



Setting boundaries for the Self Sacrifice Schema

The Self-sacrifice schema can feel right in the short term but chronic self-sacrificing (i.e. pushing needs down and putting ourselves last) can have long term consequences, such as exhaustion and resenting other people.

Please read "[The Giving Tree](#)" by Shel Silverstein and "[The Tree Who Set Healthy Boundaries](#)" by Topher Payne." These stories respectively explore self-sacrifice and setting healthy limits. Then reflect on what these stories mean to you.

Reflection questions for "The Giving Tree" by Shel Silverstein

1. What impact does life-long self-sacrificing have on the Tree?
2. What does it teach the Boy about life, relationships, and responsibility?
3. Do you relate to "The Giving Tree"? How so?
4. When you self-sacrifice what other modes emerge (vulnerable child, angry child?). How does this negatively impact other people?
5. What cost will this level of self-sacrifice have on you in 1 year or 5 years time, in terms of resentment and burn out?

Reflection questions for "The tree who set healthy boundaries?"

1. What do you admire about this tree?
2. What aspect of limit setting would you struggle with (i.e. tolerating guilt)?
3. How did the tree's ability to tolerate guilt and set boundaries impact others?
4. How would life change if you better tolerated guilt?
5. What small boundaries could you start with?