



BITCH

What stops you from setting a boundary? Afraid of being labeled? Discarded? Your conditioning? “Good girls don’t do that”. You’re being too much, too big. You’re over reacting. You’re so emotional. We can’t be friends anymore....



I don't set a boundary because I'm shy. No one listens to me. I don't want to make a fuss. Its easier to let people walk over me than it is to set a boundary. If I stay quiet, it will go away. I don't know how to set a boundary.

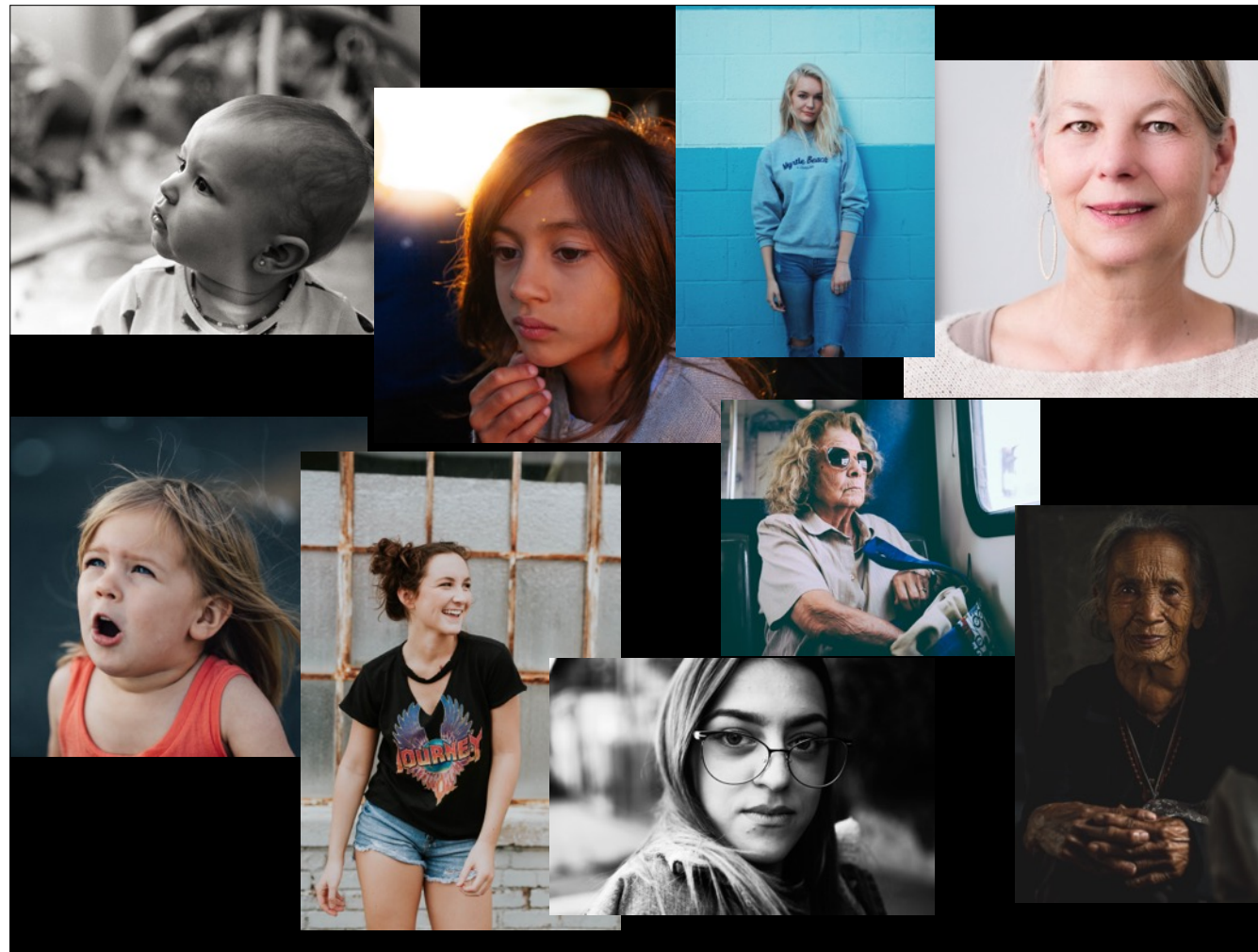


I did it. I set the boundary and survived! I used my voice, my tools. I allowed the sensations and feelings to move through. I feel confident, Assertive, Knowledgeable and Capable. Sometimes Boundaries suck, and I can survive!



My name is Andrea Gage. It started for me after college. I was finding out not everyone in the world was nice. I took a self defense class and learned the power of my no. I first had to learn my BIG no! And now I continue to develop the quieter and more refined nos.





It all begins with our safety. At different ages we have different safety needs. There are boundaries that our parents needed to give us, like “Don’t put that in your mouth” or “Hot! Don’t touch” Sometimes boundaries were put on us for the benefit of others. “Why? - Just because...” We may not have gotten the support or the tools due to our up bringing.



Through the busy-ness of our lives, different circumstances and our culture, we learn about our identity, our sexuality, what we're able to stand for and against. We learn behaviors to stay safe, both externally and internally. We develop our own unique compensations.





Some of us lock up those experiences and although we may scream quietly, we succumb to the labels we are given. Some of us fight and then continue to fight over everything, giving into our beliefs of “no one listens”, “I have to fight for everything”



While some of us shut down. Isolate. Ignore the People and the feelings that come up. Depression, anxiety and worry take over. We become less connected and more susceptible to abuse. And although we trying to get safe, it still doesn't feel that way.





How can we come with compassion for ourselves and what we have been through, to recognize, not only where we have been, but where we are going? To allow the place that needed support then, to be healed and get nourished in the present.



/we take it a drop at a time. Allowing the ripples to go out and the waters to settle again. We can then allow another drop or maybe two.... taking the time again for the ripples to ease out and integrate back into the bigger pool. This creates a bigger container. Some boundaries need more time.



In teaching boundaries over the years, I have found that there is a spectrum of where we are and in what aspects we need to attend to our boundaries. It starts with our relationships and the intersectionality of them. For example What is Our relationship to:





Money! How do we earn it? How do we spend it? Save it? or Give it away? How can money provide safety? What are the beliefs we have made around money?  
How do we ask for what we need?



Time: Where does the time go? Am I someone who is on time or am I late? Am I using time the way I'd like? for work or family. Am I wasting it the way I'd like?! with enjoyable play?! When is slowing down just the right thing to do?



Relationships: Adding in another person, creates more energy and often is fueled by what has been models for us. Personal or Professional? Friends or something more? What are my boundaries around sex and my sexuality? How do I want to be with another? What are my options?



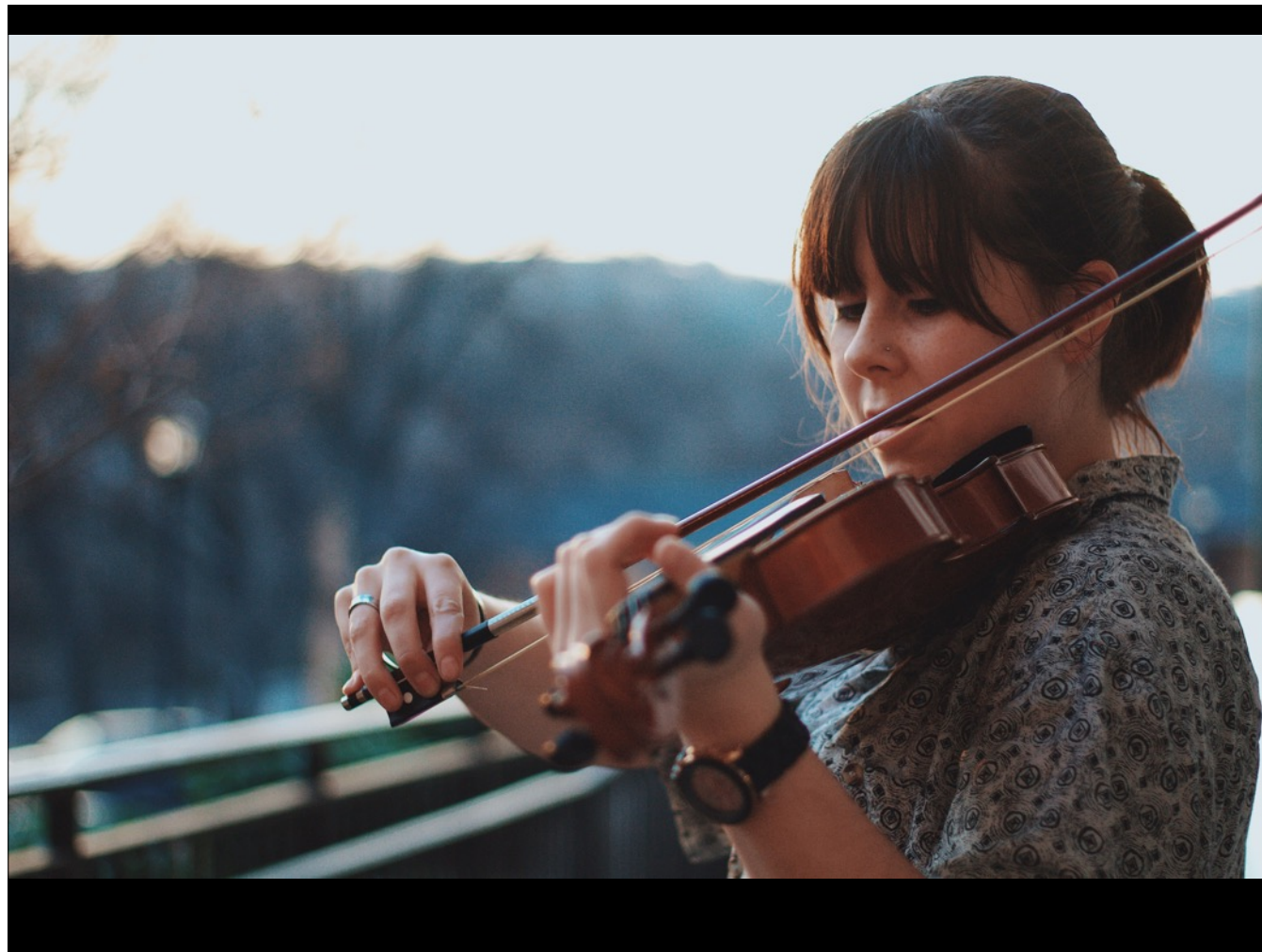


Food! With so many options these days, how do we choose what's right for our health? How do we use food? For nourishment or for comfort? Maybe we use it to show our love. How do we know when we've had too much? How do we handle the disappointment of not being able to have it all?



And then there is Technology! How do you navigate your relationship to media and the people and ideas and words you read? Think about Facebook relationships! Both personal and professional. How do I stop myself from answering that angry text right away? What about those Games on our phones? When is it time to look up?





How do we get to the Carnegie hall of Boundaries? Practice. Practice. Practice. We slow things down. We learn to listen to our bodies. We learn to recognize the patterns and create strategies to navigate not only our experience, but the reactions we receive as well.





I've learned that as I stay present to my own experience, get support and use the tools I've learned, that boundaries become easier and allow me to engage with others in my life in a fulfilling way. I can take risks to grow and get the most out of life.





Together, with the right container for a safe place to practice, we walk the path to our own regulation and knowing. We learn to move through disappointment and fear. We learn the choices to express our needs. Most importantly We also learn how to enjoy the good times.

# The Boundary



# Spectrum

*with*  
*Andrea Gage*

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

Photos courtesy of the artists at [unsplash.com](https://unsplash.com)

I invite you into this ongoing conversation. You can find more at [www.theboundariespectrum.com](http://www.theboundariespectrum.com) where there is a Facebook group and ongoing Boundary classes. There is also a podcast where we talk all things boundaries. I look forward to hearing where you are in your Boundary journey and how I can support you! Thank you!