

## **Keep it Between the Lines**

I think this saying refers to the lines on a road, but it could mean keep it inside the ballpark. Don't throw it out of bounds. Don't go overboard. Don't exceed the speed limit. Your typing should be within the margins. Don't exercise to excess. Moderation in all things.

The concept of keeping it between the lines... what does it mean? What we can learn from this idea is that there are parameters in nearly all behaviors, and that to under-utilize or over-utilize a behavior or a defense mechanism is outside the norm.

Daily we are reminded to be reasonable in our thinking and in our behaviors. In court and in the law, we continually hear and read about the 'reasonable man' (sic) test. We trust our courts and our juries to this reasonable person test, and we debate this reasonableness standard in much of our training.

In our professions, we hear about "management by exception," and "manage the extremes to the center." Many of our para-military management concepts and styles are based upon a "reasonable" degree of conformity to the expectations of our leaders. Here comes that word "reasonable" again.

The big question I often ask is how does one acquire an understanding of reasonable.

I've met many people that I didn't feel were reasonable and they may well have felt the

same about me. I know how we come to absorb the concept of staying within the lines or within parameters. When we go outside parameters as a child, a young athlete, a young student, etc., we often get jerked back and reminded to play according to the rules and stay within the lines. I guess this is how we learn about reasonableness. We learn it through life experience and by example.

Wouldn't it be great if everyone were reasonable? But whose definition of reasonable should we use?