



In June, while Cec was in Iowa for the Cedar Falls Christian Writers Workshop, he officiated the marriage of Mary Kenyon's son and daughter-in-law. Congratulations to Dan and Lydia!



Carolyn Tomlin met Cec in July at a book signing in Lexington, Tennessee. She purchased a copy of the [10th Anniversary Edition of 90 Minutes in Heaven](#).

Boundaries?

A couple of decades ago when I first heard the expression *setting boundaries*, I didn't think much about the two words. But twelve years ago I faced the need to do just that.

Without trying to blame parents or environment, I'll say I grew up without guidelines on where to erect fences to keep out prying and intrusive people. In our family, when anyone wanted a favor, we granted it. If someone asked a question—no matter how personal—we answered. I don't recall any of us saying, "That's none of your business" (or even a softer expression).

Because I didn't know how to establish limits, people sometimes took advantage of me. For example, almost every week a few individuals phoned and took up immense amounts of my time. Or they asked me to do things for them I preferred not to do, but I did anyway.

Twelve years ago I promised myself, "I'll stop them from taking up all that time." It still took me awhile to figure out my strategy. For me, it was mostly being able to say no to things I didn't want to do. When someone asked, "Do you have a minute?" (and really meant, "Do you have an hour?") I learned to say, "I have a few minutes." After perhaps ten minutes, I can now say, "I have to hang up." Most of the time it works, although a few of those callers want to keep talking. After watching the clock for two more minutes, I say, "I really have to hang up now." And I cut them off. I don't like doing that, but they've overstepped my private property line.

I want to tell you the event that made me realize the need to set firm boundaries. I met "Emma" when I taught classes at a writers conference. I skimmed a few paragraphs of what she had written and encouraged her to continue. A week later, she emailed me, "I've attached my manuscript. Critique it and tear it up as much as you need."

She didn't ask permission to send me material. She didn't ask if I would edit it. She assumed I'd edit her work—all 293 pages.

I decided to wait a few days before I answered. Three days later, Emma

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it to a publisher at the

end of the month.



On July 27, day eight of his fifteen-day trip, Cec preached and did a Q&A session at the College Parkway Baptist Church in the Annapolis area. Here he is with Brenda Ellis and her grandson, Dylan.



Leslie Payne arranged for Cec to preach at College Parkway Baptist Church on July 27. Here they are together. We're grateful for the encouraging feedback we've received.



Cec enjoys preaching and teaching at churches while he's traveling. If you live in the Murfreesboro/Nashville area and know of a church that might like to give him the opportunity on September 21, please [contact Twila](#) for more information.

That actually happened (and it's not a-once-in-a-lifetime event). I didn't know if I should rebuke her lack of manners, instruct her on professional conduct, or ignore both her emails. Finally I wrote back, "I'm too busy." That was the wrong answer.

She knew I was busy, but "Surely someone had helped you in your early days." After a few more sentences, she concluded, "If you'll work on the first three chapters that will be enough for now." (For now? I assume she still expected me to edit the entire book.)

I didn't reply and ignored two emails that followed. That was cowardly of me, but I didn't want more uninvited conversation. At first, I felt bad—really bad—about my response. But then, I thought: I have erected a boundary. I blocked her from intruding. I hadn't done it well, but it was a beginning.

I'm getting better at it. I've learned not to explain because some individuals respond by knocking down each argument. I wish I had learned that strategy twenty years ago. But the good news is that I can do it now.

It also occurs to me that if I take care of my own property and push away squatters, maybe I'll teach them to stay within their own boundaries.

Maybe.

I can't stop others from demanding;
I can stop myself from giving in by
erecting boundaries.

Personal News

- I'm out of the office for 15 days (the longest except when I've traveled overseas) and conclude with teaching and keynoting at the Philadelphia Christian Writers Conference and preaching at a church on August 3.
- August 9, I'll speak Sunday morning at the First Assembly of God Church in Sevierville, TN, and that evening at Cookeville Life Church, Cookeville, TN, where my good friend Bobby Davis is pastor. I'll lead a two-hour seminar called Healing4You.
- I'll stay a few days with Bobby to start work on writing a book with him.
- On August 21, I rejoin TheWritersView as a panelist. This is the best resource and relationship-building loop for writers that I know. TheWritersView@Yahooogroups.com



[Cec's website](#)

[Cec's blog for writers](#)

[Cec's blog for male survivors of sexual abuse](#)

[Cec's Twitter](#)

[Facebook: Cecil Murphey Author/Speaker](#)

[Facebook: Cec and Me, with Cecil Murphey and Twila Belk](#)

[Facebook: Twila Belk, The Gotta Tell Somebody Gal](#)

[Twila's website](#)

[Twila's email](#)



The Twila Zone--Words from My Assistant, Twila Belk

Do you live in the Murfreesboro or Nashville area? In September, Cec will teach at the [Writing for the Soul Conference](#) and participate in the Christian Product Expo in Murfreesboro. He'd enjoy the opportunity to preach somewhere on Sunday, September 21. Would your church be interested in inviting him? (Small churches are okay.) [Contact me](#) for more information.

We've learned that Cec's screenplay adaptation for [The Promises of Ophelia Bennett](#) took third place in the 2014 Gideon Media Arts Conference & Film Festival Screenplay Contest. We're excited to report that there's interest for a possible movie.

Cec shares an important lesson he learned in his article "Remembering and Forgetting" in the [July issue of Book Fun Magazine](#). It starts on page 15. If you'd like to know more about me and my relationship with Cec, you might enjoy Cynthia Ruchti's interview with me that starts on page 21. The title? "Welcome to the Twila Zone!" The August issue will feature Cec on the cover.



Gotta Tell Somebody, Inc. | 5672 Appleton Road | Bettendorf, IA 52722

