

## The Four Ps Of Broken Sexual Boundaries

I was around 20 years old. We were both Christians. She was beautiful and I was smitten when I realized she liked me. Soon we were making plans for marriage.

We spent a lot of time together. Here is the progression of how things went bad; from innocent to immoral but that wasn't the intention. First hands touch, then holding hands, then hugs and somewhere in there comes that first electric kiss.

The first kiss is simple and short but as time goes on they linger. During this time hands begin to caress the body.

So the day came: we were alone at my house, kissing and caressing on the couch. Soon my hands went places that should be reserved for a married couple. We went to my bedroom and undressed.

That changed everything. That now defined our time together. We may have gotten together to go to church or do ministry but we always ended up in the same place we went that day. Sadly but thankfully our relationship blew apart after a few weeks of this.

This all happened more than 40 years ago. It took many years for me to come to grips with what happened. It seems like denial to say that I never had an intention for things to go where they did. What kind of deception came about that allowed it to happen and then to continue? At what point in the kissing, etc did sin begin? As some would say, "How far was too far?"

My point in all of this is to show that good intentions or lack of bad intentions were not enough to protect us. We started down a pathway that was like a boulder rolling down a hill. It's a path that is good in marriage but not outside of it.

After many years I came to understand how things ended up where they did. Here are the **Four Ps** that I think explain it: **Proximity, Privacy, Passion, and Progression**.

- **Proximity** is being physically present with someone.
- **Privacy** is being somewhere where you are alone and it's not likely that someone will see what you are doing.
- **Passion** usually results from physical contact: kissing, caressing, etc and the motor starts running and picking up speed.

- **Progression** is the God designed path that begins with touch and ends with intercourse.

Proximity alone is not bad. When you like someone you want to be near them. Privacy alone is not always bad. A phone call is private and the corner of a coffee shop can be private. When you put the two together things can change. If a relationship does not include physical touch then proximity and privacy would not be a problem but in most relationships there is touch.

Drs. Donald Joy and Desmond Morris defined twelve steps of bonding that when done right can lead to a stronger marriage. In them you can see the progression of relationship and touch.

1. Eye to Body. A glance reveals much about a person — sex, size, shape, age, personality, and status. The importance people place on these criteria determines whether or not they will be attracted to each other.

2. Eye to Eye. When the man and woman who are strangers to each other exchange glances, their most natural reaction is to look away, usually with embarrassment. If their eyes meet again, they may smile, which signals that they might like to become better acquainted.

3. Voice to Voice. Their initial conversations are trivial and include questions like "What is your name?" or "What do you do for a living?" During this long stage the two people learn much about each other's opinions, pastimes, activities, habits, hobbies, likes and dislikes. If they're compatible, they become friends.

4. Hand to Hand. The first instance of physical contact between the couple is usually a non-romantic occasion such as when the man helps the woman descend a high step or aids her across an obstacle. At this point either of the individuals can withdraw from the relationship without rejecting the other. However, if continued, hand-to-hand contact will eventually become an evidence of the couple's romantic attachment to each other.

5. Hand to Shoulder. This affectionate embrace is still noncommittal. It is a "buddy" type position in which the man and woman are side by side. They are more concerned with the world in front of them than they are with each

other. The hand-to-shoulder contact reveals a relationship that is more than a close friendship, but probably not real love.

6. Hand to Waist. Because this is something two people of the same sex would not ordinarily do, it is clearly romantic. They are close enough to be sharing secrets or intimate language with each other. Yet, as they walk side by side with hand to waist, they are still facing forward.

7. Face to Face. This level of contact involves gazing into one another's eyes, hugging and kissing. If none of the previous steps were skipped, the man and woman will have developed a special code from experience that enables them to engage in deep communication with very few words. At this point, sexual desire becomes an important factor in the relationship.

8. Hand to Head. This is an extension of the previous stage. The man and woman tend to cradle or stroke each other's head while kissing or talking. Rarely do individuals in our culture touch the head of another person unless they are either romantically involved or are family members. It is a designation of emotional closeness.

9-12. The Final Steps. The last four levels of involvement are distinctly sexual and private. They are:

(9) Hand to Body,

(10) Mouth to Breast,

(11) Touching Below the Waist, and

(12) Intercourse.

Obviously, the final acts of physical contact should be reserved for the marital relationship, since they are progressively sexual and intensely personal.

See Dr. Donald Joy's book *Bonding* for more on this. <https://amzn.to/2xamsNP>

So getting back to the Four Ps, Passion and Progression are closely linked. In a dating relationship, physical touch leads to passion and passion brings progression.

If you recall my story, you can see the Four Ps in action and this is where "boundaries" usually break down. Passion is a very hard thing to control. In marriage, you

can let passion flourish and progress to the end which is sexual intercourse. In dating, the common question is "How far can we go?" That presents a problem. It's like racing to the edge of a cliff and slamming on the brakes hoping not to go over the edge. The honest admission would be to acknowledge that we like the feeling of intimate stimulation and want to experience it at deeper levels. The problem of Progression shows up here. In the beginning, holding hands was amazing but after you have kissed passionately, just holding hands is not quite the same. When you are together in a private place you pick up where you left off and move a little closer to intercourse each time. Without intending to cross your "boundaries" you end up sailing over the edge.

While our intention may not be bad, I think we need to realize how prone to sin and deception we are. We want to believe that we can do certain passionate things in private and not end up in trouble. A big problem is that it feels good and a feeling of closeness can soon turn into sexual stimulation. That wonderful feeling is great in marriage but outside of that we are playing with fire.

**I think the only completely safe boundary is avoiding proximity and privacy together.** I'm not talking about the privacy of a phone call or the corner of the coffee shop but the kind where you are alone and it's not likely that someone will see what you are doing.

Time can also be a factor. If marriage is far in the future it would be wise to be careful of progressing with touch. It's also hard to go back after boundaries are crossed or passion is awakened.

This is written for those who want to avoid a sexual relationship before marriage. Maybe you don't understand why that is important. If so, I want to recommend a series that does a great job of explaining God's wonderful intent for sex:

### [Vision for Life - Sexuality Series](https://www.fellowshipdenver.org/sermons/series/vision-for-life:-sexuality)

<https://www.fellowshipdenver.org/sermons/series/vision-for-life:-sexuality>

You are welcome to pass this on. You can download a PDF of this document [here](#):

<http://Pfaustin.com/The Four Ps Of Broken Sexual Boundaries.pdf>

I would appreciate your comments.

[philip.faustin@gmail.com](mailto:philip.faustin@gmail.com)