

Notes and Quotes - Soul Care in Community

Perhaps our difficulty in sensing God's presence is related to our expecting Him to always come to us in power. If so, that would make it hard for us to discern His presence when He appears in weakness, brokenness, poverty, and stillness

David Brenner

The irony of masks is that although we wear them to make other people think well of us, they are drawn to us only when we take them off." - John Ortberg

It is our weakness, not our competence, that moves others; our suffering, not our blessings, that breaks down the barriers of fear and shame that keep us apart; our admitted failures, not our paraded successes, that bind us together in hope.

Larry Crabb

Nobody escapes being wounded. **We all are wounded people**, whether physically, emotionally, mentally, or spiritually. The main question is not "How can we hide our wounds?" so we don't have to be embarrassed, but "**How can we put our woundedness in the service of others?**" When our wounds cease to be a source of shame, and become a source of healing, we have become wounded healers. Jesus is God's wounded healer: **through his wounds we are healed**. Jesus' suffering and death brought joy and life. His humiliation brought glory; his rejection brought a community of love. As followers of Jesus, we can also allow our wounds to bring healing to others. - Henri Nouwen

Where a man's wound is, that is where his genius will be. - Robert Bly

Accepting the reality of our broken, flawed lives is the beginning of spirituality not because the spiritual life will remove our flaws but because we let go of seeking perfection and, instead seek God, the one who is present in the tangledness of our lives. Spirituality is not about being fixed; it is about God's being present in the mess of our unfixedness. - Mike Yaconelli.

The soul speaks its truth only under quiet, inviting and trustworthy conditions.

Parker Palmer

Ministry begins when Christians create a context in which people can say, "My name is John, and I'm an alcoholic." "My name is Steve, and my marriage is falling apart." "My name is Carol, and I just lost my job." "My name is Alice, and I'm lonely." We take off our masks so that others will take off theirs. When this happens, we open the door to the giving and receiving of grace and truth. - James Emery White

Journey Telling

Tell your life journey – (25-35 minutes)

- Not just your conversion experience

Include in your journey – the joys and the mishaps, and especially the *place of pain* on that journey and how God has used / is using it to shape you. (E.g. your character, marriage, career choices, etc.)

Try a **Symbol Time Line** (if it helps)

Use it as a Spiritual Discipline - As people in the group hear the journey, they should try to listen beneath the words

- What God is saying through this person's story?
- What do I relate to? Why?
- How am I challenged or inspired by what I hear?
- What turns me off? Why does it turn me off?
- Do I find myself judging this person? Why?
- How can I speak the words of Christ into this person considering where they are at and where they have come from?
- How does knowing all this change the way I look at / embrace this person?

Feedback Time – 20-30 minutes

- Speak words of encouragement; Probe deeper with compassion; Affirm, Clarify, Share, Inspire
- Sample responses:
 - o "You mentioned some painful experiences but you seemed to play them down. Do you have any emotions still associated with these events?"
 - o "You mentioned that you felt abandoned by God at one point. Do those feelings still pop up? Do you want to explore that a little more with us?"
 - o How does your past pain affect your walk with Christ now?
 - o "What were the dreams you lost along the way?"
- Reflect on your own life – e.g. "When you talked about...it hit me because..."

Close your time in praying for the person

- If you hear something that needs healing - pray a healing prayer

Caveats

- Don't try to FIX anyone! Just listen, probe, speak grace and truth
- Everyone *must* covenant to privacy
- Watch out for "journey remorse." Go back the next day or two and encourage the one who shared their journey



TOOLS FOR AUTHENTIC COMMUNITY *



TOOL # 1: FEEDBACK



A) Definitions:

- From the *Dictionary*: Return of information about a product, etc., to it's supplier.
- For *Community*: Return of information (ie, thought/feeling/insight) to the person who just shared some information.

B) Thoughts on Feedback

- Use it to:
 - Encourage: "I like what you just said."
 - Affirm: "That took a lot of courage. Thanks for sharing that."
 - Clarify: "Do you mean that...?"
 - Share: "That makes me realize I've..."
 - Inspire: "I'm proud of you for sharing that."
 - Notice subtleties: "I notice your eyes are welling up with tears...do you want to share anything?"
- Ask for it when you need it
 - It can prevent unnecessary worry, doubt, fear, gossip, isolation, etc.
 - It allows the *opportunity* for clarification, apologies, deeper relationships, etc.
- Model it
 - If you are a leader, it is your responsibility to let the others hear what it sounds like, know first hand how it feels to give feedback, to constantly give permission to give and receive it.
- Silence
 - Consider the effect it can have upon the community
 - Think about this quote: "Silence is argument carried on by other means."