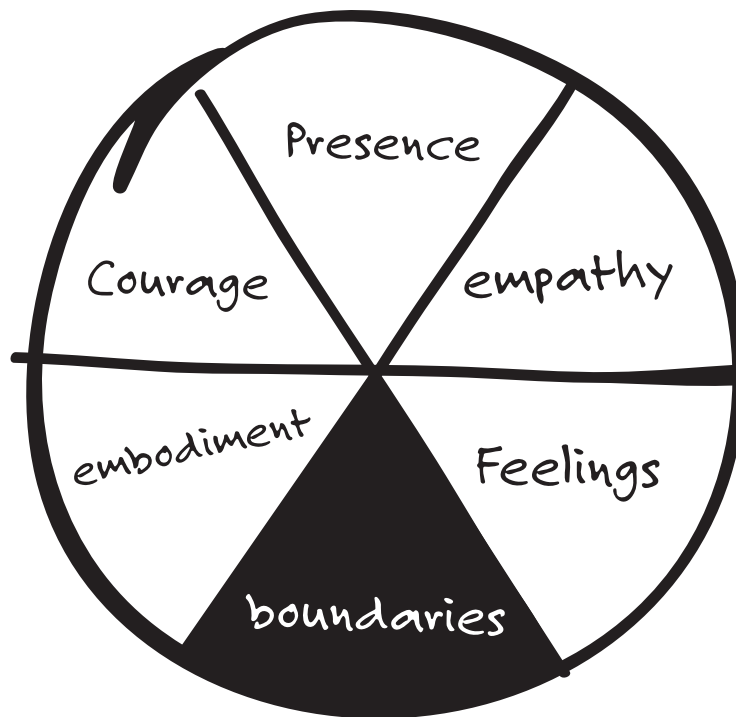


Deepening Your Impact

BOUNDARIES AND SYSTEMS



Creating Agile Boundaries

Boundaries and systems bring people together into safe, symbiotic relationships. Boundaries and systems provide protection, mutuality, and support equality in relationships. Limited boundaries restrict our work as coaches because when our boundaries are particularly porous we take on others' issues and when our boundaries are too rigid we run the risk of disconnecting. When our boundaries are agile, we are at our best.

What We'll Cover 1: Self-Assessment 2: Systems 3: Locating Your Boundaries 4: Systems Thinking 5: Action Planning

1: Boundary Self-Assessment

The following questions touch on the outer edges of where our individual boundaries start and stop, how crisp they are, or how much they absorb or hold at a distance the challenges and victories of others. This is where boundaries begin for us as coaches and leaders, as well.

What do you know about your own boundary preferences? How much physical space do you like to have around you—your personal space?

How clear are you on what you say yes to and what you say no to? Is it harder to say yes or no to some people more than others?

Do you make decisions by going inside and checking your own rudder or are you often influenced by what others would like?

Do you find it difficult to make time for yourself? How do you engage in self-care?

Do you take your coachee's issues and challenges home with you at the end of the day? How do your coachee's issues affect your daily life?

Do you sometimes feel angry or resentful about the time it takes to help another person?

Boundary Self-Assessment

Based on your previous questions, plot your position on the boundaries spectrum.



DIFFUSE	AGILE	RIGID
Boundaries are limited, porous, permeable, and become blurred or absorbed based on others.	Boundaries are steadfast and strong but empathetic.	Boundaries are highly rigid, unempathetic, unwavering.
Coach tends to collude, rescue, or fix the coachee.	Coach can hold an alliance with the coachee and surface valuable observations without getting swept up.	Coach is disconnected and limited with the coachee.

2: Systems

We have all been impacted by our generational systems and familial relationships, which show up in differentiation orientation.

At your most differentiated self, you hold a belief that you are responsible for your own well-being, challenges, and messes. At the lowest level of differentiation, there is a belief that others are responsible for your well-being and sense of happiness and contentment in the world.

Check in on your own differentiation orientation.

To what extent do you rely on others for your own happiness, well-being, and contentment?

How did your family/root systems establish either a highly differentiated self or a lower level of differentiation?

Consider a few recent coaching engagements. Think of one in which you felt went particularly well and another that felt challenging. How do you think your boundaries and systems played into these instances?

4: Systems Thinking

We often tend to place blame and insist that outside circumstances and sources outside of our control cause our problems.

When our boundaries are strong, it is easier to engage in systems thinking and imagine all parts of the system. In systems thinking, there is no one else to blame—you and the cause of your problems are part of a single system.

What is one outside circumstance you tend to blame as your “enemy” or source of your problems?

How can you shift to systems thinking instead? How will systems thinking help you overcome your old way of thinking and free your coaching engagements?

Peter Senge states that:

**THE CURE
LIES IN YOUR
RELATIONSHIP
WITH YOUR
‘ENEMY’.**

5: Insights for Action Planning

Holistic Professional Development

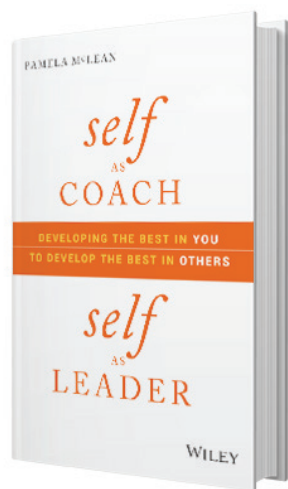
As you are reading, reflecting on the “Out in Your World” questions, and completing the Coach’s Worksheets, begin to think of how you can leverage your whole, cultivated self to affect change in your future work.

What is one key insight you can take forward regarding boundaries and systems to contribute toward your overall self-development plan for coaching improvement?

How will establishing healthy boundaries and systems thinking help you do your best work towards affecting change as a coach or leader?

What is one thing you need to be able to create healthy boundaries and systems with your coachees?

More About Our Work at Hudson



Buy the Book

For more details or to buy a copy of Pamela McLean's *Self as Coach, Self as Leader* [click here](#).

About the Author

Pamela McLean, PhD, is the CEO and cofounder of Hudson Institute of Coaching, an organization providing a full suite of coaching services inside organizations and widely known as one of the leading coach training programs in the United States for over 30 years. McLean brings more than three decades of experience as a clinical and organizational psychologist, a master coach, coach supervisor, and leader and contributor in the field of coaching. McLean has written extensively and authored [The Completely Revised Handbook of Coaching](#) (2012) and [LifeForward: Charting the Journey Ahead](#). (2015).



About The Hudson Institute of Coaching

One of the early leaders in the field of coaching, [Hudson Institute of Coaching](#) has been providing developmentally based coach training for leaders for more than 30 years. We set the standard for experiential learning programs that lead organizations and people to reach for their best as leaders and human beings in our global world.

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