

# Triggers vs. Boundaries

How an Internal Trigger Gets Mistaken for an External Boundary

## Orientation

Recognizing the difference between a trigger and a boundary can be difficult.

The following breaks it down in a way that helps you not only define the difference... but clearly recognize it when it's happening.

As you read, keep this in mind:

A trigger is personal. A boundary is relational.

Understanding that difference changes everything that follows.

## The Core Distinction

Trigger	Boundary
Internal signal	External structure
Automatic reaction	Intentional action
Emotional	Behavioral
Can repeat endlessly	Creates a stopping point
Keeps you reacting	Moves you into position

Triggers are **signals**. Boundaries are **decisions backed by action**.

# Trigger or Boundary?

Triggers can be numerous. They shift. They're often undefined. They can come out of the blue — unexpectedly and without warning.

Because of that, triggers don't function like boundaries — they function like **conditions**.

- No clear line
- No stable rule
- No clear expectation
- No clear outcome

So instead of knowing what to do... people adjust, and they make note.

And when people are constantly adjusting, structure disappears.

A boundary protects for a reason. A condition keeps you on your toes — and guessing.

That's where confusion turns into control.

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## Not All Triggers Work the Same

Everyone has triggers.

A trigger is an internal signal — a response to something that feels off, important, or uncomfortable.

On its own, a trigger isn't the problem.

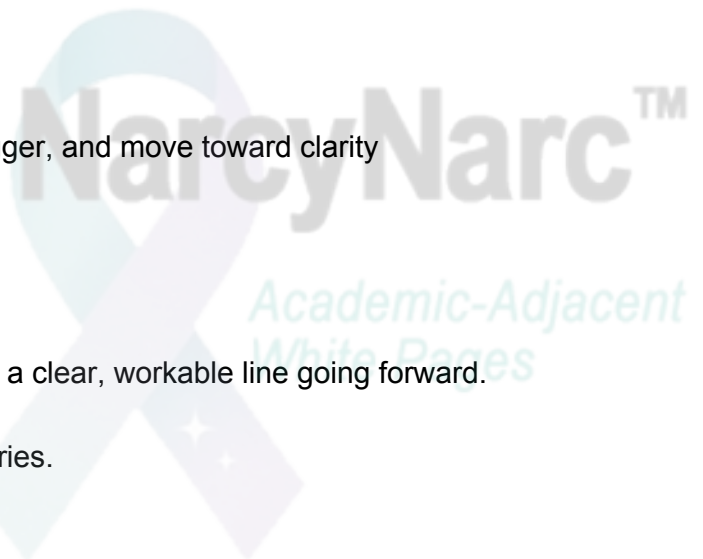
The difference is in what happens next.

- Some people notice — or even anticipate — a trigger, and move toward clarity
- Others react to the trigger... and stay in it

Most people use triggers to set boundaries.

They identify what caused the reaction... and create a clear, workable line going forward.

But in some dynamics, triggers don't lead to boundaries.



They multiply, shift, and reset.

At that point, you're no longer responding to a moment... you're responding to a **moving system**.

That's the difference between:

- Having triggers
- Being governed by them

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## “I Can't Help It” — The Control Loop

Narcy may describe her triggers as overwhelming, frustrating, or out of her control.

And in many cases... she means that.

The feeling is real.

But what happens next is where the pattern forms.

Instead of using the trigger to guide her own behavior, the trigger begins to shape the behavior of others.

The responsibility moves outward.

“I can't help how I feel” becomes:

- You should adjust
- You should explain more
- You should get it right

The trigger remains... but the environment starts to change around it.

That's how something that feels uncontrollable can still create control.

Not by changing herself... but by changing everyone around her.

## Narcy vs Healthy — What Happens After the Trigger?

Moment	Healthy Response	Narcy Reflex
Trigger felt	“Something feels off”	“Something’s wrong... and it needs to be fixed now”
Direction of response	Looks inward first	Looks outward immediately
Next move	Clarifies, reflects, slows down	Reacts, escalates, shifts tone
Use of boundaries	Sets a clear line	Creates changing conditions
Effect on others	Others understand where they stand	Others try to “get it right”
Stability	Consistent and predictable	Shifts depending on mood or moment
End result	Clarity	Confusion

She may not control the trigger... but she controls where the responsibility goes

### Creator’s Voice

A trigger without a boundary becomes endurance.

You didn’t fail because you couldn’t get it right.

You failed because there was no “right” to reach.

It’s not the trigger that traps you... it’s where the responsibility lands.

And once it lands on you... you’ll keep trying to get it right.

