

Personal boundaries essay



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Personal Boundaries People set up personal boundaries for many reasons. For some it is to keep out neighbors or animals, yet for others it is to keep something in, such as young children or a promiscuous wife with a wandering eye. In the poem by Robert Frost, both Robert and his neighbor have a wall made out of stone between their homes. Because the wall is made out of stone, it somehow breaks down and needs to be mended during the spring time.

I believe that the wall is both physical and mental and I will tell you why. Perhaps it is a physical wall, and because of frost heaves and animals stepping on the wall, the stones become misplaced. Or perhaps it is a mental wall that is broken down over the winter months because of a lack of communication between the neighbors. Perhaps all the hurtful things that were said and all the untruths that were told were forgotten over the winter and when the two neighbors returned in the spring, they were able to remember exactly why they disliked each other so much. I know that the wall is described in detail throughout the poem as something physical. However, as I have said before, I believe the neighbors have two walls, one that is physical and one that is mental.

It only seems suitable that if an owner does not want anyone else to encroach on their property, the wall they are setting up between themselves and the rest of the world is mental. It also seems as though Robert does not want the wall but his neighbor insists on having one. So if in fact I am right about the wall being physical and mental, perhaps Robert is the culprit who has engaged in something that has caused the neighbor to distrust him. Maybe Robert has done something that has made his neighbor fear for his

personal safety. It seems that would be the only logical reason to put up a wall.

Something must have happened in the past that made Robert's neighbor put up that wall; something that happened a long time ago. The deed that had occurred must have been utterly deplorable because they seem to mend the wall every spring. If your next door neighbors have ever put up a fence between your yard and theirs, you might have felt a tinge of emotional hurt. If you do feel that pain, you are the one that is being fenced out, not the one who is being fenced in. It is one thing to be fenced in, but it is another to be fencing people out.

My neighbors put up a fence next door to my parents house, and I could not comprehend why they would do such a thing. I sat back and thought about it for a while, and I came to the conclusion that if I owned my own home, I probably would not want all the neighbor kids running through my yard either. So in that scenario, the owner of the house was fencing out the other kids, but at the same time, he was fencing himself in. I have fenced myself in before, and it is a pretty lonely feeling. Maybe in a way it is a relief to know that the only people entering your property are the ones you have decided to let in. However, the owner might also feel like he is caged in, and can no longer walk his neighbor's lawn as he once used to.

I've sometimes found the ability to walk through your neighbor's backyard when there are no fences to be an eerie feeling. The feeling I get is, " I know I'm not supposed to be walking through your yard, but I just need to get to my friends house real quick, and this is the best way to go. " Also, if you've

ever walked through the backyard of a neighbor you don't really talk to or like and they catch you, it may seem as though you are just trying to spy. I feel so uncomfortable when I am walking through a neighbor's backyard and see that neighbor standing in the window watching me. That is normally the point when I think to myself, " If you don't want me to walk through here, than put up a fence.

The reason I feel that way was normally because that neighbor had set up an unspoken mental wall between himself and I. And the funny thing is I'll bet the owner was thinking, " I need to get a fence so that I can keep these damn kids from walking across my lawn. " After the owner realizes that a fence is necessary, then a mental fence is built to accompany his physical fence. The mental fence secures his feelings for his personal property such as his grill, or his lawn mower, or even his wife. The physical fence assures the safety of his things.

If the fence was built and then removed several months later, neighbors would probably still have the feeling that a mental fence still exists. Perhaps not physically, but mentally they would have an image burned into their mind that says: Do Not Enter. Sometimes home owners are very short and brash with their neighbors, and an attitude like that can build mental walls at a speed much quicker than they can ever be broken down. So, no matter what type of wall you make be it physical or mental, it will serve the same purpose. And that purpose is either to keep people in or keep people out