

The Immanuel Approach Referral Network: Important Requests, Recommendations, and Cautions

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There are now thousands of people, all over the world, wanting to receive Immanuel approach sessions – wanting to do emotional healing work with the Immanuel approach, and wanting to use Immanuel approach sessions to address aspects of their emotional and spiritual growth other than healing for traumatic memories. There are also many mental health professionals, ministries, and lay people able and willing to facilitate Immanuel approach sessions. With the Lehman Referrals page of this website and the Immanuel Network Directory, we are trying to build a referral network that can help those wanting Immanuel approach sessions to connect with those who are able and willing to provide them. These requests, recommendations, and cautions will hopefully help people use this network with maximum benefits and minimum problems.

The first section of this essay (below) presents a short summary of the key points. The remainder of the document presents expanded discussion of each of these points. We recommend reading the complete text at least once.

Important Requests, Recommendations, and Cautions: Short Summary

I. Providers: Please don't claim to teach and/or facilitate the Immanuel approach unless you truly do. Other approaches to emotional healing are often effective, and this is wonderful, but there are new pieces that distinguish the Immanuel approach from others. Please don't claim to teach the Immanuel approach and/or facilitate Immanuel approach sessions unless you include these new pieces.

II. Recipients: It is essential that you take responsibility for evaluating the person whom you are planning to see. We do not have oversight authority or provide formal supervision for any of the providers in the Immanuel referral network, and many of the providers on the Immanuel Network Directory are people we have never met. Therefore, it is essential that you take responsibility for evaluating the person whom you are planning to see.

III. Cautionary tales. Please read if you're not convinced of the need for these cautions.

IV. Am I truly teaching/providing/receiving the Immanuel approach?

Key new pieces for basic sessions:

- Priorities rearranged: primary objective = help the person to connect more intimately with Jesus by removing barriers between her heart and Him.
- 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 Him, as the foundation for everything else in the session.
- Engage directly with Jesus at every point in the session.
- More than just healing for psychological trauma.
- Immanuel approach troubleshooting and Immanuel interventions:
 1. Ongoing coaching to engage directly with Jesus for connection, guidance, and assistance at every point in the session.
 2. Monitor the person's interactive connection, and apply Immanuel interventions at any point the person loses adequate interactive connection with the Lord.
- Safety net of returning to Initial positive memory and interactive connection.

Additional new pieces for complete, richest version of the Immanuel approach:

- Understanding regarding inadequate capacity, and employing attunement relational connection to augment and build capacity.
- Advanced Immanuel intervention troubleshooting.
- Understanding and process components related to how our brains work better in community.
- Facilitator helps recipient to formulate and share the Immanuel story.
- Facilitator establishes her own interactive connection and engages directly with the Lord throughout the session.
- Additional understanding regarding processing tasks, and process components that apply this understanding.
- Additional understanding regarding the value of faith, and concrete steps for increasing it.

VI. Facilitators and trainers should be using the Immanuel approach for healing and growth in their own lives:

VII. If necessary, find/recruit your own facilitator.

VIII. Many facilitators have other tools in their tool belts, and the plan that works best for your emotional healing may ideally include using some of these other tools.

IX. There are many folks using the Immanuel approach who are not on our lists. (don't assume that a person isn't using the Immanuel approach just because she isn't on our Lehman Referral List or the Immanuel Network Directory).

Complete Text Version of Key Points

I. Providers – please don't claim to teach and/or facilitate the Immanuel approach unless you truly do: As discussed in more detail in several of our essays,¹ we know that there are other approaches to emotional healing that can be effective, such as many variations of traditional prayer for emotional healing,² Theophostic-based emotional healing, and Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR). Many people have received good healing through these approaches, and I am grateful for every mental health professional, ministry, and lay minister that uses these approaches to help people identify and resolve traumatic memories.³

¹See especially Chapter 3 in the new Immanuel Approach book for a discussion of other approaches to emotional healing, and how they relate to the Immanuel approach. Also, "Theophostic & EMDR: F.A.Q.'s and Common Misunderstandings" provides a much more detailed discussion of EMDR.

²Approaches to prayer for emotional healing, that include the central component of helping the person to connect with traumatic memories and then asking Jesus to come and heal the trauma, have been taught since the 1950's, by people/ministries such as Agnes Sanford, John & Paula Sanford, Francis and Judith MacNutt, Matthew and Dennis Linn, John Wimber and the Vineyard Church, and others.

³As discussed at the end of Chapter 4 and in the middle of Chapter 22 of the new Immanuel Approach book, there is even a strategic point at which we use these other approaches as part of the Immanuel approach. When traumatic-memory-anchored blockages prevent a person from being able to perceive the Lord's presence and establish an interactive connection, thereby precluding use of the usual

However, we also perceive that the Immanuel approach includes several important new pieces that make it easier, safer to use (especially for lay people), and also more effective than the other approaches to emotional healing that we are aware of. These new pieces also enable the Immanuel approach to address other issues in addition to emotional healing. And these new pieces enable the Immanuel approach to be taught and learned more safely, more easily, and with more consistent results.

Leaving out some of these new Immanuel Approach pieces can result in negative experiences, such as disappointment from lack of results, or being re-traumatized by getting stuck in a traumatic memory that gets activated but then cannot be resolved. And if facilitators leave out important components but still (erroneously) call what they are doing the Immanuel Approach, then the negative experiences that can result from leaving out these components will be *wrongly associated with the Immanuel Approach*.

Furthermore, there are components that I very deliberately *do not* include in the Immanuel Approach, such as the recipient using guided imagery and the facilitator leading the session with prophetic words of knowledge. These components that I deliberately exclude are associated with a variety of problems, concerns, and disadvantages. For example, if the recipient is using guided imagery, the process of proactively generating images with her own imagination can actually get in the way of receiving content from God.⁴ And if the facilitator is leading with prophetic words of knowledge, the session can get into serious trouble if the facilitator mistakes implicit memory from his own unresolved issues for guidance from the Holy Spirit. If facilitators include these components but still (erroneously) call what they are doing the Immanuel Approach, then the problems, concerns, and disadvantages that can come with these other components will be *wrongly associated with the Immanuel Approach*.

So when facilitators *leave out* important components that *should* be included and *bring in* other components that *should not* be included, but they still (erroneously) call what they are doing the Immanuel Approach, we don't just get the direct negative consequences from these negative experiences, problems, concerns, and disadvantages, we also get an erroneous association between these negative consequences and the Immanuel Approach—we get what I call the *inoculation effect*. If you inoculate people with a weakened form of an infectious disease, their immune systems will develop a resistance to the disease. And then if they encounter the real, full strength disease at some point in the future their immune systems will quickly repel it. Similarly, if a person or ministry team or pastor or church board has a negative experience with one of these other techniques that was erroneously called the Immanuel Approach, they will develop a resistance to the genuine Immanuel Approach. And then if someone comes up to them at some point in the future, and says, “Hey, I’ve just discovered a wonderful new approach to emotional healing—it’s called the *Immanuel Approach!*” those who have been inoculated will have an immediate, involuntary negative response, and will reply with something along the lines of, “No thank you. We already know about that. We tried it and had a bad experience with it.”

Immanuel approach process, we use one or more of these other approaches to remove the trauma-anchored blockages as part of Immanuel intervention troubleshooting.

⁴For additional discussion regarding guided imagery, and why are careful to not include it in the Immanuel Approach, see Chapter 8, pages ****Fill in****, Chapter 32, pages ****fill in****, and Chapter 40, pages ****fill in**** in the new Immanuel Approach book.

Therefore, if you claim to teach the Immanuel approach and/or to facilitate Immanuel approach sessions, it is important that you actually include the new pieces that I believe to be necessary ingredients for genuine Immanuel Approach sessions. And it is also important that you do not include the techniques and interventions that I have deliberately excluded from the Immanuel Approach.⁵

II. Recipients – It is essential that you take responsibility for evaluating the person whom you are planning to work with. We do not have oversight authority or provide formal supervision for any of the providers in the Immanuel referral network, and many of the providers on the Immanuel Network Directory website are people we have never met. It is therefore essential that the person who desires to receive Immanuel Approach sessions take responsibility for evaluating the person whom he/she is planning to work with. First, it is important to find a facilitator who is adequate and safe with respect to basics such as keeping confidentiality, maintaining appropriate boundaries, having reasonably good discernment, and having adequate capacity to stay with you when you experience intense emotions. Second, it's important to find a facilitator who is actually using the Immanuel approach. As just mentioned above, when compared to other approaches to emotional healing we perceive that the Immanuel approach includes several important new pieces that make it easier and safer to use, easier and safer to teach, more effective, and able to address other issues in addition to emotional healing. As also just mentioned, we have deliberately excluded recipients using guided imagery and facilitators using words of knowledge to guide sessions. Therefore, if you are wanting to include Immanuel approach sessions as part of your own personal healing and growth, it's important that you work with a facilitator who actually *includes* the new pieces that *should* be included and *excludes* the two pieces that should *not* be included.

Before the first session, it is appropriate for the recipient to ask about the providers training and experience (with respect to emotional healing in general, and the Immanuel approach in particular), and to ask about the kind of results the provider has been seeing. As discussed below, I strongly recommend that facilitators *receive* Immanuel approach sessions as part of their own healing and personal growth, and I think it is appropriate to ask about this point as well. If possible, it is ideal to talk to others who know the provider and who can comment on whether she is basically competent and safe, and on whether or not she is truly using the Immanuel approach. The recipient should also evaluate the process once sessions have begun, to determine whether he is actually receiving the Immanuel approach and to determine whether there is a good fit between himself and the provider. It is very appropriate for the person seeking healing to evaluate the process on an ongoing basis, and to find another provider if necessary.

III. Cautionary tales: Let me share several cautionary tales to emphasize the concerns just raised.

⁵There may be times when it is right to include some of these other techniques and interventions in your overall care for a person. For example, there may be ministry situations in which it is right and good to share prophetic words that you perceive God to be giving you for the recipient. Or there may be situations in which it is right and good to include guided imagery as part of a relaxation technique or as part of a devotional exercise. I am just asking that you do not mix these other pieces into the Immanuel Approach process, and that you communicate to the recipient that these other techniques and interventions are not part of the Immanuel Approach.

Cautionary tale #1 ~ “Please, please, please facilitate an Immanuel session!”: Friends of ours were wanting professional help for their marriage, and we strongly encouraged them to work with someone who could incorporate Immanuel sessions into the overall plan. They quickly found a mental health professional in their area whose website explicitly advertised the Immanuel approach as an option he offered as part of his psychotherapy practice, and they were initially very grateful for this apparent good fortune. Unfortunately, when they started working with him he seemed unwilling or unable to actually facilitate an Immanuel approach session.

When they asked for the Immanuel approach at the first session, he said that he would include the Immanuel approach when it was appropriate, but explained that it was important to start with gathering information. When they asked for the Immanuel approach at the second session, he again said that he would include the Immanuel approach when it was appropriate, but explained that he needed more information, to make sure that he accurately understood the big picture. When they asked for the Immanuel approach at the third session, he stated that they could certainly use the Immanuel approach at any point it was truly necessary, but explained that they needed to work on their communication skills before addressing other issues. When they asked for the Immanuel approach at the fourth session, he reassured them that the Immanuel approach was always available if they really needed it, but explained that first they needed to spend more time on improving their communication. At the fifth session, when he said they needed to work on conflict resolution in response to their request for the Immanuel approach, they became more emphatic, stating that they were convinced implicit memory from underlying issues getting triggered was a big part of their problem, and that they thought the Immanuel approach would help address these underlying issues. He agreed that the Immanuel approach was a valuable resource, and agreed that they might use it at some point in the future, but insisted that it was more strategic to spend this particular session working on conflict resolution. When they asked for the Immanuel approach at the sixth session, he again reassured them that Immanuel approach was available as a potential resource that they might use in the future, but explained that he wanted to spend more time focusing on conflict resolution at this point in their work.

This pattern continued for more than ten sessions. Our friends explicitly asked for the Immanuel approach at every session, and at every session the therapist reassured them that the Immanuel approach was indeed available, but then presented explanations for why something else was more appropriate for this particular appointment. In spite of asking for it at every appointment, they never received an Immanuel approach session from this therapist.⁶

In light of additional information available to me regarding this situation, I don't think the therapist was being deliberately deceitful or manipulative. I think he had some kind of intense triggered resistance to facilitating an Immanuel approach session; but he was completely unaware of this because the implicit memory content behind his triggered resistance was “invisible,” his Verbal Logical Explainer (VLE) did such a good job of coming up with explanations for why the session he was actually in was never the time or place for using the Immanuel approach, and the combination of self deception and central nervous system

⁶The happy ending to this story is that our friends eventually received wonderful Immanuel healing in sessions with Charlotte and I. But unfortunately this happy ending isn't available to the general public, which brings us back to these requests, recommendations, and cautions regarding our referral network and the network directory.

extrapolation filled in the holes at any weak points in his VLE explanations.⁷ It is very sobering to me that a well intentioned Christian therapist explicitly advertised the Immanuel approach, was unable to provide it. And it is even more sobering that he was completely unable to see or acknowledge that he could not actually facilitate an Immanuel approach session.⁸

Cautionary tale #2 ~ “Wasn’t that a wonderful Immanuel session?”: While I was attending a conference a number of years ago, a friend and colleague informed me that she had been asked to provide care for a fellow attendee who was experiencing intense emotional upset. She was planning to use the Immanuel approach in working with this person, and asked if I would be willing to sit in on the session, as an intercessor, observer, and possible consultant (in case the situation got unexpectedly complicated). I have learned a lot by observing others facilitating emotional healing, I had time and energy available, and I thought it would be especially interesting to watch some one else facilitate an Immanuel session, so I agreed to participate.

My friend and colleague demonstrated great faith, she was very empathic, she remained emotionally present, she was able to recognize and follow clues indicating underlying traumatic memories, she helped the person find and connect with the traumatic memories, she coached the person to invite Jesus to come with healing, she worked with the person to identify and resolve several blockages, and the person received significant healing for the traumatic memories that had gotten stirred up. From a certain perspective this was all wonderful, but I was somewhat surprised and disappointed. My friend had certainly demonstrated understanding and skill with respect to emotional healing ministry, and she had done a nice job of helping the person resolve several traumatic memories; but she had facilitated a very traditional ministry session, without any of the new components that distinguish the Immanuel approach from other approaches to emotional healing.

I was even more surprised by our debriefing discussion after the person had left. I was expecting my friend to turn to me with an embarrassed apology – something along the lines of, “I’m sorry Dr. Lehman. I really was intending to use the Immanuel approach. I think I got a little triggered right at the beginning, and in my anxiety I went back to the old, familiar tools that I’m most comfortable with.” But to my amazement, she turned to me with a big grin and exclaimed, “Wasn’t that a wonderful Immanuel session?” In a way, it *had* been an Immanuel session. Jesus, Immanuel, had indeed been present, just as he is always present. And Immanuel had been especially, tangibly present when he responded to the person’s prayer that he come into her traumatic memories with healing. But all of the details of the actual process of the session had been very traditional emotional healing ministry, without any of the new components that distinguish what we call the Immanuel approach from other approaches to

⁷Triggering, “invisible” implicit memory, VLE explanations, and central nervous system extrapolation are fascinating, important, widespread phenomena that are especially costly when they are not understood or recognized. See my earlier book, *Outsmarting Yourself*, for an understandable description of these phenomena, and for discussion of how to prevent them from causing lots of trouble.

⁸These events occurred fifteen years ago, before the Immanuel Approach had been developed, so our friends were actually trying to obtain Theophostic-based psychotherapy as opposed to Immanuel Approach sessions. But the point illustrated with such painful clarity in this story—that a well intentioned therapist can claim to offer a specific therapy approach but be totally unable to actually provide it—can certainly be applied to the Immanuel Approach. (A colleague has actually described a *very* similar, more recent situation with respect to the Immanuel approach.)

emotional healing. And my friend seemed to be completely unaware of this.

Furthermore, she wasn't just ignorant. That is, the problem wasn't that she simply didn't know the difference between the Immanuel approach and traditional emotional healing ministry. She had read my essays about the Immanuel approach, and she could talk, theoretically, about the key principles and process components that distinguish the Immanuel approach, but she seemed completely unaware of the fact that she had not incorporated any of them into the session she had just finished leading.⁹

Some readers may find this story to be almost hard to believe; however, a fascinating research study reveals that it is soberingly easy to find this same disconnect between theory and practice *even among professional psychotherapists*. The researchers first verified that the study subjects had been adequately trained in a particular psychotherapy modality. And when interviewed, these therapists clearly affirmed that they were indeed providing psychotherapy based on this modality. However, when the research team videotaped actual sessions, they found that many of the therapists did not implement many of the key principles or tools of the modality in question when facilitating the actual, real-life sessions that took place in their offices.¹⁰

Cautionary tale #3 ~ “That’s what I’ve been doing for years!”: On a somewhat regular basis, after I teach about the Immanuel approach at a conference someone will come up to me following my presentation and exclaim, “What you were just talking about – that’s what I’ve been doing for years! It’s encouraging to finally hear someone teaching about it!” I have also gotten a number of emails along the same lines: “A friend of mine sent me to your website, and as I was reading through your essays, I realized ‘I’ve been doing that for years!’ I’m glad your writing about it.” However, as these people provide more details about what they have been doing, I discover that almost all of them have actually been using some variation of traditional emotional healing ministry, or possibly a variation of Theophostic-based emotional healing work. Only a very small percentage have actually understood and incorporated all of the distinctive new pieces (or even some of the new pieces) that distinguish the Immanuel approach.

My perception is that these people have only listened to my presentations superficially and/or skimmed over our written material, and then jumped to premature, erroneous conclusions. They *accurately* recognize that both the therapy/ministry they have been providing and the Immanuel approach to emotional healing share certain important components, such as recognizing that many problems in the present come from underlying memory pain, asking Jesus for guidance, helping the person to find and connect with the underlying traumatic

⁹This story occurred fifteen years ago, before the Immanuel Approach had been developed, so my friend was actually trying to facilitate Theophostic-based psychotherapy as opposed to an Immanuel Approach session. But the point illustrated in this story—that a well intentioned ministry person can believe she is facilitating a specific approach to emotional healing, but be totally unaware of the reality that she is not including any of the distinctive components of the approach—can certainly be applied to the Immanuel Approach. (A colleague has actually described a *very* similar, more recent situation with respect to the Immanuel approach.)

¹⁰**Note: Does anybody know the details of this study (title, author)? I remember the contents from the research, but can't remember where I found it.**

memories, and then asking Jesus to come and heal the trauma. However, they miss the distinctive new pieces that distinguish Immanuel sessions from what they have been doing, and *erroneously* conclude that they have actually been providing full Immanuel approach sessions.

IV. How can I tell if I am receiving/facilitating/teaching the genuine Immanuel approach?:

These cautionary tales, in combination with my initial comments to providers and recipients, bring us to two important questions. For providers (trainers and facilitators): “How can I tell if what I am providing is actually the Immanuel approach?” And for recipients: “How can I tell if what I am receiving is actually the Immanuel approach?”

The most thorough answer to these questions is to read Chapters 3 through 22 from the new Immanuel Approach book (available as free downloads from the Getting Started page of www.immanuelapproach.com), and then ask “Are the training materials and/or sessions in question incorporating the principles and following the process described in these chapters?” However, while this is a good long term goal, this plan will probably be a bit overwhelming to most people – and especially at the beginning of their journey with respect to the Immanuel approach. An intermediate answer would be to start with just one chapter, and ask the above question with respect to the overview presented in Chapter 3. This plan will probably be a good fit for many, but still a bit overwhelming for some. I have therefore tried to put together a summary of the most important new pieces, with respect to principles and process, that distinguish the Immanuel approach (to emotional healing and to life) from other approaches to emotional healing. And I have also included a summary of the *excluded* techniques and interventions that help in distinguishing the Immanuel approach from other approaches to emotional healing:

A. New pieces necessary for the basic version: I consider the following principles and process components to be distinctive new pieces that are necessary for the basic version of the Immanuel Approach:

- *Switching the top priority from Symptom Relief to intimacy with Jesus:*¹¹ The most important component of the Immanuel approach is to switch the primary objective from “resolve trauma in order to relieve symptoms” to “help the person to connect more intimately with Jesus by removing barriers between her heart and Him.” We recognize that resolving trauma is an important *part* of removing blockages that hinder our connection to the Lord. And we gratefully accept the resolution of psychological trauma and the associated symptom relief as *side benefits*. But the *primary* purpose and most important priority with the Immanuel approach is to remove blockages that stand between our hearts and Jesus.
- *Deliberate appreciation, in the context of remembering previous positive experiences with the Lord, to prepare for an interactive connection with Jesus:* Recalling past positive experiences and deliberately appreciating them prepares your brain–mind–spirit system for positive relational connection. At the beginning of each Immanuel approach session, we therefore include reconnecting with memories for previous positive experiences with the Lord, and deliberate appreciation, to prepare the person’s brain-mind-spirit system for refreshing/re-establishing a living, interactive connection with Him.

¹¹This point is discussed in the “Priority Correction with Respect to Symptom Relief” section of Chapter 3 of the new book.

- *Refreshed perception of the Lord's living presence, and establishment of an interactive connection with Him, as the foundation for everything:* After the person has reconnected with a memory of past positive connection with the Lord, and *feels* appreciation in this context, the facilitator/person asks the Lord to help her perceive His presence and establish an interactive connection. 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). This living, interactive connection is then the foundation for everything else in the session.¹²
- *Engage directly with Jesus regarding every issue, question, need, and challenge.* Once the recipient has established an adequate interactive connection with Jesus, the therapist/ministry facilitator coaches her to turn to Jesus, focus on Jesus, and engage with Jesus directly regarding every issue, question, need, and challenge that comes up.

As mentioned above, the primary objective of the Immanuel Approach is to increase intimacy with Jesus. As also mentioned above, one intervention for helping the recipient increase intimacy with Jesus is to find and resolving specific blockages that hinder her heart from coming to Jesus. Well, another intervention for helping the recipient increase intimacy with Jesus is coaching her to turn to Jesus, focus on Jesus, and engage with Jesus directly regarding every issue, question, need, and challenge that comes up. That is, as the recipient repeatedly engages with Jesus to address a wide variety of issues, questions, needs, and challenges, *she will be practicing and strengthening a real, tangible, personal, experiential relationship with him.*

Furthermore, the simple intervention of repeatedly coaching the person to turn to Jesus, focus on Jesus, and engage with Him directly is sometimes 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.

- *Immanuel approach troubleshooting (Chapters 12, 13, and 26 in the new book):* Many people are quickly able to establish an adequate interactive connection at the beginning of the session, they easily maintain this connection, and they receive a variety of beautiful, life-giving results, all with only the minimal Immanuel approach interventions just described. However, others initially experience confusing, disappointing, or frustrating results, but then eventually receive enhanced friendship with the Lord, transformative emotional healing, and other beautiful, life-giving results if the facilitator can help them identify and resolve

¹²As discussed in one of the final sections of "Brain Science, Psychological Trauma, and the God Who is with Us ~ Part V," there are certain situations in which I jump right into working with traumatic memories. However, even when I "jump right into working with traumatic memories," the first thing I do once the person identifies and connects with a traumatic memory is help them establish an interactive connection with the Lord inside the traumatic memory, and then coach her to engage with the Lord directly regarding every aspect of the traumatic memory.

blockages. The Lord is always present, the Lord always wants to bless us with life-giving gifts, the Lord is always able to accomplish this, and the Immanuel approach will almost always (eventually) release these gifts and blessings if adequate troubleshooting is included.

Even though all approaches to emotional healing include troubleshooting, I use the term “*Immanuel Approach troubleshooting*” and include this as a new, distinctive component because a number of the specific troubleshooting tools we use are, indeed, new, distinctive, and unique to the Immanuel Approach. (The Immanuel Interventions described in the next section are some of the best examples of troubleshooting tools that are new, distinctive, and unique to the Immanuel Approach.)

- *Immanuel Interventions (Chapters 13 and 26 in the new book)*: Since the foundation for an Immanuel Approach session is the recipient having an adequate interactive connection with Jesus, one of the most important responsibilities of the facilitator is to make sure that this foundational connection is in place. And as the reader probably remembers, Immanuel Interventions are *specific, systematic interventions with the very focused goal of helping the person receiving ministry to perceive the Lord’s presence and establish (or regain) an adequate interactive connection with him*. As the reader probably also remembers, Chapters 13 and 26 present a rich toolbox of specific Immanuel Interventions.¹³
- *The safety net of returning to the initial positive memory and interactive connection (Chapter 14 in the new book)*: If the recipient gets stuck and other troubleshooting efforts do not resolve the problem, the facilitator can coach her to return to the initial positive memory and interactive connection with the Lord. In the context of the positive memory and the refreshed initial interactive connection, the person can engage directly with Jesus regarding the stuck point. Also, if they are coming to the end of the session and the person is still in the middle of an unresolved traumatic memory, the facilitator can coach her to return to the initial positive memory and interactive connection as a way to end the session in a safe place. This very simple Immanuel Intervention serves as a safety net, and this is especially important for groups, lay ministers, and beginners.
- *Coaching the recipient to describe everything that comes into her awareness, regardless of whether it makes sense or feels important (Chapters 16 and 17 in the new book)*: It is very important for the recipient to describe everything that comes into her awareness. This simple discipline of describing her mental content to another person pulls the content through the parts of her brain that help her to *feel the importance of the content*, and that help her to *recognize how it fits into the emotional healing work she is doing*. (Another way to think about this phenomenon of being more able to feel the importance and recognize the meaning of our mental content as we describe it to another person is that *God has designed our brains to work better in community*.) Therefore, an important part of the Immanuel Approach is for the facilitator to persistently, repeatedly coach the recipient to describe everything that comes into her awareness, *regardless of whether it makes sense or feels important*. Furthermore, the

¹³As the reader may realize, Immanuel Interventions are actually a special kind of troubleshooting, with the very focused goal of helping the recipient to perceive the Lord’s presence and to establish (or regain) an adequate interactive connection. However, even though they are technically a subset of Immanuel Approach troubleshooting, I have named Immanuel Interventions as a separate foundational component because they are so central to the process and such a hallmark feature of the Immanuel Approach.

recipient will be able to cooperate with this aspect of the process much more readily if she studies chapters 16 and 17 and understands these principles.

B. Additional new pieces that are necessary for the complete, richest, ideal version: There are also a number of “second string” new pieces – additional new principles and process components that are valuable, but not quite as central. It is possible to facilitate basic Immanuel approach sessions without these additional pieces, but both effectiveness and the richness of the fruit produced will increase steadily as these principles and process components are included. I consider the following additional principles and process components as new pieces that are necessary for the complete, richest, ideal version of the Immanuel Approach:

- *Expanding beyond just emotional healing and moving outside of special session:*¹⁴ Immanuel sessions can address more than just healing for psychological trauma. As just described above, the process in an Immanuel approach session starts with the recipient establishing an interactive connection with Jesus, and then both the facilitator and the recipient try to follow the Lord’s lead regarding the rest of the session. In some sessions, the Lord leads them to address aspects of the person’s emotional and spiritual growth other than healing traumatic memories. Furthermore, with the complete, ideal version of the Immanuel Approach, it moves outside of special psychotherapy or emotional healing ministry sessions and becomes the foundation for an Immanuel *lifestyle*. We can apply Immanuel Approach principles and tools to perceive God’s presence and connect with him during everyday life. Our ultimate goal with the Immanuel Approach *for life* is getting to the place where we perceive the Lord’s presence, and *abide* in an interactive connection with Jesus, as our usual, normal, *baseline condition* as we walk through life each day.
- *Formulating and sharing the Immanuel story (Chapter 18 of the new book):* With the complete, ideal version of the Immanuel Approach, each session ends with the facilitator helping the recipient to formulate her experience into a narrative story, and then after the session the recipient shares this *Immanuel story* with at least three other people. This Immanuel story describes what it was like *before* the recipient perceived the Lord’s presence in the place of pain, it describes what happened *when she perceived the Lord’s presence* in the place of pain, and it describes how things are/have been different *since* perceiving the Lord’s presence in the place of pain.

Note that the recipient can still connect to Jesus, get healing, and enjoy lasting fruit even if she does not formulate and share the story of her Immanuel session. However, formulating a narrative with these three key components, and then sharing it with at least three other people, helps the recipient begin to integrate the Immanuel Approach into her daily life. Formulating and sharing the Immanuel story will especially help the recipient to remember and apply the Immanuel Approach at points in the future when she notices that she is triggered.
- *The facilitator establishing an interactive connection for herself, and then engaging with the Lord to obtain ongoing guidance (Chapter 20 of the new book):* This is not absolutely necessary, since the recipient will often be able to connect with the Lord and have a fruitful session even if the facilitator has little or no interactive connection. However, it is certainly

¹⁴For additional discussion of this point, see “From the Immanuel Approach to Emotional Healing to the Immanuel Approach to Life,” in Chapter 3 of the new book.

ideal for the facilitator to also establish a living, interactive connection with the Lord at the beginning of the session, so that she can benefit from ongoing guidance by engaging directly with Jesus throughout rest of the session. Furthermore, this becomes increasingly important with intermediate and advanced work. With intermediate and advanced work, the recipient can sometimes encounter intense and complex blockages that cause him to lose his connection for extended periods of time, and the facilitator must therefore troubleshoot to resolve the complex blockages without the benefit of the recipient being able to engage with Jesus. In this situation it is obviously valuable and important for the facilitator to have her own interactive connection, so that Jesus can still provide guidance and help with the advanced troubleshooting work.

- *Faith (Chapter 21)*: Faith is obviously a part of all Christian approaches to emotional healing, so faith, *per se*, is not actually new, distinctive, or unique with the Immanuel Approach. However, the richest, ideal version includes a component of faith in the Lord's Immanuel presence, faith in the Lord's goodness, faith in the Lord's guidance, faith in the effectiveness of the Immanuel approach, and faith in the effectiveness of Immanuel interventions that *is* new, distinctive, and unique with the Immanuel Approach. Furthermore, the full, ideal version of the Immanuel Approach also includes concrete interventions for increasing each of these aspects of faith, for both the facilitator and the recipient.¹⁵
- *Key insights, principles, and tools for intermediate and advanced troubleshooting (Chapters 4, 12, 13, 22, and 26)*: As just mentioned above, an important aspect of intermediate and advanced Immanuel Approach work is that intense and complex blockages can cause the recipient to lose her connection with the Lord for extended periods of time. With the loss of the recipient's interactive connection, the facilitator can obviously no longer rely on the number one troubleshooting tool of coaching her to engage directly with Jesus, and the facilitator must therefore rely on other troubleshooting resources. As the reader will remember from Chapters 4 and 22, I essentially bless facilitators in this situation to use any emotional healing ministry and/or psychotherapy troubleshooting resources *as long as they are effective and safe*.

However, in my own intermediate and advanced Immanuel Approach work, I constantly use several packages of new, distinctive insights and interventions that are unique with the Immanuel Approach (at least as compared to any other Christian approaches to emotional healing that I am aware of):

Advanced Immanuel Intervention troubleshooting: The ideal, richest version of the Immanuel Approach includes new, distinctive insights regarding the different blockages that can hinder a person from perceiving the Lord's presence and establishing an interactive connection with Him. And the ideal, richest version also includes specific

¹⁵Some readers may wonder why faith was not included as one of the necessary components for the basic version of the Immanuel Approach. The reason for this is that faith is *not* actually necessary. Amazingly, the Immanuel Approach will sometimes still work even when neither the facilitator nor the recipient bring much faith to the endeavor. But the presence of faith is certainly ideal, it will always help the process move forward more easily and more powerfully, and it becomes increasingly valuable as one moves from basic to intermediate to advanced Immanuel Approach work.

Immanuel Interventions for identifying and resolving these blockages.¹⁶

Relational circuits, attunement, and capacity: The complete, ideal version of the Immanuel Approach includes new, distinctive understanding regarding relational circuits, attunement, and the ways in which inadequate capacity can be an especially important blockage that often hinders the emotional healing process. And the full, ideal version also includes process components designed to deliberately use attuned relational connection, especially with the Lord, as a powerful intervention for both temporarily augmenting and permanently building capacity.

The pain processing pathway: The full, ideal version of the Immanuel Approach includes new, distinctive information regarding the processing tasks that must be completed in order to resolve traumatic memories. And the full, ideal version also includes process components that apply this understanding. (For example, the facilitator deliberately watches for any places at which the recipient gets stuck in triggered, non-relational mode, and then coaches her to receive attunement (from the Lord and/or the facilitator) in order to get back into relational mode).

C. Techniques and interventions deliberately excluded from Immanuel Approach

sessions: As explained earlier, I have deliberately *excluded* the following techniques and interventions from what I consider to be the genuine Immanuel Approach:

- *Recipients using guided imagery:* With guided imagery, the therapist or minister coaches the recipient to deliberately, proactively generate *imaginary* content. However, the recipient proactively generating her own imaginary content can actually get in the way of receiving content from the Lord. So not only do I *not* include guided imagery in the Immanuel approach, I actually coach recipients to *deliberately avoid* generating their own imaginary content. In fact, I teach recipients to watch for the sense that they are proactively generating imaginary content with their own minds, and whenever this is noticed it is taken as an indicator that the content is *not* coming from the Lord.
- *Facilitators using prophetic words of knowledge to guide sessions:* As mentioned above, if the facilitator is leading with prophetic words of knowledge, the session can get into serious trouble if the facilitator mistakes implicit memory from his own unresolved issues for guidance from the Holy Spirit. So I ask that facilitators do not use prophetic words of knowledge to lead Immanuel approach sessions. As emphasized repeatedly throughout this book, the facilitator leads by providing the structure for the Immanuel approach, and by helping the recipient connect with and then interact with Jesus. *Jesus* then leads with respect to everything else.

Again, there may be times when it is right to include these components in your overall care for a person. I am just asking that you do not mix these other pieces into the Immanuel Approach process, and that you communicate to the recipient that these components are not part of the Immanuel Approach.

¹⁶See Chapter 26 in the new book for examples.

VI. If necessary, find/recruit your own provider: We realize that there are more people looking for facilitators than the number of facilitators which can be found on our Lehman Referral List or on the Immanuel Network Directory. Therefore, an important part of the plan for meeting the overwhelming need for Immanuel approach sessions is for people to find or recruit their own Immanuel approach facilitators. Our essay, “Finding/Recruiting Your Own Immanuel Approach Facilitator” (link) offers our thoughts with respect to how one might go about doing this.

VII. Many providers have other tools in their tool belt: Many competent, careful providers, who are truly able to facilitate Immanuel approach sessions, are also trained and experienced in other forms of prayer ministry and/or psychotherapy. *If you want to do emotional healing work using only the Immanuel approach, we encourage you to make that very clear to the provider from the outset of your work.*

Also, **bear in mind that the plan that works best for your emotional healing may ideally include other elements in addition to the Immanuel approach.** For example, it is sometimes necessary to use other tools, such as Theophostic, to remove blockages that prevent you from being able to experience an interactive connection with the Lord (a necessary prerequisite for being able to work within the Immanuel approach); it is sometimes helpful to take a session to “debrief” after every few Immanuel sessions; it is sometimes important to work with your therapist/minister to develop coping skills/tools (to help manage life during the time it takes to resolve underlying issues); it is sometimes important to get help from your therapist/minister in building a better support community; it is sometimes important to work with a Christian psychiatrist regarding medication to help control symptoms (even while simultaneously using the Immanuel approach to eliminate those symptoms at their roots). These additional interventions are not part of the Immanuel approach per se, but are often helpful/necessary in certain situations.

And remember cautionary tale #1. If your provider always (or even mostly) wants to use other tools, even when you explicitly ask for more emphasis on the Immanuel approach, feel free to find a different provider.

VIII. There are many facilitators and trainers who are not included on our Lehman Referral List or on the Immanuel Network Directory: Some providers we know, who are very experienced and effective, are simply too busy to take any more referrals, and so have asked to not be included on any of the referral network lists. Others work in a specific church or friend/family/ministry network that doesn't fit with taking outside referrals. And there are others that we simply haven't yet found, or that haven't yet found us. The point here is: don't assume that a person isn't using the Immanuel approach just because she isn't on our Lehman Referral List or on the Immanuel Network Directory.

IX. Facilitators and trainers should be using the Immanuel approach for regular healing and growth in their own lives: As most of those in the Immanuel Approach community already know, I am constantly encouraging anyone who will listen to embrace the lifestyle of using the Immanuel Approach to pursue regular healing and growth. As most of those in the Immanuel Approach community also know, I practice what I preach. I receive regular Immanuel approach sessions as part of my ongoing emotional healing and personal growth, and my perception is that this is profoundly valuable and important—my observation is that these regular times of connecting with Jesus continue to resolve triggers, eliminate blindspots, improve my

discernment, build my capacity, increase my faith, and build my maturity skills.

All of these benefits have produced a steady, progressive increase in what I have to offer as both a facilitator and a trainer, and this alone is a good-enough reason for facilitators and trainers to use the Immanuel Approach for regular healing and growth in their own lives. However, there is a second point that pertains more directly to the topic of this chapter. Ongoing healing and growth have also produced a steady improvement in my self-awareness and a steady decrease in my self-deception. For example, each time the Lord resolves a traumatic memory, there is one less package of toxic implicit memory that can get stirred up and contaminate my perception of myself and the world around me. Increasing faith in God's love provides another example—each time I experience Jesus' unconditional love, I become more able to look honestly at areas of difficulty or failure because I am less afraid of rejection or punishment. And the point with respect to this chapter is that increasing self-awareness and decreasing self-deception will make a facilitator and/or trainer less likely to end up as the subject of one of our cautionary tales. (I don't need any more stories about well intentioned providers who are facilitating and/or teaching something other than the genuine Immanuel Approach, but don't seem to have the slightest clue that there is a problem.)

Furthermore, if facilitators and trainers are using the Immanuel Approach for regular healing and growth in their own lives, it will be much easier to preserve unity and to protect against division as we move forward as an Immanuel Approach community. It is important that Immanuel approach facilitators and trainers be appropriately flexible, and it is especially important that they be flexible and creative with respect to customizing the Immanuel approach so that it can be most easily taught and applied in many different cultural contexts. At the same time, it is very important to protect the integrity of the Immanuel approach—we want to make sure that facilitators and trainers who claim to be in the Immanuel approach community are careful to include the new pieces that distinguish it, and we want to avoid mixing in outside content that will distort, corrupt, detract, or bring confusion. This will be challenging, and there will certainly be occasional points of disagreement and conflict. As all of us in the Immanuel Approach community wrestle with this challenging aspect of caring for the Immanuel approach, it will be tremendously helpful if we are all regularly engaging with the living, interactive presence of Jesus. And it will be especially strategic for facilitators and trainers to regularly work with Jesus in an ongoing effort to eliminate traumas, triggers, and blindspots, to build discernment, capacity, faith, and maturity, to decrease self-deception, and to increase self-awareness.

X. Cautionary Tale #4: “I Totally Agree! Of Course Everybody (*Else*) Should Be Using the Immanuel Approach for Healing and Growth in Their Own Lives.”: I do not yet know a single person who I perceive to be completely healed, totally free of triggers and blindspots, fully mature, and able to perceive the Lord's presence and guidance with 100% accuracy. This means that EVERYBODY will benefit from regular Immanuel approach sessions where they can engage directly with the living, interactive presence of Jesus in order to resolve trauma, build maturity skills, and receive any other mentoring the Lord wants to provide. I make these comments everywhere I go, along with explicitly, emphatically encouraging EVERYBODY in the Immanuel approach community to apply the Immanuel approach in their own lives. And in spite of this repeated, emphatic message, I have still been sobered and amazed to discover how many trainers and facilitators do not regularly receive Immanuel approach sessions. The most intriguing/puzzling scenarios are the ones in which people seem to whole-heartedly support me as I make these statements and recommendations, and seem genuinely convinced that they should

apply to everyone else, but then I discover that they are not using the Immanuel Approach for regular healing and growth in their own lives.¹

So again, I want to encourage *everybody* to embrace an Immanuel lifestyle that includes regular interactions with the living presence of Jesus and that includes regular work to pursue ongoing growth and healing. And if you are a facilitator and/or trainer, I want to especially encourage you: *please, please, please* use the Immanuel Approach for *regular* healing and growth in your life.

¹. And just in case you are wondering—no, one or two crisis sessions every several years, or an occasional group exercise at a conference, does not qualify as using the Immanuel Approach for regular healing and growth in your life.