

The Immanuel Approach (to Emotional Healing and to Life)
Chapter 24: Immanuel Approach Exercises for Groups & Beginners

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I. Introduction. As described in chapter fourteen, our experience with emotional healing prior to the Immanuel approach was that we could only do troubleshooting in a one-on-one setting, and we had decided to avoid emotional healing work in group settings after a painful group exercise misadventure in which a number of participants had all gotten stuck at the same time (each needing one-on-one assistance that we were not able to provide). However, as also described in chapter fourteen, as Dr. Wilder and I worked with the Immanuel approach we realized that several of the principles and process pieces that are new with the Immanuel approach make it possible to deploy a number of “safety nets” that protect against this problem. Therefore, one aspect of the Immanuel approach to emotional healing that is particularly exciting is that it can be used in group settings.

When one thinks about the war torn third world countries, where millions of people have post-traumatic stress disorder but where there are minimal resources available for these multitudes to get effective treatment to address their traumatic memories, it is hugely strategically important that the Immanuel approach can be used with many people simultaneously. For example, an emotional healing mission team can gather a large group of trauma survivors and facilitate healing for all of them at the same time. As mentioned earlier, Charlotte and I, Dr. Wilder, the Khouris, the Courseys, Pastor Patti Velotta, Mark Hattendorf, and several other colleagues have been experimenting with group exercises in a number of different settings over the last four to five years. And the results so far have been very encouraging – together, we have worked with thousands of group exercise participants, with group sizes ranging from 25 to 1200, and we have seen lots of healing with minimal problems.

Prior to developing the Immanuel approach we were also cautious about lay people doing emotional healing work (we wanted them to get a lot of training before facilitating lay ministry), and we felt that beginners should only practice under the close supervision of experienced facilitators. As with group exercises, we were concerned that recipients might get stuck – we were concerned that some recipients would open up painful memories, encounter difficulties beyond the troubleshooting abilities of lay ministers/beginners, and then be re-traumatized by remaining in the unresolved trauma for extended periods of time. However, as we have been working so diligently to clarify the principles and sharpen the tools for using the Immanuel approach with groups, we have realized that the same “safety nets” that make it possible to use the Immanuel approach safely with groups also make it possible for lay people to safely provide emotional healing ministry with much less training. This means that more lay people can become lay ministers much more quickly and easily, and this means that many people with less complicated trauma will be able to get healing with lay ministers, instead of having to wait for one of the rare and overloaded Immanuel approach mental health professionals. Furthermore, these same “safety nets” also make it possible for unsupervised beginners to safely practice with each other. This means that a handful of people anywhere in the world can get together to learn and practice with each other. You don’t have to wait for one of the rare Immanuel approach trainers to come and supervise as you practice with each other.¹ You can just gather a handful of

¹It is tremendously helpful to have a trainer teach you about the Immanuel approach and then supervise you as you practice with each other, and you should therefore take advantage of any opportu-

your friends, family, or colleagues, put together your own study group, and then receive Immanuel approach healing in the context of practicing with each other.

This is good news for the millions of third world citizens with severe post traumatic stress disorder and minimal resources, and also for those of us with less trauma and more resources. Even in first world countries there are many people with moderate trauma who are having a hard time finding someone to facilitate Immanuel approach sessions for them. As mentioned in chapter fourteen, we have invested a lot of time and energy in building the new Immanuel network directory (see the “Referrals” page of www.immanuelapproach.com), and when we first put it up we had hoped that large numbers of facilitators would quickly post profiles. Unfortunately, many well trained, experienced facilitators have chosen to not post profiles because they are already swamped with more requests than they can care for. Consequently, many who would like to receive Immanuel approach sessions are still having difficulty in finding facilitators, and this problem will probably continue for some time.

Bringing us back to the good news that the Immanuel approach safety nets make it possible for many more lay ministers to get adequate training much more quickly and easily, and the good news that these same safety nets make it possible for unsupervised lay person beginners to safely practice with each other. My hope is that large numbers of lay people will take advantage of every possible training opportunity, so that we have a steadily, rapidly growing number of facilitators available to the general public. I am also hoping that people will build study/practice groups by actively recruiting family and/or friends and/or colleagues, and then use the do-it-yourself Immanuel approach training resources in this context. If these possibilities develop as I am hoping they might, then lay people practicing with each other in the context of do-it-yourself Immanuel approach study/practice groups along with individual sessions facilitated by lay ministers will be two of the most important resources for those who are wanting to experience the Immanuel approach.

II. Immanuel Approach safety nets. As described in chapter fourteen, several of the principles and process pieces that are new with the Immanuel approach make it possible to put a number of “safety nets” in place – safety nets that make it possible to responsibly use the Immanuel approach in group settings, that make it possible for lay ministers to responsibly facilitate Immanuel approach healing with much less training, and that make it possible for beginners to responsibly practice without supervision.

A. Safety net number one: The initial steps of identifying a positive memory, deliberate appreciation, and establishing an adequate interactive connection with the Lord combine to set up an especially reliable “home base” that the lay person/beginning facilitator can use as a back up (“safety net”) troubleshooting resource. If the recipient loses her connection with God and other basic Immanuel intervention troubleshooting tools are not effective in reestablishing an interactive connection, the facilitator can coach the person to go back to the interactive connection from the beginning of the session. And then, in this safe, positive context, the facilitator can coach the recipient to engage directly with Jesus and ask Him for guidance and help regarding the point in the session at which she was *not* able to perceive His presence or establish an interactive connection. We have been amazed at the effectiveness of this simple

nity to learn from someone who is already experienced with the Immanuel approach, but I don’t think this is necessary (which is a good thing, since there are so few trainers).

safety net troubleshooting intervention.

The especially reliable home base that gets set up at the beginning of the session also provides a “make sure the person is okay” safety net at the end of the session. If the recipient gets stuck in a bad place and is not able to resolve whatever blockages are preventing her from moving forward, or if she is unable to finish processing her traumatic memory because she simply runs out of time, she can return to the positive memory, appreciation, and interactive connection with the Lord that were all refreshed at the beginning of the session. She may be disappointed that she was not able to resolve the traumatic memory, but she at least ends up back at a safe place of relational connection and positive emotions.

As described earlier, having a safety net that helps the recipient get back to her initial interactive connection with Jesus, even if she gets stuck regarding her trauma work and/or runs out of time, is like having a safety net that would enable a pilot to always get her plane safely back on the ground. It’s still *ideal* to learn the Immanuel approach with an experienced facilitator sitting beside you and coaching you as you practice, but in areas where no experienced facilitator coaches are available, having a safety net that can get the recipient safely back on the ground minimizes the risks to the point that many beginners are willing to learn and practice even without supervision.²

B. Safety net number two: When working with groups, when teaching the basic exercises to lay ministers, and especially when training beginners, we set a policy that establishes a second safety net. Those who are *not* able to perceive the Lord’s presence and establish an interactive connection with Him at the beginning of the exercise are encouraged to participate in the rest of the exercise as intercessors, but *they do not work with their own traumatic memories*. This precaution seems to identify and protect those who are most likely to get stuck and have a negative experience, and thereby provides a second safety net. It also identifies those who do not have the primary safety net in place, which is another really good reason for them to abstain from working on their own trauma.

C. Safety net number three: Whether you are working with a large group of three hundred or whether you are practicing in an Immanuel approach study group of twelve, the first step of the group exercise is to divide the larger group into very small circles of three to five. This provides a third safety net, or maybe I should say that it provides a team that can make sure the first safety net gets deployed effectively. If the recipient gets stuck in a negative place, the others in her small group can help her return to her initial positive place by coaching her to describe the initial positive memory, to repeat the deliberate appreciation exercise, and then to reestablish the initial interactive connection with the Lord. Dividing the larger group into small clusters also provides a setting in which each member can report regarding her experience (describing “whatever comes into her awareness”), at each step in the process, and thereby benefit from the ways in which our brains work better in community.³ This significantly

²These ideas obviously also apply to situations in which a small team of experienced facilitators are leading an exercise for a large group, with each team member floating over many small groups (and therefore not able to provide one-on-one troubleshooting for individual participants who encounter difficulties). With this kind of safety net protection, a small team of facilitators can lead a group exercise for several hundred participants.

³If you are not already familiar with our teaching about the importance of each participant describing “whatever comes into her awareness,” and the intriguing ways in which God has designed our brains to

increases the effectiveness of the exercise, both increasing good results and decreasing disappointing results.

III. The super simple exercise: During the summer of 2012, a mission team spent a week in Uganda doing emotional healing ministry with teens and young adults who had survived horrific war crimes perpetrated by Joseph Kony's Lord's Army, and the reason I know about the adventure is that one of the team members (Julie Woodley) learned about the Immanuel approach a couple months before they left. The team had already been prepared to use Theophostic-based tools and emotional healing resources that Julie has developed, but Julie was excited about what she was learning and experiencing with the Immanuel approach, so they threw in some Immanuel approach pieces at the last moment. And the final result was quite spectacular – more than a hundred teens and young adults received powerful healing as they encountered Jesus' living presence in their traumatic memories.

Several months later I was having lunch with Julie and Jim DeMar, another member of the summer 2012 Uganda mission team. Julie and Jim were describing the amazing things they had witnessed during their recent trip, and we were all talking about the possibility that the two of them would lead a second, similar trip in August of 2013. Somewhere in this conversation, I popped out with, "You know, if we stripped the Immanuel approach down to the absolute minimum, I think we could come up with a package of principles and tools that would still be effective for most trauma, and that your mission team could leave behind in Uganda – I think we could come up with a package that you could explain, demonstrate, and then coach practice with to the point that when you leave, the young people in Uganda could keep using it to minister to each other." And then I threw out a bunch of thoughts regarding how one might go about training a mission team to implement this vision. When I was finished, Julie and Jim paused, and then responded with, "We're going to bring our team to Evanston so that you can train them to do this."

So I came up with a super simple package of principles and tools specifically designed for this purpose. In every possible way I tried to limit the explanations, healing interventions, and troubleshooting tools to a package that a mission team of lay volunteers, with one week to work with, could effectively transfer to uneducated teenagers in Uganda. We got a chance to test drive this super simple package in the spring of 2013, when Jim, Julie, their team for August 2013, another small mission team preparing for emotional healing work in India, and a few other folks gathered in Evanston for two days of training, and the results were very encouraging. The participants seemed to experience minimal intimidation, overwhelm, or confusion, and most of them were able to facilitate significant emotional healing for each other. And as I watched the seminar participants learning and practicing with the super simple exercise, I realized that this super simple package is not just good for teaching teens in Uganda, but that it is probably also the best exercise for any lay person beginners practicing for the first time with the full Immanuel approach.⁴ Therefore, as of March 2013, I am including the super simple exercise in the package of exercises for groups and beginners, and my recommendation is that people become

function best in community, this material will be covered in detail in chapter 17, "Describe Whatever Comes Into Your Awareness (Our Brains Work Better in Community)."

⁴When I refer to "the full Immanuel approach," I'm referring to the full process, including working with traumatic memories, as opposed to just practicing with the safety net pieces (positive memory, deliberate appreciation, and interactive connection with God).

comfortable and confident with this super simple exercise before adding additional healing interventions and troubleshooting tools.

I would like to offer a few final thoughts to teams trying to teach the Immanuel approach during short mission trips and to Immanuel approach trainers who work with lay person beginners. When demonstrating the super basic principles and tools, the goal is not to use all of the knowledge, skill, and tools that you have in order to resolve every possible problem as efficiently as possible, but rather to present the simplest possible package that will still work fairly well most of the time. When I demonstrate this super basic package, I openly acknowledge that there will be some situations that are more complicated, and that will require principles, tools, and skills in addition to those included in the super simple exercise. *And then I remind the trainees that this is what the safety net is for.* In fact, when I do demonstrations in this setting, I try to find at least one person with more complicated issues, and then deliberately withhold additional skills and tools so that I can model, “this is what it looks like when you encounter something more complicated, so that the super basic tools and skills are not adequate to resolve the problem, and then you need to use the safety net.” And when I coach practice sessions in this setting I *require* people to use the safety net, even if they don’t actually need it,⁵ because I want them to prove to themselves that it’s okay to stop the healing work, *without fully resolving the trauma*, and then use the safety net to help the recipient get back to a good place.

When demonstrating the super basic principles and tools, the goal is not to impress the trainees with how you can handle every possible problem, but then produce a final reaction of, “Wow. You’re really skillful and amazing (*but I could never do that myself*).” Rather, the goal is to impress the trainees with how simple it can be, and to have their final reaction be, “I can do that!” Another way to say this is that the more knowledge, skill, clinical judgement, and therapy tools you include in your demonstrations, the more intimidating and overwhelming the overall package will feel to the average lay person beginner.

My observation is that people just being introduced to the Immanuel approach have a much easier time getting started if they begin with the super simple exercise as their first experience with practicing the full Immanuel approach, and if they make sure to prove to themselves that the safety net works. Most are amazed by how much trauma gets healed, even when they are limited to only the super simple principles and tools.

Advanced topics warning: If you’re reading this material for the first time, just to get the overview regarding the Immanuel approach safety nets, then I would recommend skipping/skimming the next section (for now) so that these practical details don’t slow you down and hinder you from seeing the big picture. Come back for these practical details when you’re ready to actually start practicing with Immanuel approach exercises.

IV. Basic Immanuel approach exercise instructions: Note that this is a description of the complete basic exercise, including all of the pieces from establishing an initial interactive connection through resolving traumatic memories, and including a few more healing

⁵If they aren’t finding places where they are genuinely stuck, I tell them, “As soon as the recipient gets connected to the traumatic memory, use the safety net immediately, before she even invites Jesus to be with her in the painful place.”

interventions and troubleshooting tools than the super simple exercise. Groups who are already experienced with the Immanuel approach routinely go through the full basic exercise, just as described here. However, if you are working with total beginners, who are trying the Immanuel approach for the very first time, we strongly encourage you to begin with the introductory exercise at the end of this document that includes just the safety net pieces (positive memory, deliberate appreciation, and establishing an initial interactive connection). And then, after people feel confident with the initial steps up to the point of establishing an interactive connection with Jesus, continue on to working with painful memories. Some of our beta-testing groups have spent as much as four to eight hours just practicing these initial steps of positive memory, appreciation, and connection, establishing the foundation for the session and getting the primary safety net in place, before moving on to the more challenging trauma work.⁶ And again, when you first start working with painful memories, begin with the super simple exercise, with ONE healing intervention and ONE troubleshooting tool. Then, after people feel comfortable with the super simple exercise, move on to the full basic exercise described here, that includes a few more interventions and troubleshooting tools.

A. Break up into small groups: When breaking a larger group into smaller circles for practicing the exercises, three is usually the ideal number. Three is the smallest number that protects against inappropriate pair bonding,⁷ and it also provides for a person who can intercede and refer to the notes while the primary facilitator is focusing on the recipient. Aside from these considerations, smaller is better because each person will have more opportunity to participate as both recipient and lead facilitator, and because most people will feel more comfortable working on personal pain in the context of a smaller group. Sometimes other factors need to be considered, such as when four or five people come to a conference as a team and it seems right for them to practice together; but unless there are significant considerations indicating otherwise, we encourage people to break into clusters of three. If you have *lots* of time and don't mind the exercises going *very* slowly, you can work in larger groups of six, eight, or even more, but you will want to pay special attention to the concern that some participants may not feel comfortable working in front of such a large audience. In certain very specific situations, two is the right number. For example, we encourage prayer partners and marriage partners to experiment with facilitating Immanuel approach sessions for each other, and the most

⁶Careful, generous practice with getting the primary safety net in place (setting up a "home base" positive memory and establishing an initial interactive connection with Jesus), is especially important when working with people who have intense trauma, and *especially* especially important when working with groups of people who all have similar intense trauma. If one of the participants starts talking about her trauma with too much graphic detail, and thereby triggers many of the others, the participants need to have enough skill with the primary safety net so that the ministry team can call a "time out," and then coach everybody to go back to their positive memories and connections with Jesus. Another way to put this is, "If you're in a situation where most of people in the room might catch on fire at the same time, you really want to make sure that the sprinkler system is in place and ready to go."

⁷According to Dr. Wilder, if a man and woman spend time together as a couple their neurological bonding circuits will unavoidably move towards pair bonding, and this involuntary, neurological pair bonding inherently includes a sexual component. This pair bond does not grow because the man and woman start out wanting to pursue an inappropriate relationship, but just because that's what bonding circuits do when members of the opposite sex spend time together as a couple. In contrast, when three or more people are together their neurological bonding circuits will usually try to build family bonds (as opposed to romantic pair bonds). Note regarding reference: Dr. Wilder learned about pair bonding vs family bonding in a private conversation with Dr. Allan Schore. Unfortunately, we are not aware of any published research reference regarding this phenomena.

convenient arrangement is often to get together with just each other. However, Immanuel approach sessions can be powerfully intimate experiences, and people who practice in pairs need to be VERY careful to avoid inappropriate pair bonding. In fact, we *strongly* recommend that people not practice as mixed gender pairs in any situation where a growing pair bond would be a problem.⁸

As you continue with the exercises, keep both functions of the small group in mind: 1) The small group provides a context for describing “whatever comes into your awareness” at each point in the exercise;⁹ 2) the other members of the group can help the recipient get back to the positive initial starting place if she gets stuck in intense negative emotions.

Opening prayer and commands (optional, depending on context): Whenever I facilitate the Immanuel approach, I start the session with opening prayer and commands, as described in the “Opening Prayer and Commands” essay (available as a free download from either the “Getting Started” or “Resource” pages of www.immanuelapproach.com). And if I am coaching Immanuel approach prayer partners or a small study/practice group, I usually encourage them to start their sessions and practice exercises with our sample opening prayer and commands, or our sample condensed opening prayer and commands (also available as free downloads from either the “Getting Started” or “Resource” pages of www.immanuelapproach.com). However, with large group exercises I usually say the opening prayer and commands myself, silently, before we start the group exercise. This is because most of the larger groups I have worked with have included participants who had very little teaching or experience with demonic phenomena, and I was concerned that the prayers and commands dealing with demonic spirits might confuse and/or trigger them. If you are leading a group exercise and you happen to know that the participants are familiar with demonic phenomena, I think it is ideal for small cluster of three to five participants to start the exercise with our sample opening prayer and commands (or at least something similar).

B. Positive memories and deliberate appreciation: Ask the Lord to bring forward a memory of a previous positive experience of perceiving His presence and connecting with Him. If no memory comes forward spontaneously, take time to deliberately find one. Ask the Lord to help you recognize different aspects of the positive experience that you can specifically appreciate. Each person in the group then describes her positive connection memory to the others in the small group, and names specific things she appreciates about the experience. The goal is to *reconnect* with the positive memory, and to describe specific things that you appreciate until you *feel* appreciation/gratitude. Note that faith and gratitude “momentum” usually grow for all in the group as each person shares.

Remember that you may need to help other group members in using safety net #1 later in the

⁸For example, growing intimacy and pair bonding between spouses would be wonderful, but a growing pair bond between practice partners who are each married to someone else would be a huge problem.

⁹We realize that it takes a lot more time for each participant to report to the rest of the group at each step in the process (as opposed to each person just doing the exercises silently in her head), but our perception is that this is part of the larger picture that has enabled people to do group exercises and unsupervised beginner practice with good results and minimal breakage. If you are skeptical regarding the importance of this piece, please review chapter seventeen, “Describe Everything that Comes Into Your Awareness (Our Brains Work Better in Community).”

exercise. As described below, sometimes you will need to remind them of specifics as part of coaching/helping them to return to their positive memories, repeat their deliberate appreciations, and reestablish their initial connections with Jesus. So pay attention (taking brief notes is ideal).

As we and our colleagues have been working with the Immanuel approach, with groups and individuals and in many different settings, we have identified several frequently asked questions and special considerations with respect to the positive memories that recipients work with to begin the Immanuel approach process:

1. “What if I don’t have any memories of positive connections with the Lord?”:

Memories of past positive connections with the Lord are ideal, but if you have not yet had special interactive connections with God then use a memory of some other special event. For example, a memory of a particularly beautiful experience with one of your children, a favorite family Christmas memory, a memory of an especially positive vacation with friends, or a memory of thoroughly enjoying your favorite meal. You can practice deliberately reentering the positive memory, reconnecting with the positive emotions associated with the positive memory, and deliberately focusing on things you appreciate even if an interactive connection with God was not part of the original positive experience. Also, for step 3, below, you can experiment with asking the Lord to help you perceive His presence and establish an interactive connection in the context of this “non-God” positive memory. Maybe this exercise will be your first time for perceiving the Lord’s presence and experiencing and interactive connection.

2. More than one positive memory: One positive memory is usually adequate, but it is ideal to have several, since appreciation momentum builds as one works with several positive memories in succession. Having several memories available will be helpful if anyone gets stuck in particularly intense negative emotions later in the exercise, and therefore needs an especially strong positive memory and appreciation safety net. So if you are working with people who are more likely to need an especially strong safety net (for example, they have survived severe trauma, their support system is poor, and their coping skills are weak), we recommend repeating the first step several times, so that each person has a safety net that includes several positive memories.

3. Appreciation memories without splinters: Many people have positive connection with God memories that still include trauma splinters. For example, the person’s appreciation memory may be for an Immanuel approach session in which she experienced Jesus’ loving, healing presence powerfully *with* her in a traumatic memory of her intoxicated father emotionally, physically, and sexually abusing she and her siblings. However, in this kind of complicated trauma, it is common to have a number of distinct traumatic pieces, so that unresolved pieces (or “splinters”) may remain, even while the parts of the memory that *have* been resolved *are* indeed now positive places where the person experiences the Lord’s healing presence. And if the traumatic memory the person works on later in the exercise resonates with the unresolved splinters, the initial appreciation parts of the memory can get blended together with the negative thoughts and emotions from the (now) activated splinters, so that the memory is no longer usable as a safety net. Therefore, if the people you are working with are describing appreciation memories that may have splinters (the positive memories being describe are about the Lord’s presence in the midst of trauma), and especially if many of the people in your larger group have similar traumas, so that each person’s splinters could trigger other participants, it is important to coach the participants to

deliberately find positive memories that are completely free of splinters – memories without any aspect of pain or trauma. For example, feeling God’s presence while appreciating a beautiful sunset, seeing Jesus standing beside her as she holds her new baby, or experiencing a connection with Jesus in the context of a particularly beautiful worship service.

If a participant discovers that all her memories of positive God connections are memories of God’s presence in the midst of trauma, she can try a simple exercise that is often successful in generating completely splinter-free memories of interactive connections with God. The participant starts with a non-God positive appreciation memory, such as holding her baby, playing with a favorite pet, spending time with a best friend, or some beautiful nature experience like looking out over the Grand Canyon at sunrise. Then, just as for those who don’t yet have positive memories for interactions with God (above), she can go through the deliberate appreciation step with these non-God positive memories, and then use these same memories to go through step C, below. With this simple exercise, many become able to perceive God’s interactive presence in memories that had previously been non-God positive memories, and these new interactive connection positive memories are totally splinter-free (not associated with trauma in any way).

C. Reenter a positive memory and establish an interactive connection with the Lord: After you have identified one or more memories of past positive connection with the Lord, and *feel* appreciation for His presence and care in these past experiences, spend several minutes reentering/reconnecting with one of the memories. Then, from “inside” the memory, pray something along the lines of “Lord, help me to be aware of Your living presence, and to have an interactive connection with You.”¹⁰ Share whatever comes into your awareness with the others in your group. Again, if you have not yet had experiences of interactive connection with the Lord, then use a memory of some other special event.

Note that it’s best to take turns for the piece just described (the first part of step C), with group members going through this part of the process one at a time. This is because of the way our brains work better in community. When people go through this step in the Immanuel approach process, perception of the Lord’s presence and the interactive connection can sometimes be subtle, presenting through thoughts and/or images and/or emotions that the participants initially do not recognize. In fact, people often do not recognize the Lord’s presence, or that an interactive connection has been established, until they describe what they are experiencing, out loud, to the rest of the group. And these subtle thoughts, images, and emotions that the person misses until she describes them out loud – these subtle pieces on the periphery of her awareness, that don’t initially feel important or make sense – these are the pieces of mental content that the “describe whatever comes into your awareness” technique is designed to capture. As you will recall from chapter seventeen, when a person disciplines herself to describe these pieces to the others in her group (even though they don’t yet feel important or

¹⁰As mentioned earlier (chapter eight), in most cases, the person perceives the Lord’s living presence and establishes an interactive connection in the context of the memory imagery (the subjective experience of being inside the memory spontaneously morphs into a new, living interaction with Him, but still in the context of the autobiographical content carried in the memory). However, some people will perceive the Lord’s living, interactive presence in the room where they are receiving ministry; some people will perceive the Lord’s living, interactive presence in the context of a different memory that comes forward spontaneously; some people will perceive the Lord’s living, interactive presence in the context of imagery that does not seem to be coming from any specific memories, and some will experience two or more of these simultaneously.

make sense), they get pulled through the part of her brain that is able to feel that they *are* actually important, and that is able to recognize how they fit into the picture.

Taking turns is important because it's hard to hold onto these subtle, vague, "unimportant" thoughts, images, and emotions. Shoot, noticing them even when they're right in front of you is difficult, let alone trying to remember the vague, "unimportant" content that was hovering in the periphery of your awareness ten minutes ago. If everybody goes through the first part of this step at the same time, when they get to the second part where each group member describes her experience, there will be a long delay between the prayer and the verbal report for everybody but the person who goes first. The participants should therefore take turns, with each member of the group going through the whole process of reconnecting with her positive memory, asking the Lord for help with perceiving His presence and establishing an interactive connection, and then describing "whatever" comes into her awareness before moving onto the next participant.¹¹

After each member of the group has gone through the first part of this step, pick one person to continue through the rest of the exercise as the recipient and pick a second person to be the primary facilitator. As the recipient is working on her traumatic memory, the primary facilitator (with the support of the other group members) should be reminding/coaching her regarding the instructions. (Ideally, the facilitator will coach regarding the instructions to the point that the recipient can focus all of her attention on her healing, without having to worry about looking at the instructions.) The facilitator (with the support of the others) also needs to apply the safety nets if the recipient gets stuck. *Note that from this point onward these exercise instructions are directed to the facilitator.*

If the recipient perceives Jesus' presence and has established an interactive connection with Him: proceed on to D.

If the recipient does not perceive Jesus' presence or have an interactive connection with Him, and you would like to try simple troubleshooting: 1.) Coach the recipient to ask, "What's in the way of my perceiving Your presence and having an interactive connection with You?," coach her to observe whatever thoughts, emotions, images, memories, physical sensations, etc that come into her awareness, and coach her to describe these to the others in the group *regardless of whether they "make sense" or feel important.*¹² 2.) Coach the recipient to ask, "What do I need to do to take the next step forward?," coach her to observe whatever thoughts, emotions, images, memories, physical sensations, etc that come into her awareness, and coach her to describe these to the others in your group *regardless of whether*

¹¹If all the participants already have experience with the Immanuel approach, and are consistently able to quickly and easily perceive the Lord's presence and establish an interactive connection, then you can save time by doing the first part of this step all together. That is, you can have the whole group reenter their memories, invite the Lord, and ask for interactive connections all at the same time, and then take turns just for the next part, where each group member shares regarding her experience.

¹²Remember, the purpose of the "describe everything" discipline is not to push people to describe details they feel uncomfortable talking about, but rather to help people describe details that are being withheld because they don't feel important and/or make sense. Therefore, coaching the recipient to "describe everything" always needs to be in the context of "to the extent you feel comfortable doing so."

they “*make sense*” or *feel important*.¹³ 3.) Follow-up regarding any directions the Lord provides.

If troubleshooting has identified and resolved blockages, so that the recipient is now able to perceive the Lord’s presence and connect with Him, then proceed on to D.

If the recipient does not perceive the Lord’s presence or have an interactive connection with Him after a brief season of simple troubleshooting, then coach her to return to her positive memories and appreciation until she *feels* appreciation and is at an okay place to stop.

Caution note: if the recipient is not able to establish an interactive connection with the Lord *then she does not have the full safety net in place*, and it is very important that she does *not* go on to working with traumatic memories in a group exercise or unsupervised beginner practice setting. Note to recipient: if your difficulty with perceiving the Lord’s presence and connecting with Him persists, especially across multiple sessions, we strongly encourage you to get help with Immanuel intervention troubleshooting in the context of individual sessions with someone experienced with finding and resolving blockages.

If time permits, the group can choose a new recipient, and then start again with step C with this next participant.

No memories of positive connections with God: As noted above, if you don’t have positive memories of past interactive connections with the Lord, you can experiment with trying this step with other positive memories. We have been pleasantly surprised to discover that many people can begin to perceive Jesus’ presence and experience interactive connections with Him *for the first time* by thinking about a positive memory, deliberately stirring up appreciation, reentering the memory and reconnecting with the associated positive emotions, and then asking the Lord to help them perceive His presence and establish an interactive connection. Note that it is especially important for the participant to describe whatever comes into her awareness after trying this experiment (regardless of whether it makes sense or feels important), since her first experience with perceiving the Lord’s presence and having an interactive connection may be subtle, and she may not recognize it for what it is until she shares it with the rest of the group.

D. Choose a traumatic memory to work on: Help the recipient select a low to moderate intensity traumatic memory from one of the following categories (we recommend picking low intensity memories when you are just getting started with these group exercises):¹⁴

Memories for painful experiences from your recent adult life that do not yet feel fully

¹³Again, this persistent encouragement to “describe everything” always needs to be in the context of “to the extent you feel comfortable doing so.”

¹⁴Some ask “Why not just ask the Lord to bring forward the memory He wants to work on?” This *is* what we do in individual sessions, but our concern in the group setting is that none of us have perfect perception of the Lord’s guidance. In the context of a group exercise the leader cannot discern with each participant regarding the accuracy of their perception of the Lord’s guidance, and the consequences of mistaken discernment are much greater (for example, getting into an overwhelming traumatic memory in the group setting, without appropriate resources to care for this). Therefore, in the group setting we are usually more conservative and directive, and provide guidelines for selecting memories as opposed to having each person simply ask the Lord what to do/where to go.

resolved. One good way to find low intensity traumatic memories from your recent adult life is to look through recent unpleasant experiences in which you did not perceive the Lord's presence at the time of the original experience, and you still do not perceive His presence in the memory. Most of these will turn out to be traumatic experiences. Pick one that is minor. Note: picking a memory for a minor traumatic experience in recent adult life is probably the best way to stay in the shallow end of the pool.

Memories that you have been able to think about and talk about without getting overwhelmed, "stuck," and needing someone else to help you get back on your feet emotionally.

Please *do not* focus on an upsetting symptom and ask: "Lord, take me to the memory where this is coming from." This approach may take you to a memory that you have never before worked with, or even to a memory you have never before been consciously aware of.¹⁵

Please *do not* go to memories where you have gotten stuck and/or overwhelmed, and have needed someone else to help you get back to a place where you were okay.¹⁶

Please *do not* go to memories that you have never previously talked about. If you have never previously described the experience to another person, it may be much more important than you feel or perceive. In individual sessions, the person will often report, "A memory has just come to me, but it's not important – I think it's just a distraction." But when I coach them to describe it anyway, they are surprised by the intense negative emotions that well up as they start to talk about it. As you probably recognize, this is an example of the person's brain working better in community. But we don't want you to demonstrate this phenomenon by being overwhelmed by unexpectedly intense negative emotions in the context of a group exercise.¹⁷

E. Invite/welcome Jesus into the memory, ask Him to help you to establish an interactive connection, and engage with Him to receive healing: Coach the recipient to focus on the traumatic memory, and deliberately reenter/reconnect with it. In some situations, such as emotional healing groups in first world countries, participants will often be high functioning, well defended, and have difficulty connecting with their traumatic memories. For these situations, one simple way for the recipient to reenter/reconnect with the memory is to picture herself back in the painful situation, and then talk about the details until she can feel the negative emotions associated with the original experience.

****Caution note:** In some situations the concern will be for the recipient to avoid triggering and overwhelming everyone else in the group. For example, in groups where many of the

¹⁵This is a precaution for people who are just learning the process. If the people in your group have high capacity and are experienced with the Immanuel approach, you can feel free to use the "focus on an upsetting symptom, and ask the Lord to take you to the underlying memories" approach.

¹⁶Again, this is a precaution for people who are just learning the process. If the people in your group have high capacity and are experienced with the Immanuel approach, you can be more adventurous with respect to the memories you pick to work with.

¹⁷Again, this is a precaution for people who are just learning the process. If the people in your group have high capacity and are experienced with the Immanuel approach, you can be more adventurous with respect to the memories you pick to work with.

participants have survived severe trauma, and in which many of the participants share similar trauma, if one group member starts talking about the details of a painful memory the others can quickly become overwhelmed by intense triggering. In these situations, the participants can usually reconnect with painful memories very easily (usually, all they need to do is close their eyes and think about the original experience for a moment), and it will be important for the person leading the overall exercise to coach participants to *avoid* describing the details of their trauma. In fact, the person leading the overall exercise should specifically coach the participants to describe their trauma very briefly, and in only the most vague and general terms.¹⁸

Once the recipient is emotionally connected with the traumatic memory, coach her to invite/welcome Jesus to be with her in the memory, and to ask Him to help her perceive His presence and establish an interactive connection. From the perspective of being *inside* the memory, she can pray something like, “Jesus, I welcome You to be with me here. Please help me to be aware of Your presence and to have a living, interactive connection with You,” or “Jesus, I make a heart invitation for You to be with me here. Please help me to perceive Your presence and to establish a living, interactive connection with You.”¹⁹ Then coach her to observe whatever comes into her awareness, and to the extent she feels comfortable doing so, describe her internal mental content to the others in the group *regardless of whether it makes sense or feels important*. (Remember that our brains works better in community, and that she may not recognize Jesus’ presence in her memory until she shares her internal experience with the others in the group).

1.) If the recipient is able to perceive the Lord’s presence and establish an interactive connection: If the recipient is able to perceive the Lord’s presence and establish an interactive connection in the traumatic memory, then coach her to keep focusing on Jesus and to engage with Him at every point in the session, regarding every issue that comes up, and regarding every difficulty that she encounters. For the super simple exercise, just keep coaching the recipient to focus on Jesus and to use the following two prayers (as each is appropriate), “Jesus, what do You want me to know about this?” and “Jesus, please help me.”²⁰ And after each interaction with Jesus, coach the recipient to “describe any thoughts, emotions, images, memories, or physical sensations that come into your awareness, *regardless of whether they “make sense” or feel important.*” (Remember, our brains work better in community).

For the basic exercise with the slightly larger tool box, you can add some additional coaching

¹⁸One would think that our very specific instructions about choosing minor traumatic memories for group exercises would avoid the problem of participants overwhelming each other with their traumatic details. Unfortunately, our experience is that people with severe trauma often have very poor judgement with respect to what would constitute a minor trauma. Also, in some situations it will be right to use group exercises with people who have similar severe trauma, and in these situations it is especially important to coach the participants regarding how to avoid overwhelming each other with traumatic details that can be intensely triggering.

¹⁹Feel free to adjust the exact wording so that it feels like the best fit for your group’s experience and church culture.

²⁰Again, you can adjust the wording so that it feels like the best fit for your group’s experience and church culture. For the super simple exercise, stay with a *very* small menu (two or three) *very* simple variations of these two prayers.

regarding how to engage with Jesus most effectively. One of these additional coaching tools is to use more discernment and varied vocabulary in coaching the person to ask Jesus for guidance, ask Jesus for healing, ask Jesus for resources, and ask Jesus for help. Another of these additional coaching tools is to help the recipient get words for any perceptions, thoughts, emotions, etc that feel true regarding the memory, and then coach her to share these with the Lord directly. After each interaction with Jesus, coach the recipient to observe any thoughts, emotions, images, memories, or physical sensations that come into her awareness, and especially anything she sees or senses the Lord to be doing. And then (as always), coach her to describe all of this to the others in the group *regardless of whether it makes sense or feels important*.²¹ When using the slightly larger tool box, you can also include more skilled coaching to help the recipient notice the content of her internal awareness, more persistent, skilled coaching to describe *everything* that comes into her awareness, and more skilled help with recognizing the clues that come forward.

2.) If the recipient is *not* able to perceive the Lord’s presence or establish an interactive connection: If the recipient is not able to perceive the Lord’s presence or establish an interactive connection in the memory, try simple troubleshooting. For the super simple exercise, go straight to the *troubleshooting safety net intervention* described below (section 5.b.). For the basic exercise with a few more tools: 1.) Coach the recipient to ask, “What’s in the way of my being able to perceive Your presence and establish an interactive connection in this memory?;” coach her to observe whatever thoughts, emotions, images, memories, physical sensations, etc come into her mind; and coach her to describe these to the others in the group, *regardless of whether they make sense or feel important*. 2.) Coach the recipient to ask, “What do I need to do to take the next step forward?;” coach her to observe whatever thoughts, emotions, images, memories, physical sensations, etc come into her awareness; and coach her to describe these to the others in the group, *regardless of whether they make sense or feel important*. 3.) Follow-up regarding any directions the Lord provides.

If troubleshooting has identified and resolved blockages, so that the recipient is now able to perceive Jesus’ presence and has an interactive connection, then coach her to engage with him to receive healing (go to E1, above).

If the recipient does *not* perceive Jesus’ presence or have an interactive connection with him after a brief season of simple troubleshooting, then move to the *troubleshooting safety net intervention* described below (section 5.b.).

3.) If the recipient becomes stuck, and asking Jesus for guidance and help does not seem to be resolving the problem: If the recipient becomes stuck at any point in working with the traumatic memory and she still has an interactive connection, the first thing to do is coach her to focus on Jesus and ask him for guidance and help, and then coach her to describe whatever comes into her awareness (focusing especially on anything the Lord is doing). However, if these interventions do not seem to be resolving the problem then transition to the *troubleshooting safety net intervention* described below (section 5.b.).

4.) If you’re running out of time (fifteen minutes or less remaining) and the recipient is still feeling bad: If you are getting to the end of the session (fifteen minutes or less

²¹Again, this persistent encouragement to “describe everything” should always be in the context of “to the extent you feel comfortable doing so.”

remaining), the traumatic memory has not been resolved, and the recipient is still feeling bad:

a) Super simple exercise: For the super simple exercise, just transition to the *end-of-session safety net intervention* described below (section 5.a.), so that deliberate appreciation and being with Jesus in a positive context can move the recipient to a better place before the end of the session. Please don't fall into the trap of feeling like a failure if you have to use the safety net. Remember, when you are just beginning to practice with the Immanuel approach *it's actually important and valuable for you to use the safety net*, so that you are sure that it really works.

b) Basic exercise: For the basic exercise (with a few more tools and options than the super simple exercise):

If you want to make sure the recipient's negative emotions are resolved before she goes home, then transition to the *end-of-session safety net intervention* described below (section 5.a.), so that deliberate appreciation and connection with Jesus can move her to a better place before the end of the session.

If you and the recipient are both okay with the possibility of ending the session with lingering negative emotions, the recipient feels like something positive is happening, and she therefore wants to use all the time to continue working with the traumatic memory, you can make the judgment call to continue interacting with the Lord regarding the traumatic memory right up until the end of the session. Again, if the top priority is to make sure that the recipient's negative emotions are resolved before you go home, make sure to leave time at the end of the session (like, transition now), so that she can work *with the group* to use the safety net intervention to get back to a better place. As I have mentioned repeatedly, our brains works better in community. The safety net intervention will be much more effective with the group, as compared to the recipient trying to use it on her own after the group exercise has ended.

5.) Safety net intervention overview: What I call the "safety net intervention" is to deploy the first safety net described above – you help the recipient get back to her positive, safe interactive connection with Jesus from the beginning of the exercise. If the recipient's connection with Jesus at the beginning of the exercise was especially strong and her connection with the negative thoughts and emotions in the traumatic memory is only moderate, she may be able to go directly back to her initial interactive connection, and then quickly return to gratitude and peace as she spends time with Jesus in that context. However, if the recipient's connection with Jesus at the beginning of the exercise was not so strong, and if she is intensely connected to the negative thoughts and emotions in the traumatic memory, you may need to coach her to review her positive memory, coach her to repeat the deliberate appreciation exercise, and then coach her to repeat step C in order for her to return to the positive, safe interactive connection from the beginning of the session.²²

a) End-of-session safety net intervention: If you're using the safety net as an end-of-session intervention so that the recipient can end the exercise in a good place, then start

²²The *Bob: Safety Net Demonstration* live session teaching DVD (#29 in the LMS series) provides a good example of quickly and easily going back to the initial interactive connection, without having to go through the positive memory recall and deliberate appreciation steps.

with helping her get back to the positive, safe interactive connection from the beginning of the exercise (as just described). Once she has reestablished the connection from the beginning of the exercise, coach her to spend time focusing on Jesus and deliberately appreciating both the Lord's goodness and the initial positive memory until the negative emotions from the traumatic memory have been fully replaced by gratitude and peace.

b) Troubleshooting safety net intervention: You can also use the safety net as a troubleshooting intervention that enables the recipient to continue working with the trauma. If you are wanting to pursue this option, start with helping the recipient to get back to the positive, safe interactive connection from the beginning of the exercise (as just described). And then, *continuing in the context of this positive place*, coach her to engage with Jesus regarding the painful memory. Coach her to tell/ask Jesus anything she wants to talk/ask about regarding the trauma, and coach her to especially talk/ask about any places of difficulty (for example, any places where she was not able to perceive His presence, or any places where she asked for help but did not perceive resolution). Coach her to continue focusing on Jesus, and then to observe any thoughts, emotions, images, memories, or physical sensations that come into her awareness (and especially anything she sees or senses the Lord to be doing). Finally, coach her to describe whatever comes into her awareness. (Your brain works better in community!)

Sometimes, just reestablishing the positive, safe connection from the beginning of the exercise, and then talking to Jesus about the traumatic memory and the problems that developed in trying to work with it, will use up the remainder of the session. However, in some situations the recipient will reestablish an interactive connection, talk to Jesus about the traumatic memory and any points of difficulty, and get to a good place fairly quickly – she has a good connection with the Lord, she understands whatever He has shown her about the problems that developed in working directly with the traumatic memory, and there is a lot of time remaining. At this point, if the recipient desires to do so, she can try again with respect to working directly with the trauma (working from the perspective of being inside/connected to the painful memory). Sometimes the process will then proceed smoothly to complete resolution; but if you get stuck again, just use the safety net intervention again. And repeat this cycle until you run out of time or the traumatic memory gets resolved.

c) Practical tips regarding advanced safety net coaching: With some situations in which the recipient is intensely triggered to severe trauma, the facilitator will need to provide special persistence and skill in helping her return to the interactive connection from the beginning of the session.

i) Provide detailed coaching: If the recipient gets stuck in a bad place and is having difficulty getting back to her initial positive memory and interactive connection with Jesus, the primary facilitator and other members of the group need to provide *detailed* coaching for each step of the safety net intervention. For example, you can remind her of some of the specifics from her positive memory, and then coach her to recall them and describe them in detail. You can coach her to spend time picturing and appreciating specifics that were particularly special, and you can also help her to find some new specific appreciations. If the recipient is still having trouble with actually *feeling* gratitude, you can coach her to recall and appreciate several positive memories in succession. (Remembering from chapter six, appreciation momentum builds as one works

with several positive memories in succession.)²³ Once the recipient is subjectively feeling gratitude, you can remind her to reenter the positive memory and ask Jesus for help with perceiving His living presence and establishing an interactive connection, and then encourage her to observe and describe whatever comes into her awareness.

ii) Persist with safety net even if recipient doesn't feel like going to positive memory:

Sometimes the recipient will be strongly connected to a memory of severe trauma, she will be feeling intense negative emotions, and her relational circuits will be deeply off. And because of the ways in which our relational circuits interact with our memories and emotions, with her relational circuits deeply off she will not initially *want* to think or talk about positive memories, when she tries to recall and reconnect with positive memories she will initially find this to be difficult, and when she starts remembering and talking about her positive memories she will not initially *feel* any appreciation.²⁴ In these situations you may need to be very directive and persistent in coaching the recipient to recall and describe her positive memories, name specific appreciations, and deliberately reenter the positive memory, *even when she doesn't initially feel like it*. In some situations it may take as long as fifteen to twenty minutes, but our experience is that if a person persists in recalling, talking about, appreciating, and reentering positive memories of experiencing the Lord's presence, she will eventually calm down, return to feeling appreciation, regain access to her relational connection circuits, and be able to get back to the good place of perceiving the Lord's presence and feeling connected to Him. It may take some practice to learn to be adequately directive and persistent in these situations, but with appropriate coaching most people can learn this fairly quickly.

iii) Validate distress, reassure that pain is not being dismissed or ignored: When the recipient is intensely connected to a traumatic memory she will sometimes be deeply blended with the subjective experience from inside the original trauma. In these situations, when you suggest going back to the connection from the beginning of the exercise the recipient can feel like you are going somewhere else, and leaving her to stay behind in the painful place by herself. She might feel like you are simply abandoning her, or at the very least that you are trying stuff her pain back down into her unconscious because you don't want to deal with her messy emotions. In these situations it is very helpful to acknowledge the validity of the person's distress, remind her regarding the purpose of the positive memory intervention, and reassure her that she is not being ignored, managed, or abandoned. I usually say something along the lines of, "I understand that this painful memory place is very important, and needs to be cared for. We're not trying to ignore or minimize this memory place, or just stuff it back down. But for right now, the next step in the healing process is to "switch gears" and go back to the positive

²³Again, appreciation momentum builds as one works with several positive memories in succession, and it is therefore wise to build safety nets that include several positive memories if you are working with participants who are at risk for getting particularly stuck in particularly intense traumatic memories. Hopefully, group exercise leaders will be aware of these concerns if they are working with people who are particularly vulnerable. Therefore, for the purposes of these advanced safety net coaching notes I will assume that recipients have several positive memories that they can work with if this is needed.

²⁴For additional discussion regarding these ways in which our relational circuits interact with our memories and emotions, see the "Key Concepts" page of www.outsmartingyourself.org, chapters 12, 15, 16, and 17 in *Outsmarting Yourself*, and Part II of the "Brain Science, Psychological Trauma, and The God Who is With Us" essays (this essay is available as a free download from www.kclehman.com.)

memories and interactive connection from the beginning of the session. And when you have reconnected with Jesus in that safe, positive place we will ask him for more help regarding this painful place.” Or, for the end of the session, “...but for right now, in this group setting, we want to ‘switch gears’ and help you use the positive memory safety net so that you can get back to a good place for the end of the exercise.”²⁵

iv) Start with offering attunement: Attunement can be a particularly helpful resource for any situations in which the recipient is intensely connected to a traumatic memory and resisting the safety net intervention. If you know about attunement and are skilled in providing it, the ideal is to start with offering attunement until the person regains access to her relational connection circuits, *and then after she has regained access to her relational connection circuits* coach her through the steps of recalling positive memory, deliberately stirring up appreciation, and reestablishing an interactive connection.²⁶ Again, starting with attunement is ideal; however, persistent safety net coaching as described above, even without skilled attunement, will almost always²⁷ be effective.

v) Don’t go back to the same memory: Once the recipient has calmed down she may return to the exercise, but if the group had to do a lot of coaching (as opposed to just a few gentle reminders), *she should work with a different memory*. The fact that she needed so much help indicates that the first painful memory is not good material for a group setting. I am confident the Lord can heal any traumatic memory, but it is best to deal with the more intense and complicated traumas in settings in which the recipient can receive more advanced one-on-one trouble shooting if this is necessary.

F. End of exercise – more appreciation, the Immanuel story, and the safety net:

If the recipient experienced complete resolution of the traumatic memory: Coach the recipient to thank the Lord for His healing presence and healing work. Coach the recipient to formulate and tell the Immanuel story (be sure that she names several specifics she especially appreciates).

²⁵If you can honestly do this (for example, you have plenty of time in the current session and can return to the trauma after getting more help from Jesus in the context of the initial positive memories, or you are planning to have future sessions in which you can return to these traumatic memories), it is ideal to also assure the person that you will eventually come back to continue work on the unresolved trauma. However, do not offer this assurance unless you are sure you will be able to provide what you promise.

²⁶When I offer attunement as part of the safety net intervention, I usually include comments validating the recipient’s pain, assuring her that we are not just trying to manager her, reminding her of the purpose of the intervention, and reassuring her that we will return. For additional discussion of attunement as a resource for helping the recipient regain access to her relational connection circuits, see chapters 15, 17, and 18 in *Outsmarting Yourself*, and “Brain Science, Psychological Trauma, and The God Who is With Us, Part II: The Pain Processing Pathway” (available as a free download from www.kclehman.com).

²⁷As mentioned above, a very small number of participants may encounter especially complicated difficulties that can actually hinder them from cooperating with the initial-positive-memory-and-interactive-connection safety net. As also mentioned above, deliberate, skilled, and persistent attunement is one of the most consistently effective interventions for helping these people calm down and get back to a place where they are able cooperate with the initial-positive-memory-and- interactive-connection safety net.

If the recipient experienced some kind of positive interaction with the Lord in the context of the traumatic memory, but only partial resolution: 1) If she has not already done so (safety net as she was running out of time), coach the recipient to return to her interactive connection from the beginning of the exercise. As mentioned earlier, the recipient may be able to just go directly to her connection with Jesus, or she may need to repeat the positive memory and appreciation steps in order to reestablish her initial connection. After she has reestablished her positive, safe connection with Jesus, coach her to spend time focusing on Jesus and appreciating both the positive memory and the Lord's goodness until she feels grateful and peaceful. (She should no longer be feeling the negative emotions from the trauma.) 2) Coach the recipient to thank the Lord for this positive interaction, and then help her formulate and tell the Immanuel story regarding the positive interaction that has occurred (be sure to help her name specifics she especially appreciates).

If the recipient did not have a positive interaction with the Lord in the context of the traumatic memory: If you have not already deployed the end-of-session safety net, do it now. That is, coach the recipient to return to her interactive connection from the beginning of the exercise so that she can end the exercise in a good place. Again, the recipient may be able to go directly to her connection with Jesus, or she may need to repeat the whole positive memory, appreciation, interactive connection package. After she has reestablished her positive, safe connection with Jesus, coach her to spend time focusing on Jesus and appreciating both the positive memory and the Lord's goodness until she feels grateful and peaceful. (She should no longer be feeling the negative emotions from the trauma.)

With each of these options, remember to coach the recipient to do the "end of exercise" steps out loud with the others in the group. (Our brains works better in community.)

Brief reminder comments regarding the Immanuel story: The "Immanuel story" is the story of 1) how things were before God showed up, 2) what happened when God showed up, and 3) how things have been different since God showed up. The concepts here are pretty simple, but unfortunately many of us are a lot better at talking about the pain part of the story than we are at talking about the God part of the story. As a result, we will often spend thirty minutes describing every detail of the long history of our pain, and then summarize the God/healing part of the story in thirty seconds. And in groups with a lot of trauma, this can set everybody else on fire. So we want to provide some additional coaching regarding how to formulate and tell the Immanuel story:

First round: Start at the point you first perceived God's presence with you (as opposed to starting at the beginning of the pain story). With the help of the group, give a blow by blow account of everything from the moment of perceiving God's presence forward. Tell each thing God did, and your reaction to it. Describe every detail you can get words for, especially your emotions, body sensations (if this is helpful), and anything you perceived to change as you engaged with God regarding the healing work. After these pieces have all been well developed, put them together and tell them as a story. If there are concerns about triggering others, leave the story like this, and tell it to at least three people as soon as (reasonably) possible after finishing the exercises.

Second round (if there are minimal concerns regarding triggering others): Tell the story again, *slightly* expanded, with a *little* bit of context regarding the pain part of the story (how things were before God showed up). As soon as (reasonably) possible after finishing the exercises,

tell the story to at least three people.

G. Closing prayer (optional, depending on context): Whenever I facilitate the Immanuel approach I end the session with a closing prayer, as described in the “Closing Prayer and Commands” essay (available as a free download from either the “Getting Started” or “Resource” pages of the Immanuel approach website, www.immanuelapproach.com). And if I am coaching Immanuel approach prayer partners or a small practice group, I usually encourage them to close their sessions and practice exercises with our sample closing prayer and commands (also available as free downloads from either the “Getting Started” or “Resource” pages of www.immanuelapproach.com). However, with large group exercises I usually say the closing prayer and commands myself, silently, after we finish the group exercise. This is because most of the larger groups I have worked with have included participants who had very little teaching or experience with demonic phenomena, and I was concerned that the prayers and commands dealing with demonic spirits might confuse and/or trigger them. If you are leading a group exercise and you happen to know that the participants are familiar with demonic phenomena, I think it is ideal for each small group to close the exercise with our sample closing prayer and commands (or at least something similar).

H. Repeat steps C through H with another member of the group: If time permits, the group can return to step C, and then repeat steps C through G with another member of the group.

V. Summary regarding the “Safety net” intervention (going back to the initial positive memories, appreciation, and interactive connection with the Lord): When encountering any of the difficulties below, the recipient can go back to the positive memories, appreciation, and interactive connection from the beginning of the exercise, and then get help from Jesus in that positive context. This simple but effective intervention can be a resource and/or “safety net” in various ways at various points throughout the exercise.

- If the recipient is not able to perceive the Lord’s presence in the traumatic memory, even after asking “what’s in the way?” and trouble-shooting;

if the recipient should become stuck at any point in working with the traumatic memory, and especially if the recipient becomes stuck and has lost her interactive connection with Jesus;

or if the recipient is able to perceive the Lord’s presence in the traumatic memory, but does not experience a strong enough connection to be able to receive the help she needs;

– for each of these situations, coach the recipient to go back to the positive memory starting place and re-establish connection with Jesus in that context. From the positive memory place of restored connection with Jesus, coach the recipient to ask Jesus for help and specifically ask Him about the traumatic memory. Then if time permits, the recipient can go back to the traumatic memory and apply the new guidance/help she just got from Jesus. Repeat as many times as necessary.

- At the end of the session, if you run out of time before the recipient has fully resolved the traumatic memory, help her return to her connection with Jesus from the beginning of the exercise. After she has reestablished this positive, safe connection, coach her to spend time focusing on Jesus and appreciating both the positive memory and the Lord’s goodness until she feels grateful and peaceful.

VI. Miscellaneous practical training tips:

A. Cautions regarding large groups: We recommend that you do not try these exercises with large groups until you are able to perceive the Lord's presence and connect with Him in your own experience. We recommend that you do not try leading large group exercises until you are comfortable with facilitating the Immanuel approach in individual sessions, and you have been getting consistently good results. We recommend that you try to begin experimenting with group exercises in smaller group settings (25 people or less), in which you know the people that will be participating. Finally, it is ideal to have a few experienced facilitators available to deal with the possibility that a small number of participants may encounter especially complicated difficulties – complicated difficulties that can actually hinder them from cooperating with the “go back to the initial positive memory and interactive connection” safety net.²⁸

B. Four to six repetitions: Almost everybody will feel a bit insecure and clumsy the first couple of times, even with just the safety net practice and the super simple exercise. This is normal and too be expected. In addition to providing reassurance for those who are feeling the most insecure, we need to be aware of this extremely common reality because it is very important to deliberately help people get through it. Studies of the neurology of learning and research focusing on observable behavioral both show a dramatic tipping point for most people at four to six successful repetitions. People who go through a new procedure only two or three times will often still feel insecure enough that they will be reluctant to continue on their own – when they no longer have a trainer providing supervision and encouragement. However, if trainees persist until they have gone through the new procedure four to six times, most of the people who initially felt uncomfortably clumsy and insecure will feel dramatically more comfortable and confident, and they will be much more likely to continue using the new procedure even without coaching or supervision. Therefore, whenever possible we should deliberately plan our training so that participants successfully get through at least the super simple exercise four or more times.

C. Verbal instructions: Mission teams teaching these principles and tools in third world countries should deliberately practice using primarily verbal explanations and instructions to

²⁸For example, on very rare occasions, an internal dissociated part will come forward and refuse to go back to the initial positive memory and interactive connection because she doesn't trust or like Jesus. Or an internal part will come forward and refuse to cooperate with the safety net intervention because she feels like it will just stuff her and her trauma back in the closet, and then her pain will never get resolved. If you are skilled in working with internal parts and advanced Immanuel interventions, you can work directly with the internal part and her guardian lie fears so that she will eventually be able to cooperate with going back to the initial positive memory and connecting with Jesus. Another, much more general intervention, is to offer deliberate, skilled, and persistent attunement. In my experience, this attunement intervention will always help the recipient to calm down, feel safe, and eventually get back to a place where she is able to cooperate with the initial-positive-memory-and-interactive-connection safety net. If you are not already familiar with attunement, see the “Key Concepts” page of www.outsmartingyourself.org, chapters 11 and 18 in *Outsmarting Yourself*, and Part II of the “Brain Science, Psychological Trauma, and The God Who is With Us” essays (available as a free download from www.kclehman.com) for definition and explanation. Also, to put all of this in perspective: in working with more than 800 group exercise participants over the past five years, I've encounter maybe five people who've had this kind of complicated blockage hindering them from using the initial-positive-memory-and-interactive-connection safety net.

coach participants through the exercises, as opposed to relying on explanatory handouts and written instructions (many of the third world participants will not be able to read). Even in situations where the participants can read, consider leaning towards more verbal explanations and instructions, especially for practice with the safety net pieces and the super simple exercise. My observation is that the detailed instructions are sometimes more distracting than helpful, and I was pleasantly surprised by how well the people at our recent seminar did with only the one page summaries. My assessment at this point is that the ideal is to use this explanatory essay and the detailed instructions as reference resources before and/or after practice exercises, but during the actual exercises have a trainer/leader providing verbal explanations and instructions, with the practice groups using only the 1 page summaries as “cheat sheets.”

D. Alternate one page summaries: Some participants prefer the one page summaries that are essentially outlines of the detailed instructions, whereas others prefer the alternative 1 page summaries that focus more on the key concepts. Particularly with the initial safety net practice and the super simple exercise, I prefer the alternative summaries in combination with good verbal explanations and instructions.

VII. Helpful handouts: When we use these exercises in group settings we have found that some participants like to have copies of the detailed instructions, and that most participants like to have copies of the one page summaries (below), so we usually provide these as handouts. In order to provide maximum convenience and flexibility regarding the use of these resources, we have made each of these handouts available as separate documents on the Immanuel approach website. (These documents can be accessed from either the “Resources” page or the “Getting Started” page of www.immanuelapproach.com.)

Note: We are still learning about and making adjustments to these group exercises, and more raw data is helpful. If you try Immanuel approach group exercises, please let us know what happens.

Just the Safety Nets, Immanuel Approach Exercise
(Positive Memory, Appreciation, and Interactive Connection)

(1 page summary, K.D. Lehman MD, Revised 2/12/14)

1.) Break into small groups: The ideal number for each group is three. Two to five can work.

2.) Positive memories and deliberate appreciation: Opening prayer (optional). Focus on a memory of previous positive experience of perceiving the Lord's presence and connecting with Him. Each group member describe positive memory to the others, and name specific things you appreciate about these experiences. The goal is to *reconnect* with the positive memory, and to describe specific things that you appreciate until you *feel* appreciation/gratitude.

Multiple positive memories: If working with people likely to need an especially strong safety net, repeat the positive memory step several times, so that each person has several positive memories.

No memories of positive connections with God: Use a memory from a non-God positive experience.

Appreciation memories without splinters: If participants are describing appreciation memories that are about God's presence in the midst of trauma, and especially if many participants have similar traumas (high risk of triggering each other), coach participants to deliberately find positive memories without any aspect of pain or trauma (completely splinter-free). If all memories of positive God connections are memories of God's presence in the midst of trauma, start with non-God positive appreciation memories, go through the deliberate appreciation step with these non-God positive memories, and then use the same memories to go through step 3, below. This can sometimes generate new (splinter-free) God connection memories.

3. Reenter a positive memory and establish an interactive connection with the Lord: *One at a time*, 1) spend several minutes reentering/reconnecting with one of the positive memories, 2) from "inside" the memory, pray something along the lines of "Lord, help me to perceive Your living presence, and to have an interactive connection with You," and 3) share whatever comes into your awareness with the others in your group.

No positive God memories: If you don't have positive memories of past interactive connections with the Lord, you can experiment with trying this step with non-God positive memories.

If you have established an interactive connection with the Lord: Name several specifics you especially appreciate about the experience, and express your gratitude to God.

If you do not have an interactive connection with the Lord, and you would like to try simple trouble-shooting: 1.) Ask: "What's in the way of my being able to perceive Your presence and connect with You in this memory?," describe whatever comes into your awareness *regardless of whether it makes sense or feel important*. 2.) Ask: "What do I need to do to take the next step forward?," describe whatever comes into your awareness. 3.) follow any directions from God.

If trouble-shooting resolved blockages and you have an interactive connection, then name several specifics you especially appreciate and express your gratitude to God.

If you have *not* been able to establish an interactive connection after brief troubleshooting (or if you decided not to try troubleshooting), return to positive memories and appreciation until you *feel* appreciation and are at an okay place to stop.

Super Simple Immanuel Approach Exercise for Groups and Beginners

(1 page summary, Karl D. Lehman, MD, Revised 2/12/2014)

1.) Break up into small groups: The ideal number for each group is three. Two to five can work.

2.) Positive memories and appreciation: Opening prayer (optional). Focus on memory/memories of previous positive experiences of perceiving the Lord's presence and connecting with Him. Each group member describe positive memory/memories to the others, and name specific things you appreciate about these experiences. The goal is to remember and appreciate until you *feel* appreciation/gratitude.

3.) Reenter a positive memory and establish an interactive connection: One at a time, 1) spend several minutes reentering/reconnecting with one of the positive memories, 2) from "inside" the memory, pray something along the lines of "Lord, help me to perceive Your living presence, and to have an interactive connection with You," and 3) share whatever comes into your awareness. After each person has gone through these pieces, pick a recipient and a primary facilitator for the rest of the exercise (steps #4 through #6), with the others in the group listening, supporting, and interceding.

Note: The recipient must be able to establish an interactive connection with the Lord in step 3 in order to move on to the rest of the exercise. Do not proceed with the remainder of the exercise if you don't have a recipient with an interactive connection. (See essay for additional explanation)

4.) Help Recipient choose a traumatic memory to work on: Select a low to moderate intensity traumatic memory (see full text version for additional directions regarding memory selection).

5.) Invite/welcome Jesus into memory, ask for interactive connection, engage with Him to receive healing: (Recipient) From the perspective of being inside the memory, pray something like: "Jesus, I make a heart invitation for You to be with me here. Please help me to have an interactive connection."

a.) If recipient is able to establish an interactive connection in the memory: Engage with Jesus to receive healing (see full text for additional instructions).

b.) If recipient is *not* able to establish an interactive connection: "Safety net" troubleshooting (reestablish initial connection, engage Jesus there. Full text for additional instructions).

c.) Recipient has trouble, and asking Jesus for guidance & help does *not* resolve the problem: "Safety net" troubleshooting (reestablish initial connection, engage Jesus there. Full text for add'l).

d.) You're running out of time and trauma is still not resolved: End of exercise safety net.

6.) End of exercise – more appreciation, the Immanuel story, and the safety net:

If complete resolution of traumatic memory: Help recipient to thank the Lord, and to formulate and tell the Immanuel story. Help name specifics especially appreciated. Closing prayer (optional).

If some positive interaction with the Lord, but *only partial* resolution of the trauma: 1) Help recipient return to connection with Jesus from beginning of exercise, and to spend time with Jesus and deliberate appreciation until he/she *feels* grateful and peaceful (the negative emotions have fully resolved). 2) Help recipient to thank the Lord, and to formulate and tell Immanuel story regarding the positive interaction. 3) Closing prayer (optional, depending on context)

If no positive interaction with the Lord in working with the trauma: 1) Help recipient return to connection with Jesus from beginning of exercise, and to spend time with Jesus and deliberate appreciation until he/she *feels* grateful and peaceful (the negative emotions have fully resolved). 2) Closing prayer (optional, depending on context).

Super Simple Immanuel Approach Exercise for Groups and Beginners

(Alternative one page summary, Karl Lehman M.D., Revised 2/12/2014)

ONE healing intervention,
ONE troubleshooting tool.

Beginning of session: Coach the person to establish an interactive connection, go to a traumatic memory, and offer the basic Immanuel invitation and request from inside the memory. ****Remember – don't go to the traumatic memory if she can't establish an initial interactive connection****

If the person *can* connect with Jesus in the memory (and for as long as they *stay* connected with Jesus), use ONE healing intervention: at every point in the session, regarding every issue that comes up, regarding every difficulty that arises, coach the person to focus on Jesus, engage with Jesus, and ask Jesus for guidance and help, and then coach her to describe whatever comes into her awareness.

If the person *can't* establish an initial connection with Jesus in the memory, if she loses the connection with Jesus at any point later in the session, or if the session feels stuck for any reason, then use ONE troubleshooting tool: coach the person to go back to the positive memory and interactive connection from the beginning, and in that context ask Jesus about the problem. After she talks to Jesus about the problem, if you have enough time you can coach her to return to the memory and try again.

End of session: As you are getting close to the end of the session: A) If the trauma is resolved and the person is in a good place, coach her to spend time being grateful; B) If the person is still in an unresolved traumatic memory, help her to go back to the positive memory and interactive connection from the beginning. In this context, coach her to appreciate Jesus and the positive memory until she feels grateful and peaceful.

After emotional healing – The Immanuel story:

First round: Start at the point you first perceived God's presence with you. With the help of the group, give a blow by blow account of everything from the moment of perceiving God's presence forward. Tell each thing God did, and your reaction to it. Describe every detail you can get words for, especially your emotions, body sensations (if this doesn't get in the way), and anything you perceived to change as you engaged with God regarding the healing work. After these pieces have all been well developed, put them together and tell them as a story. If there are concerns about triggering others, leave the story like this and tell it to at least three people.

Second round (if there are minimal concerns regarding triggering others): Tell the story again, *slightly* expanded, with a *little* bit of context regarding the pain part of the story. Tell the story to at least three people.

Note: this is like the core of many previous approaches to emotional healing prayer, but with positive memory and connection at front end, ONE super simple troubleshooting tool, a safety net if the person has trouble/gets stuck at any point, and the Immanuel story. Simple differences, but huge with respect to safety of lay ministry, the possibility of group exercises, and self-propagation.

Basic Immanuel Approach Exercise for Groups and Beginners

(1 page summary, Karl D. Lehman MD, Revised 2/12/2014)

1.) Break up into small groups: The ideal number for each group is three. Two to five can work.

2.) Positive memories and appreciation: Opening prayer (optional). Focus on memory/memories of previous positive experiences of perceiving the Lord's presence and connecting with Him. Each group member describe positive memory/memories to the others, and name specific things you appreciate about these experiences. The goal is to remember and appreciate until you *feel* appreciation/gratitude.

3.) Reenter a positive memory and establish an interactive connection: One at a time, 1) spend several minutes reentering/reconnecting with one of the positive memories, 2) from "inside" the memory, pray something along the lines of "Lord, help me to perceive Your living presence, and to have an interactive connection with You," and 3) share whatever comes into your awareness. After each person has gone through these pieces, pick a recipient and a primary facilitator for the rest of the exercise (steps #4 through #6), with the others in the group listening, supporting, and interceding.

If recipient perceives the Lord's presence and feels connected to Him: proceed on to Step #4.

If recipient does not perceive the Lord's presence or feel connected to Him, and would like to try simple troubleshooting: See complete version for directions regarding simple troubleshooting.
Don't proceed to Step #4 unless recipient has an interactive connection with the Lord.

4.) Help recipient choose a traumatic memory to work on: Help recipient select a low to moderate intensity traumatic memory (see full text version for additional directions regarding memory selection).

5.) Invite/welcome Jesus into memory, ask for interactive connection, engage with Him to receive healing: From the perspective of being inside the memory, recipient prays something like: "Jesus, I make a heart invitation for You to be with me here. Please help me to have an interactive connection."

a.) If recipient *is* able to establish an interactive connection in the memory: Engage with Jesus to receive healing (see full text for additional instructions).

b.) *Not* able to establish an interactive connection: Simple troubleshooting (full text for addt'l).

c.) Recipient has trouble, and asking Jesus for guidance & help does *not* resolve the problem: "Safety net" troubleshooting (reestablish initial connection, engage Jesus there. Full text for addt'l).

d.) You're running out of time and trauma is still not resolved: End of exercise safety net.

6.) End of exercise – more appreciation, the Immanuel story, and the safety net:

If complete resolution of traumatic memory: Help recipient to thank the Lord, and to formulate and tell the Immanuel story. Help name specifics especially appreciated. Closing prayer (optional).

If some positive interaction with God, but *only partial* resolution of the trauma: 1) Help recipient return to connection with Jesus from beginning of exercise, and to spend time with Jesus and deliberate appreciation until he/she *feels* grateful and peaceful (the negative emotions have fully resolved). 2) Help recipient to thank the Lord, and to formulate and tell Immanuel story regarding the positive interaction. 3) Closing prayer (optional)

If no positive interaction with God in work with traumatic memory: 1) Help recipient return to connection from beginning of exercise, and to spend time with Jesus and appreciation until he/she *feels* grateful and peaceful (negative emotions are fully resolved). 2) Closing prayer (optional).

Basic Immanuel Approach Exercise for Groups and Beginners

(small tool box, alternative one page summary, Karl Lehman, M.D., Revised 2/12/2014)

Beginning of session: Coach the person to establish an interactive connection, go to a traumatic memory,²⁹ and offer the basic Immanuel invitation and request from inside the memory. Then use the following very small tool box of healing interventions and troubleshooting tools. **Remember – don't go to the traumatic memory if the recipient can't establish an initial interactive connection**

- 1) Primary healing intervention: As with super simple, coach the recipient to focus on Jesus, and to engage with Him at every point in the session, regarding every issue that comes up, and regarding every difficulty that she encounters. But feel free to use a little more discernment and varied vocabulary in coaching the person to ask Jesus for guidance, ask Jesus for healing, ask Jesus for resources, and ask Jesus for help.
- 3) Additional simple healing intervention: Help the person get words for whatever she is thinking, feeling, or experiencing, and then coach her to communicate this directly to Jesus.
- 4) Additional simple healing intervention: As always, after each interaction with Jesus coach the recipient to describe any thoughts, emotions, images, memories, or physical sensations that come into her awareness. But you can include more skilled coaching to help the recipient notice the content of her internal awareness, more persistent, skilled coaching to describe *everything* that comes into her awareness, and also more skilled help with recognizing the clues that come forward.
- 2) Simple troubleshooting: If the person loses perception of Jesus and connection with Jesus at any point in the session, help them reestablish connection: 1) coach simple invitation and request (“Jesus, I make a heart invitation for You to be with me here. Help me to perceive Your presence and to connect with You”), and then coach them to report “whatever comes into your awareness.” 2) If they do not perceive and connect, try VERY SIMPLE trouble shooting: “What’s in the way?” Coach to report whatever comes into his/her awareness. “What should we do? How do we cooperate with Your plan?” Coach to report whatever comes into his/her awareness, and then follow any guidance from Jesus. If this doesn't work fairly quickly (or at any point the facilitator and/or recipient feel uncomfortable with the session and/or feel they are getting in too deep), help recipient go back to initial positive connection.
- 5) “Safety net” troubleshooting tool: As with super simple, go back to the initial positive place, in that context ask Jesus for more guidance and help (including, “Why stuck in the other place?”), and then go back to the difficult place when ready. Note: can just stay in positive place, and end session there, if recipient doesn't feel ready to go back to difficult place.

Safety net: If, for any reason, the session feels stuck, or the recipient can't get all the way through to healing in the time available, just go back to the positive memory and interactive connection from the beginning of the exercise.

After emotional healing – The Immanuel story: Start at the point you first perceived God's presence with you. Tell each thing God did, and your reaction to it (blow by blow, details). Describe anything that changed as you engaged with God regarding the healing work.

²⁹If you are coaching participants to use the wider Immanuel approach for life, with the possibility of issues/agenda other than healing emotional trauma, you can coach the person to ask Jesus for guidance regarding what to do with the session, instead of helping her choose an appropriate traumatic memory.

The Immanuel Approach (to Emotional Healing and to Life)

Chapter 25: Let Jesus Drive

(with Respect to Non-process Aspects of the Session)

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DRAFT

Comments regarding advanced topics: I want to address advanced topics for mental health professionals and experienced emotional healing ministers who are encountering more complicated situations, but I don't want to discourage or overwhelm part time lay ministers and beginners. So if you're a part time lay minister or beginner, you're already convinced regarding the need for the Immanuel approach structure, and you are already convinced regarding the importance of letting Jesus lead with respect to every non-process aspect of Immanuel approach sessions, then just skim over everything except the stories. You don't need the theoretical discussion regarding the importance of the facilitator providing the structure for the Immanuel approach process, you don't need the theoretical arguments for letting Jesus lead with respect to every other aspect of the session, and you don't need the caveats regarding exceptions for complicated situations. Just enjoy the stories, and let them encourage you regarding how effectively Jesus can lead when you constantly coach the recipient to focus on Him and ask Him for guidance and help. If you encounter a more complicated situation in which the basic Immanuel approach tools don't seem to be fully effective, you can just end the session with helping the person get back to her initial positive memory and interactive connection, and then read more/get a consultation/refer the person to a more experienced facilitator.

If you are *not* fully convinced about the importance of the Immanuel approach structure, and you have thoughts along the lines of "Why do we need any of this – why don't we just pray, 'Jesus, please come and heal me'?" then please read the first part of the discussion with special care.

If you are a mental health professional or experienced emotional healing minister, you already have other emotional healing tools and techniques which you mix in with the Immanuel approach process, and you frequently find yourself providing direction with respect to non-process aspects of Immanuel approach sessions, then please read the second part of the discussion with special care.

I frequently receive questions along the lines of, "When should I take responsibility for leading the session?" or "How much direction should I provide?," and I am constantly asking myself these same questions. One of the most important points with respect to these questions is differentiating between direction with respect to the Immanuel approach *process* and direction with respect to *non-process* aspects of the session (timing, pacing/intensity, specific content, and the details of the pain processing pathway).

It is important to provide direction with respect to the *process*: With respect to the Immanuel approach *process*, I occasionally hear someone comment, "It's all about Jesus – *I don't do anything*." This is a very catchy sound bite, and "It's all about Jesus" is certainly true from a certain perspective, but this comment always makes me nervous.

The facilitator provides the overall structure/framework for the Immanuel approach by directing the recipient through the steps for establishing the initial interactive connection with Jesus, by coaching the person to focus on Jesus and ask Him for help at any point she needs guidance or other assistance, by repeatedly coaching the person to describe whatever comes into her awareness, by periodically checking the status of the recipient's connection with Jesus, by helping the person re-establish an interactive connection at any point this is lost, by employing troubleshooting tools when the recipient has difficulty connecting with Jesus, and by leading her back to the initial positive memory and interactive connection

whenever this safety net is needed. If the facilitator doesn't recognize the importance of providing the structure for the Immanuel approach by providing direction with respect to the process, then she won't take responsibility for providing this structure carefully and competently.

Along the same lines as the "It's all about Jesus – I don't do anything" comments, some have asked, "Why do we have to provide any direction at all, even regarding the process? Why can't we just invite Jesus to be present, ask Him for emotional healing, and then let Him do the whole thing?" Actually, I asked this question myself, especially in light of the fact that this approach occasionally works. I have read a number of case studies in which the person has made this kind of simple request for emotional healing – sometimes just in her private prayer time and sometimes in the context of a worship service, but not in an emotional healing session, and not with anyone providing direction with respect to the Immanuel approach (or any other approach to emotional healing). And even without any of this emotional healing process or structure, the person had a powerful encounter with Jesus that looked exactly like the core of a successful Immanuel approach session – the person perceived Jesus' tangible presence in some way, He led her to important root memories, she perceived Jesus' presence in the traumatic memories, He walked her through unfinished processing tasks to accomplish resolution of the trauma, and then the original emotional problem went away and never came back. I have even heard this exact same story from several people that I know personally. However, my observation is that this is rare. I have known hundreds of people who have tried this super simple approach, with nothing more than persistent "Jesus, please be with me and heal me" prayers, but only a handful have experienced a tangible healing encounter with Jesus that produced lasting fruit.¹

Furthermore, my assessment from extensive reading, hundreds of conversations with colleagues, 25+ years of clinical experience, and my personal emotional healing journey is that we have gotten progressively better results as we have developed approaches to emotional healing that apply increasingly complete understanding of the underlying psychological and spiritual phenomena. For example, we got better results than with the "Jesus, just heal me" approach when prayer ministers in the 1950's and 60's helped the person focus on the presenting problem, specifically asked God to reveal the underlying roots, and then explicitly invited Jesus to come with healing into the traumatic memories that came forward.² Positive results increased another notch in the 1970's and 80's when emotional healing ministries incorporated more understanding with respect to troubleshooting to remove blockages.³ We saw another increase in positive results when Dr. Ed Smith developed Theophostic, which incorporated more understanding regarding the importance of connecting with the emotions in traumatic memories, more understanding with respect to certain processing tasks (e.g., correctly interpreting the meaning of the experience), and another round of progress with respect to troubleshooting. And now the Immanuel approach, with new pieces such as starting with appreciation, establishing an interactive connection with Jesus at the beginning of the session, and making sure to maintain the interactive connection throughout the session is yielding yet another bump in positive results.

My observation is that the Immanuel approach is consistently easier and safer to use, consistently easier and safer to teach, and consistently more effective than any previous approach to emotional healing. It is therefore important that we provide the structure/framework for the Immanuel approach by being

¹My assessment is that when people use only the super simple "Jesus, please be with me and heal me" prayer, less than 1% get the kind of healing we see with the Immanuel approach.

²See, for example, the approach to emotional healing described in chapter 11 ("The Healing of the Emotions") in Agnes Sanford, *The Healing Light*, revised edition (St. Paul, MN: Macalester Park Publishing, 1972), pages 117-126, and in chapter 7 ("The Healing of the Memories") in Agnes Sanford, *The Healing Gifts of the Spirit* (New York: J.B. Lippincott, 1966), pages 109-123.

³The approach to emotional healing described in chapter 13 ("The Inner Healing of Our Emotional Problems") in Francis MacNutt, *Healing* (Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 1974), pages 178-191, provides a good example.

adequately directive with respect to the details of the process.

Let Jesus drive with respect to *non-process* aspects of the session: In contrast to providing a lot of direction with respect to the Immanuel approach *process*, I try to let Jesus drive as much as possible with respect to everything else – I try to let Jesus choose when to address a particular memory or issue, I try to let Jesus guide with respect to how quickly/intensely we press into a memory/issue, I try to let Jesus choose which traumatic memories and/or other issues to bring forward, I try to let Jesus answer any questions that come up, and I try to let Jesus manage the details of working through the different tasks on the pain processing pathway. The most important reason to let Jesus drive as much as possible is that He is the best therapist in the world. The judgment calls just mentioned, such as when to bring forward memories that are especially traumatic or how intensely to push into these memories, can be very tough; and making the wrong call can cause the recipient to tumble into varying degrees of decompensation, sometimes even ending up in the hospital. However, when we are able to let Jesus drive, He happily carries the responsibility for these tough decisions and always makes the right call. Furthermore, as limited human facilitators we periodically encounter problems that seem tangled, huge, and impossibly unsolvable; but when we let Jesus drive, He comes up with amazing, creative interventions that we never would have thought of (and they work!). When we let Jesus drive, facilitating sessions becomes much less stressful and the recipient receives the best possible care.

Another really important reason to let Jesus drive is that this keeps the Immanuel approach simple enough and safe enough that the average lay person can actually learn it and use it. If the facilitator is driving, she will need very high levels of technical skill and clinical discernment to make the tough judgment calls mentioned above, to navigate through sophisticated defenses, and to unravel complicated problems. However, a lay person with a small amount of training, minimal technical skills, and humble clinical discernment can provide the structure/framework for the Immanuel approach, and then let Jesus drive with respect to the non-process aspects of the session. If Jesus takes responsibility for all of the complicated, difficult, dangerous stuff, then the average lay person can quickly learn to safely facilitate emotional healing sessions. And this is HUGELY, strategically important as we are trying to make emotional healing accessible to every person on the planet.

Earlier I discussed the end of the spectrum where people ask, “Why do we need to provide any direction at all? It’s all about Jesus – let’s just let Him do everything.” At the other end of the spectrum are people who feel most comfortable when they are driving, and therefore tend towards grabbing the wheel with respect to all aspects of the session. My observation is that many mental health professionals and experienced emotional healing ministers fall into this category. We have spent many years learning the principles and developing skill with the tools of emotional healing, we feel most secure with the familiar techniques that we have successfully applied in many prior situations, we have gotten to the point where we get reasonably consistent and robust positive results, and we feel most comfortable in the driver’s seat when facilitating therapy/ministry sessions.

The first challenge for those of us who already have lots of training and experience with other approaches to emotional healing is to actually stick with the Immanuel approach process at all. We have no problem with the “provide direction” piece, but when stressed or unsure, instead of providing the structure for the Immanuel approach, the direction we provide leads back to whatever techniques and process we were using prior to trying the Immanuel approach.⁴ Especially at first, it takes a lot of deliberate effort to stay with the Immanuel approach process, instead of reverting to previous approaches to emotional healing that feel more familiar and comfortable.

The next challenge for those of us with lots of training and experience, after staying with the larger framework of the Immanuel approach, is to let Jesus lead with respect to the non-process aspects of the

⁴I have been using the Immanuel approach for so long now that I no longer notice this pattern in my own practice, but I certainly struggled with this as I was first transitioning from Theophostic-based emotional healing and EMDR to the Immanuel approach.

session. My own experience actually provides an excellent (but humbling) illustration. For example, let's say I perceive a strategic issue that is clearly affecting the person's life. To my perspective, it's just sitting out in plain sight, the person seems to be deliberately ignoring it, and the Lord seems to be letting them just ignore it.⁵ Unless I'm consciously thinking about the importance of letting Jesus drive and therefore deliberately restraining myself, the next thing I know I'm in the driver's seat, trying to get the person to deal with what I perceive to be the elephant in the living room (or at least the donkey in the living room).

Or I spot subtle clues indicating an important unresolved trauma. I've spent thousands of hours over many years sharpening my ability to spot these clues and recognize what they mean, and it's very satisfying to use these hard earned skills. Unless I'm consciously thinking about the importance of letting Jesus drive and therefore deliberately restraining myself, the next thing I know I'm in the driver's seat, trying to steer the person towards the traumatic memory I know is there.⁶

Or the person is working with a memory and I recognize which unfinished processing tasks are causing the memory to linger as trauma. I've spent thousands of hours learning how to help people take memories through the different tasks in the processing pathway, and it's satisfying to use these hard earned skills. Unless I'm consciously thinking about the importance of letting Jesus drive and therefore deliberately restraining myself, the next thing I know I'm in the driver's seat, guiding the person in the work of taking her memories through the unfinished processing tasks.

Or the person asks a question. Now, I love understanding how things work, I've spent twenty-four years in school, I've spent tens of thousands of hours studying the professional literature since finishing my formal training, I have twenty-five years of clinical experience, I've been deliberately pursuing my own growth and healing for 35+ years, and I've spent tens of thousands of hours deliberately pondering all of this data. All of this interest and work has resulted in having some pretty good answers to many of the questions that come up in emotional healing sessions, and I really enjoy teaching. On top of all of this, I also have triggered energy that contributes to the problem. As a child, I was skinny, short, slow, without any discernable artistic or musical talent, and I had a difficult time getting started academically due to having dyslexia. But I loved science and math. If I studied hard (and I always did), I usually knew the answers, so when the teacher asked a science or math question I felt like for once I had something to offer. I was the kid bouncing up and down in his seat, waving his hand frantically, and pleading earnestly, "Oh, oh, oh, oh! I know! I know! Pick me! Pick me! Pick me!" Not surprisingly, unless I'm consciously thinking about the importance of letting Jesus drive and therefore deliberately restraining myself, the next thing I know I'm in the driver's seat, sharing my really good answer to the question that has just been asked.

Another part of the humbling truth with respect to myself is that I usually underestimate the Lord's willingness to provide adequate leadership and help.⁷ I also often underestimate the recipient's ability to receive and cooperate with the Lord's guidance. At some deep level, I often feel like the session will move forward more quickly and produce better results if I do most of the driving. (I want the Lord to ride shotgun – I want Him to participate as a consultant at strategic points in the session, and I'm more than

⁵In many situations, Jesus doesn't push as hard as I would. In my opinion, He often seems way too relaxed with respect to letting people wait until they're ready.

⁶Note that even when I know there is an underlying traumatic memory, and I'm steering the person towards it, I never make suggestions regarding the specific memory content. See Karl Lehman, "Discerning Truth In Memory," for discussion regarding why it is important to NOT make suggestions with respect to specific memory content. (Available as a free download from www.kclehman.com.)

⁷Even though I realize that this erroneous underestimate regarding the Lord's willingness to provide adequate guidance and help is triggered implicit memory being transferred onto the Lord, and even though this is steadily decreasing as I work away at the underlying trauma, it still affects me.

happy for Him to take the wheel when I get lost – but I still feel most comfortable when I spend the majority of the trip in the driver’s seat).

Putting all of this together, the bottom line is that I often grab the wheel when I should be coaching the person to focus on Jesus and ask *Him* for guidance and help. So I try to constantly, deliberately challenge myself to lean towards letting Jesus do more of the driving.⁸ In addition to this logical, left hemisphere discussion, I would like to provide a couple of stories that will help this point about letting Jesus drive sink deeply into your emotional, intuitive right hemisphere.

Eileen, “She’s been sitting in Jesus’ lap.” At the end of the session presented in the *Eileen: “Immanuel Interventions”* DVD, Eileen was in a three-year-old memory in which she was sitting in Jesus’ lap and listening to His heart beat as He spoke words of reassurance and blessing. At this point in the session it was obvious that Eileen had received some powerful, beautiful healing work, but it was also clear to me that there was a lot more that needed to be done, especially regarding trauma related to her mother. I didn’t say this out loud, but I was thinking, “If we had more time, I would coach Eileen to press into this remaining trauma.” As I was having this thought, and also thinking about how I might encourage Eileen to pursue this healing work in some other setting, she made a spontaneous comment along the lines of “Jesus is saying that for right now He wants me to just stay in His lap and enjoy being with Him, and then at some time in the future we need to do more healing work about my mother.” I thought, “Wow. That’s interesting. Jesus is obviously aware of the healing work that still needs to be done, but He also seems very clear that right now is not the time to do it.” So I let it go and closed the session.

Another part of this story is that in addition to her participation in one of our mentoring groups, Eileen would also come in for an occasional individual session. She did a lot of Immanuel healing work in personal prayer times with just herself and Jesus, but occasionally she would get really triggered, be unable to resolve the problem on her own, and then come in for a consultation session for help with getting unstuck. This happened every two to three months, and with each session we would start by helping her to establish an interactive connection with Jesus, ask Him to show us where to go and what to do for the rest of the session, and then just follow His lead. This seemed to be working very well so I wasn’t worrying about setting the agenda, and I had forgotten all about the comments from the end of the mentoring group session.

And then, in a session about a year-and-a-half after the healing work presented in the training DVD, Eileen established a good connection with Jesus, asked for guidance, and reported, “Jesus says that now it’s time to do the healing work about my mother.” Somehow the matter-of-fact way she stated this, and then looked at me with calm patience (as if she was waiting for me to take the next obvious, logical step), gave me the impression that she expected me to know exactly what she was talking about. It felt as if she were referring to something that had happened to both of us just a few minutes earlier, and that I should know what she meant by “...the healing work about my Mom.” I had no idea what she was talking about, and I’m sure I looked as clueless as I felt, because she eventually explained, “You know – the little girl – she’s been sitting on His lap, building capacity, learning to trust Him, and just enjoying being with Him – and He says that now it’s time to go and work on the painful memories.” I’m still totally lost. “Okay,...uhm,...ahh,...I’m not sure I’m exactly clear about which little girl and which memories we’re referring to – I think somehow I missed something.” So she explained further, “You know, the three-year-old child part from the memory in the kitchen, where my Mom was doing dishes and I was trying to get her attention, but she was so depressed that she was just starring blankly out the window. And Jesus told the little girl that He wanted her to just sit in His lap for a while, but sometime later we would need to do more healing work about my mother.”

⁸I realize that I provide a particularly dramatic example, but I have noticed that there are quite a few others that share many of these same issues, and have similar struggles with grabbing the wheel when Jesus should be driving.

The lightbulb finally went on for me, “Oh! You mean from the session a couple of years ago – the session on the DVD? You’re saying that the little girl child part from that session has been sitting on Jesus’ lap all this time? She’s been sitting on Jesus’ lap for the last couple years, building trust and capacity, and now Jesus is saying that it’s time to work on the traumatic memories regarding your mother He was referring to at the end of the session?” “Exactly!” says Eileen. “She’s been with Jesus all this time, and Jesus says she’s ready to do the healing work now.”

Oh, wow. Amazing. I had never seen this one before, but in light of the dramatic fruit in Eileen’s life after the earlier session (and also in light of the other things I had been seeing the Lord do in Immanuel sessions), it all seemed quite possible. So making direct eye contact,⁹ I spoke directly to the three year old child part and asked if she would be willing to cooperate with whatever Jesus wanted to do regarding the painful memories with her mother. She promptly said “Yes,” and within minutes Jesus had taken her to some very intense memories in which she had been terrified that her mother would die. After this initial intervention to help her get started, all I did was coach her to focus on Jesus and ask Him for help at every point in the healing work, and the memories were resolved in less than twenty minutes. As we finished working through the memories, I remember thinking that this was some of the smoothest, easiest work I had ever done, when working with such traumatic early childhood experiences, and I especially noted that Eileen did not have any problems with disconnection or inadequate capacity.

As I pondered this session, it became increasingly clear that Jesus is an excellent therapist, with a very high level of skill and excellent clinical judgment. He had made a very good clinical judgment call at the end of the initial session in directing us to wait before trying to work with the traumatic mother memories, He had obviously been very skilled in building trust and capacity with the child part as she spent 18 months sitting in His lap, He obviously made the right call in saying that she was now ready to work on this material, and He did a beautiful, gentle, extremely effective job of leading us through the healing work when Eileen finally did go to the memories. Furthermore, I am convinced that this healing work would have been much more difficult if I had tried to get Eileen to go to these memories prematurely. I’m sure we would have encountered complicated problems with inadequate capacity, and it would have been slower, messier, and much more painful. In addition to the theoretical reasons for letting Jesus lead, this kind of practical experience has taught me to deliberately lean towards letting Jesus drive as much as possible (regarding non-process aspects of the healing work).

Rita: Let Jesus answer the questions: Another particularly dramatic experience teaching me to let Jesus drive happened this past spring (2012). I was facilitating a demonstration session in one of our mentoring groups, and about ten minutes into the session the recipient, Rita,¹⁰ asked a question. It was a good question, asking for both clarification regarding the personal meaning of the memories she was working with and explanation regarding a theoretical point, and after a few moments of thought I had a really good answer. Just before opening my mouth to share my ideas, the thought occurred to me, “I wonder what would happen if I coach her to focus on Jesus and ask Him, instead of just giving the answer myself?” To be painfully honest, my immediate internal response to this thought was something along the lines of, “Yeah, that’s a nice idea, but the Lord sometimes seems to take His time with respect to answering questions – He’s too relaxed, too willing to waste time, and not adequately concerned about making the best use of the session.¹¹ Furthermore, He often seems to speak so quietly that it takes a bit of work to make sure we are accurately hearing and understanding His answer. I think we’ll get a usable answer a lot more quickly if I just take care of it myself.”

⁹See “Direct Eye Contact (Technique for Making Contact with Internal Parts),” available as a free download from www.kclehman.com, for discussion of this simple but powerful tool for working with internal child parts.

¹⁰Yes, this is the Rita from several of our live session DVDs.

¹¹In addition to the long pauses, Jesus also seems to talk a lot more slowly than I do.

But then I had second thoughts, “You know, this is a training group, where trying new stuff and learning is more important than efficiency. So maybe I’ll coach her to ask Jesus, just to see what happens.” So I did, and sure enough, there was a long pause – we’re in this strategic training group, with a whole room full of busy people trying to learn stuff, and Jesus waits for a couple of minutes before answering the question. And then we had to take some more time for me to coach Rita to verbalize what she thought she was hearing from the Lord. But when Rita finally described what she perceived as the Lord’s answer, I was amazed to realize that it was exactly what I would have said. Well, actually, not *exactly* what I would have said. The Lord’s answer was actually more precise, more elegant, and more carefully nuanced than what I had been about to offer, and He didn’t repeat Himself or get distracted by tangential digressions. But the core content was the same. And the Lord seemed to have a quiet but profound authority clearly beyond what I carry. I’m sure that if I had answered her question Rita would have listened to me, and she would have seriously considered the probability that my thoughts were valid, but subtle uncertainties would have lingered around the edges. In contrast, when she heard these same thoughts from the Lord she immediately had a deep, peaceful sense of confidence that they were true. It was done. No additional discussion was needed, and we moved on.

And then about fifteen minutes later it happened again. Rita asked a good question, requiring an answer that would both clarify the personal meaning of the memories she was working with and explain a theoretical point; after a few moments of thought I had a really good answer; just before opening my mouth to share my ideas, the thought occurred to me, “I wonder what would happen if I coach her to focus on Jesus and ask Him, instead of just giving the answer myself?”; I felt the same skeptical assessment that we would probably get a usable answer much more quickly if I just answered the question myself; and I had the thought, “You know, this is a training group, where trying new stuff and learning is more important than efficiency. So maybe I’ll coach her to ask Jesus, just to see what happens.” Once again, I went ahead and did this, there was a long pause before Jesus answered the question, and then we had to take more time for me to coach Rita to verbalize what she thought she was hearing from the Lord. Once again, I was amazed to realize that the Lord’s answer was exactly what I would have said, except clearer, more elegant, more carefully nuanced, without repetitions or digressions, and carrying His special authority. And once again, when she heard the answer from Jesus she immediately had a deep, peaceful sense of confidence that it was true. It was done. No discussion was needed, and we moved on.

Ten minutes later Rita asked another question, and after a few moments of thought I had a really good answer, but this time I then jumped right to, “Okay Lord, I get the point. You want me to coach her to ask You.” So I coached Rita to focus on Jesus and present her question to Him, but this time I was much more patient through the long pause as we waited for Jesus to answer and I had more positive expectation as I coached Rita to verbalize what she thought she was hearing from the Lord. And even though it had just happened twice in the last 35 minutes, I was still amazed that the Lord’s answer was exactly what I would have said, except clearer, more elegant, more carefully nuanced, without repetitions or digressions, and carrying His special authority. Once again, when she heard the answer from Jesus she immediately had a deep, peaceful sense of confidence that it was true. No additional discussion was needed, and we moved on.

When Rita paused to ask another good question fifteen minutes later, I thought, “Wow. You’re really making a point here Jesus.” And even though I once again had a good answer that I wanted to share, I went right to coaching her to focus on Jesus and ask Him. There was the familiar long pause while we waited for Jesus to answer, I supplied the familiar coaching to help Rita verbalize what she thought she was hearing from the Lord, and then for the fourth time in less than an hour Jesus said just what I would have said, but better. On one hand, it was encouraging to see that I was thinking along the same lines as Jesus. It was kind of like being able to check the answers at the back of the book – “Hey, I’m still on the right track! That’s nice to know.” But it was also humbling to see Jesus provide yet another answer that was clearer, more elegant, more carefully nuanced, more concise, and carrying more authority than what I had to offer. And, not surprisingly, when she heard the answer from Jesus she immediately had a deep, peaceful sense of confidence that it was true. No discussion was needed, and

we moved on.

When Rita paused to ask yet another question ten minutes later, I immediately thought, “Okay Lord, I think we can all see that You are *really* trying to make a point here.” As usual, I had some good ideas about what needed to be said, but by this point in the session it was pretty obvious that I should just jump right to coaching her to engage directly with Jesus regarding her question. So I did. There was still a long pause while we waited for Jesus to answer, and I still had to coach Rita to verbalize what she thought she was hearing from the Lord, but this time I was waiting with eager anticipation to see if He would do it again. Sure enough, for the fifth time in little more than an hour Jesus brought truth that made the exact same core points I had wanted to make, but with more clarity, elegance, nuance, and efficiency. And, as always, His answer came with a special authority, so that Rita immediately had a deep, peaceful sense of confidence that it was true. She was thoroughly satisfied, no discussion was needed, and we moved on.

By this point in the session I was very impressed with the Lord’s thoroughness and cleverness with respect to the teaching point He had just made, and I also felt like I had a good sense of where the rest of the session was going to go. Rita was in the middle of working on an important unresolved issue, and the Lord had just taken her to what looked like the key root memory. It all looked fairly straight forward – she just needed to work through a few unfinished processing tasks, the key root trauma would then be resolved, and we would be home free. To be totally honest, I felt like I could handle the rest of the session by myself. I wasn’t planning on grabbing the wheel from Jesus, but I felt like I could have taken care of the situation if Jesus had gotten called away for an emergency.

And then Rita suddenly said something along the lines of, “I can’t do this....This memory is too big – it’s too much – I don’t know how to handle this....I feel like I’m not able to work through this one – I can’t do it.” We only had about twenty minutes left before the end of the group, and Rita seemed to be completely stuck. Even after taking some time to think and listen for guidance, I couldn’t come up with a plan that would quickly deal with her apparent lack of the capacity and maturity skills needed to work through the traumatic memory that had somehow suddenly gotten bigger and more complicated. The lesson so far seemed to have been, “Coach the person to take her questions to Jesus, even when you think you have good answers yourself,” but at this point I didn’t feel like I had much choice. I had no idea what to do, and was more than happy to apply the “Coach the person to engage directly with Jesus at every point in the session” Immanuel approach principle. So I coached Rita to focus on Jesus, ask Him for guidance/help, and then describe whatever came into her awareness.

After a long pause (Jesus, don’t You realize how little time we have left?), Rita reported that she was now in a completely different memory. This new memory was clearly much less complicated and less intense, and Rita seemed ready and willing to work with it, but it also seemed to be completely unrelated to the strategic traumatic memory in which she had just been stuck. I was actually quite disappointed. I had hoped that the Lord would have some clever plan for working through the larger memory that seemed to be so key to the issue we had been working with, instead of just saying, “I can’t help her get through that one either, so let’s just go find something smaller and easier.” I was a bit puzzled and disappointed, but I figured we might as well work with what we had, so I kept coaching her to ask Jesus for guidance and help regarding the new memory.

She worked through this new memory quickly and easily, and then with about five minutes left, she popped out with, “Oh, wow! Now Jesus is taking me back to the other memory, and I’m just realizing that the key issue in the little memory we just resolved is the exact same as the key issue in the other memory that felt like it was too big for me.” After pausing for a few moments to think about what she had just said, the rest of us were all able to see the connection; but none of us had caught this until she had pointed it out. Rita then went on to explain, “The main reason the bigger memory felt like too much for me was that I didn’t know how to go about working through the situation – I didn’t feel like I could handle such an intense memory when I had no idea regarding how to work with it. So Jesus took me to a smaller memory with the same issue, and then showed me what to do and helped me practice in

the less intense memory.” Now that she had a clear battle plan for how to work through the traumatic pieces, she willingly went with Jesus back to the memory that had previously felt impossibly difficult and intense, and with His help she was able to resolve it within the remaining five minutes.

We were all in awe. This was one of the most effective, efficient, brilliant, elegant, creative therapy interventions that any of us had ever seen. Not to mention the fact that the rest of us wouldn’t have even known about the smaller, simpler parallel memory. Somewhere in the back of my mind, after the fifth round of Jesus bringing an answer that was essentially the same as what I had I wanted to share, I was starting to feel pretty pleased with myself. I never would have said it out loud, due to the outrageous presumption, but if I gotten words for what was starting to feel true it might have been something like, “Well yeah, of course I know I’ll never be *fully* as good a therapist as Jesus. I mean, His answers and interventions are always a bit better than mine, *but I’m getting pretty close*. I mean – all false humility aside – I think I could take care of most of this by myself if I really needed to.” Now I was just in awe. “Jesus, You’re the man! I am definitely the humble student, and You are most assuredly still the master.” I think Jesus wants us to deliberately practice letting Him drive as much as possible, for all of the reasons described earlier, but it’s especially nice to let Jesus drive when we’re completely lost.

These two stories are particularly striking, and I think the Lord deliberately orchestrated them to make sure I clearly understood this teaching point, but I have also had many similar experiences that have conveyed the same truth (just not quite so dramatically). The steadily growing pile of these experiences in my own practice, along with a steadily growing pile of similar stories from others who are using the Immanuel approach, has lead me to increasingly lean towards letting Jesus drive with respect all non-process aspects of Immanuel approach sessions.

Persist with the Immanuel approach, and let Jesus drive even when it’s bumpy and slow: As just described, there have been times when I was tempted to just lead the healing work myself, instead of applying the Immanuel approach *process* and then letting Jesus drive with respect to everything else. I worried that Jesus would not provide adequate guidance and help, and I worried that the recipient would not be able to adequately understand and/or cooperate with the Lord’s guidance and help; but when I deliberately restrained myself, and coached the person to turn to Jesus instead of trying to do it myself, I was dramatically pleasantly surprised by the Lord’s competence. This has been tremendously faith-building with respect to the Lord’s character, heart, and faithfulness, and it especially encourages me regarding the possibilities for widespread lay ministry with the Immanuel approach to emotional healing.

However, there have also been situations in which the Immanuel approach was truly bumpy, cumbersome, and slow. For example, when both I and the recipients were just getting started with these new tools, the initial steps of positive memory recall, deliberate appreciation, and establishing an interactive connection were particularly slow and cumbersome. It would also slow things down when beginner recipients didn’t yet have skill with respect to the “describe *whatever* comes into your awareness” piece. Regarding these bumpy, cumbersome, slow situations, my assessment is that other tools and techniques have truly been more efficient than the Immanuel approach. For example, some of my clients have responded particularly well to certain other interventions, such as Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR). When one of these patients has had trouble with the Immanuel approach, I have switched (at least temporarily) to EMDR, and my perception is that it was more efficient.

Furthermore, there have been situations in which the recipient’s emotional healing actually did move more quickly when I provided a lot more direction. For example, when there have been a lot of blockages hindering the recipient’s perception of the Lord’s presence and she has only been able to receive a small portion of His guidance and help. In these sessions, I have had to provide more direction to make up for the recipient’s impaired ability to receive guidance from Jesus.

Nevertheless, I encourage you to be persistent in practicing with the Immanuel approach, even when it is

bumpy and cumbersome, and to keep leaning towards letting Jesus drive as much as possible, even when the recipient is having trouble perceiving His presence and receiving His guidance and help. As discussed in the “Caveats” section below, there are certain strategic clinical situations in which it is appropriate, and even necessary, to provide more direction and/or to use other tools and techniques; but *in general*, I want us to challenge ourselves to be persistent in practicing with the Immanuel approach, and to deliberately lean towards letting Jesus do more and more of the driving. First, we will often be pleasantly surprised – as illustrated by the true stories just described, we will often find the Immanuel approach to be less cumbersome and more effective than we had anticipated.¹²

Second, people will often experience an initial phase of slow, cumbersome inefficiency, as they are first learning to use the Immanuel approach and as they first experiment with letting Jesus do more of the driving, but if they persist this will steadily resolve as they gain experience and as the recipient removes blockages. In my own experience, I initially often had sessions in which the Immanuel approach felt slow and cumbersome; but now it usually flows smoothly, produces elegant results, and is more efficient than any other technique I have ever used.¹³ Athletic endeavors provide a good analogy. When an athlete changes some aspect of her technique, even if the new technique is clearly the better way to do things, she usually experiences an initial phase of frustration and her performance actually deteriorates. *Temporarily*. But then she begins to improve steadily as she makes the transition and gains expertise with the new form, and in the long run her performance with the new technique surpasses anything she had been able to do in the past.¹⁴

Finally, using the simplest possible techniques, where we just provide the structure for the Immanuel approach process and then coach the person to engage directly with Jesus regarding every other aspect of the session, is strategic with respect to the long term big picture. In order to make a real dent in the trauma and dysfunction that is pervasive throughout the entire planet, we need to get hundreds of millions of lay people incorporating the Immanuel approach into their daily lives – as part of their personal healing and growth, and as part of caring for their families and friends. My hope is that using (and simultaneously *modeling*) the simplest Immanuel approach techniques, in every possible appropriate setting, can be part of this larger vision. With the process and interventions being so simple and safe, recipients and observers will often learn the Immanuel approach easily and naturally as they participate in sessions.¹⁵ We have already been observing this on a regular basis. Because the most basic form¹⁶ of

¹²I know I’m repeating this point, but it’s really, really important. That is, I’m saying it over and over again to make sure that you get it. Just in case it didn’t really sink in, I’m making the point repeatedly.

¹³Rita’s session, described above, is a perfect example of smooth, elegant, and effective.

¹⁴Note that this pattern is most pronounced with mental health professionals and experienced emotional healing ministers (like myself). We have spent many years learning the principles and developing skill with other emotional healing tools, and we have gotten to the point where we get reasonably consistent and robust positive results with these other tools. Initially, when we try to switch from these other tools to the Immanuel approach we feel frustrated, clumsy, and less effective. The temptation to return to the old familiar techniques, with consistent moderately good results, is intense. However, if we persist with the new tools we begin to get increasingly good results with the Immanuel approach, and we eventually get better results than with any previous techniques.

¹⁵In addition to simply participating in Immanuel approach sessions, I offer brief explanations regarding the principles involved, and I ask the recipients and observers to do a moderate amount of reading regarding the Immanuel approach. But the bottom line is that most people doing emotional healing work with me eventually learn the Immanuel approach to the point that they actually start using it on their own.

¹⁶Part of why it is so important for the facilitator to provide only the structure for the process, and then lean heavily towards deferring to Jesus regarding every other aspect of the session, is that this is part of what makes the Immanuel approach so simple and safe for lay people and beginners.

the Immanuel approach is so simple and safe, the recipients (and also any supporting friends or family they bring with them) often learn it fairly quickly, and then feel safe enough and confident enough *that they actually begin to use it*. This does not happen with other techniques, such as EMDR,¹⁷ that require much more training and skill, and it also does not happen if we mix more complicated tools and techniques in with the Immanuel approach.

Caveats: As I look for ways to bring the Immanuel approach into every possible setting, and as I deliberately lean towards letting Jesus do more of the driving, I keep several caveats in mind.

Caveat #1: Some people are not yet able to use the Immanuel approach. The first, most obvious caveat is that some people are not yet able to use the Immanuel approach – they have blockages that are currently preventing them from perceiving the Lord’s tangible presence or establishing an interactive connection, and without these pieces the Immanuel approach process is not possible. With these people, I temporarily use other approaches, such as EMDR and Theophostic-based emotional healing, with an important part of the work being to find and resolve the hindrances that prevent them from using the Immanuel approach. And as we find and resolve traumatic memories (and other issues), I periodically check regarding their ability to perceive and connect with Jesus. I’m always working towards the Immanuel approach. My goal is for every person to eventually be able to embrace the Immanuel approach, as their primary way of receiving emotional healing and also as a lifestyle.

Caveat #2: Additional direction from the facilitator is needed to compensate for a poor connection with Jesus. As mentioned above, there are situations in which the recipient is able to use the Immanuel approach, but blockages hinder her connection with Jesus to the point that she is only able to receive a portion of His guidance and help. In these sessions, the facilitator has to provide more direction to make up for the recipient’s impaired ability to receive guidance from Jesus. The good news is that Immanuel approach healing will always result in resolving traumatic memories (and other issues) that hinder the person’s connection with Jesus, and as this happens her ability to receive the Lord’s guidance and help will steadily improve. Therefore, both the facilitator and recipient should constantly press towards allowing Jesus to do more of the driving. One of the most straight-forward ways to do this is to periodically experiment with deliberately stepping outside of your comfort zone, as I did in the session with Rita. Deliberately withhold guidance and help that you usually provide, coach the person to engage directly with Jesus, and give Him plenty of time in which to work.¹⁸ If the recipient is not able to obtain the resources you are temporarily withholding through engaging directly with Jesus, you can easily step back in; however, if you discover that the person is able to receive more guidance and help than you had thought possible, her Immanuel healing work will take a big step forward.

Caveat #3: Short term strategic clinical considerations. As also described above, there are situations in which other techniques may be more efficient than the Immanuel approach. And while I strongly encourage people even in these situations to be moving towards the Immanuel approach as the foundation for *long term* plans, there are sometimes short term strategic clinical considerations that require the use of other techniques.

For example, if a person is in crisis because his new job is intensely triggering his Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), the Immanuel approach is slow and cumbersome in your hands as an

¹⁷In my observation, even techniques that are supposed to be open to lay ministers, such as Theophostic, Sozo, and various other approaches to emotional healing prayer, include too much complexity for the average lay person to use. Even in the context of ministry programs specifically designed to train lay people, we have noticed that many of the lay trainees never actually use these other approaches because they feel too complicated/intimidating.

¹⁸It is usually best to let the recipient know what you are intending to do, so that she isn’t frightened and/or confused when you suddenly begin to provide significantly less guidance and help.

inexperienced facilitator, this person has issues that hinder his ability to connect well with Jesus, you are experienced and efficient with EMDR, and this person responds particularly well to EMDR, then choosing to use EMDR for dealing with his immediate crisis could make the difference between whether or not he is able to keep his job. Or if a person is in crisis because her mother's unexpected death has precipitated an episode of intense, suicidal depression, and EMDR is again more efficient than the Immanuel approach for a variety of reasons, then choosing to use EMDR for this immediate crisis could even save her life by finding and resolving the roots of her depression before she is able to kill herself. Or if a person is in crisis because his addictive sexual behavior is destroying his relationship with his wife, and EMDR is more efficient than the Immanuel approach in the context of your current work with this particular person, then choosing to use EMDR for this immediate crisis could save his marriage.

I would still encourage you to move towards using the Immanuel approach as the foundation for *long term* care in each of these situations; but urgent, strategic, practical concerns require that we use whatever is *currently* the most efficient intervention for the short term crises.

Caveat #4: Counterfeit/contaminated guidance. Nobody is able to perceive the Lord's guidance with 100% accuracy or follow it with 100% obedience. Even when we are able to establish a good interactive connection with the Lord, unconscious avoidance, subtle self deception, the complexity of the neurological processes involved, physical trauma in our fallen biological brains, psychological trauma in our fallen minds, internal dissociated parts with complex agenda, and deliberate demonic interference can all get in the way of receiving and following the Lord's guidance. This is why both the recipient and facilitator need to be constantly watching for observable, lasting positive changes in the recipient's life, as one of the most reliable methods for discerning whether or not the "guidance and help" the person describes is truly from the Lord.

Fortunately, counterfeit and/or contaminated "guidance and help" is usually a minor problem with the Immanuel approach.¹⁹ However, in some situations a combination of dissociated internal parts and/or other unconscious aspects of the person's mind and/or demonic spirits will send forward content that the person mistakenly perceives to be coming from Jesus, and this counterfeit/contaminated "guidance" causes bigger problems. In some of these cases the counterfeit/contaminated "guidance from Jesus" is directly toxic. For example, the person might receive "guidance" reassuring him that it's okay to continue having an affair with one of his co-workers, as long as he really loves her. Or the person may hear "words from Jesus" that are angry, condemning, and non-relational. An important part of the facilitator's role is to watch for this kind of toxic content that the recipient mistakenly perceives as coming from Jesus,²⁰ and in these situations the facilitator will have to provide a lot more direction

¹⁹I have been consistently pleasantly surprised by how little this problem has prevented people from having life-giving interactions with Jesus in the context of Immanuel approach sessions. For additional discussion of counterfeit and/or contamination with respect to guidance and help that the recipient perceives to be coming from God, see chapter (**fill in when this chapter is complete.** Currently available in part II, "Go back to the basics if you feel overwhelmed," in the "Where/how do I get training regarding the Immanuel approach?" essay (available as free download from www.immanuelapproach.com), section F, "Is it from the Lord?" – on discerning the source of Immanuel approach experiences," of Part III, "The Immanuel Approach, Additional Practical Considerations," in the "Brain Science, Psychological Trauma, and the God Who Is with Us, Part V: The Immanuel Approach, Revisited" essay (available as free download from www.kelehman.com), "Internal Dissociated Parts Presenting as Jesus" (available as free download from www.kelehman.com), and "Unresolved Issues in the Therapist/Facilitator: One of the Most Important Hindrances to Emotional Healing" (available as free download from www.kelehman.com).

²⁰Having adequate discernment to be able to spot this kind of toxic counterfeit/contaminated "guidance" is an important qualification for anyone who wants to facilitate Immanuel approach sessions. For example, a facilitator should be sufficiently familiar with Biblical truth and the heart of God so that

until the source of the counterfeit/contaminated “guidance and help” has been identified and resolved. Thankfully, once the source of counterfeit/contamination has been resolved, the facilitator can go back to letting Jesus do most of the driving. Again, our observation is that this kind of serious problem with toxic content is rare, but facilitators working with extreme trauma and other complicated problems will need to be aware of these phenomenon.

In other cases the counterfeit/contaminated “guidance” is much more subtle, in that it leads to subtle, chronic avoidance of important issues (as opposed to introducing directly toxic content that is much more obvious). For example, if a person has internal dissociated parts that are very invested in avoiding certain particularly painful memories, they may deliberately fabricate thoughts, emotions, and images that the recipient will mistakenly perceive as Jesus’ presence leading away from the strategic memories.²¹ In these situations the facilitator will have to provide a lot more direction until the source of the counterfeit/contaminated “guidance” has been identified and resolved, and once the source of the counterfeit/contaminated “guidance” has been resolved, the facilitator can go back to letting Jesus do most of the driving. As with directly toxic content, our observation is that this kind of serious problem with subtle avoidance is rare, but facilitators working with extreme trauma and other complicated problems will need to be aware of these phenomenon.²²

When you do offer guidance and help, be humble and tentative: As just mentioned above, there will be times when the recipient is having difficulty with receiving guidance and help directly from God, and in these situations the facilitator will have to provide more direction and assistance. As discussed in chapter four, this especially becomes necessary when people doing intermediate and advanced Immanuel approach work encounter seasons during which they have difficulty establishing good connections with the Lord. As discussed in chapter 20, when we do offer guidance and help as the facilitator it is important to be humble and tentative as we give our input. For example, if I notice that the session is not flowing smoothly on it’s own, and I have a thought about something that might be helpful, I will gently say, “I have a thought about something that might be helpful. If you would like to hear it, let me know when you

she can recognize when supposed “guidance from Jesus” is inconsistent with these two important reference points. For additional discussion of this aspect of the facilitators role, see chapter (****Fill in when complete.****) Currently available in the essays referenced in footnote 18.

²¹This is not the place for a thorough discussion of this advanced topic, but I will offer a few quick thoughts: 1) This phenomenon is actually easiest to spot when it is widespread, because the person will have session after session after session in which they appear to have many positive, pleasant, painless interactions with Jesus, but they never deal with any difficult issues or memories and there is no observable fruit in their lives. 2) This phenomena can sometime present in much more subtle ways, and the best resource for recognizing these more subtle presentations is logging in many hours of Immanuel approach sessions. As you become more and more familiar with how the Lord works in Immanuel sessions, you will start to notice subtle clues when counterfeit/contaminated “guidance” shows up. In a variety of subtle ways, it won’t look and feel like “the real thing.” 3) For extensive discussion regarding how to recognizing subtle counterfeit/contamination, see chapter (****fill in when complete.****) currently available in the essays referenced in footnotes 18 and 19).

²²This is not the place to provide a thorough discussion of this advanced topic, but I will offer one quick thought. In many situations where you see an important issue and/or memory that seems to be getting ignored, you can gently describe what you are observing, and then make the following invitation: “I’m not sure whether Jesus is deliberately waiting, or whether some kind of avoidance/resistance on your part may be hindering your ability to get this one on the table, but would you be willing to ask Him about it, and see what He says?” You may perceive that the person just takes her avoidance to the next level (for example, generating a counterfeit Jesus that says, “No, it’s fine, we don’t need to look at that.”). However, I have been pleasantly surprised by how often this simple, gentle intervention helps the person move forward. And in other situations, the true, genuine Jesus will clearly say, “Yes, this is important, but now is not the right time,” as He did in the initial session with Eileen.

come to a good place to pause and I would be happy to share it with you.” And then if/when they ask for my input, I offer it gently, as a suggestion that they are free to accept or reject.

As also discussed in chapter 20, we should be especially humble and tentative when we perceive that the Lord is giving us guidance that he wants us to pass on to the recipient. And when the facilitator offers something as possibly from God, the recipient always makes the final call regarding whether or not to accept the guidance and/or help as from the Lord.

Final thoughts:

Long term benefits of taking it home. As you are thinking about whether or not to use the Immanuel approach, and thinking about whether or not to let Jesus do most of the driving, it’s important to remember that it will be a HUGE long term, lasting benefit for the recipient to eventually be able to use the Immanuel approach on her own. With most situations in which the Immanuel approach is less efficient in the short term, the benefit of eventually being able to use the simple Immanuel approach tools on her own, as an ongoing resource that she can take with her, will outweigh the short term loss of efficiency.²³ Even in situations where the Immanuel approach is initially very bumpy and cumbersome, I encourage you to think about moving toward using the Immanuel approach more and more over time. At the very least, include occasional sessions in which you very deliberately use the Immanuel approach (with only the simplest tools and techniques), explain the underlying principles as you apply the Immanuel approach tools and techniques, and explicitly name the goal of the recipient eventually being able to have these tools and techniques as a resource that she can take home with her.

Part time lay ministers and beginners: just focus on the stories and let them encourage you. I made this point at the beginning, in the “Advanced topics warning” section, and I want to make it again here. I don’t want the advanced/complex aspects of this discussion to discourage or overwhelm part time lay ministers or beginners. So if you’re a part time lay minister or beginner, you are already convinced regarding the need for the Immanuel approach structure/framework, and you are already convinced regarding the importance of letting Jesus lead with respect to every non-process aspect of Immanuel approach sessions, then just enjoy the stories and let them encourage you regarding how effectively Jesus can lead when you constantly coach the recipient to focus on Him and ask Him for guidance and help. If you encounter a more complicated situation in which the most basic Immanuel approach tools don’t seem to be fully effective, you can just help the person get back to her initial positive memory and interactive connection from the beginning of the session, and then afterwards you can take time to study more of our material and/or get a consultation and/or refer the person to a more experienced facilitator.

²³In this discussion, the cost/benefit analysis is referring to the cost of the healing process slowing temporarily as you transition from other approaches to the Immanuel approach, with the Immanuel approach being bumpy and cumbersome at first. This cost/benefit discussion is *not* referring to situations with urgent, strategic clinical concerns, such as the cases with PTSD, depression, and addictive sexual behavior crises described in the “Caveat #3” section above.

The Immanuel Approach (to Emotional Healing and to Life)

Chapter 26: Intermediate/Advanced Troubleshooting

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DRAFT

In chapters twelve and thirteen I described troubleshooting tools and Immanuel interventions that are so basic, simple, and easy that the average layperson can learn to use them quickly, and so safe that they can be used in the context of group exercises. When we encounter difficulties, we should of course start with these basic, simple tools and interventions that are especially easy and safe. However, as described in chapters four and twenty-two, we sometimes encounter more complicated blockages that require more advanced troubleshooting tools and Immanuel interventions. In this chapter I would like to present a brief introduction to intermediate/advanced Immanuel approach troubleshooting and Immanuel interventions, to give the reader a feel for the kinds of blockages that can be identified and resolved with intermediate/advanced tools and interventions.¹

Advanced topics warning: Some are intimidated by the complexity of the blockages, resources, and interventions that I discuss in this chapter. If you are going through this book for the first time, just to get an overview of the Immanuel approach, one option is to simply skip this material for now and then come back for it when you have become comfortable with the basic Immanuel approach tools and process and want to begin helping recipients with intermediate and advanced blockages. However, if you decide to look at this material now please don't let it scare you away. If you find yourself feeling intimidated or overwhelmed by the discussion of more complex blockages and more advanced trouble-shooting, I strongly encourage you to skim (or skip) the rest of the chapter, and to at least experiment with the basic tools and process. *Please* don't decide that the Immanuel approach is too difficult until you have at least tried the basic Immanuel approach exercises just described in chapter twenty four (and make sure to try these exercises with a facilitator or practice partner, so that you can take advantage of the ways in which your brain works better in community).

I. Intermediate/advanced Immanuel approach troubleshooting: As mentioned in chapter four, with additional study and practice people who are more serious about emotional healing can become effective in dealing with more complicated problems.

Facilitators who are more serious about emotional healing can learn about additional trouble shooting tools and Immanuel interventions, and they can gain more knowledge about the ones they are already using. For example, they can learn about variations for coaching the recipient to describe whatever is coming into her awareness and they can learn about variations for coaching the recipient to engage directly with Jesus. They can learn about self-protection vows that can

¹ I am working to put together a series of essays that will provide a much more detailed discussion of intermediate and advanced Immanuel approach troubleshooting and Immanuel interventions, but for the purposes of this book I want to give the reader at least an introductory overview of intermediate and advanced tools and interventions.

hinder the healing process, and about how to recognize and systematically dismantle them.² They can learn more about guardian lie fears that can block the healing process, and about how to uncover them and neutralize them. They can learn about the direct eye contact technique for working with internal parts.³ And they can learn about how deliberate attunement can help the recipient stay connected, augment the recipient's capacity,⁴ and augment the recipient's maturity skills.⁵

In addition to gaining *knowledge*, facilitators who are more serious about emotional healing can also gain more *skill*. First of all, as facilitators put in more time practicing they become more comfortable, confident, and smooth with respect to the whole process. When beginners facilitate their first few sessions they usually feel clumsy and awkward, and they often focus a lot of their attention on their notes as they worry that they might forget something or that they might not “do it right.” Fortunately, most facilitators become more comfortable and confident fairly quickly with regular practice,⁶ and as they become more comfortable with the basics they become more effective simply by being more fully present to the recipient. Furthermore, as they become more comfortable, more confident, and more present to the recipient they are more able to notice subtle clues, and they can begin to develop a second level of skills.

Learning to drive provides a good analogy for the way in which we need to master the basics before learning second level skills. I learned to drive in Chicago in fairly heavy traffic, and when I first got on the road I was totally focused on just the basics – stuff like obeying the speed limit, changing lanes without hitting other cars, not running through stop signs, using the clutch to shift gears correctly, and not hitting pedestrians in the cross walk when I was making turns through crowded intersections. However, with continued practice I eventually mastered these basic skills, and when these skills became automatic to the point that I hardly even thought about them any more I started to develop a second level of driving skills and habits. For example, I learned to watch for people who were signaling to turn left, so that I could move into the right lane and slide around them instead of ending up stuck behind them while they were waiting for an opening to make their turn. And when I was driving on the highway I learned to watch for exit ramp congestion a mile down the road so that I could easily move into the passing lane before things

² For information regarding how to recognize and dismantle self-protection vows, see Karl D. Lehman, “Vows: ‘Clutter’ that Can Hinder Emotional Healing,” last modified 12/14/2013, <http://www.kclehman.com>, and Karl D. Lehman, “Self-protection Vows Worksheet,” last modified 12/12/2013, <http://www.kclehman.com>.

³ For information regarding this simple, powerful technique, see Karl D. Lehman, “Direct Eye Contact (Technique for Making Contact with Internal Parts),” last modified 12/12/2013, <http://www.kclehman.com>.

⁴ For a brief refresher regarding capacity, review the section on capacity from chapter three. For a much more detailed discussion of capacity as it relates to emotional healing, see either the essay or DVD set titled *Immanuel, Emotional Healing, and Capacity*.

⁵ For information about attunement and how it can be a resource for emotional healing, see Karl D. Lehman, “Brain Science, Psychological Trauma, and the God Who Is with Us ~ Part II,” last modified February 4, 2011, <http://www.kclehman.com>, and Karl D. Lehman, *Outsmarting Yourself*, (Libertyville, IL: This Joy! Books, 2011).

⁶ If you have facilitated more than ten sessions and still consistently feel anxious, awkward, and clumsy, I would encourage you to receive a session for yourself, specifically focusing on triggers that might be getting stirred up when you facilitate.

got crowded. Furthermore, I had additional capacity available to be emotionally present and carry on conversations with anybody that might be riding with me. (This was definitely *not* the case during my early practice drives in crowded Chicago traffic.)

Learning to use variations for coaching the recipient to describe whatever is coming into her awareness provides a good example of second level Immanuel approach skills. The super basic, “Describe whatever comes into your awareness, regardless of whether it makes sense, feels important, or is nicely packaged” is a good start, and many sessions will go well from beginning to end with nothing more than this simple sentence whenever coaching with respect to “describe everything” is needed. However, after facilitators have become fully comfortable with the basics they can learn variations that can be very helpful in certain situations. For example, sometimes I go through several rounds of coaching the recipient with the basic “describe whatever...” sentence, but she repeatedly reports “I’m not getting anything,” even though I can observe subtle thoughts and emotions going across her face. I realize that she’s ignoring subtle clues as she’s waiting (and waiting and waiting) for something more dramatic to happen,⁷ so I provide some additional coaching along the lines of,

“I’m noticing thoughts and emotions going across your face, and I’m wondering if there might be subtle clues that you’re missing. When I’m receiving, I sometimes catch myself focusing just on the center, or front, of my internal mental awareness, and ignoring subtle thoughts, emotions, physical sensations, or fragments of memories that are just barely perceptible on the periphery. If you’re willing, I’d like you to deliberately check for anything on the periphery of your internal mental awareness, even if it’s faint, subtle, and doesn’t feel important and/or make sense.”

And then the recipient will usually acknowledge that yes, there have been some things lingering on the periphery of her awareness, but she insists that they are “faint,” “vague,” and “just unimportant distractions.” When I finally coax her to describe them out loud, we are able to recognize them as important clues and then the whole process starts to move forward again.

Or I go through several rounds of coaching the recipient with the basic “describe whatever...” sentence, but then I notice that she’s becoming increasingly anxious and embarrassed as she alternates between long pauses and changing the subject.⁸ At this point I will provide some additional coaching, along the lines of:

“I’m noticing that you’re having difficulty responding, and that maybe you’re getting a bit anxious and embarrassed. I’m just wondering if content might be coming forward that you’re uncomfortable sharing? If I’m way off target just let me know – I’m sure I’ll survive – but if this is what’s happening then there are several things that might be helpful. One possibility is that you can just talk directly to Jesus, silently, without telling me any of the details. Another option is that I can help you find a way to talk about it in general terms. As long as I can understand the general ideas we’re working with, I don’t need to know any of the details –

⁷ Note that I am able to notice the subtle facial expressions that indicate thoughts and emotions because the basic Immanuel approach process and tools have become second nature, and I therefore have plenty of mental capacity available for observing the recipient and listening for the Lord’s guidance.

⁸ Again, I’m able to notice these clues because the basic Immanuel approach process and tools have become second nature, and I therefore have plenty of mental capacity available for observing the recipient and listening for the Lord’s guidance.

sometimes people find that this feels much less vulnerable or embarrassing, and then they're able to move forward. The last option is that we can just stop here, and go back to the positive memory and connection with Jesus from the beginning of the session. But if I'm guessing correctly, and this *is* what's happening, if you're willing I'd like to try one of the other two options."

After this explanation and invitation the recipient usually gives just the slightest nod, and says (very quietly), "Yes. Yes, that's what's happening." Thankfully, the recipient is almost always able to work with me to implement one of the first two options, and then the whole process starts moving forward again.⁹

Learning to use variations for coaching the recipient to engage directly with Jesus provides another example of second level Immanuel approach skills. The super basic, "Ask Jesus for guidance," and "Ask Jesus for help" are a good start, and many sessions will go well from beginning to end with nothing more than these two simple phrases whenever coaching to engage directly with Jesus is needed. However, after facilitators have become fully comfortable with the basics they can learn variations that can be very helpful in certain situations. For example, sometimes I coach the recipient to just focus on Jesus and to observe his behavior as a source of subtle (or sometimes not so subtle) guidance and encouragement. Sometimes I coach the recipient to ask Jesus for specific feedback ("Tell him that you're afraid he's angry with you, and ask him if it's true"). Sometimes I coach the recipient to observe Jesus' face as part of asking for specific feedback ("Look at Jesus' face – does he look angry?," "Does he look frightened?," "Does Jesus look like he's upset or disgusted with you?," or "Does Jesus look overwhelmed, or worried that he might not be able to handle the situation?"). Sometimes I coach the recipient to ask Jesus for very specific guidance, such as "What choices do I need to make to take the next step forward?" or "How can I best cooperate with what you're doing?" Sometimes I coach the recipient to ask Jesus for very specific assistance, such as "Please help me dismantle this disconnection defense that is preventing me from feeling your love," or "Please give me more strength, grace, and capacity." And sometimes I employ a fair amount of intermediate/advanced skill in helping the recipient to find the right words for what's in her heart and then helping her to share them directly with Jesus.

In addition to gaining additional knowledge and skill, facilitators who are more serious about emotional healing can learn to recognize when they are triggered and then use specific interventions for getting their relational circuits back on line.¹⁰ And they can also get their own

⁹ Several quick comments. One is that the process sometimes will eventually move forward if the facilitator just keeps gently coaching with the super basic one sentence invitation. Eventually the recipient decides to describe the faint, vague content in the periphery of her awareness, or she decides to report that she is having trouble because the content coming forward is too embarrassing. But the intermediate coaching variations described here can help things move forward more quickly and easily. Also, if the facilitator is only equipped with the basic tools and they aren't working, she can always just coach the recipient to go back to the safety net initial positive memory and connection. In some cases the recipient will be able to identify and resolve the problem by talking to Jesus in the context of the initial safe, positive setting; and if she isn't, then they can just stop the session and the recipient will still be okay, back in a positive, safe place with Jesus.

¹⁰ For additional discussion and resources regarding how to recognize when you're triggered into non-relational mode, and then how to get your relational circuits back on line, see Karl D. Lehman, *Outsmarting Yourself*, (Libertyville, IL: This Joy! Books, 2011), especially chapters 12, 15 through 21 (pages 101-108, 115-204).

healing so that they can work with increasingly intense/difficult aspects of sessions without getting triggered.¹¹ (Both of these interventions increase their ability to stay emotionally present and retain good discernment, even when working with more intense trauma). Facilitators that are more serious can deliberately build their capacity, further increasing their ability to stay emotionally present when working with more intense trauma. Facilitators that are more serious can strengthen their faith, so that they are more able to persist even when the process becomes slow and difficult.¹² And facilitators that are more serious can develop skill in deliberately offering attunement, so that the recipient can stay connected and keep moving forward even when things are difficult and she temporarily loses her connection with Jesus.¹³

II. Intermediate/advanced Immanuel interventions: Remembering from chapters three and thirteen, Immanuel interventions are *specific, focused, systematic interventions with the goal of helping the person receiving ministry to perceive the Lord's living presence, and to establish an adequate interactive connection with him*. And since an adequate interactive connection with God is the center of the Immanuel approach, Immanuel interventions for recipients who are having difficulty with their interactive connection are an especially important component of Immanuel approach troubleshooting.

As mentioned above, chapter thirteen presents Immanuel interventions that are so basic, simple, and easy that the average layperson can learn to use them quickly, and so safe that they can be used in the context of group exercises. When the recipient is having difficulty with her interactive connection with God, we should of course start with these basic, simple interventions that are especially easy and safe. However, we sometimes encounter more complicated blockages that require more advanced Immanuel interventions. This book is not the place for a detailed discussion of intermediate and advanced Immanuel interventions, but I want to provide just a few examples to give the reader a feel for the kinds of blockages that can be identified and resolved with more advanced interventions.¹⁴

A. An advanced intervention for blocking fears: Blocking fears are one of the most common problems that sometimes require more advanced Immanuel interventions. As described in chapter 13, in many situations in which the person is initially unable to perceive the God's presence we discover that she's actually afraid to let him be present. Instead of inviting God to be with her and asking for help in perceiving his presence, at some deep, often non-conscious level she is actually sending the exact opposite message: "Lord, stay away from me! I'm afraid to let you be with me – I *don't* want you to be here with me and I *don't* want to be aware of your presence." And when we are asking that God *not* manifest to us as a tangible presence

¹¹ For additional discussion of the importance of facilitators getting their own healing, see Karl D. Lehman, "Unresolved Issues in the Therapist/Facilitator: One of the Most Important Hindrances to Emotional Healing," last modified 12/18/2013, <http://www.kclehman.com>.

¹² Review chapter 21 if you want to refresh your understanding of how faith enables one to facilitate Immanuel approach sessions more effectively, and for specific interventions that can increase one's faith.

¹³ Again, for information about attunement and how it can be a resource for emotional healing, see "Brain Science, Psychological Trauma, and the God Who Is with Us ~ Part II" and *Outsmarting Yourself*.

¹⁴ Again, I am working to put together a series of essays (and eventually a separate book) that will provide a much more detailed discussion of intermediate and advanced Immanuel approach troubleshooting and Immanuel interventions.

God seems to respect our choice and request.¹⁵

As also described in chapter 13, blocking fears can often be resolved by very basic interventions, such as simply helping the person to focus and get words for the blocking fear, helping her to tell Jesus about it, and then coaching her to ask him for help. And even though these interventions are so simple, the recipient will often report that the fear becomes less intense (or resolves completely), and then she becomes willing to allow the Lord to be tangibly present. However, there are some situations in which these simple, basic interventions do not work, and in these situations we need to employ more advanced Immanuel interventions. The good news is that these advanced interventions are almost always (eventually) effective when applied with gentle persistence.

One of the advanced interventions I often use for persistent blocking fears is to work with the recipient to find a scenario that feels safe, even in spite of the blocking fears that are still present. That is, I negotiate with the recipient to find specific conditions that somehow get around or neutralize the blocking fears. In almost every situation we are eventually able to find some set of parameters that feel adequately safe, and the recipient becomes willing to let Jesus be with her. Once the recipient becomes *willing* to let Jesus be present she quickly becomes able to perceive his tangible presence in some way, and once she is able to perceive his presence she usually quickly discovers that he is safe and good, she is able to establish an adequate interactive connection, and she is able to receive whatever guidance, assistance, and gifts that he has for her.

For example, this type of Immanuel intervention with one particular recipient proceeded as follows:

Dr. K: “This seems like a pretty difficult memory. I think it would be really helpful if you could let Jesus be present, spend some time just being with him, and then let him help you with the healing work. Would you be willing to invite him to be with you, and to ask him to help you perceive his presence?”

Recipient: “No. I don’t want him to come.”

Dr. K: “You don’t want Jesus to come? Why not?”

Recipient: “I don’t want him to see me. I’m ugly.”

Dr. K: “Well, what if we ask him to face the wall so that he can’t see you? Would it be okay for him to come if he faces the wall so he can’t see you?”

Recipient: “Yeah, that would be okay.”

Dr. K: “So, if he agrees to face the wall and not look at you, you’d be willing to invite him to be with you and to ask him to help you perceive his presence?”

Recipient: “He’s already here. He’s facing the wall but he’s talking to me. He says...,” and

¹⁵ I believe that God is actually still with us, but when we do not *want* him with us he seems to respect our desire/request/choice by allowing us to not perceive his presence.

she goes on to describe original, gentle, and beautifully appropriate comments from Jesus.

Within minutes of allowing Jesus to be present, the recipient decided that he was kind and friendly and safe, and that it would be okay for him to turn around and come closer. She was able to let him be with her and to receive from him, and then the rest of the healing process began to move forward again.

I also use a variation of this negotiation intervention with people who *are* able to perceive the Lord's presence, but who are so afraid of him that they won't let him come close enough to do any good. When I started experimenting with Immanuel interventions, I assumed that all we had to do was get to the point at which the person could perceive the Lord's presence. However, I quickly discovered that there are some people who can perceive the Lord's presence but keep him so far away that he can't really provide any significant help. These people are usually either pushing him away out of anger or unwilling to let him come close because of blocking fears, but the good news is that Immanuel interventions are almost always able to resolve the problem.

Just as with all other blocking fears, these fears can often be resolved by very basic interventions, such as simply helping the person to focus and get words for the blocking fears and then helping her to tell Jesus about them and ask him for help. However, as is also true with other blocking fears, I occasionally encounter persistent fears that require more advanced Immanuel interventions. And in these situations I use an interesting intervention that is very similar to the one just described for people who are afraid to even let God be present. I work with the person to figure out a "safe" plan – specific conditions *that feel safe to her* – for obtaining more information about Jesus from the Lord himself. In almost every situation we are eventually able to find some set of parameters that feel adequately safe, so that the recipient becomes willing to interact directly with Jesus to learn more about his true character and heart. And the blocking fears resolve as she learns the truth about Jesus – she discovers that he is safe and good, she allows him to come closer, and she is able to receive whatever guidance, assistance, and gifts that he has for her.

For example, in one particular session I was working with a person who needed more capacity. I was pretty sure that she could quickly gain the needed capacity if she would just spend some time in a positive place with Jesus, but she did *not* want to try anything that included "being with Jesus." I was also pretty sure that her reluctance to be with Jesus would resolve if she would just learn more truth about his character and heart, and at this point in the session our interactions went something like this:

Dr. K: "Would you be willing to let Jesus be present and just learn more about him – just get to know him? Not any kind of intimate "be *with* him stuff," not dealing with any of the hard, scary, painful parts of the memory – just let Jesus be present and learn more about him?"

Recipient: "No! No way!"

Dr. K: "Why not?"

Recipient: "He's too scary."

Dr. K: "Can you think of any conditions – any way in which it would feel safe to learn more

about him?”

Recipient: “No. He’s not safe.”

Dr. K: “Would you be willing to just look at him? To just see what he looks like?”

Recipient: “I can’t see much – he’s too far away.”

Dr. K: “Jesus is already there with you in the memory? You can see him?”

Recipient: “Yeah, he’s here and I can see him, but he’s so far away I can’t see much.”

Dr. K: “Would it be okay for him to come close enough for you to be able to see him better?”

Recipient: “No!”

Dr. K: “Even just a *little* closer?”

Recipient: “No!”

Dr. K: “Why not?”

Recipient: “If he gets mad he’ll hit me.”

At points like this I pause to ask the Lord for inspiration and creativity, and in this session a very interesting idea occurred to me immediately after this prayer:

Dr. K: “What about using a telescope – then he could stay far away? You could see him better, but he’d still be too far away to hit you if he gets angry.”

Recipient: “Okay.” (brief pause) “Yeah, I can see him a lot better now.”

Dr. K: “You have a telescope?”

Recipient: “Yeah, I’m looking at him through a telescope. I can see him a lot better now, but he’s still too far away to hit me.”

Once she could see Jesus more clearly, I simply encouraged her to observe him:

Dr. K: “So,...what’s he look like? Are his fists balled up, like he’s angry?”

Recipient: (Pause) “No...”

Dr. K: “Does his face look mean?”

Recipient: (Pause) “No...”

Dr. K: “Well, why don’t you just watch him for a while, and see what happens.”

And within minutes, the previously frightened recipient decided that Jesus had a nice face –

that he looked friendly and safe – and that it would be okay for him to come closer. The closer Jesus came the more she learned about him, and each time she learned more she was willing to let him come closer. Eventually she was able to allow Jesus to be close enough so that she could receive encouragement and strength from him, her capacity was further increased just from having him standing beside her,¹⁶ and the healing process began to move forward again.

*****Note to draft version readers: The recipient in this story gave me verbal permission to use this example in our teaching material, but now I can't find my notes regarding these details. If this was your session, please contact me (drkarl@kclehman.com) so that we can send you the forms for written permission that the publisher will request for including this in the final version of the book.*****

B. An advanced intervention for blocking anger: Blocking anger is another common problem that sometimes requires more advanced Immanuel interventions. In many situations in which the person is initially unable to perceive God's presence, we eventually discover that she's so angry at God that she does not want to *let* him be present. I have a godson who helped me as I was developing this material by providing a particularly clear demonstration of the phenomena. I cared for him during our church services while his father helped to lead worship as a member of the praise team, and being an active, intelligent, resourceful six year old boy, he would do things like bring a baseball to church and want to continue throwing it up in the air and catching it even as he was seated in the worship space and the service was about to begin. It was therefore often my job to tell him that he was not allowed to do things that he wanted to do. Sometimes he handled this with surprising grace, but when other things in his life were not going well he would respond with, "You're mean! I don't like you! Leave me alone and don't talk to me." And then he would turn away from me, squeeze his eyes tightly shut, put his hands over his ears, and refuse to respond to anything I did or said.

As I have been working with the Immanuel approach to help people connect with God, I have discovered that many of us have places in our hearts where we are reacting to God in much the same way as my godson was reacting to me. We are so angry at God that we are pushing him away. Instead of inviting God to be with us and asking for help in perceiving his presence, at some deep, often non-conscious level we are actually sending the exact opposite message: "Lord, stay away from me! I'm SO angry at you – I *don't* like you, I *don't* want you to be here with me, and I *don't* want to be aware of your presence." And, again, when we are telling God that we do *not* want him to manifest to us as a tangible presence he seems to respect our choice and request.

As with most other blockages, these problems can often be resolved by very basic interventions, such as simply helping the person to focus and get words for the blocking anger, and then helping her to tell Jesus about her anger and ask him for help. However, as is also true with other blockages, I occasionally encounter blocking anger that is particularly intense, particularly persistent, and that requires more advanced Immanuel interventions. In these scenarios I find that I can usually attune to the person in the place she is angry, validate the pain underneath the anger, and then work with her to come up with an acceptable plan – specific conditions that *feel acceptable to her* – for allowing the Lord to be present. And then after she's able to perceive the Lord's presence I help her to engage directly with Jesus regarding her

¹⁶ Remember the analogy from chapter three, of a child going down into a dark basement by herself versus going into the same dark basement while holding her father's hand.

anger and pain.

One of these interventions might look something like the following:

Recipient: “Lord, I invite You to be with me in this place, and I ask You to help me perceive Your presence.”

Dr. K: “So, what’s happening?”

Recipient: “I’m still in the memory, but nothing has changed and I can’t sense or see or feel anything that I perceive to be the Lord’s presence.”

Dr. K: “Would you be willing to ask what’s in the way?”

Recipient: “Sure. Lord, what’s in the way of my being able to perceive your presence?”

(Pause) “Nothing’s happening.”

Dr. K: “Just describe whatever’s coming into your mind, whether or not it makes sense.”

Recipient: “Well, I just keep getting the word ‘Anger.’” (pause)

“And then sometimes the thought comes, ‘I don’t want him.’”

Dr. K: “Huh.” (pause)

“I know your adult wants to cooperate with the Lord, but I wonder what the kid in this memory thinks about the Lord. That is, I know you know what you *ought* to think and feel, but if you just listen to what *feels* true, I wonder what the kid in this memory would say?”

Recipient: (Long pause) “Wow. I don’t know if I should say this.” (Another long pause)

“The thoughts that come to me are, ‘I hate God! He didn’t protect me, He’s an idiot, and I sure as h#%l don’t want him in here with me.’”

Dr. K: “Well, it sounds like there’s some place inside of you – maybe a child part of you from inside this memory – that’s pretty angry at God. Would you be willing to go inside the memory, and let the child part of you from inside the memory tell me more about why you’re so angry at God?”

Recipient (speaking from inside the memory): “You want to know why I’m angry at God? I’ll tell you why I’m angry at God!....”

At this point the recipient provides many additional details regarding her anger towards the Lord and where it comes from, and I focus on attuning to her anger (and especially on attuning to and validating the pain underneath the anger). Eventually I invite the person to transition to talking directly to the Lord:

Dr. K: “I think your anger and pain make a lot of sense. Would you be willing to allow the Lord to be with you in this place, and then once you’re able to perceive his presence you

can tell him what you've just been telling me?"

Recipient: "No! I don't want him to be with me! He let this happen – he's stupid and incompetent – why would I want someone who's so stupid and incompetent to be with me in this place?"

"And besides, he won't listen to me. He'll just blame *me* for what happened – we'll just end up talking about how I'm bad, and why it's all my fault."

"And he's mean – he'll slap me if I get angry at him."

Dr. K: "I'm wondering if we might be able to make a deal with the Lord. What if the deal is that you get to say whatever you want to say, he agrees to listen to you, and he promises that he won't blame you or punish you for being angry? If Jesus would agree to those conditions, would you be willing to let him be with you and to ask him to help you perceive his presence?"

Recipient: (Pause) "Okay."

"What Dr. Karl said, Lord. I invite You to be with me *as long as You're okay with those conditions*. I'm still angry at you and I still don't like you, but you can be here with me if You want to."

Dr. K: (pause) "So what's happening now?"

Recipient: "Well, now I can see Jesus." (Pause)

"He's just standing there, looking at me." (Pause)

"He's not doing anything. He's not upset. He looks like he's just listening...."

Dr. K: "So, can you engage directly with Jesus regarding all of this? Can you talk directly to Jesus about all of the stuff you've been telling me?"

Recipient: "Yeah. I think I can do that. So, Jesus, I'm really angry about the way you didn't protect me, and I'm angry about....etc."

*****Note again to readers of the draft version: The recipient in this story gave me verbal permission to use this example in our teaching material, but now I can't find my notes regarding these details. If this was your session, please contact me (drkarl@kclehman.com) so that we can send you the forms for written permission that the publisher will request for including this in the final version of the book.*****

At this point I often have to include an additional intervention to help the person engage with Jesus *in a way that is relational*. This may seem strange at first, but it is surprisingly easy for a person to perceive God's presence but continue to be totally stuck in non-relational mode. For example, I've worked with people who can get to the place where they're able to allow God to be tangibly present, but they're still so angry that they won't let him really be *with* them and they refuse to receive any of the help that he has to offer. As I repeatedly encountered these scenarios and persistently asked God for guidance, I eventually came up with the following

intervention that seems to be effective in most of these situations. I say something along the lines of, “You can be as angry as you want to, and you can express your anger in any way you want to (as long as you don’t throw furniture in my office), *but I ask that you express your anger directly to Jesus, and that you continue to focus on him as you’re expressing your anger.*” And then, as they’re expressing their anger, I periodically check-in to make sure they continue to focus on Jesus *and I ask them to observe and report regarding how he’s responding.* As the reader will probably realize, coaching people to keep focusing on Jesus, and to observe and describe his responses, helps them move from their initial place of being stuck in *non-relational* non-productive spewing to a new place of *relational* interactions that actually help them move forward.

One of these interventions went something like this:

Dr. K: “You can be as angry as you want to, and you can express your anger in any way you want to, but I ask that you express your anger directly to Jesus, and that you continue to focus on him as you’re expressing your anger.”

Recipient: (with lots of intensity) “So, Jesus, why didn’t You *do* something?! If You’re so big and wonderful, why didn’t you help my Mom stop drinking? Why didn’t You remind her to come pick me up after school, instead of letting me stand in the cold for hours?....And where were You when I needed You the most – when I was so frightened and lonely? You say You were with me, but why didn’t You let me see You or feel You?....etc.”

Dr. K: “So,...what’s Jesus doing, as you’re saying all this stuff?”

Recipient: (pause) “He’s just standing there, looking at me and listening to what I have to say.”

Dr. K: “Is he upset?”

Recipient: (pause) “No...”

Dr. K: “Is he trying to invalidate your anger?”

Recipient: (pause) “No...”

Dr. K: “Is he making excuses?”

Recipient: (pause) “No...”

Dr. K: “Does he look frightened?”

Recipient: (pause) “No...”

Dr. K: “Is he angry at you for expressing your anger?”

Recipient: (pause) “No... he’s holding my gaze – he’s looking me right in the eyes – but he’s not at all scared or angry.”

Dr. K: “Well, keep talking to him about your hurt and anger, until you feel like you’re really finished. And as you’re able, tell me about anything he says or does in response.”

I keep checking/coaching periodically to make sure the recipients continue to focus on Jesus, speak their anger directly to Jesus, and pay attention to his responses, and eventually they will start to describe more details with respect to what he is saying and doing. Jesus’ responses have been quite variable, but they have always been perfect. His responses have always been timed just perfectly. His responses, including his facial expressions, have always been nuanced just perfectly – with just the right balance of validation, attunement, compassion, and challenge for each particular situation. His responses have always included just the right reinforcing information, such as appropriate scriptures, or particularly relevant pieces of information from the people’s own lives. And he’s never the least bit afraid of people’s anger, or punitive towards them for being angry.

And then, eventually, I ask, “So..., what do you think? What do you think about how he’s responding?” And when the person has actually stayed connected to Jesus – when she has actually continued to focus on him while she was expressing her anger and when she has actually been paying attention to his responses – she *always* reports feeling satisfied with Jesus’ responses, she reports a sense of resolution with respect to her anger, and the healing process begins to move forward again.

I’ve been especially interested to observe that many of these people have already spent a lot of time venting anger towards God, *but that they have never continued to focus on him as they were expressing their anger nor paid attention to how he was responding to their anger*. Many seem to get lost in the process of venting their anger, and no longer even perceive the Lord’s presence by the time they’re finished. For example, one woman I worked with reported, “I’m stuck. I can perceive the Lord’s presence in the memory, but I’m so angry at him that I won’t let him come close.” When I suggested that it might be helpful for her to express her anger directly to Jesus, she responded with a bit of discouragement: “I’ve already done a lot of venting anger directly to Jesus – in lots of other memories – but it hasn’t seemed to do much good.” However, when I asked a few clarifying questions she realized that she had always lost track of Jesus somewhere in the process. By the time she would get done venting she would no longer perceive his presence.¹⁷ She had never continued to perceive his presence and focus on him all the way through her angry venting, and she had never paid attention to nor thought about how he was responding.

So I encouraged her to go back to the memory in which she was so angry at Jesus and to express her anger directly to Jesus, but this time make sure to look at his face, make sure to *keep* focusing on him as she expressed her anger, and make sure to pay attention to his responses. When she did this she was immediately able to perceive that Jesus was listening to her – hearing and understanding every word she was saying. And she was also able to see that he was looking at her with profound compassion. As soon as she looked at his face, and focused on how he was responding to her anger, she was able to perceive his heart for her, and then also able to hear him and to let him help her. And as soon as she was able to see his heart, hear him, and let him help her, he began to lead her forward into healing for this traumatic memory that had been stuck for so long. This five minute intervention of coaching her to

¹⁷ “As I’m venting, everything just goes black. By the time I get done venting, the memory [and the perception of Jesus with me in the memory] is gone.”

continue focusing on Jesus, and to deliberately pay attention to and ponder how he was responding, resulted in her being able to move forward into healing.

C. Identify and resolve pernicious blockages: Some people will have particularly complex blockages, with a number of different pieces all tangled together. I call these pernicious blockages. The bad news is that it takes a lot of time and effort to identify and unravel the different components that contribute to these tangles. The good news is that Jesus wants us to resolve these blockages even more than we do, he knows all about them, and he will help us. For a detailed discussion of the pernicious blockage that hindered my connection with the Lord for many years, including the story of how the Lord helped me to resolve it, see “Immanuel, An Especially Pernicious Blockage, and the Normal Belief Memory System” (available both as a DVD teaching set from the “Store” page of www.immanuelapproach.com and as a free download essay from www.kclehman.com).

Before closing this chapter, I want to remind the reader again that many (even most?) blockages can be resolved with the basic, simple, easy troubleshooting tools and Immanuel interventions described in chapters twelve and thirteen. And I also want to remind the reader to not let this advanced material scare you away. If you felt intimidated or overwhelmed by this discussion of more complex blockages and more advanced trouble-shooting, I strongly encourage you to just go back to the basics. *Please* don’t decide that the Immanuel approach is too difficult until you have at least tried the basic Immanuel approach exercises just described in chapter twenty four (and make sure to try these exercises with a facilitator or practice partner, so that you can take advantage of the ways in which your brain works better in community).

The Immanuel Approach (to Emotional Healing and to Life)

Chapter 27: India, Human Trafficking, and Immanuel

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DRAFT

In the fall of 2013, myself and a friend of ours, Mark Hattendorf, provided Immanuel approach training for a team with Bright Hope Ministries that went to India in December. Part of the plan for the trip was to teach about the Immanuel approach at a large conference, and this turned out pretty well. Mark ended up going along on the trip, and he was able to give a brief presentation to about a thousand church leaders. Another part of the plan, associated with this same conference, was to provide Immanuel approach training for women in church leadership. This also turned out pretty well. The Bright Hope team was told to prepare for fifty women, but three hundred showed up. This was initially overwhelming, but eventually exciting and hopeful. In addition to explaining about the Immanuel approach, the ministry team was also able to coach the women through group exercises, and even in the first group exercise most of the women reported experiencing connections with Jesus. By the end of the several training sessions many of the women were successfully facilitating Immanuel approach ministry with each other.

The third part of the plan, which was really at the heart of the vision for the trip, was to provide assistance to an anti-human trafficking team. This is a team of courageous individuals who risk their lives to rescue and care for girls who have been sold into the human trafficking system. The men on the rescue squad raid brothels, sweatshops, and other situations in which girls are being held in slavery. The rescued girls are taken to a safe house, where they live together with safe house “moms” who help them with day to day practical needs, provide parental type supervision, and try to create a safe family environment. And there are also aftercare counselors who provide therapy and pastoral care for the girls’ emotional wounds.

The Bright Hope team facilitated Immanuel sessions for the men on the rescue squad, for the aftercare counselors, and for the safe house “moms,” and almost all of them had powerful, beautiful encounters with the living presence of Jesus.¹ That was cool. The Bright Hope team was able to provide training for the rescue squad, for the aftercare counselors, and for the safe house “moms,” and a number of the trainees seemed to be able to facilitate for each other by the end of the very brief training. That was cool. But what touched me the most were the stories about the sessions with the girls. These are girls between the ages of 11 and 24, some of whom had been sold into the human trafficking system as early as 5 years of age. A common story was that the young girl would initially be trained and used as a beggar, and then sold to men for sex when she was older (but not much older). The women on the ministry team spent a morning with the girls, just loving on them in practical ways (like painting their nails, singing with them, and giving them lots of hugs), and then in the afternoon the women on the team facilitated Immanuel approach exercises in small groups.

The exercises started with positive memories and appreciation, and then the girls were invited to simply invite Jesus to be with them and ask Jesus to help them perceive his presence. There were a number of Hindu and Muslim girls in the group, but they also wanted to participate and were willing to try this simple prayer and invitation. Note that the girls were not told that they had to be Christians in order to participate and they were not told what to expect. The ministry team

¹ Several of them were “completely undone” by their experiences with the living presence of Jesus – how he came to them and cared for them.

women simply explained the exercise and then invited the girls to participate if they wished to do so.

And even though the ministry team was familiar with the Immanuel approach, and had seen many of the people they prayed with connect with Jesus, they were still amazed by the results. Out of about 20 recipients (15 safe house girls and then some of the staff), all but two had profound, beautiful experiences with Jesus. One of the most interesting parts of the experience was that many of the girls (including the Hindus and Muslims) started to describe vivid mental imagery of a man in a white robe who was gentle and kind. And even though they had spent most of their lives being abused by men who used them as beggars and then forced them into prostitution, they immediately felt safe with this “man in a white robe.” With tears streaming down their faces, they described being held, comforted, and encouraged. They reported that this man in the white robe held them in his lap, hugged them, stroked their faces, told them that he loved them, reassured them that he was with them in their pain and sadness, told them that they were good and beautiful, and told them that he had good plans for their lives. And again, amazingly, they all felt safe as he held them, and felt that his gentle touch as he stroked their faces was safe and good and life-giving. Furthermore, all of these girls (including the Hindus and Muslims) somehow came to realize that this man in the white robes was Jesus.

Interestingly, Jesus did not take the girls to traumatic memories.² He just spent the whole time holding them, loving them, comforting them, and encouraging them. At first this puzzled Mark and I and the ministry team, since we knew that all of these girls desperately need healing for their many traumatic experiences, and we assumed that Jesus would start right out with emotional healing work. But then we realized that Jesus actually knew what he was doing. Those who know about working with trauma know that the first thing you do is to establish a safe place of connection and trust, which then serves as the context and foundation for the healing work. Sometimes this can be established very quickly, especially when the recipient already knows Jesus and already has a relationship with the facilitator. But as we thought about the sessions at the safe house we realized that these girls would understandably need some extra time, just being in a safe place and building trust with this “man in a white robe.” I expect that Jesus will lead them to do healing work when the time is right, but I’m glad that he had better clinical judgment than the rest of us, so that he knew to start with an entire session of just loving on these girls.

² With one exception. The oldest of the girls did recall a traumatic experience, apparently spontaneously, after she had been laying in Jesus’ lap for a while. Unfortunately, the translator wanted to move on to the next person so the facilitator only had time to coach the girl to go back to her safe, positive place in Jesus’ lap, and didn’t get any other details regarding the traumatic memory or about what happened once the girl got back to Jesus. The good news is that the girl was at a joyful, peaceful place by the end of the exercise, so I’m guessing that Jesus took care of the situation in one way or another.