APRIL 2017, McKinney, TX: If we wait long enough, difficult and traumatic experiences from our past will go away on their own…right? Eventually, we’ll forget about the people who have hurt us, the poor choices we’ve made, or the situations that changed the course of our life. Sadly, that isn’t necessarily true. Time doesn’t heal all wounds.

Instead, we hoard our hurts. We rehash our sorrows and wonder how they could have been prevented. Year after year we build up layer upon layer of anger, guilt, fear, confusion, pain, and sadness. Living on this gerbil-wheel of insanity keeps us from making brand-new memories and embracing the richer life we crave—and the life God wants us to live.

In Setting Boundaries with Negative Thoughts and Painful Memories, author Allison Bottke, approaches the subject with her trademark candor and bold transparency—completely willing to admit her own mental and emotional health struggles. Motivated by empathy and deep compassion, Bottke has wrestled with the demons of negative thoughts and painful memories from years of poor choices and violated physical and emotional boundaries. She knows firsthand what it’s like to hold on to feelings of anger, isolation, guilt, shame, and fear. More important, she knows what it’s like to learn how to let those feeling go. Her insightful perspective is that of someone who has personally struggled with boundary-related challenges.

Over the years, Allison has intimately shared with countless readers the poor choices and consequences that resulted from wrong decisions she began to make as a teenager—and how those choices spilled over into the following years.

“Strong physical and psychological boundaries protect us from harm,” says Bottke. “Sometimes we experience hurt and pain from our own choices, and sometimes from unfortunate circumstances. Although we may not always be able to prevent bad situations in our lives, we can change how we respond to them. With healthy emotional and psychological boundaries, we can experience God’s unconditional love and acceptance, and find the courage, confidence, and hope that will transform our years ahead.”

Now is the time for setting healthy boundaries with the past. Allison Bottke will help you…

- tame the triggers that stir painful memories by replacing negative thoughts with biblical hope
- identify lingering communication issues so you can release them and grow in your relationships
- take six simple S.A.N.I.T.Y. steps to find peace in the midst of emotional chaos

Setting Boundaries with Negative Thoughts and Painful Memories is the 7th book in the award-winning series from Harvest House Publishers that has sold over 250,000 copies worldwide.

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Setting Boundaries with Negative Thoughts and Painful Memories, by Allison Bottke © 2017
(Revised: 4/25/17) Page 1 of 6
The 6-Steps to S.A.N.I.T.Y.

In the latest book in her popular award winning Setting Boundaries® series, Bottke once again introduces readers to the legendary Six Steps to SANITY to help them dig out from under the suffocating hoard of hurts that keeps them in bondage.

• **S – Stop Hoarding Your Hurts:** Stop ignoring the issues that fuel your negative thoughts and painful memories. Stop, step back, be still, and pray. Your ability to focus and make smart choices will increase dramatically when you learn to respond rationally instead of emotionally to challenging situations or choices.

• **A – Assemble Supportive People:** It is vital to have supportive, trusting people in your life who can lend advice and encouragement by listening, praying, and believing in you.

• **N – Nip Excuses in the Bud:** Excuses are often justifications of negative behavior. They can often nurse your emotional pain and keep you in bondage. Resist accepting excuses from yourself or others.

• **I – Implement a Plan of Action:** We often get caught up in our own thoughts, emotions, and choices. When you know where you are at and where you are headed, you can make smart choices to get there.

• **T – Trust the Voice of the Spirit:** God has a good plan for your life, but it can take time to learn how to follow Him. When you trust God and you grow in your relationship with Him, He can lead and guide you to make healthy choices and good decisions.

• **Y – Yield Everything to God:** You will experience freedom when you let go and let God help you carry the burdens. True peace and sanity is possible, when you release unrealistic expectations, negative emotions, and lies of the enemy.

Additional information is available at www.AllisonBottke.com and a private “Members Only” SANITY Support Group has been developed on Facebook where Allison personally responds to questions, leads weekly live sessions and interacts in real time with members. Membership is limited. Visit www.AllisonBottke.com for more details.

Product Details: Paperback, 206 pages. Publisher: Harvest House © April 2017
Size: 5 1/2 x 8 1/2 ISBN: 978-0-7369-6241-4

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Suggested Interview Questions for Allison Bottke, author of Setting Boundaries with Negative Thoughts and Painful Memories

1. You’ve written six books in the successful Setting Boundaries® series before this one, what made you decide on this topic?

2. What are the four types of boundaries and why is it that so many of us have difficulty understanding the role they play in life? (page 131-132)

3. You share how you first experienced violated boundaries as a child, and then again in an abusive teenage marriage. How did those experiences compound unhealthy choices later in your life? (xx & 186)

4. How are negative thinkers made? You say that many variables impact how and why we think (or don’t think) the way we do. What are some of those variables? (page 56-57)

5. In the chapter titled; Childhood Chaos – Adult Confusion you say it’s important for us to talk about and process traumatic childhood experiences. How can something that happened years ago still affect us now? Shouldn’t we just “get over it” and move on? (page 121 & 140)

6. The things we experience in life affect all of us on an emotional, psychological, and biological level—yet they affect all of us differently. Why is it that some people move on and some don’t? Why do some of us get stuck? (page 82)

7. You’re very candid about your own struggles with past trauma, emotional health, and mental illness. How prevalent are these issues in society today? Particularly in the church?

8. What does the role of identity and faith play in setting healthy boundaries in our thought life? (page 160, 167, 171)

9. Few of us escape life without being hurt or scarred by a painful experience. Where does healing begin? (page 55 & 169)

10. What is the Secret Power of S.A.N.I.T.Y.?

11. How can our listeners take part in a SANITY Support Group? (They can participate in a private “Members Only” online SANITY Support Group on Facebook where Allison personally responds to questions, leads weekly live sessions and interacts in real time with members. Membership is limited. Go to AllisonBottke.com/membersonly.)

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Sadly, bad stuff happens to good people. Sometimes, no matter how hard we try to put it behind us, we are forever changed by the experience. And sometimes it takes us years to make the connection that the mess we’re in now has a whole lot to do with the misery we were in back then (page 29).

Finding hope, healing, and sanity in life isn’t about changing other people; it’s about changing how we respond to other people. Finding sanity and health is about changing ourselves. Learning to set healthy boundaries in our thought life, for instance, is about facing that inner critic and changing how we respond to our own emotions and memories (page 29).

The healing of a heart broken by traumatic events, violated boundaries, and relationship abuse can take a long time. I know this all too well. I also know that when we apply the “Y” Step in SANITY and Yield ourselves to God, He heals and restores (page 43). At some point, every Christian who truly wants to walk in God’s will is going to have to release his or her problems to God and learn to trust Him for whatever happens (page 44).

SANITY is what we gain when we shift our perspective, when we stop focusing on the painful situations and challenging circumstances of life and instead begin to focus on changing our own heart attitudes and the behaviors those attitudes prompt. SANITY comes when we make the heartfelt commitment to stop allowing our dysfunctional thoughts to destroy our peace of mind. SANITY comes when we begin to understand how much God loves us, that He has a plan and purpose for us, and that He wants to meet our every need in healthy, satisfying ways like nothing and no one else can (page 24).

Seeing life primarily through a filter of negativity is incredibly unhealthy, as is seeing it through a filter of positivity even when your heart is breaking. It’s all about finding balance—that elusive middle ground we find so hard to reach. But can I let you in on a secret? When we see life through a filter of faith, we can learn to process the good and bad—the positive and negative—in ways that nourish our body, mind, heart, and spirit. When we look at life’s circumstances through a filter of faith, God can shine a light of revelation into the dark corners of our memory and enable us to be authentically joyful (page 55).

Here’s the bottom line: None of us can fulfill God’s purpose for our life if we aren’t serious in our efforts to set healthy boundaries—especially in our thought life. Also, we must not ignore the call to guard our hearts. Obeying this commandment—establishing this boundary—is critical to our mental, emotional, psychological, and even physical health. God doesn’t want you to live in bondage to the pain, expectations, worry, fear, depression, or anxiety that comes when we have weak emotional boundaries. Pray for God to do a miracle in your life concerning the thoughts that threaten your peace and rob you of joy. And realize that while the awful things may never get smaller, your life can get bigger and better able to support them (196-197).

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Meet Allison Bottke

**Allison Bottke** is the award-winning author of the acclaimed *Setting Boundaries®* series from Harvest House Publishers, which includes *Setting Boundaries with Your Adult Children, Setting Boundaries with Your Aging Parents, Setting Boundaries with Difficult People, Setting Boundaries with Food, Setting Boundaries for Women,* and the Young Women’s Guide to *Setting Boundaries*. She is the founder of the SANITY Support Group, a Six-Step program based on the bestselling *Setting Boundaries®* series (more than 250,000 sold).

Bottke has written or edited more than 30+ nonfiction and fiction books, and is the founder and general editor of more than a dozen volumes in the popular *God Allows U-Turns®* anthology. She is a frequent guest on national radio and TV programs including *Focus on the Family, The 700 Club, Daystar Network, Praise the Lord, The Dr. Laura Show* and others.

Unwilling to hide behind pretense, Allison’s compelling story is threaded throughout many of her narrative non-fiction books—particularly in the *Setting Boundaries®* series. Her willingness to share her story of intense trial and tribulation has inspired countless readers to look at life, choices, and boundaries—in an entirely new way.

Once entrenched in New Age spirituality, Bottke grew up in a single-parent household, struggled with undiagnosed learning disabilities, and endured a violent first marriage at the age of 15 that ended in divorce and the birth of her only child at age sixteen. Returning to school to get her GED and vowing to be a responsible and loving parent, she grew up quickly. Moving from Cleveland, Ohio to southern California, life in the fast lane included recreational drugs, alcohol, a series of dead-end relationships, and an increasingly rebellious son. Despite these problems, she became one of the nation’s first plus-sized models with the prestigious Wilhelmina Agency, appearing in full-page ads for Levi Strauss, Gloria Vanderbilt, Pendleton Knitwear and many others.

In her mid-thirties, Bottke came to know Jesus as her Savior after taking a walk one night to clear her mind from a series of escalating problems including her teenage son’s arrest and another broken engagement. Inexplicably led into a Wednesday evening church service, she found herself sitting alone in the balcony, broken hearted and crying. “It was as though the pastor was speaking directly to me that night, as he talked about feeling lost, being broken, and having an empty space in our hearts that only God could fill. I learned when we’ve finally had enough—God is enough.”
Recognizing that she had been trying to fill that empty space with everything but God, Bottke knew immediately that something miraculous was happening as she surrendered her life to the Lord. “Life didn’t suddenly become any easier for me or my son, but for the first time in 35-years I realized I wasn’t alone, that I had a Navigator who could give me much needed direction, and who loved me no matter what—and that brought me hope, healing, and amazing peace.”

Years later, the message of setting healthy boundaries and finding sanity was birthed almost as dramatically. Her adult son had been arrested again, but this time with far more serious charges and consequences. “When I finally said enough is enough and stopped making my son and all of his drama, chaos and crisis the priority in my life, and shifted the focus of my own choices to seriously developing my relationship with Jesus Christ, my life began to change. When I began to realize the insanity of how I had been living was a direct result of the poor choices I was making combined with my unhealthy boundaries, God began revealing the steps I needed to take to find hope, healing and SANITY.”

Today, the Six Steps to SANITY have spread throughout the world in seven different Setting Boundaries ® books, selling over 250,000 copies. “I feel blessed, honored and humbled that God has allowed me to share this message of SANITY in so many ways, with so many people.”

The long-awaited follow-up to the first book in the series, Setting Boundaries with Your Adult Child, will release in 2018. How to Connect with Your Troubled Adult Child will focus on the challenging issues of mental and emotional illness.

Allison lives in a suburb of the DFW area. AllisonBottke.com

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(Revised: 4/25/17) Page 6 of 6