

# **Boundary Work Handout**

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## **Part One – Boundary Preferences**

Examine the next page of this handout. The column on the left reflects how things really are, while the column on the right asks for your preferences of how things should be. Within each column you will see a series of circles with various distances between them. Please check the ONE box beside the set of circles that best illustrates the relationship asked about – one box for each column.

1. What do the diagrams tell you about your work-home boundaries? Is there a discrepancy or congruency between your ideal and actual? What might that imply?
2. How might the “Berlin Wall” (past and/or present) example be a symbol of the boundary between your work and your home life? Remember – boundaries can be physical, cognitive, emotional, behavioral, and/or temporal.
3. What specific aspects of work do you try to integrate with or segment from home? What specific aspects of home/personal life do you try to integrate with or segment from home?
4. Who are the people in your life (work, home, other) that tend to want you to have a more segmented life? And who wants you to have a more integrated life?

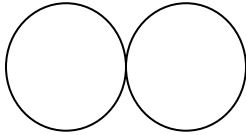
## BOUNDARIES BETWEEN HOME AND WORK FOR YOU

### ACTUAL BOUNDARY

*Please circle the situation that best applies.*

**My home      My work**

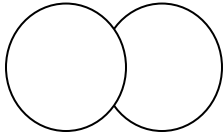
1



My home and my work tend to be almost or completely segmented from one another.

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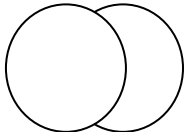
2



My home and my work tend to be very segmented from one another.

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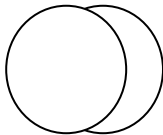
3



My home and my work tend to be fairly even between integrated and somewhat segmented.

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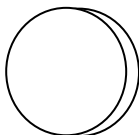
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My home and my work tend to be very integrated with one another.

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5



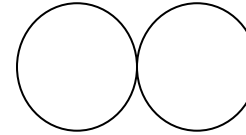
My home and my work tend to be almost or completely integrated with one another.

### PREFERRED OR "IDEAL" BOUNDARY

*Please circle the situation that best applies.*

**My home      My work**

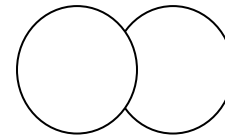
1



I prefer my home and my work to be almost or completely segmented from one another.

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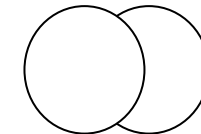
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I prefer my home and my work to be very segmented from one another.

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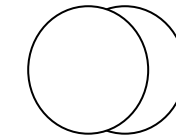
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I prefer my home and my work to be fairly even between integrated and segmented.

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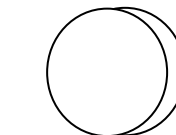
4



I prefer my home and my work to be very integrated with one another.

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5



I prefer my home and my work to be almost or completely integrated with one another.

## **Part Two – Boundary Challenges & Opportunities**

5. What are some instances of work-home “boundary violations” you have experienced? Have you ever been the violator for someone else’s work-home boundary preferences?
6. What are some of the ways you have experienced work-home conflict? Work-home enrichment?
7. What are some of the ways you have seen others in your organization experience work-home conflict? Work-home enrichment?

## **Part Three – Boundary Tactics**

8. The following three pages contain a list of strategies for managing the work-home boundary. What strategies for work-life balance – among those listed – have worked well for you?
9. What additional strategies – not in the list – have been or might be successful for you?
10. What strategies have you observed in others? Do you have “role models” of colleagues who manage the boundary well?

## Work-Home Boundary Work Tactics

From our Clergy Study (Kreiner, Hollensbe, & Sheep, *Academy of Management Journal*, August 2009)

| Name                               | Description   | Example Situations & Quotes   |
|------------------------------------|---|---|
| <b>Behavioral Tactics</b>          |   |   |
| Using other people                 | Utilizing the skills and availability of other individuals who can help with the work-home boundary (e.g., staff members screening calls) | “My wife is very good. She answers the phone and helps me to discern whether or not it is an emergency. If it’s not, she takes a message; if it’s my day off, for example. My church administrator, who takes all the calls at the church, is very good about helping me keep my boundaries up. There are also three clergy on staff here so we are able to share emergencies that come up. That is a great help.”  |
| Leveraging technology              | Using technology to facilitate boundary work (e.g., voicemail, caller ID, email)  | “Well, I’ll tell you one thing that has really transformed our ability to keep things separate and coordinated is a palm pilot. That’s much better than a calendar.... That has really helped us....”<br>“Caller ID is a big help with the phone calls.”  |
| Invoking triage                    | Prioritizing seemingly urgent and important work and home demands (e.g., pastoral emergency and childcare emergency)                      | “I try and sort out between what I have to do, and what I should do, and what I want to do. It is kind of a triage. You know, you have to do what you have to do. Then sometimes what you have to do is what you want to do, but not necessarily. Then eventually you can work down to the stuff that you want to do.... Like tomorrow, my kids are in this big swim meet. I would love to be there for the swim meet. I was supposed to have a volunteer job at it. But, a long-time member of our parish died, and we are going to have an enormous funeral with 500 people.... So, there is just no question.... I wish I could be at the swim meet, but I can’t. On the other hand, if it was an optional sort of ‘Can you come in and do this on a Saturday?’ You know I would say, ‘You know, I have this big swim meet to go to. I’ll come in, in the afternoon.’” |
| Allowing differential permeability | Choosing which specific aspects of work-home life will or will not be permeable   | “I try to leave the work, the emotional and spiritual side of the work, if at all possible, at the church. So the politics and all that, I try not to bring that home. The actual physical stuff of letters and sermons and correspondence and newsletters and all that stuff, the office is just too busy of a place to be creative and concentrate. So, I tend to do a lot of the creative work at the house, rather than in the office.... I try to build an emotional wall to not bring the baggage of the church or too much of it ... but the actual physical work part [is different].”  |

### Temporal Tactics

|                       |  |  |
|-----------------------|--|--|
| Controlling work time | Manipulations of one's regular or sporadic plans (e.g., banking time from home or work domain to be used later, blocking off segments of time, deciding <i>when</i> to do various aspects of work) | <p>"The biggest thing was to try to have some flexibility about taking advantage of being able to be home in the middle of the day, for periods of time when there was nothing special going on in the church building. Then trading that for times when I was obligated to be in the church building that maybe didn't fit in the pattern that I had kept before, of pretty much nine-to-five availability."</p> <p>"We always return phone calls, of course. We always respond, but it's not always when the people <i>want</i>. When people <i>need</i>, yes. There is a big difference between what a person wants and what they actually need."</p> |
| Finding respite       | Removing oneself from work-home demands for a significant amount of time (e.g., vacations, getaways, retreats)   | <p>"I find that increasingly on my day off, I like to get out of town just to change the optics. Home is a way that, even with policing the boundaries, the experience of home can sort of become contaminated with the spillover from work. I find that just on a regular basis it is good to get away and go someplace else. When I get up in the morning and raise the shades in the bedroom, I'm looking across the parking lot at my office. I'd rather be looking at [a] river or something. Yeah, there is some contamination there."</p> <p>"When I am away at my cabin, I am away and the boundary is there."</p>                               |

### Physical Tactics

|                              |  |  |
|------------------------------|--|--|
| Adapting physical boundaries | Erecting or dismantling physical borders or barriers between work and home domains | This respondent made the building of a fence between the church and the rectory a formal part of her contract upon moving to a new parish: "I wanted to have a place that is private. To do that, the fence that they are going to put up will be a white stockade fence, six feet tall, but the last foot is going to be a lattice top so that there is privacy and some kind of open place at the top. I imagine that we will have some really beautiful gardens. I'm going to buy an arbor that has gates and latticework to grow roses on. It may sound kind of silly, but I really wanted the transition between home and work and back again to be a point of kind of health and beauty. In my imagination, I have climbing roses over the arbor and in the wintertime we will put Christmas lights on it. I really want it to be clear that there is a boundary, but that the passage back and forth is good. I have thought a lot about it." |
| Manipulating physical space  | Creating or reducing a physical distance or "no man's land" between the            | Long term example: "You know when we moved to [this town]..., there was a house for sale right next door to the church. We intentionally chose not to [buy it].... We intentionally chose to put some distance between us and the  |

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|------------------------------|--|--|
|                              | work and home domains  | <p>church. That's been a good thing. It's kind of an oasis, too. It's out in the country and so it's kind of a very natural boundary. People don't trek out there.... So there is a physical, it feels like a physical barrier, boundary between us and the town and us and church."</p> <p>Short term example: "About three weeks ago I had a huge wedding. The rehearsal ran three hours.... It was such a complicated wedding. It was like everything but the kitchen sink, plus the kitchen sink. The wedding itself was very long too. So, one thing I did after the wedding was over, I not only went home, but I said let's go out to dinner. Like, let's literally get out of here. I didn't think anybody would come back for any reason, but if they did, I didn't want to be around."</p> |
| Managing physical artifacts  | Using tangible items such as calendars, keys, photos, and mail to separate or blend aspects of each domain   | "Sometimes the mailman leaves a bundle of mail in our post box for the office and I just dump it off in the office so it doesn't come home. We are vigilant about working in whatever way we can to prevent much cross contamination between home and work."   |
| <b>Communicative Tactics</b> |  |  |
| Setting expectations         | Managing expectations <i>in advance</i> of a work-home boundary violation (e.g., stating preferences to parish or family ahead of time)                                    | "Thursdays are sacred time. Everybody in this church knows it. I am absolutely not available unless you have just been run over by an eighteen-wheeler. If you are headed to the emergency room, you call me, I'll be there, but don't you call me if you want to know whether something ought to be in the bulletin or not. Everybody knows it. I've never had to be mean about it. I've just been real clear."   |
| Confronting violators        | Telling violator(s) of work-home boundaries either <i>during or after</i> a boundary violation (e.g., telling a parishioner to stop calling at home for frivolous reasons) | "Your problem parishioner, you learn to deal with that, and put your arms around that. For some people you've got to set boundaries. You need to say, 'Well, you need to make an appointment and come and see me. At the appointment we will talk about that.'"  |