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## HEALTHY DISCIPLESHIP

### Emotionally Healthy Relationships Course Scripts

#### **Session 1: Take Your Community Temperature Reading**

##### **PETE**

I want to welcome you to EH Relationships. This is Part 2 of a larger discipleship Course we call Emotionally Healthy Discipleship.

##### **GERI**

We are so very glad you are here and pray that the next 8 weeks will be a powerful, transformative experience for you – one that will change your relationship with God, with yourself, and (of course) with others.

##### **PETE**

This unique Course has helped countless people from around the world. And we trust it will do the same for you.

In these 8 Sessions, you will learn practical handles, i.e. tools or skills to actually live out Scripture's command to love like Jesus. That is what happened to the two of us over 28 years ago and it opened a door that changed our lives... forever.

Geri and I became committed followers of Christ while we were college students. We grasped what it meant that Christ died for us personally and was alive today. We learned about spiritual disciplines. We actively served Jesus. I even went to seminary.

We immersed ourselves in the best of Christian training and discipleship for years. And we eventually started a church in Queens, New York City.

But something was desperately wrong.

We realized-- people were supposedly growing in love for God, but that wasn't translating into greater love for people. We couldn't figure out why people with apparent great zeal for Scripture and God were defensive, judgmental, critical, unapproachable, and unsafe to be around. That included us! (and I was the pastor!)

We finally acknowledged that the quality of love inside the church was not really that different from that outside the church. We were recycling the same problems year after year--pretending things were fine when they weren't

We kept hitting a Wall.

- We didn't know what to do with our anger.
- We were afraid of being honest in our relationships.
- We didn't know what to do with sadness and disappointments; in fact, we felt guilty at even having those feelings
- When we were hurt or disagreed with someone, we didn't know how to talk about it.
- We avoided conflicts
- We acted nice on the outside when we were upset on the inside.
- We said "Yes" when we really wanted to say "No."
- We made assumptions about people without checking them out.

We could go on and on.....

Geri and I loved one another. We just didn't know how to do it well or maturely. Our discipleship had not equipped us for that. (Of course, this applies to singles as well. You may want meaningful relationships, but you're not exactly sure how to love others maturely either). That's when we ended up in a counselor's office and learned a simple skill to help us listen/connect to one another (actually it was a simplified version of Incarnational Listening that you'll learn in Session 5).

That one simple skill opened a door for us to actually *SEE* one another, *HEAR* one another, and *FEEL* one another – let me say it more clearly – *love one another* in a way we had not in our previous 8 years of marriage!

I often call it a 2<sup>nd</sup> conversion because it launched us on a journey we call today "Emotionally Healthy Discipleship." We came to understand that **PP Emotional Health and Spiritual Maturity are Inseparable: It is not possible to be spiritually mature and emotionally immature.**

A person may be, chronologically 35, 55, or 75 years old but remain an emotional infant or child in their relationships.

Jesus taught us that there are 2 great commandments that summarize the whole of Scripture. The first is to **PP** "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind...And the second is like it, "Love your neighbor as yourself." This was one major reason Jesus was in constant conflict with the religious leaders of his day. They were on fire for God, but were terrible at loving people. Jesus recognized that loving others is the essence of true spirituality. (slow) In fact, for Jesus, our love for God is measured by the degree to which we love others.

The apostle Paul's makes the same point in 1 Cor. 13 where he writes: **PP** "If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love... or if have all faith so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I AM NOTHING." He makes it very clear that Bible knowledge or gifts don't speak to our maturity. Rather love is the **ONLY** true measure of our maturity in Christ. And we can't love others well while remaining emotionally immature.

So while a commitment to a personal relationship with Jesus and to spiritual practices is important, that does not automatically translate into making us love like Jesus. That requires learning new **SKILLS** in **HOW** to do relationships in the new family of Jesus.

## GERI

The skills you will learn in this Emotionally Healthy Relationships Course unlocked for us the application of Scripture into everyday life. Every Christian needs practical skills incorporated into their discipleship to grow out of emotional infancy into emotional adulthood. It is easy to grow physically into a chronological adult. It is quite another to grow into an emotional adult

We learn many skills to be competent at school and in our careers. Many of us spend thousands of dollars, and years of our lives, preparing for our life work or careers. But few of us learn the relationship skills necessary to grow into an emotionally and spiritually mature adult. We somehow think it will come naturally and without training. These emotionally healthy relationship skills DO NOT come naturally. You weren't born with them. You need to learn them.

Research has shown that people's ability to have face-to-face conversations with eye contact, and to connect emotionally has decreased dramatically over the last 15-20 years. Technology like smartphones and social media has changed the world.

All of this makes it MORE imperative to intentionally incorporate into your discipleship the kinds of skills you will learn in this course.

So over the next 8 sessions we will equip you in 8 different skills.

They are not hard to understand, but they have to be personally experienced and practiced if they are going to take root in our lives.

It's similar to riding a bike. I can read to you from a book about how to ride a bike. I can show you a video on how to ride a bike. I can get on a bike and demonstrate. But you still will not know how to ride a bike. You have to get on the bike yourself to actually learn how to ride a bike.

In the same way you have to do the skills to learn them. Initially, you may feel uncomfortable as you practice them, but as you will see, they will become a more natural part of you as time goes on.

## PETE

When we come to faith in Jesus and become Christians, we are birthed into the new family of Jesus. At that point the rest of our lives is about discipleship - following Jesus, learning how to love God, ourselves, and others. This Course was developed over a 21 year period where we tried to break this down practically - How do we love others in the way Jesus commanded. Over that time, we developed 8 core skills. They form the framework of this Pt. 2 in our Discipleship Course. will notice them listed in your workbook. Notice how they build on one another. They are: **PP** (1 by 1 Pyramid of Skills)

- The Community Temperature Reading
- Stop Mind Reading
- Clarify Expectations
- Genogram Your Family

- Explore the Iceberg
- Incarnational Listening
- Climb The Ladder of Integrity and
- Clean Fighting

Most of us simply want to jump to Clean Fighting, but as you can see in this graphic, this is the highest-level skill and builds upon the others.

We will close the Course, then, with a final, very important session on developing a plan to implement these 8 skills into ALL your relationships. Over the years, we have seen people learn and use the Skills from this Course to radically change their families, friendships, dating relationships, marriages. People like you have brought them into workplace, classrooms and even sports teams! And that is our prayer for you as well.

**PP** The goal of this Course is to move you from brokenness to greater wholeness in your life and relationships.

God made you and me for this kind of connection to others, for relationships.

Now let's begin now with the first skill called The Community Temperature Reading (or CTR as we call it for short).

## **GERI**

It's called Community Temperature Reading (CTR) because it is meant for 2 or more people and it's about improving the temperature in relationships.

There are 3 things I want you to remember.

FIRST, the purpose is to enable you to express your God-given power by using your voice, which many of us are not accustomed to doing. And we will also allow others to express themselves. That right there is the foundation for building healthy relationships with others.

Secondly, this skill is not only foundational to building healthy relationships it is also the *foundational* building block for the rest of the skills that will follow. *1.* Sometimes, we say "This is the skill with training wheels- the beginner skill." It involves brief and light sharing. Nothing heavy.

Thirdly, it involves sharing around 5 important categories vital to building healthy relationships.

Let's begin with the first category:

### **1. PP APPRECIATIONS**

The problem with appreciations is that we may think them "in our heads" about others, or we only say them when someone has gone above and beyond the call of duty. In fact, some families and cultures never express appreciations to their children fearing it will go to their heads and make them arrogant. That's simply not true.

Appreciations are important to the life of any community or relationship because they keep us from taking one another for granted. They have an amazing, positive effect on people and relationships. The truth is, and social science confirms this, God wired our brains to give and receive appreciations. It's a form of giving thanks. Here are some examples.

e.g. To your friend you might say, I appreciated you waiting for me last night when I was running late.

e.g. Or to a roommate, "I appreciate you putting the garbage out twice a week."

e.g. Or to a co-worker, "I appreciated you arriving early and getting the coffee ready before our meeting."

## 2. **PP** The second category is PUZZLES

Many times when someone doesn't do something that we were expecting, we are tempted to jump to conclusions and make judgments about it. For example, if you email, text or call someone and they don't get back to you, what is the story you tell yourself? ("they're mad at me, they're insensitive, or I'm not important to them", pause). It's human nature to jump to negative interpretation of someone else's behavior, but the vast majority of times we are wrong. There can be numerous reasons why someone doesn't return an email: didn't get it, forgot about it, didn't know you expected a response, just to name a few. I can't emphasize HOW MUCH these negative interpretations hurt relationships and communities. Our negative conclusions and judgments impact how we relate to that person. You will probably start avoiding the person who didn't respond to your email or resent them.

Instead of being upset but not saying anything at all or angrily saying, "Why didn't you return my phone call," - You can say, "I'm puzzled as to why you didn't call me back."

"I'm puzzled as to why you left your dirty dishes in the sink last night."

OR to a friend who's 20 min late for a lunch date, instead of remaining silent and annoyed you say, "I'm puzzled why you are 20 minutes late."

Here are some I've used: I'm puzzled why you were unusually quiet in small group last night. I'm puzzled why I wasn't asked to be part of that outreach project.

Since it is easy for us to jump to negative interpretation, and as Christians we can be very judgmental, puzzle is a loving word. I'm not kidding when I say it cut my sinning in half! I PROMISE you, the word puzzle can change your life.

## 3. **PP** The third category is COMPLAINTS WITH POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

All relationships are going to have complaints, or things they don't like. This is normal, and part of being human beings created with different likes and dislikes. There are two challenges with complaints. First, some of us grew up with an unwritten rule, "If you don't have anything nice to say, don't say anything at all." So we are afraid to voice anything negative. Secondly, for others of us, it is easy to complain and not take any responsibility for a possible solution. We complain but we don't say what we want instead.

The purpose of complaints with possible solutions is to help you be aware of, and take responsibility for the small irritations and annoyances that arise every day. When those irritations

are unspoken, they can become a painful wound. When spoken poorly, they become destructive to relationships. So we're going to teach you a simple format to do it differently, using the phrases "I notice....and I prefer..."

For example:

"I notice you leave the lights on in our apt when you leave, and I prefer you turn them off."

I notice our meetings start late and I prefer we start at the agreed-upon time.

I notice you leave your coffee cups in the car and I prefer you take them with you when you leave the car."

These complaints are meant to be light, in other words you know that the person can easily make the adjustments. If it's not something easily resolved, and needs negotiation, then that's another skill called Clean Fight that you'll learn in Session 7.

**PETE:**

#### **4. PP The fourth category is NEW INFORMATION**

Relationships can only grow when people know what is happening in each other's lives – the trivial as well as the important. This can take many forms –events, appointments, new decisions. It is a way of staying current with each other. For example:

"Our professor moved our exam so I can go to the movies this week."

"I'm exploring a different job within my company"

"John is sick, and he won't be able to make the meeting."

#### **5. PP The fifth category is Hopes and Wishes**

God created each of us to have hopes and wishes - both big and small. They offer windows into our unique souls, revealing significant parts of who we are. Our relationships deepen when we share our hopes and when we listen to the dreams of others. The Community Temperature Reading (CTR) provides a space for this to happen.

For example:

-I hope we can continue our rhythm of getting to one Nat'l Park a year..

-I hope you will pursue taking piano lessons again in the near future.

-I hope to sleep in and get some extra rest this weekend.

**GERI**

Transition: Now we are going to show you an example of what this looks like between a mother and her adult son. Turn to the page in the workbook that has the Thermometer (PP) (pg-30)

They will model the CTR, following the structure by going back and forth, first with appreciations then up to puzzles, then complaints w/ solutions, to new information to lastly hopes and wishes. It may feel awkward to you at first, but that's true of most things we are learning for the first time. After you see the model, stop the video and then follow the directions in your workbook to practice the CTR.

Demonstration CTR ( min)**DVD – Summary/Final Remarks:****Pete**

As you just saw in your groups, each of us comes from families and cultures that did appreciations a certain way. Or perhaps they didn't do them at all. Our families, and cultures, also had a certain way of expressing complaints, puzzles, and hopes and wishes. What we learned about how to do relationships in our families is DEEPLY ingrained in us- especially under stress. And we often underestimate the depth of our bad habits. That is why this 5-part structure and the sentence stems are so helpful as a foundational skill to get us started. The CTR helps us begin learning how to put off our old selves and learn to love well in the new family of Jesus.

The structure – even though it may appear stiff at times – helps provide space for every person to discover or rediscover their power and voice. Each sentence stem helps each person express their core dignity.

The sentence stem “*I prefer...*” can be very powerful if this is something that wasn't allowed in your family of origin.

*Appreciations* say to another person– “I see you.”

*I'm puzzled* says “I won't bear false witness against you.”

*I notice and I prefer* says: “I can assert my God-given dignity in a way that respects you.”

*New information* – says what is going on my life is important.

*Hopes and wishes* - – says I am a human being with longings!

**GERI**

The CTR is a very flexible tool and can be used either one-on-one or in a group setting. When Pete and I started out we practiced many times as a couple. Then we taught our kids. At dinner we each shared from the 5 categories. It was amazing what we learned about each of our kids. At times we might only have time for two of the categories and that worked fine too.

Again, The Community Temperature Reading is very flexible. If you have limited time, you can do just 1 or 2 of the categories. For example, our church staff meetings would have limited time so we'd only do appreciations, but this creates a positive atmosphere for our work together. If there is a lot of tension in the relationship or group you will probably NOT do Complaints with Possible Solutions.

It's great for Retreats or Mission trips or vacations with friends or family because it gives language and tools for healthy relating in those intensive contexts. Small groups use it, as well as different ministries in the church. We know managers who use it in their businesses, teachers in their classrooms, and coaches with their teams. pause. The goal is that this becomes integrated into our everyday life and relationships. What this looks like for me is, I may say to my dentist,

“I’m puzzled why you didn’t return my phone call.” Or I may say to the person in charge of our staff planning day, “I notice there are no break times noted on the schedule and I’d prefer we included them.”

One final caution - The Community Temperature Reading is a tool. Like any tool it can be used to build something or could be used as a weapon. A hammer, for example, can be used to build a house, or as a weapon to kill someone. I can build someone up with “I’m puzzled” or “I notice and I prefer” OR I can kill someone with “I’M PUZZLED” or “I NOTICE AND I PREFER”. So you MUST watch your body language, the tone of your voice, and the intent of your heart.

## **PETE**

Science has been researching for decades, in many studies around the world, what makes people happy in their lives. The longest, most in-depth of these studies, is from Harvard.

And do you know what they concluded after more than 85 years of research?

They came to one simple and profound conclusion and it is this: **It is not money, achievement, or status that leads to health and happiness. The single greatest factor that leads to health and happiness is...PAUSE good relationships.** Most of us can attest to that. When things are going well in our relationships, all is well. When things are not going well in our relationships, life is painful and difficult.

God said “It is not good for human beings to be alone” (Gen 2:18). But it’s not easy to be together either. That’s why we need these skills. Being together involves knowing yourself and how to connect with others. Then we can get on the path of loving God, ourselves and others and a “good life”. And that is what these 8 skills are all about.

And The Community Temperature Reading is a great place to start. To make this skill your own, you will need to practice it. We ask that you practice it at least 2 to 3 times a week - not only this week but throughout the entire Course. If you don’t have someone from this Course to practice with, then teach it to a willing friend, family member or co-worker and do it with them. Simply tell them you are in this Course, and you need to practice the Skills you are learning.

One final thing.

This whole Course is about obeying the commandment Jesus gave us – to love our neighbor as ourselves. Each of the 8 skills were developed to help you do just that. The problem is—alone they are not enough. In fact, when we try to follow Jesus and love in our own strength, we discover that we can’t. We naturally fall back to unhealthy ways of relating – especially under stress. That’s why Jesus said: **PP** “Apart from me you can do nothing” (John 15:5). Jesus’ point is that we need His grace, His life, His love in the Holy Spirit to flow into us if it is to flow out of us. We are completely dependent on Him. He truly is our Source of power

That is why the developing and deepening of your relationship with him is core to this Course. It is why we wrote **PP**(Cover of Day by Day Book) *The EH Relationships Day by Day* book. It is a

devotional to help you learn to be with Jesus, to commune with him, and to connect with him each day.

So this week you will want to go to Week 1 in The EH Relationships Day by Day book that is titled “Take Your Community Temperature Reading.” And you’ll notice that each of the devotional readings and Scriptures reinforce and expand on what you have just learned.

I’m excited for what God will do in and through you this week in the Course. And pray that these 8 weeks we have together may transform the way you relate to God, yourself, and the people around you – the rest of your life.

## **Session 2: Stop Mind Reading and Clarify Expectations**

### **GERI**

As we begin this Session, I want to remind you that these skills are meant to help us grow as followers of Christ. Look at the graphic in your workbook that shows how each skill enables us to both receive the love of God and give the love of God. In our last session we learned the Community Temperature Reading (or CTR for short). With that skill I receive the love of God by using my God-given power and voice to express, for example, my preferences and hopes & wishes. I’m also giving the love of God by avoiding judgments but checking out puzzles and now taking responsibility for my complaints or things I don’t like. pause

In this SESSION you will actually be taught 2 Skills—Stop Mind Reading and Clarify Expectations. (Possibly PP Pyramid) They both revolve around eliminating assumptions that create confusion and pain both for yourself and in your relationships. They are simple skills, and profoundly practical.

These two skills are based on the 9<sup>th</sup> commandment from Ex. 20:19: **PP YOU SHALL NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS AGAINST YOUR NEIGHBOR.** When you and I make assumptions about others without checking them out, it’s easy to start telling ourselves stories about them in our heads that are not true. We are bearing false witness in our own thoughts and this is very damaging to relationships.

The FIRST skill, called “STOP MIND READING”, is to clarify what another person is thinking rather than assuming you know. It is a skill that can be used anywhere, anytime that I become aware that I am making assumptions that I have not checked out.

**PETE**

Some Xians get offended at the title of this- Mind Reading - because God condemns it the Old Testament. That is why we call it that. We are the last people who should be involved in such a thing.

For example: On my days off from church, I used to think “I’m so tired and would love to take a nap. But in my mind, I start thinking to myself. ‘If I take a nap, she’ll be upset. I just assumed it was important to her that I take advantage of every spare minute to get things done. When I finally learned this skill I asked her, ‘Geri, may I have permission to read your mind?’” She said, “OK.” I said, “I think you will think I am lazy if I take a nap on our day off.” Her response was, “Not at all.” “OH WOW,” I lost years of NAPS!!!!

As you saw in your short Bible study, the goal of the book of Proverbs is that we mature from being fools into wise people. As Prov. 18:15 says “The heart of the discerning (or wise) acquires knowledge, the ears of the wise seek it out” In other words, we seek to live in truth. Because we can’t build Jesus’ kingdom on lies –whether it be in church, our families or our places of work.

**GERI**

I have an example where a young woman came to me about how she recently used this skill. She told me she assumed her friend would be upset with her for wanting to reschedule a dinner date, but this time she decided to Stop Mind Reading. So she called her friend and said, “I’d like to check out an assumption with you? I’d like to reschedule our dinner date but I think you’ll be mad at me if I do. Is that correct?” Her friend said to her, “No. I’m actually relieved. I’ve had a stressful week, and it would be better for me to reschedule as well.”

So you can see how we can begin to tell ourselves stories that just aren’t true when we make assumptions. How many times have you laid in bed at night replaying some interaction you had during the day and begin making assumptions about it or the person. We automatically start negatively interpreting what happened, or what was said, without checking it out – and we lose sleep all over an assumption. You’ve heard the Bible verse: “Don’t let the sun go down on your anger...) well I want to say “Don’t let the sun go down on your assumptions!”

**PETE**

The principle is simple: Never assume you know what a person is thinking or feeling.

Here’s how the skill works. Reflect on something you assume someone thinks or feels but has not actually told you. Then ask : “May I have permission to read your mind?” When permission is granted: Say, “I think that you think...”. “Is that correct?” OR ask, “Can I check out an assumption I have? I am wondering... Is that correct?”

Here’s an example of what we mean: Let me try this out now live with Geri:

“Geri, may I have permission to read your mind?” – “I think you think that I am responsible for figuring out next steps for buying our next car, where we will buy it, transferring plates, figuring out the \$, and getting rid of our old Brown Chevy. Is that correct?”

Geri -- “Pete, can I check out an assumption I think you have of me? - “I think you think I am responsible for all the logistics (plane, the rental car, communication with the outfitter, clothing, etc.) for our summer vacation. Is that correct?”

**Transition:** Now we’re going to show you the wrong way of how we these kinds of situations are handled and then the right way to integrate this skill of Stop Mind Reading. Then you’ll turn in your workbooks and follow the instructions for to do skill:

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## Clarifying Expectations

### Pete

Assumptions bring so much UNNECESSARY pain to relationships. That’s why we actually have three different ways of getting at our assumptions. The first was last week in the CTR through “Puzzles”. The second, we just learned in, “Stop Mind Reading”. This third one will be through CLARIFYING EXPECTATIONS. This skill helps us recognize what expectations we have a right to and how to clarify our expectations with others. Listen,

- People quit their jobs over unmet expectations.
- Churches split over unmet expectations
- Couples divorce over unmet expectations
- Families stop talking to one another over unmet expectations.
- Friends

### GERI

All of us grew up taking in thousands upon thousands of messages around expectations. These messages came from our families, our cultures, TV, social media, schools, friends, even fairy tales. Think for a moment just about the area of marriage. What expectations about Marriage did you receive from:

Your family? wives will be in charge of the house, husbands pay bills,

Fairy Tales? You will live happily ever after;

Love Songs? romance and love come naturally or you don’t have to work at it...breathe...

Holidays and birthdays also come with a lot of expectations. Here’s a list of expectations about Christmas that we’ve collected from people:

- We’ll buy each other gifts of equal value (unconscious)
- When we gather this year everyone will get along. No one will get out of hand. (unrealistic)
- Every Christmas children will be grateful and well behaved (unrealistic)
- Guests will bring food (unspoken)
- Everyone will help clean-up ( unspoken) breathe

As you think about those expectations what do you notice? Some may be UNREALISTIC like, ‘everyone will get along and there will be no tension’. If for the last 7 years there is tension and conflict between Uncle John and Aunt Mary, then it’s probably UNREALISTIC to expect that it won’t happen this year. How about ‘buying each other gifts of equal value’? You didn’t know you had an expectation around money spent on gifts until you gave a \$100 gift and received a

\$20 gift. Sometimes we aren't even CONSCIOUS of our expectations until we get disappointed. And finally, You just assumed everyone would offer to bring food without you having to ASK but they didn't. And now you have to cook the whole meal. So sometimes our expectations are UNSPOKEN..

So there are actually 4 Problems with Expectations:

1. They are a problem when they are Un Conscious **PP** - Sometimes we have expectations that we didn't even know we had UNTIL we are disappointed

e.g. **PETE** I expected all children to be straight A students until one of my daughters started getting B's and C's. I wasn't even conscious I had that expectation until it happened and I was disappointed.

e.g. **GERI** Early in our marriage I had no idea I expected Pete to work around our house the way my dad did when I was growing up. And when he wasn't fixing things on his days off I was annoyed. "Isn't this his job" I was thinking?

So sometimes we are not even conscious of our expectations.

2. Second problem with expectations is when they are Un Realistic. **PP** Sometimes we have expectations that aren't reasonable, or there is no evidence to support that it can, or will happen. Here are some examples:

e.g. My Small Group will end on time THIS week, even though it never has.

e.g. Those close to me will make my birthday special, even though in past years they haven't.

e.g. Someone told me recently that when they text their friend, they expect them to text back immediately. I asked, "What's immediately"? "30 seconds", they said. Probably unrealistic.

3. Thirdly, Expectations are a problem when they are Un Spoken. **PP** Many times our expectations are actually never said out loud. For example,

e.g. Each of your colleagues will remove their food from the office refrigerator at the end of the week

e.g. The extended family will help in paying for the grandparents' anniversary party

e.g. All leaders will attend prayer meetings

If you're telling yourself, "they should just know", it is a lie from the pit of hell. We cannot expect people to read our minds. Expectations must be spoken.

4. Finally expectations are a problem when they are Un Agreed-upon **PP**

Very often I have expectations of others that they never agreed to, or people have expectations of me I never agreed to.

e.g. Just because you invited your son and his girlfriend for dinner doesn't mean you can expect they will or should come..

e.g. Just because you ask a friend for a ride doesn't mean they will do it, or have to do it.

e.g. I also realized I had expectations of people they didn't agree to. I would speak my expectations, for instance, in an email to church volunteers to be at an event we were hosting 30 minute before it was about to begin. Then I would be shocked when they arrived 30 minutes AFTER the event began. I later realized, although I had spoken (via email) the expectation, they actually never agreed that they would or could come 30 minutes early.

Think with me for a moment of the countless expectations around:

Workplaces: things like overtime, co-worker birthdays, or who cleans out the staff refrigerator?

Home and family: Do I buy birthday presents for my brother's children? How often should I call my mom or dad? Do I go to the family Christmas party since I'm expected to?

Neighbors: There are expectations about loud music after certain hours, barking dogs, teenager's friends taking food from the refrigerator without asking.

Church: The pastor will return my phone calls within 24 hours. The church will help me parent my teenage sons. I will hang out with people in my small group on weekends.

## **PETE**

Here's the Million dollar question: What expectations do we have a right to and what expectations don't we have a right to? This skill help us to distinguish between these 2 things: What is a valid expectation and what is an invalid expectation. Sometimes we don't even know we have an expectation until we are angry or disappointed. That is why a lack of clarity about expectations can be like stepping on a landmine. Suddenly you are in the midst of the fallout and pain of a strained relationship.

## **GERI**

So, let's be clear about what makes an expectation valid.

**PP** There are 4 criteria :

1. **PP CONSCIOUS** – ie. I am aware of my expectation
2. **PP REALISTIC** – That means there is evidence to support that the expectation is reasonable of me or someone else. Either it has been done in the past or the person has the capacity and willingness to do it. I want to make a special note here: The reason this is so important is that unrealistic expectations are a leading cause of depression. Disappointment can make the heart sick (literally) when something doesn't happen you were expecting. So when it comes to work projects, or ministry experiences, or family gatherings, and friendships you have to really think about whether your expectations are realistic, or not.
3. **PP SPOKEN** - I have expressed the expectation clearly.
4. **PP AGREED UPON** - The other person has agreed to the expectation by saying "yes".

**PP** So here is the principle: An expectation is only valid when mutually agreed upon. Let me repeat that since it is so important: An expectation is only valid when mutually agreed upon.

## **PETE**

Now before we send you off to practice the skill, I want to mention a few exceptions to this agreed upon criteria. As our children's authority figures as parents, we don't need their agreement when we ask them to do household chores. In work, where there is an employer/employee contract, there is already an overall agreement. And there is built into the marriage vow expectations that you will not flirt and be faithful to love your spouse for the rest of your life.

Transition: Now before we have you practice this skill, we want to show you the wrong way and then the right way of clarifying an expectation. Then we ask you to go to your workbook and follow the instructions to practice CLARIFYING expectations yourself.

### **Geri Closing Summary**

In closing, it is important to mention that not all un-met expectations have the same level of disappointment. Some disappointments are small, others medium and yet others very large. This skill, Clarify Expectations, is used for small and medium expectations, NOT Large expectations around very significant disappointments such as “I never expected to get divorced, or lose my job or have a special needs child.” These type of large un-met expectations result in deep, deep disappointment and these losses need, and deserve, their own space for grieving.

Nonetheless learning this skill truly has the capacity to significantly change your life as making assumptions are the source of much preventable pain in our relationships. Clarifying expectations is foundational for creating a healthy culture – whether it be in a church, a family, a workplace, a friendship, a team, a ministry. The key is that you practice until it becomes 2<sup>nd</sup> nature to you.

You will find that many many issues are resolved by simply clarifying expectations around them. Others, however, require negotiation to solve them. This will be covered in Session 7 with the Skill – Clean Fighting.

### **PETE**

Let me address three common questions.

The first is: What do I do when someone cannot meet my expectation? **PP** This happens a lot! So, for example, you and your sister have had a mutual expectation to go on vacation together for the last 10 years. Now she has changed her mind due to a new job and a serious boyfriend. So what do you do? You grieve the loss and accept her decision. So now, you turn your expectation into a hope – that someday she changes her mind and/or her life situation changes.

But of course, **disappointments around expectations** come in all sizes – small, medium and large. **Small** -(your roommate didn’t take the garbage out). **Medium** – a close friend misses an event that was important to you) or **Large** (I didn’t expect to get divorced). The large disappointments, in particular, need their own space because they require a process of significant grieving. It can be very helpful to talk with a mature, objective friend in some of those cases.. A 2<sup>nd</sup> common question that comes up is:

2. What do I do if I have an agreed upon expectation with someone and then they don’t do it? **PP** Perhaps they said yes because they were afraid to say no to you. Remember that if a person cannot say no to you, then what you have is not an expectation but a demand. Maybe, it wasn’t clear enough. You may need to go back to clarify the issue again. Or maybe they thought they could do it, and later realized they could not. You will need to explore the reasons. A third question is often:

3. What do I do if God doesn’t meet my expectations? **PP** You can rest assured that He will not. We like to know where God is going, what he is doing, how we are getting there, or when we will arrive. So often we try to take charge of God, control the way life unfolds, and make him our

servant. We make a deal with God that goes like this: “I will obey you and keep my side of the bargain. And you will bless me and not allow any serious suffering in my life.” God is Knowable, having revealed himself in Jesus Christ and in Scripture. But He is also Unknowable - that is, utterly above us and transcendent with thoughts and plans that are far above ours. Most of the time we have no idea what God is doing. That is why Augustine wrote, “If you understand, it is not God you understand.”

That is why learning to spend time with God each week through the *EH Relationships Day by Day* book is so essential to this Course. The rhythm of meeting with God twice a day, and seeking to do silence and stillness, is meant to help us surrender our will and plans to His. Each time we stop to be with Jesus we are declaring “I need you.” It is an act of humility. So this week you’ll go to chapter 2 on Stop Mind Reading and Clarify Expectations in your Day by Day devotional.

Also, before your next meeting – we ask you to practice the Stop Mind Reading and the Clarify Expectations skills at least two times. Set aside time when you can think about any assumptions or mind reading that you might be engaging in. Session 3 next week is called “Genogram Your Family.” You will be looking at your family going back 3-4 generations –please don’t forget the pre-reading in your workbook for that Session.

Thanks. So now, as we close this Session, may God fill you with his power that you might become what the book of Proverbs calls – a wise, discerning person who gives thoughts to their ways and loves the the world well as a result.

### **Session 3: Genogram Your Family**

#### **PETE**

Let me invite you to look in your workbook to Session 3 as we go into our next skill - Genogram your family. (**PP** Graphic Pyramid). A genogram is a visual tool to help us look at the history and dynamics of our family over three to four generations, and its impact on us.

As it says in your workbook: The purpose of this skill is to help you become aware of and to break the sinful patterns in your family of origin in order to live your God-given purpose in the world.

This skill applies three biblical truths. **PP The first is The Blessing and Sins of Our Families Have Impact Lasting for at Least Three to Four Generations.**

That means your family, in the biblical sense, includes all your brothers, sisters, uncles, aunts, grandparents, great grandparents, great uncles and aunts, and significant others going back to the mid-1800s!

So we see Scripture such as when God gives the 10 Commandments, and he says: PP “You shall not make for yourself an idol . . . for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation...” (Exodus 20:4, 5-6) The Hebrew word for “punish” means = tends to be repeated.

In other words, What happens in one generation often repeats itself in the next. The consequences of actions and decisions taken in one generation affect those who follow. So our pasts are played out in our present relationships without us necessarily being aware of it.

For this reason, we often observe certain patterns from one generation to the next such as divorce, addictive behaviors, inability to feel certain emotions, sexual abuse, poverty, depression, and unstable relationships. As has been said:, “We may be through with the past, but the past is not through with us.”

The second principle is: **PP 2. Becoming a Christian is to be Birthed into a New Family and a New Culture.** When we come to Christ, we are birthed and adopted into God’s family. We then have new brothers and sisters from around the world. We are given a new name (Christian), a new inheritance, and new power (the Holy Spirit). What determines our identity is no longer first our biological blood, but the blood of Jesus.

Finally, the third truth is: PP Discipleship is putting off the sinful patterns of your family of origin and culture and learning how to do life in the new family of Jesus.

That means putting off that which does not belong in the new family of Jesus and learning how to do life in Jesus’ family. We like to say - Jesus may be in your heart but grandpa lives in your bones. Discipleship is getting Jesus, and his way of doing life, into your bones. But this can be hard work and often painful. But the extent to which we can go back and understand how our families have shaped us is what enables us to break destructive patterns. The genogram was created to help us do just that.

It wasn’t till I was in my late 30’s, already 17 years as a Christian, that I realized the impact of my family. Here are three messages I received from my family: You exist to keep everybody else happy. Along with my brothers, our role was to “make Mama happy,” My dad traveled a lot and was absent. And my Mom suffered with mental illness her whole life. Even though we were children, it was expected we would take care of her. So when I became a Christian, I naturally began to take care of others. I simply transferred being overly responsible in my family of origin to being overly responsible for everybody. Is it any wonder I became a pastor?

A 2nd was: You don’t have a right to enjoy your life. My family didn’t do play or delight. Because of physical and emotional abuse, healthy boundaries were not in place. So then, as an adult, I would allow people to treat me poorly. It felt normal. In my family, we were expected to work and produce, not do self-care or have fun. So I felt guilty resting and being unproductive. So I simply worked – all the time. I then naturally brought that into my Christian life.

And a 3rd message said: It’s not okay to make mistakes. In my house, if you dropped a dish and it broke, you got yelled at or a beating. There was an unhealthy perfectionism that got into me as a result, one that I carried into my Xian life. So I believed in the love and grace of God, but I lived law- as if God’s love for me was based on working hard and doing things perfectly.

## **GERI**

I was one of 7 children and my family gave me many wonderful gifts growing up. I knew I was loved. I belonged to a large extended family of aunts, uncles and cousins. My family knew how to play together, celebrate, and we are very loyal and supportive of one another. In fact my

family had so many positive traits that it was difficult for me to admit that we had negative ones. But we did. And those negative traits impacted my capacity to love well in significant ways.

The First was in the area of emotions. My family was good at positive emotions such as joy, enthusiasm, and fun but we weren't good at feelings like sadness, hurt, or fear. In other words, we didn't do the difficult emotions. I remember my father teaching me to ride a bike as a 5 or 6 yr old. When I crashed to the ground and was laying there with a bleeding elbow and bleeding knee my father says to me, "you're not hurt, get up!" But I remember lying there thinking, "I am hurt and afraid", but since he said to get up I got up. (pause) Because my father could not enter his own hurts and fears he could not enter mine either. I had to learn to become a whole human being who could feel and acknowledge ALL my emotions.

Secondly my family didn't do conflict well either. The mantra in my family of 9 was "Don't fight." The problem was, we were not taught how to negotiate our differences. My parent's conflicts either ended in yelling or silent treatment, both of which were scary to me as a child. I brought these styles of conflict into the new family of Jesus. If I saw you at church and was mad at you, I would avoid you. If we disagreed, I just assumed I was right. I had to learn not to be threatened by differences but to respect them.

Thirdly, social shame was a part of my family. It was important to us to be seen by others as "good". This meant be moral, be nice, don't upset or disappoint people. This led me to say "yes" ALOT, even when I really wanted to say "no", lest I upset or disappoint people. I also didn't speak up in conversations when I disagreed with what was being said because I was afraid of being seen as disagreeable - even though I was! I had internalized that my worth and value, ie. my sense of "okayness", came from how others thought of me.

## **PETE**

### Construct Your Genogram

Turn to the page in your workbook with your genogram graphic on it. **PP** I will lead you in sketching out a 3 generational genogram to look at patterns in your family. We will do a simple genogram here meant to serve as an introduction (We are giving you only a brief time). The goal here is not to get all the symbols perfect (people take graduate level courses in this), but to begin becoming aware of unhealthy patterns from our family of origin that are holding us back from maturing and growing as God intends.

So let's begin.

As you look at the paper, you will notice boxes and circles. The box symbol is for male. The Circle is for female. Next to the bottom box on the left – write the name of your father or primary caregiver if adopted. Next to the bottom circle on the right- write the name of your mom or primary caregiver. (Don't worry about divorces yet. Blended families. Half-brothers or sisters. We will get to that)

Notice now the line going up from your father to your grandparents on his side. Write their names next the box (for your grandfather) and circle (for your grandmother).. *Slow*. Then, write

the name of your grandfather on your mother's side in the box on the left and the name of your grandmother on your mother's side in the far right. Note where I wrote their names.

If you don't know their names, simply put a question mark next to the box or circle. *Slow*

Now, under the line that connects your parents, we are going to add you and any brother/sisters you may have. Draw a line down for you and each of your siblings. You will go from left to right, with oldest to the left moving to youngest on the right. So you can see I have an older sister Gloria, an older brother- Joe and another older brother - Anthony. As you draw lines down, make sure your line extends longer than the others since you are the star of your genogram. Write the names of each one next to the appropriate box or circle. Slow 16

Now we have three generations showing in the diagram.

NOTE: Let me encourage the leader or facilitator of your Session to stop the video at any point to give you all a few extra minutes if needed.

Next. If you are married (or were ever married), you will note that with a line running from you to your spouse as you see on your screen. Then draw lines down for any children that came from that marriage. Write their names. Geri is my spouse and we have 4 daughters. Or if you are living together with an intimate other, but not married, use a dotted line to signify that. You can see that symbol in the box below that says "Relationship Dynamics" and has Symbols". SLOW Let's assume my parents divorced, we would draw 2 slashed lines on their marriage line as you see on the screen. (If they only separated, you would put 1 slashed line) Then if my father remarried (or lived with someone for a length of time), I would draw a line going to the left of him with a circle for the woman as you see on the screen, noting her name.

And if they had any children, a line is drawn down from them. Again with their name.

The same would apply if my mother had remarried and had children after that divorce. (Leigh add)

Now anywhere in your genogram where there was a divorce, use the divorce symbol of 2 slashes between the couple. Let's say you divorced and now you are remarried. It would look like this. *Slow*

Finally, for people who have died, we mark it with an X in the box or circle. Now, if anyone died prematurely, note next to their box or circle, at what age did they die, and how (e.g. accident, cancer, suicide). Especially note premature deaths as they are significant. My Dad's father, Dominic, died prematurely at age 47 in the middle of the Great Depression and 5 of 6 of his children had to drop out of school to work and support the family. *Slow*.

Now each of you have a three to four generational diagram in front of you.

Now I am going to explain some other important additions to your genogram. As I am speaking, I want you to listen as I lead you through the section called "Individual Activity" in your workbook. I will be explaining the instructions in numbers 1-4 When I finish, you will have at least 15 minutes alone to actually complete this individual activity. But as I am talking, listen with one ear and feel free to fill out SOME of your genogram answers as I am talking.

But let me make a few comments before we begin. We are often asked, why are we focused on the negative legacies and not the positive ones? Part of the reason here is the limitations of time we have in this Session. But it is also because the negative legacies from our families are what keep us from going forward in life and that we tend to avoid looking at.

99% of our parents did better than their parents. Actually, this exercise helps us be more compassionate towards them as we consider the families they grew up in.

**As you respond to the questions 1-3, do so through the eyes of your childhood through teen years.** (even though you are looking back now as an adult). Why? Those years were key years in which we were shaped by our families.

“Question 1: Using the symbols in the following chart, return to our genogram and describe possible relational dynamics between family members.” You will notice in the chart 5 relationship dynamics with descriptions and corresponding symbols for each one.

Here are some examples of how I would describe the relationship dynamics that went on in my family.

When I think about the relationship between my parents growing up, there was a recurring theme of conflict. See the symbol. Some of us will have lots of conflict lines in our genogram. My father had a cut off for years with my older brother. They stopped talking to each other for years. Note the symbol.

I had a distant relationship with my sister for years. This means we were not emotionally connected. We didn't share beyond surface information. Note that symbol.

Enmeshment is when there is pressure for family members to think, feel or act alike. You end up losing yourself. There isn't space to develop your own separate identity. People don't express what they stand for or want. Note that symbol of 3 solid lines (see my father with his mother). Abuse – Abuse can be sexual, physical, emotional or spiritual. This is important to note in any family genogram. I realize it is painful to put on paper, but is very important. We see that in my grandfather with my mother and his wife. Note the symbol. If there was abuse, of any kind, that came from someone outside your family, you will want to note that on your genogram.

Now look at the 2nd Question in your workbook. I want you to think about re-occurring themes that run in your family such as addictions, affairs, secrets, abuse, divorce, mental illness. (See that box on the right side of your genogram sheet). A few themes in my family were cut offs, overworking and abandonment. Note those in the box provided.

Question 3 will ask you to note any earthquake events.- These are traumatic events that impacted your family that sent shock waves through your family generationally -perhaps even before you were born (In my case I had a cousin born with Down Syndrome about the same time I was born, one of my brothers joined a cult, and I had a first cousin killed in a Vietnam War in 1968).

And then finally, as your time comes to a close, you'll answer question 4: “What are one or two insights you have learned regarding how your family of origin impacted who you are today?”

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Transition: So now turn to your workbooks and complete questions 1 to 4—filling out your genogram— prayerfully before the Lord (being sure to leave time to answer that final application question in #4).

## **PETE**

For many of us, to genogram our family was very difficult to do. We commend you for your courage. The story of the Israelites coming out of slavery in Egypt is a great picture for us. They lived for 400 years as slaves. They had other gods, lied a lot, stole, coveted, worked 7 days a week. Although God had delivered them out of Egypt, Egypt was still deep in them. They were freed by grace but they still did life the way their families had for generations. It was in their bones. They had to be formed now as God’s new family. So God gave them the 10 commandments. In the same way, God gives us Scripture. We call this the work of discipleship.

That is why it is so important that we become deeply aware of the commandments of our family – most were never spoken to us explicitly but they are in us.

The principle is: You cannot change what you are not aware of

So look in your WORKBOOK and CONSIDER THE EXAMPLES of UNBIBLICAL FAMILY COMMANDMENTS. We chose 10 common ones

For example, look at the first commandment on money. Some of us were taught things like: Money is the best source of security. -The more money you have, the more important you are.- Make lots of money to prove you “made” it. I knew a young man named Stephen who found himself in almost very serious financial debt. Overwhelmed and frustrated. He looked at the largeness of what was ahead of him. I invited him to do a brief genogram of his family around the issue of finances with a simple question: How were finances handled in your family? - We sketched out a 3 generational genogram looking at how his grandparents and his parents dealt with money. The pattern was unmistakable. There was debt, mismanagement of money and constant financial struggles. This awareness took him on a journey to change that legacy!

## **GERI**

Let’s look at the commandment of ANGER. How did your family do anger? Was there only one person who was allowed to be angry. Did your family stuff anger then explode, or leak it out in sarcasm? Was anger dangerous or suppressed?

We had a husband share with us how his wife would lash out, and verbally attack him. I asked John if he had anger toward his wife when this happened. “Oh NO, I’m not allowed to get angry with her. She’s allowed to be angry with me but I’m not allowed to be angry with her,” he said. The story then spilled out that John grew up with an alcoholic father who took his anger out on the family, but the family was never allowed to be angry with him. John had an internal rule that said, “It’s not safe ever to show my anger,” so he was allowing his wife to disrespect him rather than assert himself. The question is, “How do we do anger in the new family of Jesus?” God says, “Don’t let the sun go down on your anger.” He also says, “Be angry, but don’t sin.”

(pause) God has given us our anger to assert ourselves, not attack others, especially when we are being disrespected.

Let's look at the commandment of GRIEF AND LOSS. How did your family do grieving? pause. When I was in the 2nd grade my grandfather died. I have an indelible memory of coming upon my mother in my grandparents' basement. She quickly turned her head so I would not see her crying. As a 7 yr old I can still remember the jolt of fear in my body because 1) I had never seen my mother cry, and 2) because there was something happening I wasn't supposed to see.

This would be just one of many messages from my family where I internalized that showing sadness or weakness must be bad. My mother didn't know how to grieve because her family didn't know how to grieve. When she was 9, her sister just one year younger than her, died. It's very traumatic for a child to lose a sibling. Her parents didn't know how to talk about the tremendous pain of that loss with their children and turned to alcohol instead.

But what does God say about grief and loss? Well, it's such a significant part of life that  $\frac{2}{3}$  of the Psalms are about grief, and we have a whole book of the Bible called Lamentations on grieving. Since life is filled with losses from birth to the grave, it's essential that as members of the new family of Jesus we acknowledge our losses. God uses our losses to meet us in ways we had not imagined.

Now please return to your WORKBOOK and follow the instructions.

--WORKBOOK

### **PETE- Final closing**

Your homework for the next week or two is to observe your behavior. If something seems out of order in your life, ask yourself, "How did my family do that?"

There are many layers of doing a genogram. It can be a shock for some to do this for the first time. I spent one full year in an advanced program interviewing every living member of my family to build my genogram. The purpose was to see how deeply my family had impacted me in the present. It was very painful but powerful and liberating!

So let me encourage you to 1. Prayerfully reflect on your genogram in this coming week. - Sit with your genogram before God in prayer. Give God time to clarify things for you, perhaps making additional connections. 2. Some of you may want to sit with a wise mentor or friend to talk through your genogram and get some additional perspective 3. Others of you may see the value of meeting with a good Christian counselor/therapist for healing of deeper wounds. For me this was indispensable as I had abuse in my history that I had buried for years.

Every family is broken. Some are very deeply broken - as mine was. So was Joseph's, one of the primary figures in the book of Genesis. He experienced great loss and tragedy in his family growing up. His losses were enormous. He could have said "My family ruined my life. They robbed me of my best years!" But instead, he remained faithful to God and walked with him – even when things were externally going terrible for him. He had a deep sense that the purposes

of God were at work – in hidden and mysterious ways. In the end, Joseph was profoundly transformed and became a blessing to the nations.

God placed you in your family at a particular moment in history, into a particular set of circumstances, in a particular place. He did that to shape you into a person that, like Joseph, might be a blessing to the world around you.

Here is the great truth - God works “in, through and, in spite of,” your family and past. This is the entire lesson of the book of Genesis. The purposes of God are at work – in hidden and mysterious ways. God is working out His purpose THROUGH and IN SPITE OF the traumas we experience. Joseph does not deny his painful past but weeps over his losses. And he stays with God! He knows: “People may have planned this for evil. But God planned it for good.”

I love the phrase: “The invisibility of God in human affairs.” God has been at work in your life from the time you were in your mother’s womb. And He wants to take your past and give you a great future out of it. God will waste nothing. In fact, when we surrender ourselves to God, we find that some of our best material is found in the failures and pain of our past.

So let me invite you again this week to dig into the Daily Office. -*Emotionally Healthy Relationships Day By Day* **PP**. You’ll be in week 3 and a number of devotional readings will directly speak to issues related to Genogram Your Family. As you cultivate your own personal relationship with Jesus, you will better be able to put off any false messages you received from your family of origin. And you will experience more deeply God's message to you that you are loved and lovable, and that His hand is on your for a great future.

So may you be like Joseph – who stayed with God through good times and bad. And may you trust Him to take all the broken parts of your history and create something beautiful with your life that you can then offer to the world.

#### **SESSION 4 EXPLORE THE ICEBERG**

##### **PETE**

This week we will introduce to you our fifth skill called Explore the Iceberg. **PP PYRAMID GRAPH**. The goal of Explore the Iceberg is to become aware of your emotions, with the goal of processing them and discerning God’s will.

MY TESTIMONY – I thought I wasn’t a feeler. **SOLID, STEADY** not emotional like the women in my family. Men could do anger but did not do weakness/vulnerability/ sadness/fear. – worked hard. I prided myself on being steady.

Then I became a Xian at 19 – I was taught – CCC caboose.. **FACT FAITH FEELINGS** last. **PP?** I somehow picked up the message that good Christians were never angry, sad, or afraid. We were just supposed to be nice all the time.. and happy!

---I felt guilty when I was angry with people. I judged people who were sad or fearful. And I mistakenly thought “You’re not really spiritual if you’re feeling depressed or sad. You must be weak or lacking in faith.”

-- And, of course, I overemphasized joyfulness and being strong in X

I didn't understand that Scripture teaches feelings are a key part of what it means to be a human being made in God's image.

Throughout Scripture God expresses a whole range of emotion. God feels. He created us to feel too. That is what makes us human.

In Scripture we find so many examples of people freely expressing their feelings before God. Rather than medicating their pain, denying it, or suppressing it, they poured it out to Him.

-- We have David, a man after God's own heart- expresses the full range of emotions from suicide to deep depression to rage to confusion to great joy.

-- We have Job -35 chapters of anguish- wrestling with suicide, angry, and depressed.

-- There is Jeremiah - called a man of sorrows who wrote a whole book in the Bible called Lamentations!

– Most important, think of Jesus. He shed tears. He was filled with joy. He felt overwhelmed with grief. He was sorrowful. He was angry. He was moved with compassion. In Gethsemane, we see a fully human Jesus—anguished, sorrowful, and spiritually overwhelmed -- not emotionally frozen or shut down.

So, we have to ask ourselves: Where did we get the idea that acknowledging and expressing authentic emotion is somehow less than spiritual? And why do we believe that we can—or somehow should—grow in spiritual maturity without, at the same time, growing in emotional maturity?

For the first 17 years of my Christian life, I ignored the emotional component of spiritual life with God.. It didn't matter how many books I read or seminars I attended. I would remain an emotional infant until I integrated and embraced the emotional part of God's image in me. The foundation on which I had built my life, and had taught others, was cracked. And there was no hiding that from those closest to me.

## Explore the Iceberg

### GERI

In the family I grew up in it was easy and acceptable to express emotions like happiness, fun, enthusiasm or playfulness but non-existent to admit or express VULNERABLE emotions such as hurt, fear, and shame. For example, no one in my family of 9 would say, "I felt so hurt when you said that to me", or "I'm fearful I won't make the team", or "I'm embarrassed I don't have a date for the prom".

When I became a follower of Christ I also got the message that certain emotions, like anger, weren't acceptable. As a matter of fact I remember being at church many times and smiling on the outside but being very angry on the inside. I thought "good" Christians should not get angry. Then you have Bible verses that say, "The joy of the Lord is your strength" or "Rejoice, again I say Rejoice" so I had a lot of guilt about my anger and other difficult emotions. I just tried to ignore them. I didn't understand that emotions are God-given gifts. In other words emotions are good, very very good! It was the messages I internalized from my family and my theology that were faulty.

Ecclesiastes 3 that says there is a time to laugh and a time to cry, times when we are happy and times for deep sadness. There will be times when we feel love and times when we feel hate. This is a picture of a whole human being. AND WHOLENESS AND HOLINESS GO TOGETHER.

**PP** An analogy we often use in Emotionally Healthy Spirituality is the iceberg. 10% of an iceberg is above the surface and visible, while 90% is invisible and below the surface. The Titanic was fatally damaged by what was unseen. Human beings are like icebergs. 10% of us is seen but there's a whole lot more to us below the surface that is not seen.

Ken Burns, an American film-maker, produced a documentary on Franklin Delano Roosevelt, our 32<sup>nd</sup> President. Roosevelt's life has some important lessons for us about icebergs. Roosevelt accomplished a lot of good for our country with things like the creation of Social Security, the GI Bill that enabled veterans to go to college, unemployment compensation, preservation of parks, AND his steady leadership thru WWII. But he wasn't a very integrated person. In other words who he was on the outside was not who he was on the inside. For instance Roosevelt never showed pain and he had plenty of it, both emotionally and physically. For one thing he had polio and wore extremely painful braces all the time. An aide once caught him grimacing in pain but he immediately changed his expression when she walked in the room; his family life was extremely painful. He had a long affair with his wife's secretary; He and his wife, Eleanor, had no marriage and their children rarely saw their father and felt abandoned by him. There were 19 divorces between his 5 children. Eleanor once said, about the state of the lives of her children, "When I think about my children I want to commit suicide." Roosevelt died prematurely at 62 of a cerebral hemorrhage. I suspect he was very unaware of his iceberg, that is, what was going on inside of him, in particular his feelings.

I relate to Roosevelt on certain levels. I liked to get a lot done. I wanted to serve and help people; I wanted people to see me as strong, capable, loving and spiritual. I definitely did not want to show any weakness, pain or vulnerability. And like Roosevelt I was not only hurting myself but others. And like Roosevelt I had no idea I had an interior world or what we refer to as the iceberg.

Even though I had low awareness of my interior world there was plenty of conflict going on in there. My interior conflicts consisted of: rules against feelings, lying to myself, pretending everything was fine even when it wasn't, taking things personally, making innumerable assumptions about things and people, bad self-care and bad interpretation of the Bible that believed denying feelings was the mature Christian thing to do.

I have learned that you can do all sorts of things to avoid feelings. You can quit a job, go to another church, read books, get new relationships, make more money, even pray or fast but if you don't look inside of you this is similar to just moving around the chairs on the Titanic to keep the ship from going down. As Jesus said, "a bad tree cannot produce good fruit." And "It's not what goes into us that defiles us, but what comes out of us."

The following vignettes are a couple of ways we typically deal with what is going on inside us.

Take a look: Wrong way..

Here are 3 truths about Emotions:

1. Unprocessed emotions don't die.

Many of us are uncomfortable expressing certain feelings so we find other ways to express them like, "it worried me sick" or "it broke my heart", or something was a "pain in the neck".

But unprocessed emotions don't die. They get buried alive. Why? Because God created them to be paid attention to. If emotions aren't acknowledged properly they WILL find a way to come out. First) They may go into your body in the form of insomnia, high blood pressure, panic attacks, cancer, irritable bowel syndrome, anxiety, weight gain, depression, or Secondly) They will LEAK out in things like sarcasm, defensiveness, tears and a host of other ways. Remember emotions are like an internal GPS system given by God to guide us, and must be paid attention to!

2. Health community requires people know themselves.

We need to know our own feelings in order to love others well. We can't have authentic healthy church communities without it. How can I enter your pain, your sadness, your hurt, fear, shame if I don't enter my own? It's safe to say, then, the extent to which I am able to experience my own emotions is the extent to which I'm a loving person.

Think about the implications of this for a small group. How am going to tell you how I really am if I'm not in touch with what's going on inside me. The group goes around. How are you? Fine. How are you? Fine. How are you? Fine. So everybody is good, but then our community is not really any different than the world around us. Think about it. How can the world know us if we don't know ourselves?

3. Feelings help us discern God's voice.

Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Jesuits, wrote the classic work 450 years ago on the important place of our emotions in discerning God's will. And this was in a context of a complete commitment to do God's will, follow Scripture, and seek wise counsel. The issue is not, by any means, to blindly follow our feelings, but to acknowledge them as a part, a significant part, of the way God communicates to us.

Therefore, it is important that we become aware of our feelings and ask, "God how are you coming to me through this?" So for example, I opened an email once and immediately felt a reaction in my body. When I stopped to pay attention to the feeling, I realized it was panic. I felt panic because I thought I was being criticized in the email. I said, "Oh God, how are you coming to me through this?" Upon reflection I realized I needed to re-anchor myself in God's love and not in what others think of me. And because of that I am OK and can receive feedback, suggestions and even criticism from others.

Or maybe you find yourself tearing up or feeling dread about a certain meeting. Ask yourself, "How is God coming to me in this"?

We also pay attention to our passions and delights. When I leave NYC and step out into nature I feel such exhilaration. It's so important for all of us to pay attention to our joys and delights because our deepest desires (pure, true and beautiful) are God's desires for us too.

A friend of ours was on a Panel around the theme of Spiritual Formation. He was asked "What do you think keeps us from progressing in the spiritual life?" He replied, "When more attention is given to our outer world (ie. things like tasks, programs, and activity) at the expense of our inner world." And he was right. Many of us have an overdeveloped, outer world and underdeveloped, inner world.

Transition: Now we want to give you the opportunity to go beneath your iceberg and become aware of your emotional world. Turn to the instructions in your workbook where you will be asked to respond to 4 different questions.

## **PETE**

For some of you doing this skill was difficult. You may have written very little after “What am I angry or sad about?” Others of you, perhaps, began to write and discovered it was as if a dam had burst. You said to yourself: “I had no idea all that was going on inside me!” 2 min.?! I needed an hour!”

Still others of you, perhaps, had a difficulty distinguishing between anger, sadness and fear. It may be that our feeling muscles are weak or underdeveloped..

When I began the journey of emotionally healthy discipleship, my “feeling” muscles were very weak. So I began to integrate into my morning time with God 3-4x a week a time to journal about the emotions I had experienced the previous day! This was so new to me. “Oh yes, I’d say to myself, I was hurt when that person made that sarcastic remark to me.” And I would journal about it before God. These “feeling” workouts strengthened my ability to be aware of my emotions. Soon I got better at identifying my feelings in the moment so I didn’t have to wait until the next day!

I began to experience a greater freedom, a lot more peace and less anxiety. While initially it was difficult, with practice.. over time, identifying and naming my emotions became as natural as breathing.

## **GERI**

HERE ARE A FEW THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND AS WE CLOSE OUR TIME TOGETHER

FIRST: Difficult emotions that go unprocessed cover over pleasureable feelings.

It is difficult to feel love, joy, or kindness when you are carrying anger inside you. Imagine with me a bottle of oil and vinegar. When mixed together, the oil rises to the top and covers the vinegar. So it is with unprocessed emotions. The difficult emotions naturally rise to the top and cover over the positive ones. Note I am not calling the emotions of anger, sadness and fear bad. They are SIMPLY difficult. But if they go unprocessed then love, kindness and joy will remain buried below (PP) and we won’t flourish.

SECOND: If we don’t process our emotions, we may also end up leaking them and not taking responsibility for them. The result is other people often get hurt. For example, I may be angry about what my coworker said to me but I’m not really in touch with it, so I go home and unconsciously take it out on my family.

The THIRD thing to remember is: Anger is a surface emotion.

When you are angry, ask yourself, “What am I afraid of? Or What am I hurt or sad about? The primary emotion, going on beneath the surface of anger, is really hurt, sadness or fear. For example, if I’m angry that Pete didn’t give me a card for our anniversary, what’s really underneath my anger is hurt. If I’m angry that my daughter didn’t call to let me know that she would be a few hours late, what’s really under my anger is fear for her safety.

You also need to pay attention for when your anger crosses the line into sin and is coming from the worst place in you. Aristotle said it best: “Anyone can be angry, that is easy, but to be angry with the right person, to the right degree, at the right time, for the right purpose, and in the right way, this is not easy.”

## **PETE**

This week let me encourage you to Explore your Iceberg around those four questions at least twice -during your time alone with God. Journal how God comes to you. You may also want to consider exploring the iceberg with a safe friend whom you trust. The other person simply asks you the sentence stems out loud, one question at a time (e.g what are you mad about, sad about, afraid of, glad about?), giving you time to respond. Geri and I have done this for each other over the years and it has been a wonderful gift.

Let me encourage you also to read and pray the Psalms. God used the rawness of the psalms to help the suppressed parts of me come alive. David’s honest, raw emotions, and freedom to lay himself out so utterly before God can be a great model and inspiration for us.

Let me encourage you again to continue seeking to develop a daily rhythm with *The EH Relationships Day by Day* devotional. This week you will be in Week 4.

So may the Lord bless you and keep you as you embark on this new journey. And as you open up your iceberg to God, may you not only enter the depth of your own feelings, but may you find a newfound grace to enter the feelings of those around you. And may you be increasingly soft, approachable, and safe for those around you - that the world might know the love of Jesus. In Jesus’ name! AMEN.

## **Session 5: Incarnational Listening**

### **PETE**

Welcome to our next skill - Incarnational Listening. **PP GRAPH PYRAMID.**

As I mentioned briefly in Session 1, Geri and I hit a Wall in the 8th year of our marriage. And it was not a Wall we could get through by ourselves. We reached out for help to some very wise counselor and learned an abbreviated form of the skill we are teaching today-- Incarnational listening. This was the skill that got Geri and me launched on this journey of Emotionally Healthy Discipleship.

The only kind of listening I knew was for the purpose of defending, giving an opinion, or advising. Up to this point, we used a type of machine gun, rapid fire communication. Geri and I finished each other's sentences and didn't have a problem interrupting each other. Incarnational Listening was such a revolutionary experience that it changed not just our marriage but our relationships with our children, our family and friends, our neighbors, our leadership, and of course, the church. Everything.

The reason this happened is because this type of listening transformed our ability to love. David Augsberger, a theologian, said it best: **PP** "Being heard is so close to being loved that for the average person they are almost indistinguishable."

As you can see in your workbook under Incarnational Listening, the goal of this skill is to listen at a heart level with empathy like Jesus, attuning to the words and non-verbal cues of another person. But since this skill involves speaking as well as listening we need to talk briefly about how we speak to each other in the new family of Jesus as well.

## **GERI**

Let me ask you, "How did the family you grew up in speak to one another? This is important because we tend to speak to others the way we were spoken to. For example my family used sarcasm and had certain facial expressions and tones of voice that were often disrespectful. Since most communication comes through non-verbals it's easy to understand that no matter what your words say your heart comes through your tone, facial expressions and body language. People will respond to those things more than words.

Let me ask you, "How did the family you grew up in speak to one another? This is important because we tend to speak to others the way we were spoken to. For example, my family used sarcasm and had certain facial expressions and tones of voice that were often disrespectful.

In the new family of Jesus we speak differently. It is marked by 4 characteristics; we speak respectfully, honestly, clearly and in a timely fashion. Let's take one at a time: **PP** First, We speak **RESPECTFULLY**. To do that, you have to give thought to your words and not just blurt them out. By respectful that means we take the other person's feelings into consideration. Eph.4 says to speak in a way that makes it easy for the listener to hear your words. For example, instead of saying "That's your idea?! That is ridiculous!." You can say respectfully: "That's your idea? That is interesting. Help me understand it." **PP** Secondly, we speak **HONESTLY**. This is a lot harder than it sounds, but the truth is you have a right to your feelings and thoughts, and to speak them. Instead of speaking dishonestly and saying, "I don't mind if you're late tonite." You say, "Yes, I would mind if you're late and would really appreciate you home for dinner at 6pm." **PP** Thirdly we speak **CLEARLY**. No hinting, beating around the bush or being too vague. For example, instead of vaguely saying, "you never cook", you can say, "I would really like you to cook two nights a week." Or rather than hinting with, "Are you busy Friday?", you can clearly ask, "Would you be willing to give me a ride to the doctor's on Friday?" And finally **PP**, we speak **TIMELY**. We are aware of when we or the person are tired, irritated, or short on time, and, if necessary, we wait for a better time. We like to summarize it this way: In

the new family of Jesus we do healthy speaking **PP** We speak respectfully, honestly, clearly and in a timely fashion.

Think with me for a moment. In the last few days, when has your speech NOT been respectful (blurted something out...didn't take the feelings of the listener into consideration), not been honest and clear (not truly saying what you think and feel or beating around the bush) or not been timely (that is, impulsive rather than waiting for a good time).  
IMAGINE HOW YOU COULD HAVE DONE IT DIFFERENTLY? pause

NOW LET'S THINK ABOUT LISTENING TOGETHER

**PP** As you can see on your screen there is a picture of unhealthy togetherness. It's where we don't respect our differences, and it's hard to see where one person ends and another begins. In UNhealthy togetherness we want, or expect, a person to think and feel the way we do about things. When they don't we may feel threatened. No two human beings are alike. We all have different feelings, thoughts, fears, and values.

**PP** In this picture of healthy togetherness the individuals understand and respect each other's separateness. They allow one another to have their own thoughts, feelings, fears and values. This is a critical foundation for being able to listen incarnationally.

## **PETE**

A key word to grasp incarnationally listening is the word attunement. **PP** Attunement means not just listening to someone's words but their non-verbals – things like their eyes, facial expressions, tone of voice, tears, body posture and intensity of their words. When we are attuned to a person's words and body language, they “feel felt” by us. Attunement helps us sift through the facts to get to the feelings. Most of us have been trained to listen simply for information or facts. *THIS KIND OF LISTENING IS DIFFERENT.* The “prize,” is emotional connection, not information. We are making an internal shift to give our full attention and time to someone. **AND THIS IS TRULY THE MOST BASIC FORM OF LOVE.**

The Incarnation of Jesus serves as a beautiful model for us of this kind of listening. .

**PP** Jesus entered our world.

**PP** Jesus held onto himself -remaining fully God as He became fully human.

**PP** Jesus hung between two worlds.

In the way to listen incarnationally means we follow Jesus in this. As we listen, we leave our world. We enter another person's world. We hold on to ourselves. And then we hang between their world and ours.

TRANSITION: Now we want to show you a wrong model and then a right model of Incarnationally Listening .

Model poorly

Model correctly

## GERI

Now that you've seen a model of listening incarnationally, let me just mention a couple of things. We know it looks wooden. People note this often when they see it for the first time. But, trust me, it is a very different experience when you do it yourself. The structure is meant to provide guard rails to help you listen to the feelings and not just the words.

For example, when we were beginners at this skill, I said to Pete, "I felt like you murdered me with your words." And Pete responded "So you were a little angry with what I said." As you can see, he departed from the structure by changing my words and not feeling the hurt behind them. Following the structure keeps us honest and accurate.

Also, listening didn't mean agreement. They weren't trying to solve a problem but are only listening to empathize and for understanding. Problem solving is another skill. And by the way research has shown that 70% of problems can be solved through listening. That is very significant. So you want to learn this skill!

So here's what we would like you to do. In groups of two, one of you will be the speaker and the other the listener. Then you'll switch. Here are the guidelines. You will also find them in your workbook.

### As the Listener

- Give the Speaker your full attention (don't be thinking about your rebuttal)
- Step into the speaker's shoes and feel what they are feeling
- Avoid judging or interpreting
- Reflect back as accurately as you can what you heard them say
- When you think they are done ask "Is there more?"; (Many times there is more)
- When they are done ask them "Of everything you have shared what is the most important thing you want me to remember?"

### As the Speaker

- Speak in the "I".
- Keep statements brief (and if you are saying too much the listener can tap you on the knee or hand to pause you)
- Stop to let the other person paraphrase. (if they didn't hear you correctly, you let them know)
- Include feelings. (It's critical in this skill to be able to distinguish between thoughts and feelings. Many of us say things like, "I feel like going to the movies" or I feel that children should go to school 12 months a yr. If you use the words "" or "like" after "I feel" then you are not sharing a feeling but a thought. The only word that ought to come after a "I feel" is a feeling. I feel sad. I feel anxious. I feel excited. There is a sheet with feeling words in the appendix. Please use that and have it in front of you when you do this exercise.
- Remember: Be honest, clear, and respectful.

Transition: Now turn in your workbooks to the Partner Activity for this Session and follow the instructions in your workbook. You will be sharing around this question: “What is the biggest thing impacting you right now? And how are you feeling about it?”

### **Pete- Conclusion**

Let me share a few pointers as we close this session.

First, the Incarnational Listening guidelines are meant to serve as guardrails for us to keep us on track while learning a new skill. Yes, they may initially feel like a straightjacket. But remember: We are seeking to change a way of speaking and listening that goes back 3-4 generations!! Doing it poorly is in our bones.

If it is awkward, be assured that you are learning something new and that is a good thing. They are, as Geri said, like the training wheels of a bike. They are necessary when we begin learning to ride that bike. There will be a time where you will not need these guidelines as guardrails. But for now, to break deeply embedded bad habits, use them to get started.

Secondly, this skill of Incarnational Listening is a powerful spiritual formation/discipleship tool. It requires great character and maturity to truly listen to a person - especially when they are saying something we disagree with or something negative about us. So let me invite you to see this skill as a sharp tool in the hands of God to mature you, to help you drop your defenses, and to become more open and approachable. But again, this is not so easy.

And finally, incarnational listening can be a means to encounter God. Martin Buber, a Jewish theologian and writer in the 1900's developed a powerful framework for understanding relationships.. **PP** When we relate to a person as an object or as a means to an end, he said, we are treating them as an “It.” When we relate to a person as sacred or holy, attuning to them, we are treating them as a “Thou.” And when two people through speaking and listening have an “I-Thou” encounter, the space between them becomes holy, or sacred space. **PP** God, who is Love, comes and fills that space with His presence. We have seen that over and over and over again.

That is why Geri and I, when we first learned this skill, set aside time every week to practice Incarnational listening around the simple question, “What is the biggest thing impacting you and how are you feeling about it?”

### **Geri**

I will never forget the first time I experienced the fruit of this skill, and evidence of how God was changing us. Similar to what you did today, Pete and I sat and practiced the skill on several occasions. Then one day I was at the kitchen sink, and Pete walked in and asked me a question. He wanted my opinion about an issue he was struggling with related to work. In the past he didn't really want my opinion. It was just his way of processing out loud. But on this day, he looked into my eyes and was very present with me. He said, “I really want to listen to you. Your thoughts and feelings really matter to me.” I almost fell on the floor. I was grasping that this

wasn't just an exercise anymore but something profound was changing in him and in our relationship. It was a very holy moment.

### **Pete**

Again, this is not a problem-solving skill. That is the skill of Clean Fighting which we will learn later in this Course.

The greatest gift we can give the world is to love people in the name of Jesus - and make no mistake about it, that requires listening. Henri Nouwen said it this way, **PP** "From experience, you know that those who care for you become present to you. When they listen, they listen to you. When they speak, you know they speak to you....Their presence is a healing presence because they accept you on your terms, and they encourage you to take your own life seriously." And friends, listening is one of the greatest ways we can do that. Sadly, we as the church of Jesus Christ are not known for being "great listeners."

So for the next week, we ask that you practice incarnational listening at least 1x with someone. Decide when and with whom you'll practice this skill in the upcoming week. Use the question, "What is the biggest thing impacting you and how are you feeling about it?"

And continue prayerfully doing the devotionals from the *EH Relationships Day by Day* devotional. Week 5 on Incarnational listening complements beautifully what we have done in this session. And may you be present to the God who is present to you, may you listen to him who so faithfully listens to you, and as one theologian has said so well, 'May you behold the One who beholds you...and smiles.'

### **Session 6: Climb the Ladder of Integrity**

Introduction (10 min.)

### **PETE**

Let's review where we have come in The Emotionally Healthy Relationships Course. **PP (Graphic Pyramid, 1 by 1)** In Session 1, we began with The Community Temperature Reading - our beginner skill. In Session 2 we did Stop Mind Reading and Clarify Expectations. Then in Session 3 we did Genogram Your Family. Our 4th was Explore the Iceberg and our last session was Listen Internationally. This session builds on the previous skills and is more challenging. We call this "Climb the Ladder of Integrity".

This is used when something is bothering you - when you have been experiencing tension with someone or a situation when you find yourself, perhaps, angry, frustrated, bothered, or hurt. Often times it has to do with the fact that something important to you, i.e. something you value, is being violated.

Let's review the purpose of the Ladder of Integrity written in your workbook:

To clarify your values by processing your thoughts and feelings and, if necessary, to assert yourself respectfully. Say it 2x

Here are some examples:

- Every time you are out to dinner with your friend they take phone calls. It's getting to you but you are not sure whether you have a right to say something.
- You have a family member that tells racist jokes. It really bothers you but you don't know how to address it.
- You call your friend but they never call you. Why does this aggravate you so much?
- A co-worker continually talks negatively about another coworker and you have this growing uneasiness about it.
- Your friend consistently takes needless risks when driving and you have conflicting feelings about it.
- You are on edge every time you call home because there is something about the way your mother or father talk to you that disturbs you.
- You are becoming more conscious that you don't like watching movies that your spouse or someone else picks that have inappropriate or unnecessary sex or violence in them.

Climb the Ladder of Integrity is (a personal journaling tool) meant to help you get honest and clear about what is going on inside of you, to discover your values, and how, for you, they are being violated. Once you identify why something is important to you, then you can take responsibility for it. This, of course, involves slowing down for reflection. And that's what the Ladder of Integrity is all about. It is meant to help you respond thoughtfully, respectfully and effectively based on your values rather than merely being reactive and blaming. In other words it enables you to live with integrity. What I mean by that is what is important to you on the inside is congruent with what you are living on the outside.

So let's go back to a few of my earlier examples:

- Every time you are out to dinner with your friend they take phone calls. So instead of getting frustrated and saying nothing in an effort to be nice, or say something sarcastic like "Oh nice of you to join me again," You climb the Ladder and get in touch with your value of having a relationship where you respect each other by giving your full attention to one another.
- You have a family member that tells racial jokes. It really bothers you but you don't know how to address it. So instead of avoiding them or saying something like, "What is your problem?" you climb the Ladder and you get clear about your value for the dignity of all people. \_\_\_\_\_
- You call your friend but your friend never calls you. Instead of deciding I'm not going to call them any more, you climb the Ladder and get clear on how you value mutual initiative in this particular friendship.
- You are on edge every time you call home because there is something about the way your mother or father interact with you that you find disturbing. So instead of making excuses of why you can't visit them, you climb the Ladder and realize that when your mother or father speak to you, your own sense of value and dignity feels diminished. You prefer they speak to you clearly and respectfully. So you take time to prepare to have that conversation with them.

I have learned that in order to have a healthy relationship with myself and others I need to know my values. I need to be congruent between what I value and what I am living. Climbing the Ladder of Integrity helps us move toward this healthy integration. A lot of us don't realize how much depression and anxiety can stem from living out of fear of expressing ourselves. Unfortunately most of us have not been taught how to discover, and uncover, our values. The reason the Ladder of Integrity is so important is because Scripture tells us we are each uniquely created in the image of God with distinct preferences, hopes, dreams, and values. No one else can live your life and express your values for you.

### **PETE**

Climbing the Ladder of Integrity may sometimes involve moral issues of right and wrong. Other times it may involve gray areas or personal preferences. For example in Galatians 2, Paul's integrity caused him confront Peter about his hypocrisy by not eating with Gentiles in the church at Antioch. It may be a moral issue such as pornography, abusive anger, or stealing.

Others times, when we are talking about integrity, we are talking about what Romans 14 calls "gray issues". Gray issues refer to things that are not necessarily right or wrong. We may differ on the kinds of movies we watch or how far above the speed limit we go. Paul writes in Romans 14 "Some consider one day more sacred than another; others consider every day alike. Everyone should be fully convinced in their own mind."

Remember: The Ladder of Integrity is NOT a Conflict Resolution skill. Clean Fighting, the next skill, will be used for that. The purpose of this skill is for you to get clear and clarify what is going on inside of you so you can identify your values and then if appropriate, respectfully respond to them rather than react or blame others.

Note the progression of the Ladder in your workbook **PP**.

Notice we begin at the bottom and go up.

Numbers 1 to 6 have to do with WHAT IS GOING ON INSIDE OF ME.

1. "Right now the issue on my mind is..."
2. "I'm anxious in talking about this because..."
3. "My part in this is..."
4. "My need in this issue is..."
5. "My feelings about this are...."
6. What my reaction tells me about me is...

Then it moves to WHAT I VALUE in numbers 7-10

7. This issue is important to me because I value .... and I violate this value when... (you'll notice a star next to this because this is heart of what you are trying to get to in the Ladder)
8. I am willing/not willing to...
9. One thing I could do to improve the situation is....
10. The most important thing I want you to know is...

Then finally the last 2 sentence stems deal with WHAT I HOPE

11. I think my honest sharing will benefit our relationship by...

12. I hope and look forward to...

For now we are going to show you a model of someone using the Ladder of Integrity. Her name is Rebecca O'Connor. She is married to Max and they have a 5-year old daughter named Lindsay. They received an email from their daughter Lindsay's teacher. This is what it says: *"Hi Mrs. O'Connor, we want you to know that we have noticed that Lindsay has been very inconsistent with handing in her homework packet each day. Since we think this teaches a child responsibility, could you please make sure she finishes her homework each day? Thanks very much...." Signed... "The Teacher*

First you will see one possible wrong way of responding to this email. Then that will be followed by a right way as Rebecca, the mom, uses the Ladder of Integrity to get clear on her values.

**SCENE 1 WRONG WAY:** Dinner Table in their home

### **RETURN TO PETE**

Well, the Ladder helped Rebecca, a lot, to understand where her anger was coming from and to get beyond it to her values. After she and Max were able to have a great talk about what to do, it was decided she would have a conversation with the teacher... which she did. While their philosophy around homework may have differed from Lindsay's teacher, Rebecca and the teacher were able to share their perspectives with one another, and agree on the right approach that fit Lindsay going forward.

Now it is your turn. Let me invite you to, turn off the video and follow the instructions in your workbook to Climb the Ladder of Integrity yourself.

### Closing Remarks:

#### **Pete**

Again, the Ladder of Integrity is not about confronting another person. It is about getting clear within yourself, about helping us grow into more differentiated people. "Differentiation refers to our capacity to define our life goals apart from the pressures of those around us." This involves hard work as it requires calming down, and getting clear about what is important to us. We saw Rebekkah do this around Lindsay's teacher's request. That is why it is not uncommon to go up the Ladder several times to make sure all hints of blaming have been removed. That is when you know you are ready to talk to the other person. But there also may be times when, after working with the Ladder, getting clear within yourself is enough. And there is no need for you to go to the other person.

A friend of ours was recently asked to assume greater responsibility as a volunteer within a Christian organization. Rather than simply say yes out of guilt and the great need (something she normally did in the past), she went up the Ladder prayerfully to sort out her unease and get clear about her values. It became clear to her that if she did this, she would be violating her own value of self care and quality time with her family. This led her to say a healthy no - which she did. It WASN'T necessary for her to explain the whole back story of her values and process. Again, there are situations like this where the goal is just to get clear within yourself.

## GERI

We have used Climb the Ladder of Integrity in a variety of situations.

We have used it in our marriage, in parenting and with staff at our church. For example, one of our staff, who had tension with another co-worker wrote out the Ladder on his own and went over it with me as a neutral person. It took a couple of times up the Ladder to get to his core value. Once he got clear about his core value, he no longer felt reactive, and was able to have a non-blaming conversation with the co-worker he had been avoiding.

We are asking you to practice this Skill before the next session. After doing the Ladder, you may decide you want to have a conversation with the person with whom you have the issue. But it is not always necessary to do that.. It may be enough for you to have just gotten clear on your values.

## PETE

**PP** Now Jesus is our model of integrity. He was able to hold on to his integrity during His short earthly life. He resisted the temptations and the voices around Him to wander off from the clear path His Father had laid out for Him.

We wouldn't be here with you today if Geri had not gotten clear on her values and integrity. This enabled her to come to me (8 years after we started our church) when I was the lead pastor, and say "I Quit" the church. This was an awful moment for me. It was a crisis and felt like a disaster . But God would use it to profoundly change my life.

Geri's integrity forced me to look at where I was not living my own integrity - things like, where I was saying yes when I really wanted to say no, where I cared too much what others thought, and where I sometimes exaggerated to make myself look better. This drove me to God who then met me during that difficult season. Not only was I radically transformed but so was our marriage and our church. It also resulted in the birthing of Emotionally Healthy Discipleship which is now being used around the world.

You see, when you find your integrity, everyone around you experiences a newfound freedom as well. We have seen this again and again.

So again, you will want to do week 6 on the Ladder of Integrity in *The EH Relationships Day by Day* book. I have found that silence and stillness during times with God have been significant times where He has melted layers of pretense and superficiality in my life. I encourage you to be open for the Holy Spirit to talk to you during those times as well.

Let me close now with a favorite Hasidic tale of mine that points out our tendency to live someone else's life and not our own. It goes like this: " Rabbi Zusya, when he was an old man said this:, "In the coming world, God will not ask you, "Why were you not Moses? Why were you not Jeremiah? No. God will ask you "Why were you not you? Why didn't you live out your one, unique, unrepeatable life?"

For this reason the Ladder of Integrity can serve as a powerful key to unlock the door into spiritual maturity and the beautiful, unique life God has destined for each of us.

### **Session 7: CLEAN FIGHTING**

#### **Geri**

A core issue in discipleship in the new family of Jesus is learning how to resolve conflict maturely. Many people want to start with this skill - Clean Fighting. They want relief from the relational pain and tensions they are living with as quickly as possible. For this reason, it's important for us to give you realistic expectations around this skill. For one thing you have to understand conflict happens on a spectrum of 'who takes out the garbage' to 'a church split'.

In this session, we want you to think of this as a beginner conflict resolution tool. So we are not trying to deal with the large, long-standing conflicts.

What's also important to realize is that Clean Fighting builds on all the previous 7 skills we have worked on in this Course **PP** (Pyramid Graphic)- the CTR, Stop Mind Reading, Clarify Expectations, Genogram, Incarnational Listening, Explore the Iceberg, and Ladder of Integrity..

In order to be good at conflict resolution, you have to be good at knowing what's going on inside of you and be able to speak that respectfully, honestly, clearly and in a timely fashion. You need to be aware of any assumptions you may be making or invalid expectations you have. You need to be a really good listener who is able to enter another person's world and incarnationally listen. And you have to be able to get at your values as we talked about in the last session in the Ladder of Integrity.

So let me ask you, "how good are you at the other skills?" It will be important that you continue to practice and get comfortable using them..

Now, notice in your workbook THE PURPOSE of this Clean Fighting tool - it is to resolve conflict as emotionally mature adults by eliminating "dirty fighting" and taking responsibility for an issue.

#### **PETE**

We each come from families of origin where we learned how to do conflict a certain way. For example, perhaps your mother was yell/screamer (like mine) and your father was an appeaser who said little until he would reach a point where he would explode in anger (again like mine). Maybe you saw relationships in your family get ruptured or broken but never repaired. That is all I knew. How many of you had caretakers or parents that modeled for you, and taught you, how to deal with conflict in a mature, healthy way? In our experience very few of us.

In the church we misinterpret Jesus' words in Matthew 5:9 : Blessed are the peacemakers for they will be called sons of God. **PP** We think peacemaking is avoiding conflict at all costs so nobody gets upset. We mistakenly think it means we are to be nice. We don't want to rock the boat so we say nothing and end up in what can be called a "False Peace." Everything looks nice and good above the surface, but actually there is tension, resentment, and anger underneath.

But Jesus models for us true peacemaking. He didn't ignore tensions and differences. In fact, if you look closely, conflict was part of Jesus' life and ministry. He overturned the tables in the Temple. He had difficult conversations with the religious leaders. He confronted the 12 disciples multiple times. He was not afraid to speak truth and disagree with people. Jesus disrupted false peace in order to bring true peace.

In doing so, He shows us that true kingdom peace will never come by pretending that what is wrong is right-- or by pretending there is not tension when there is. In other words, true peacemakers love God and others enough to disrupt false peace. For this reason, learning to fight cleanly is a core discipleship issue for all of us.

It is important that we begin by looking at ways we do Dirty Fighting:

So now turn in your workbooks and follow the instructions.

**PAUSE VIDEO 2 min.**

**DIRTY FIGHTING SKIT**

**Pete**

Sadly, the way people resolve conflicts in the church is not very different from conflict resolution outside the church. In fact, it is possible to be a Xian for 5, 10,, 30, or 40 years and still do conflict the same way we did as a 12 year old in our family of origin.

If we did a genogram of our families and looked ONLY about how conflict was dealt with, we would probably see negative generational patterns, or emotionally immature ways of doing conflict, that goes back generations. So make no mistake about the significance of how much is at stake learning this skill of Clean Fighting.

**GERI**

A "Clean Fight" in reality is not a fight but a negotiation between two people for the sake of the relationship. The person asking for the "Clean Fight" recognizes THEY ARE THE ONE WITH THE ISSUE. They care enough to take responsibility for something important to them, rather than projecting blame on the other. The person listening to the issue cares enough to consider what is important to someone they care about. They are willing to negotiate. So for example, I did a Clean Fight with Pete about his talking on the cell phone when he walks in the house at the end of the day. It was upsetting to me. If he was married to someone else it might not bother them at all but it bothered me SO it was my issue, not Pete's.

**PETE**

Now we're going to show you the same roommates from a few minutes ago, modeling the process of a Clean Fight for us.. So follow along in your workbook as they go through the 8 steps of a Clean Fight:

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You just saw Clean Fighting modeled - Now let me walk you slowly through the Steps.

Notice the first thing the Speaker did was to Ask Permission to do a Clean Fight. When the other person says "ok" then the Speaker begins:

1. States the problem with "I notice..."
2. State why it is important to you. "I value..."
3. Fill in the following sentence: "When you... I feel ....."
4. State clearly, respectfully and specifically your request. Specifically means to include details such as time and dates.

The Listener then responds:

5. Considers the request. In a few sentences, briefly share your feelings and perspective on it.
6. Are you willing to do all of it, part of it, or none of it?

The Speaker

7. Agrees with the request, modifies the request, OR offers an alternative (They keep going back and forth until you come to an agreement, but not more than three times)

**Together**

8. Write your agreement and make a plan to go over it in 2-4 weeks. – go over in 2-4 weeks

Transition: Now it's your turn to practice. Follow the instructions in your workbook.

**PETE****Ending**

Most of us believe conflict is a sign of something going wrong, but the reverse is often true. It may actually indicate that something is going right. That is because conflict is normal, important, and necessary if relationships are going to flourish and mature over time..

So let me close with a couple of thoughts.

First, in a very real sense God invites us all of us to learn a new way - in this new family of Jesus - how to negotiate conflicts (i.e learn to have clean fights). This radically different way of doing relationships is one of the greatest gifts we as local churches and communities to the world around us.

Secondly, conflicts, quite often, can be places of revelation about God. You will notice that one of the readings in *EHR Day by Day* is from the story of Jacob and his long-standing cut off with his brother Esau. As Jacob prepares to resolve the conflict with his brother, he is filled with fear and anxiety. Yet God meets him in an extraordinary way. And Jacob is transformed in the

process. In the same way, as you do the courageous work of learning to have clean (and not dirty) fights, you too can expect God to meet you in new ways and mold you even more into the image of His Son Jesus.

Thirdly, we each need to learn and become aware of how our triggers in the present have roots in our past - i.e. our genograms. - especially as it relates to conflict. In fact, research shows 96% of arguments are determined in the first 3 minutes. Let me say it again. 96% of arguments are determined in the first 3 minutes. So you want to be really careful how you start the conversation. Start softly. Be mindful of your tone, face and body language. And if you find yourself triggered and wanting to run out of the room be sure to ask for a time out. Or if you started out in the wrong tone and find the conversation spiraling downward, you can simply say, "Hey, I'm sorry, I didn't start out right. Can we start again?"

And finally, remember not every conflict gets resolved this side of heaven. In those cases, it involves forgiveness and letting go. Now you may have inadvertently found yourself in a "fight" that is complex, and requires significant skill to unpack and dissect. When that happens, you will want to speak to a mature mentor, a pastor, or a professional counselor. These are significant moments for our discipleship and maturing in Christ.

I trust you can now increasingly see how much these skills have a lot to do with a growing spirituality. So, let me encourage you to slow down to integrate silence, stillness and Scripture into your life through *The EH Relationships Day by Day* book. This week's Scriptures and devotionals revolve around our skill of Clean Fighting. Utilize that time to be with Jesus, opening your heart to new things God might be seeking to say to you, and surrendering your will to His.

Now this week, your assignment is to practice this "Clean Fighting" skill. And don't be afraid, God will be with you as He was with Jacob.

## **Session 8: Develop a Rule of Life to Implement Skills**

### **PETE**

The Emotionally Healthy Discipleship Courses were developed over many years to address critical missing components of discipleship in the church today. **PP** Part 1, The Emotionally Healthy (EH) Spirituality Course, focuses on helping people learn how to love God. Part 2 – EH Relationships - focuses on helping us learn to love people. Our hope is that they will serve as an introduction and framework for the rest of your discipleship journey.

It is as easy today to separate loving God from loving people as it was in the days of Jesus. The religious leaders of Jesus' day were zealous and had memorized whole books of the Bible. But they were rigid, judgmental, condescending, and proud. Little mercy and love flowed from them. For Jesus, the first test of a relationship with God is not that we are morally tougher but more importantly, that we are mercifully softer.

We observed this gap in our own church that we led for 26 years.. And we, of course, observed the gap in our own lives. So we have spent these years refining, testing, and developing what you have learned in this Course. As we said in the opening Session, we learn many skills to be competent in our careers and at school. We don't learn, however, the skills necessary to grow into emotionally mature Christians who love well. Scripture is clear: "By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another" Jn. 13:35 We are to be the best lovers of people on the face of the earth.

## **GERI**

The goal of this Session is to help you create a specific plan to sustain the use of the Skills long-term into your life.

So now let me invite you to look at the chart in your workbook of the 8 skills. Let's review them together. We began with The Community Temperature Reading (CTR for short). Its purpose is to increase awareness of your God-given value, and your voice, and to build healthy relationships with others. The second skill was called Stop Mind Reading. Its purpose is to clarify what another person is thinking instead of make assumptions. The third is Clarify Expectations. Its purpose is to recognize whether certain expectations are valid or not, and to clarify them with others. The fourth is Genogram Your Family. Its purpose is to become aware of and break the unhealthy patterns in your family-of- origin in order to live your God-given purpose. The fifth is Explore the Iceberg. Its purpose is to become aware of your emotions with the goal of processing them and discerning God's will. The sixth is Listen Incarnationally. Its purpose is to listen at a heart level with empathy, attuned to the words and non-verbal cues of another person. The seventh is Climb the Ladder of Integrity. Its purpose is to clarify your values by processing your thoughts and feelings, and to assert yourself respectfully. And the eighth and final skill is Clean Fighting. Its purpose is to resolve conflict maturely by eliminating "dirty fighting" tactics and taking responsibility for the issue.

## **PETE**

Now we want to invite you to create what is called a Personal Rule of Life. Please don't be intimidated by the word "rule". The word comes from the ancient Greek word for "trellis." PP A trellis is a structure that enables a grapevine to get off the ground and grow upward, becoming more fruitful and productive. In the same way, a Rule of Life is a trellis that helps us abide in Christ and become more fruitful spiritually. It is an intentional, conscious plan to keep God at the center of all we do - and in the case of this Course - in all our relationships as disciples in the new family of Jesus.

So turn off the video and follow the instructions in your workbook.

## **Closing Summary**

### **Pete**

Congratulations – Learning these eight new relationship skills is something that can be overwhelming- but you did it! Make no mistake about it – regardless of your age, your race, your

culture, where you were born, age, or where you live, these are COUNTERCULTURAL ways of relating. The relationship skills clash with many of our normal ways of relating. So don't underestimate what is involved in doing these skills. The changes you seek from what you learned in the EH Relationships Course won't happen overnight, but fruit will emerge if you stay with them. We can assure you of one thing - if you patiently persevere to do these skills, the mustard seed of God in you will grow remarkably and powerfully until it becomes visible to everyone around you.

The most important thing is that you make progress. Remember the image we showed you in Session 1 called **PP** "EH Relationships in the New Family Of Jesus" On the left side you saw symptoms of broken relationships. It was marked, for example, by defensiveness, low self-awareness, and blaming. Our goal during these 8 weeks has been to move you to the greater wholeness on the right side. These are relationships marked by qualities like: high self-awareness, non-reactivity, and delight.

In this final session, you hopefully identified one to three skills, in particular, that God is inviting you to take as our Course concludes. However, it is important that we keep perspective on how slowly we learn and change.

Our experience has shown us that you usually need to go through the skills in this Course 2-3 times to actually get them. So, see if you can create a context where you do the Course again. Perhaps you can do it with a friend, neighbor, or willing co-worker. Perhaps you can be a group table leader the next time the Course is offered.

Our hope and prayer is that you will learn these skills and take them out into your workplace, school, family, friendships, and neighborhood. What a gift you now have at your fingertips to give the world in the name of Jesus!

It is an exciting, life changing journey. And I promise you - neither you, nor those around you, will ever be the same.

So let me pray an ancient Celtic prayer over you as we conclude our time together and you go out into the world.

May the peace of the Lord Christ go with you,  
wherever He may send you.

May He guide you through the wilderness,  
protect you through the storm.

May He bring you home rejoicing  
at the wonders He has shown you.

May He bring you home rejoicing  
once again into our doors.

In Jesus' name! AMEN