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When we learn how to have good boundaries, we're giving ourselves the opportunity to love and nurture ourselves just like we so naturally love and nurture other people.

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Hello and welcome to Remember Why You're Here, a podcast for seekers and sensitives where you can relax, receive, reconnect yourself, and remember the most important thing of all: why you are here. And for this episode, I wanted to revisit a teaching I had created years ago called What Gardens Teach Empaths. My Garden has been one of the biggest teachers in my life and over the years I found that Gardens in particular have really specific messages for empaths. You're going to learn more about that particular message in just a moment, but spoiler alert, it's about boundaries. Boundaries, yes.

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And this is really up for me in particular right now in my life because we just did a really big thing in our garden. We have had so much deer pressure in our garden for the past handful of years. There's a sweetness to it because there's this mama doe who comes and has her babies right above our garden in the orchard, close to the top of the ridge, and it's just the cutest thing in the world. But it means that over time there is now this whole herd of deer that call our garden home. And over the past couple of years, it got to this place where we were actually not able to grow much at all because everything just got cropped down. And so finally this year we got serious with ourselves and we were like, if we want to garden, we are going to have to put in a fence.

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So using wire and cattle panel and rebar, we put in a fence around our entire garden, which is quite large, and it's a terraced garden, so it was a little complicated, but it has made a world of difference. And it was really interesting in particular where before we did it, I think we were worried that it would make the garden feel hemmed in, that it would kind of create this unpleasant experience inside the garden, especially because we're creating this fence out of wire and cattle panel. It's not like this beautifully finished wooden fence or anything like that. But what I found on the other side has been super fascinating.

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So we put up this fence around the garden — and it's got to be tall for deer, you need a tall fence — so it's a bit like a fortress, but actually being inside the garden feels better than before. I had no idea that that was going to be the case at all. It is actually amazing to me how now walking inside the garden, it's almost like my body just sighs. There's this sense of relief for having had erected this boundary around this place. And it makes me want to laugh because I've literally been talking about this for years with empaths and boundaries, and here is just such a specific example. So without further ado, let's get into this episode.

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In this audio episode, I'm also going to guide you through an exercise to help you decide what boundaries need to be in place in your life right now. So if you'd like, you can listen to it all the way through and then drop into the exercise or pause it at times if you need a little bit more space to complete each step. Okay, let's get into it. We are at the height of gardening season right now. My garden is lush and green and growing and a bit overwhelming, and I've always said that gardens are our greatest teachers. Gardens can teach humans so much things like patience, conscientiousness, humility. But the reality is most empaths don't need to learn those things. We already have it in spades. Luckily, the garden is also one of our greatest teachers when it comes to the things that empaths need to learn the most: boundaries.

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Empaths are naturally porous. It's what makes us such good communicators and caretakers, creatives and helpers. But it's also what ends up making our boundaries pretty wonky. For a lot of empaths and highly sensitive people, it's confusing and hard to know where you start and somebody else ends. And this can be a beautiful thing. For example, when we're communing with a creative project or we're communing in nature, these can be incredible experiences of union and melding of awarenesses. But when it comes to interacting with other humans, this can get challenging. If you're an empath, you probably struggle with boundaries and most likely have struggled with boundaries since you were little.

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Often empaths are told that boundaries aren't okay, that us setting boundaries isn't what somebody else wants of us. And this might've started happening for you when you were quite little. So because we've been trained to see boundaries as a bad thing, I think it's important that we redefine what boundaries actually are. Boundaries aren't actually about keeping other people out. It's about keeping you in. And this is something that I tell to my family when they struggle to understand why I can't go to the third event that weekend of the family reunion, for example. I say, it's not about you. It's not about keeping you out or that I don't want you in my life. It's about keeping me in. Because empaths are so naturally our essence, our life force will flow out of us if we don't have good boundaries. So it's less about telling people you don't want them in your life, although sometimes that's important and very needed, and more about understanding what you need to keep your energy and your essence within yourself, what your nervous system needs to be able to function and stay attuned to yourself.

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So often empaths will over-attune to other people, especially other people's desires and needs of them. And in doing so, lose sight of who they are, what they need, what they desire. I love this quote by Prentice Hemphill about boundaries. I think it captures it perfectly. And the quote is, "boundaries are the distance at which I can love you and me simultaneously." So when we learn how to have good boundaries, we're giving ourselves the opportunity to love and nurture ourselves just like we so naturally love and nurture other people. Now, learning boundaries is a lifelong journey if you're an empath, and, nature and specifically our gardens have so much to teach us at how to hold life-giving boundaries.

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If there's one thing I've learned over my years of gardening, it's this: a beautiful garden is created through boundaries. If we don't know how to set boundaries in a garden, it simply stops becoming a garden. When we create a garden, that is us creating with nature; we are co-creating with this world to bring more beauty into existence. Now, gardens in this way are metaphors for our own lives. Your own life is a garden, and you get to decide what grows in that garden. You get to decide how that garden is tended and what you want to flourish there.

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So whether or not you are a literal gardener or have a garden to interact with, this exercise from my book, *Mirrors in the Earth* will help you get super clear on your boundaries in your life with the help of a garden. So for this exercise, we're going to connect to the inner garden. And you can follow along with this exercise with me now and do it while you're listening or take notes and do it later. But to start with, I'd like you to list five prominent people in your life, people who tend to be a big part of your day-to-day life or take up a lot of energy or time in your life.

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Now, envision, in your inner eye, your life as a garden with you at the center of a garden. So you might be a tree at the center, a fountain, a stone, but really take this moment to visualize yourself at the center of this garden that is your life. Once you have that visual now, bring in each one of the five people one by one, and see where they land in the landscape and the way they're represented in the landscape. So when they walk into your landscape, they're not going to be in their human form. They might be a plant, a stone, a feature, something in the garden that just resonates or makes sense for you in terms of that being's relationship to you in the garden. So see yourself in the center of that garden and then start to bring in one person at a time and see how they end up being represented in your garden off the bat.

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Now, just this alone might give you really valuable information about what kind of energy these people bring into your life. What are they bringing into your garden? But we're going to take this now one step further. So once you get the visual for all five people, where they are in the garden, how they're represented, how that relationship is functioning between them and you as the center point in that garden. Now I want you to ask yourself, what do you need in order to flourish in this garden? What do you want this garden to look like? And one by one, visit each one of these people as they're represented in your garden and see what needs to change. So for example, if this person was represented by a plant, does this plant need to move perhaps closer to you at the center further away? Does this plant need to go away altogether or does it need to change? Does it need some pruning? Does it need some feeding?

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Each time you drop into each one of these people, you're going to be given valuable information about where you are at in your relationship to them and what kind of boundaries you and your garden need in order to flourish. So play around with this. Take your time with it. If you're a highly visual and tactile person, you might even want to make an actual map on a piece of paper and cut out some elements and

move them around. Notice in your body when you feel settled and expansive, that's when you know that these people are at the proper distance from you and in the right relationship. That's when you know that your boundaries are good and intact. Again, we want to feel this sense of yourself and your essence having ample space to be and flourish in this world.

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And if you struggle with this practice, try repeating this mantra: I am the gardener of my life, and the living world is fed by any boundary I make that supports my own light. And the truth is, the earth wants to support you in learning how to set boundaries. Because as an empath, boundaries are how you start to recognize and utilize the gifts you are meant to bring to this world. So often as empaths, when we don't have good boundaries, our vital energy, life force essence and gifts tend to leak out into places where they're not meant to go. You are here to give a gift to this world, and as an empath, I guarantee you that gift is pretty spectacular. And when you learn how to erect proper boundaries in your life, boundaries that help the garden of your life flourish, you can then give your gifts to this world.

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So in this way, the earth is very invested in helping you learn how to set these boundaries because your gifts are meant to come to help co-create greater healing on this planet. And if any of this information is lighting you up, then definitely get a copy of my book *Mirrors in the Earth*. There's a whole chapter about gardens and setting boundaries, and the book as a whole was specifically written for empaths and highly sensitive people to go on this journey of connecting with the earth to start to see themselves, to recognize who you are and to ultimately see and embody the gifts that you alone are here to bring to this world. Your gifts are a unique event in the history of the universe and the earth is deeply invested in helping you come home to yourself, come home to your belonging so you can bring those gifts to the forefront.

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And if you'd like to receive even more specific information about your gifts and how you're meant to bring them to the world, definitely head on over my website and take the earth healing archetypes quiz. We've had over a hundred thousand people take this quiz and the responses we've gotten have been amazing. So this quiz will show you which of the five earth healing archetypes you are meant to embody on this planet. These archetypes will give you valuable information about how the gifts are meant to flow through you and how your energy is meant to work on this planet. So once you take the quiz, then you can sign up for a totally free class that will take you deep into this archetype as well as access to all of the other archetypes.

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So now I would love to hear from you. Do you identify as a sensitive or an empath? Have boundaries been hard for you? And what is one thing that you learned from doing this exercise? I can say from my experience as an empath who has been working on her boundaries over the years, the more I empower myself and tell myself that it is okay to set a boundary, and not only is it okay, but it's something that this earth is asking me to do and is celebrating me every single time I set a life-giving boundary for

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myself. Because the truth is, when the garden of your life flourishes, the garden of the wider world can shine.

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It never gets old. All of that information never gets old for me. Clearly, I'm always revisiting this and reaching new levels of understanding around it. So if you did want to share with me what came up for you around this practice or around this topic, leave me a voice message. Head on over to asiasuler.com/remember, and you can leave me a voice message there.

(14:44):

And I just want to take a moment to send out a special thanks to anyone who has left a review for this podcast. I can't tell you how much it means to me. And we got a couple new reviews recently and I thought I would just feature them here for a moment as a way of saying thank you so much. So this is from Sheila:

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"Asia. Thank you for creating this beautiful podcast. It is a kindness that you're giving your time and energy to share profound messages with the world." Thank you. "My nerves feel soothed by your gentle voice, encouraging words, balanced perspective."

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I'm so grateful for that. Thank you for taking time out of your life to share that with me. So here's one more:

(15:25):

"I love all of Asia's offerings and this podcast is such a gift to all of us sensitive souls who are trying to understand our purpose in this world. I love how it helps me to remember my connection to this wild, beautiful planet."

(15:36):

That just feels like such a perfect one to end on for this particular episode. So as you step into the wild, beautiful garden of your life, may you remember that you deserve to cultivate what you truly desire in this lifetime, that you're worthy of that. And may whatever it is that you're growing, nurturing, protecting, and creating... may the motion of stepping into being the gardener of your life help you remember the most important thing of all: why you are here.