Sharon Martin:** Yes, I can. I can relate to that too. Or, you know, worrying that I'm going to fail the test, even though I never failed a test, it's the same sort of irrational fear about something that's very unlikely to happen. But it's a sense that the consequence of doing it would be so bad that it would be intolerable.

[00:28:24] And I know that you know this Laura, but I'll repeat it for people who are listening that, you know, one of the things that I really like to talk about is that these kinds of behaviors, even though they're not really helpful for us as adults. I really like to remember that we started doing them for all the right reasons.

[00:28:43] Like they were really adaptive ways of trying to deal with a situation that felt scary, that felt out of control, felt unsafe. In some way, we knew that we needed to behave in a particular way in order to get [00:29:00] through that situation. And that was the best that we could do. And it worked to a certain degree to get us through those difficult situations.

[00:29:09] Unfortunately then usually at some point in adulthood, we go, Hmm. You know, I'm still doing that. Of course. I mean, because that's human nature as soon as, you know, keep repeating the patterns that we learned early on, but we realized that it's not really working for me anymore. And perhaps, I mean, hopefully we're also in a situation if we can step back and look at it and see that I don't really need that behavior anymore, I don't need to stay quiet any more, or I don't need to be perfect anymore. And again, this might differ at different, in different situations or with different people as I mentioned at the beginning. It may be that you are in a personal relationship where you feel like, oh, I still need to do this kind of adaptive survival skill, but maybe you actually don't [00:30:00] need to do the same thing at work.

[00:30:01] Maybe that is a place where you could let your guard down a little bit and be a little bit more of your authentic self. These are the kinds of things that we really need to take time to assess and think through. Instead of, I think being on autopilot. And our autopilot, it wants to protect you at any cost. And I think that sort of brings us back to our boundaries is that part of what we need boundaries for is a sense of safety and that self protection. And that's really important, but we also have to distinguish where we need those stronger boundaries where we need to have the wall up a little bit more and where we can let it down.

[00:30:50] Because I think if we don't really have a way of sort of thinking that through and being more thoughtful about it, we're just going to go [00:31:00] with almost sort of a reactive approach rather than I don't know a more a proactive or an actual plan. That's part of what we work on in the book is thinking about that there are particular steps that you can use to help you develop a plan, especially in a situation where you're feeling really stuck and struggling with either, what boundary do I set or how do I set it? Because most of us don't take the time to actually think that through we just, mostly do the same thing that we've always done, even if it's not working. Right. I mean, that's the, that's the struggle of relationship dynamics is they tend to just go round and round.

[00:31:42] And the other thing that I really like people to think about is where do they have control in this situation? Because of course that's empowering to notice where you've got some control and some power, but that's really the only place that we can make changes. When [00:32:00] we want to set a boundary, sometimes we're going to be asking somebody else to do something or to make a change in their behavior to stop doing something, for example.

[00:32:10] But part of the frustration that people have with boundaries is they ask somebody else to change. And the other person doesn't make the change. They might be very angry and say, no,

[00:32:22] **Laura Reagan:** Right. Setting their boundary.

[00:32:24] **Sharon Martin:** They might say no in a very unpleasant way, or sometimes people say they're going to make a change, but they don't, there's no follow through. Which is equally frustrating to think something's going to change. And then, you know, days and weeks go by and, you know, they still haven't made any, any of the changes. And of course I feel, feels very hurtful and disrespectful to have somebody not follow through on something that you've asked of them, which has its own issue that we could talk about. But I think, for our purposes today, the important thing to remember is that if you're in that situation, [00:33:00] you need to think about what is it that you can do? What change can you make to try to get your needs met rather than to kind of continuing to be at the mercy of somebody else doing it for you.

[00:33:15] **Laura Reagan:** Yes.

[00:33:16] **Sharon Martin:** The challenge here is that again, I think we're not really used to thinking about things in this way, and let's be honest, it's easier to ask somebody else to make a change than it is to change ourselves. It usually feels like the ideal, like this is how I want the situation to be resolved is I want you to stop texting me at midnight, and perfectly reasonable requests, there's nothing wrong with that. But if the other person keeps doing it, you have a choice of course, to just continuing that situation, but you're probably going to feel resentful and annoyed and so forth. But the alternative is to think like, well, what is it [00:34:00] that I could do in this situation so that I can get a good night's sleep?

[00:34:04] And I know this it's again, it's a very simple example. There are much more complicated scenarios that we end up with but of course the obvious solution seems to be, well, I could turn my phone off or, I could put that person on mute or whatever your options are. But the point is that you do have options of things that you can actually do to make this situation work better for you. That's not to say that the other person isn't going to potentially have some negative feelings that you're not responding to their texts at midnight, but again that's the piece where you have to say, well, I have a need for a decent night's sleep and I need to go to bed before that, and that's okay.

[00:34:54] Unless this is truly a life and death emergency, they can wait to [00:35:00] get the response until morning. But I think part of the problem is that once we sort of get into patterns like this with people that if the friend let's just say has been texting you at midnight for, weeks or months, and you've been responding, but feeling upset about it, you know, of course it's hard to, you know, for the, for them to adjust to your new approach to things.

[00:35:22] And oftentimes it just takes some time, it might take some conversation depending on what the relationship is for people to kind of get on board with your boundary. But, but there are some people that will push back continuously, unfortunately. And that's, again, it's a reality that there are going to be situations where people will be unhappy, when you set limits with them, but those are choices that we have to make, if we're willing to do that and tolerate some of that discomfort, or we want to not set the boundary instead the discomfort that comes from that, [00:36:00] right. It's not as if there's no discomfort in not setting the boundary.

[00:36:05] **Laura Reagan:** Exactly.

[00:36:06] **Sharon Martin:** And I think that's what people forget is they're unhappy, that's why they're setting their boundaries.

[00:36:11] **Laura Reagan:** Yeah. Yeah, exactly. But it seems like there's kind of like a gradual, I don't know, stages of understanding boundaries because I definitely thought at first, well, if I don't say that I don't want the person to do it, then they don't know. And I feel like they're violating my boundary, but they're, they're just doing things the way they normally do things. So I'll just tell them, and then they won't do that anymore. And then, like you said, they keep doing it. You go through all this, like muster up the most strength from inside and you say, "I don't like when you do this," and I'm asking you to stop and then they do it again and you're like I don't know, it's just like, ah, you know, it's like, how could this happen? I told him that I don't like it! Maybe its about like [00:37:00] recalibrating that.

[00:37:00] **Sharon Martin:** You know you bring up a couple of points. So I think one reminder is yeah, if possible, don't wait too long to set the boundary, right? Because part of what you're describing is that that normal phenomenon, which is like the longer you wait, the more annoyed you get. And then the chances of the boundary coming out in a not very nice way have increased, right.

[00:37:24] So that, so that's one part of it. And of course you're absolutely right. I mean, people can't read what you need, um, unless you tell them.

[00:37:33] But, but of course, even people who care about you can't necessarily like flip the switch immediately. Um, again, behavior patterns, even if they're, they're fairly new, they get ingrained in, we are creatures of habit that we know, we tend to do the same things. And I think there's also something it's sort of natural that people will test the boundary.

[00:37:56] If you set a new boundary like this, that there, there's going to be a [00:38:00] little bit of testing. Um, and I don't think that's necessarily malicious. Um, I mean, it could be, but I think we should try and give people the benefit of the doubt and, think like they're adjusting to, they're trying to figure out now this friend has to figure out a new way to get their needs met.

[00:38:18] Right? If they were coming to you for support or information, in these texts and now you're not available, the friend has to like, you know, figure out, like you said, to recalibrate and come up with some different strategies, and that's not necessarily something that people do in one day, but that could be a process.

[00:38:36] And so I think depending on what the situation is if it's a safety issue, I mean, that's a different matter. But if we're talking about this kind of situation with the text messages, we can have, some space there. And I think sort of an understanding that it's adjustment for both parties and there might be some slips and [00:39:00] we just want to give people a little bit of opportunity to try to adjust before we kind of go to the next level with them or, have the next talk with them, or even try to frame it for ourselves in this way that they're trying to learn a new behavior rather than framing it as they're disrespectful, and they don't care about me or something really extreme.

[00:39:26] **Laura Reagan:** It's such a good point because that's the, that's the message that we, as it's festering, cause we're so frustrated and resentful and it's building and we're like, they don't respect me. They don't even like me. They're doing this on purpose. They want to mess with my head, you know, or something like that.

[00:39:42] And then that doesn't feel good. And it's also you're starting to make up a whole story about what's going on that might have very little connection to reality.

[00:39:52] **Sharon Martin:** I think those are important distinctions to make, because like I said, I think, I think most people can adjust [00:40:00] and can get on board when we start to set boundaries with them, there will be, I think the minority of people in your life hopefully, really are the ones who are going to push and push and push and truly don't care about your boundaries. I mean, obviously there are some people like that in the world, but I don't think that for most of us, it's the majority of our relationships.

[00:40:22] So I think that's helpful to make that distinction. If you know that you're dealing with somebody who kind of falls into that category of in the book, I call it difficult people,

you know, you can call it whatever you want. Right. But people who are just really challenged, you know, in the boundary department, versus, the average person who, again, just may not have that much experience with boundaries, um, themselves.

[00:40:45] Um, but I think hopefully most people can, can learn, um, along with you. But, but as I said, I mean, there's also, there's also something that we can't just be asking other people to make changes. We have to be willing to make [00:41:00] changes, ourselves. And sometimes that's hard because we don't like the choices that we're left with right, we feel like that ideal choice is the friends is going to stop and stop texting me, but there's usually some other choices. They may not be ideal solutions to the situation, but they're are things that you can do. And so therefore we need, we should look at them at least and consider whether they make sense for us.

[00:41:26] **Laura Reagan:** Sharon, thank you so much for sharing about this. It's a really complicated topic, but, I'm excited to dive into your book myself, but also with clients. And I actually, I called it by the wrong name. I said better boundaries. It's a better boundaries workbook.

[00:41:41] **Sharon Martin:** That is true. It is a workbook, which I, I like workbooks. I guess that should be obvious since it's the second one I've written, but I like them because I think it's important for people to actually practice the skills and that's part of what you get in a workbook is, you have [00:42:00] questions that are asked of you and there's exercises for people to do so that they can be working on that skill component of it, not just the knowledge base, like we need both of course, to understand the concepts, but then to apply them to our lives. And of course that's the most challenging piece of it is how do I actually do this?

[00:42:21] **Laura Reagan:** Exactly. Well, I have loved talking with you again as always. And can you just tell us where, tell our audience where people can find everything you're doing?

[00:42:31] **Sharon Martin:** Yes my website is livewellwithsharonmartin.com and from there you can find everything.

[00:42:38] **Laura Reagan:** Perfect.

[00:42:39] Thank you again for being my guest today on Therapy Chat, Sharon.

[00:42:42] **Sharon Martin:** It is my pleasure. I love talking with you and I only wish we had more time.

[00:42:48] Me too. I think we're

[00:42:49] **Laura Reagan:** probably going to have to do this again.

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