

 RESTORING YOUR HEART

UNDERSTANDING EMOTIONS FOR WOMEN

– A Safe Small Group Experience –

Restoring Your Heart® Workbook: *Understanding Emotions For Women*
2022 Edition

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Restoring Your Heart

Understanding Emotions For Women

Table Of Contents

Introduction To RYH <i>Understanding Emotions For Women</i>	1
Welcome To Your RYH <i>Understanding Emotions For Women</i> Group	3
Lesson 1 Understanding Emotions	7
Lesson 2 Restoring Our Emotions	19
Lesson 3 Biblical Concepts About Emotions	31
Lesson 4 Feeling, Thinking And Acting	41
Lesson 5 Understanding Our Defenses	55
Lesson 6 Understanding And Confronting Our Fears	65
Lesson 7 Understanding Anger	75
Lesson 8 Dealing With Present Anger	85
Lesson 9 Processing Old Hurt And Anger	95
Lesson 10 Understanding And Dealing With Guilt	107
Lesson 11 Joy - Connecting With God	119
Lesson 12 Continued Healing	129
Addendums	
Addendum A - <i>Development Of Emotionally-Based Problems (Three Column Chart)</i>	137
Addendum B - <i>The Restorative Process</i>	139
Addendum C - <i>RYH Group Covenant And Guidelines</i>	143
Addendum D - <i>Feelings Wheel</i>	147
Addendum E - <i>Safe Support System</i>	149
Addendum F - <i>Needs Square</i>	151
Addendum G - <i>Needs Of The Heart</i>	153
Addendum H - <i>Expanded Needs Square</i>	155
Addendum I - <i>Connecting With God</i>	157
Addendum J - <i>Healthy And Unhealthy Emotional Expressions</i>	159
Addendum K - <i>Cognitive Distortions</i>	161
General RYH Leader's Instructions	163

Introduction To RYH

Understanding Emotions For Women

In the Christian community there is sometimes confusion about the purpose of emotions and their importance to our spiritual growth and maturity. For example, negative emotions may be viewed as sinful or emotions in general may be regarded as not to be trusted or a sign of weakness. God designed us with emotions, so to become a healthy, mature, spiritual woman, you must understand how your emotions affect your thinking and acting. You must also learn how to relate to other people and to God in a healthy way at the emotional level. Our emotions are the direct pipeline to our hearts and the means by which we bond and connect at the most basic and intimate level.

As you go through this workbook with other women in a safe group setting, we hope that you will experience the following outcomes:

1. Understand the importance of your emotions
2. Learn how to feel and express your emotions, especially negative ones, in healthy ways
3. Develop an emotional vocabulary
4. Begin to understand how unresolved emotional pain from your past can affect your present life
5. Learn how to better connect with people at the emotional level and thereby strengthen your relationships with people
6. Learn how to better connect with God at the emotional level and have a deeper heart connection with Him
7. Gain greater self-awareness and spiritual maturity

It is our hope that this workbook and the group interaction that goes along with it, will give you knowledge and experiences that will have lasting benefits for you, your family, your relationships with friends and your relationship with God.

We strongly recommend that you read the booklet *How Emotional Problems Develop*. You can purchase a printed version or download a free PDF at the WDA store: www.disciplebuilding.org/store.



RYP Group Leaders:

Before beginning your group:

- **Register** your group details at www.restoringyourheart.com.
- **Read** the Leader's Instructions section starting on page 163.



Welcome To Your RYH *Understanding Emotions* For Women group

1. Welcome from your group leader and introduce yourself –

- Your RYH group leader will share a little information about herself and also the benefits she received when she participated in a RYH *Understanding Emotions* group.
- Each group member: Tell the group a little bit about yourself, e.g., marital status, family members, type of job, where you grew up or any other general bit of personal information you'd like the group to know.
- Each group member: Share with the group what you hope to gain by being a participant in this group.

2. What will you learn in this group?

Introduction to Workbook – read aloud together with each group member reading a paragraph (page 1).

3. *RYH Group Covenant And Guidelines – Addendum C (page 143)*

- Your group will read together each item in the *RYH Group Covenant* to be sure everyone understands the importance of the commitment you are making to each other. The *RYH Group Covenant* establishes the “rules” for how the group will function.
- You will sign the *RYH Group Covenant* together with your leader and other group members. Sign both copies. Tear out the Leader's Copy and give to your group leader. Keep your signed copy in your workbook.

4. *Connecting With God – Addendum I (page 157)*

- Your group will read together and discuss the instructions and purpose for *Connecting With God*.

- You will have an opportunity after each lesson in the workbook to interact with God.
- This will allow you to connect with God throughout the course of this workbook and intentionally bring Him into your healing process by regularly expressing your feelings, thoughts and concerns to Him.

5. ***Feelings Wheel – Addendum D (page 147)***

- A tool that will be referred to and used frequently throughout this workbook experience.
- Will help you learn how to identify what you are feeling as you are feeling it.
- Will help you develop or improve your “emotional vocabulary.”
- The general layout of the *Feelings Wheel* is negative feelings are on the top and positive feelings are on the bottom. Feelings are closely tied to having our needs met. Negative feelings can indicate our needs are not being met; positive feelings can indicate that our needs are being met.

6. **Other helpful tools-**

- Each lesson will contain at least one “Processing Tip” and/or “Listening Skill.” These are designed to help you have a more interactive group experience and to become a better listener.
- ***Leader’s Notes*** for each lesson are after every lesson. For additional insights and Scripture references, you may read the ***Leader’s Notes***. They aren’t reserved solely for your group leader.
- ***Healthy And Unhealthy Emotional Expressions (Addendum J)*** gives guidelines for how to express your emotions in healthy ways (found on page 159 and introduced in Lesson 1).
- ***Safe Support System (Addendum E)*** explains how to recognize “safe” people and how to become a “safe” person (found on page 149 and introduced in Lesson 2).
- ***Needs Square (Addendum F)*** helps you identify your emotional needs (found on page 151 and introduced in Lesson 3).

- ***Cognitive Distortions (Addendum K)*** helps you identify wrong thinking (found on page 161 and introduced in Lesson 4).
- ***The Restorative Process (Addendum B)*** visually depicts the restorative process (found on page 139 and introduced in the Processing Tip of Lesson 9).
- ***Development Of Emotionally-Based Problems (Three Column Chart) (Addendum A)*** explains how emotional problems develop and the order of healing (found on page 137 and included as an aid to understanding the process).

7. Miscellaneous –

- Group time for each session is two hours.
- Typically one lesson is covered each week.
- You should prepare each lesson in advance of the meeting time. A typical amount of preparation time each week is 1 - 2 hours.
- You will get more out of the lesson if you spread out your preparation time over the course of the week, e.g., on day 1, read the lesson; on day 2, answer a few questions; on day 3, answer a few more questions, etc.; and then review your lesson the night before your group meets.
- The more time you invest in preparation, the greater your benefit.

8. Questions or comments?

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.



Understanding Emotions

Lesson One

1

*I waited patiently for the LORD;
he turned to me and heard my cry.
He lifted me out of the slimy pit,
out of the mud and mire; he set
my feet on a rock and gave me
a firm place to stand. He put
a new song in my mouth,
a hymn of praise to our God.
Many will see and fear the LORD
and put their trust in him.*

(Psalm 40:1-3)

Emotions can be described as the energy with which we connect to God and people at the most basic and intimate level.

God has a wide range of emotions and because we are created in His image, we also are created with a wide range of emotions. Emotions are an important part of our lives. It is our emotions that make us feel alive, and it is our emotions that can also make us feel miserable. They fluctuate, sometimes on an hourly basis, according to what is going on around us and how we interpret what is going on around us.

Emotions are signals that tell us if something is right or wrong, or if something is painful or if it feels good. They tell us what is going on inside of us. Negative emotions often tell us that there is a problem and that something needs our attention. Positive emotions tell us that all is well. Emotions are frequently indicators of whether or not our needs are being met.

When we were children, we learned both healthy and unhealthy ways to understand and regulate our emotions, based on our childhood experiences and influences. The ways we learned to handle and express our emotions as a child are important because they will impact the ways we handle emotions as an adult. Our parents, or primary caregivers, are the people who taught us how to regulate our feelings as we grew up. (See NOTE at the end of this lesson.) They

did this in several ways, by modeling behavior, by intentionally teaching us or by the ways in which they interacted with us. Sometimes we are taught healthy ways to deal with emotions and sometimes we are taught unhealthy ways. (See *Healthy And Unhealthy Emotional Expressions* (Addendum J).)

Sometimes we are taught that emotions are not to be trusted and can only lead us astray..

1. What messages, whether positive or negative, have you received from your environment (e.g., family, church, culture) about feelings?

Many of our adult problems are caused by the ways we have learned to deal with our emotions, particularly negative ones. Sometimes we try to avoid negative emotions because we are confused by them. Sometimes we are afraid of our negative emotions and sometimes we deny that we have negative emotions altogether.

The culture we live in falsely says that pain in any form is not good, and therefore, is to be avoided at all costs. Pleasure, on the other hand, is said to be good, and if something feels good, then it is good.

2. What are your beliefs about negative feelings such as pain, anger, fear, guilt or sorrow? (E.g., I should avoid them, they are okay, they are sinful, they are overwhelming, etc.)

God created us with negative emotions for a reason. They tell us something about our environment and ourselves. God, Himself, experiences negative emotions. Therefore, we should expect to experience negative emotions as well.

*Then the LORD's anger burned against Moses... (Exodus 4:14a)
They tested God again and again and provoked
the Holy One of Israel. (Psalm 78:41, English Standard Version)*

God has also promised Christians that we will experience trials, tribulations, and persecution. All of these will cause us to have negative emotions. In Scripture, many saints experienced negative emotions.

In Psalm 13, King David expresses his sorrow, confusion, and fears to God:

*How long, LORD? Will you forget me forever?
How long will you hide your face from me?
How long must I wrestle with my thoughts
and day after day have sorrow in my heart?
How long will my enemy triumph over me?
Look on me and answer, LORD my God.
Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep in death,
and my enemy will say, "I have overcome him,"
and my foes will rejoice when I fall. (Psalm 13:1-4)*

This description of Jesus occurs in Isaiah 53:3-4:

*He was despised and rejected by mankind,
a man of suffering, and familiar with pain.
Like one from whom people hide their faces
he was despised, and we held him in low esteem.
Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering,
yet we considered him punished by God,
stricken by him, and afflicted.*

Jesus experienced sorrow, grief, and rejection in His life. He said to His disciples, "Remember what I told you: 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also." (John 15:20a-b) From this verse, we see that life will include difficult experiences and the negative emotions that accompany them. God never condemns these feelings.

3. How would you summarize what Scripture says or implies about negative emotions in the above passages?

4. Think of a recent experience that caused negative emotions in you. What did your emotions tell you about yourself, others and/or the situation?

As stated above, how we regulate or handle our emotions was largely determined during our childhood. We learned how to process and express emotions by observing how our parents, or primary caregivers, handled their emotions. We also learned some beliefs about emotions from how our parents reacted to our expressions of emotion. Other people affected us too, but our parents are usually the first and primary influences in our lives. As a result of our childhood experiences, many of us didn't learn how to think about our emotions or how to process them in healthy ways.

One day, when Sarah was 12 years old, she decided to help her mom by cleaning out the cookware cabinet in the kitchen. She wanted to do it so her mom would be proud of her. Her mom was not scheduled to arrive home from work until 6:00 pm, so Sarah had an hour to accomplish the task. She put all the pots and pans on the floor where she could arrange the items neatly. She was excited about surprising her mom.

Her mom arrived home 30 minutes early and went into the kitchen. When she saw the mess, she began yelling at Sarah. "What are you doing? You have made a mess. Hurry up and put those things back in the cabinet like I had it." Sarah felt hurt, angry and guilty. Her mom would not listen to her explanation so she felt misunderstood and disappointed. Sarah carried these feelings inside because she was not allowed to express her negative emotions, but was expected to obey.

5. What did you feel as you read about Sarah?

Before answering Questions 6, 7, and 8, review *Healthy And Unhealthy Emotional Expressions* (Addendum J) in the back of the workbook. It will help as you think about your childhood experiences.

6. Summarize how emotions were expressed in your family when you were growing up, especially by your parents. Describe how you were treated when you expressed negative emotions.

7. Were there any discrepancies between how your parents expressed emotions and how children were allowed to express emotions in your home? What were they?

8. What were the messages you received about emotions as you watched your parents express their emotions and react to yours?

When children haven't been taught how to understand their emotions or to process and express them in healthy ways, they often develop emotional problems. As they grow older, these problems may become worse. The more dysfunctional a family was in dealing with emotions, the more likely it is that a child will have emotional regulation problems as an adult. Only when a person begins to understand and express her emotions in healthy ways will the emotional problems begin to improve.

There are several indicators/symptoms in an adult's life that suggest that she did not learn how to deal with emotions in a healthy way.

Typical emotional struggles an adult may face:

Check any of these that apply to you.

- 1. You are numb and do not feel your emotions.
- 2. The emotions you feel are mainly negative.
- 3. You tend to overreact and be supersensitive in certain situations.
- 4. You don't know how to express emotions in a healthy way.
- 5. You are afraid of certain emotions.
- 6. You try to distract yourself so you will not feel certain emotions, or you do unhealthy things to alter your moods.
- 7. You believe that certain emotions are bad and you should not have them.
- 8. You are confused by some of your emotions.
- 9. You are depressed for no clear reason.
- 10. You don't know how to deal with pain.
- 11. You feel bitter, negative, or simply unable to enjoy life.
- 12. You take out your anger on people who are not the source of the anger.
- 13. You are unable to control your expressions of anger.
- 14. You feel out of control most of the time.

In the pages that follow, we will look at how to identify emotions, both past and present, and learn how to express them in healthy ways. This is called "regulating our emotions." In addition, we will take a more in-depth look at the negative emotions of anger, guilt and fear.

At the back of this workbook is a tool called the *Feelings Wheel* (Addendum D). This tool is useful to help you explore and express your emotions. It is healing to be able to name the emotions you are feeling at a particular time. The feelings named on the *Feelings Wheel* are not exhaustive, and you may come up with many more words to express what you are feeling. The *Feelings Wheel* is a valuable aid in the emotional healing process.



Takeaway from Lesson 1:

Emotions are the energy with which we connect to God and to other people. Since we are created in the image of God, and He experiences both positive and negative emotions, so will we. Our beliefs about emotions and how they are expressed are determined in childhood by how our parents expressed their emotions and responded to ours. Learning to identify our emotions and express them in healthy ways (or regulate our emotions) is important for having healthy relationships.

*As the deer pants for streams of water,
so my soul pants for you, my God.
My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.
When can I go and meet with God?
By day the LORD directs his love,
at night his song is with me
— a prayer to the God of my life.*

(Psalm 42:1-2,8)



Connecting with God

Refer to *Connecting With God* (Addendum I) on page 157 and then begin your time with Him.



Note:

This workbook is focused in part on our childhood experiences. The people who took care of us and had authority over us when we were children have had significant impact on how we perceive ourselves and the world. These people are typically our parents. We recognize, however, that many people have been raised by their grandparents or other relatives and some have been brought up in foster care. Rather than continuously using the phrase “parents (or primary caregivers),” which begins to sound cumbersome, we’ll use the word “parents” with the understanding that this word refers to anyone who regularly cared for you as a child.



Processing Tip:

What am I feeling?

One of the most important questions we can ask ourselves is, “What am I feeling?” Whether you’re in the midst of an argument, or you’re having the same issue with others over and over, or you’re using an unhealthy defense mechanism or addictive behavior; this question (What am I feeling?) can help you understand what you are trying to communicate to others and what need(s) you are trying to get met. Combine this question with the *Feelings Wheel* and the *Needs Square* for even more clarity.

Example:

Marsha often found herself at odds with people in team meetings, and in discussions with her husband and other family members. Sometimes people told her she was overbearing and always wanted to be “right.” They even said she made statements that assumed she knew everything about a situation, including the motives of others.

Marsha began to ask herself the question, “What am I feeling?” when she found herself in these uncomfortable situations of being at odds with others. She almost immediately recognized that she was feeling insignificant and insecure. Even though Marsha had “good” parents and was raised in a stable family that went to church, she began to realize the impact of her childhood on her responses to others. As she considered the *Needs Square*, it dawned on her that her parents had never really valued her or her accomplishments, even though there were many; and she was still seeking value by winning arguments and trying to convince people that her ideas were the best.

With these two insights, “I am feeling insignificant and insecure,” and “As a child, my need for value was not met by my parents,” Marsha realized that her reactions in the present were based more on experiences from her past. With this knowledge, she was able to react differently in present situations where people disagreed with or challenged her.



Listening Skill:

Approximately two-thirds of all communication is non-verbal. Non-verbal language includes body movements, facial expressions and tone of voice. It may be conscious or outside of our awareness. Train yourself to “listen” with your eyes as well as your ears to understand what the other person is saying.



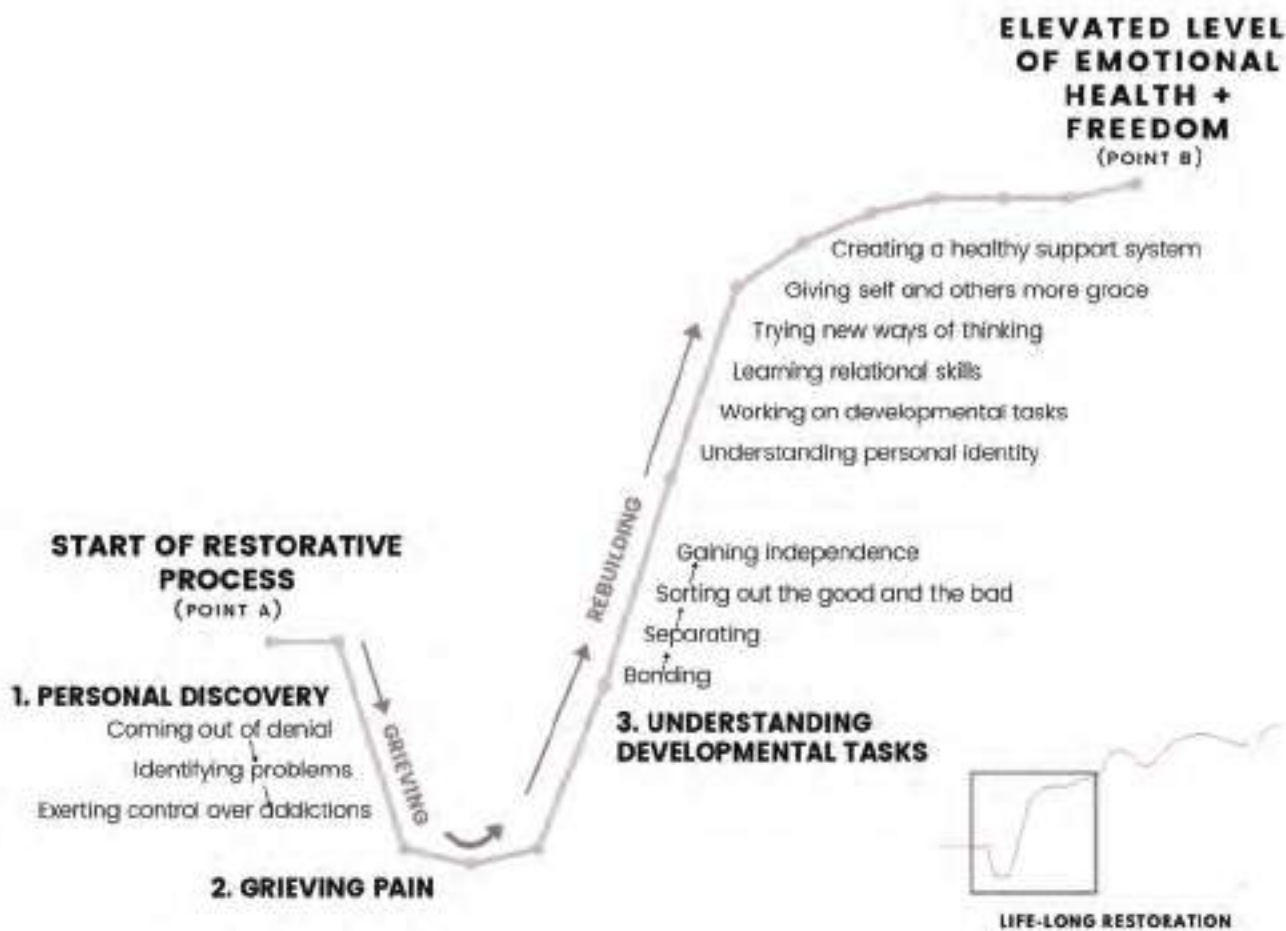
DEVELOPMENT OF EMOTIONALLY-BASED PROBLEMS (Three Column Chart)

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

At the beginning of this third stage, people are still grieving their losses. And 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.

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.

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

(Cont'd)

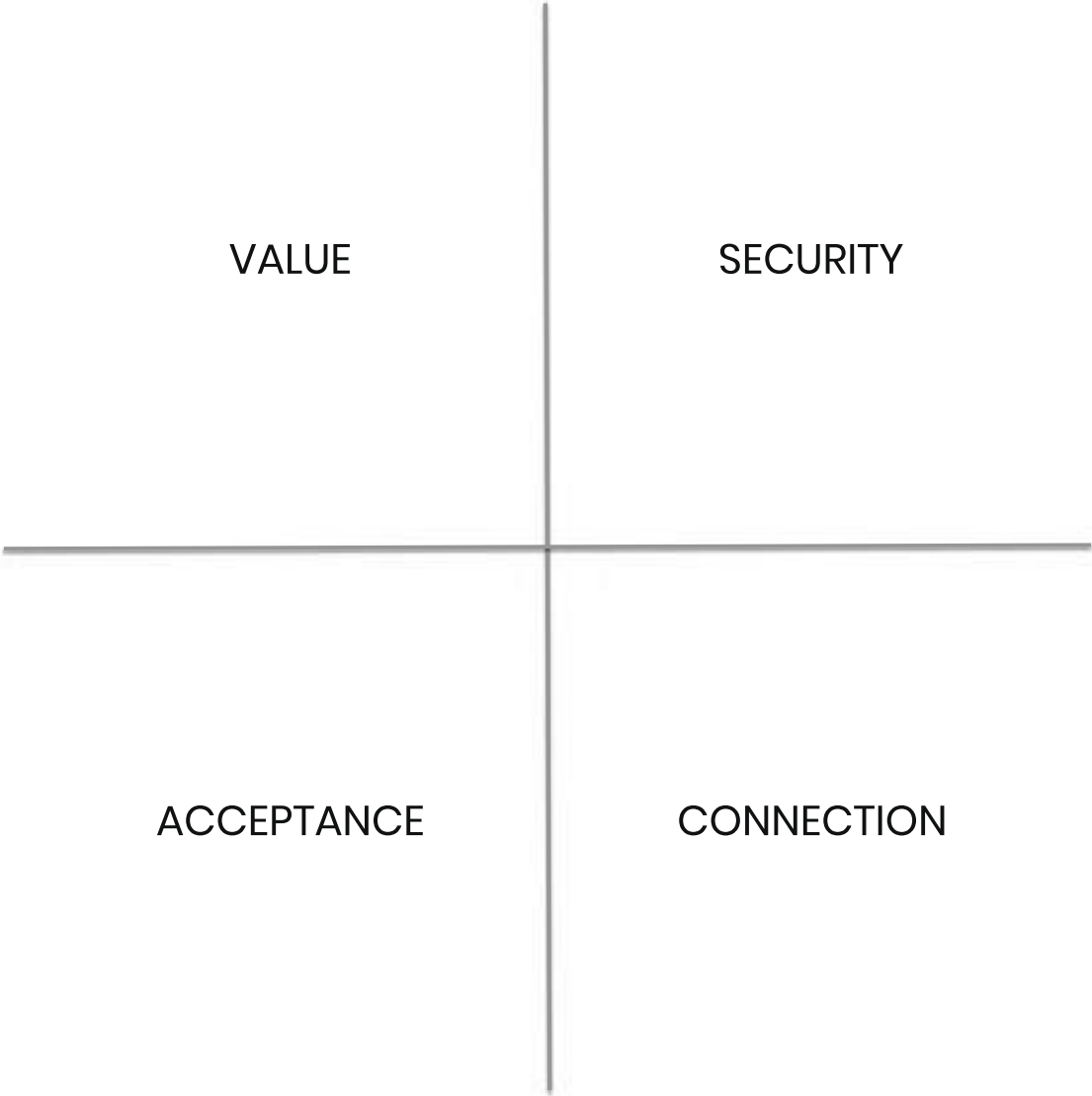
Become a safe person

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 with whom you have regular contact 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 safe and supportive people?

NEEDS SQUARE



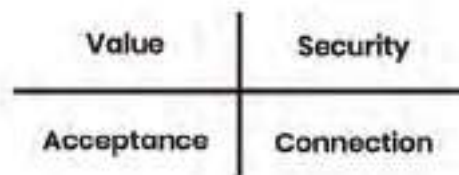
NEEDS OF THE HEART

“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.



UNFORTUNATELY:

- We are all born spiritually dead – we do not know how to experience God’s love.
- We have parents or caregivers that are imperfect reflections of God’s love.
- We grow up wounded.

WE ARE BORN ON A SPIRITUAL BATTLEFIELD:

- God’s enemy wants to destroy what God loves – PEOPLE.
- Specific wounds can target each emotional need.
 - **Abuse** (physical, emotional, sexual or spiritual) – cannot feel **valuable**.
 - **Rejection** – cannot feel **accepted**.
 - **Neglect** – cannot feel **secure**.
 - **Abandonment** (physical or emotional) – cannot feel **complete**.

SATAN HAS A VERY 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

(Cont'd)

- Those 2 lies create 2 types of messages.
 - SHAME messages – these are usually present if we struggle with needs related to **value** or **acceptance** – (God doesn't care.)
 - FEAR messages – these 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 these emotional needs met the best way we can. Frequently, that's on our own.
- Our strategies to 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

