

Title: "An IA lifestyle should include regular, proactive trauma work"

August 12, 2024

Greetings all,

Just a quick note to share a new FAQ, "Does an Immanuel lifestyle really need to include regular, deliberate, proactive trauma work?" (This content can also be accessed from section XI, I in the "Cumulative FAQs Document" on the FAQs page of www.immanuelapproach.com.)

Blessings,

Dr. Lehman/Karl

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Does an Immanuel lifestyle really need to include regular, deliberate, proactive trauma work?

As described in detail in chapter three of the big lion book, the first step in expanding from the Immanuel Approach *for emotion healing* to the Immanuel *lifestyle* is widening the agenda to include many additional aspects of life, such as capacity building, maturity-skill mentoring, receiving comfort for pain in the present, and spending time with Jesus as a friend, as opposed to restricting the agenda to just emotional healing. As understanding regarding the Immanuel lifestyle and this generous buffet of agenda options has spread through the IA community, many facilitators have become convinced that after helping the recipient to establish a connection with Jesus at the beginning of the session, the next step should always be to just ask Jesus, "What do You want to do today, Lord?"

And this is understandable, because this approach is especially simple and it usually results in life-giving interactions with Jesus. In fact, when I facilitate demonstration sessions in my mentoring groups, I sometimes start the sessions in exactly this way. *However*, I am convinced that deliberate, proactive trauma work should *also* be a regular part of an Immanuel lifestyle.

- We tend to lean away from painful trauma work: My observation is that most of us (all of us?) tend to lean away from painful trauma work. If the only thing we ever do is to get a connection with Jesus, and then just say, "What do You want to do today?" our psychological defenses will tend to subtly lean away from working on trauma. Even those of us who *sometimes* cooperate with guidance from Jesus directing us to do trauma work, will, at other times, subtly resist/avoid/ignore invitations from Jesus to work with Him to resolve traumatic memories.

In my own healing journey, it has been helpful to counteract this tendency to avoid working on trauma by deliberately including regular healing work in my Immanuel lifestyle. I have Immanuel prayer times where I just enjoy being with Jesus,

or look at some issue with Jesus, or do intercessory prayer in the context of and Immanuel connection, or just talk to Jesus about what's on my heart; but I also have sessions where I very deliberately start with trauma work as the tentative agenda. For example, "Jesus, I've been noticing this trigger that is hindering my relationship with Charlotte. I think this is coming from underlying trauma and that it would be good to work on it with you. If my sense of direction regarding this is correct, could You please give me a sense of confirmation regarding this tentative agenda and then show me the next step forward." Or even, "This trigger is hindering my relationship with Charlotte, and unless You give me clear guidance otherwise, I'm assuming it would be good to work on this," and then I focus on the trigger and ask Jesus to help me find and resolve the underlying roots. And my observation is that these regular, proactive, deliberate trauma-work sessions have enabled me to do important, strategic healing work that I otherwise would have continued to subtly avoid.¹

- Trauma is affecting us more than we realize: Part of my discernment regarding this issue is that I am convinced we all have trauma that is affecting us more significantly than we realize. And we all have trauma that is especially affecting our important relationships more significantly than we realize. We can (at least partially) compensate for this widespread lack of self-awareness by deliberately, proactively watching for triggers, and then deliberately, proactively making time for Immanuel Approach work to address them, as part of living an Immanuel lifestyle.²
- Memory-anchored distortions, hindrances, and blockages: We all have implicit memory from past painful experiences that is hindering our relationships with the Lord (and again, more significantly than we realize). We should all be watching for places where we have distorted perceptions regarding God's character and heart, and whenever we notice this, we should deliberately, proactively make time for Immanuel Approach work to find and resolve any underlying trauma that is contributing to the problem.³

This point is discussed at length in chapter forty-two of the big lion book, but the short summary for our purposes here is that *it is very difficult to spot trauma-anchored distorted perceptions because they just feel true*. (After we find and resolve the underlying trauma, it is easy to see the distorted perceptions *in retrospect*, but they are VERY hard to see while they are still active.) In my experience, the most effective way to get around this problem is just to make trauma work a regular part of our Immanuel lifestyles. If we are regularly working on any trauma we are aware (and

¹I have also observed this with every person for whom I have facilitated regular, ongoing sessions.

²See chapters two through four in *Outsmarting Yourself* for a detailed discussion regarding why we all have such poor self-awareness regarding trauma and triggering.

³See supplementary chapter 35-c for the big lion book for additional discussion regarding how we all have implicit memory from past painful experiences that hinders our relationships with the Lord.

any trauma we can find by following triggers), we will regularly find and resolve trauma that is hindering our relationships with the Lord just by accident. For myself, persisting with this approach for the past twenty years has resulted in finding and resolving many memory-anchored distortions regarding the Lord's character and heart, and this has PROFOUNDLY blessed my relationship with the Lord.

- Observable, lasting positive changes that accumulate over time: As discussed at length in chapter thirty-six of the big lion book, the gold-standard confirmation that we are engaging with the genuine presence of Jesus is observable, lasting positive changes that accumulate steadily over time as we do regular healing work. As explained in chapter thirty-six, this is the **only** discernment criteria that has 100% reliability for differentiating between the genuine presence of Jesus and counterfeits. And "...accumulate steadily over time as we do regular healing work" is a necessary part of the 100% reliability. Obviously, "accumulate steadily over time *as we do regular healing work*" requires that we include *regular healing work* as part of our Immanuel lifestyles.
- Christianity is profoundly, inherently, foundationally relational: When we deliberately, proactively include regular healing work as part of our Immanuel lifestyle, we do more healing work than if we just "leave it to Jesus." And those who do more healing work demonstrate more observable positive changes (especially over time) -- less triggering, many different aspects of their lives getting better, *and all of their relationships improving, including their relationships with God*. In this context, I want to point out that Christianity is profoundly, inherently, foundationally relational. Putting these pieces together: If we do more healing work when we deliberately, proactively include regular healing work as part of our Immanuel lifestyles, if more healing work results in more improvement in all of our relationships, including our relationships with the Lord, and if Christianity is profoundly, inherently, foundationally relational, we can safely assume that God's usual plan is for us to deliberately, proactively include regular healing work as part of our Immanuel lifestyles.
- Baseline relational circuit status: Yet another reason for deliberately, proactively including regular healing work as part of our Immanuel lifestyles is that this will improve our baseline relational-circuit status. As we keep shoveling away—resolving more and more old wounds and bruises—we will spend less and less time subtly (or not so subtly) triggered, and we will therefore spend more and more time with our relational circuits on line. And having our relational circuits on line more and more of the time will make it easier and easier to be aware of, and connect with, the living presence of Immanuel.

An important caveat: Combinations of low capacity and/or poor support system and/or especially severe trauma and/or especially intense difficulties in the present will sometimes create situations in which it is *temporarily* strategic to mostly just spend time with Jesus (and correspondingly do minimal trauma work).⁴

⁴The story about the internal child part who spent eighteen months just sitting in Jesus' lap provides an excellent example. (See the big lion book, chapter twenty-five, pages 331-333.)