



## **Brain Science, Psychological Trauma, and the God Who Is with Us, Part V: The Immanuel Approach, Revisited**

(©Copyright 2008 K.D. Lehman MD, New 11/2/07, Revised 10/7/2011)

**\*\*Note: This essay is “under construction,” and will hopefully eventually turn into a book about the Immanuel approach. But the book might be several years away, and in the mean time this preliminary material will hopefully be helpful\*\***

**I. Introduction:** At this point I would like to return to the Immanuel Approach to emotional healing, and discuss this topic in more detail.

Before talking about anything else, I think it would be good to refresh our memories regarding our current definition of the Immanuel approach:

Contributing components:

- Deliberate appreciation, in the context of remembering previous positive experiences with the Lord, to prepare for an interactive connection with Jesus
- Refreshed perception of the Lord’s living presence, and establishment of an interactive connection with the Lord, *in the present*, as the starting foundation
- Engage directly with Jesus at every point in the session
- Immanuel approach troubleshooting (1. Ongoing coaching to engage directly with Jesus for connection, guidance, and assistance at every point in the session; 2. Immanuel Interventions at any point the person loses adequate interactive connection with the Lord)
- Formulate and tell the Immanuel story
- Describe whatever comes into your awareness (your brain works better in community)
- *Facilitator* establish interactive connection, and constantly ask for the Lord’s guidance
- Faith (in the Lord’s presence, in the Lord’s goodness, in the Lord’s guidance, and in the effectiveness of the Immanuel approach/Immanuel interventions)
- Understanding regarding capacity, understanding regarding attunement and relational connection circuits, and understanding regarding processing tasks at each of the brain levels
- Our modified version of Theophostic® theory, tools, and techniques

If you take all of these components, organize them around the presence of Jesus as the central focus, and clearly identify connecting more intimately with Jesus as the primary objective (with resolution of trauma as a secondary objective), you have the Immanuel Approach to emotional healing. Hopefully, several of these contributing components<sup>1</sup> will now make more sense than when I first presented this definition in Part I. In case you’re wondering, I will, eventually,

---

<sup>1</sup> For those of you who like to confirm your memories by checking the answers at the back of the book, the components that have already been discussed include: understanding regarding capacity, understanding regarding attunement and relational connection circuits; and understanding regarding processing tasks at each of the brain levels.

provide a description of the process; but before describing how they fit together in an actual Immanuel approach session, I want to say more about the contributing components that have not yet been discussed.

I think it would also be good to refresh our memories regarding interactive connection. I am experiencing an *interactive* connection with the Lord when I perceive His presence in some way and it *feels* true that we are having a living, real time, mutual, contingent<sup>2</sup> *interaction*. When I am experiencing an interactive connection, it feels true that the Lord sees, hears, and understands the emotions and thoughts I am experiencing and communicating, and it also *feels* true that he is offering contingent responses to my emotions and thoughts. And an *adequate* interactive connection is an interactive connection that is clear enough, strong enough, and functional enough to enable the person to accomplish the task immediately in front of her. An adequate interactive connection is an interactive connection in which the person perceives the Lord clearly enough, allows Him to come close enough, feels a strong enough emotional connection, achieves enough synchronization, and is able to receive enough *to enable to her to take the next step forward*.<sup>3</sup>

Now I would like to embark on a detailed discussion of each of these components.

## II. Components of the Immanuel approach:

**A. Deliberate appreciation, in the context of remembering previous positive experiences with the Lord, to prepare for an interactive connection with Jesus:** The first step in the Immanuel approach is to recall a previous experience of positive connection with the Lord, and then to deliberately stir up appreciation in this context. This simple intervention of remembering past positive connections with the Lord, and feeling appreciation in this context, prepares our brains, minds, and spirits to establish an interactive connection with the living presence of Jesus in the present.

**1. Evidence supporting appreciation as connection intervention:** Many will be happy to simply take my word for it on this point, and skip ahead to the practical “how to” section (see “practical considerations,” page \*\*, below). However, others will appreciate the evidence collected here in support of our claims about the value of appreciation.<sup>4</sup> Also, for those who like to start with “hands on” experience, and therefore initially skip ahead to the “how to” section, I encourage you to eventually come back and look at the explanation sections. As

---

<sup>2</sup> *Contingent* interaction means that our responses are directly related to (*contingent* upon) what the other is experiencing and communicating. For example, if I meet my godson in the park and he comes running to me with a big smile, a contingent interaction would be to greet him with “Hey! It’s good to see you! It looks like you’re having a good day.” And if I’m walking through the park and I see him standing by himself and crying, a contingent interaction would be to kneel down beside him and quietly ask, “What’s he matter? Tell me what happened.” In contrast, if I see him alone and crying, a *non-contingent* interaction would be to ignore his distress and greet him with “Hey! It’s good to see you! Isn’t this a beautiful day?”

<sup>3</sup> For discussion of ideal interactive connections, see the section below on Immanuel interventions.

<sup>4</sup> For example, Christian mental health professionals often find that secular colleagues doubt the credibility of any interventions that explicitly incorporate spirituality. When talking about something like the Immanuel approach, it is helpful to have supporting evidence from mainstream neurological and psychological research.

described below (\*\*reference to appropriate location\*\*), systematic research of optimal teaching methods shows that most people experience dramatically increased learning when they *combine experience and cognitive explanation*.

**a) John Gottman, observable behavior, and “bottom line” sociological outcome:** Some of the most original, intriguing research regarding marriage relationships has been carried out by John M. Gottman, Ph.D.. He set up an apartment wired with video cameras and microphones, recorded randomly selected couples spending weekends together,<sup>5</sup> and then followed these couples for years into the future, monitoring “bottom line” sociological outcome, such as whether a given couple reported being happily married ten years later or whether they were divorced. Dr. Gottman then subjected this large pile of carefully gathered information to rigorous statistical analysis, and thereby *identified which observable behaviors corresponded to which bottom line sociological outcomes*. For example, did the couples who spent time watching Walt Disney movies together have a better chance of staying happily married? Were the couples who never washed the dishes more likely to end up in divorce court?

Since 1986 Dr. Gottman has filmed thousands of couples, he has recorded tens of thousands of hours of observable behavior, he has followed some of these couples for as many as 14 years, and he has taken the resulting mountain of data and run it through a vast array of high powered statistical analyses. One of the clearest conclusions from all of this research is that appreciation is good for relationships – the *observable behavior* of deliberately focusing on things you appreciate about your spouse leads to the “bottom line” *observable positive sociological outcome* of staying married, *and being happy with your marriage*. Couples that were already doing this did very well, and deliberately learning to do this proved to be a powerful positive force in salvaging even deeply troubled marriages.<sup>6</sup>

**b) Neurobiology:** One study has directly demonstrated that, at least in some people, appreciation releases oxytocin;<sup>7</sup> and a variety of other studies provide a growing pile of indirect evidence indicating that positive social interactions (such as appreciation) stimulate the release of oxytocin.<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, an extensive body of research demonstrates that

---

<sup>5</sup> Of course the couples were aware of being filmed and were willing to be a part of the study. Also, to preserve a certain necessary level of privacy, the couples were monitored only from 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m., and never in the bathroom.

<sup>6</sup> For additional discussion of Dr. Gottman’s research, see Gottman, John M. & Silver, Nan, *The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work*. (New York, NY: Three Rivers Press) 1999; and Gottman, John M., & Notarius, Clifford I., “Decade review: Observing marital interaction.” *Journal of Marriage & the Family*. November 2000, Vol. 62, No. 3, pages 927-947. The Gottman Institute website, [www.Gottman.com](http://www.Gottman.com), also provides a vast array of additional information regarding Dr. Gottman and his research work with marriages and relationships.

<sup>7</sup> Turner, Rebecca A.; Altemus, Mararet; Enos, Teresa; Cooper, Bruce; McGuinness, Teresa, “Preliminary research on plasma oxytocin levels in healthy, normal cycling women: Investigating emotional states and interpersonal distress.” *Psychiatry*, summer 1999, Vol. 62, No. 2, pages 97-113.

<sup>8</sup> For a summary discussion of this point, see Uvnas-Moberg, Kerstin, “Oxytocin may mediate the benefits of positive social interaction and emotions.” *Psychoneuroendocrinology*, 1998, Vol. 23, No. 8, pages 819-835.

oxytocin prepares your brain for emotional bonding and positive relational connection.<sup>9</sup>

**c) Cognitive therapy:** Both empirical research with cognitive therapy and cognitive therapy case studies demonstrate that our thoughts powerfully and predictably influence our emotions.<sup>10</sup> For example, deliberately focusing our attention on things we appreciate will consistently generate the corresponding positive emotion of gratitude. Furthermore, cognitive therapy research and case studies demonstrate that learning to think more positively with respect to another person, and the corresponding increased positive emotions towards the person, produce observable benefits for the relationship.<sup>11</sup>

**d) Our own clinical observations and personal experience:** As of July 2011, Charlotte and I have included deliberate appreciation in this way in hundreds of emotional healing sessions, we have applied deliberate appreciation in a number of other clinical and pastoral settings, and we have also spent hundreds of hours employing deliberate appreciation in our own lives. Our observations are that deliberate appreciation, even though it is so simple, consistently increases a person's ability to engage in positive relational connection.<sup>12</sup>

Each of these independent bodies of information are consistent with the conclusion that appreciation prepares your brain–mind–spirit system for positive relational connection. Dr. Gottman very deliberately uses this to help marriage partners increase their positive emotional bonding, and Dr. Wilder had the inspiration that this same information could be deliberately applied to our relationships with the Lord. The beginning of each Immanuel approach session therefore includes deliberate appreciation in order to prepare the person's brain-mind-spirit system for establishing a living, interactive connection with Jesus.

## 2. Deliberate appreciation is very biblical:<sup>13</sup> Deliberate appreciation is not just good brain

---

<sup>9</sup> See, for example: Insel, Thomas R., Winslow, James T., Wang, Zouxin, Young, Larry J., "Oxytocin, vasopressin, and the neuroendocrine basis of pair bond formation," *Advances in Experimental Medicine and Biology*, 1998, Vol. 449, pages 215-24; Keverne, E.B., Kendrick, K.M., "Oxytocin facilitation of maternal behavior in sheep." *Annals of the New York Academy of Science*. 1997, Vol. 652, pages 83-101; and Carter, C. Sue, "Biological Perspectives on Social Attachment and Bonding," Chap. 5 (pages 85-100) in C.S. Carter, L. Ahnert, K.E. Grossmann, S.B. Hrdy, M.E. Lamb, S.W. Porges, and N. Sachser (Eds) *Attachment and Bonding*, (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press), 2005.

<sup>10</sup> For recent, careful summaries of the extensive research evidence supporting these foundational principles of cognitive therapy, see David A. Clark and Aaron T. Beck, *Cognitive Therapy of Anxiety Disorders: Science and Practice* (New York: The Guilford Press, 2010), especially chapters 3 & 4; and Aaron T. Beck, and Brad A. Alford, *Depression: Causes and Treatment, Second Edition*. (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), especially chapter 16.

<sup>11</sup> For a recent, thorough discussion of the use of cognitive therapy for relationship difficulties, including discussion of research and case study evidence supporting the validity of these basic principles of cognitive therapy in the context of relationships, see Frank M. Dattilio, *Cognitive-behavioral Therapy with Couples and Families: A Comprehensive Guide for Clinicians* (New York: The Guilford Press, 2010).

<sup>12</sup> Many of our colleagues, such as Jim and Kitty Wilder, Chris and Jen Coursey, and Ed and Maritza Khouri, are also noticing these same things in their personal lives and in their work with others.

<sup>13</sup> As a side note, I perceive that this information regarding appreciation has two implications with respect to worship: 1) intentional, deliberate appreciation exercises can prepare our brain–mind–spirit

science and good clinical practice, it is also very biblical. The Old Testament contains many passages encouraging us to deliberately remember, and be grateful for, what the Lord has done for us. For example, “When you have eaten and are satisfied, praise the Lord your God for the good land he has given you.” (Deut 8:10) The Psalms are especially full of exhortations to deliberately remember and appreciate the Lord’s goodness. For example, “Give thanks to the Lord, call on his name; make known among the nations what he has done. Sing to him, sing praise to him; tell of all his wonderful acts....Remember the wonders he has done, his miracles, and the judgments he pronounced.” (Ps 105:1-5) And many of the Psalms *model* deliberately remembering and appreciating the Lord’s goodness. For example, I will praise you, O Lord, with all my heart; I will tell of all your wonders. I will be glad and rejoice in you; I will sing praise to your name, O Most High....(*ten more verses of specific appreciations*). (Ps 9:1–18) The apostle Paul repeatedly encourages us to be grateful and to thank the Lord for his goodness. For example, “...be filled with the Spirit. Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Eph 5:18–20) And Jesus models appreciation and gratitude, as he thanks the Father for many things. For example, “Then Jesus looked up and said, ‘Father, I thank you that you have heard me...’” (Jn 11:41)

For MANY more specific versus illustrating each of these points, see chapter 19 in *Outsmarting Yourself*.<sup>14</sup>

**3. Specific memories are the ideal context for deliberate appreciation:** Both our observation of others and our own, personal experiences with the Immanuel approach reveal that memories for specific past positive experiences are the ideal context for deliberate appreciation, and this also makes sense neurologically.

**a) Greater emotional impact: \*\*Note: for Immanuel approach book, synchronize with OY, which may have later versions with additional edits for some pieces of this section\*\*** Part of the reason that specific memories are an especially good context for doing the initial appreciation exercise is that the size/intensity of the positive effect will usually be much larger if we engage in deliberate appreciation in the context of actual memories and relationships, as opposed to doing the appreciation exercise with abstract, theoretical information. For example, when I present this material as a seminar, I demonstrate this difference by doing two different versions of deliberate appreciation for security officers. When I appreciate security officers in the context of abstract, theoretical information, I take thirty to forty seconds to make the following statements:

- I appreciate that security officers take on the awkward (and sometimes very tense) task of searching patients as they come into the emergency room.
- I appreciate that they work all hours of the day and night;
- I appreciate that emergency room security officers intervene when patients become dangerous, risking their personal safety to protect others.

---

systems for positive relational connection with the Lord in the context of worship; and 2) to the extent that worship includes appreciation, it prepares our brain–mind–spirit systems for positive relational connection with the Lord.

<sup>14</sup> Karl Lehman, *Outsmarting Yourself: Catching Your Past Invading the Present and What to Do about It* (Libertyville, IL: This Joy! Books, 2011), pages 194-7.



- I appreciate that their job can be very messy and unpleasant, sometimes requiring exposure to blood, saliva, vomit, urine, and feces.

I truly believe each of these statements, but when I simply summarize them as abstract, theoretical concepts I feel only a very slight sense of subjective gratitude.<sup>15</sup>

In contrast, when I appreciate security officers in the context of specific memories, I start by telling stories about my experiences with security officers during my psychiatric training. When I was working as a psychiatric resident I served in two different emergency rooms. At the VA (Veteran's Administration) hospital, the special security room for evaluating potentially dangerous patients had been converted into a part time office, so that we had to work with aggressive, agitated, belligerent, mentally ill, and often intoxicated combat veterans in a room fully equipped with potential weapons, such as light weight steel chairs and heavy metal lamps. But even more important than the inadequate physical facilities were the inadequate security personnel.

The security personnel were mostly older men, who were overweight, out of shape, and inadequately trained. The security officers were also all veterans themselves, and therefore had understandable loyalty and sympathy towards the veteran patients. Unfortunately, their loyalty and sympathy towards other veterans was sometimes stronger than their concern for the safety of the psychiatric residents. For example, the official policy was that all psychiatric patients must be searched before being evaluated, but the security officers felt that it would be offensive to insist, and they therefore skipped the search if the patient was unhappy with the idea. The officers also wanted to avoid confronting their veteran colleagues in any way that might escalate to the point of needing to use physical restraints, so they would sometimes back down instead of stepping forward when patients would cross physical safety boundaries.

Furthermore, there were usually only two security officers on duty for the whole, huge, seven story hospital, so there were often no officers in the emergency room. At these times we would have to send out a page for security staff if we felt a patient might be dangerous, and sometimes there would be long delays before anyone would arrive. The intense work flow pressure would usually push towards just going ahead without them. And there were also times when they would make an independent assessment that their presence was no longer needed, and then walk away in the middle of an evaluation without asking for my input.

Together, all of these factors lead to some pretty scary situations. For example, there was the summer afternoon during my first year when I was sent in to see an extremely intoxicated Viet Nam veteran with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). The security staff were not present, but I was busy and tired, and decided to go ahead and get started instead of taking the time to page them and wait for them to get to the ER. I have often thought about and prayed for this veteran, and I understand why he had PTSD. He had been deployed in an area where the Viet Cong would get children to wear hand grenades under their clothing, and then walk up to groups of soldiers as suicide bombers. After a number of

---

<sup>15</sup> This first part of the demonstration has occasionally generated more intense gratitude, but when I observed myself carefully I noticed that this only happens when the "abstract, theoretical" statements start prompting brief flashes of specific memory examples.

these disastrous encounters, my patient's commanding officer had ordered him to go into a village they were approaching and shoot all the children. Needless to say, these memories haunted him terribly.

Nevertheless, it was still frightening to work with an agitated, aggressive, belligerent, thoroughly intoxicated soldier who was transferring all of his anger about these experiences onto me. After I had entered the room and shut the door, he came to within six inches of my face and proceeded to yell at me (with lots of swearing) for several minutes. Nobody even knocked on the door to check whether I was okay. At the time he was actually yelling at me I was mostly in shock, but afterwards I realized that I would have been in serious trouble if he had decided to physically attack me. If the patient had really wanted to hurt me, he could easily have busted my lip (or beaten me to death with one of the heavy metal lamps) before effective intervention had come to my aid. Even if the security officers had been in the room their intervention would probably have been very conservative, such as asking him to sit down – if he had actually wanted to hurt me, their reluctance to precipitate confrontation would have resulted in intervention that was too tentative and too slow.<sup>16</sup>

On another occasion, an extremely angry and agitated veteran came into the emergency room asking for psychiatric care. He was 6'4" tall and extremely muscular, probably weighing 270 pounds, and as he told the lady at the front desk that he needed to see a psychiatrist he also mentioned that he would kill any police officers that he ran into. He was wearing combat fatigues, with large cargo pockets bulging with unknown contents, and he was carrying a large back pack, also bulging with unknown contents. Two security staff were in the emergency room, but they decided that it would be a bad idea to ask him to submit to being searched. They also decided that it might upset him if he mistook them for police officers, so they went into another office where they would not be visible. I was sent into the non-security room, alone, to do the psychiatric evaluation.

As I entered the room I knew that he had not been searched, and realized that he could be carrying any number of weapons in his bulging pockets and back pack. But then I also realized that he could easily attack me with the steel chair he was sitting on or the lamp on my desk, and if this weren't enough, I realized that a 270 pound extremely muscular combat veteran trained to kill enemy soldiers in hand to hand combat probably wouldn't need any weapons in order to inflict serious bodily damage.

It did not take long for things to get worse. After responding to my first several questions with angry outbursts, he jumped up from his chair and rushed across the room (towards me). Fortunately, instead of attacking me he decided to barge out of the office, barge out of the emergency room, and commandeer the public transportation bus that had just stopped in front of the hospital. I think he was so upset that he didn't even know what he wanted, but his threats to kill anyone who didn't cooperate resulted in frantic calls to the police. Minutes later, a fully equipped SWAT team arrived.

It took the SWAT team several hours to get him off the bus, and when they did finally get him off the bus it took six men to restrain him. Physically out of control psychiatric patients

---

<sup>16</sup> This is not just an ungenerous speculation, since one of my colleagues had his nose broken by a patient before security could stop the assault, and on another occasion a patient attacked one of my colleagues and broke several of his ribs before the security officers were able to intervene.

can usually be safely restrained by securing their wrists and ankles, but this patient was thrashing and lunging so violently that he required additional straps across his chest and forehead. Once he was in restraints it was my job to finish the admission evaluation, and as I did this he continued thrashing violently and yelling at the top of his lungs (swearing and threatening to kill me), with his eyes wild, his face purple-red, and the bulging veins across his forehead and along his neck looking as if they were about to burst. After I completed the evaluation, as I was walking away from him, he yelled after me: “When I get out of here, I’m gonna find you, I’m gonna find your family, and I’m going to kill you all – I’m gonna kill you, I’m gonna kill your mother, I’m gonna kill your wife, and I’m gonna kill your children.”

I felt physically unsafe so consistently in the VA emergency room that I just tried not to think about it, so that fear would not get in the way of my efficiency.

My experience working in the university emergency room, on the other hand, was completely different. First of all, the special security room reserved for psychiatric evaluation had *not* been converted into a part-time office, and contained nothing that could possibly be used as a weapon.<sup>17</sup> But more important than the security *room* was the security *staff*, and especially one particular security officer. His name was Andre, and he was an African American man who had briefly played professional football for the Seattle Seahawks. When wearing his thick-soled uniform shoes he was almost seven feet tall, and he probably weighed 280 pounds *before* putting on the body armor that he wore whenever he was on duty. I called him Andre the Giant, and I felt safe whenever he was on duty.

If there was a psychiatric patient to be evaluated, I never had to worry about finding the security guard. The nurses would page me to come and see the patient, and Andre would always already be there, waiting for me, when I arrived. And there was never tension regarding whether he would decide that his presence was no longer necessary, and therefore walk away in the middle of the evaluation. In fact, even when I told him that I didn’t think I needed security protection for a particular patient, he would stay in the area and keep an eye on me.

In contrast to the security officers at the VA, Andre never neglected to search patients, and he would not allow anything that could *possibly* be used as a weapon. Not pocket knives, not box openers, not nail files. He would even ask people to put their pencils and car keys in the security box.

Andre would escort the person to the security room, and then stand in the doorway as I began the evaluation. If he sensed the *slightest hint* of danger, he would come into the room and stand beside me. And if he sensed more than the slightest hint of danger, he would step forward and motion me towards the door, so that he could easily block any attempt the patient might make to attack me. In contrast to the security officers at the VA, Andre had zero tolerance for threatening, or even marginally intimidating behavior. If an angry patient even got out of the chair, Andre would quickly step into the room and give quiet but firm directions: “Sir, you need to go back to the chair and sit down. Now.” If someone made a threatening gesture, or even an angry statement directed towards me, Andre would lean into the room and ask: “Dr. Lehman, is there a problem?” And even these quiet, simple

---

<sup>17</sup> The *only* thing in the security room was a large cushioned chair that was bolted to the floor.



interventions were amazingly effective when coming from a 6'10" two hundred and eighty pound security officer wearing body armor.

Andre would never avoid necessary, appropriate physical contact. If someone was extremely intoxicated and/or psychotic, and needed physical redirection, Andre was right there. And if someone was totally out of control and/or assaultive, so that physical restraint was necessary to keep everyone safe, Andre was right there. This was dangerous, and could also be very messy and unpleasant (extremely intoxicated accident victims could come in covered in vomit, saliva, urine, feces, and blood ), but Andre never showed even the least sign of hesitation when physical contact was needed in order to keep everybody safe.

In addition to all of this, Andre knew more about physical safety in the emergency room than I did, and took measures to ensure my safety that I hadn't even thought of. For example, he would gently but firmly remind patients to remain seated, and to lean slightly back in the chair – a position that made it extremely difficult for the person to come at me suddenly. He would remind me regarding the safest way to position myself in the room, so that I could exit and close the door quickly and easily. And with especially agitated patients, he would remind me that we could offer appropriate medications, and then wait for them to produce calming benefit before continuing the evaluation.

After sharing these stories, I name specific things I especially appreciate about Andrea:

- I appreciate that Andre was willing to deal with the unpleasant reactions that might be caused by his insisting on a careful, thorough search before allowing the person into the assessment area;
- I appreciate that Andre never avoided necessary physical contact, even though it was dangerous, and sometimes also very messy and unpleasant;
- I appreciate that he was always present;
- I appreciate that he was well trained regarding the many details that would contribute to my safety, and that he consistently took the initiative in making sure that these were in place;
- I appreciate that he went out of his way, at the cost of personal risk, in order to make it *easy* for me to be safe;
- I appreciate that he was HUGE, and that he was willing to wear heavy, uncomfortable body armor in order to be able to provide a physical presence that could actually handle dangerous, out of control patients;
- and I appreciate that *I actually felt safe* whenever Andre was on duty.

When I think about the abstract, theoretical reasons to appreciate security officers, I feel a mild, vague sense of appreciation; but when I think about Andrea the Giant, and how much it meant to me to be able to work without having to risk serious physical injury, *I feel* appreciation at a whole different level.<sup>18</sup>

Doing deliberate appreciation regarding the Lord provides another example. If I appreciate

---

<sup>18</sup> Note that the contrast between these two ways of doing the appreciation exercise is much more dramatic when I present this example live. Observable emotions come forward spontaneously when I do the exercise in the context of specific memories about Andrea the Giant, but the reader cannot perceive this, since the written text does not include my facial expressions, voice tones, and other non-verbal communication.

the Lord in the context of abstract, theoretical information, such as the attributes of God found in scripture, I take thirty to forty seconds to make the following statements:

Lord, I appreciate that You are perfect.  
 I appreciate that You are omnipresent.  
 I appreciate that You are powerful.  
 I appreciate that You are just.  
 I appreciate that You are merciful.  
 I appreciate that You are righteous.  
 I appreciate that you are perfect.  
 I appreciate that You heal.  
 I appreciate that You forgive.

I believe each of these statements, and I appreciate these truths about the Lord, but when I simply summarize them as abstract, theoretical concepts I feel only a very slight sense of subjective gratitude.

In contrast, if I appreciate the Lord in the context of specific memories, I start with taking several minutes to think about, reconnect with, and re-enter specific memories of previous positive connections with the Lord. For example, I think about my experience of interacting with the Lord regarding my friend Thomas and his heroic faithfulness.<sup>19</sup> I picture myself carrying my exercise weights and walking towards the lake on Kedzie boulevard; I recreate the mental image of the Lord walking beside me as a friend, smiling and appearing to enjoy the weather; I repeat the comment, “Lord, I’m so glad that Thomas is with You now;” I recreate the mental image of the Lord suddenly turning to me, with His big smile; I remember the sense that He heard me, that He understood me, and that He responded contingently to what I was thinking and feeling; and I remember the poignant specifics of His response, “So am I! He has fought the good fight, and has finished the race. He is here with Me now – his suffering has ended, and he is being rewarded for his heroic faithfulness.”

And then, after I have reconnected with the thoughts and emotions and re-entered the memory, I talk to the Lord about specifics that I especially appreciate:

“Lord, somehow many subtle things about the way You were walking beside me – Your smile, Your attitude, the way You stroll, Your overall attitude – tell me that you were *enjoying* yourself – that You *like* being with me – that You think of me as a *friend*. This means so much to me.”

“Lord, I feel like I can’t even get words to fully express the vibrancy and vitality of Your presence and smile. I appreciate how I knew that I was perceiving Your living presence by the way Your responses surprised me and felt so *alive* – so different from the internal perceptions that I initiate in my own mind.”

“Lord, You know that I sometimes struggle with the fear that there will never be true justice – that people like Thomas will never be adequately compensated. I feel such deep

---

<sup>19</sup> This story about Thomas is presented in the section on Immanuel interventions in Part I of the “Brain Science, Psychological Trauma, and the God Who Is with Us” essay series.

reassurance from Your striking, immediate, vivid, energized, detailed, emphatic response to my thought regarding Thomas. I appreciate that You recognize how hard his life has been, that You're aware of how faithfully he followed You through the difficulties he lived with every day, and that You honor his quiet heroism. I appreciate that the magnitude of his struggle, of his obedience, and of his courage have not been lost on You; and that, even as we speak, he is in Your presence, receiving His reward."

When I think about the abstract, theoretical reasons to appreciate the Lord, I feel a mild, vague sense of appreciation. In contrast, when I think about my experience of interacting with Jesus regarding Thomas, reconnect with the thoughts and emotions, re-enter the memory, and when I talk to the Lord about specific aspects of the experience I especially appreciated, I *feel* gratitude at a whole different level.<sup>20</sup>

**b) Neurological explanation:** At least part of this difference between engaging in deliberate appreciation as an exercise in abstract concepts and deliberately stirring up appreciation in the context of specific memories has to do with the differences between the right and left hemispheres. The right hemisphere is the primary location for *experiential* knowing anchored in specific autobiographical memories, so that doing the appreciation exercise in the context of specific autobiographical memories will also cause the right-hemisphere to be much more involved. The right hemisphere is also the primary location for emotional processing, so that processing through the right hemisphere will generally produce a larger effect size with respect to emotions. Therefore, doing the appreciation exercise in the context of *specific autobiographical* memories of previous positive experiences will cause the material to be processed through the right hemisphere, and will thereby pull in the larger emotional effect size associated with right hemisphere involvement. Furthermore, the right hemisphere is the primary location for the processing of social, relational interactions, so that doing the appreciation exercise in the context of social, relational memories will produce additional increase in right-hemisphere involvement. Thinking about non-relational positive experiences, such as snorkeling in Australia or eating chocolate silk pie, will still help prepare your brain-mind-spirit for positive relational connection,<sup>21</sup> but engaging in deliberate appreciation in the context of social, relational memories, such as past experiences of connecting with the Lord, is especially powerful.<sup>22</sup>

---

<sup>20</sup> Again, the contrast between these two ways of doing the deliberate appreciation exercise is much more noticeable when I present this material live, where my facial expressions, voice tones, and other forms of non-verbal communication help to convey the dramatic difference in emotional intensity.

<sup>21</sup> See chapter 19, in our new book, *Outsmarting Yourself: Catching Your Past Invading the Present, and What to Do about It*, for discussion of how any form of appreciation prepares you for positive relational connection by bringing your relational circuits online (or increasing their activity if they are already online).

<sup>22</sup> Caveat: intensity of the original experience also needs to be considered. For example, my perceptions of the Lord's presence are usually very faint, so even though it was very profound, my interaction with the Lord regarding Thomas was a low intensity experience with respect to sensory perception. In contrast, snorkeling in Australia was an intensely vivid experience. Therefore, I can sometimes stir up appreciation more intensely by reentering my Australia snorkeling memories than by reconnecting with my memory of talking to the Lord about Thomas. The ideal, of course, is to work with memories for vivid, intense positive experiences with the Lord.

**c) More John Gottman, observable behavior, and “bottom line” sociological outcome:** In Gottman’s research, thinking and talking about past positive experiences of being together with your spouse was another strong predictor of positive sociological outcome, and also a deliberate intervention that could be used to improve marriages in distress. Just as with appreciation and marriage, these principles that apply to your relationship with your spouse also apply to your relationship with the Lord: thinking and talking about past positive experiences of being together with the Lord will benefit your relationship with the Lord.

**d) Reconnecting with a positive memory reactivates original appreciation:** With respect to the internal states of our brains, minds, and spirits, reconnecting with the memory of an earlier experience will recreate, to some extent, the conditions present in the original experience. For example, when I reenter the memory for a painful experience where I felt sadness, such as when my pet squirrel died from thirst because the water dispenser broke while we were away on vacation, to some degree I re-experience the sadness associated with the original events. Similarly, when I reenter the memory for a positive experience where I felt appreciation, such as when the Lord spoke to me about Thomas, to some degree I re-experience the appreciation associated with the original events.

**4. Putting it All Together:** So, combining these pieces regarding appreciation and specific memories, the practical application with respect to the Immanuel approach is that the person starts each session with returning to a memory of a previous positive experience with the Lord; and then, in the context of this memory, she engages in deliberate appreciation. Stirring up appreciation in the context of a specific positive memory prepares her brain, mind, and spirit for the next step of establishing a living, interactive connection with Jesus in the present.

## 5. Practical Considerations:

**a) Finding/choosing the memory:** With respect to “recalling a memory of a previous interactive connection,” an obvious question is “How do I find/choose the memory?” One approach is to ask the Lord to bring forward the memory he wants you to work with, and then wait for a minute or two, paying careful attention to whatever comes into your awareness. Another approach is to make a list of the times you have had interactive connections with the Lord that have been especially clear and meaningful, and then experiment with using each of these memories for the purpose of the “deliberate appreciation in the context of remembering previous positive experiences with the Lord” step of the Immanuel approach process. After a bit of experimentation and practice you should find one or two memories that are consistently effective, and once this has been established you can quickly go to one of these memories whenever you need to stir up appreciation at the beginning of an Immanuel approach session.

**b) Deliberate appreciation should also include *reentering* the memory:** You may already be assuming this after reading the “reconnecting with a positive memory reactivates original appreciation” section, above; but just in case it’s not already clear, recalling a previous positive experience should include reentering the memory for the experience. Thinking about the memory, deliberately naming and focusing on specific things you appreciate about the positive experience, and especially focusing on gratitude for the Lord’s presence and care are all good, but sometimes we can do all of this from an external, left

hemisphere, analytical perspective. This left-hemisphere analysis is still good, and it does contribute to appreciation, but it often lacks emotional power. It is therefore important to deliberately reconnect with/reenter the memory as a complimentary component that augments the emotional power of left-hemisphere analytical appreciation. As mentioned above, reentering the memory of a previous positive experience will automatically reconnect you with the gratitude you felt at the time of the original events.

Many people spontaneously include reentering the memory when they recall a previous positive experience, and these folks probably think this point is silly and unnecessary. However, this point is not so obvious to everybody. When I first began experimenting with deliberate appreciation as part of the Immanuel approach, I focused almost exclusively on the left hemisphere, analytical, external component. I had to *learn* to deliberately include reconnecting with/reentering the memories when I recalled experiences of previous positive connection with the Lord.<sup>23</sup>

**c) You can streamline things for people who are familiar with the process:** With people who are new to the Immanuel approach, I lead them through this process carefully and slowly – we identify a memory of a previous positive experience with the Lord, I ask the person to describe this experience (in detail), I coach the person to describe specific things she especially appreciates about the Lord in the memory experience, and then I coach her to reenter/reconnect with the memory so that she can feel the appreciation associated with the original experience from inside the memory. In contrast, people who are familiar with the process usually go through an abbreviated version (identifying a past positive experience, thinking about/reentering the memory for the positive experience, and deliberately appreciating the Lord in the context of the positive memory), without the need for coaching from me. In fact, this often happens smoothly and quietly during the opening prayer.<sup>24</sup>

**d) Deliberate appreciation becomes easier and more effective with practice:** Deliberate appreciation is a skill that we can learn. As Charlotte and I have persisted in practicing with deliberate appreciation, we have found that the whole process flows more easily, subjective feelings of gratitude come more quickly, and the end result is usually more robust.

**e) Other practical stuff?**

**B. Refreshed perception of the Lord's presence, and establishment of a living, interactive connection with the Lord *in the present* as the starting foundation:** After stirring up appreciation in the context of recalling a previous positive experience, continue to deliberately reconnect with/reenter the memory (several more minutes), and then transition to a living, real time, interactive connection in the present.

**1. Re-enter memory:** Spend several minutes thinking about the memory and recalling the original experience as vividly as possible. The goal is to *re-enter* the memory – to recreate, as much as possible, the brain-mind-spirit state of being *inside* the original interactive

---

<sup>23</sup> Another point that may seem obvious to some, but be helpful to others: when I reenter memories as part of deliberate appreciation, I go in with the clear objective of stirring up gratitude. I find that this helps me avoid wandering and/or getting distracted as I reconnect with the memory.

<sup>24</sup> Several of the sessions portrayed in our live ministry DVDs illustrate this point well. See, for example, *Maggie #3: Labor & Delivery Trauma*, and *Rita #3: Jesus is Better than Candy*.



connection with the Lord. For example, I usually use the memory described above, in which I perceived the Lord walking beside me and talking to me about my friend, Thomas. When I re-enter this memory I try to recreate the whole situation in my mind – I picture myself (first person, from the *inside* of the experience) carrying my exercise weights and walking towards the lake on Kedzie Boulevard; I recreate the same mental image of the Lord walking beside me as a friend, smiling and appearing to enjoy the weather; I repeat the comment, “Lord, I’m so glad that Thomas is with you now;” I recreate the mental image of the Lord suddenly turning to me, with his big smile; I remember the sense that he heard me, that he understood me, and that he responded contingently to what I was thinking and feeling; and I remember his specific response, “So am I! He has fought the good fight, and has finished the race. He is here with me now – his suffering has ended, and he is being rewarded for his heroic faithfulness.”

The reason we re-enter the memory of a previous interactive connection is that this seems to provide an especially good context for establishing an interactive connection in the present. And this makes sense neurologically, psychologically, and spiritually. The brain, mind, spirit conditions in the original experience were obviously “just right” for establishing an interactive connection (since it happened), and re-entering the memory recreates, to a large extent, these “just right” brain, mind, spirit conditions.

**2. Transition to living, real time, interactive connection in the present:** From what Dr. Wilder and I have observed, it seems to be a very small step from being inside the *memory* of a previous interactive connection to establishing an interactive connection *in the present*. In fact, our observation is that when people re-enter memories of previous interactive connections, with the desire and intention of establishing an interactive connection in the present, they are always able to make the transition from their memories to living, real time, interactive connections in the present unless there is a specific problem blocking the process.<sup>25</sup> Furthermore, this transition seems to take place spontaneously, without us having to do anything other than ask the Lord for help and shift the focus of our attention to our relationship with the Lord in the present.

For example, when I want to establish an interactive connection with the Lord, I think about, appreciate, and re-enter the Thomas memory, as described earlier. When I get to the place where I’m inside the memory and have reconnected with the original experience, I ask the Lord to refresh my perception of His presence and establish an interactive connection; and then I stay with the mental images from the memory but change the focus of my attention to my relationship with the Lord in the present, specifically checking to see what feels true with respect to the Lord *in the present*. That is, I stay inside the mental imagery of walking towards the lake with the Lord walking beside me, but I ask “Does his presence in this imagery feel like it’s only a memory, or does it feel like he’s with me in the present, as a

---

<sup>25</sup> For example, I have worked with people who have dissociated internal parts that understand how this works, and realize that establishing an interactive connection often leads to working with painful memories. These parts therefore often allow the initial steps of recalling and re-entering the memory of previous interactive connection, but then shut things down when it comes to the step of transitioning to a living, interactive connection in the present. Another example is people who have such intense triggered fear about not being able to connect with the Lord that this derails the process at the point they would otherwise be transitioning to an interactive connection in the present.

living presence?” And when I do this I almost always<sup>26</sup> discover that it feels true that the Lord is with me in the present, and that he has re-established an interactive connection.<sup>27</sup>

Some have asked for more explanation regarding how this works. The first comment I want to make along these lines is that this memory-based technique for establishing a living, real-time, in-the-present interactive connection with the Lord is *not* simply a combination of autobiographical memory and guided imagination. Thinking about interactions with one of your friends can be helpful in making this point. I think we can all see that actually talking to your friend is not the same as remembering a previous conversation, nor is it the same as thinking up an imaginary conversation. When you remember a past conversation you are simply replaying memory for known events that have already happened – the characters in your memory don’t start coming up with new and unexpected responses. And when you think up an imaginary conversation, *you* are generating both sides of the interaction and you aren’t surprised by anything your imaginary friend says or does. In contrast, when you are actually having a living, interactive connection with your friend in the present, *she* will come up with spontaneous, original, contingent responses that *you* don’t anticipate and that are not under *your* control. Furthermore, no combination of re-entering memories for past conversations and thinking up imaginary new conversations will cause your friend to suddenly appear in front of you and establish an interactive connection in the present.

I have also come up with a second friendship analogy to help present what I think *is* happening with this memory-based technique for establishing interactive connection with the Lord. Let’s say a close friend is waiting in your living room, wanting to connect with you. Let’s also say that you are in an emotional space where you would be happy to connect with your friend, but you enter the room blindfolded so that you are not initially aware of her presence. Finally, let’s say that you spend several minutes thinking about and re-entering a memory for a previous positive interactive connection with this person, and then you take off your blindfold to discover that your friend is sitting in front of you. I think we can all see that unless some specific problem gets in the way, you will flow naturally into an interactive connection with your friend in the present.

Now let’s apply this analogy to the Lord. In our Immanuel emotional healing sessions people regularly meet the Lord as a living presence, and establish contingent, interactive connections with Him, in the context of being “inside” of memories for past experiences. I also believe that the Lord can wait for you in your memories just as the friend in my hypothetical analogy can wait for you in your living room. Furthermore, we can assume that the Lord wants to connect with you as he waits for you in your memories, since he always wants to connect

---

<sup>26</sup> Occasionally there is some sort of blockage, such as triggered anxiety about not being able to perceive the Lord’s presence, that hinders the transition.

<sup>27</sup> In most cases (such as my own sessions), the person perceives the Lord’s living presence and establishes an interactive connection in the context of imagery from the initial memory. That is, they perceive that the Lord’s presence in the imagery from the initial memory comes alive, and that (still in the context of this same imagery), His presence begins to engage with them interactively. However, some people will perceive the Lord’s living, interactive presence in the room where they are receiving ministry; some people will perceive the Lord’s living, interactive presence in the context of a different memory that comes forward spontaneously; some people will perceive the Lord’s living, interactive presence in the context of imagery that does not seem to be coming from any specific memories, and some will experience two or more of these simultaneously.

with you. So, the Lord wants to connect with you and is waiting for you in your memories for past experiences of interactive connection, and you go into one of these memories wanting to connect with him. After spending a minute or two thinking about and re-entering the memory, you stay with the content from the memory but change the focus of your attention from the historical connection in the memory to the question of whether the Lord is with you in the present. Changing the focus of your attention to the question of whether the Lord is with you as a living presence in the present is like taking off the blindfold. Unless there is some specific problem in the way, you will perceive the Lord's living presence and flow naturally into a living, contingent, interactive connection in the present.<sup>28</sup>

Our observation is that the combination of recalling a previous good experience with the Lord, stirring up appreciation, and deliberately reentering the memory provides an especially effective doorway/bridge for re-establishing an interactive connection with the Lord.

**3. Putting It All Together:** So, putting these pieces together, the practical application with respect to the Immanuel approach is that after the person has identified one or more memories of past positive connection with the Lord, and has successfully engaged in deliberate appreciation so that she *feels* appreciation for His presence and care in these past experiences, I coach the person to spend several minutes reentering/reconnecting with the memory/memories.<sup>29</sup> As she does this, I ask the Lord to help her perceive His presence and establish an interactive connection,<sup>30</sup> so that these are real and living in the present, and then I coach the person to describe whatever comes into her awareness. If she doesn't spontaneously report an interactive connection with the Lord, I specifically ask whether she can perceive His living presence.<sup>31</sup> The person is usually able to transition smoothly and easily from positive memory recall and appreciation to a living, interactive connection with the Lord in the present (and if this doesn't happen, we trouble-shoot regarding what's in the way).

#### 4. Practical Considerations:

---

<sup>28</sup> Note that there is still something mysterious/unexplained here, since the Lord is waiting for us in the present as well as in *all* of our memories, but most of us can *not* just perceive his presence and connect with him in the present and/or the average memory in the same way we can perceive his presence and connect with him in the context of memories for previous interactive connection. Somehow the context of memories for previous interactive connections provides an *especially* effective context/bridge for establishing an interactive connection in the present.

<sup>29</sup> Note that coaching the person to spend several minutes very deliberately reentering/reconnecting with the memory is a new piece as of fall 2010.

<sup>30</sup> In most cases, the person perceives the Lord's living presence and establishes an interactive connection in the context of the memory imagery. That is, they perceive that the Lord's presence in the memory imagery comes alive, and that (still in the context of the memory imagery), His presence begins to engage with them interactively. However, some people will perceive the Lord's living, interactive presence in the room where they are receiving ministry; some people will perceive the Lord's living, interactive presence in the context of a different memory that comes forward spontaneously; some people will perceive the Lord's living, interactive presence in the context of imagery that does not seem to be coming from any specific memories, and some will experience two or more of these simultaneously.

<sup>31</sup> This question prompts the person to focus her attention on the Lord, and on the question of whether her perception of his presence is only memory, or whether she is experiencing a living, interactive connection in the present.

**a) Detailed written account:** If you are having trouble re-entering your memories for previous interactive connections, detailed written accounts can sometimes help you connect more powerfully. For example, I am very familiar with my story of talking to the Lord about Thomas, I have reviewed the written account many times, and I am able to re-enter this memory even without looking at the written account. But I experience a *stronger* connection when I take the time to read through the detailed account. Even though I am so familiar with the story, I still consistently leave out (or skim over) emotionally important details when I think about it without the benefit of my written notes. Putting together a detailed written account, and then reading it when you're triggered, do take a bit of time and effort, but I would encourage you to try this if you're having trouble re-entering your positive memories and re-establishing an interactive connection.

**b) Connection in the present is often much more subtle than the connection in the experience you are remembering:** An important practical point with respect to the transition from memory to a living interactive connection in the present is that the connection in the present is often much more subtle than the connection in the experience you are remembering. For example, when I'm upset and use the Thomas memory as the starting point for receiving attunement, my perception of the Lord's presence when I transition to the present is usually just a faint, single frame from the memory images of the Lord's face, accompanied by a subtle knowing that he's aware of my experience, that he's listening, that he understands, that he cares, that he's empathizing with me in my pain, and that he's not upset with me for being messy.<sup>32</sup> I usually do *not* perceive the kind of dramatically spontaneous and contingent responses that were part of the interactions about Thomas, like when the Lord surprised me by suddenly turning towards me, flashing a big smile, and making comments that I had not been expecting (at least not initially). However, even though the interactive connection in the present is usually much more subtle, it still works as a foundation for the Immanuel approach.

**c) Skills and faith that help you cooperate:** As already mentioned, we don't have to do anything to *produce* the transition from memory to refreshed interactive connection in the present, but in my experience there are several things that have been helpful with respect to cooperating with the process. I have been learning to recognize what the refreshed connection in the present looks like for me, I have been learning to recognize that it is real even though it is often very subtle, and I have been growing in faith with respect to the whole process. Growing/learning with respect to these points has enabled me to spend less time and energy worrying about whether my interactive connection with the Lord is real, so that I can more easily move on to the next steps of the process.

**d) You can streamline things for people who are familiar with the process:** With people who are new to the Immanuel approach, I carefully coach them through this process; whereas people who are familiar with the process often recall a positive memory, reenter/reconnect with the memory, feel appreciation for the Lord, and then perceive the Lord's living presence and establish an interactive connection with Him without the need for coaching from me. As with the positive memory and appreciation steps, the whole

---

<sup>32</sup> I think it is valid to think about the Lord seeing us, hearing us, understanding us, caring for us, and empathizing with us in our pain *as subtle forms of contingent response*. Therefore, I am experiencing a subtle form of interactive connection with the Lord if I am talking to him about my pain (as described below), and it *feels* true that he sees, hears, and understands me, that he cares about me, and that he is empathizing with me in my pain.

initial process to the point of establishing an interactive connection often happens smoothly and quietly during the opening prayer.<sup>33</sup>

**C. Ongoing coaching to engage directly with Jesus at every point in the session:** Once the person has established a living, interactive connection with Jesus in the present, coach her to turn to Jesus, focus on Jesus, and engage with Him directly at every point in the session.<sup>34</sup>

**1. Enhances our personal, relational, heart connection with the Lord:** As discussed at length in Part I of the “Brain Science, Psychological Trauma, and the God Who Is with Us” essay series, the primary objective of the Immanuel approach is to enhance our personal, relational, heart connection with the Lord. Coaching the person to turn to Jesus, focus on Jesus, and engage with Him directly at every point in the session is the “bread and butter” Immanuel approach intervention for helping the person build her personal, friendship connection with the Lord.

**2. Keeps the session moving:** Repeatedly coaching the person to turn to Jesus, focus on Jesus, and engage with Him directly is also very practical with respect to the Immanuel approach process. Often, this simple intervention is all that is needed to keep the session moving forward with respect to emotional healing, maturity mentoring, or anything else the Lord wants to accomplish. The person might engage with Jesus for guidance in choosing an initial target, for help with finding underlying traumatic memories, for assistance with resolving unfinished processing tasks, for capacity augmentation when dealing with inadequate capacity, or for help with any other questions, needs, or challenges that come up. If the person immediately turns to Jesus and engages with Him directly, *as soon as these questions, needs, or challenges come up*, the session often just keeps moving forward without the perception of being stuck or the need for troubleshooting.

**3. Prevents potentially problematic issues from even coming up:** Furthermore, this simple intervention can prevent potentially problematic issues from even coming up. For example, constantly coaching the person to turn to Jesus, focus on Jesus, and engage directly with Jesus, so that she perceives that He is with her and receives the benefits of a living interactive connection, will dramatically increase the person’s capacity throughout the session. With the benefit of this quiet, background capacity augmentation she might go through the whole session without the issue of limited capacity ever coming up. In contrast, without this quiet, background capacity augmentation, there might have been five places where you would have needed to explicitly address the need for additional capacity.

**4. Coach the person to ask for the help/gifts the Lord has for her, coach her to ask for more of the help/gifts the Lord has for her:** For some of you this point might have been obvious from the beginning, but I had to *discover* that the Lord sometimes likes us to explicitly ask for His assistance and gifts. When I first began using the Immanuel approach, I somehow had this image, this idea, that *perceiving* and *receiving* were a one step deal, inherently merged together. I assumed that if a person could perceive the Lord’s presence, and had established an interactive connection, then the Lord would automatically and

---

<sup>33</sup> Several of the sessions portrayed in our live ministry DVDs illustrate this point well. See, for example, *Maggie #3: Labor & Delivery Trauma*, and *Rita #3: Jesus is Better than Candy*.

<sup>34</sup> In the language of Wilder and Coursey’s *Share Immanuel* booklet, this simple, foundational intervention is “helping the person stay in the interactive seat.”



immediately release everything He had for the person.

I was surprised to discover that *receiving* what the Lord has for you can be a separate process from *perceiving* his presence. There's certainly some overlap, of course. For example, perceiving the Lord's presence and establishing an interactive connection *inherently* resolves certain lies, such as "I'm all alone in this" (you can't believe you're all alone if you can perceive the Lord's presence with you); establishing an interactive connection inherently helps with respect to capacity, as with the child holding her Father's hand; and establishing an interactive connection with the Lord usually also immediately releases a variety of other blessings as well. However, I discovered that the Lord often (maybe always?) has *additional* blessings and resources that He wants us to *ask* for.

I learned this in a session where the person had been able to perceive the Lord's presence and establish a strong interactive connection early in the session, with dramatic benefit, but then became stuck again twenty minutes later:

As she became stuck at this later point in the session, I asked: "So, what happened to Jesus? Can you still perceive His presence?" expecting her to report that she'd somehow lost sight of Him in the midst of the horrible memories we were working on.

I was actually surprised when she responded with: "Oh, sure. He's right here beside me."

The first thought that came to me in response to this was: "How can she be getting stuck if she can still perceive Jesus "right there beside her?"

And then I think the Holy Spirit prompted a new thought, and I asked: "Since it *seems* like you're getting stuck again due to lack of capacity, I wonder if the Lord might have more resources for you. Why don't you focus on Jesus, and ask Him if He has more resources for you?"

She paused for a moment, and responded with: "Oh, yeah. He says He *does* have more resources for me."

Full of good ideas at this moment, I cleverly suggested: "Um..., why don't you ask Him what you need to do to receive these additional resources?"

Another pause, and then she comments: "He says I need to focus on Him, lean on Him, and ask Him for more strength."

Needless to say, this plan worked perfectly, and the healing process began to move forward again.

The humbling truth is that my initial attitude, when I first started experimenting with the Immanuel approach and Immanuel interventions, had been something along the lines of wanting Jesus to show up and deliver His goods as quickly as possible, so we could keep moving: "I mean, thank You very much for Your help and all that, but we have important work to do here. We need to get these traumatic memories resolved, and these symptoms relieved, and we only have 30 minutes left before the end of the session. So – nothing personal – but I'm afraid we really don't have time to stay and talk."

Jesus, on the other hand, seemed to want us to turn to Him and ask Him for help *on an ongoing basis*. His apparent policy of “I have more resources, but you have to ask Me for them at the point you need them” encouraged us to remember that He was there, and to be deliberate about periodically turning to Him and focusing on Him. He seemed to want to be *relational*, as opposed to just getting used as a resource, with as little interaction as possible.

**5. More examples of preventing potential problems:** A common scenario in sessions I facilitate provides additional examples of how the simple intervention of coaching the person to engage directly with Jesus can prevent potentially problematic issues from even coming up. If the person is able to establish a good interactive connection at the beginning of the session, I coach her to keep focusing on Jesus, to ask Him for guidance, to ask for any gifts/blessings the Lord has prepared for her, to spend time “just” being with Jesus, and to periodically describe what’s happening (at appropriate pause points in her interactions with Jesus). The session might then go something like the following:

Person receiving: “We’re sitting together on a bench along one of my favorite trails at the campground where we vacation each summer. (Pause) It’s nice. I feel very safe, and I know that He’s glad to be with me....”

Dr. Lehman: Good. Just keep focusing on Jesus, spending time with Him, and cooperating with whatever He’s doing. And let me know what’s happening, when it’s possible to do so without interrupting your interactions with Jesus.”

Person receiving: (Pause) “Now He’s pointing out to me little things that are especially beautiful – a yellow lady’s slipper [an especially beautiful flower], an indigo bunting [an especially beautiful bird], and a little rock with sparkly crystals in it. We’re just enjoying His creation together....”

Dr. Lehman: Good. Just keep focusing on Jesus, ask Him for guidance, cooperate with whatever He does, and let me know what happens.

Person receiving: (Pause) “Now He’s standing up, and holding out His hand to me, like He wants to go somewhere. (Pause) He says He wants to do some more healing work – He wants to work on my fear of my bosses anger. (Pause) We’re walking – I’m just following Him. (Pause) He’s leading me to the playground from when I was in first grade, and now I’m remembering....”

As the person keeps her focus on Jesus, asks for His gifts and guidance, cooperates with whatever He’s doing, and follows His lead, the “what should I do with this session?” question and the need for help with finding underlying traumatic memories never even come up.

**D. Immanuel approach troubleshooting:** Many people are quickly able to establish an adequate interactive connection, they easily maintain this connection, and they receive enhanced friendship with the Lord, transformative emotional healing, and a variety of other beautiful, live-giving results, *all with only the minimal Immanuel approach interventions already described*. However, others initially experience confusing, disappointing, or frustrating results. Through tens of thousands of hours of working with EMDR, Theophostic-based emotional healing, and now the Immanuel approach, I have become totally convinced that the Lord is *always* present, that the Lord *always* wants to bless us with life-giving gifts, that the

Lord is *always* able to accomplish this, and that the Immanuel approach will almost<sup>35</sup> always (eventually) release these gifts and blessings *if the facilitator can help the person identify and resolve blockages that are sometimes present*. This is very encouraging, and it has brought me to the place of being very persistent with respect to troubleshooting in situations where the person does not initially get good results. It has also convinced me of the importance of adequate troubleshooting.

**1. Ongoing coaching to engage directly with Jesus for connection, guidance, and assistance at every point in the session:** As mentioned above, repeatedly coaching the person to turn to Jesus, focus on Jesus, and engage directly with Jesus sometimes prevents potentially problematic issues from even coming up. As also mentioned above, when the person does encounter questions, needs, and challenges, if the person immediately turns to Jesus in these situations – as soon as the questions, needs, and challenges come up – the session often just keeps moving forward without the perception of being stuck or the need for troubleshooting. However, sometimes the person tries to figure it out/resolve it on her own, and then eventually becomes stuck and needs help with troubleshooting. In these situations, the first thing I do with respect to troubleshooting is check to see whether she can still perceive the Lord’s presence and whether she still has an interactive connection; and if these two pieces are still in place,<sup>36</sup> I simply coach her to turn to Jesus, focus on Jesus, and engage directly with Jesus regarding the difficulty in front of her.

When I first started working with the Immanuel approach, this first, most basic troubleshooting tool actually surprised and puzzled me. I had initially thought that a session would always move forward smoothly as long as the person was still able to perceive the Lord’s presence and maintaining an interactive connection. But then I had a very interesting experience in a session I was facilitating. It seemed like something wasn’t working quite right – it seemed like the process wasn’t moving forward as I sensed it should be – and I was just trying to figure out what was going on. As part of this, I innocently asked “can you still perceive the Lord’s presence?” thinking that maybe the person had lost her interactive connection, and that this was the reason things were bogging down. I was actually quite surprised when she responded with something along the lines of, “Oh, yeah, Jesus. I had forgotten all about Him. Actually, He’s still standing right here beside me. I guess I got so focused on \_\_\_\_ (fill in the blank with some intense aspect of the issue being addressed), and so overwhelmed by \_\_\_\_ (fill in the blank with some combination of negative thoughts and emotions) that I totally forgot about Jesus.”

After encountering this same phenomena in a number of sessions, I realized that people often forget about the Lord and/or lose track of the Lord, *even when He is still standing right beside them*. As they explained to me, they would get so focused on some aspect of the issue they were working on, and/or so overwhelmed by the negative thoughts and emotions they were experiencing, that they would totally forget about Jesus. The primary intervention in these scenarios is to recognize the problem, remind the person that Jesus is with her, and then

---

<sup>35</sup> On very rare occasions, a person will persistently choose to indulge in bitterness and/or self-pity and/or rebellion. This will block the Immanuel approach process, and cannot be resolved with any of the usual troubleshooting tools.

<sup>36</sup> If she is not able to perceive the Lord’s presence, and has lost her interactive connection with Him, I use Immanuel interventions, as described below, to restore her ability to perceive the Lord’s presence and reestablish an adequate interactive connection.

coach her to deliberately direct her attention back to Him. And sometimes I might also need to provide a little additional coaching to help her engage directly with Jesus regarding the problematic issue she's wrestling with.<sup>37</sup>

Occasionally the person still perceives the Lord and has an interactive connection – she hasn't even lost Him or forgotten about Him – but it just didn't occur to her to turn to him, focus on Him, and ask Him for help. In these situations, all I need to do is provide the gentlest reminders to focus on Jesus and ask Him for help.<sup>38</sup>

Before leaving our discussion of coaching the person to engage directly with Jesus for connection, guidance, and assistance at every point in the session, I want to mention two variations that are common, subtle, and important.<sup>39</sup>

**a) Notice that something important has come forward and then ask again:** Sometimes the person does not perceive any response from Jesus when she focuses on Him and asks for help, but when I ask her to describe whatever is coming into her awareness she reports important new information and/or emotions coming forward. The person often does not perceive their meaning or importance until she describes them to me,<sup>40</sup> and even after recognizing their significance, in most of these situations the person still does not *feel* that the new, important content is coming from the Lord. Even so, I encourage her to notice the meaning and importance of the new content, to consider the possibility that it is from the Lord (even though she can't feel the connection), and to continue focusing on the Lord, asking Him for help, and describing whatever comes into her awareness as long as important new information and/or emotions continue coming forward. In most of these situations, the different pieces coming forward eventually all fit together and we can see clearly that the Lord has been leading the process.

**b) Help the person recognize what's in her heart, get words to describe it, and then share whatever she has formulated/articulated with Jesus:** Occasionally I will be working with a person who perceives the Lord's presence, who appears to have an adequate interactive connection, and who seems to be focusing on Jesus and engaging directly with Jesus; but I don't see any movement regarding the question/need/challenge in front of us. In these situations, before trying anything more complicated I simply try a slower, more careful, more deliberate form of coaching the person to engage directly with Jesus. I coach her to carefully look through her internal awareness, and help her to notice, identify, and get

---

<sup>37</sup> For example, help her to focus the problem, help her talk to Jesus about it, and remind her to explicitly ask Him for help.

<sup>38</sup> This may seem silly, but you will be surprised by how often it happens. People are especially prone to this kind of problem with missing simple, obvious solutions when they are triggered to unresolved childhood trauma, so that their thinking and discernment are impaired (and this can sometimes be quite subtle).

<sup>39</sup> At *any* point in the process where we ask the Lord for guidance/help, these two variations can provide additional help in recognizing and understanding whatever the Lord is sending forward. To put this another way: when we ask for guidance/help, *and we don't receive the kind of response we're expecting*, these two simple, basic variations can help the session keep moving forward.

<sup>40</sup> See "Describe everything that comes into your awareness," below, for a careful discussion of this common, interesting, and important phenomena.

words for whatever she finds there. Then I help her to present it to Jesus as clearly, honestly, humbly, and vulnerably as possible. Usually we discover that there was some combination of fears, questions, concerns, and confusion that she had not even been fully aware of, and when I help her recognize this, get words for it, and then talk directly with Jesus about it the session begins to move forward again. Even if the person doesn't sense a clear, explicit answer from Jesus, *we almost always observe that something shifts and the session moves forward in some way* after the person gets words for what's in her heart and expresses them directly to Jesus.

For example, with careful, patient coaching the person might eventually recognize that she doesn't want the session to go forward because she's afraid of the shame she might feel – if she allows Jesus to move the session forward, she might find memories with unbearable shame. And when she is able to articulate these thoughts, and talk to the Lord about them, she discovers that this blocking fear subsides: “Jesus didn't say anything or do anything, but I just don't feel so afraid about the shame any more. I think I'm okay with moving forward.” Or careful, patient coaching might help the person recognize that she's ambivalent about cooperating because of what she might have to give up: “If I cooperate with Jesus, and let Him heal me, then I'll have to give up my [addictive] eating – I don't think I'm ready to do that.” And when she's able to focus this ambivalence, get words for it, and talk to the Lord about it, she discovers that this blocking ambivalence loses its power: “I didn't hear any specific answer from Jesus, but the thought occurred to me that God won't take away my free will just because I get healed – I could still choose whether or not to eat. I don't know...(pause). It just seems true, and I feel more willing to cooperate.”

One of these interventions might look something like this:

Anna: “I'm focusing on Jesus and asking Him for help, but nothing's happening.”

Dr. Lehman: “I want you to carefully scan through your internal awareness, and report whatever you notice – even if it doesn't seem to make sense or feel important. Notice any thoughts, emotions, images, or even physical sensations, and just describe them. They might be vague, they might not feel important, or they may seem like fragments that don't even fit together. Just describe whatever you notice.”<sup>41</sup>

Anna: “Well,... (pause), maybe I feel a little anxious.”

Dr. Lehman: “Try focusing on Jesus and asking for more clarity about the anxiety.”

Anna: (long pause), “Actually...(pause), I think maybe I feel the anxiety *when* I focus on Jesus and ask for help.”

Dr. Lehman: “If you're willing, lean into it. Focus on Jesus, ask Him for help, and let yourself feel the anxiety while you're doing it.”

Anna: (long pause), “Well,...(pause), the thought comes to me that maybe there's part of

---

<sup>41</sup> Sometimes it takes several rounds of this kind of coaching before the person is finally able to observe and describe internal mental contents that *don't yet make sense or feel important*. See “Describe everything. Your brain works better in community,” below, for additional discussion of this important phenomena.



me that doesn't want to do this – maybe I'm not sure I really want to do this?"

Dr. Lehman: "This might be difficult, and you can say 'no' if you want to, but if you're willing, keep focusing on Jesus, let yourself feel your ambivalence, and ask Him for more clarity."

Anna: (pause), "You know, as I'm talking about it, I'm realizing that I'm afraid Jesus is gonna ask me to do something I'm not able to do or that I don't want to do, and then He's gonna be disappointed with me."

Dr. Lehman: "Anna, what you just said – that's really important! Would you be willing to focus on Jesus, talk directly to *Him* about what you just said to me, and then pay attention to how He responds?"

Anna: "Yeah. Okay. (Pause) Well, Lord. Like I just said. I'm afraid you're gonna ask me to do impossible stuff – stuff I can't do, and then You're gonna be angry and disappointed with me."

(pause, turning to Dr. Lehman), "You know, this reminds me of my parents, who were in ministry, and our church where everyone was always talking about missionaries...(goes on to describe many details)."

Dr. Lehman: "This is really important, and I'm glad you're telling me about it, but would you be willing to focus on Jesus, tell Him about this stuff, and watch how He responds?"

Anna: "Yeah, okay... (pause). So, Jesus, there's part of me that doesn't want to follow You. I'm thinking about my parents, and the people in my church – they were always talking about missionaries who gave up everything, and martyrs who died for Jesus...(more details). I'm afraid You're gonna tell me to do impossible stuff, and then be disappointed and angry when I can't do it – if I talk to You, cooperate with You, or try to follow You, You're just gonna make impossible demands, and then judge me and make me feel bad."

Dr. Lehman: "So what's Jesus doing? How's He taking all this?"

Anna: "He's just standing there, listening."

Dr. Lehman: "Can you tell if He's angry, or judgmental?"

Anna: "No, He's not angry or judgmental – He's just listening. Maybe He's a little sad. It feels like He gets it. Like He understands."

Dr. Lehman: "What about disappointment? Any sense that He's disappointed with you?"

Anna: "No. No disappointment. Maybe now a little smile."

Dr. Lehman: "So, where's the fear and ambivalence? Where're you at about 'I don't want to cooperate, I don't want to hear what Jesus has to say?'"

Anna: “Well, He didn’t really give me an answer – He didn’t say anything – but somehow the fears don’t feel as big. I can still feel a little anxiety, but the fears about Him telling me to do hard, overwhelming stuff, and then being disappointed and angry – all that feels a lot less true. (Pause) I think I’m okay with trying some more of the Immanuel stuff – I think I feel more willing to cooperate.”

My current understanding regarding these situations is that the person is simply having trouble with recognizing/understanding her internal experience, getting words to describe it, and sharing it with Jesus. For people who are having trouble with recognizing and/or interpreting their internal experience (especially with respect to emotions), who are having trouble with finding words for their internal experience, and who feel very vulnerable with respect to letting anybody else know about their internal experience, this intervention is part of helping them engage directly with Jesus.

*Help the person share her heart with Jesus, even when things are flowing smoothly:* As just discussed, helping the person recognize what’s in her heart, get words to describe it, and then talk directly to Jesus about it is a valuable basic troubleshooting tool. However, I have also found this simple intervention to be valuable even when nothing appears to be stuck. When things are going well, the person is able to perceive the Lord’s presence, she has a good interactive connection, and the session is moving forward, it’s surprisingly easy to forget the “additional intimacy” step of deliberately sharing her heart with Him. So even when a session is going well I often find myself helping the person look into her heart, helping her to identify, name, and own what she finds there, and then helping her present it to Jesus as clearly, honestly, humbly, and vulnerably as possible. It’s amazing how often we are with Jesus and forget to deliberately open our hearts to Him in this way, and taking this simple step will usually strengthen every aspect of the person’s connection with the Lord.

There have been a number of times when I was facilitating a session and the person reported Jesus saying something along the lines of “Talk to me about everything,” “I love it when you open your heart to me,” “It blesses me when you tell me what’s in your heart.”

Before moving on to Immanuel interventions, I want to say this again: Coaching the person to turn to Jesus, focus on Jesus, engage directly with Jesus, and ask Jesus for help is always the first step in trouble-shooting with the Immanuel approach.

## **2. Immanuel Interventions at any point the person does not have/loses adequate interactive connection with the Lord:**

Let us start with recalling the definition of Immanuel interventions from Part I:

*“Immanuel interventions” are specific, focused, systematic interventions with the goal of helping the person receiving ministry to perceive the Lord’s living presence, and to establish an adequate interactive connection with Him.*

Actually, the process described above for establishing an interactive connection at the beginning of the session is one of the simplest, most basic forms of Immanuel intervention. But for the purposes of this discussion, I think of Immanuel interventions as 1) the systematic trouble-shooting process for helping the person establish an adequate connection with Jesus when the initial steps of positive memory recall, appreciation, reentering the positive memory, and explicit request do *not* flow quickly and easily into an adequate interactive

connection; and 2) interventions for helping the person *re-establish* an adequate interactive connection with Jesus at any point in the session that they might lose this all important foundation.<sup>42</sup>

You could also say that Immanuel interventions are “troubleshooting” with respect to establishing and/or reestablishing an adequate interactive connection with the Lord. As mentioned above, tens of thousands of hours of emotional healing work have convinced me that the Lord is *always* present, that the Lord *always* wants to bless us with life-giving gifts, that the Lord is *always* able to accomplish this, and that the Immanuel approach will almost<sup>43</sup> always (eventually) release these gifts and blessings *if the facilitator can help the person identify and resolve blockages that are sometimes present*. One of the most important insights that came to me as I was first learning about Immanuel interventions was that we could “trouble-shoot” with respect to perceiving the Lord’s presence and adequate interactive connection in much the same way that we could “trouble-shoot” with respect to the overall emotional healing process; and the details of the conceptual framework for Immanuel intervention trouble-shooting fell into place very easily when I realized that there were several very specific parallels between trouble shooting for the overall process and trouble shooting for Immanuel interventions:

With troubleshooting for the overall process, I assume that the Lord always *wants* to heal emotional and spiritual wounds, and that the Lord is always *able* to heal emotional and spiritual wounds. Therefore, if the person is not experiencing healing, I assume that there must be something in the way. My experience has taught me that the blockages can be identified and resolved, and that when this is done, the healing process will move forward. I therefore work very persistently to expose and resolve any blockages, and in almost every situation persistent trouble-shooting eventually enables the person to receive healing.

Similarly, with Immanuel Intervention trouble shooting, I know with absolute certainty that the Lord is present – He has been present with the person in every past experience, and He is present now. And my experience has taught me that the Lord always wants the person to be able to perceive His presence, connect with Him, synchronize with Him, receive from Him, and be *with* Him (the Lord always wants to establish an adequate interactive connection). Therefore, if she can’t I assume that there must be something in the way. My experience has also taught me that the blockages can be identified and resolved, and that when this is done, the person *will* be able to perceive the Lord’s presence, connect with Him, synchronize with Him, receive from Him, and be with Him. I therefore work very persistently to expose and resolve any blockages, and in almost every situation persistent trouble-shooting eventually enables the person to perceive the Lord’s presence and establish an interactive connection.

In organizing my thinking with respect to Immanuel interventions, I find it helpful to first talk about helping the person perceive the Lord’s presence and establish/reestablish an interactive connection, and then to talk about making sure the interactive connection is adequate.

---

<sup>42</sup> As most readers will probably realize, helping the person establish an adequate interactive connection when she is “inside” unresolved traumatic memories is an especially important instance of using Immanuel interventions to help the person reestablish an adequate interactive connection.

<sup>43</sup> On very rare occasions, a person will persistently choose to indulge in bitterness and/or self-pity and/or rebellion. This will block the Immanuel approach process, and cannot be resolved with any of the usual troubleshooting tools.

**a) Perceiving the Lord's presence, and establishing/reestablishing an interactive connection:**

***Basic, simple, easy, safe Immanuel Interventions:*** There are a number of Immanuel interventions that are so basic, simple, and easy that the average layperson can learn to use them quickly, and so safe that they can be used in the context of group exercises. The Immanuel interventions described in 1) through 5) fall into this category.

**(1) Coach the person to direct her attention back to Jesus:** As mentioned earlier, people can forget about the Lord and/or lose track of the Lord, *even when He is still standing right beside them*. The recipient can get so focused on some aspect of the issue she is working on, and/or so overwhelmed by the negative thoughts and emotions she is experiencing, that she totally forgets about Jesus. Therefore, before trying any other Immanuel intervention trouble-shooting, check to see if the person has simply forgotten about and/or lost track of the Lord. As described above, when this is the case, the person is still able to perceive the Lord's tangible presence and can easily maintain an adequate interactive connection, *as long as they choose to focus their attention on Him*. In these situations, all you need to do to restore an adequate interactive connection is to identify the problem and then coach the person to direct her attention back to Jesus.

**(2) Heart invitation and explicit request:** As I have carefully observed the details of the many Immanuel approach sessions I facilitate, I've noticed that an explicit invitation and request are often not needed at the beginning of the session. Often, after recalling a positive memory of previous connection with the Lord, stirring up appreciation, and reentering the memory, the person will report that the memory flows spontaneously into a living, interactive connection in the present, even without any explicit invitation or request.<sup>44</sup> Many of my colleagues (for example, Dr. Wilder) have also noticed this, and have therefore decided to omit explicit invitation and request as regular components at the beginning of Immanuel approach sessions. I would encourage you to experiment with both options, and notice what seems to work best for you and the people you work with. Even so, for the reasons outlined below I still usually coach the person to make an explicit invitation and request, as part of establishing an interactive connection at the beginning of the session (recognizing that they often don't seem to need it).

In contrast, when a person loses her interactive connection with the Lord at some point later in the session, I strongly encourage you to start your Immanuel intervention trouble-shooting with coaching the person to make a simple, explicit invitation and request. It is very common for a person to temporarily lose her interactive connection with the Lord at some point later in the session. For example, it's very common for people to temporarily lose their interactive connection when they first enter a memory that still carries unresolved trauma. And this is true even for people who are able to *clearly* perceive the Lord's presence and establish a *strong* interactive connection at the beginning of the session. At any point in the session that the person loses her interactive connection, the first, simplest, easiest, most basic Immanuel intervention is to coach her to make a very simple heart invitation and explicit request. I usually use something along the lines of,

---

<sup>44</sup> A number of our live session DVDs provide examples of this phenomena. See, for example, *Rita #3: Jesus Is Better than Candy*, *Maggie #3, Labor and Deliberate Trauma*, and *Steve: "Just" Be with Jesus.*"

“Lord, I claim the truth that You are here. I make a heart invitation – I invite You to be *with me*, here in this place. I also ask You to help me perceive Your presence, and to help me reestablish an interactive connection.”

*Heart invitation:* One might ask, “If He’s *always* with us, and we’re making a point of claiming this truth in faith, then why are we *inviting* Him to be with us?” My perception is that this invitation applies to our *hearts*. The scripture that helped me clarify this point is from Rev 3:20: “Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me.” My understanding is that this scripture is referring to our hearts. The Lord is always present and everywhere present, but even as we claim the truth that He is with us, we also need to invite Him into our hearts.

Another data point that helped me recognize the importance of this invitation has been discovering that the opposite message is one of the most common blockages hindering a person from perceiving the Lord’s presence. In many situations where the person is initially unable to perceive the Lord’s presence, we discover that she *does not want Him to be with her* – either because she’s afraid to let Him be present or because she’s angry at Him; and that instead of making an invitation she is (consciously or unconsciously) sending the exact opposite message: “Lord, stay away from me!” When we are *not* making an invitation – when we do *not* want the Lord to be with us in a given memory or experience, the Lord seems to respect our desire that He stay away.<sup>45</sup> Furthermore, we often see people who are initially *not* able to perceive the Lord’s presence *become* able to perceive His presence when we identify that they do not want Him with them, we help them to resolve this blockage, and then they replace “stay away from me” with an invitation.

*Direct, explicit request:* I’m not a theologian, and have not done a careful theological study regarding the role and importance of asking, but my Layman’s/Lehman’s experience is that asking does seem to make a difference. My experience is that the Lord, out of His grace, sometimes gives us what we need and/or want without even waiting for us to ask, but that more often He seems to want us to ask.

“You have not because you ask not” (James 4:2) seems to be a very simple summary of this point.

The importance of asking was especially visible early in our journey with Immanuel interventions and the Immanuel approach, before we began to start each session with helping the person perceive the Lord’s presence. As described in Part I, there was a block of time during which we would not try an Immanuel intervention unless/until we encountered a problem with inadequate capacity. In these early sessions, we would usually be half way through the session, the person would be having difficulty with a painful memory, and I would finally suggest trying an Immanuel intervention. And in some of these situations the person reported that she became able to perceive the Lord’s presence *immediately in response to our asking*. Some told me that they had become able to perceive the Lord’s presence at the moment we finished the prayer, and others

---

<sup>45</sup> I believe that He is actually still with us, but when we do not *want* Him with us, He seems to respect our desire/request by allowing us to not perceive His presence.



described becoming able to perceive the Lord's presence "before we even finished praying." Several people specifically commented: "Now I realize that He's been here, with me, the whole time, but I wasn't able to see Him (feel Him/hear Him/sense His presence) until we prayed."

In each of these situations, my perception was that the Lord had been waiting for us to ask – that He had wanted to be tangibly present, to be more connected, and to provide more assistance, but that He had been *waiting for us to ask*.

**(3) Ask "What's in the way (of perceiving the Lord's presence and establishing an interactive connection)? And then coach the person to describe whatever comes into her awareness:** Often the simple heart invitation and explicit request are all that's needed, either at the beginning of the session, when the person first invites the Lord to be with her and asks Him to help with perceiving His presence and interactive connection, or as the first, most basic Immanuel intervention. However, in some situations this simple, initial intervention will not be enough to reestablish the interactive connection. When this occurs, the next step with respect to Immanuel intervention troubleshooting is to ask, "What's in the way of \_\_\_\_\_ perceiving Your presence and establishing an interactive connection?," and then coach the person to describe whatever comes into her awareness. Then, as soon as a blockage is identified, ask the Lord for guidance with respect to how to resolve it. I usually ask (or coach the person to ask) something along the lines of, "so now what do we do?/how do we cooperate with Your plan for moving forward?/what do we do to take the next step forward?" And once you have asked for direction regarding how to resolve the blockage, coach the person to describe whatever comes into her awareness, notice what the Lord reveals, and then cooperate with His guidance.

*Notice that something important has come forward and then ask again:* Just as with coaching the person to engage directly with Jesus at every point in the session, helping the person to recognize that something important has come forward, and then coaching her to ask again is a common, subtle, and important variation that the facilitator should be aware of. The person may not *recognize* any answer to the question she just asked, but when I coach her to describe whatever is coming into her awareness she reports new information and/or emotions that I can usually perceive to be significant. As mentioned earlier (and discussed at length, below), the person often does not perceive their meaning or importance until she describes them to me, and even after recognizing their significance, in most of these situations the person still does not *feel* that the new, important content is coming from the Lord. Even so, I encourage her to notice the significance of the new content, to consider the possibility that it is from the Lord, and to ask for more. In most of these situations, the different pieces coming forward eventually all fit together and we can see clearly that the Lord has been leading the process.

*Help the person recognize what's in her heart, get words to describe it, and then share whatever she has formulated/articulated with Jesus:* Just as with coaching the person to engage directly with Jesus at every point in the session, additional careful coaching to help the person recognize what's in her heart, get words to describe it, and then talk directly to the Lord about it is a common, subtle, important variation that the facilitator should be aware of. For example, we might ask the Lord, "What's in the way?," and the person might report mental content that doesn't seem to go anywhere, but my intuition/guidance from the Lord is that there's something else coming forward that the person has not been able to identify or articulate. In these situations, before trying

anything more complicated I simply try a slower, more careful, more deliberate form of coaching the person to “describe whatever is coming into your awareness.” I coach her to carefully look through her internal awareness, and help her to notice, identify, and get words for whatever she finds there. Then I help her to present it to Jesus as clearly, honestly, humbly, and vulnerably as possible.

An interesting point here is that this intervention is still surprisingly effective, *even though the person is not experiencing an interactive connection or even perceiving the Lord’s presence*. I coach the person to stand in faith, claiming the truth that Jesus is always with us, and talk to Him directly, even though she doesn’t see Him. That is, I coach the person to operate out of the invisible truth that Jesus is always with us, and talk to Him *as if she can perceive His presence*. And when she does this, something usually shifts in a good way and the process moves forward.<sup>46</sup>

Even with just these simple Immanuel intervention tools, we usually find something that explains the blockage. For example, the person might discover that she has a lot of ambivalence about experiencing Jesus’ presence in the memory we are working on. After asking “What’s in the way?” she realizes that the memory includes sinful choices on her part, and she is afraid that Jesus will be angry and condemn her if He should show up in the memory. And when I help her recognize this, get words for it, and then talk directly with Jesus about it, the blocking thought/fear/concern/issue loses power and she becomes willing to *allow* the Lord’s presence. As soon as we notice this shift, I coach her to try the heart invitation and explicit request again, and she is then able to perceive the Lord’s presence and quickly establishes an interactive connection. In fact, the person often becomes able to perceive the Lord’s presence as soon as the shift occurs, before we even get around to repeating the invitation and request.

These steps in the Immanuel intervention troubleshooting process, including the additional variations just discussed, might look something like the following:<sup>47</sup>

*The person receiving ministry is working inside a memory in which she was traumatized by her mother’s harshness, judgment, and unfairness. For the purposes of this example, we have already clarified that the recipient lost her interactive connection when she entered the memory. She has taken the first Immanuel intervention troubleshooting step of making an explicit invitation and request, but she is still unable to perceive the Lord’s presence. I have just coached her to ask the Lord for guidance regarding “What’s in the way?”*

Sarah: “Lord, please show me what’s in the way – what’s hindering me from perceiving You and connecting with You?”

---

<sup>46</sup> As mentioned earlier, these two variations can provide additional help in recognizing and understanding whatever the Lord is sending forward. When we ask for guidance/help, *and we don’t receive the kind of response we’re expecting*, these two simple, basic variations – noticing that something important has come forward and then asking again, and helping the person recognize what’s in her heart, get words to describe it, and then share whatever she has formulated/articulated with Jesus – can help the session keep moving forward.

<sup>47</sup> The details in this example are actually taken from real sessions.

Dr. Lehman: Good. Now just describe whatever comes into your awareness.

Sarah: (pause) “I’m just realizing that I still feel bitter towards my Mom in this memory. (pause)... The thought comes to me that maybe my bitterness is somehow blocking me from connecting with Jesus.”

*I coach Sarah to ask the Lord for guidance regarding how to move forward, she does this, and I again coach her to describe whatever comes into her awareness.*

Sarah: (pause) “The thought comes to me that I need to let go of this bitterness towards my mother.”

Dr. Lehman: “Do you feel like you’re ready to do that?”

Sarah: “Yes, of course. It’s in the way, so I need to let it go.”

*I lead Sarah through a prayer for releasing bitterness, and she appears to cooperate, but nothing changes. So I coach her to ask for more guidance regarding what’s in the way and how to take the next step forward. She does this.*

Sarah: (Pause) “Nothing’s happening.”

Dr. Lehman: “Just describe whatever’s coming into your awareness. Don’t worry about whether it feels like it’s coming from the Lord, don’t worry about whether it feels important, and don’t worry about whether it makes sense – just reports anything you notice coming into your awareness.”

Sarah: (Pause) “Nothing’s happening, except that I feel uncomfortable.”

Dr. Lehman: Focus on your feeling of discomfort, keep asking the Lord for more guidance, and then report whatever comes to you.

Sarah: (Pause) “Lord, what’s this discomfort about. What do You want to show me about this discomfort?” (Pause) “Well, when I think about letting go of the bitterness, I notice the discomfort. (Pause) “Maybe I feel anxious about letting go of the bitterness.”

Dr. Lehman: Focus on your anxiety about letting go of the bitterness, keep asking the Lord for more guidance, and then report whatever comes to you.

Sarah: (Pause) “Lord, what do You want to show me about my anxiety about letting go of the bitterness?” (Pause) “Well, it feels like the bitterness helps me defend myself from my Mom. If I’m not angry, I won’t be able to protect myself from her unfairness – she’ll just win.”

Dr. Lehman: “Now that we’ve clarified the problem with being afraid to let go of the bitterness, I’d like to try something. Would you be willing to invite Jesus to be with you here, to help you let go of the bitterness?”

Sarah: (Pause) “The thought that just pops into my head is ‘no.’” (Pause) “I’m noticing the thought that Jesus might make me let go of the bitterness.” (Pause) “I think maybe

I'm afraid to let Jesus be here because I'm afraid He will make me let go of the bitterness."

Dr. Lehman: "If you're willing, I'd like you to speak directly to Jesus – talk to Him about all the stuff you just told me, and ask Him what He wants you to know about it. I realize you can't perceive Him yet, but if you're willing, stand in faith on the truth that He's here, and talk directly to Him about all of this."

Sarah: (Pause) "Jesus, I think maybe I'm afraid to let go of my bitterness." (Pause) "I'm afraid that if I let go of my anger, I won't be able to defend myself. Mom will just yell at me, be unreasonable, not listen to me, blame me for all the problems with my sister, and I won't be able to do anything about it. And I'm afraid to let You be with me here, because I'm afraid You will make me let go of the bitterness." (long pause)

Dr. Lehman: "So, what's happening? Just try to notice and describe whatever is happening inside, and then describe it."

Sarah: (Pause) "Well, this is kind of funny. I don't perceive Jesus, and I didn't notice anything dramatic happening, but it doesn't feel as true any more. Somehow, it just doesn't feel true that I won't be okay if I let go of the bitterness." (Pause) "I feel like I'm ready to let go of the bitterness, and I don't feel afraid to let Jesus be here any more."

Dr. Lehman: "So, would you be willing to try the invitation and request again?"

Sarah: "Sure. Lord, I make a heart invitation for You to be with me here. Help me to perceive Your presence, and help me let go of this bitterness." (Long pause, but Sarah's face changes dramatically during the pause, moving from anxiety and anger to an expression of peacefulness).

Dr. Lehman: "So, when you're ready, let me know what's happening."

Sarah: "This is so cool. As soon as I started, I could see Jesus standing beside me in the memory. I could tell that He understood everything about why I was so upset, and about why my Mom's behavior hurt me so much. For just a moment I could feel all the pain from the memory, but then I could feel Him *with* me, and it all seemed to change." (Pause) "I didn't feel alone any more, and I didn't feel helpless and unable to defend myself any more. Somehow, I suddenly realized that I'm not a little girl any more – I didn't feel paralyzed, or weak, or small – it just felt like I could say what I would need to say if I were in a situation like that." (Pause) And Jesus was showing me stuff about my mother – how she was overwhelmed and triggered. I think He gave me compassion for my mother."

Dr. Lehman: "So where's the bitterness?"

Sarah: "Oh, wow! This is kind of weird. It's totally gone. Now I just feel compassion...."

*From this point I continued to coach Sarah to focus on Jesus, to ask for guidance, and to engage directly with Him regarding everything that came up. We went through the*

*memory in this way, looking for any splinters, and finished the session with the memory completely resolved.*

**(4) Go back to original interactive connection:** If you try the simple, initial Immanuel interventions just described but they don't seem to be working, or if you are feeling confused and/or overwhelmed for any reason, then coach the person to go back to the interactive connection from the beginning of the session. This is one of the wonderful safety nets for beginners, lay person's, and group exercises. If the process bogs down, and you don't know what to do, you can always go back to the interactive connection that was just refreshed at the beginning of the session. In the context of the positive memory and interactive connection from the beginning of the session, you can then coach the recipient to engage with the Lord regarding the point in the session where she was *not* able to perceive the Lord's presence or establish an interactive connection.

**(5) “Back and forth” technique:**<sup>48</sup> Another very simple form of Immanuel intervention trouble-shooting is what I call the “back and forth” technique. When a person *is able to perceive the Lord's presence and establish a good connection with Him at the beginning of a session*, but then has difficulty perceiving and/or connecting with the Lord once inside traumatic memories, one trouble-shooting option is to help the person go back and forth between the place where they feel connected to the Lord and the traumatic memory. For example, I would start with coaching the person to return to the imagery from the positive connection at the beginning of the session, and then coach her to focus on Jesus (in whatever way He is present in the imagery), reconnect with/reenter the memory of the interactive connection from the beginning of the session, and ask the Lord to refresh the connection as a living interaction in the present. After making sure that the person again *feels* appreciation, perceives the Lord's presence as real in the present, and is experiencing a living, interactive connection with Jesus, I would then coach her to focus on and talk about the traumatic memories, and I would do this until she is emotionally connected to the trauma (*feels* the negative emotions carried in the memories). Then I would again coach her through the process of returning to the interactive connection with Jesus, making sure that she does this until she again perceives the Lord's presence as real in the present and is experiencing a living, interactive connection. Our experience is that when a person keeps repeating this cycle, a bridge eventually forms between the two places and she will spontaneously begin to perceive the Lord's presence and connect with Him *inside the traumatic memory*. Once this happens I simply coach the person to focus on Jesus and ask Him for help, and He then leads the process of working through any unresolved traumatic content.<sup>49</sup>

The main *disadvantage* with this tool is that it can take a lot of time, but a big *advantage* is that it is conceptually very simple, and can especially provide an easy to learn “safety net” trouble-shooting tool for beginners. As explained in more detail in the discussion of group exercises below, if a person gets stuck in a painful memory and other trouble-shooting options are not working, one “safety net” option is to help them get back to the interactive connection with Jesus from the beginning of the session.

---

<sup>48</sup> I want to thank Dr. E. James Wilder for the conversation that prompted the development of this “back and forth” trouble-shooting tool.

<sup>49</sup> I have had sessions where all we did was to go back and forth between the initial positive connection and the traumatic memory.



Note: Sometimes a person who is connected to a traumatic memory will be feeling intense negative emotions and her relational circuits will be off, and in this context she will not initially *feel* like talking about positive memories and she will not initially *feel* any appreciation. In these situations you may need to be very directive and persistent in coaching the person to talk about positive memories and appreciation *even when they don't feel like it*.<sup>50</sup> In some situations it may take as long as fifteen to twenty minutes, but our experience is that if a person persists in talking about positive memories of experiencing the Lord's presence they will eventually calm down, regain access to their relational connection circuits, return to feeling appreciation, and be able to get back to a good place of perceiving the Lord's presence and enjoying and interactive connection with Him. It may take some practice to learn to be adequately directive and persistent in these situations, but with appropriate coaching most people can learn this fairly quickly.

***Immanuel interventions that are somewhat more advanced and complicated:*** We have just finished discussing several Immanuel interventions that are so basic, simple, and easy that the average layperson can learn to use them quickly, and so safe that they can be used in the context of group exercises. There are also several Immanuel interventions that are somewhat more advanced and complicated.

NOTE: some are intimidated (overwhelmed?) by the complexity that I discuss in the next several sections – complexity that can sometimes unfold in sessions where the person is working on intense trauma, loses her interactive connection with the Lord, and has complex, memory-anchored blockages hindering her from reestablishing an interactive connection. I would like to offer two thoughts of advice and encouragement. First, start with practicing just the first steps of the Immanuel approach – practice going to positive memories, stirring up appreciation, and establishing an interactive connection with the Lord in this context. Many are surprised by how easily they are able to do this. Especially if they do it with a partner, so that they can take advantage of the ways our brains work better in community (see the section, below, on “describe everything that comes into your awareness”).<sup>51</sup>

Second, after you have practiced for a while, and get to the point where you can consistently establish an interactive connection in the context of positive memories, pick a

---

<sup>50</sup> If you know about attunement and are skilled in providing it, the ideal is to start with offering attunement until the person regains access to her relational connection circuits, and then *after she has regained access to her relational connection circuits* coach her to persist in the positive memory recall and deliberate appreciation exercises. For additional discussion of attunement and relational connection circuits, see Part II of the “Brain Science, Psychological Trauma, and The God Who is With Us” essays (available as free downloads from [www.kclehman.com](http://www.kclehman.com)).

<sup>51</sup> Some find that they need a fair amount of Immanuel intervention trouble-shooting in order to enable them to establish an interactive connection, even in positive memories. As described in a number of the essays I have written, this was certainly my experience. If you are one of these people, I STRONGLY encourage you to persist, as frustrating, painful, and difficult as it may be. **It's worth it!** I would also encourage you to look at the essay, “Immanuel, an Especially Pernicious Blockage, & the Normal Belief Memory System”(available as free download from [www.kclehman.com](http://www.kclehman.com)). Hopefully you will find it to be both helpful and hopeful.

small traumatic memory and try the rest of the steps from the emotional healing process.<sup>52</sup> Many are surprised to discover that they can successfully navigate through the Immanuel approach emotional healing process with only the simple, basic trouble-shooting tools already described, in combination with only the simplest, most basic tools from the Immanuel interventions describe below. (As with the initial steps, the success rate is dramatically increased if you go through the process with a partner, so you can take advantage of the ways our brains work better in community.)

Again, if you find yourself feeling intimidated/overwhelmed by the following discussion of more complex trouble-shooting, I STRONGLY encourage you to at least try the initial steps of the Immanuel approach process – try practicing with the simple interventions for establishing an interactive connection in the context of positive memories and appreciation. And after you have gained confidence and skill with these initial pieces of the process, I gently encourage you to try the rest of the process with very small traumatic memories – memories for recent experiences in which you weren't able to perceive the Lord's presence and felt only mild to moderate unpleasant emotions.

**(6) Identify and resolve blockages caused by the person *choosing to not* invite Jesus:**

Blockages where the person is *choosing to not* invite Jesus, or even choosing to forbid Jesus' presence, have already come up as examples, but I want to say more about this common and important phenomena. \*\*the final document will include many pages of examples and additional discussion at this point\*\*

**(7) Identify and resolve pernicious blockages:** Some people will have complex tangles that prevent them from perceiving the Lord's presence and that are especially challenging to resolve. I call these pernicious blockages. The bad news is that it takes a lot of time and effort to identify and unravel the different components that contribute to these tangles. The good news is that Jesus wants us to resolve these blockages even more than we do, He knows all about them, and He will help us. For a detailed discussion of the pernicious blockage that hindered my connection with the Lord for many years, including the story of how the Lord helped me to resolve it, see "Immanuel, An Especially Pernicious Blockage, and the Normal Belief Memory System" (available as free download from [www.kclehman.com](http://www.kclehman.com)).

**b) Make sure the interactive connection is adequate:** With an *ideal* interactive connection, the person will be able to perceive the Lord's presence clearly; she will be able to allow Him to come close, she will *feel* connected to Him; she will synchronize with Him; she will be able to receive His guidance and help; she will feel that the Lord sees her, hears her, understands her, cares about her, and that He is *with* her, even in places of pain;<sup>53</sup> and she will be able to spend time "just" *being with* the Lord. However, the reader will probably notice that I usually talk about an *adequate* interactive connection. My very

---

<sup>52</sup> One of the best ways to find an appropriately small trauma is to pick a memory for a painful experience from your *recent* past, in which you were not able to perceive the Lord's presence and experienced *only mild to moderate* unpleasant emotions. Another safety net is to pick a memory for an event in which you did not need help from others to calm down and/or process the experience.

<sup>53</sup> Pop quiz: Did you recognize that "the person will feel that the Lord sees them, hears them, understands them, cares about them, and that He is *with* them, even in places of pain" = receiving the Lord's attunement?

simple definition of an adequate interactive connection is “enough interactive connection to enable to person to take the next step forward.” For example, **\*\*example pending\*\***

With the larger Immanuel approach to life, the number one priority, most important long term goal could be stated as, “Help the person develop an increasingly ideal interactive connection with the Lord – help the person move towards the ultimate goal of walking through each day *abiding* in an ideal interactive connection with the Lord.” Within a specific Immanuel approach session, the practical, pragmatic objective of Immanuel intervention troubleshooting is to help the person establish an adequate interactive connection. As long as the person has an interactive connection that is adequate for helping her take the next step that is in front of her, the process almost always keeps moving forward,<sup>54</sup> and questions about needing something to be different/needing to trouble-shoot don’t even come up. When things do bog down, it is often because the interactive connection is *not* adequate for the next step; and when Immanuel approach troubleshooting (for example, focusing on Jesus and asking, “what’s in the way/what needs to be different?") reveals an inadequate interactive connection, then we use specific, focused Immanuel interventions to improve the strength and quality of the connection.

As I gain more and more experience with the simple Immanuel approach troubleshooting tools described above, I have discovered that these simple tools will almost always eventually reveal the need for better interactive connection, reveal the point of difficulty, and also provide guidance for how to correct the problem, as long as I persist with enough patience and faith.<sup>55</sup> For example, the process bogs down, I coach the person to focus on Jesus and ask for guidance and help, the Lord provides clues that reveal an inadequate connection, I coach the person to focus on Jesus and ask for guidance and help, the Lord provides clues that reveal the source of the problem and the needed intervention, I coach the person to focus on Jesus and ask for guidance and help, and then the Lord provides any help necessary to actually implement the plan. However, in my experience it has also been helpful for both myself and the recipient to be aware of the phenomena describe below. Being aware of the different ways in which an interactive connection can be inadequate, being familiar with the kinds of problems that can cause these inadequacies, and seeing examples of how different Immanuel interventions can resolve these problems helps us recognize and understand the clues the Lord sends forward.

**\*\*Lots more material, with many examples, to be included in final document\*\***

**c) Increased Persistence and Faith for People Who Often/usually Perceive the Lord’s Presence:** An interesting data point is that when we work with someone who’s been able to perceive the Lord’s presence at some point in many previous emotional healing sessions

---

<sup>54</sup> In very rare situations, the person persists in choosing bitterness and/or self pity and/or rebellion in ways that block emotional healing, even in spite of an adequate interactive connection. **\*\*or should we say that these choices actually make it impossible to establish an adequate interactive connection, in spite of every possible Immanuel intervention?\*\*\***

<sup>55</sup> Occasionally I encounter complex situations for which the simple Immanuel approach troubleshooting tools are not adequate. For example, internal dissociated parts may deliberately block the troubleshooting due to guardian lie fears about the bad things they believe will happen if they allow an adequate interactive connection. In these situations, it has been even more helpful to be familiar with the phenomena described below.

(and/or has often perceived the Lord's presence in other situations), and then we encounter an internal part that can't perceive His presence, or a specific memory in which the person can't perceive the Lord's presence, we have a *very* high success rate with finding and resolving the blockages hindering the person from being able to perceive the Lord's presence *by the end of the session*. In *almost every case*, by the end of the session we've been able to figure out what was in the way, resolve the blockage, and then go forward, with the person (or the specific internal part in question) being able to perceive the Lord's presence. Again: if a person has often/usually been able to perceive the Lord's presence in the past, then it's *almost always* possible to find and resolve hindrances in any specific situation where she's not able to perceive His presence.

My point here is that I want to encourage a special level of persistence and faith, within a single session, for any situation where you're working with someone who has often or usually been able to perceive the Lord's presence in the past. Also, this is a good place to start if you are a beginner and feeling insecure with respect to Immanuel interventions.

In the *long run*, you should have the same kind of persistence and faith for any person seeking to perceive the Lord's presence. Almost every person we have worked with has *eventually* been able to perceive the Lord's presence and establish an interactive connection; but some of these people have required many sessions to identify and resolve a variety of memory anchored blockages, and some of these people have required many sessions to identify and resolve the different components of their particular pernicious blockages. My own experience with many healing sessions to resolve a variety of memory anchored blockages, and many sessions to identify and resolve the different components of my particular pernicious blockage, provides a good example. I was not able to perceive the Lord's tangible presence or establish an interactive connection until I went through many emotional healing sessions to resolve memory anchored blockages, and to identify and untangle the components of my pernicious blockage; but in the long run this persistent work has been effective, *and it has been worth it!* I now routinely perceive the Lord's presence and am able to establish an interactive connection with Him, both of these pieces have become easier and easier to accomplish, and the strength and quality of my interactive connections with the Lord have been increasing steadily. A final encouraging thought along these lines is that I'm convinced my journey would have been considerably easier and shorter if our current Immanuel approach insights and tools had been available.<sup>56</sup>

**d) Immanuel interventions usually work, and when they do, the person is always able to take the next step forward:** It is important to note that Immanuel interventions do not always work. There have been some situations where we have *not* been able to find and resolve whatever was in the way. However, mostly we are amazed with how often they *do* work. In our current experience Immanuel interventions are *usually* successful, *and in every situation where Immanuel interventions are successful, and the person is able to perceive the Lord's presence and establish an adequate interactive connection, something good*

---

<sup>56</sup> For a detailed discussion of the pernicious blockage that hindered my connection with the Lord for many years, including the story of how the Lord helped me to resolve it, see "Immanuel, An Especially Pernicious Blockage, and the Normal Belief Memory System." For discussion of my healing journey with respect to other memory anchored blockages, see "Dad/God Isn't All-knowing or All-powerful: A Case Study and Discussion," "Case Study: 'God the Psychotic Cult Leader,'" and "Emotional Healing and Personal Spiritual Growth: A Case Study and Discussion." These essays are all available as free downloads from [www.kelehman.com](http://www.kelehman.com).

*happens and the person is able to take the next step forward.*

**e) Putting it all together (Immanuel interventions section):** So, putting all these pieces together, the practical application with respect to the Immanuel Approach is that the facilitator needs to help the person maintain an adequate interactive connection through out the process. We need to actively watch for clues that the person may have lost an adequate interactive connection, we need to check-in regarding the person's interactive connection as part of routine troubleshooting whenever it seems the session is not moving forward, and we need to apply Immanuel interventions whenever we find that an adequate interactive connection is no longer present.

**E. Formulate and tell the Immanuel Story:** \*\*Section on the Immanuel story to be included in final document\*\*

**F. Describe whatever comes into your awareness (your brain works better in community):** As a person participates in the Immanuel approach, it is important that she describes everything that comes into her awareness, regardless of whether or not it *feels* important or “makes sense.” Those of you familiar with Theophostic will know that Dr. Smith has always taught this as an important part of the Theophostic process, but he has not provided any support for this point other than his personal observation that it appears to be consistently helpful. Over the last several years I have gathered a collection of data points that I believe come together to build a compelling explanation for why it's so important for a person to describe everything that comes into her awareness when receiving therapy or ministry.

**1. Case studies from our experience with emotional healing:** The first data points I want to present are observations from our experience with emotional healing sessions.

**a) My session regarding 2 y.o. separation memories:** As described in Part IV, being separated from my parents for three to four weeks at the age of two was definitely a traumatic experience that was *not* processed and resolved at the time it occurred. For most of my life I didn't even know about this early and important trauma. If you were paying attention for Part III, it should not surprise you that I had no conscious, explicit, autobiographical memory for these events, since my hippocampus was still very immature at 2 years of age.<sup>57</sup>

My discovery of these events makes a good story. I had been learning about association stimulation and the alternative memory retrieval system, and decided to be much more intentional with respect to noticing when I was triggered and then trying to figure out where the triggered content was coming from. As I was doing this, I noticed one especially dramatic pattern that I could not explain. Any scene in a movie or book with a little boy losing his mother would make me cry. For example, even though I had watched the movie *The Kid* many times, I would still cry every time I came to one of the scenes about his mother dying of cancer. This didn't make sense to me, since my mother was still alive and well: “Why do I cry every time a kid loses his mother, since that has obviously never

---

<sup>57</sup> If this whole episode had been an event that other family members talked about I could have known about it from their stories, even though I did not have my own conscious autobiographical memories, but by the time my hippocampus was old enough to start laying down autobiographical memories our time at the Wetzel's was old history that nobody talked about anymore.



happened to me?”<sup>58</sup>

During the time I’m making these observations my older brother comes to visit, and while we’re sitting in a restaurant eating deep dish pizza I mention this particular puzzling observation: “...This one just doesn’t make sense. Mom never got sick – why do these scenes stir up so much emotion for me?” He promptly replies with: “What about the time when Mom got so sick that we had to go stay with the Wetzels?” After looking stunned for several seconds, I respond with something along the lines of “What on earth are you talking about? Mom never got sick!” He goes on to tell the whole story, since he had been two years older and could still remember many of the details. He told me about how Mom got mono while she was pregnant with our younger sister, and eventually got so sick that Dad had to carry her to the bathroom. And about how they gladly accepted the Wetzel’s offer to care for us, since Mom couldn’t even get out of bed, let alone chase after two small boys, and Dad was working full time. I still didn’t believe him until I talked to Mom and Dad and they both told the exact same story. How strange! These events had affected me greatly, and I could still observe intense triggered thoughts and emotions that I now recognized as coming from these memories, but I had absolutely no conscious autobiographical memories for these events.

I realized that I had often experienced triggered implicit memory thoughts and emotions from these events, but that I had never recognized or understood them. This implicit memory content had even come forward in emotional healing sessions, but I had not recognized it or known what to do with it, and so always eventually pushed it aside and went on to something else. So the next time I got together with my prayer partner, I decided to work very deliberately on these memories. In this session, I focused on the familiar triggered thoughts and emotions I guessed to be coming forward from these memories, and then asked the Lord to help me access the underlying trauma. What happened next is the data point that’s relevant for this section. After asking the Lord to help me access the underlying memories, images and thoughts start coming into my mind. I have an image of holding a telephone to my ear, but I’m looking up at the place where the cord goes into the wall, so I must be quite small (about the size of a two year old). I’m looking around a room, with a door leading to a hallway to my right and a large sofa across the room from me. And the thought comes to me: “I can hear her voice – she must be here somewhere! I wonder where she could be hiding? The sofa’s big enough to hide a grown-up – maybe she’s behind the sofa!”

But here’s the strange part: I do *not* have any sense that these images or thoughts are important, and I do *not* perceive their meaning. The thoughts and images don’t *feel* important, and I don’t recognize how they fit into my personal autobiographical story. In fact, this effect is so complete that I tell Dan: “Nothing’s happening. I’m not getting anything.” Fortunately, Dan is an experienced enough therapist that he responds with:

---

<sup>58</sup> You get extra credit points if you are having a thought along the lines of: “It would have been more effective to lean into the triggered content and pay attention to what came forward, since the strategic search retrieval system often cannot make the connection between triggered implicit memory content and the underlying memories.” You get even more extra credit points if you add: “And this would be especially true in this case, since the strategic search retrieval system is never able to make the connection to memories that have been stored before the hippocampus is mature.” Yes, I realize that I don’t always correctly apply my theories to my own life.

“Your mind is never completely blank,<sup>59</sup> so why don’t you just describe whatever’s coming into your awareness, even if it doesn’t make sense or feel important.” As soon as I start to describe the above thoughts and images, a huge wave of emotion wells up inside of me, I start sobbing, and I recognize that I’m getting the visual images, thoughts, and emotions from being at the Wetzels and talking to Mom on the phone. At two years old I had not been able to comprehend that she could be so far away and still be talking to me – I figured that if I could hear her voice so clearly she must have been somewhere near by.

*When the content was isolated inside my head, I was not able to **feel its importance** or **perceive its meaning**; but as I described it to Dan, both of these pieces fell into place, and I was able to feel that it was important and to see how it fit into my personal story.*

**b) Person with memory of looking out the window of a car:** In a session where I was facilitating the emotional healing process, the person I was working with initially reported “I’m not getting anything.” However, as I coached her to describe *whatever* was coming into her mind, regardless of whether or not it felt important, she eventually acknowledged that she *had* been getting a mental image, but she also assured me that it didn’t make any sense and was certainly not important. With more coaching, she eventually described “I’m seeing myself in the car with my family – I’m sitting in the car, looking out the window as we drive down the highway.” And as she continued to talk about and focus on this image, she realized that it was from the beginning of a trip that ended in deep rejection – it was from the beginning of an unresolved traumatic memory that was anchoring an important rejection lie.

*When the content was isolated inside her head, she was not able to **feel its importance** or **perceive its meaning**; but as she described it to me, both of these pieces fell into place, and she was able to feel that it was important and to see how it fit into her personal story.*

**c) “Pulu did it”:** In another session the person I was working with commented: “I’m not getting anything – I’m just getting gibberish.” But when I asked “What kind of gibberish?” and encourage her to describe *whatever* was coming into her mind, regardless of whether or not it felt important, she reported “I just keep getting the words ‘Pulu Did It’.” “Who’s Pulu? And what did she do?” I asked, thinking that maybe Pulu was the name of an internal child part. “No” she responded, “It’s the name of a children’s book I got in the mail yesterday,” and then immediately went on to make several spontaneous comments about things that had upset her about the book. I asked her to focus on these comments and ask the Lord to show her what He wanted her to know about them, and within five minutes these comments had led to an important connection to traumatic childhood memories.

*When the content was isolated inside her head, she was not able to **feel its importance** or **perceive its meaning**; but as she described it to me, both of these pieces fell into place, and she was able to feel that it was important and to see how it fit into her personal story.*

---

<sup>59</sup> The one exception to “Your mind is never completely blank” is when internal parts and/or demonic spirits are deliberately creating the specific, unusual phenomena in which you truly perceive your internal mental awareness to be “completely blank.” However, once you know this it is no longer a problem, because whenever you encounter “completely blank” you will realize this actually means you need to deal with internal parts and/or demonic spirits intentionally blocking whatever would otherwise be coming forward.

**2. Neurological case study:** Another collection of data points I want to present come from a fascinating case study described by Dr. Antonio Damasio.<sup>60</sup> Elliot was doing well personally, professionally, and socially. He was a good husband and father. He was very intelligent and talented, and had a good job with a successful business firm. He was a role model for his younger siblings and colleagues. And then he began to make poor decisions. For example, he might spend the entire afternoon on a series of tasks that were interesting but less important, while neglecting to prepare for a crucial meeting scheduled for the next morning. The tasks he did focus on would be done well, but then he would show up the next morning and be totally unprepared for the meeting. And these poor decisions were not an occasional accident, but rather became a consistent problem to the point that he could not be counted on to perform an appropriate action when it was expected. At this same time he also developed severe headaches, and it was eventually discovered that he had a large, fast growing brain tumor. The tumor was benign, and was successfully removed, but unfortunately a large area in the right-sided prefrontal cortex had been irreversibly damaged before the problem was corrected.

Elliot continued to make poor decisions so persistently that he eventually lost his job. And another job. And another job. In spite of warnings from several friends, he invested his life's savings with a questionable business partner, and then lost all of his money when the venture ended in bankruptcy. Aside from his persistent difficulty with poor decisions he appeared remarkably normal, and this actually contributed to his problems because his family and friends could not understand why he was behaving so foolishly. His wife, for one, could not deal with this state of affairs, and his marriage eventually ended in divorce. And then his second marriage also ended in divorce. By the time Elliot was sent to Dr. Damasio he was unemployed, twice divorced, bankrupt, and in the custody of one of his siblings.

Dr. Damasio was asked to see Elliot because he had lost his disability income. The problem was that he appeared to be so normal the disability investigators concluded he simply did not want to work. As Dr. Damasio proceeded with his evaluation, he was increasingly able to understand why the disability investigators had decided to discontinue Elliot's assistance – to his surprise, he could not demonstrate any objective impairment *even with an exhaustive battery of every psychological testing procedure that might possibly be relevant*. Standardized IQ testing showed his intelligence to be superior; normal performance on the Wisconsin Card Sorting Test demonstrated basic logical competence and the ability to change mental set; normal performance on specialized tests developed by Shallice and Evans<sup>61</sup> revealed that he could complete the complex task of making estimates on the basis of incomplete knowledge; he generated a valid profile on the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI); and a variety of additional tests revealed that his perceptual ability, past memory, short-term memory, working memory, attention, new learning, language, and ability to do arithmetic were all intact.

Damasio and his colleagues also developed a number of specialized testing tasks to evaluate whether Elliot could come up with solutions for hypothetical ethical dilemmas and

---

<sup>60</sup> Damasio, Antonio, R. *Descartes' Error: Emotion, Reason, and the Human Brain*. (New York, NY: Avon Books), 1994, pages 34-51, 205-222.

<sup>61</sup> For detailed description and discussion of these specialized testing tasks, see Shallice, Tim, and Evans, Margaret E., "The involvement of the frontal lobes in cognitive estimation," *Cortex*, 1978, Vol. 14, pages 294-303.

hypothetical business problems, whether he could predict the *practical* consequences of hypothetical events, whether he was aware of the *social* consequences of hypothetical actions, whether he could generate a variety of different options for how to respond in hypothetical situations, and whether he could conceptualize efficacious means for achieving a variety of hypothetical social goals. Elliot performed as well or better than the normal controls on each of these tasks, demonstrating that he still had *cognitive* knowledge of the principles of behavior that he neglected to use day after day in real life. He still had cognitive knowledge of these principles, and could carry on a very coherent and logical discussion of the different considerations involved in all of these *hypothetical* scenarios, *but he was unable to apply any of this knowledge or understanding in his **real life** decisions.*

As I am sure you already realize, one of the most significant points in all of this is the dramatic discrepancy between Elliot's excellent performance on the tests and his dismal performance in real life. Not surprisingly, Dr. Damasio and his colleagues also noticed this dramatic discrepancy, and they wanted to develop new tests that *would* be able to demonstrate Elliot's disability, and that would help to elucidate its source. But how to proceed? They knew that the damage to his prefrontal cortex had resulted in abnormalities in his brain function; but what were these abnormalities that caused him to perform so poorly in real life, but that did not affect his performance on the many different testing tasks? And they knew that the challenges encountered in real life must include component tasks that Elliot could not perform; but what were these tasks that he so persistently failed to navigate in everyday living, but that were obviously not included in the tests that he completed so successfully?

Two clues led Dr. Damasio and his colleagues to develop fascinating testing procedures that finally provided the explanation for Elliot's puzzling disabilities. The first clue was noticing that Elliot lacked normal emotional responses to situations that would be expected to upset the average person, the clearest example being Elliot's lack of negative emotions regarding his own tragic story. All of the testing had focused on Elliot's *cognitive* abilities, but as Dr. Damasio spent hours talking with him about every detail of his story, he slowly realized that Elliot's minimal display of *emotion* was not just the result of a stoic personality, but rather an abnormal lack of emotional response. And so the thought occurred to him: "Could Elliot's problems somehow be linked to his impaired emotions?"

A comment from Elliot supplied the second clue. At the end of a session of working on the specialized testing tasks described above – after coming up with many plausible, reasonable ways in which he might handle the hypothetical situation that had been presented – Elliot commented spontaneously: "And after all this, I still wouldn't know what to do!" Pondering this comment, Dr. Damasio realized that the specialized testing tasks had included formulation of alternatives, reasoning through costs and benefits, identifying possible consequences, etc – all of this being *logical discussion of the principles* – but the tests had *not* included the *bottom line of having to make decisions or choices with actual consequences*. As Damasio points out: "Real life has a way of forcing you into choices," (Page 49) and choices in real life have consequences. And so the thought occurred to him: "Could Elliot's problems come from difficulty at the point where he has to make an actual choice with real life consequences?"

In response to these thoughts, Damasio and his colleagues set out to design testing procedures that would simulate the complexity and uncertainty of real life, that would require choices

with consequences, and that would include the assessment of emotional response.<sup>62</sup> They came up with a testing scenario that involved simulated gambling. The test subject, or “player,” was given \$2,000 of very real-looking play money, and told to lose as little as possible and make as much as possible. The player would then sit in front of four decks of cards, and would pick cards, one at a time, from whichever decks he chose. The only information the player received was that *every* card would indicate some amount of money that would be paid to him, and that some of the cards would also indicate a penalty he would have to pay to the experimenter. The algorithms for the actual numbers on each card in two of the decks were designed so that these decks were “slow but safe” – the rewards were small, but the penalties were also small, so that the subject would consistently win, over the course of the whole game, when pulling cards from these slow but safe decks. The other two decks were “fast,” with each reward being much higher, but these “fast” decks were also dangerous, with occasional penalties that were so large that the subjects would consistently lose, over the course of the whole game, if they persisted in pulling cards from these fast but dangerous decks.

The details of the experiment were designed to be very complex, with lots of variability, lots of unpredictability, no patterns that were easy to identify, and the participants were not allowed to take notes or make calculations. The point of all this was to produce a very complicated situation with no clear right or wrong answers – a situation where the participants could not use their left hemisphere analytical systems to solve the problem by figuring out the underlying algorithms and thereby coming up with a logical plan that would guarantee success. *Just as often happens in real life*, they had to use right hemisphere intuitive assessment to come up with “best guess” decisions in a very complex situation with many variables and no clear right or wrong answers.

The results of this experiment were fascinating, and revealed that Damasio and his colleagues had designed the first laboratory task that could measure the functional difficulty displayed by people with frontal lobe damage such as Elliot’s. Normal subjects initially sampled all decks, and often showed early preference for the “fast” decks, but then always moved to the safe decks by the time they had pulled 30 cards. They then stayed with the safe decks, and although their games went more slowly, with smaller rewards, they consistently won. Elliot, on the other hand, did not do this. He continued with a strong preference for the fast but dangerous decks throughout the entire experiment, even though he went bankrupt half way through the game and had to take “loans” from the experimenter. One of the most intriguing data points is that by the end of the game Elliot had figured out, *cognitively*, that the two “fast” decks were bad; but although he *cognitively understood* this key principle, he was *not able to apply it when actually playing the game*.

The second part of the testing setup was that the investigators used skin conductance to measure the subjects emotional responses throughout their participation in the card game gambling scenario.<sup>63</sup> The results from this part of the study were also fascinating. *After each*

---

<sup>62</sup> For a more detailed discussion of this fascinating research, see: Bechara, Antoine; Damasio, Antonio R.; Damasio, Hanna; & Anderson, Steven W., “Insensitivity to future consequences following damage to human prefrontal cortex.” *Cognition*, 1994, Vol. 50, pages 7-15.

<sup>63</sup> For a more detailed discussion of this part of the study, see: Bechara, Antoine; Tranel, Daniel; Damasio, Hanna; & Damasio, Antonio R., “Failure to respond autonomically to anticipated future outcomes following damage to prefrontal cortex.” *Cerebral Cortex*, March/April 1996, Vol. 6, pages



card was turned – when they would see the results of each choice – Elliot’s skin conductance responses were similar to those of normal subjects; but there was a dramatic difference regarding their responses *before* turning each card. Normals had an increasingly intense skin conductance response *warning them of danger before taking cards from the dangerous decks*. As they reached for the danger decks, their spontaneous, intuitive, emotional response (measured by skin conductance) said “oh, oh, oh – danger, danger,” and this response steadily increased the longer they played the game. However, *the right prefrontal injury patients showed no skin conductance responses prior to choosing from the dangerous decks*. The emotion-based intuitive guidance system, indicated by the skin conductance, was not working to contribute intuitive, emotion-based warning; *and this matched exactly their hard to identify, but hugely disabling problems in real life*.

Finally, all the pieces fit together. Elliot’s life had fallen apart because his ability to make real life decisions was greatly impaired, and he had this difficulty with real life decisions because he could not *feel* what was important. He could endlessly discuss all of the cognitive, logical considerations, *but he couldn’t feel which considerations were more important*. He could logically analyze all of the different factors involved, *but he consistently made bad choices because he had lost his right sided intuitive guidance system that had previously enable him to feel the relative importance of the different considerations, and that had enabled him to feel whether a given bottom line decision was “good” or “bad.”* Elliot was crippled in the real life world of pervasive complexity and uncertainty, where we constantly rely on our intuitive, emotion-based system to augment our logical, analytical system. For example, Elliot could correctly formulate and logically discuss all the considerations that should contribute to scheduling the events of his next week, but he might make the very poor final decision of skipping his daughter’s birthday party in favor of getting his hair cut *because he could not feel that his daughter’s birthday party was more important than making sure to get his hair cut before the weekend, and he could not feel that it would be bad to miss his daughter’s party*.

And for the purposes of this discussion, it is important to remember the brain tumor at the beginning of the case study – *all of these problems were caused by damage to Elliot’s right prefrontal cortex*.

**3. Other information regarding the prefrontal cortex:** A large body of case studies and other research provides additional pieces to the puzzle:

- a.) the right prefrontal cortex is the primary area for interactions with other people, and especially for face to face communication (for example, this part of the brain watches and interprets other people’s facial expressions and voice tones, and generates appropriate facial expressions and voice tones in response);
- b.) the left prefrontal cortex is especially involved in language-based communication; and
- c.) both right and left prefrontal cortices are heavily involved in perceiving the meaning of a particular piece of mental content, and especially perceiving how any particular mental content fits into your personal autobiographical story.

**4. Returning to “Describe everything that comes into your awareness”:** So, putting all the pieces together – Elliot’s right prefrontal brain injury, his impaired decision-making in real life, the normal results from most psychological tests, the gambling decision-making research, the skin conductance research, our experience with Theophostic-based therapy and Immanuel Interventions, and additional research regarding the functions of both right and left prefrontal cortices – I have come up with the following set of hypotheses regarding why it is so important to describe everything that comes into our awareness:

- We need the right-sided pre-frontal cortex to be online<sup>64</sup> to be able to *feel* the importance of our internal mental content. In the same way that Elliot couldn’t *feel* any guidance from his damaged pre-frontal cortex, if we don’t have the right-sided pre-frontal cortex on line, we can look right at important internal mental content and not *feel* it’s importance. This is what often happens when we are in an emotional healing session and do *not* describe everything that comes into our awareness.
- We need both the right and left prefrontal cortices online to be able to recognize the meaning of our internal mental content, and especially to recognize how a given piece of content relates to our personal autobiographical story. If we *don’t* have both pre-frontal cortices on line, we can look right at important internal mental content and not recognize how it relates to our personal autobiographical story. This is what often happens when we are in an emotional healing session and do *not* describe everything that comes into our awareness.
- The *social interaction task* of communicating with the therapist/facilitator, especially face to face communication, causes the content you are describing to be processed through the right prefrontal cortex.
- The *language task* of getting words to describe your mental content causes the content to be processed through the left prefrontal cortex.
- **Therefore, when you describe your mental content to another person, the combination of the *social interaction task* and the *language task* causes the content you are describing to be processed through both the right and left prefrontal cortices, and thereby enables you to feel the importance of the content you are describing, to perceive the meaning of the content your are describing, and especially to perceive how the content fits into your personal autobiographical story.**

**5. Upgrading from partial to full benefits:** Furthermore, even if you *can* feel that something is important and *can* correctly perceive it’s meaning, you will often miss a large percentage of the positive power if you keep it to yourself. My experience during a THRIVE conference exercise several years ago provides a good example. We were doing a devotional exercise, with instructions along the lines of “Pay attention to any images or thoughts or emotions that come into your awareness. Write them down, and trust that they are from the

---

<sup>64</sup> It may be more accurate to say “If a particular piece of mental content is not processed through the right-sided pre-frontal cortex,” as opposed to “If the right-sided pre-frontal cortex is not online.” This may be more consistent with the full body of data, in that a person can often feel the importance of some mental content at the same time they are unable to feel the importance of other content. This would indicate that the problem is not the R pre-frontal cortex being offline, but rather that some of the mental content is not being processed through it for some reason.

Lord...etc.” Often when I would try this kind of exercise, I would not get anything that I perceived to be from the Lord, and so would usually end up disappointed, frustrated, and triggered. So my initial response was not exactly positive. I was thinking:

“This kind of thing never works for me. For example, right now I get an image of His smiling face, but I can feel that it’s an imagination image that I’m generating as I think ‘So what would it look like if I could see His face?’ And I have the thought ‘I’m glad to be with you,’ but I can feel that this is just a thought that I’m generating in answer to my own question ‘So what would the Lord say?’”

And then suddenly I had a second mental image of His face, but this image was spontaneous, unexpected, not initiated by me, much more engaging, and had a smile that was *alive*. At the moment I perceived this new, spontaneous image of Jesus’ face, the thought came into my mind: “Just because you can accurately guess that I’m here and that I’m glad to be with you doesn’t make it not true – just because you accurately deduce these truths doesn’t disqualify them!” And the sense I had was that He said this with a smile and a chuckle – He wasn’t upset with me or rebuking me, but rather was on my side, and laughing *with* me regarding my logical error and spiritual fussing.

At the time this occurred, my initial response was surprisingly mild. I did recognize “I think this is really the Lord. I think this image and thought are actually from Him,” and I had a vague subjective sense that it was real and important, but both pieces of this initial reaction were quite subdued. However, later in the day as I described this experience to Charlotte, intense emotions began welling up as I was telling the story and I had a much clearer, keener perception of what it meant. Until I described the experience to Charlotte, I had not been able to *fully* feel its importance or to *fully* comprehending its meaning. As I think about this now, it seems that I had been *missing 90% of the blessing* until I talked to Charlotte about it.

Watching groups doing Immanuel exercises provides another good example. We have facilitated group Immanuel exercises that included breaking up into small groups so that the participants can apply this principle in describing their experiences to each other. As I observed those participating in the exercise, I noticed that people would usually be fairly calm while they were waiting to share – they had completed the exercise *internally*, but they were waiting to share with the rest of the group. And then these same people would *come alive emotionally* as they described the details of their experience with the others in their small group. When people are just doing the exercise in their own heads, I see smiles, nods, and observable emotions with levels of intensity between 1 and 3 (on a scale of 1 to 10); and then as they share with the group, I see tears, laughter, and observable emotions with levels of intensity between 3 and 7.

**6. Compelling explanation helps (the reason I’m giving you this information):** As mentioned above, Dr. Smith has taught “describe everything that comes into your awareness” as a part of the Theophostic process for years. However, my observation is that this simple directive is amazingly hard to implement when you are the one receiving healing. Even after being *repeatedly* instructed to “report everything,” it is still very easy to leave out the things that *feel* unimportant: “Yes, I know I’m supposed to report everything, but that can’t *really* apply to the things that I’m *sure* aren’t important.”

Regarding this point, there is a striking similarity between what I observe in emotional healing sessions and Elliot’s experience. Extensive psychological testing demonstrated that

Elliot had a cognitive understanding of the principles regarding how to navigate life, but somehow being unable to *feel* their importance at the point they were relevant got in the way of actually being able to apply them in real life. In the card game, he eventually figured out the key principle that certain decks were dangerous, but somehow being unable to *feel* this danger at the point it was relevant got in the way of applying this knowledge when he was actually playing the game. ***And this same phenomena occurs with the “Describe everything” directive!*** We understand this principle *cognitively*, but somehow being unable to *feel* it at the point it is relevant gets in the way of actually applying it – we have a cognitive understanding of the principle, but somehow being unable to *feel* the importance of the mental content gets in the way of actually choosing to describe it.

My own experience provides an especially clear example. I understood this instruction with respect to process, and I was convinced that it was valid and important because I had seen it happen in front of me so many times. I consistently taught that this was an important principle, and even wrote an entire essay about the importance of making sure to describe *everything* that comes into your awareness. But in spite of all of this, I would still frequently fail to apply this principle in my own sessions. Somehow, when I was inside my own sessions, being unable to *feel* the importance of certain mental content got in the way of actually choosing to describe it. When I was inside my own sessions, it was *so* difficult to take the time and energy to report things that *truly, truly, truly felt* unimportant. “I know what I tell everybody else, and I know I’ve missed things in my own sessions when I didn’t report everything, but *these* thoughts/images/physical sensations (fill in the blank) are *truly* just distractions. I *will* ‘report everything’ *if it’s important.*”

Deep down in our experiential, intuitive, right hemisphere “guts,” it’s really hard to believe something might be important when it doesn’t *feel* important; and in the middle of a session (especially when we’re more triggered and blended than we realize), it’s *sooo* hard to report something when we truly don’t believe that it might be important.

Here’s the good news, and the reason I have just taken all this time to present this material: I have noticed a dramatic change in my behavior since coming to these conclusions regarding the underlying brain science. In sessions where I’m receiving, when I become aware of mental content that does not *feel* important, I find myself thinking about the material I’ve just presented, and it is so compelling that it consistently tips the balance. I can *feel* that being aware of this material helps me choose to go ahead and report things even when they don’t feel important. I have also observed this same benefit for people I work with – a clear understanding of this material helps them to more consistently implement the directive to “report everything.”

**7. Complexity, variability:** There is obviously some complexity with respect to these circuits/this phenomena, since sometimes thoughts, emotions, images, etc come into our conscious awareness and we *are* able to feel the importance and perceive the meaning *even though we are not describing it out loud to another person*. Some people seem to prefer to process internally at times, and this is okay *as long as it works*. However, as described above, in many situations the person is *not* spontaneously able to feel the importance and perceive the meaning *and he usually has no insight regarding his lack of ability to feel the importance and perceive the meaning of the clues sitting in front of him*. Therefore, it is especially important to coach the person to “describe everything” when things are *not* moving forward and the session seems to be stuck. Furthermore, even with people who like to process internally (without reporting), I invite them to experiment with the “describe everything”

technique to see if this tool will enable them to move forward even more effectively.

**8. Putting it all together:** Putting all these pieces together, the application with respect to the Immanuel approach is that it's very important to coach the person to describe everything that comes into her awareness, *at every point, throughout the Immanuel approach process.*

**9. Practical considerations regarding the “describe everything that comes into your awareness” technique:** As of July 2011, we have had the opportunity to coach hundreds of people in many different settings as they learn to apply these “describe everything that comes into your awareness” principles. As I observe people trying to use this technique, I often see them waiting in silence for a minute,...two minutes,...five minutes,...ten minutes, or even longer, and when I question them regarding their internal experiences during these long pauses it becomes clear that they are waiting for something to come forward that feels important and/or makes sense. In spite of the extensive explanations and instructions, many people still find it amazingly difficult to just start describing their internal mental content even when it doesn't feel important and/or make sense.

Sometimes the images, thoughts, emotions, etc that come forward *do* feel important and make sense. For example, images come forward that the person recognizes as coming from memories that match the trigger she was focusing on, or she suddenly has a clear perception of the Lord's tangible presence in a memory that she had already been working with. These are the easy ones, and people have no difficulty reporting these. However, as we have just discussed at length, sometimes the content that comes forward does *not* feel important or make sense, and these are the situations where the “describe everything...” discipline helps us recognize important clues that we would otherwise miss. For example, in several of my own sessions there were points where it seemed like nothing was happening, and all that I was aware of was anxiety that nothing would happen. I didn't mention this because I was waiting for “something else,” but after a *loong* pause I finally reported: “What I'm most aware of is feeling anxious that nothing will happen.” And then I realized that this was part of my triggered fear that the Lord would disappoint me, which turned out to be an important part of what I was working on.

One of the most common scenarios<sup>65</sup> goes something like this:

Client: Long pause, as she waits for something that feels important and/or makes sense.

Karl: “If you can, I'd like you to describe whatever's happening inside, even if it doesn't make sense or feel important.”

Client: “I'm just getting distractions.”

Karl: “If you're willing, I'd like you to describe them – just for kicks.”

Client: “There are a bunch of different images and thoughts, but they're just fragments, they're all jumbled together, and they don't make any sense...it's really hard to get words...”

Karl: “What you're describing is very common, and people usually have difficulty finding words that feel just right, but I'd like you to give it a try and just do the best you can. What we usually see is that the person makes a first attempt, with comments about how difficult it is and how the words don't quite fit, but then as they work at it the picture becomes

---

<sup>65</sup> It is helpful to be familiar with this scenario because recognizing it will enable the client/facilitator team to successfully navigate the situation by prompting them to apply the “describe everything...” technique.



increasingly clear and they eventually find words that feel right. If you're willing, I'd encourage you to do that – just take the image/thought fragments one at a time and do your best to describe them.”

And when the client does this, she is usually surprised to discover that the pieces become increasingly clear and fit together with increasing coherence. Sometimes it takes a few minutes and sometimes it takes half an hour, but when she finishes this process of describing her mental content the pieces usually make sense and fit together in a way that enables her to take the next step forward.

Before moving on I would like to describe another common scenario with which it is helpful to be familiar.<sup>66</sup> In this scenario something comes into the person's awareness, such as a subtle image of Jesus' face accompanied by a thought, but she feels unsure regarding whether she is perceiving the Lord's tangible presence or whether the content is just a construct of her own mind. At this point the person will usually pause, waiting for greater clarity. Unfortunately, in many situations this greater clarity never comes because she is missing significant clues due to her inability to feel their importance and/or recognized their meaning. The person continues to wait...and wait...and wait, and eventually concludes that the process is not working.<sup>67</sup> However, if the facilitator coaches her to apply the “describe everything...” technique the session can look like this:

Client: Long pause as she waits for a greater sense of clarity regarding whether or not she is really perceiving the Lord's presence.

Karl: “If you can, I'd like you to describe whatever's happening inside, even if it doesn't feel important or you're not sure what it means.”

Client: “I don't think it's working.”

Karl: “If we *do* discern that the process isn't working then we'll ask the Lord to show us what's in the way, but for now I'd like you to just describe whatever's coming into your awareness.”

Client: “I think maybe I'm just making it up.”

Karl: “If we discern that your own mind *is* making things up – in an attempt to ‘help’ the process work, or for some other reason – we can ask the Lord to help us sort that one out; but if you're able to, I'd like you to start with just describing whatever has come into your awareness.”

Client: “Well, I'm still in the memory, but now I have a subtle sense of the Lord's presence. (Pause) It's very faint, but I see an image of Jesus standing next to my Mom. (Pause) The thought comes: ‘if you were to get into a situation like this again you could respond differently.’ And He's showing me how the situation could have been handled much more constructively. *But it's all so faint – I'm not sure if it's really Jesus, or whether I'm just making it up.*”

Karl: “Were you thinking about ways in which the Lord might intervene, and then proactively imagining these images, thoughts, and insights, or was it all a surprise?”

Client: “Oh, it was totally a surprise. I was thinking about the memory, worrying that nothing would happen, and then I had the image of Jesus standing beside my mother and

---

<sup>66</sup> Again, recognizing this scenario will enable the client/facilitator team to successfully navigate the situation by prompting them to apply the “describe everything...” technique.

<sup>67</sup> Or, at the very least, she needlessly wastes time circling in confusion because she is unable to recognize the clues that would clarify the situation.

the thoughts came into my mind.”

Karl: “Does the thought that you could respond differently and the insight about the more constructive way in which to handle the situation feel true?”

Client: (Pause) “Yes. Yes they do. They feel totally true.”

Karl: “And how does the memory feel?”

Client: “Well, now that you mention it, it feels peaceful and calm. (Pause) I’m just realizing – this memory always upset me because I felt like I didn’t know how to handle the situation, and I’ve always avoided similar situations because I didn’t want to re-experience that feeling of being overwhelmed and inadequate. *But now it doesn’t bother me to think about it because I feel like I would know what to do.*”

As I ask questions that help the person discuss the details out loud, it usually becomes increasingly clear one way or the other. In some sessions, like the one just described, it becomes increasingly clear that the person is experiencing the Lord’s living, healing, life-changing presence. In other sessions it becomes increasingly clear that the person’s mind is generating the phenomena through proactive imagination. For example, in one session the person reported having the thought, “Where should I put Him?” and then could feel herself constructing an imaginary image of Jesus at the place in the memory where she had decide to “put Him.” Not surprisingly, she was not the least bit surprised by the image she had just constructed, and nothing changed or resolved.

In spite of all the teaching and instructions regarding the “describe everything...” technique, people in situations like these will sit quietly for many long minutes while they wait for something that feels important and/or makes sense. Therefore, when people are first practicing with this technique I encourage them to experiment with very deliberately limiting pauses to one to two minutes, or even twenty to thirty seconds. If the person receiving ministry is still silent at the end of this designated pause the facilitator offers a gentle prompt along the lines of: “I realize additional material may come forward with more time, but just go ahead and report whatever has come into your awareness, even if it doesn’t feel important or make sense yet.”

Another simple technique that is especially helpful for those who are just getting started is to observe the person’s face, and when you notice facial expressions that indicate thoughts going through his mind prompt him with a simple observation and invitation, such as: “I just noticed your brow furrow, and I’m guessing that thoughts of some kind were associated with the facial expression. Would you be okay describing them?” or “I just saw a thought go across your face – could you tell me about it?”

## **10. Several important caveats regarding “describe everything that comes into your awareness:**

**a) Not a mandate to say things you are not yet comfortable disclosing:** The “describe everything” relational discipline is *not* a mandate to force yourself to say things that you don’t yet feel comfortable saying. For example, if a particularly painful, vulnerable, unresolved traumatic memory comes to mind, the “describe everything” discipline is not a mandate to force yourself to talk about it. One option is to describe the painful content in general terms, so that the other person will have some idea of what you’re dealing with. You can also say something even more general, such as: “Some things have come to mind that I know are important, but I’m not comfortable saying more about them.” In some situations you can continue working with the upsetting material by engaging directly with

Jesus, but just not describing the details out loud. In other situations you will want to work with Jesus to shut down the upsetting content, and then come back to this material at some later time when optimal support is available. In either case, it's important to let the other(s) know what's going on so they can provide support and avoid misinterpreting the session (for example, erroneously concluding that "it didn't work – nothing happened").

As just discussed above, the "describe everything" discipline is trying to address the problem of choosing to not describe mental content because it does *not feel important*, because it does *not "make sense"* (you don't understand how it pertains to the current focus of your session), or because it has *not yet been nicely packaged*. Choosing to not describe mental content because it's too embarrassing, too frightening, or too upsetting for some other reason is a completely different phenomena. Again, if something comes into your awareness that you don't want to talk about, you do *not* have to describe the details if you don't feel comfortable doing so. For additional discussion of how to navigate situations where you're reluctant to report what's happening because it's too upsetting, see "Not Reporting Everything – An Especially Sneaky Form of Interference."<sup>68</sup>

**b) Not a mandate to say things that will cause conflict or be upsetting/hurtful to others:** The "describe everything" relational discipline is *not* a mandate to force yourself to say things that will cause conflict or be upsetting/hurtful to others. Again, the "describe everything" discipline is trying to address the problem of choosing to not describe mental content because it does *not feel important*, because it does *not "make sense"*, or because it has *not yet been nicely packaged*. Choosing to not describe mental content because it would cause conflict or be hurtful/upsetting to others, *and/or you perceive this is not the right time or place to address the issue*, is a completely different phenomena. Feel free to withhold your thoughts or "save them for later" if something comes into your awareness and you perceive it would not be helpful to describe this particular mental content at this particular time.

**c) Not left hemisphere analysis:** The "describe everything" relational discipline is *not* about giving left hemisphere theoretical, analytical monologues every time something reminds you of a subject you have thought a lot about. For example, if I'm in a conversation and the other person mentions psychological trauma, her comment might remind me of an essay I've been working on and I could easily launch into an hour of extemporaneous comments related to the topic. The person I'm talking to might even be interested in the topic and welcome my comments, but this would *not* be an application of the "describe everything" discipline we're presenting here. In contrast, application of the describe everything discipline would look like this: I'm in a conversation, the other person mentions psychological trauma, and her comment reminds me of the essay I've been working on. At this point, I notice both the association and my internal response to it, and comment: "I've just spent the last week working on an essay about faith-based interventions for resolving psychological trauma, and your comment brings to mind some of the stuff I've been studying and writing. And I can feel an emotional response as well – just thinking about it for a few seconds, I can feel how passionate I am about the subject. If you ever want to hear more I'd be happy to tell you about it."

---

<sup>68</sup> Lehman, Karl D., "Not Reporting Everything – An Especially Sneaky Form of Interference," "About Our Theophostic-based Emotional Healing Ministry/Therapy" section, "Documents" page, [www.kclehman.com](http://www.kclehman.com).

One more time: the “describe everything” discipline is trying to address the problem of choosing to not describe mental content because it does *not feel important*, because it does *not “make sense”*, or because it has *not yet been nicely packaged*. Choosing to not talk about the content of my essay because other considerations and social cues indicate this is not the place for a lecture on psychological trauma is a completely different phenomena.

**G. Facilitator establish interactive connection, and constantly ask the Lord for guidance:**

Points to be included in this section for the final document:

\*Discussion of the appropriate place for direction/leadership from the facilitator (direction with respect to the process is important and helpful, direction/suggestion with respect to memory content is dangerous and to be avoided)

\*Discussion of the difference between appropriate direction/leadership/discernment from the facilitator, and input that is not appropriate in the context of an Immanuel session (advice, confrontation, cognitive therapy, generational deliverance initiated and lead by the facilitator, trying to fix the problem by providing more information, etc).

\*Description of the ideal way in which the facilitator can provide direction/discernment/guidance/leadership: Primary focus is on coaching the person to get direction from Jesus, but the facilitator should also establish an interactive connection, constantly ask for guidance, pay attention to whatever comes into her awareness, and share this with the recipient (as appropriate).

\*The importance of the recipient making the final call with respect to what to do with guidance/input from facilitator, but caution to not lose the valuable resource of discernment/guidance through the facilitator due to inappropriate fear about being directive/suggestive.

\*Discussion of the importance of the facilitator building an Immanuel approach *lifestyle*, including ongoing Immanuel approach emotional healing, so that his interactive connection and guidance will be as strong as possible (among other things, eliminate trauma so that triggered implicit memory does not impair his interactive connection and discernment).

\*Practical tips: for example, tips on how to use active listening, paraphrasing, and offering possible options as part of helping the person recognize, understand, and get words for the content that comes into her mental awareness (and how to do this without suggesting memory content).

**H. Faith<sup>69</sup> (in the Lord’s presence, in the Lord’s goodness, in the Lord’s guidance, and in the effectiveness of the Immanuel approach and Immanuel interventions):** My perception is that faith helps. Although the Lord is amazingly gracious, and often works even in the face of minimal faith, it seems that faith does contribute to the efficacy of our prayers in releasing the Lord’s will for healing in any given situation. In ways I don’t fully understand, faith cooperates with the Lord’s intentions and makes it possible for Him to work more powerfully.

---

<sup>69</sup> Note that the comments here with respect to the Immanuel approach also apply to Theophostic and any other Christ-centered emotional healing ministries.

**1. Biblical teaching:** I'm not a theologian, and have not done a careful theological study regarding the role and importance of faith in emotional healing, but I think we can all agree that passages such as the following indicate that faith is important:

Matt 9:27-31, especially verse 29: "...Then He touched their eyes and said, 'Because of your faith, it will happen....'"

Mark 6: 1-5, especially verse 5: "...And because of their unbelief, he couldn't do any mighty miracles among them except to place his hands on a few sick people and heal them."

Luke 7:37-50, especially verse 50: "...And Jesus said to the woman, 'Your faith has saved you; go in peace.'"

Luke 17:11-19, especially verse 19: "...And Jesus said to the man, 'Stand up and go. Your faith has made you well.'"

**2. Our experience and observations:** Both Charlotte and I have noticed that it is easier to work with people who have strong faith. When a person comes in expecting to connect with the Lord and to get healing, the session goes more smoothly and the positive results are more dramatic.

Both Charlotte and I have also noticed greater efficacy when *our* faith is strong. We observed this most clearly the first several times we returned to Evanston after attending Theophostic training events where Dr. Smith had provided a series of live demonstration sessions. Most days would include some lectures, but occasionally the entire day was invested in demonstration sessions. On one of these days, the morning would start with Dr. Smith picking a volunteer from the audience – maybe a person who reports that she has panic attacks whenever she thinks about a certain subject. Dr. Smith would lead her through the Theophostic process, and in anywhere from 20 to 90 minutes she would find the underlying traumatic memories, focus the distorted interpretations, and identify and resolve blockages. Jesus would then bring truth to replace the distorted interpretations, and she would report that she could now think about the triggering subject without the least twinge of anxiety, let alone panic. There would be 20 to 30 minutes for questions and discussion regarding the session, and then we would take a break for cookies and hot chocolate.

After the break, Dr. Smith would choose another volunteer – maybe a middle-aged man who describes a problematic compulsive behavior. Dr. Smith would lead him through the Theophostic process, and in anywhere from 20 to 90 minutes he would find the underlying traumatic memories, focus the distorted interpretations, and identify and resolve blockages. Jesus would then bring truth to replace the distorted interpretations, and he would report that he could now think about the most intensely triggering situations without the slightest impulse towards his previous compulsive behavioral response. There would be 20 to 30 minutes for questions and discussion regarding the session, and then we would take a break for lunch.

We would come back from lunch, and Dr. Smith would pick another volunteer – maybe an older woman who asks for help with persistent feelings of self-hatred. Dr. Smith would lead her through the Theophostic process, and in anywhere from 20 to 90 minutes she would find the underlying traumatic memories, focus the distorted interpretations, and identify and



resolve blockages. Jesus would then bring truth to replace the distorted interpretations, and she would be able to talk about events that had always especially stirred up self-hatred, but now without feeling the slightest self-condemnation. There would be 20 to 30 minutes for questions and discussion regarding the session, and then we would take a break for crackers, cheese, and soda.

After the break, Dr. Smith would choose another volunteer – maybe a 35 year old man who experienced persistent guilt about getting his high-school girlfriend pregnant and then pushing her to get an abortion, even though he had confessed this sin and asked the Lord’s forgiveness on hundreds of occasions. Dr. Smith would lead him through the Theophostic process, and in anywhere from 20 to 90 minutes he would go through the memories for these events (and also any related unresolved traumatic memories), focus the distorted interpretations, and identify and resolve blockages. Jesus would then bring truth to replace the distorted interpretations, and the volunteer would report that he still knows his choices were wrong, but that now he finally feels forgiven. There would be 20 to 30 minutes for questions and discussion regarding the session, and then we would take a break for supper. Occasionally, Dr. Smith would facilitate one last session in the evening.

By the end of one of these seminars we had usually seen at least 10 - 15 sessions in which the person appeared to receive permanent healing for significant traumatic memories. Both Charlotte and I could sense that watching session after session after session of effective healing was tremendously faith-building, we could both sense a dramatic increase in the positive results in our work when we returned home, and we both perceived that at least part of this dramatic increase resulted from our increased faith.

**3. Psychological factors that contribute:** In addition to the somewhat mysterious ways in which faith releases *spiritual* authority and power for healing, there are also fairly straightforward psychological factors that contribute to the beneficial effects of faith. For example, faith encourages persistence in trouble shooting, increases capacity, and protects against interference from discouragement and triggering.

Faith in the effectiveness of the Immanuel approach and Immanuel interventions – the deep conviction that they should always work, *and if they do not, then there is a reason* – especially encourages persistence in trouble shooting. My experience with advanced physics problems in college provides a helpful analogy. In the advanced level physics classes, a single homework assignment problem might take five to six hours of work and ten to twelve pages of calculations to solve. However, my classmates and I would be incredibly persistent when working on these problems *because we knew there was an answer – we knew the textbook would not give us problems that could not be solved*. As we were working on these problems, *we knew* that there was some way to make it work, and we would persist in trouble shooting until we found the solution.

**4. Practical considerations with respect to increasing faith:** Fortunately, there are specific, concrete, accessible things we can do to increase our faith.

**a) Resolve level 5 distorted interpretations that undermine faith:** Many traumatic memories contain distorted interpretations that become “anti-faith” lies when they come forward as implicit memory and are transferred onto the Lord. For example, level 5 distorted interpretations from my 2 year old separation trauma, such as “He won’t come

when I need Him,” and “I can’t trust His heart towards me” become “*anti-faith*” beliefs when they come forward as implicit memory and get transferred onto the Lord. These anti-faith beliefs are *diametrically opposed* to faith and *inherently incompatible* with faith because you cannot simultaneously believe “He won’t come when I need Him” and “He is always with me,” you cannot simultaneously believe “I can’t trust the Lord’s heart towards me” and “The Lord loves me, and I can trust Him to care for me.” At any given moment, to the extent that the anti-faith lies are triggered forward and feel true, the opposing truth about the Lord will *not* feel true. This phenomena is very common and important, and we usually do not perceive the true source of the thoughts and feelings regarding the Lord due to the fact that *the triggered content comes forward as “invisible” implicit memory.*<sup>70</sup>

The good news is that we can resolve these anti-faith beliefs! We can find and resolve the traumatic memory files that contain the anti-faith beliefs, and when we resolve the underlying traumatic memories, the anti-faith distorted interpretations will be permanently resolved. Each time we resolve a traumatic memory that contains anti-faith distorted interpretations, the truth about the Lord’s heart and character will *feel* more true, and it will be easier to hold onto this truth. (We will notice especially dramatic beneficial change with respect to situations that had previously triggered the trauma-associated anti-faith beliefs.)

I *know* this is true because it has happened repeatedly in my own life. My 2 year old experience of being separated from my parents once again provides a good example. As described in Part IV, any time I would become stuck in a situation that felt overwhelming, and call out to the Lord for help, but then not be able to perceive His presence or help, my interactions with the Lord in the present would match my interactions with my parents in the original memory sufficiently to activate the beliefs and emotions from the 2 year old separation. The beliefs and emotions from the 2 year old separation trauma would then come forward as implicit memory and get transferred onto the Lord – it would *feel intensely true* that I couldn’t trust God’s heart towards me because He chooses to allow things for which there is no possible justification, it would *feel intensely true* that He’s not with me now, and won’t come even though I call and call for Him, and it would *feel intensely true* that He won’t help me when I’m overwhelmed by a situation and need His help. And since all of this would come forward as “invisible” implicit memory, I would have no awareness or insight regarding “oh, these thoughts and emotions are coming from traumatic childhood memories.” Instead, it would *feel true, subjectively*, that the thoughts and emotions were *about the Lord*, and that they were true *in the present*.

However, these long-standing and very costly anti-faith beliefs have been steadily losing power as different pieces of the 2 year old separation trauma have been getting healed. There are still splinters that can get triggered when I’m dealing with especially intense and prolonged frustration and disappointment, but now I often encounter difficult, frustrating, disappointing situations *without getting triggered, even when I ask the Lord for help and do not perceive any tangible response*. Instead of feeling triggered, hopeless, overwhelmed, abandoned by the Lord, alienated from the Lord, and bitter, now what usually feels true is: “I don’t understand why You’re allowing this mess, and it’s really hard; but I know that You’re with me, and because of who You are, that’s enough.”

---

<sup>70</sup> If you are not familiar with how “invisible” implicit memory, the verbal logical explainer, and confabulation can hide the true source of trauma-anchored lies, please read chapters 2 through 5 in *Outsmarting Yourself*, and the section on Implicit memory in Part III of the “Brain Science, Psychological Trauma, and the God Who Is with Us” essay series.

And this is only one of many examples from my personal experience. For a number of additional examples of how traumatic experiences can include distorted interpretations that function as anti-faith beliefs, and of how resolving these trauma-associated anti-faith beliefs can strengthen our usable faith in the present, see: “Dad/God isn’t all-knowing or all-powerful: A case study and discussion,”<sup>71</sup> “Case study: ‘God the psychotic cult leader,’”<sup>72</sup> and “Unresolved issues in the facilitator: One of the most important hindrances to emotional healing ministry.”<sup>73</sup>

The *Father-Son Wounds* DVD provides a particularly powerful example of emotional healing and the resolution of trauma-associated anti-faith beliefs, showing the whole sequence as it unfolds in a live emotional healing session. At the beginning of the session, Rocky is transferring implicit content from memories about his father onto the Lord, so that he *feels* alone as opposed to feeling that the Lord is with him. Referring to his family, friends, colleagues, *and also referring to the Lord*, he states: “It’s like somehow Rocky ends up being alone. No matter what he does, no matter how hard he tries, *even if he’s doing right*, he has to do it by himself – he ends up being alone.” During the session, the Lord leads Rocky to the underlying traumatic memories, where content from painful experiences with his father exactly matches the thoughts and emotions he was perceiving to be true with respect to the Lord. Rocky perceives the Lord’s presence in the memories and interacts with Him to receive healing, and then at the follow-up interview 16 months later, he reports:

“When things would go wrong in my life, my first, knee-jerk, heart response was: ‘Why are You allowing this? Why aren’t You helping me? Lord, where are You – are You out golfing?’ And now when things go wrong, my initial response is: ‘This really stinks – I really don’t like this, *but I know that You’re with me.*’”

My perception is that finding and resolving traumatic memories that contain anti-faith distorted interpretations is one of the most powerful things we can do to increase our usable faith, and I think this is one of the most exciting benefits of the Immanuel approach (or any other effective emotional healing tool).

**b) Truth in non-traumatic memory files (for both client and facilitator):** One of the simplest and most straight-forward things we can do is to load truth about the Lord’s character and heart, truth about Immanuel interventions, and truth about the Immanuel approach into non-traumatic memory files. As discussed in “Brain Science, Psychological Trauma, and the God Who Is with Us, Part III,” loading truth into non-traumatic memory files, *by itself*, will not resolve trauma-associated distorted interpretations that undermine faith; however, truth in non-traumatic memory files is still an important and valuable

---

<sup>71</sup> Lehman, Karl D., “Dad/God isn’t all-knowing or all-powerful: A case study and discussion,” “Examples of Healing” section, “Documents” page, [www.kclehman.com](http://www.kclehman.com).

<sup>72</sup> Lehman, Karl D., “Case study: ‘God the psychotic cult leader,’” “Examples of Healing” section, “Documents” page, [www.kclehman.com](http://www.kclehman.com).

<sup>73</sup> Lehman, Karl D., “Unresolved issues in the facilitator: One of the most important hindrances to emotional healing ministry,” “Understanding and Equipping for the Healing Journey” section, “Documents” page, [www.kclehman.com](http://www.kclehman.com) (see especially pages 15 - 17).

component that contributes to building faith.<sup>74</sup>

When we're thinking about how to build faith, research regarding effective teaching strategies provides helpful guidance. In a fascinating series of studies, Daniel Schwartz and John Bransford compared three groups of students. The first group received *cognitive explanation*, the second group received "hands on" lab *experience*, and the third group received a synchronized, coherent combination of the lecture explanation and lab experience. When the students were tested for usable understanding of the concepts being taught, the combined presentation was found to be ***as much as three times (yes, that's 300%) more effective than either component alone.***<sup>75</sup>

This research, in combination with my own observations and experience, has convinced me that the most powerful, stable, *usable* faith<sup>76</sup> is built by starting with *both* right-hemisphere experiential, intuitive "knowing" and left-hemisphere cognitive logical understanding, and then combining them in a synchronized, coherent final product. Therefore, when it comes to participating in Immanuel interventions and the Immanuel approach, it is helpful for our *left hemisphere* to have a *cognitive, logical understanding* of the underlying theory, so that the plan "makes sense" and is convincing with respect to probable efficacy; and it is also helpful for our *right hemisphere* to have an *intuitive, experiential "knowing"* that the Lord's heart is good, that His character is trustworthy, that He is always present, that people can perceive His presence when blockages are removed, and that the Immanuel approach is consistently effective.

**c) Teaching regarding scriptural foundation:** To the extent that we perceive the Bible to be an authoritative source of truth, it is helpful to have teaching regarding the scriptural support for Immanuel interventions and the Immanuel approach to emotional healing. Charlotte's teaching, *Immanuel: God With Us*, is designed to provide this scriptural foundation. This material is primarily left-hemisphere cognitive information and understanding, but the personal stories also provide a component of right-hemisphere experiential knowing.

**d) Teaching regarding observable data and logical analysis:** To the extent that we experience systematic observation and logical analysis to be helpful, it is valuable to have teaching regarding the case study observations, scientific studies, and logical considerations that support Immanuel interventions and the Immanuel approach to emotional healing. Our presentations in the *Brain Science, Emotional Healing, and the God Who is With Us* series are designed to provide this observational, scientific, and logical foundation. This material is primarily left-hemisphere cognitive information and understanding, but personal stories again also provide a component of right-hemisphere experiential knowing.

---

<sup>74</sup> For additional discussion regarding the role and value of truth in non-trauma memory files, see: Lehman, Karl D., "Immanuel, an especially pernicious blockage, and the normal belief memory system," "Immanuel Series" section, "Documents" page, [www.kclehman.com](http://www.kclehman.com), pages 13-21.

<sup>75</sup> Schwartz, Daniel L.; Bransford, John D., "A Time for Telling", *Cognition and Instruction*, Vol. No. 4, 1998, pages 475 - 572.

<sup>76</sup> Schwartz and Bransford were studying the learning and application of new concepts, as opposed to the building and application of faith, but I think the principle with respect to the special power of *combining* right hemisphere *experiential knowing* with left hemisphere *cognitive understanding* is transferrable.

**e) Personal stories and other case studies/testimonies:** If we have had powerful positive experiences with the Lord, with Immanuel interventions, and with the Immanuel approach, we can share our stories with others. If we know people who have had powerful positive experiences with the Lord, with Immanuel interventions, and with the Immanuel approach, we can ask them to share their stories with us. Although not as powerful, “second hand” stories in the form of written case studies/testimonies can also contribute good raw material for building faith. Just as including vegetables as a regular part of our physical diets will help to build and maintain strong bodies, I think including stories of the Lord’s presence, goodness, and faithfulness as a regular part of our spiritual diets will help to build and maintain strong faith. Personal stories, case studies, and testimonies can be an excellent source for both left hemisphere cognitive information and right hemisphere experiential knowing.

**f) Observe actual sessions:** Even more powerful than hearing stories is observing actual sessions. It is an amazingly powerful and faith-building experience to watch the Lord heal someone, right in front of you. For those of us who are privileged to be in various situations where we can regularly observe live sessions, let us remember to appreciate this gift. For those who are not able to observe live sessions, video recordings of actual sessions can be almost as powerful with respect to encouraging faith. (Even though I have watched them many, many times during the editing process, I still feel tangible faith encouragement each time I view one of our ministry session DVDs). Observing actual sessions will especially contribute right-hemisphere experiential knowing.

**g) First hand experience:** There’s nothing like building our own, *first hand*, personal positive experiences, both participating in Immanuel interventions and the Immanuel approach to emotional healing for ourselves, and also facilitating for others. A growing pile of our own, first hand positive experiences, where the person receiving ministry is able to perceive the Lord’s presence and the Immanuel approach is effective in resolving traumatic memories, will obviously be uniquely effective for building our faith in the goodness and trustworthiness of the Lord’s character and heart, our faith in the efficacy of Immanuel interventions, and our faith in the efficacy of the Immanuel approach to emotional healing. First hand experience, either receiving or facilitating, is obviously a uniquely powerful source of right hemisphere experiential knowing.

## **I. Understanding regarding processing tasks at each of the brain levels, understanding regarding capacity, attunement, and relational connection circuits:**

Section for the final document to include:

\*Very brief summaries (mostly references to discussions of each of these topics in Parts I through IV) re each of these points.

\*To the extent that the person is not able to maintain an interactive connection, and not able to let the Lord lead, it is helpful for the facilitator to understand these concepts/phenomena, and provide appropriate direction in the session with respect to these concepts/phenomena.

\*Reminders regarding “The Lord knows all this stuff, so when the person has a strong interactive connection and can let the Lord lead, it’s very simple.”



\*Comments re “the more we work with the Immanuel approach, and the more skill (and faith, other?) we are developing with respect to helping people establish and maintain adequate interactive connections with the Lord, the more we just let Him lead.

### **J. Our modified version of Theophostic® theory, tools, and techniques:**

Very, very short summary (additional discussion to be included in the final document): For people who are not able to perceive the Lord’s presence or establish an interactive connection, and the Immanuel interventions described above do not resolve the problem, part of Immanuel interventions to find and resolve complex blockages is finding and resolving traumatic memories that contribute to and/or anchor the blockages. However, we can’t use the Immanuel approach to emotional healing in these situations since the person cannot yet perceive the Lord’s presence or establish an adequate interactive connection. So, in these very specific situations, we use our modified version of Theophostic theory, tools, and techniques to find and resolve traumatic memories that contribute to the complex blockages.

### **III. The Immanuel Approach, Additional Practical Considerations:**

**A. Homework to prepare recipient:** \*\*Final document will include discussion of “homework” (essays, DVDs, etc) that can be helpful in preparing the person who will be receiving Immanuel approach ministry/therapy.\*\*

**B. Opening prayer, closing prayer:** \*\*Final document will include discussion of the opening prayer and closing prayer that I use in demonstration sessions and teaching videos.\*\* (for book, could include these essays? Main text or appendix?)

**C. Do we always start sessions with deliberate recall of positive memories, appreciation, and refreshing connection with Jesus?:** In the real world of practical concerns, starting with positive memories, deliberately describing specific details you appreciate, and trying to re-establish a connection with Jesus in the present all take time; and in sessions with facilitators who support themselves from session fees this also translates into a significant financial concern. Another practical concern is that some people have particular difficulty with accessing their traumatic memories. With these people, it is an “opportunity” when they come into the session intensely triggered, and they sometimes report that this “opportunity” is lost when the session begins with positive memory, appreciation, and connection with Jesus *since this is usually a powerfully calming exercise that shuts the traumatic memories back down.*

The importance of these practical considerations is minimal in sessions with people who have especially clear perceptions of the Lord’s presence and who are able to establish especially strong connections with Him, but these considerations become increasingly important as the clarity of perception and strength of connection decrease. In my practice, I decide when to use the full Immanuel approach process by combining the decision tree outlined below, discussion with the person receiving ministry, and listening to the Holy Spirit.

**1. Group exercises:** The first branch in the decision tree is “group exercise or individual session?” As discussed above, emotional healing in a group setting presents unique risks, in that people can get “stuck” in a situation where one-on-one trouble-shooting is not possible. In group settings, concerns about people getting stuck in traumatic memories and the

necessity of having the four “safety nets” in place are much more important than concerns about saving time and concerns that some will have difficulty connecting with trauma due to the calming effects of the initial steps of the full Immanuel approach process. Therefore, in group settings I always begin with positive memories, appreciation, and refreshing connection with Jesus.

Again, taking more time and having some who cannot adequately connect with negative content are much smaller problems than having people get in over their heads and then be unable to get back on their feet.

**2. Individual sessions:** In individual sessions we can customize our interventions to the specific needs of the one person sitting in front of us, and this allows us to work on more intense traumatic content and also allows much more flexibility with respect to process.

**a) People who usually perceive His presence especially clearly and establish an especially strong interactive connection:** Some people I work with are almost always able to perceive the Lord’s presence clearly and are usually able to establish an especially strong interactive connection. With these people, the value of beginning the session with perceiving the Lord’s presence and connecting with Him is so large that it tends to outweigh other considerations, and I therefore almost always use the full Immanuel approach process. Some of these same people have particularly intense traumatic memories that often exceed their capacity.<sup>77</sup> When working with these individuals it is especially valuable to begin by refreshing a positive connection with Jesus because this provides augmentation for their capacity right from the beginning of the session. Furthermore, just as with group exercises, the initial positive connection “safe place” serves as a safety net for the times when they become “stuck” in particularly difficult memories.

**One exception:** Occasionally we encounter a person who is able to perceive the Lord’s presence and establish a strong interactive connection, but who still has trouble adequately accessing her traumatic memories. Some of these people have reported that the initial “positive memory, appreciation, and refresh connection with Jesus” component of the Immanuel approach calms them down, and makes it even more difficult to access their unresolved trauma. Even so, I still often start these sessions with the positive memory, appreciation, and refresh connection steps because this is such a life-giving way to begin, it is good to submit the larger picture and priorities to Jesus, and it is so helpful to have His leadership right from the beginning of the session. I will occasionally skip these initial steps if the person comes in with a very focused request to deal with a specific target, she is triggered, and she wants to capitalize on the “opportunity” of having the traumatic content already activated. Another part of what I do in these situations is to discuss these considerations with the person, and then include her in the final discernment regarding how to begin her sessions.

**b) Perception of His presence is less clear, connection is less strong:** Most of the people I work with fall in a middle zone. They are usually able to perceive the Lord’s presence and

---

<sup>77</sup> One might ask: “How can the people with such severe trauma be at the ‘front of the line’ with respect to perceiving His presence and connecting with Him? Doesn’t their woundedness hinder the process?” My perception is that this is one of the ways the Lord extends special grace to those who have suffered through particularly horrible experiences.

connect with Him, but the perception of His presence is not especially clear and the connection is not especially strong. Within this group, as the clarity of perception and strength of connection decreases, the value of beginning the session with perceiving the Lord's presence and connecting with Him becomes less and less dominant, and correspondingly other considerations become more significant. I find it helpful to consider whether or not the person has difficulty accessing traumatic memories, whether or not she has difficulty with getting overwhelmed, whether or not she has difficulty with getting "stuck" in traumatic memories, whether or not she has difficulty handling sessions where she has not been able to resolve her distress by the end of the session, and whether or not time and finances are a problem.

Difficulty with getting overwhelmed, difficulty with getting stuck in traumatic memories, difficulty with handling sessions where we run out of time before she gets all the way through traumatic memories, and the *absence* of difficulty accessing traumatic memories all cause me to lean towards including positive memory, appreciation, and refresh connection exercises at the beginning of the session; whereas difficulty with getting adequately connected to traumatic content, the ability to handle sessions where we run out of time before she has been able to resolve her distress, the *absence* of difficulty with getting overwhelmed, and the *absence* of getting stuck in traumatic content all cause me to lean towards omitting these initial parts of the Immanuel approach. Similarly, adequate time and the absence of financial stressors cause me to lean towards including deliberate recall of positive memories, appreciation, and refreshing connection with Jesus at the beginning of the session; whereas lack of time and the presence of financial stressors cause me to lean towards omitting these steps.

***\*\*At this point, I do not know any way to predict with certainty ahead of time, but rather discuss these considerations openly, try it both ways, and then include the person in the process of discerning what works best/what they would prefer.\*\****

An interesting subgroup: There are some people who usually have faint perception and weak connection if we try the "positive memory, appreciation, refresh connection" steps at the beginning of the session, but then usually have clearer perception and stronger connection once they are inside traumatic memories. With these people it usually seems to work best to skip the initial "refresh perception and connection," and then use Immanuel interventions and other Immanuel approach techniques once they have gotten to traumatic memories.

**c) People who are *not* able to perceive His presence or connect with him, in spite of repeated, persistent Immanuel interventions:** With these people, I basically use Theophostic-based therapy/ministry, and periodically try Immanuel interventions to identify blockages and test whether enough hindrances have been resolve to enable perception of the Lord's presence and connection with Him. This process of using Theophostic-based therapy/ministry to find and resolve specific, memory-anchored blockages might take only one session to work through several key memories, it might take several sessions to resolve a handful of different memories, or it might take many months to untangle a complex network of traumatic memories, with distorted content that has combined in specific ways

to cause especially pernicious blockages.<sup>78</sup>

**d) Move progressively towards starting with positive memory, appreciation, interactive connection:** \*\*The final document will include discussion of how most people move steadily towards starting each session with the full Immanuel approach process, as progressive resolution of blockages results in increasing ease with which they can establish and interactive connection and increasing strength and quality of the interactive connection they do establish. This has been true in my own experience, and in most of the people I work with on an ongoing basis. Also, I have also been moving more towards starting every session with the full Immanuel approach process as I gain skill and faith regarding the initial steps.

#### **D. Perception of the Lord's presence can be quite variable:**

\*Final document will include examples of the many different ways in which people have experienced the Lord's presence.

\*Final document will Include comments and discussion re experience with Charlotte session, where she felt the Lord's presence but did not perceive a visual image as part of the experience, and eventually felt from the Lord: "Sometimes, this is just the way it is. There's nothing missing."

#### **E. Other?:**

**IV. Summary of theoretical foundation for working with traumatic memories:** The theoretical context for our Immanuel approach to working with traumatic memories is discussed in "Brain Science, Psychological Trauma, and the God Who is With Us," Parts II, III, and IV. Summarizing very briefly, these foundational principles regarding traumatic memories are as follows:

- When we encounter pain, our brain/mind/spirit system tries to process the painful experience, and there is a specific pathway that this processing follows. When we are able to successfully complete this processing journey, we get through the painful experience without being traumatized; and instead of having any toxic power in our lives, the adequately processed painful experience contributes to our knowledge, skills, wisdom, and maturity.
- Various problems and/or limitations can block successful processing; and if we are *not* able to complete the processing journey, then the painful experience becomes a traumatic experience, and the memories for these traumatic experiences have toxic power in our lives.
- One of the most common and most important toxic components of traumatic memories are level 5 distorted interpretations. These trauma-associated distorted beliefs are the source of *many* problematic emotions and behaviors, and these problematic emotions and behaviors will disappear when the distorted beliefs are resolved. Note: these trauma-associated distorted

---

<sup>78</sup> For additional discussion of how a network of traumatic memories and other issues can combine to create especially difficult blockages, see "Immanuel, An Especially Pernicious Blockage, & The Normal Belief Memory System" in the "Immanuel Series" section of the "About Our Theophostic-based Therapy/Ministry" page of our website, [www.kclehman.com](http://www.kclehman.com).

beliefs are the “lies” discussed in Dr. Ed Smith’s writing about Theophostic.

- Unresolved traumatic memories are the true source of many current negative emotions, problematic reactions, relationship difficulties, etc.
- We have multiple, *parallel memory systems* that are *qualitatively* different from each other, and there are also *different types of memory files* that are *qualitatively* different from each other.
- Traumatic memories are *qualitatively* different from non-traumatic memories:

To some extent, they are stored, retrieved, and processed by different memory systems, and they are probably also stored, retrieved, and processed as different types of memory files.

The material in traumatic memories is more difficult to access and more difficult to modify.

Content from traumatic memories often comes forward as implicit memory material, meaning that it will *feel true in the present*, and *we will not recognize that it is coming from traumatic memories*.

- Traumatic memories are *consistently* accessible under the right conditions, traumatic memories are *consistently* open to modification under the right conditions, and the toxic content in traumatic memories can be *consistently* resolved when the right conditions are in place and the necessary resources are available.

One of the most important necessary conditions for resolving toxic content is that you must do the remedial processing work from *inside* the traumatic memory.

**V. Foundational principles for the Immanuel Approach to emotional healing:** The foundational principles for organizing therapy/emotional healing ministry around the presence of Jesus are as follows:

- The Lord (Immanuel) is always with us. The Lord is with us in the present, as we use the Immanuel approach, He was with us when the original traumatic experiences occurred, and He is present now in the memories of these traumatic experiences.
- Many things (fear, bitterness, choices/vows, lies about the character and heart of God, demonic interference, etc.) can hinder us from being able to perceive the Lord’s presence, but it is possible to identify and resolve these hindrances with the Lord’s direction and assistance. **\*\*This is where we employ “Immanuel Interventions” for the specific purpose of helping the person perceive the Lord’s presence and establish an adequate interactive connection\*\***
- We help the person perceive the Lord’s presence and establish an interactive connection at the beginning of each session, to provide the ideal foundation for going forward and also to provide a “safety net” that we can come back to.
- Jesus can guide the client and facilitator from the current symptoms to the underlying traumatic memories.
- When blockages have been removed, it is always possible to perceive the Lord’s Immanuel



presence, *with us*, in our traumatic memories.

- The living Jesus Christ is uniquely effective in helping the person complete unfinished processing tasks.<sup>79</sup>
- Profound and permanent healing of a given traumatic memory occurs when the living Jesus Christ helps complete unfinished processing tasks.
- Many things (bitterness, psychological defenses, unconfessed sin, demonic interference, etc.) can hinder the healing process, but it is possible to identify and address these hindrances with the Lord's direction and assistance.
- The Lord always facilitates healing once the interfering problems are removed/resolved.
- The Lord is able to and wants to resolve each wound to the point that the "traumatic" memory is completely peaceful and calm – to the point that all processing tasks have been completed and all toxic content has been resolved.
- Symptom relief is a good gift from the Lord, but the most important objective in all of this is to remove the blockages that hinder our hearts from getting to Jesus.

**VI. Summary of the process for the Immanuel approach to emotional healing:** The basic process components of the Immanuel approach to emotional healing are as follows:

- Ask the Lord to bring forward a positive in which the person experienced an interactive connection. If this doesn't work, help the person find/choose a memory where she was able to perceive the Lord's presence and experienced an interactive connection with the Lord.
- Coach the person to name, out loud, specific things she appreciates about the previous positive experience, especially focusing on things she appreciates about Jesus' presence and care in the memory of previous positive connection. Do this until she *feels* appreciation.
- Coach the person to spend several minutes reentering/reconnecting with the memory of previous positive connection.<sup>80</sup> As she does this, ask the Lord to help her perceive His living presence and establish an interactive connection,<sup>81</sup> and then coach her to describe whatever comes into her awareness.

---

<sup>79</sup> Jesus' unique efficacy in replacing distorted interpretations with truth is especially apparent in Theophostic, where the healing work especially focuses on this level 5 processing task.

<sup>80</sup> Note that coaching the person to spend several minutes very deliberately reentering/reconnecting with the memory is a new piece as of fall 2010.

<sup>81</sup> In most cases, the person perceives the Lord's living presence and establishes an interactive connection in the context of the memory imagery. That is, they perceive that the Lord's presence in the memory imagery comes alive, and that (still in the context of the memory imagery), His presence begins to engage with them interactively. However, some people will perceive the Lord's living, interactive presence in the room where they are receiving ministry; some people will perceive the Lord's living, interactive presence in the context of a different memory that comes forward spontaneously; some people will perceive the Lord's living, interactive presence in the context of imagery that does not seem to be coming from any specific memories, and some will experience two or more of these simultaneously.

- If the person is not able to perceive the Lord’s living presence and establish an interactive connection, apply Immanuel intervention tools to identify and resolve blockages.
- In the context of a living, interactive connection with the Lord, coach the person to engage directly with Jesus regarding what to do with the session: “what would You like to do with this session, Lord?”

**For people who have an adequate interactive connection with Jesus, the rest of the process simplifies to:** 1) Coach the person to keep focusing on Jesus, keep asking Him for guidance, and keep following His leadership; 2) If difficulties of any kind are encountered, coach the person to focus on Jesus, engage with Him directly regarding every aspect of the problem, ask Him for guidance and help, and then cooperate with whatever He leads her to do; 3) If she loses her interactive connection with the Lord, help her reestablish an adequate interactive connection by coaching her regarding the basic Immanuel intervention trouble-shooting tools;<sup>82</sup> 4) Finish the session with helping the person formulate and tell the Immanuel story.

**For people with a connection that is less strong, and who therefore need additional structure, proceed with the remainder of the steps below:**

- Identify “target” symptoms, such as thoughts, emotions, or physical sensations that distress the person. If the presenting problem is a behavior, identify the thoughts, emotions, and physical sensations that come immediately before the behavior.
- Have the client activate the target symptoms by focusing on them, and also by focusing on triggering stimuli that are known to stir them up.
- Ask Jesus to lead her to the true source and origin of the problem.
- Jesus guides the thoughts, images, memories, etc. that come into the client’s mind, and these lead the client and therapist to the underlying traumatic memories.
- As soon as the client comes to these memories, coach her to pray: “Lord, I invite You to be with me, in these memories. Help me to perceive Your presence .”
- If the person has difficulty perceiving the Lord’s presence and/or receiving adequate help from the Lord, apply “Immanuel Intervention” tools to identify and resolve blockages.
- Help the client focus on and *connect with* the toxic content in the traumatic memories. It is often especially important to help the person identify level 5 distorted interpretations.
- Coach the person to interact directly with Jesus regarding each piece of unresolved content. It is often especially important to help the person interact directly with Jesus regarding level 5 distorted interpretations.

---

<sup>82</sup> 1) Ask the Lord, “What’s in the way?,” report whatever comes, and then deal with it as the Lord leads; 2) Help the person get words for whatever she is thinking, feeling, experiencing, etc., and then coach her to describe this all directly to the Lord; 3) Return to the initial interactive connection, and in that context ask the Lord about the place where you’re not able to perceive His presence; 4) The “back and forth” technique.

- The “traumatic” memories lose their toxic power as Jesus interacts directly with the client and helps her to complete all previously unfinished processing tasks.
- Coach the person to spend time “just” *being with* Jesus.
- Finish the session with helping the person formulate and tell the Immanuel story.
- Trouble shooting: As mentioned above, bitterness, psychological defenses, unconfessed sin, demonic interference, and other problems can hinder the healing work. If the process gets stuck at any point, help the person identify and resolve the problems that are in the way.
- Coach the person to describe everything that comes into her awareness: Throughout the process, coach the person to describe any thoughts, images, memories, emotions, and body sensations that come into her awareness. It is especially important for her to do this at points where the process feels stuck and/or at points where she perceives that “nothing is happening.”
- Ask Jesus for guidance and assistance: The therapist and client ask Jesus for guidance and assistance frequently during each step of this process, and especially during trouble-shooting.
- If the person gets stuck in a bad place: If the person gets stuck in a place where they are upset, coach them to return to the initial positive connection to help them calm down. Depending on how upset they are, you may have to be very directive in reminding them of the initial positive connection, asking them to describe the details, coaching them to repeat the appreciation exercise, and coaching them to deliberately reenter the positive memory.
- If you run out of time: At the end of the session, if you run out of time before the person can resolve traumatic memories to a point of peace and calm, you can return to the initial positive connection so that she can end the session in a good place.

**VII. Blessings beyond just addressing capacity problems:** As described in Part I, I initially used Immanuel interventions as a special tool for situations where the person was having difficulty due to inadequate capacity. As also mentioned in Part I, we have since discovered that helping the person perceive and connect with Jesus can result in many additional blessings beyond just addressing capacity problems.

**A.) Helpful in many ways during the session:** When we start the session with helping the person perceive the Lord’s presence and establish an adequate interactive connection with Him, and when we help the person perceive the Lord’s presence and establish an adequate interactive connecting inside each traumatic memory, we can then turn to Jesus for leadership and resources throughout the rest of the session. This has been especially helpful when the person encounters any difficulty, whether or not it has to do with capacity. At any point during the rest of the session that she has trouble, I simply coach her to look at Jesus, to focus on Jesus, to engage directly with Jesus regarding every aspect of the problem, to ask Jesus for help, to receive more from Jesus, and to spend time *being with* Jesus. As describe earlier, for people who are able to perceive the Lord’s presence and connect with Him in this way, the simplest additional “Immanuel” nudges can be all that is needed. Sometimes, all I have to do is ask “What’s Jesus doing?” Or I might make a very simple suggestion, such as “Keep focusing on Jesus and see if that helps,” “Ask Jesus if there’s more He has for you,” or “Ask Jesus what He wants you to do next.”

I have been amazed by how often a person receives powerful help from Jesus early in a session, but then seems to “lose” Him when things get messy, even if this occurs only minutes later in the same session. On many occasions, when a client has become stuck later in the session, I have asked “Where’s Jesus? What’s He doing?” and they have responded along the lines of “Oh, I forgot about Jesus. Now that you mention it, I realize He’s standing right beside me, but I wasn’t looking at Him.” In many of these situations, just reminding the person to look at Jesus quickly resolved the problem. If the person reports that they can no longer perceive the Lord’s presence, we use Immanuel interventions to reestablish and adequate interactive connection. And when the person can again perceive His presence, the Lord then always helps in one way or another, and the healing process begins to move forward again.

**B.) Benefits that continue beyond the session:** People often experience profound, ongoing benefits that continue beyond the therapy/ministry session. For example, being *with* Jesus seems to be a very powerful source of joy, and this blesses the person in many ways in their “regular” life between sessions (those of you who have studied Dr. Wilder’s material will especially appreciate the value of this). And receiving more truth about Jesus – more truth about His heart, more truth about His character, more truth about His authority and power to heal, more truth about what it is like to “just” *be with* Him, etc – inherently produces direct benefit for people’s faith. When they know Him more they trust Him more, and in addition to being helpful in therapy/ministry sessions, this increased faith also seems to be applicable in other aspects of their lives.

**C.) Inherent value of being with Jesus:** And here is a really strange thought: Maybe a closer relationship with Jesus is valuable, *in and of itself*. What if it is *inherently* important and valuable to establish an increasingly ideal interactive connection (perceive the Lord’s presence more clearly, know Him more truly, let Him come closer, etc), and to “just” be with Him *even apart from all the practical benefits associated with these things*. We all know that Mary was the one with the “correct” response in the story of Mary and Martha,<sup>83</sup> where Mary was “just” sitting at Jesus’ feet, *being with Him*, and Martha wanted Mary to come and help with tasks that Martha apparently thought were more important. But if the painful truth be told, I’ve often identified more with Martha than with Mary. “I mean, it’s nice to just sit around with Jesus and all that, *if we can afford the time*, but there are practical, necessary<sup>84</sup> tasks that need to be taken care of *first*. If we have time after we finish these other *necessary* tasks, then, of course, wouldn’t we all like to just sit around and hang out with Jesus?”

As I have been observing the Lord’s responses in these sessions, it seems that He *still* thinks this relationship aspect – just *being with Him* – is even more important than “practical benefits,” such as resolving specific traumatic memory targets so that the person can be free of bothersome symptoms. In my own discipleship journey, watching Jesus interact with people during these Immanuel interventions has been one of the most powerful sources of truth regarding the importance and value of “just” *being with Him*.

Also, it is important to note that *being with* Jesus is not *either* valuable for its own sake, *or* valuable as a resource for emotional healing. Not only does Scripture teach that being with God is inherently valuable, and not only do our current Immanuel intervention interactions with

---

<sup>83</sup> Luke 10:38-42

<sup>84</sup> Whatever you do, don’t say “more important.”

Jesus indicate that He still thinks that being with Him is the “better portion,” but being with the Lord *also* happens to be a powerful source of joy, and contributes to building capacity. When you think about it, since God is truly a good and loving Father, it makes sense that something He wants, and that He teaches us to do, is *also* good for us. As described in Part I, the Lord just wants us to keep our priorities straight – remembering that the *relationship* aspect of *being with Him* is even more important than “practical” considerations, such as building capacity, resolving traumatic memories, and relieving symptoms. Both the relationship and “practical” benefits are real, important, and valuable, but the Lord wants us to remember that “...the primary, most important purpose of all this emotional healing stuff is to remove the blockages that are between your heart and Me. *The primary, most important purpose of emotional healing is to remove the blockages that hinder your heart from coming to Me.*”<sup>85</sup>

Regardless of the specific content or problems encountered, it seems to be a tremendous blessing and resource for the person to be able to perceive the Lord’s presence and connect with Him at the beginning of the session, to be able to turn to Him for help throughout the rest of the session, and to be able to enjoy this increased connection and intimacy with Him between sessions.

**VIII. More regarding the Immanuel Approach to life:** As described in Part I, when people began to connect with Jesus and follow His lead from the *very beginning* of each session, He expanded the agenda, and the “Immanuel approach to emotional healing” became just *one part* of the larger “Immanuel Approach to Life.”

Sometimes Jesus’ agenda is to resolve trauma. **\*\*final document to include examples\*\***

Sometimes Jesus’ agenda is to build capacity. **\*\*final document to include examples\*\***

Sometimes Jesus’ agenda is to build maturity skills by teaching, modeling, and helping the person practice. **\*\*final document to include examples\*\***

Sometimes Jesus’ agenda is to address other issues important to optimal living, such as the balance between work and restoration. **\*\*final document to include examples\*\***

Sometimes Jesus’ agenda is to “just” spend time with us, as a friend and companion, just because He likes being in relationship with us. **\*\*final document to include examples\*\***

Sometimes His agenda is other stuff that we have never even thought about addressing in an emotional healing session. **\*\*final document to include examples\*\***

And the first, number one, highest priority item on the Lord’s agenda is to help us be *with* Him.

The Lord has also expanded the Immanuel approach by moving it outside of special “sessions.” He wants us to use these tools to connect with Him during every day life. In part I I mentioned the person who tried an Immanuel intervention prayer while driving down the highway, and then spent the rest of the trip just being with Jesus, as a friend and companion; and the person who tried an Immanuel intervention in the dentist’s office, and then focused on being with Him as she went through the dental procedure. My own experience with Immanuel interventions provides

---

<sup>85</sup> Words from Jesus to person receiving ministry (Immanuel approach session facilitated by Dr. Lehman, described in “Brain Science, Psychological Trauma, and the God Who is With Us, Part I”).



another excellent example of moving this stuff outside of sessions – of using these tools to connect with Jesus during every day life. \*\*final document to include examples from my personal experience\*\*

**IX. Does this teaching regarding Immanuel Interventions and the Immanuel Approach make outrageous and/or heretical claims?:** Some people are upset by the teaching that we actually interact directly with the living Jesus Christ. Some people are upset by the proposition that people who engage in this process will perceive the Lord’s presence, will connect with Him, *and will actually communicate with God*. Some people especially have trouble with the obvious implication that people who participate in this process will receive a kind of divine revelation in the context of communicating with the living Jesus Christ.

First, I want to clarify what I am actually saying, so that there is no confusion regarding the questions we need to address. Yes, I am saying that we actually interact directly with the living Jesus Christ. Yes, I am saying that people who engage in this process will perceive the Lord’s presence, will connect with Him, *and will actually communicate with God*. Yes, I am saying that people who participate in this process will receive a kind of divine revelation in the context of communicating with the living Jesus Christ. This is exactly what I am saying. If you are going to hang me for this, you can be comforted by the fact that I am not denying the charges.

However, I am NOT saying that we are infallible in our ability to accurately perceive what the Lord is saying to us. I am NOT saying that we are infallible in our ability to accurately interpret the meaning of what the Lord says to us. I am NOT saying that we are infallible in our judgment regarding how the Lord’s words to us apply to the rest of the world. In summary, I am NOT saying that the revelation people receive in the context of communicating with Jesus has the same authority as scripture. But I AM saying that we can perceive the Lord’s presence, that we can connect with Him, that we can communicate with Him, and that we can receive truth from Him in the context of this communication.

So, do I have an answer for those who are upset by these bold claims? Can I support this teaching – that some find upsetting (or even outrageous) – with sound Biblical exegesis? The answer is actually surprisingly simple:

Read Dallas Willard’s book: *Hearing God*.<sup>86</sup>

In all seriousness, Dr. Willard wrote this book to answer exactly these questions: “Can we, today, in the twenty first century, actually communicate with the Lord? Can the average Christian, in the present, actually receive specific, individualized truth from God in the context of this communication?” Dr. Willard’s conclusion is “Yes.” And he supports this conclusion with strong, sound, compelling Biblical exegesis.

Read the book. It’s really excellent.

**X. Immanuel approach group exercises:** One aspect of the Immanuel approach to emotional healing that is particularly exciting is that it seems to be possible to use this approach in a group setting. When one thinks about the war torn countries, where millions of people have post

---

<sup>86</sup> Willard, Dallas, *Hearing God: Developing a Conversational Relationship with God*. (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press), 1999.

traumatic stress disorder, *and where there are not resources available for these multitudes to get effective treatment to address their traumatic memories*, it is hugely strategically important that it appears to be possible to use the Immanuel approach with many people simultaneously.

Prior to developing the Immanuel approach we had not done group exercises due to concerns about the possibility that many people might get stuck simultaneously. With Theophostic-based techniques, if people get stuck, you need to do trouble shooting “one on one.” This is not possible in a group setting. Therefore, we never did group exercises because we did not want to get to the end of a group exercise and have 27 people who were all stirred up, connected to traumatic memories, but stuck and unable to get through to healing.<sup>87</sup> However, as discussed below, some of the new components of the Immanuel approach appear to make it possible to avoid this problem. Charlotte and I, Dr. Wilder, Ed Khouri, and several other colleagues have each been experimenting with group exercises during the past several years, and so far we have worked with groups of 25 to 1200 participants, *with good results and minimal problems*.

Note: We are still in the early stages of developing this group exercise, *and so we encourage those who want to try it to proceed with caution*. Please do not try leading group exercises until you are able to perceive the Lord’s presence and connect with Him in your own experience. Please do not try leading group exercises until you are comfortable with using the Immanuel approach in individual therapy or ministry sessions *and have been getting consistently good results*. Furthermore, we ask that you begin experimenting with group exercises in settings where you know the people that will be participating, and where there is a team available to deal with the possibility that a small number of participants may encounter difficulties.

**A. Immanuel Approach safety nets:** Our perception is that the Immanuel approach provides a number of “safety nets” that now make it possible to do emotional healing exercises in group settings.

**Safety net number one:** The initial steps of identifying a positive memory, deliberate appreciation, and establishing an adequate interactive connection with the Lord *combine to set up a safety net* that can be used both during the exercise and at the end of the exercise for those who are having difficulty. If a person is having difficulty, and the members of the group he is in are not able to help him resolve the problem with the troubleshooting tools available, then the person can return to the positive memory, appreciation, and interactive connection with the Lord that were all refreshed at the beginning of the session. Therefore, even if the person is not able to permanently resolve the problem, they at least end up back at a safe place of stability and positive emotions.

**Safety net number two:** Those who are not able to perceive the Lord’s presence and refresh a tangible connection with Him participate in the first steps of the exercise, and participate in the rest of the exercise as intercessors, but *do not work with their own traumatic memories*. This precaution seems to identify and protect those who are most likely to get stuck and have a negative experience, and thereby provides a second safety net.

---

<sup>87</sup> Actually, I did this once. I tried a group exercise at one of our seminars, with maybe 75 to 100 people. Many of the participants experienced wonderful healing, but a number of the participants got stuck in negative memories, we were not able to provide one-on-one troubleshooting, and these people had miserable experiences. Once was enough.

**Safety net number three:** We have people do the exercises in a small group setting, so that they can describe their mental content to each other, and thereby apply the benefit of “your brain works better in community.” This significantly increases the effectiveness of the exercise, and thereby provides a third safety net by increasing good results and decreasing disappointing results.

**Safety net number four:** Furthermore, if one member of the group gets stuck in a negative place, the other members can help the person return to the initial positive place by coaching him to describe the positive memory, repeat the appreciation exercise, and reenter the positive emotions associated with the positive memory. This provides a fourth safety net.

**B. Complete group exercise:** Note that this is a description of the complete exercise you will eventually get to. We strongly encourage you to begin with practicing the initial steps, and then progress to working with painful memories after people feel comfortable with the building block components. Some of our beta-testing groups have spent several sessions just practicing the initial steps, so that the participants felt confident with these important building blocks before moving on to the more challenging trauma work.

**1.) Break up into small groups:** Break the larger group up into small groups of three to four persons each, and keep both functions of the small group in mind:

First, the small group provides a context for describing “whatever comes into your awareness” at each point in the exercise. This obviously takes a lot more time, but our perception is that this is part of the larger picture that has enabled us to do group exercises with good results and minimal breakage.

The second purpose of the small groups is to provide the fourth safety net, where other members of the group can help the person get back to the positive initial starting place if he gets stuck in intense negative emotions. In order to do this, *you need to pay attention to each other’s stories and appreciations, so that you are able to provide the safety net if this is necessary.*

**2.) Positive memories and deliberate appreciation:** Ask the Lord to bring forward one or several memories of previous positive experiences of perceiving His presence and connecting with Him. If no memories come forward spontaneously, take time to deliberately recall one to several memories of times when you could perceive the Lord’s presence and felt a positive connection with Him. Ask the Lord to help you perceive specific things to appreciate. Each person in the group then describes her positive connection memory/memories to the others in the small group, names specific things she appreciates about these experiences. The goal is to share appreciations and deliberately reconnect with the positive memories until you *feel* appreciation. Note that faith and gratitude “momentum” usually grow for all in the group as each person shares.

Remember that you may need to help others in the group return to their positive memories later in the exercise, so pay attention (taking brief notes is ideal) so that you will be able to remind/coach/help the others in your group to repeat their positive memory stories and appreciations, should this be necessary.

Comment regarding “one to several”: One memory is often adequate, but it is ideal to have

several, since appreciation momentum builds as one works with several positive memories in succession. Having this additional resource available will be helpful if anyone gets stuck in particularly intense negative emotions later in the exercise, and therefore needs an especially strong positive memory and appreciation “safety net.”

### **3.) Reenter the positive memory and ask the Lord to establish an interactive connection:**

After you have identified one or more memories of past positive connection with the Lord, and *feel* appreciation for His presence and care in these past experiences, spend several minutes reentering/reconnecting with one of the memories. Then, from “inside” the memory, pray something along the lines of “Lord, help me to perceive Your living presence, and to have an interactive connection with You.”<sup>88</sup> Share whatever comes into your awareness with the others in your group (remember that your brain works better in community – sometimes you will not recognize perception of the Lord’s presence until you describe what you are experiencing).

**If you perceive the Lord’s presence and feel connected to Him:** proceed on to Step #4.

**If you do not perceive the Lord’s presence or feel connected to Him, and you would like to try simple “trouble-shooting”:** 1.) Ask: “What’s in the way of my being able to perceive Your presence in this memory?;” observe whatever thoughts, emotions, images, memories, physical sensations, etc come into your mind; and to the extent you feel comfortable doing so, describe these to the others in your group *regardless of whether they “make sense” or feel important.* 2.) Ask: “What do I need to do to take the next step forward?;” observe whatever thoughts, emotions, images, memories, physical sensations, etc come into your mind; and to the extent you feel comfortable doing so, describe these to the others in your group *regardless of whether they “make sense” or feel important.* 3.) Follow-up on any direction the Lord provides.

If “trouble-shooting” has identified and resolved blockages, so that you are now able to perceive the Lord’s presence and connect with Him, then proceed on to step #4.

If you do *not* perceive the Lord’s presence and feel connected to Him after a brief season of simple trouble-shooting, return to your positive memories and appreciation until you *feel* appreciation and are at an okay place to stop. *Please* do not go on to working with traumatic memories *in this group setting* if you have not been able to establish an interactive connection with the Lord. Also: If your difficulty with perceiving the Lord’s presence and connecting with Him persists, especially across multiple sessions, we strongly encourage you to get help with Immanuel intervention troubleshooting in the context of individual sessions with someone experienced with finding and resolving blockages. If time permits, the group can go through the rest of the exercise with another person.

---

<sup>88</sup> As mentioned earlier, in most cases, the person perceives the Lord’s living presence and establishes an interactive connection in the context of the memory imagery (the subjective experience of being inside the memory spontaneously morphs into a new, living interaction with Him, but still in the context of the autobiographical content carried in the memory). However, some people will perceive the Lord’s living, interactive presence in the room where they are receiving ministry; some people will perceive the Lord’s living, interactive presence in the context of a different memory that comes forward spontaneously; some people will perceive the Lord’s living, interactive presence in the context of imagery that does not seem to be coming from any specific memories, and some will experience two or more of these simultaneously.

**4.) Choose memories to work on:** NOTE: from this point onwards the group should work with only one person at a time. This is very important, since the other members of the group need to be available to apply the safety nets if the person gets stuck. Select a small to medium sized traumatic memory from one of the following categories (we recommend picking small memories when you are just getting started with these group exercises):<sup>89</sup>

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

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

Please *do not* focus on an upsetting symptom and ask: "Lord, take me to the memory where this is coming from." This approach may take you to a memory that you have never before worked with, or even to a memory you have never before been consciously aware of.<sup>90</sup>

Please *do not* go to memories where you have gotten stuck and/or overwhelmed, and have needed someone else to help you get back to a place where you were okay.<sup>91</sup>

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

---

<sup>89</sup> Some ask "why not just ask the Lord to bring forward the memory He wants to work on?" This *is* what we do in individual sessions, but our concern in the group setting is that none of us have perfect perception of the Lord's guidance. In the context of a group exercise the leader cannot discern with each participant regarding the accuracy of their perception of the Lord's guidance, and the consequences of mistaken discernment are much greater (for example, getting into an overwhelming traumatic memory in the group setting, without appropriate resources to care for this). Therefore, in the group setting we are more conservative and directive, and provide guidelines for selecting memories as opposed to having each person simply ask the Lord what to do/where to go.

<sup>90</sup> This is a safety net caution for people who are just learning the process. If the people in your group have high capacity and are experienced with the Immanuel approach, you can feel free to use the "focus on an upsetting symptom, and ask the Lord to take you to the underlying memories" approach.

<sup>91</sup> Again, this is a safety net caution for people who are just learning the process. If the people in your group have high capacity and are experienced with the Immanuel approach, you can be more adventurous with respect to the memories you pick to work with.



exercise.<sup>92</sup>

**5.) Invite the Lord into the memory, ask Him to help you to perceive His presence, and engage with Him to receive healing:** Focus on the memory, invite Him to be with you, and ask Him to help you perceive His presence and establish an interactive connection in the memory. From the perspective of being inside the memory, pray something like: “Jesus, I make a heart invitation for You to be with me here. Please help me to perceive Your presence and experience an interactive connection.”

**a.) If you are able to perceive the Lord’s presence:** If you are able to perceive the Lord’s presence and establish an interactive connection in the traumatic memory, then get words for any perceptions, thoughts, emotions, etc that feel true regarding the memory, and explain these directly to the Lord. As you continue focusing on Him, observe any thoughts, emotions, images, memories, etc that come into your awareness, *and especially anything you see or sense the Lord to be doing*. To the extent you feel comfortable doing so, describe all of this to the others in your group *regardless of whether they “make sense” or feel important* (your brain works better in community).

Keep focusing on Jesus, ask Him for guidance, ask Him for help, ask Him for healing, ask Him for resources, and at any point you are having difficulty, focus on Jesus and ask Him for help. After each interaction with Jesus, observe any thoughts, emotions, images, memories, etc that come into your awareness, *and especially anything you see or sense the Lord to be doing*. As always, describe everything to the others in your group.

**b.) If you are not able to perceive the Lord’s presence:** 1.) Ask: “What’s in the way of my being able to perceive Your presence in this memory?;” observe whatever thoughts, emotions, images, memories, physical sensations, etc come into your mind; and to the extent you feel comfortable doing so, describe these to the others in your group *regardless of whether they “make sense” or feel important*. 2.) Ask: “What do I need to do to take the next step forward?;” observe whatever thoughts, emotions, images, memories, physical sensations, etc come into your mind; and to the extent you feel comfortable doing so, describe these to the others in your group *regardless of whether they “make sense” or feel important*. 3.) Follow-up on any direction the Lord provides.

If “trouble-shooting” has identified and resolved blockages, so that you are now able to perceive the Lord’s presence and connect with Him, then engage with Jesus to receive healing, as described in 4a, above.

If you do *not* perceive the Lord’s presence and feel connected to Him after a brief season of simple trouble-shooting, move to the “safety net” trouble-shooting intervention described below.

**c.) If you become stuck, and asking Jesus for guidance, help, etc does *not* seem to be resolving the problem:** If you become stuck at any point in working with the traumatic memory and you still perceive the Lord’s presence in the memory, the first response is to

---

<sup>92</sup> Again, this is a safety net caution for people who are just learning the process. If the people in your group have high capacity and are experienced with the Immanuel approach, you can be more adventurous with respect to the memories you pick to work with.

focus on the Lord, ask Him for guidance, ask Him for help, and then describe to the group whatever thoughts, images, memories, emotions, etc come into your awareness *focusing especially on anything the Lord is doing*. However, if these interventions do not seem to be resolving the problem, then transition to the safety net intervention described below.

**d.) If you're running out of time (ten to fifteen minutes left) and you still feel bad:** If you are getting to the end of the session (ten to fifteen minutes left), the traumatic memory has not been resolved, and you want to make sure the negative emotions you are feeling are significantly reduced before you go home, then transition to the "safety net" intervention described below, so that deliberate appreciation can move you to a better place before the end of the session. If you feel okay about ending the session with lingering negative emotions, you feel like something positive is happening, and you therefore want to use all the time to continue working with the traumatic memory, you can make the judgment call to continue interacting with the Lord regarding the traumatic memory right up until the end of the session. However, if you want to make sure your negative emotions are reduced before you go home, make sure to leave time at the end so that you can work *with the group* (your brain works better in community) to use the "safety net" intervention to get back to a better place.

**e.) The "safety net" trouble-shooting intervention:** When other attempts at trouble shooting don't work, the "safety net" intervention is to go back to the place in step #3 where you experienced a refreshed perception of the Lord's presence and a refreshed connection with Him. Sometimes this is not necessary, but you may need to review your positive memories and repeat the appreciation exercise in order to return to the place where you perceived the Lord's presence and felt connected. Also, depending on how intensely you were connected to negative emotions in the context of the painful memory, it may take some time to transition back to feeling appreciation. Try to find some new specific appreciations, and persist until you again *feel* appreciation.

Once you have reconnected with the Lord, then, *continuing in the context of this positive place*, engage with Him regarding the painful memory. Get words for any perceptions, thoughts, emotions, etc that feel true, and explain these directly to the Lord. An then, as you continue focusing on Him, observe any thoughts, emotions, images, memories, etc that come into your awareness, *and especially anything you see or sense the Lord to be doing*. To the extent you feel comfortable doing so, describe all of this to the others in your group (your brain works better in community!). Especially talk to Him about the place of stuckness with respect to working with the traumatic memory directly (for example, not being able to perceive His presence in the memory, losing the ability to perceive his presence part way through, or asking for help regarding some point and not perceiving resolution).

Sometimes, just restoring the positive connection with the Lord from step #3 and then talking to Him about the traumatic memory and the problems that developed in trying to work with it directly will take the whole session. However, sometimes you reconnect with the Lord, talk to Him about the traumatic memory and any points of difficulty, and get to a good place fairly quickly – you get to a place where it feels like you're connection with the Lord is good and you understand whatever He has shown you about the problems that developed in working directly with the traumatic memory. At this point, if time permits, you can return to the traumatic memory and try again to work with it directly (working from the perspective of being inside/connected to the painful memory). Sometimes the process

will then proceed smoothly to complete resolution; but if you get stuck again, just use the safety net intervention again. I have had sessions where all we did was to go back and forth between the initial positive connection and the traumatic memory, and after four or five “back and forth” cycles the person spontaneously began to perceive and connect with Jesus inside the memory. Once they were perceiving the Lord’s presence and connecting with Him inside the memory, I simply coached them to focus on Jesus and ask Him for help, and He then lead the process of working through the trauma to complete resolution.

Note: If you get stuck in a place where you are upset and are having difficulty getting back to the positive starting place memory on your own, other members of your group can coach you through each step of the “safety net” intervention. Once you have calmed down, you may return to the exercise, but if your group had to do a lot of coaching (as opposed to a few gentle reminders) *please work with a different memory*. The fact that you needed so much help indicates that the first painful memory is not good material for a group setting. I am confident the Lord can heal any traumatic memory, but it is best to deal with the more intense traumas in settings where you can receive one-on-one trouble shooting if this is necessary.

Note #2: Sometimes a person who is connected to a traumatic memory will be feeling intense negative emotions and her relational circuits will be off, and in this context she will not initially *feel* like talking about positive memories and she will not initially *feel* any appreciation. In these situations you may need to be very directive and persistent in coaching the person to talk about positive memories, name appreciations, and deliberately reenter the positive memory, *even when they don’t initially feel like it*. In some situations it may take as long as fifteen to twenty minutes, but our experience is that if a person persists in talking about, appreciating, and reentering positive memories of experiencing the Lord’s presence, they will eventually calm down, regain access to their relational connection circuits, return to feeling appreciation, and be able to end in a good place of perceiving the Lord’s presence and feeling connected to Him. It may take some practice to learn to be adequately directive and persistent in these situations, but with appropriate coaching most people can learn this fairly quickly.<sup>93</sup>

## 6.) End of session – the Immanuel story and more appreciation:

**If you experience complete resolution of the traumatic memory:** Thank the Lord for His healing presence and healing work, formulate and tell the Immanuel story, and name several specifics you especially appreciate.

**If you experienced some kind of positive interaction with the Lord in the context of the traumatic memory, but only partial resolution:** Thank the Lord for this positive interaction, formulate and tell the Immanuel story regarding the positive interaction that has occurred, and name specific things you appreciate until you feel peaceful (until you no longer feel the negative emotions from the trauma). If appreciation regarding the positive

---

<sup>93</sup> If you know about attunement and are skilled in providing it, the ideal is to start with offering attunement until the person regains access to her relational connection circuits, and then *after she has regained access to her relational connection circuits* coach her to persist in the positive memory recall and deliberate appreciation exercises. For additional discussion of attunement and relational connection circuits, see chapters 15 and 17 in *Outsmarting Yourself*, and Part II of the “Brain Science, Psychological Trauma, and The God Who is With Us” essays (available as free downloads from [www.kclehman.com](http://www.kclehman.com)).

interaction in the traumatic memory does not take you all the way back to peaceful, then return to the original positive memory/memories and do more appreciation until you do feel peaceful.

**If you did not have a positive interaction with the Lord in the context of the traumatic memory:** Return to the positive starting place memory/memories, repeat deliberate appreciation, and reenter/reconnect with the positive emotions associated with the positive memories until you *feel* appreciation.

With each of these, remember to do this out loud with the others in your group (your brain works better in community).

If time permits, the group can return to step #3 and then go through the full exercise with another member of the group.

**C. Summary regarding the “Safety net” intervention (going back to the initial positive memories, appreciation, refreshed interactive connection with the Lord):** When encountering any of the difficulties below, you can go back to the positive memories, appreciation, and refreshed interactive connection from the beginning of the session, and then reconnect with Jesus in that positive context. In this way, the initial positive memories, appreciation, and refreshed interactive connection can be a resource and/or safety net in various ways at various points throughout the rest of the session.

- If you are not able to perceive the Lord’s presence in the traumatic memory, even after asking “what’s in the way?” and trouble-shooting, go back to the positive starting place and re-establish connection with Him in this context. From this place of restored connection with Jesus, ask Him for help and specifically ask Him about the traumatic memory. Then go back and forth until you can perceive the Lord’s presence and establish an interactive connection in the traumatic memory.
- If you should become stuck at any point in working with the traumatic memory, and especially if you become stuck and have lost your interactive connection with Jesus, go back to the positive starting place and re-establish connection with Him in this context. At any point that you have difficulty perceiving the Lord’s presence or connecting with Him, you can go back to the initial interactive connection.
- If you are able to perceive the Lord’s presence in the traumatic memory, but do not experience strong enough connection to be able to receive the help you need, you can reference back to the initial positive connection to re-establish a stronger connection.
- At the end of the session, if you run out of time before you can resolve the traumatic memory to a point of peace and calm, you can return to the initial positive connection in order to help end the session in a good place.

**D. Helpful handouts for group exercise participants:** A one page summary of the instructions for the Immanuel group exercise has been included at the end of this document. We have found that each person participating in these group exercises likes to have a copy of the full text instructions (the five pages you have just read), and also the one page summary, so we usually provide these as handouts.

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



## Instructions for Immanuel group exercises (1 page summary/outline)

Karl D. Lehman, MD & Charlotte E.T. Lehman, M.Div. 10/7/2011

- 1.) **Break up into small groups:** Break up into small groups of three to four persons each.
- 2.) **Positive memories and appreciation:** Focus on memory/memories of previous positive experiences of perceiving the Lord's presence and connecting with Him. Each person in the group describe positive memory/memories to the others, and name specific things you appreciate about these experiences. The goal is to share appreciations until you *feel* appreciation for the Lord.
- 3.) **Reenter the positive memory and ask the Lord to establish an interactive connection:** Spend several minutes reentering/reconnecting with one of the positive memories. Then, from "inside" the memory, pray something along the lines of "Lord, help me to perceive Your living presence, and to have an interactive connection with You." Share whatever comes into your awareness. After each member of the group has shared, pick one person to continue through the rest of the exercise (steps #3 through #5), with the others in the group listening, supporting, and interceding.

**If you perceive the Lord's presence and feel connected to Him:** proceed on to Step #3.

**If you do not perceive the Lord's presence or feel connected to Him, and you would like to try simple "trouble-shooting":** See full text version for directions regarding simple "trouble-shooting." **\*\*Don't proceed to Step #3 unless/until you feel connected to the Lord.\*\***

- 4.) **Choose memories to work on:** Select a small to medium sized traumatic memory (see full text version for additional directions regarding memory selection).
- 5.) **Invite the Lord into the memory, ask Him to help you perceive His presence, engage with Him to receive healing:** From the perspective of being inside the memory, pray something like: "Jesus, I make a heart invitation for You to be with me here. Please help me to perceive Your presence."
  - a.) **If you are able to perceive the Lord's presence:** See full text for instructions regarding how to engage with Jesus to receive healing.
  - b.) **If you are not able to perceive the Lord's presence in the memory:** See full text
  - c.) **If you become stuck, and asking Jesus for guidance, help, etc does *not* seem to be resolving the problem:** See full text
  - d.) **If you're running out of time (ten to fifteen minutes left) and you still feel bad:** See full text
  - e.) **The "safety net" trouble-shooting intervention:** See full text

### 6.) **End of session – the Immanuel story and more appreciation:**

**If you experience complete resolution of the traumatic memory:** Thank the Lord for His healing presence and healing work, tell the Immanuel story, and name several specifics you especially appreciate.

**If you experienced some kind of positive interaction with the Lord in the context of the traumatic memory, but *only partial* resolution:** Focus on positive interaction in the memory and initial positive memories, tell the Immanuel story, name specific appreciations until you feel peaceful (you no longer feel negative emotions from traumatic memory).

**If you did not have a positive interaction with the Lord in the context of the traumatic**

**memory:** Return to positive memories, name specific appreciations, and reenter/reconnect with positive emotions associated with positive memories until you *feel* appreciation.