

## WISDOM

## SETTING HEALTHY BOUNDARIES



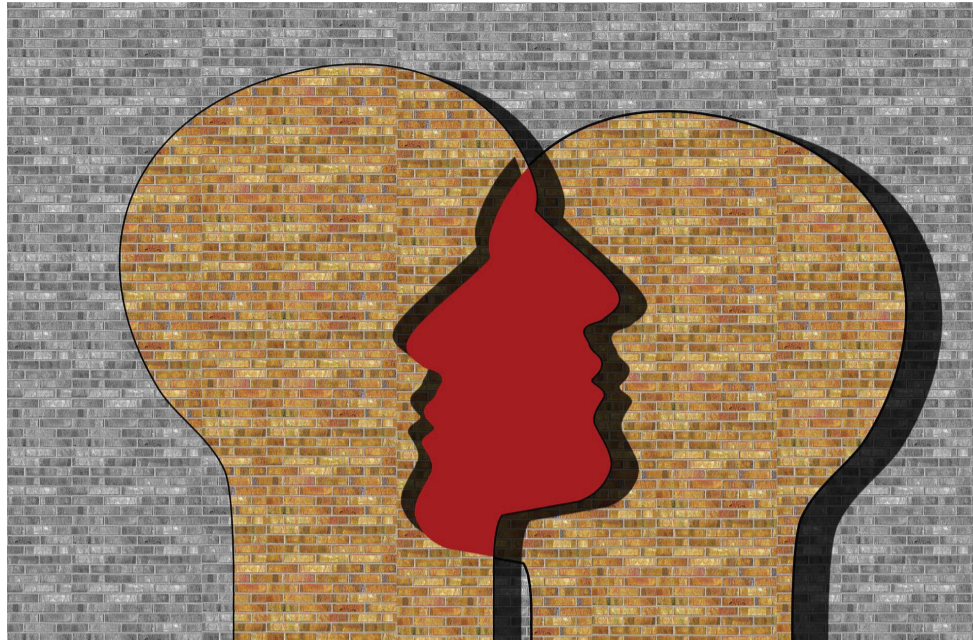
MAUREEN GOODMAN

Ancient wisdom talks of the importance of staying within set boundaries to keep us safe. In the story of Rama and Sita, a line was drawn around her and she was warned not to step over the line or there would be serious and dangerous consequences. However, she did step over, and was kidnapped and there began a whole new complicated story. In the Bible, the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah were to be destroyed because of the sinful lives of those who

lived there. One family. Lot and his wife, were found to be virtuous, and so they were told to flee the city, but on no account to look back. Lot's wife did look back, and she was turned into a pillar of salt. She ignored the boundary that was set for her safety.

Our own lives are full of situations and relationships that pull and push us in one direction or another, and it is often very difficult to know how to make the right decisions, and be able to listen to our conscience. Our conscience holds our inner self-regulating set of boundaries, and we only know if we have stepped over the boundary when we begin to feel uncomfortable about how we have behaved, even though at the time, it seemed the right thing to do. Our conscience will let us know if it was or it was not.

The way I live, that is the set of boundaries I hold



The boundaries I have set for myself become clear to others if I always live within them.

within, become clear to others, providing I always live

within them. When we are true to ourselves, we can be

carefree because we know that what will happen will

be for the best. Others will come to know what the

bottom line is for me and will not even try to pull me across it, as it would be a waste of their time.

However, this takes great strength of character. It is difficult to stay within the boundaries I have set if my emotions are affected. I may want sympathy and may do something just to please others so that I get that sympathy, for example, divulging information that I should not. We may put someone else down to make ourselves look better than them to try to get praise or admiration. I may put others on a pedestal and fall under their influence and cross the boundaries of the principles I have established for my own life. If I am in an emotional state, it is very easy to be manipulated by others.

These kinds of relationships need to be handled with strength and love, without imposing or con-

trolling. For this, great inner strength is needed, and that can only come from God, a connection with the Divine. In that connection comes strength and clarity, and the power of tolerance. Tolerance is important in keeping boundaries strong and healthy. We are going to need clarity and discernment in the very near future, because there are so many energies trying to manipulate us all, not least, the newly emerging artificial intelligence, AI. Many will not be able to discern what is true and what is not. If I can keep my dignity and hold on to my self-worth, and keep a deep connection with God, the Divine, I will have all the clarity and strength that I need.

Maureen Goodman is the Programme Director for the Brahma Kumaris UK, and BK NGO representative to the United Nations in Vienna.

## PLAIN TRUTHS

## KEYS TO A HAPPY LIFE



DR. SACHIN PARAB

It is simple to be happy, but it is difficult to be simple.

Being simple and uncomplicated in our thinking, speech, and lifestyle helps us live a happy life. The simpler we are, the less we would need to worry about other people and situations. We would neither make unnecessary assumptions about people's motives nor spend our time and energy in planning how to respond to them. In contrast, the more pretentious we are, the further we move away from real happiness. Being simple does not mean being naïve or gullible. When our mind is calm and free from the clutter of excessive thoughts, we are able to discern the vibrations coming

from other people and know what they mean, and respond appropriately. This also keeps relationships light and easy.

We should also recognise and accept the truth that being happy or otherwise is in our hands. It is not other people or situations that give or take away our happiness – it is the way we perceive them. The Gita tells us that the soul is its own friend and its own enemy. It takes some people a lot of time to digest this fact. We usually blame others for our unhappiness, "They did this...", or "This is what happened today, that is why...". It is up to us to magnify situations – make a mountain out of a molehill – or take them in our stride. Depending on how we see and respond to a situation, we have a good or bad experience.

Therefore, we cannot blame others for our unhappiness. Other people or circumstances are not the real cause of our anger – they only give us the push that brings out the anger that was already within us. If we are carrying a cup of tea and we stumble, it is tea that will



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be spilled, not coffee. Similarly, when people or situations give us a jolt, what comes out of us, in the form of thoughts, emotions, speech, and behaviour, is

what lies within us. If there is anger inside, we will react angrily. A peaceful person would react peacefully. The anger or peace are not created by ex-

ternal factors; we carry them within and they are expressed in such circumstances.

The solution is to change ourselves, not expect others

to change for our sake. In life, there can be all sorts of situations; we cannot expect to have everything our way all the time. Difficult people and circumstances will test us; what matters is how we handle them. This is where spirituality comes in. Rajyoga teaches us to create positive thoughts that empower us and help to keep us stable at all times. When we recognise the fact that we are the masters of our thoughts and emotions and consciously practise creating positive thoughts, we gradually gain greater control over our mind and are able to respond to people and situations more peacefully and rationally. As we gain sovereignty over the self, we experience a newfound freedom – we are no longer slaves to our emotions, or puppets in the hands of other people and situations. This freedom brings dignity, and the ability to face the ups and downs of life with stability.

Dr. Sachin Parab is a counsellor, hypnotherapist, and corporate trainer who has been practising and teaching Rajyoga meditation for the last 27 years.

## A THOUGHT FOR TODAY

Body and soul operate according to separate laws.

The body is ruled by the material laws of physiology and biology. The soul operates according to the laws of energy. Consequently, the healing process will be different for each. Because the energy of the soul keeps the body alive it has a significant influence on the health of the body. Healing the soul is based on wisdom, love, peace, and faith. To heal the soul, I must take the medicine of virtues every day, morning and evening. This allows me to start my day with peace, love, gratitude and end my day with the same. Today let me heal the soul.

## STATE OF MIND

## Virtues, awareness, and mental health



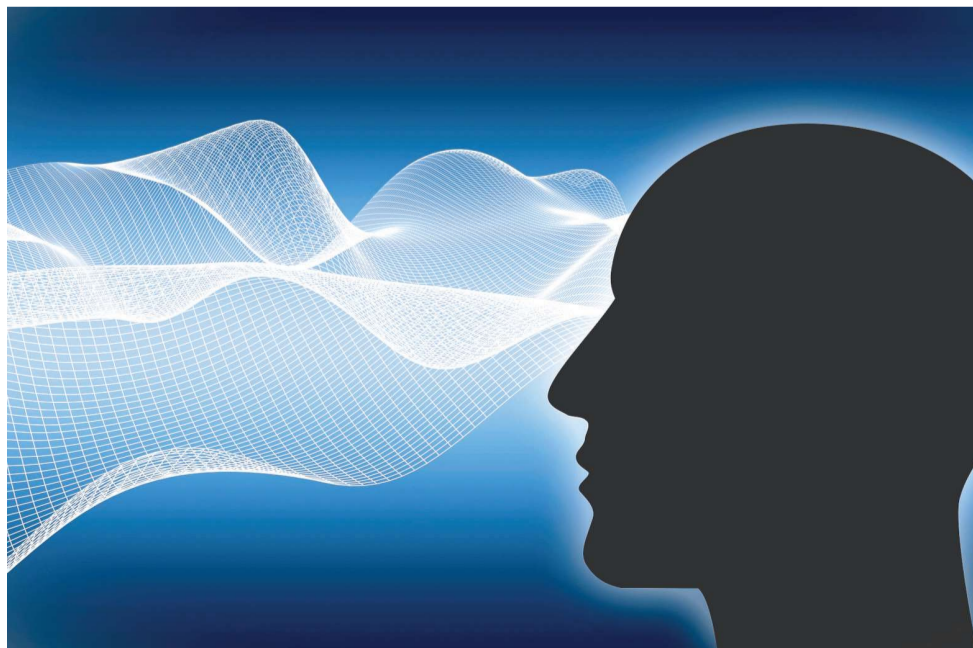
CHIRYA RISELY

As many people in the world are recognizing that the health of the mind is of supreme importance, we could look at what might be considered a crisis, rather more as that we are now in the beginnings of a mental health renaissance.

More people are talking openly and honestly about their mental health than ever before. Many new and emerging evidence-based, whole-person approaches to mental health and well-being are making a significant difference in the lives of people of all ages, providing tre-

mendous help for overcoming, and avoiding, mental health challenges. One important method is through play. Everyone loves to play because it freely connects us with our real inner being, I the soul. Doing what we love puts us 'in the flow', the positive mental state of being entirely and happily absorbed in just the present moment and the task at hand.

A teacher had an inspiring way of teaching students the subtleties of the virtue of happiness through a game. The teacher gave an inflated balloon to every student. They were to write their name on it, and also a virtue or quality they valued, such as honesty or generosity. The group then bounced the balloons all around and to each other. The mixed-up balloons were left in a colorful pile in the middle of the room. The students were then given three minutes to find their own balloon. Despite a hectic search, very



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few found their balloon. The balloons were now all float-

ing around the room. At that point, the teacher told the

students to go and take the first balloon they found and

hand it to the person whose name was written on it.

Within 5 minutes, everyone had their own balloon. The teacher said to the students: "These balloons are like happiness. We will never find it if everyone is looking for their own. But if we care about other people's happiness, we'll find ours too."

We give the gift of virtues through creative play, and by passing on virtues quietly to others through our positive thoughts, words, and actions. These 'valuable' gifts are truly precious because they are imperishable, and they multiply the more we share them. Virtues are more valuable than the material things we give to each other.

Happiness is energy, not matter. When we are happy while fulfilling our responsibilities, our happy vibrations radiate and create joy, which uplifts the mindset of others around us.

Our consciousness, awareness or attitude is extremely important in playing a game

or in performing any task. Whenever we have a task to do, we can check whether we are considering the task with enthusiasm, creativity, and enjoyment, or whether we simply want to get it done because it has to be done, and it is our duty to do it. Our state of mind is more important than the task itself. The more positive the consciousness, the more positive benefit will be the experience from performing the task.

One of the most charitable things we can do is to find a way to maintain our inner happiness, no matter what the situation is. Inner happiness springs from the deep awareness of being a spiritual being having a human experience. We can make that human experience as happy as we choose.

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