

Pondering Point

Since the beginning of time we have learned the best way to protect ourselves is to build walls around us. The higher and stronger the wall, the safer and more secure we feel. **The cruel irony is that in our efforts to keep people out, we are making it difficult for other people to come in.** *How do others get to know us when we keep ourselves locked away? With emailing and texting it's easy to build walls and not have to face others. We are so busy that we barely have time for the people in our lives. Are we seeing the effect these walls have on everything around us? When we hide behind walls, we are slowly training ourselves to be withdrawn, anti-social and distrustful. What has hurt us in the past that caused us to build these walls? What are we afraid of?*

It is human nature to seek out relationships with others. We crave understanding and kinship: however, many of us are waiting for someone strong or outgoing *to break their way through the walls we have constructed. What do we do when these people break our walls down? What if it's not invited?* We reserve the right to maintain boundaries that are healthy for us. **Sometimes walls salvage our relationship with others based on those boundaries.** When do these boundaries become *walls*? And do they go up too quickly? When building the walls we need to shelter and keep us safe, think about leaving room for a window or two – so you can see what lies on the outside and others may see what lies within.

Do you hide behind WALLS?

Do others know the real you?
Does your Iron Castle have a welcome mat?



Imagine... breaking down one of your walls and putting out the welcome mat.

— From Pondering to Practice —

Activity:

Group Discussion: Walls & Boundaries

- Does your family, community or organization have walls up that keep others out?
- Have a discussion around the difference between setting boundaries and building up walls.
- Use this information to better understand where others are coming from and where they may have walls or boundaries.

Try This – Have the members in your group create a visual about what can be helpful and dangerous about living behind these “walls.”

- *What may be blocked out?*

Reflection:

- *Do you put walls up?*
 - *Are they for everyone or only for certain people?*
- *What are your walls made of? Brick and concrete? Something more porous? Can you see out? Can others see in? Are you comfortable with that?*
- *Have you ever put a wall up for someone specific?*
 - *Why?*
 - *Were you ever able to let them in?*
 - *What did it take for you to break that wall down?*

Breaking the wall down requires removing one brick at a time. Don't expose too much of yourself too quickly and recoil back. Pace yourself and let in the light!

"Sometimes you put walls up not to keep people out, but to see who cares enough to break them down."

- Anonymous