

It's a new year, and the race continues.



For many people the new year is an exciting time, they see it as a new opportunity to accomplish their dreams, to start new goals, a new business, family, etc., for others it could feel frustrating and may even think: 'how long until this is over?'. The way we'll continue on, depends on how we will choose to see it, as a gift or as a burden, and that's how we will face what's ahead.

Whatever your view has been these first couple of weeks of 2018, we invite you to choose, no matter what, to take the coming 350 opportunities to keep trying, to not give up, and to persevere until the end.

This time, we want to share about boundaries but with a different focus.

Boundaries, as we've seen different times before, **are like a protective barrier, something that limits and protects of something or someone.**

The other day I read that many times when we see children or teenagers act out resistant or defensive behaviors, we tend to see it as an attack, we say *they are* rude, disrespectful, ungrateful, inconsiderate, etc. However, the author proposes to see that resistance or attacks as a defense mechanism. The example he used was the space suit, necessary for survival in outer space.

The suit was studied and redesigned many times, in order to protect astronauts in a hostile environment for the human body, otherwise, they would die. It regulates body temperature, breathing, protects from the external temperature and pressure, allows communication, among other great things. It's been designed specifically for that environment.

Children that were institutionalized for any amount of time, found themselves in the need to design their own protective suit, one that would keep them alive and safe physically and emotionally. They had to develop a mentality and a set of behaviors that worked while living there, but even though the environment changed, the mindset didn't, or hasn't yet.

If we choose to see their resistance as a survival skill and not only as an attack on us, it is more likely that the way we face it changes. First of all, we must acknowledge it exists and has a purpose, and with time and our example we can show them it's no longer necessary for the environment they are now.

Then, little by little, the walls will start to fall as they realize we won't do the same to them as they experienced before:

- we won't punish them for wanting more food
- or for not eating
- we won't rebuke them when they cry,
- or for saying they don't love us,
- or for saying they miss their previous family,
- or for not knowing how to handle their feelings.

We will choose to observe and seek to understand what's going on behind the behavior and survival mechanisms, and we will provide new tools so they can learn they no longer have to survive, they are free to live now. Even if it takes us years, we must teach them how to relate to and communicate with others, and help them change the lens by which they see themselves so they know they were created by a loving God.

It is very common that their sense of belonging and worth were fractured, hence they tend to connect faster with hopelessness, anxiety and depression. So, it will be a very important part in the role of those safe adults in their lives to:

- reassure them they are loved and worthy, no matter how many mistakes they've made, or how hurt they are.
- remind them there are new opportunities and they can make it.
- tell them the truth firmly and always with love, loud doesn't make it effective.
- teach them their feelings do not have control over them but give us information on how to do or work on,
- show them the rules are to protect and not to harm,
- understand actions have natural consequences and we must allow them, if they get mad it won't last forever,
- model forgiveness and reconciliation are always available, modelarles que el perdón y la reconciliación siempre están disponibles,
- send the message they can choose to believe, grow and bloom.

And the adventure continues...

What does the Word say?

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us,

Hebrews 12:1

Says that:

- we are not alone,
- there are others around us that have lived similar things and have survived,
- there are things in our lives that we need to get rid of,
- we must go on, because God chose us for this particular race.

Take courage!

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