



# Voicing Your Limits Before Your Limits Voice Them for You

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## **THE HIDDEN BORDER**

There is an almost invisible, barely perceptible line that many of us cross. Most of us are oblivious that we have strayed into new territory. It seems both familiar and strange at the same time. Familiar in the sense is that we are still doing the same things in the same place. Strange in the fact that we are doing it at a much quicker pace seemingly on automatic, lost in the mechanics of trying to beat the clock and scratch a checkmark beside each item on our to-do list.

It is hard to articulate and define this line. It is easier to kind of feel when we have crossed it. We tend to lose our self in the work. I am not referring to a state of flow. This is anything but that.

## **WELCOME TO THE GRIND**

This is the grind. Where we sacrifice our individual needs and peace of mind to the job at hand day-in and day-out. We break our own promises to take care of ourselves and to put time aside for sleep, exercise and breaks. We mindlessly divert the rare commodity of time from our kids, family and friends to the all-consuming, never satiated job. There seems to be no respite.

Working with clients I see this phenomenon (or what I like to classify as a phenomenon) on a weekly basis. My clients tend to be of the breed who are hard-working and profoundly professional. They are dedicated and loyal to their teams. At the same time, they have their own personal deficiencies and areas of improvement.

## **KNOWING ONE'S BOUNDARIES**

One of the universal challenges found in my client base is the ability not only to set their boundaries, but to have the discipline to keep to those boundaries. I am not talking about stretching beyond our current abilities in order to grow and develop. I am talking about moving beyond the healthy and sustainable levels. Where we put a continuous and unnecessary load and strain on our minds and bodies.

Of course there are going to be extraordinary situations where we have to go beyond those healthy limits. The problem is when those situations move from the 'few and far between' to becoming the weekly norm.

For some the wake-up call comes too late. They've taken one step too far and have fallen into the abyss. They lose themselves. Their desire and motivation for their profession and work fall from them as they tumble head-long, Their drive to get up in the mornings also gets lost as they flail head over foot. This so called 'burn-out' is when our limits speak for us, and unfortunately for many, it can break us.

## **THE WAKE-UP CALL**

In my coaching sessions I try to get people to become vigilant to the signs of when they've crossed the almost invisible, barely perceptible line. I get them to articulate and to define, to the best of their ability, what that line is for them. Once defined I encourage them to voice their limits and to set the boundaries in which they will hold themselves to. They know from experience that to stray beyond those boundaries is risking their mental and physical well-being.

Everyone crosses into unsafe territory at some point, and as I've mentioned above this is to be expected. The question is: what is the frequency of this crossing? Half of the challenge is to be aware of when we are about to move into the dangerous territory, and the other half is to limit our exposure. In the end, we either voice our limits or those limits will voice them for us. Hopefully, the wake-up call does not come too late.

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