

 RESTORING YOUR HEART

CONQUERING SHAME FOR WOMEN

– A Safe Small Group Experience –

Restoring Your Heart Workbook: *Conquering Shame For Women*
2023 Edition

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Conquering Shame For Women_07.11.2023

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Conquering Shame For Women

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Welcome To Your RYH *Conquering Shame For Women* Group

Participants in an RYH *Conquering Shame* group should have already completed an RYH *Processing Pain* group and an RYH *Understanding Emotions* group. This will be at least the third RYH group for each participant. You should verify that each participant has completed the above-mentioned groups.

Options for first group session:

Option 1 – If the women already know each other by participating in the first two RYH groups together, you may hand out the workbooks (or participants may order their workbooks) one or two weeks ahead of time. Instruct the participants to complete the first lesson. Discuss Lesson 1 at your first meeting together.

Option 2 – If the group participants do not know each other, it is usually best to spend some time on introductions. You can do either of the following:

- Have a shorter initial meeting (one hour) and ask each woman to share something about her other group experiences and what she learned about herself. Hand out the workbooks. Discuss Lesson 1 in your second meeting.
- Add 30 minutes to Option 1 for introductions.

For Options 1 and 2 – Read the *RYH Group Covenant and Guidelines* (Addendum C) together.

Have the group participants sign and date the covenant. There will be two copies of the *RYH Group Covenant* in the back of the workbook. Participants should keep a signed copy in their workbook and give the signed Leader's Copy to the RYH group leader.

It is important to read the *RYH Group Covenant* item by item. This agreement establishes the "rules" for how the group will function. There may be times throughout the group sessions that the leader will need to review the *RYH Group Covenant* with the participants (for example, advice giving by participants, participants talking too much, etc.).

ATTENTION LEADER



Before you start:

HAVE YOU REGISTERED YOUR GROUP?

If not, please go to



<http://bit.ly/RYHgroupregister>.

If you need assistance from the RYH Team, email ryh@disciplebuilding.org.



Introduction To Shame

Lesson One



Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden. But the LORD God called to the man, "Where are you?" He answered, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid." And he said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?"

(Genesis 3:8-11)

What is shame? It is the deep **belief** and painful **feeling** that we are flawed, defective, and worth less than others. As shame-based women, we see ourselves as weak, broken people, inadequate, insignificant, unlovable, or not particularly talented. We may try to improve our condition by developing a false self, but behind the facade, we may still see ourselves as beyond repair.

Other important elements of shame are a desire to hide our imagined defectiveness from others and a fear that, despite our efforts, we will be discovered. We may try to be who we think people want us to be, not who we really are; or we may become too concerned with how we appear to others. Also, shame can cause us to have a hard time facing our sins and confessing them to God and to those we have offended. By withholding part of ourselves from God and other people, we have difficulty growing spiritually as well as establishing and maintaining close relationships with people.

It's true that a significant number of people have a fairly healthy self-image and thus do not see themselves as experiencing shame. However, in his book *The Soul of Shame*, Christian psychiatrist Curt Thompson points out that all people have some amount of shame. It is the result of the fall of mankind (Genesis chapter 3). For those of us who fall into this group, shame occasionally rears its ugly head at times such as yearly performance reviews, fighting with someone we love, or making a mistake. Sometimes it's simply that vague sense that something is not right about us.

If you have joined this RYH *Conquering Shame* group, it's because you are aware that you may have some degree of shame. Since you have already been in safe groups where you have experienced healing, you are also aware that we will be discussing some painful, and often embarrassing, experiences. As difficult as it may be to revisit them, assessing your level of shame and sharing your thoughts and feelings about your lives with safe people are part of the healing process.

It's important to mention that your needs play a key part in both causing and conquering shame. Neglect and active abuse can prevent you from getting important emotional needs met. Learning how to get these needs met in healthy ways will help you heal. Remember to refer to the *Needs Square* (Addendums F and H) from time to time while completing the lessons.

Another important thing to keep in mind is that reading the material and sharing in the group may cause you to feel worse before you feel better. Feeling worse, or grieving, is part of your healing process. If this happens to you, remember the results you experienced in previous groups, and don't give up. As you stay on course with your healing, you will begin to feel better. See *The Restorative Process* (Addendum B) to remind yourself of this hope.

We'll begin our study with a general assessment of factors that may indicate shame in your life.

1. Check any of the following that you experience, even if only occasionally:

- You secretly think you don't measure up to others.
- You believe that you are not good at anything or at very few things.
- You feel lonely and isolated.
- You see yourself as insignificant.
- You think that you are unlovable or that few people like you.
- You are easily embarrassed.
- You are self-conscious around other people.
- You have feelings of self-loathing.
- You desire to "hide" the real you from others.
- You are self-condemning.
- You feel numb.
- You are embarrassed about having feelings.
- You are embarrassed about having needs.
- Your feelings are easily hurt.
- You are embarrassed by compliments.
- You have an excessive need for praise.
- You have perfectionistic tendencies.

- You are driven to overachieve.
- You have difficulty admitting when you have made a mistake or have done something wrong.
- You have a tendency to become angry when people correct or criticize you.
- You are easily offended.
- You tend to justify all your actions.
- You have difficulty believing in your HEART that God loves you and has forgiven you of your sins even if, in your HEAD, you know this is true.

Take note of the number of items you checked because this will be your starting point. There is no right or wrong number; it is just helpful to have an idea of where you are with shame right now.

Shame's Connection with Other Emotions

The emotional aspects of shame are excruciatingly painful. They include feelings of inadequacy, loneliness and isolation, deep embarrassment, and even self-loathing. This pain can be so great that most of us repress all or part of it. However, blocking the hurt does not make it go away.

One specific emotion that can be associated with shame is anger. Those of us who have been deeply hurt by over-criticism or other types of abuse sometimes react to feelings of shame by becoming angry and/or defensive. While anger and defensiveness can seem like the opposite of shame, they are actually a mask for our deeper feelings of hurt and inadequacy that are an integral part of shame.

The emotion of guilt can feel similar to shame, but the two are very different. Guilt arises from the belief, true or false, that we have done something wrong, that we have made a moral mistake. Shame tells us that there is something wrong with us, that we are a mistake. Even though shame and guilt are not the same emotion, it is not unusual for someone who often experiences guilt to have a great deal of shame as well, and vice versa. At times, it may be difficult to determine which one you are feeling, guilt or shame.

2. How often do you experience guilt?

3. Do you think that some of the “guilt” you have been experiencing may really be shame? Explain your answer.

Safe Support System and Self-Care

It is important that we prepare ourselves for the hard work of conquering shame. We need to have a support group comprised of safe people who can help us through the process. Safe people are individuals who listen to us, believe what we say happened, understand the depth of our pain, and do not try to minimize it. They provide empathy and keep our confidences. The women in your RYH group can be this for each other, but you will also need support from other people in your life. This will be especially true when your group ends. It is emotionally healthy to have a few people in your life who are safe people for you and for whom you are a safe person. You have already become familiar with this concept from the other RYH groups that you’ve participated in.

Review the *Safe Support System* (Addendum E).

A Note about Vulnerability

There are a number of Christian books about conquering shame. Almost all of the psychologists who authored these books agree that **vulnerability is important for healing**. They emphasize that sharing (with safe people) our experiences of shame, and the feelings connected with them, is a huge part of the healing process. They also stress the importance of not sharing these thoughts and feelings with just anybody. We need to be able to recognize when a person is truly safe. RYH groups are designed to help with the process of being vulnerable with safe people. God created us with a need for relationship with Him and with other people. As we share our answers to the questions every week and our feelings associated with them, we experience vulnerability. As we engage with the *Connecting With God* (Addendum I) experience each week, we connect with the ultimate safe Being. Both of these are important parts of our restoration.

4. List the people in your life that you consider safe and are close enough to you to be part of your support team.

As part of your healing, it's important to notice when you need healthy rest and relaxation. To begin with, you should not turn to any addictive behaviors you have engaged with in the past or seek out new ones. This only causes more problems. You need to have in place healthy ways to relax and renew your mind from the stress of conquering shame. (You may have already begun practicing this kind of self-care when you learned about self-calming behaviors in the RYH *Processing Pain* workbook.)

Most relaxation techniques will involve one of your five senses. The most basic relaxation technique is to focus on your breathing by taking several long, deep breaths. Other suggestions for relaxing and/or relieving stress include going for a walk, working out, having fun with a friend, taking a bubble bath, doing a crossword puzzle, playing with your pet, or watching a funny movie.

Prayer gives us a chance to share our stress and pain with the ultimate safe and caring person—God. Many people find reading the Bible, especially the Psalms, to be helpful when going through or remembering a difficult time in their lives. Listening to praise music, especially songs about God's great love for us, can be encouraging and relaxing. *Connecting With God* (Addendum I) at the end of each lesson is a way to connect with God and bring Him into your healing process.

The important thing is that you identify something that helps you relieve stress and does not harm you in doing so.

[WARNING: If you research, or look for, relaxation techniques, especially via the internet, be aware that some of them might be connected to new age practices derived from Eastern mysticism or Western occultism. These should be avoided as they may invite unwanted spiritual influences.]

5. List a few activities that help you relax and/or relieve stress.

6. Make a list of anything you still need to do to establish your safe support system and have your relaxation techniques ready as you continue this study.

As mentioned earlier, it is part of the healing process to feel and release a certain amount of painful shame. However, if you were abused and/or deeply shamed as a child and are feeling overwhelmed, you may want to spread out the homework by working on each lesson over several days' time. Some people find it is better to only do the lesson during the daylight hours. If you are finding the lessons especially hard to do, be sure to let your group leader know about your situation. This is a part of practicing healthy self-care.

7. At this point in the shame study, to what degree do you see yourself struggling with shame?

No Shame					Extreme Shame				
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

The purpose of this group is to help Christian women understand who they are in Christ, not just intellectually, but also emotionally, and to be set free from the

negative effects of shame. In later lessons, we will discuss our true identity. At this time, read Romans 8:28-39 and remember that we are more than conquerors through Christ Jesus who loves us.

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified. What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written: “For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.” No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:28-39)

8. Summarize in your own words what Romans 8:28-39 says.



Takeaway from Lesson 1:

Shame is the painful belief and feeling that there is something wrong with who we are. Because of the fall, all of us experience shame to some degree. If our shame is severe, we may block, suppress or hide it. To heal from shame, we need God and we need to allow ourselves to be vulnerable in an emotionally safe community. It is important to have self-care strategies in place before we begin to understand and deal with our shame.



Connecting with God:

Refer to *Connecting With God* (Addendum I). Begin your time of sharing with God and listening for His response.

Note: The necessity for, and value of, a safe community for your healing process cannot be overemphasized. The field of neuroscience is currently advancing many new studies concerning our brains. The findings are interesting because they validate what God has been telling us all along. We are created (or hardwired) for connection, both with God and with other people. Our brains work best in relationships. In fact, we cannot know who we are without the help of other people and, of course, God. Additionally, since our emotional hurts, including shame, happened within relationships, they can only be healed within relationships. We cannot heal alone. We need both the help of God and the help of safe people to get better.

Your RYH group is designed to be a safe place where you can gradually allow yourself to become more vulnerable. The antidote to shame is vulnerability. As you continue through the workbook, we hope you'll gain great benefit from the healing power of an emotionally safe community. As a further connecting point, in various parts of this workbook, we will be sharing other people's stories of healing their shame.

If you are interested in reading more about the subjects of brain development, attachment theory, connection, and the healing power of community, we suggest the following books:

Anatomy of the Soul by Curt Thompson, MD

Living from the Heart Jesus Gave You by James G. Friesen, PhD et al.

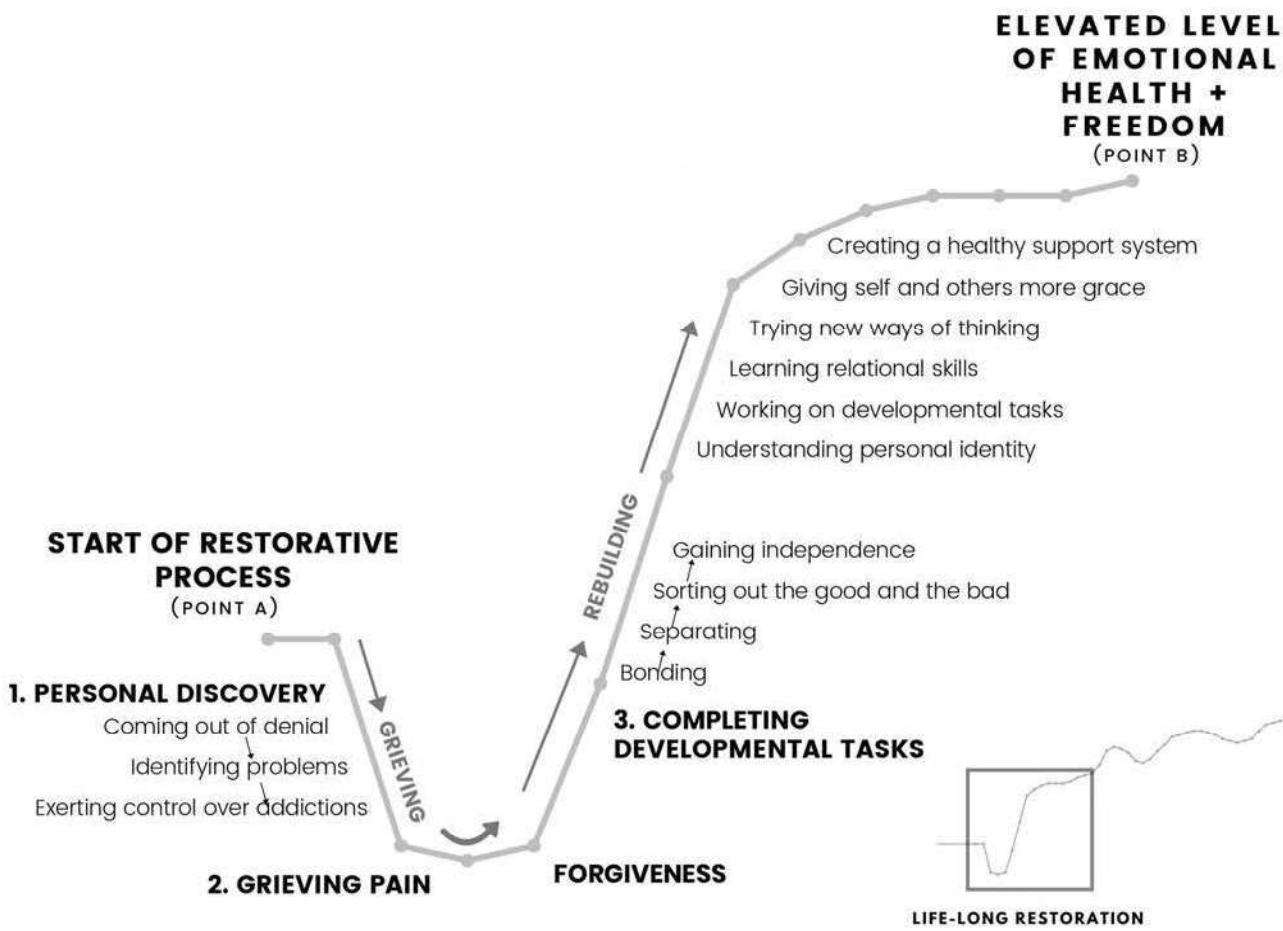
Outsmarting Yourself by Karl Lehman, MD

DEVELOPMENT OF EMOTIONALLY-BASED PROBLEMS (Three Column Chart)

CHILDHOOD →	ADULTHOOD →	ADULTHOOD
<p style="text-align: center;">SOME CAUSES OF CHILDHOOD PAIN</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Active abuse 2. Neglect (unmet needs) 3. Child's poor choices and sinful responses 4. Personality of the child 5. Role in the family <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p> <p style="text-align: center;">RESULTS OF NOT BEING ABLE TO PROCESS PAIN</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Adaptation to survive <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Addictive behaviors b. Defense mechanisms 2. Suppression of negative emotions 3. Development of false belief systems 4. Development of a shame-based identity 	<p style="text-align: center;">EXAMPLES OF ADDITIONAL PROBLEMS EXPERIENCED IN ADULTHOOD</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Mounting on top of the unprocessed childhood pain, making the pain worse</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Relational problems 2. Poor decision-making 3. Full-blown addictions 4. Needs still not met 5. Abusive relationships 6. Depression 7. Numb or primarily negative feelings 8. Poor relationship with God 9. Feeling out of control 	<p style="text-align: center;">ASPECTS OF THE RESTORATIVE PROCESS</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. End abusive relationships 2. Control addictions 3. Learn to properly view and express emotions 4. Grieve pain and losses 5. Understand needs and meet them appropriately 6. Learn to distinguish between healthy and unhealthy thinking and behavior 7. Develop a healthy view of self, the world and God 8. Foster healthy relationships and a healthy support system 9. Learn to grow spiritually

THE RESTORATIVE PROCESS

The healing process might initially feel worse before it feels better. This is normal, but keep going! There are freedom and life on the other side.



UNDERSTANDING THE RESTORATIVE PROCESS

Explanation of *The Restorative Process* diagram

No one is restored in exactly the same way, because no one has exactly the same issues in life. However, there is a general process that most people's restoration follows, and it occurs in three stages.

Stage 1: Personal Discovery - (left side of *The Restorative Process* diagram)

A person beginning the restorative process encounters a steep learning curve. Many people do not understand how their present struggles are affected by their past and therefore don't see the importance of dealing with their past. However, since we are a product of our past, we must deal with it in order to remove its negative effect on the present. The initial personal discovery stage of restoration allows people to assess their childhoods and their past relationships, and how they have been affected by them.

For some people, **denial** will be a stumbling block for restoration. People in denial do not want to acknowledge their struggles or their dysfunctional and sinful manner of living. Their families may have been unhealthy, but they do not want to admit this or tell family secrets. Yet, the Bible tells us that the truth will set us free. It is imperative that people learn to admit to themselves and a few safe people the truth about their lives and about their families. People who cannot tell themselves the truth are in denial, and restoration does not begin until they start to break out of it.

For other people, **suppression of emotions** will be a stumbling block. They may feel mildly depressed or numb, or have difficulty even knowing what they are feeling. As they begin to explore their life history and its effect, especially if it was a negative effect, they may begin to feel sad about what has happened. Feeling sad is normal and won't last forever.

In Stage 1 of restoration, people need to experience several things:

- They need to learn the general ways the past can affect the present.
- They need to begin to understand family systems and the ways that dysfunctional families affect children.
- They need to begin to discover some of the specific ways their past, especially their family of origin, is affecting their present.
- They need to begin to identify some of the unhealthy thinking and behavior patterns in their lives and how these are affecting them.

- They need to start the grieving process as they begin to realize what they have lost.

Stage 2: Grieving Pain – (lowest point of *The Restorative Process* diagram)

In the second stage of the restorative process, people learn how to deal with their emotions in the present, feel and release their buried emotions (grieving), and learn from their past. For most people, emotional problems begin because they do not know how to deal with their negative emotions. If people don't learn how to deal with emotions in a godly manner, they will continue to get worse and damage others, especially their children.

Frequently, there is confusion in the church about emotions. Many churches teach incorrect views of negative emotions. They compound this by fostering a culture that encourages everyone to always be on their best behavior and keep their struggles private. People need to learn how to get in touch with their full range of emotions and to learn the Scriptural truths about emotions and their proper expression. This information will allow a person to move towards emotional and spiritual health. The RYH workbook *Understanding Emotions* helps people gain a better understanding of their emotions and learn healthy ways to express them.

In the restorative process, people learn the importance of grieving the losses experienced in their lives. This grieving process usually begins in Stage 1 as people begin to identify their losses. In Stage 2, people will learn information about the grieving process and be given time to grieve. The most important goal of Stage 2 is for people to work through at least one unresolved loss from their past. Once that is accomplished, they have the tools to continue processing other losses and to learn from those losses. The RYH workbook *Processing Pain* takes individuals through Stage 1 and helps them begin the work of Stage 2.

As individuals progress through the grieving process, they may experience greater sadness in Stage 2 than they did in Stage 1. It is important for people to understand that this is a normal part of the restorative process.

Although most people have several significant losses in their lives, they can really only process one loss at a time. It will take different people varying amounts of time to complete the second stage, depending on the number and degree of unresolved losses. No one will ever complete this process perfectly or fully, but everyone needs to make significant progress in this area before moving on to Stage 3.

Stage 3: Completing Developmental Tasks - (right side of *The Restorative Process* diagram)

Both Christian and secular psychologists recognize that there are certain psychosocial tasks (developmental tasks) that should be completed in childhood and young adulthood. However, in this fallen world, almost no one completes them perfectly. In the third stage of restoration, people will benefit from help as they complete any of the tasks they have not fully realized.

The four developmental tasks are:

- **Bonding** – Bonding refers to connecting with people emotionally, learning to trust trustworthy people, and getting needs met.
- **Separating** – Separating involves developing one’s own identity and learning proper boundaries.
- **Sorting out good and bad** – Sorting out good and bad involves gaining a proper biblical view of man that includes our dual nature: capable of sinning and of doing good.
- **Gaining independence** – Gaining independence occurs when people recognize that they have become an adult, are equal to other adults, and have the capacity to manage their own life.

For more information on developmental tasks, we recommend the book *Changes That Heal: Four Practical Steps to a Happier, Healthier You* by Dr. Henry Cloud.

At the beginning of this third stage, people are still grieving their losses. As they continue in this third stage, they may even discover new losses to grieve that are the result of not completing these tasks. Later in Stage 3, most people come out of their grieving and start to feel better. These people report that they feel a new joy about life, because they have a new appreciation of how God made them as unique individuals.

Completing developmental tasks is a lifelong process. As people make up deficits in bonding, separating, sorting out good and bad, and gaining independence, other important aspects of rebuilding occur. People begin to understand their true identity and develop new relational skills. They also begin to have healthier ways of thinking, to give themselves and others more grace, and to create a healthy support system. All of these things work together to give people an increasingly elevated level of emotional health and freedom.

Note: It is important to recognize that the restorative process is not a one-time event that ends in complete healing. This process will occur repeatedly in a person’s life.

RESTORING YOUR HEART GROUP COVENANT AND GUIDELINES

- ✓ I agree to make attendance at all group sessions a top priority. I agree to be on time for each session. I agree to complete assignments between group sessions. I agree to call or text ahead if I will be late to, or absent from, a group session.
- ✓ I agree that all information shared in the group is confidential. Nothing leaves this room. (The only time confidentiality may be broken is if someone threatens suicide or says they are going to harm someone else.) I understand that if I break my commitment to confidentiality, I may be asked to leave the group.
- ✓ I agree to participate in this group. This means talking openly about my thoughts and feelings, honestly reporting my behaviors, and exchanging helpful feedback with other group members when appropriate.
- ✓ I agree to listen attentively while others in the group share. I agree to monitor the length of my own sharing time so all group members have opportunity to share. I understand that cell phones are for emergency use only and need to be silenced during group time.
- ✓ I agree to take responsibility for my own feelings and circumstances by using "I." I will avoid making judgmental statements to group members or offering unsolicited advice.
- ✓ I agree to inform my group leader of any physical and/or emotional problems that may affect my participation, since some group sessions may be emotionally intense.
- ✓ I understand that Restoring Your Heart group leaders are trained facilitators, not mental health professionals. Group activities and processes are not intended to imitate or replace methods used by licensed mental health professionals.
- ✓ I understand that Restoring Your Heart group leaders may occasionally consult with other Restoring Your Heart group leaders or trainers regarding group interactions. This allows the freedom to gain other perspectives and ideas concerning how best to help the group function in a healthy manner. No identifying information is shared in such consultations. All Restoring Your Heart group leaders and trainers are committed to protecting confidentiality.

Signed _____ Date _____

Participant's Copy

ADDITIONAL RYH GROUP COVENANT GUIDELINES FOR ONLINE/VIDEO/PHONE RYH GROUPS

Online groups sometimes require a different approach to maintaining group confidentiality and privacy. Therefore, additional guidelines are required.

RYH group leaders agree to:

- Utilize encrypted technology platforms to promote the privacy and confidentiality of all group members.
- Configure the settings of the webinar platform to prohibit all recordings for RYH sessions.

RYH group leaders *and* RYH group participants agree to:

- Remember that you are on camera, and try to interact as though you were meeting in person (i.e., maintain eye contact, stay engaged, avoid looking at phones, refrain from snacking/eating/chewing gum, etc.).
- Use a headset or maintain a location with closed doors where conversations cannot be overheard.
- Maintain a location with no interruptions or distractions.
- Not record RYH online group sessions for any reason.
- Not photograph or screen shot their RYH online group session(s) without the expressed permission of all group members.

Signed _____ Date _____

Participant's Copy

Additional on-line tip: Arrange your location so the lighting is in front of you and not behind you.

RESTORING YOUR HEART GROUP COVENANT AND GUIDELINES

- ✓ I agree to make attendance at all group sessions a top priority. I agree to be on time for each session. I agree to complete assignments between group sessions. I agree to call or text ahead if I will be late to, or absent from, a group session.
- ✓ I agree that all information shared in the group is confidential. Nothing leaves this room. (The only time confidentiality may be broken is if someone threatens suicide or says they are going to harm someone else.) I understand that if I break my commitment to confidentiality, I may be asked to leave the group.
- ✓ I agree to participate in this group. This means talking openly about my thoughts and feelings, honestly reporting my behaviors, and exchanging helpful feedback with other group members when appropriate.
- ✓ I agree to listen attentively while others in the group share. I agree to monitor the length of my own sharing time so all group members have opportunity to share. I understand that cell phones are for emergency use only and need to be silenced during group time.
- ✓ I agree to take responsibility for my own feelings and circumstances by using "I." I will avoid making judgmental statements to group members or offering unsolicited advice.
- ✓ I agree to inform my group leader of any physical and/or emotional problems that may affect my participation, since some group sessions may be emotionally intense.
- ✓ I understand that Restoring Your Heart group leaders are trained facilitators, not mental health professionals. Group activities and processes are not intended to imitate or replace methods used by licensed mental health professionals.
- ✓ I understand that Restoring Your Heart group leaders may occasionally consult with other Restoring Your Heart group leaders or trainers regarding group interactions. This allows the freedom to gain other perspectives and ideas concerning how best to help the group function in a healthy manner. No identifying information is shared in such consultations. All Restoring Your Heart group leaders and trainers are committed to protecting confidentiality.

Signed _____ Date _____

Leader's Copy

ADDITIONAL RYH GROUP COVENANT GUIDELINES FOR ONLINE/VIDEO/PHONE RYH GROUPS

Online groups sometimes require a different approach to maintaining group confidentiality and privacy. Therefore, additional guidelines are required.

RYH group leaders agree to:

- Utilize encrypted technology platforms to promote the privacy and confidentiality of all group members.
- Configure the settings of the webinar platform to prohibit all recordings for RYH sessions.

RYH group leaders *and* RYH group participants agree to:

- Remember that you are on camera, and try to interact as though you were meeting in person (i.e., maintain eye contact, stay engaged, avoid looking at phones, refrain from snacking/eating/chewing gum, etc.).
- Use a headset or maintain a location with closed doors where conversations cannot be overheard.
- Maintain a location with no interruptions or distractions.
- Not record RYH online group sessions for any reason.
- Not photograph or screen shot their RYH online group session(s) without the expressed permission of all group members.

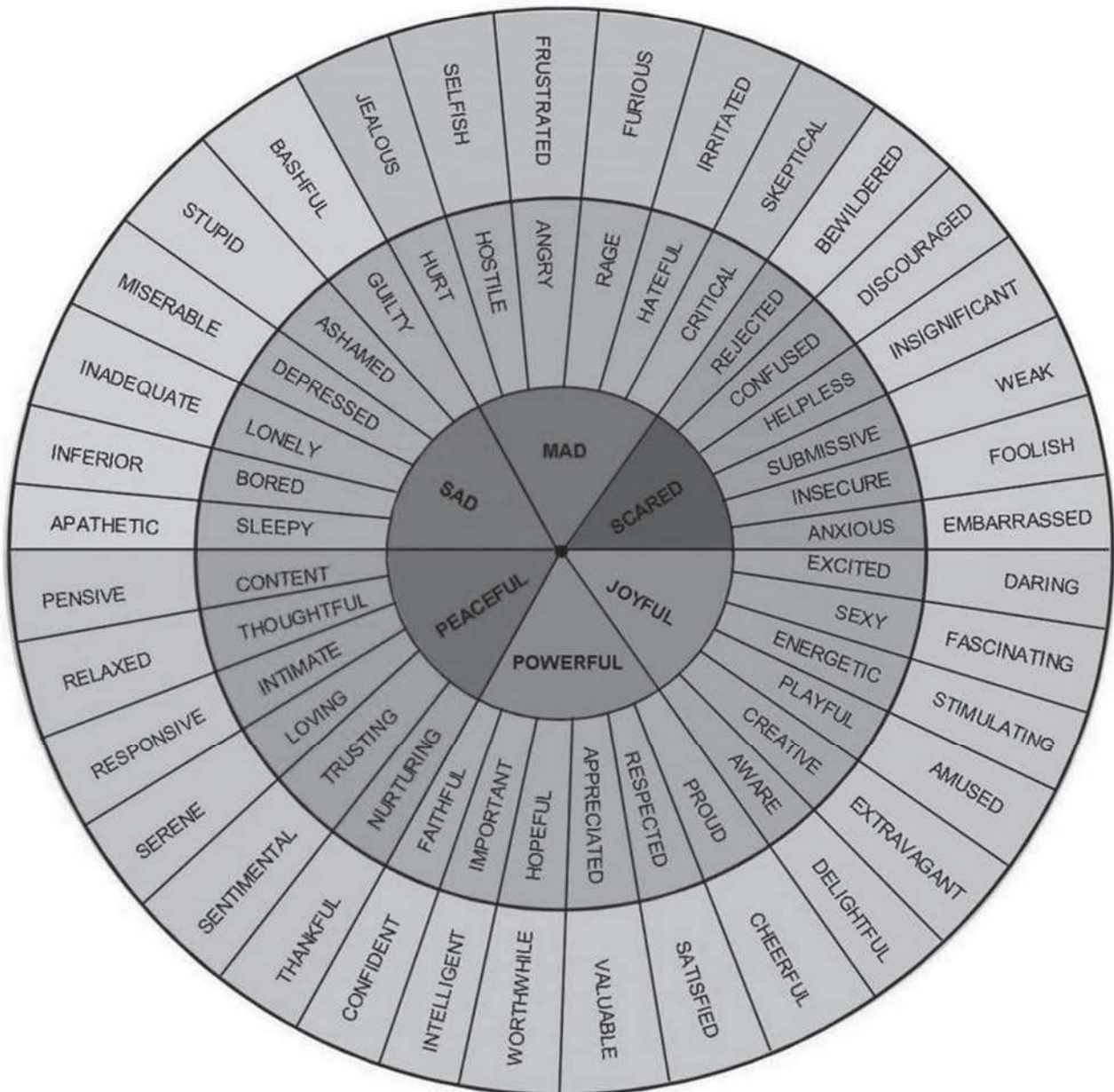
Signed _____ Date _____

Leader's Copy

Additional on-line tip: Arrange your location so the lighting is in front of you and not behind you.

FEELINGS WHEEL

(Developed by Dr. Gloria Willcox)



How To Use The *Feelings Wheel**

The *Feelings Wheel* is a tool included in all of the RYH materials (identified as Addendum D).

The purpose of the *Feelings Wheel* is to help people develop an emotional vocabulary by teaching them to name what they are feeling in real-time (as they experience the emotion) as well as what they felt in past experiences.

Many people are not aware of their feelings and, therefore, have very little control over them. When we can recognize and name our feelings, we can process them and make sense of them. Then we understand ourselves and other people better, which leads to healthier relationships.

The *Feelings Wheel* can be used in many different ways. Here are some ideas that may be helpful:

- The top half of the *Feelings Wheel* consists of negative (or unpleasant) emotions.
- The bottom half of the *Feelings Wheel* consists of positive (or pleasant) emotions.
- When we are feeling a negative emotion(s), we likely have needs that are not being met.
- When we are feeling a positive emotion(s), one or more of our needs are probably being met.
- There are many more emotions than those named on the *Feelings Wheel*. It may be helpful to write in others on the wheel when you experience them.
- We usually experience more than one emotion at a time. Encourage people to name more than one.
- Sometimes we experience both negative and positive emotions at the same time.
- The center of the wheel names six basic emotions.
- If someone starts by naming a basic emotion, encourage them to explore all sections of the wheel to name other feelings. When beginning at the center and working outwards, people are not limited by just the emotions in that sextant (or piece of the pie). (Example: When I say I am mad, it may be helpful for me to know that I am also feeling ashamed and weak, which are in different pie pieces.)
- When someone names an emotion on the outer wheel, it can be helpful to have them drill down to the center of that particular pie piece to recognize the more basic emotion they are feeling. (Example: When I say I feel frustrated, it may be helpful to me to understand at a more basic level that I'm mad.)
- Encourage people to use the *Feelings Wheel* at home with their children and other family members.

* The *Feelings Wheel* was not created by WDA or RYH. The original *Feelings Wheel* was created by Gloria Willcox, but there are many variations and versions now in use.

SAFE SUPPORT SYSTEM

What is a support system?

1. A network of people that help you make it through difficult and bewildering changes involved in healing (restoration).
2. People who give you practical, intellectual, emotional and spiritual support.
 - a. Practical: Do things for you when you can't.
 - b. Intellectual: Give you information you should have received as a child.
 - c. Emotional: Comfort and support you when you are hurting and validate your feelings.
 - d. Spiritual: Give you hope, remind you of God's love and good purpose toward you, and encourage you to trust Him.
3. Additional ways a support system helps:
 - a. Helps you see that you are not alone or the only one struggling.
 - b. Offers love and respect in spite of your struggles.
 - c. Challenges your distorted thinking and inspires you to grow.
 - d. Believes that you were abused and acknowledges the subsequent pain.
 - e. Causes you to feel reassurance, cared for, and listened to.

Biblical ideas about support systems

1. God created two primary support systems.
 - a. The family – not always safe and supportive.
 - b. The church – not everyone is safe and supportive.
2. Jesus' use of small groups for support and discipleship models a safe support system.
3. Genesis 2:18-25 indicates that all people need other people.
4. The New Testament contains many "one another" passages which also indicate our need for other people. (Romans 12:10; Colossians 3:13-16)
5. Galatians 6:1-5 shows the balance between needing the support of others and taking responsibility for ourselves.

SAFE SUPPORT SYSTEM

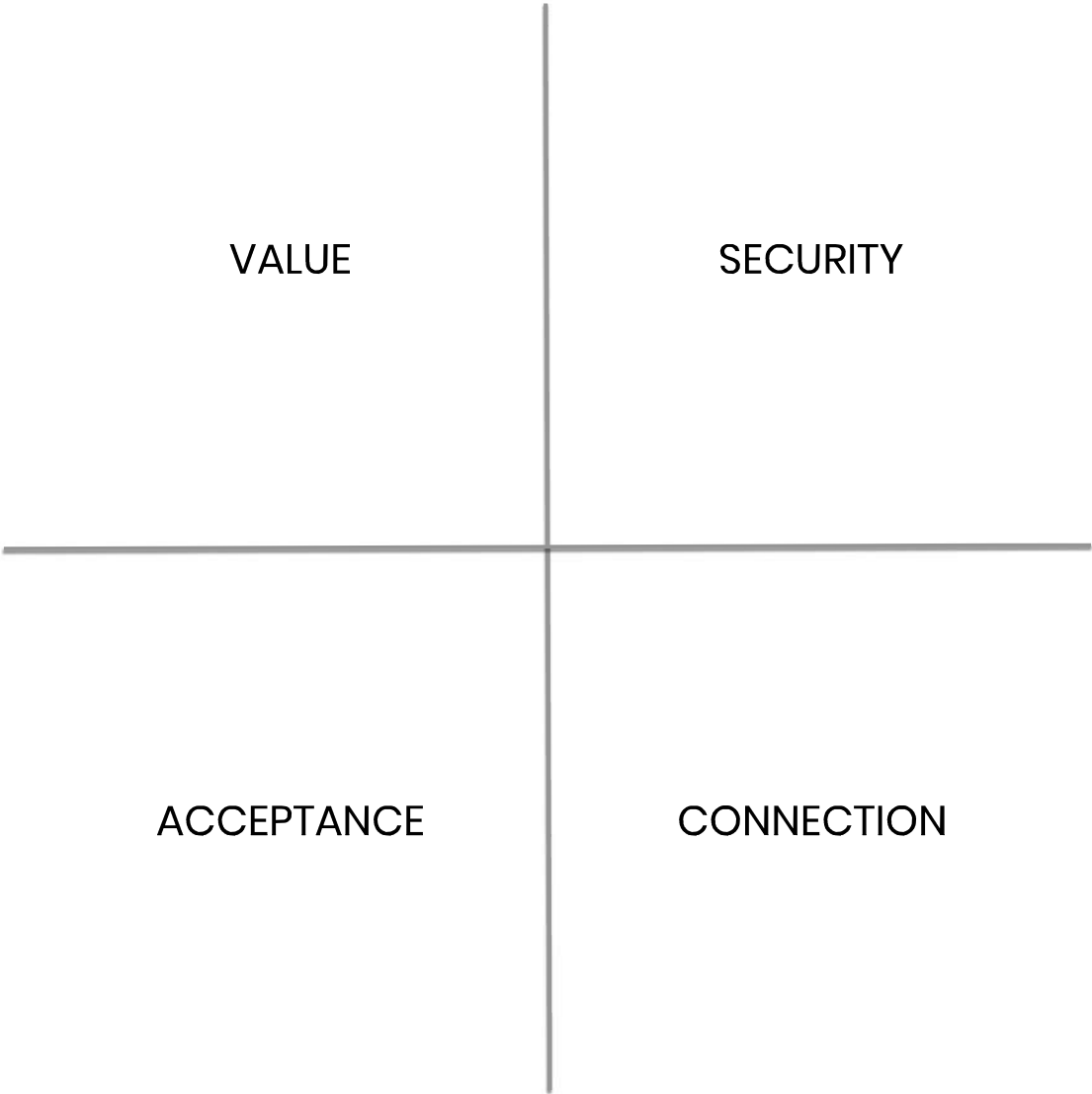
Become a safe person

1. Maintain confidentiality. (*Remember to tell people when you want something kept confidential.*)
2. Validate people's feelings and needs.
3. Safe people:
 - a. Listen.
 - b. Validate feelings.
 - c. Only give advice when asked.
 - d. Communicate understanding when able.
 - e. Encourage the person sharing to be honest and open.
 - f. Don't judge or reject.
 - g. Make eye contact.
 - h. Are empathetic.
4. A way to identify safe people is by using the "share, check, share" system. Share a little of what happened to you, or your feelings, and check their response. If they handle your information based on the criteria above, then share a little bit more, etc.

Exercise

1. List 5-10 people you have regular contact with and feel close to.
2. Put a check mark next to the names of supportive people.
3. Circle the names of people who know the things you struggle with.
4. Put a star next to those who directly support your healing.
5. Cross out the name of any who are unsupportive.
6. Put a question mark next to those you are not sure about.
7. Go back to those not crossed out. What qualities do they have that make them seem like safe and supportive people?

NEEDS SQUARE

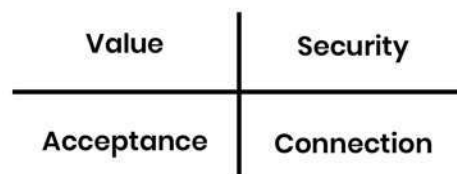


NEEDS OF THE HEART

“There is a God-shaped vacuum in the heart of every man that cannot be filled by any created thing, but only by God the Creator, made known through Jesus.”

Blaise Pascal, French mathematician, philosopher and physicist, 1623-1662

God created us with 4 basic emotional needs. As He meets these needs, He is able to reveal His love and character to us.



We All Experience Pain in Childhood.

- We do not naturally know how to experience God’s love.
- We have parents or caregivers that are imperfect reflections of God’s love.
- We grow up with hurts.

We Are Born into a Spiritual Battle.

- God’s enemy wants to destroy whom God loves, people.
- Specific wounds can target each emotional need.
 - **Abuse** - cannot feel **valuable**.
 - **Rejection** - cannot feel **accepted**.
 - **Neglect** - cannot feel **secure**.
 - **Abandonment** - cannot feel **complete**.

Satan Has a Powerful Weapon, the Lie.

- He will use half-truths if they are more believable.
- He uses these weapons with great skill; however, they are **powerless** if we recognize them.
- Two of his lies about needs are:
 - God is not enough for you. (He isn’t able to meet your needs.)
 - You are not important to God. (He doesn’t care to meet your needs.)

NEEDS OF THE HEART

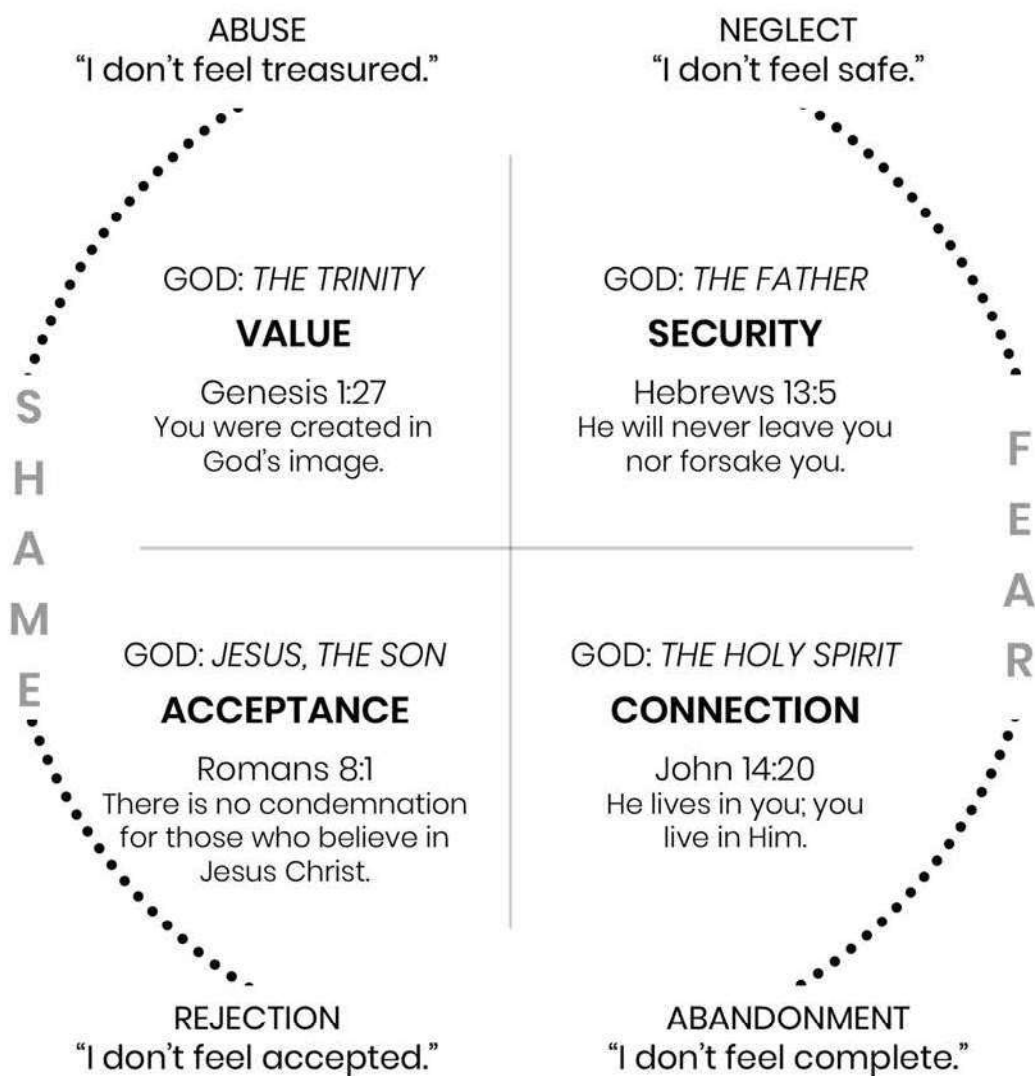
- Those 2 lies create 2 types of messages.
 - SHAME messages – are usually present if we struggle with needs related to **value** or **acceptance** (God doesn't care.)
 - FEAR messages – are usually present if we struggle with needs related to **security** or **connection** (God isn't sufficient.)

We Come into the World with a God-Shaped Vacuum that Must Be Filled.

- At an early age we begin to figure out how to get our emotional needs met the best way we can. Frequently, that's on our own.
- The ways we meet our needs are based on messages we receive.
- Attempts to meet our own needs often cause us to develop a faulty belief system:
 - About God
 - About ourselves
 - About our situations



EXPANDED NEEDS SQUARE



CONNECTING WITH GOD

Because God is our Ultimate Healer, each lesson will end with an opportunity to intentionally interact with Him. This is a way to bring God into your healing process. God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit desire to be with you and to help you. They delight in spending time with you.

If you don't have a relationship with God or if He seems distant or disinterested, this could be a way to begin a connection with Him. If you feel uncomfortable sharing with God, try sharing with Him as you would share with a friend you trust.

We encourage you to be honest with God. If you feel angry with Him, or frustrated and confused for the way your life has gone, let Him know. If you are depressed or lonely, share that with Him. If you feel joy and gratefulness, tell Him about that. God wants to hear from you, whether you're sharing the good or the bad.

One way to begin is to close your eyes, take a few deep breaths, and think about what you'd like to share with God. There are many ways to begin, and there's no one right way to start communicating with God. (You may address God the Father, Jesus or the Holy Spirit.)

Write down your thoughts to God. Then listen quietly. You may hear a clear response from God, a not-so-clear response, or even no response. It is not likely to be an audible voice you hear; you will receive it more like a thought. If you do hear from God, write down what you heard. If you don't hear from Him, try not to become discouraged. His silence doesn't mean He's not listening.

Some suggestions to share with Him are:

- Feelings you experienced during this lesson, both positive and negative
- Any personal insight you had
- An experience from your past that you remembered during this lesson
- Your experience of connecting or not connecting with God through the process of completing this lesson

By interacting with God in this way, we hope you will experience Him as a participant in your healing process and thereby strengthen or maybe even begin your relationship with Him.

CONNECTING WITH GOD

At times, your leader may ask if anyone wishes to share their God connection experience with the group. Sharing of this is voluntary. If you have an especially significant time with God and wish to share, it could be an encouragement to your fellow group members. If you are having trouble connecting with God, it could be an opportunity for your group members to encourage you.

You may complete this exercise before or after the group discussion of the lesson. You may write out your response at the end of each lesson or keep all your responses for all the lessons together as a journal. This is your connection time to engage with in your way.

HEALTHY AND UNHEALTHY EMOTIONAL EXPRESSIONS

Healthy Expressions

Feelings, including negative ones, are validated and not discouraged.

Feelings are expressed in a clear, controlled manner.

People have an emotional vocabulary (e.g., words like angry, hurt, upset, etc.).

Healthy ways of dealing with emotions are encouraged and taught.

Unhealthy ways of dealing with emotions are discouraged and disciplined.

People face and work through stress, challenges, and crises.

The atmosphere is relaxed and joyous.

People feel loved, respected, and connected.

People show love and respect for one another.

Unhealthy Expressions

True feelings are hidden or denied.

When feelings are expressed, the person may be ostracized or punished.

Feelings are not talked about.

Parents are able to express their emotions; children are not allowed to.

Emotions may be out of control and expressed in damaging ways.

People avoid stress, challenges, and crises.

The atmosphere is tense and depressing.

People feel hurt, disappointed, and disconnected.

People are disrespectful, uncaring, and untrusting of one another.

It is important to understand our emotions and how to express them in healthy ways. Emotions originate beneath our conscious awareness. When we can identify and express them, we bring them into our awareness where we can think about them and act in healthy ways. If we are not aware of them or if we suppress them, they will cause us to act and react in ways that adversely affect our relationships, and we won't understand why.

COGNITIVE DISTORTIONS

Cognitive distortions are ways of thinking that convince you of something that isn't really true. Sometimes this is referred to as "stinkin' thinkin'."

1. **ALL-OR-NOTHING THINKING:** You see things in black-and-white categories. You place people or situations in "either/or" categories, without shades of gray or allowing for the complexity of most people and situations. If your performance falls short of perfect, you see yourself as a total failure.
2. **OVERGENERALIZATION:** You see a single negative event as a never-ending pattern of defeat.
3. **MENTAL FILTER:** You pick out a single negative detail and dwell on it exclusively, filtering out all positive aspects of the event or person. Your vision of all reality becomes darkened, like the drop of ink that discolors the entire beaker of water.
4. **DISQUALIFYING THE POSITIVE:** You reject positive experiences by insisting they "don't count" for some reason or other. In this way you can maintain a negative belief that is contradicted by your everyday experiences.
5. **JUMPING TO CONCLUSIONS:** You make a negative interpretation even though there are no definite facts that convincingly support your conclusion.
 - a. **MIND READING:** You arbitrarily conclude that someone is reacting negatively to you, and you don't bother to check this out.
 - b. **FORTUNE TELLING:** You anticipate that things will turn out badly, and you feel convinced that your prediction is an already-established fact.
6. **MAGNIFICATION (CATASTROPHIZING) OR MINIMIZATION:** You expect disaster to strike, no matter what. You exaggerate the importance of things (such as your goof-up or someone else's achievement), or you inappropriately shrink things until they appear tiny (your own desirable qualities or the other person's imperfections). This is also called the "binocular trick" because it skews your perspective.
7. **EMOTIONAL REASONING:** You assume that your negative emotions necessarily reflect the way things really are. "I feel it; therefore it must be true."
8. **SHOULD STATEMENTS:** You try to motivate yourself with "shoulds" and "shouldn'ts", frequently resulting in guilt when you can't live up to them. "Musts" and "oughts" are also offenders. When you direct should statements toward others, you feel anger, frustration, and resentment because you are imposing a set of expectations that will probably not be met.

9. **LABELING AND MISLABELING:** You attach a negative label to yourself instead of just describing your error, e.g., "I'm a loser." When someone else's behavior rubs you the wrong way, you attach a negative label to him, e.g., "He's a real jerk." Mislabeled involves describing an event with language that is highly colored and emotionally loaded.
10. **PERSONALIZATION:** You take everything personally or assign blame to yourself with no logical reason to believe you are to blame. This distortion covers a wide range of situations, from assuming you are the reason a friend did not enjoy the girls' night out, to the more severe examples of believing that you are the cause for every instance of moodiness or irritation in those around you.
11. **ALWAYS BEING RIGHT:** You believe that you must always be right, correct, or accurate. If you are a perfectionist, you will recognize this distortion. With this distortion, the idea that you could be wrong is absolutely unacceptable, and you will fight to the metaphorical death to prove that you are right.
12. **FALLACY OF FAIRNESS:** You feel resentful because you think you know what is fair, but other people won't agree with you. When things didn't go your way growing up, you may have heard, "Life isn't always fair." If you go through life applying a measuring ruler against every situation judging its "fairness," you will often feel badly and negative because of it.
13. **FALLACY OF CHANGE:** You expect others to change if you pressure or encourage them enough. This distortion is usually accompanied by a belief that your happiness and success rest on other people, leading you to believe that forcing those around you to change is the only way to get what you want.

Source: David D. Burns, *The Feeling Good Handbook* (New York: William Morrow and Company), 1989.