

The Immanuel Approach (to Emotional Healing and to Life)
Chapter 24: Immanuel Approach Exercises for Groups & Beginners
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NOTE: As of Feb 2022, this essay provides an updated, totally re-written version of Chapter 24

I. Introduction. As described in chapter fourteen, our experience with emotional healing prior to the Immanuel approach was that we could only do troubleshooting in a one-on-one setting, and we had decided to avoid emotional healing work in group settings after a painful group exercise misadventure in which a number of participants had all gotten stuck at the same time (each needing one-on-one assistance that we were not able to provide). However, as also described in chapter fourteen, as Dr. Wilder and I worked with the Immanuel approach we realized that several of the principles and process pieces that are new with the Immanuel approach make it possible to deploy a number of “safety nets” that protect against this problem. Therefore, one aspect of the Immanuel approach to emotional healing that is particularly exciting is that it can be used in group settings.

When one thinks about the war torn third world countries, where millions of people have post-traumatic stress disorder but where there are minimal resources available for these multitudes to get effective treatment to address their traumatic memories, it is hugely strategically important that the Immanuel approach can be used with many people simultaneously. For example, an emotional healing mission team can gather a large group of trauma survivors and facilitate healing for all of them at the same time. As mentioned earlier, Charlotte and I, Dr. Wilder, the Khouris, the Courseys, Pastor Patti Velotta, Mark Hattendorf, and several other colleagues have been experimenting with group exercises in a number of different settings over the last four to five years. And the results so far have been very encouraging – together, we have worked with thousands of group exercise participants, with group sizes ranging from twenty-five to five thousand, and we have seen lots of healing with minimal problems.

In addition to our concerns about group exercises, prior to developing the Immanuel approach we were also cautious about lay people doing emotional healing work (we wanted them to get a lot of training before facilitating lay ministry), and we felt that beginners should only practice under the close supervision of experienced facilitators. As with group exercises, we were concerned that recipients might get stuck – we were concerned that some recipients would open up painful memories, encounter difficulties beyond the troubleshooting abilities of lay ministers/beginners, and then be re-traumatized by remaining in the unresolved trauma for extended periods of time. However, as we have been working so diligently to clarify the principles and sharpen the tools for using the Immanuel approach with groups, we have realized that the same “safety nets” that make it possible to use the Immanuel approach safely with groups also make it possible for lay people to safely provide emotional healing ministry with much less training. This means that more lay people can become lay ministers much more quickly and easily, and this means that many people with less complicated trauma will be able to get healing with lay ministers, instead of having to wait for one of the rare and overloaded Immanuel approach mental health professionals.

Furthermore, these same “safety nets” also make it possible for unsupervised beginners to safely practice with each other. This means that a handful of people anywhere in the world can get together to learn and practice with each other. You don’t have to wait for one of the rare Immanuel approach trainers to come and supervise as you practice with each other.¹ You can just gather a handful of your

¹ **Error! Main Document Only.** It is tremendously helpful to have a trainer teach you about the Immanuel Approach and then supervise you as you practice with each other, and you should therefore take advantage of any opportunity to learn from someone who is already experienced with the Immanuel Approach. But I don’t think this is an absolute necessity (which is a good thing, since there are so few trainers).

friends, family, or colleagues, put together your own study group, and then receive Immanuel approach healing in the context of practicing with each other. And this means that even more people can receive Immanuel Approach healing, because the people who are learning will receive healing for uncomplicated² trauma in the context of practicing with each other.

This is good news for the millions of third world citizens with severe post traumatic stress disorder and minimal resources, and also for those of us with less trauma and more resources. Even in first world countries there are many people with moderate trauma who are having a hard time finding someone to facilitate Immanuel approach sessions for them. As mentioned in chapter fourteen, we have invested a lot of time and energy in building the new Immanuel network directory (see the “Referrals” page of www.immanuelapproach.com), and when we first put it up we had hoped that large numbers of facilitators would quickly post profiles. Unfortunately, many well trained, experienced facilitators have chosen to not post profiles because they are already swamped with more requests than they can care for. Consequently, many who would like to receive Immanuel approach sessions are still having difficulty in finding facilitators, and this problem will probably continue for some time.

Bringing us back to the good news that the Immanuel approach safety nets make it possible for many more lay ministers to get adequate training much more quickly and easily, and the good news that these same safety nets make it possible for unsupervised lay person beginners to safely practice with each other. My hope is that large numbers of lay people will take advantage of every possible training opportunity, so that we have a steadily, rapidly growing number of facilitators available to the general public. I am also hoping that people will build study/practice groups by actively recruiting family and/or friends and/or colleagues, and then use the do-it-yourself Immanuel approach training resources in this context.³ If these possibilities develop as I am hoping they might, then lay people practicing with each other in the context of do-it-yourself Immanuel approach study/practice groups along with individual sessions facilitated by lay ministers will be two of the most important resources for those who are wanting to experience the Immanuel approach.

II. Super-simple training/healing exercises: During the summer of 2012, a mission team spent a week in Uganda doing emotional healing ministry with teens and young adults who had survived horrific war crimes perpetrated by Joseph Kony’s Lord’s Army. And I know about this adventure because the team learned about the Immanuel approach a couple of months before they left. They had already been prepared to use Theophostic-based tools and other emotional healing resources, but they were excited about what they were learning and experiencing with the Immanuel approach, so they threw in some Immanuel approach pieces at the last moment. They then contacted me when they returned from the trip, and shared with me regarding the spectacular final results – more than a hundred teens and young adults received powerful healing as they encountered Jesus’ living presence in their traumatic memories.

Several months later, I was enjoying lunch with two of the people who had been part of the summer 2012 Uganda mission team. They were describing the amazing things they had witnessed during their recent trip, and we were all talking about the possibility that their team could return to Uganda for more emotional healing mission work in the summer of 2013. Somewhere in this conversation, I popped out with, “You know, if we stripped the Immanuel Approach down to the absolute minimum, I think we could come up with a package of principles, tools, and skills that would still be effective for most trauma, but that would be so simple and so safe that you could leave it behind when you come

² **Error! Main Document Only.** I use “uncomplicated” instead of “mild to moderate” very deliberately. As long as the process is not hindered by complicated defenses and blockages, we have seen beginners in practice groups facilitate healing for even severe trauma.

³ **Error! Main Document Only.** My thoughts regarding Immanuel approach do-it-yourself training can be found in appendix B of the big lion book, or in the “Where/How Do I Get Training Regarding the Immanuel Approach?” essay on the “Training” page of the Immanuel approach website (www.immanuelapproach.com),

back to the States—I think you could teach the young people in Uganda to actually use the Immanuel Approach, so that they could continue to facilitate emotional healing for each other after you leave, as opposed to just giving them the limited amount of ministry that your team could facilitate during the short time that you are there.” And then I threw out a bunch of thoughts regarding how one might go about training a mission team to implement this vision.

When I was finished, they stared at me for a few long moments, and then both responded with, “We’re going to bring our team to Evanston so that you can train them to do this.” And thus began my work to develop the series of teaching segments and practice exercises that are now presented in my Immanuel Approach Basic Training seminars and in the Immanuel Approach Basic Training video series.

III. Big-picture perspective for trainers: Before moving on to discuss practical considerations, I would like to offer a few big-picture-perspective thoughts for teams trying to teach the Immanuel Approach during short mission trips and for Immanuel Approach trainers who work with lay person beginners.

Whenever you provide demonstrations for lay-person beginners, the goal is not to use all of your knowledge, tools, and skills in order to resolve every possible problem as efficiently as possible, but rather to present the simplest possible package that will still work at least fairly well at least most of the time. When I demonstrate the basic principles, tools, and skills used in this series of training exercises, I openly acknowledge that there will be some situations that are more complicated, and that will require principles, tools, and skills in addition to those included in the basic exercises. And then I remind the trainees that this is what the safety net is for.

In fact, when I demonstrate basic principles, tools, and skills in the context of training lay-person beginners, I try to find at least one person with more complicated issues, and then deliberately withhold additional skills and tools so that I can model, “This is what it looks like when you encounter something more complicated, so that the basic tools and skills are not adequate to resolve the problem, and then you need to use the safety net.” And when I coach practice sessions in this setting, I require people to practice using the safety net, even if they don’t actually need it. That is, if they aren’t finding places where they are genuinely stuck, I tell them, “As soon as the recipient gets connected to the traumatic memory, use the safety net immediately, before she even invites Jesus to be with her in the painful place.” I want the facilitators to experientially prove to themselves that it’s okay to stop the healing work, even though the trauma has not been resolved, and that they are able to use the safety net in this situation to help the recipient get back to a good place.

When demonstrating basic principles, tools, and skills the goal is not to impress the trainees with how you can handle every possible problem. (This would initially be very satisfying, but it would also produce a final reaction of, “Wow. You’re really skillful and amazing. But I could never do that myself.”) Rather, the goal is to impress the trainees with how simple it can be, and to have their final reaction be, “I can do that!” Another way to say this is that the more knowledge, skill, clinical judgement, and therapy tools you include in your demonstrations, the more intimidating and overwhelming the overall package will feel to the average lay person beginner.

Advanced topics warning: If you’re reading this material for the first time, just to get the overview regarding the Immanuel approach safety nets, then I would recommend skipping/skimming the next section (for now) so that these practical details don’t slow you down and hinder you from seeing the big picture. Come back for these practical details when you’re ready to actually start practicing with Immanuel approach exercises.

IV. Healing/practice exercises – practical considerations:

A. Use training exercises together with training videos: The ideal training option is to use the series of training exercises from the “Exercises for groups and beginners” section of the “Resources” page of www.immanuelapproach.com together with the Immanuel Approach Basic Training video series. The explanatory essay accompanying each exercise provides the text from the theory-explanation section of the corresponding video segment, but I strongly encourage you to view the videos as well.¹ First, the videos include helpful diagrams, pictures, and text slides. And second, the videos include demonstrations, so that you can see Charlotte and I demonstrate the theory that has just been explained and the exercise that you will then practice for yourself.

B. Go through the exercises in sequence: It is vitally important that you go through the training segments and practice exercises according to the sequence presented in the basic training video series. Firstly, the later exercises build very systematically on the earlier exercises, with all of the pieces from the earlier exercises coming together to produce the full Immanuel Approach process for emotional healing presented in the final exercises. And even more important, the earlier teaching segments and practice exercises set up safety nets which absolutely need to be in place before doing the trauma work included in the final two exercises.

C. Confidentiality: The other people on your practice team will share personal, sensitive details, and will have personal, poignant, vulnerable experiences in the context of these exercises. It is very important that you not talk about other recipients’ personal details or Immanuel encounters without asking their permission first.

And I really, really want to emphasize this point because it is common for recipients to have poignant, profound, powerful, beautiful, amazing, inspiring, life-giving encounters with the Lord, and it is totally understandable that you will want to talk to people about the profound, beautiful Immanuel encounters that the other recipient(s) on your practice team describe. If the other recipient(s) on your practice team describe poignant, beautiful encounters with Jesus (and/or share personal details) that you find especially meaningful and would like to be able to talk about, please ask their permission first. If you have permission, then talking to others about what you see and hear just helps to spread the good news. But please, please don’t talk about other recipients’ personal details or Immanuel encounters without asking their permission first.

D. Read through the handout instructions immediately before each exercise: When I do basic training seminars, right before each exercise we all read through the instructions together. (I read through the explanation sections of the instructions, out loud, as the participants read along silently; and we all read the sample-coaching sections out loud together.) This will take a few extra minutes and feel a bit tedious as you are actually doing it, but it applies well-established brain science regarding short-term memory and priming memory, and I encourage you to include it.

The research regarding short-term memory shows that information carried in our short-term memory systems will be very clear and usable immediately after we learn it, but that it can fade dramatically in the course of hours or even minutes. And we are all familiar with this reality in our practical, day-to-day lives. For example, whenever I face a complicated, unfamiliar home-repair or car-repair project, I can feel that it is really important to have the details fresh in my mind, and I therefore review the youtube instruction video immediately before attempting the repair.

Furthermore, reviewing the instructions before each exercise will also tap into an unconscious phenomena called priming. The fascinating research regarding priming shows that when we read over a specific piece of text, unconscious memory traces are laid down in one of our implicit memory systems. And if we then read that same text again at some point in the future, our unconscious minds will recognize the passage even if we have no conscious memory of the

¹The explanatory essays can be an adequate preparation for the training exercises, for those who truly can’t afford the videos. But the ideal training package is to watch the corresponding video segment before practicing with each training exercise. Again, it is especially helpful to see Charlotte and I demonstrate the exact same exercise that you will then be trying for yourself.

specific content. And even though we are not consciously aware of it, we will read and comprehend the text more easily.

Again, it will take a few extra minutes and feel a bit tedious, but I encourage you to include this simple technique throughout your basic training endeavors because the benefits are worth it. My observation is that some participants find these practice exercises to be surprisingly stressful and intimidating,² and reading through the instructions for the very first time as they are actually trying to use them makes the whole adventure feel significantly more stressful and intimidating. Thankfully, this simple technique of reading through the instructions immediately before using them really helps with this – as the participants use the exercise handouts to facilitate each exercise, they will read and comprehend the instructions more easily – the exercise handouts will feel more familiar and friendly, and less stressful and intimidating. The bottom line is that this simple technique will help more participants to have positive, comfortable, satisfying experiences with the practice exercises

Note: the material we read through together immediately before each exercise does not include the first page of each exercise handout. The points summarized briefly on the first page of each handout are points that I explain in more detail in the teaching portions of the videos, and I include them on the first page of each handout because I want to refresh them, over and over again, throughout the larger basic-training endeavor. My intention is to make them extra-conveniently available, as short summary points on the first page, so that people will glance at them as they are sitting around waiting for each practice exercise to begin. Also, the material we read through together immediately before each exercise does not include the opening prayer, closing prayer, or “additional sample coaching” that is sometimes included at the end of the coaching instructions.

E. Divide large groups into small practice teams (Third safety net): Whether you are working with a large group of three hundred or whether you are practicing in an Immanuel approach study group of twelve, the first step of the group exercise is to divide the larger group into small practice teams. This provides a third safety net, or maybe I should say that it provides the team that can make sure the first safety net gets deployed effectively. If the recipient gets stuck in a negative place, the others in her practice team can help her return to her initial positive place by coaching her to describe the initial positive memory, to repeat the deliberate appreciation exercise, and then to reestablish the initial interactive connection with the Lord.

Dividing the larger group into small practice teams also provides a setting in which the recipient can report regarding her experience – describing “whatever comes into her awareness” at each step in the process – and thereby benefit from the ways in which our brains work better in community.³ This significantly increases the effectiveness of the exercise, both increasing good results and decreasing disappointing results.

F. Ideal size for practice teams: When breaking a larger group into small teams for practicing the exercises, there are a number of factors that should be taken into consideration:

1. Protection from inappropriate pair bonding: An especially important factor to consider is the need to protect participants from inappropriate pair bonding. According to Dr. Wilder, if a

²For example, the simple component of recalling a detailed positive memory and deliberately stirring up strong appreciation will be surprisingly unfamiliar and difficult for some recipients, the component of describing their experiences out loud to others will be surprisingly unfamiliar and difficult for some recipients, and the component of remembering and connecting with traumatic memories will be intense and difficult for most recipients. And many facilitators will find it to be stressful and intimidating to coach recipients through unfamiliar, difficult experiences.

³Training segment #3 in the video series, and the associated explanatory essay below, explain the intriguing ways in which God has designed our brains to function best in community, and especially the importance of each recipient describing “whatever comes into her awareness,” out loud to the facilitator. (See *The Immanuel Approach: To Emotional Healing and to Life*, chapter 17, “Describe Whatever Comes Into Your Awareness (Our Brains Work Better in Community),” for a much more detailed discussion.

man and woman⁴ spend time together as a couple, their neurological bonding circuits will unavoidably move toward pair bonding, and this involuntary, neurological pair bonding inherently includes a sexual component. This pair bond does not grow because the man and woman start out wanting to pursue an inappropriate relationship, but rather because that's what bonding circuits do when members of the opposite sex spend time together as a couple. And this pair bonding effect becomes increasingly powerful as the two people spend regular time together, as might happen with a ministry team that meets together each week for ongoing learning and practice. Furthermore, Immanuel Approach sessions are often especially bonding experiences, since the practice team members are often going to deep, vulnerable places together.

In contrast, when three or more people are together their neurological bonding circuits will usually try to build family bonds (as opposed to romantic pair bonds). So both the simplest and the most effective intervention for preventing inappropriate pair bonding is to divide the larger group into practice circles with three or more participants in each circle.⁵

2. Time efficiency: Aside from the first consideration, which indicates practice teams of at least three participants for any situations where inappropriate pair bonding might be a problem, smaller practice teams provide the important logistical benefit of moving through practice exercises more quickly.

3. Convenience of gathering: Smaller practice teams also provide the important logistical benefit of making it easier to gather. For example, if an Immanuel Approach group is encouraging the lifestyle component of regular healing/practice sessions over time, it is much easiest for two people to schedule and gather, with steadily increasing logistical difficulty with increasing size of the practice group.

4. Less vulnerability: Smaller is also generally preferable because most people will feel more comfortable doing personal healing work in the context of a smaller group.

5. Other considerations: Sometimes other factors need to be considered, such as when four or five people come to a conference as a team and it seems right for them to practice together.⁶

In light of these considerations, three is usually the ideal number if inappropriate pair bonding is a concern, since three is the smallest number that protects against inappropriate pair bonding. And two is usually the ideal number if inappropriate pair bonding is not a concern. (For example, pair-bonding would not be a concern if a person's practice partner is their grandmother, or their spouse, or their sibling, or if they are practicing over zoom for only a few exercises.)

G. Practice teams should stay the same (if at all possible): When you get to the final two exercises, if the recipient gets stuck in intense negative emotions and needs rigorous coaching to help them get back to their positive memories and appreciation, it is very helpful for the other member(s) of their practice team to know the details of several of their positive memories (from being with them in the previous exercises where they described these details). So it is actually fairly important for the teams to stay the same throughout the series of training exercises, if at all

⁴With gay or lesbian participants, these same concerns regarding pair bonding would of course apply to two men working together or two women working together, respectively.

⁵I learned about pair bonding versus family bonding in a private conversation with Dr. Allan Schore. Unfortunately, we are not aware of any published research regarding these phenomena. (E. James Wilder [Ph.D. psychologist, director, Shepherd's House], in discussion with the author. 2008.)

⁶In some cultures and on some ministry teams, there is a strong preference for doing everything in larger groups. So in some situations the participants will have a strong preference to work in practice circles of six, eight, or even more. The group exercises will still work with much larger practice teams, but they will go very slowly and it will take a lot more time for everybody to get a chance to both facilitate and receive. Also, with larger practice circles you will want to pay special attention to the concern that some participants may not feel comfortable working in front of such a large audience.

possible.

H. Important caveat regarding “describe everything that comes into your awareness”: The purpose of repeatedly coaching the recipient to “describe everything” is not to push people to describe details they feel uncomfortable talking about, but rather to help people describe details that are being withheld because they don’t feel important and/or make sense. Therefore, coaching the recipient to “describe everything” always needs to be in the context of “to the extent you feel comfortable doing so.”

I. Additional encouragement with respect to troubleshooting: If your difficulty with perceiving the Lord’s presence and connecting with the Lord persists, especially across multiple sessions, I strongly encourage you to get help with Immanuel intervention troubleshooting in the context of individual sessions with an experienced facilitator. In my experience, recipients who initially have difficulty will almost always eventually be able to perceive and connect with the Lord if they persist in working with an experienced troubleshooter.

J. Additional thoughts with respect to choosing a traumatic memory: The instruction handouts for each of the safety-net exercises and for each of the trauma-healing exercises include a section on choosing an appropriate traumatic memory to work on. The purpose for these instructions is to help the recipient find a mild-to-moderate traumatic memory that would not be too complicated and/or too intense for beginners. I included only the most necessary practical points in the exercise instructions, to prevent them from becoming too cumbersome, but I would like to offer here a few additional thoughts.

1. Memories for painful experiences from your recent adult life: In earlier versions of these exercise instructions, I used to include the following as one of the options for finding mild/minor traumatic memories: “One good way to find simple, low-intensity traumatic memories is to look through painful experiences from your recent adult life, and then pick a minor painful event that still feels unresolved. If you are having trouble finding a recent painful event that feels unresolved, look for unpleasant experiences in which you did not perceive the Lord’s presence at the time of the original experience, and for which you still do not perceive his presence in the memory. Most of these will turn out to be minor unresolved trauma.”

However, I no longer include this option. What I have observed is that many of these minor events from our recent adult lives have felt traumatic and unresolved because they have hooked into underlying, earlier, more important traumatic memories. And this has often turned out poorly in either of two ways. On the one hand, if the recipient does not go to the underlying trauma, there is minimal healing shift and the experience is disappointing/unsatisfying. On the other hand, if the recipient does go to the underlying trauma, you can unexpectedly end up in major traumatic memories that are too complicated and/or too intense for beginner practice exercises.

2. Why not just ask the Lord to choose the memory?: Some ask “Why not just ask the Lord to bring forward the memory He wants to work on?” This is what I do when I facilitate individual sessions, but my 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 usually 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.

3. Do not start with an upsetting symptom and look for the roots: Please do not focus on an

upsetting symptom and ask, “Lord, take me to the memory where this is coming from.” Although this approach is often very effective for finding the roots of puzzling, troublesome psychological symptoms, it may also take you to very intense traumatic memories, it may take you to traumatic memories that you have never before worked with, and it may even take you to memories that you have never before been consciously aware of.

4. Do not use memories where you have gotten stuck or that have caused you to decompensate: Please do not use memories in which you have gotten stuck, memories that have overwhelmed you, or memories that have caused you to become so upset that you needed someone else to help you get back to a place where you were okay. As you may have already noticed, this description of memories that are not appropriate for groups and beginners is essentially the opposite of the second criteria for safe memories described in the exercise handouts.

5. Do not use memories that you have never previously talked about: Please do not use 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 many individual sessions that I have facilitated, the recipient has reported, “A memory has just come to me, but it’s not important—I think it’s just a distraction.” But when I coached him to describe it anyway, he has been surprised by the intense negative emotions that welled up as he started to talk about it. And these memories have almost always been for experiences that the person has never previously talked about. As the reader may recognize, this is an excellent example of the person’s brain working better in community. But we don’t want participants to demonstrate this phenomenon by being overwhelmed by unexpectedly intense negative emotions in the context of group exercises or in practice sessions for beginners.

6. Do not use a memory that has been emotionally disconnected: Please do not use a memory that you have talked about, but with emotional numbness/disconnection. We don’t want a major traumatic memory to connect emotionally for the first time in the middle of your beginner exercise.

7. These precautions are for beginners: The selection criteria included in the safety-net and trauma-healing exercises, and the precautions just described here, are for people who are just learning to use the Immanuel Approach process for resolving psychological trauma. If the people in your group have high capacity and are experienced with the Immanuel approach, and are using the emotional healing exercises for regular, ongoing healing work as a part of an Immanuel lifestyle, you can feel free to work with any traumatic memories that you and your healing/practice team discern to be appropriate. And you can feel free to use the “focus on an upsetting symptom, and ask the Lord to take you to the underlying memories” approach.

K. Additional thoughts regarding connecting with traumatic memories: Once the recipient has established an interactive connection with the Lord in the context of her initial positive memory, the next step in the process, for both the safety-net exercises and for the emotional healing exercises, is to help the recipient connect with her traumatic memory. For most recipients, you can help them to re-enter/reconnect with their memory by coaching them to picture themselves back inside of the painful situation, and then to talk about the details until they can feel the negative emotions associated with the original experience. However, some recipients will report that they often have trouble connecting too intensely with painful memories. If you and/or the recipient are concerned that she will connect with her traumatic memory too intensely, you can coach her to describe her memory from an outside observer perspective (as opposed to picturing herself back inside the painful situation), and/or you can coach her to describe only a few details. These variations will significantly reduce the intensity of negative emotions.

Also, in groups where many of the participants have survived severe trauma, and in which many of the participants share similar trauma, if one group member starts talking about the details of a

painful memory the others can quickly become overwhelmed by intense triggering. In these situations, the participants can usually reconnect with painful memories very easily. (Usually, all they need to do is close their eyes and think about the original experience for a moment). And it will be important for the person leading the overall exercise to specifically coach the participants to describe their trauma very briefly, and in only the most vague and general terms.⁷

L. Using the safety net is not failure: To both the facilitator and recipient: don't fall into the trap of feeling like a failure if you have to use the safety net. Remember, when you are just beginning to practice with the Immanuel approach it is actually important and valuable for you to use the safety net, so that you are sure that it really works.

M. Opening prayer and commands: Whenever I facilitate the Immanuel approach, I start the session with a carefully-thought-out opening prayer and with specific commands to any spiritual forces that might interfere with the process.⁸ And if I am coaching Immanuel approach prayer partners or a small study/practice group, I usually encourage the facilitators to start the sessions and practice exercises with my sample opening prayer and commands (or my sample condensed opening prayer and commands).⁹ However, with large group exercises I usually say the opening prayer and commands myself, silently, before we start the group exercise. This is because most of the larger groups I have worked with have included participants who had very little teaching or experience with demonic phenomena, and I was concerned that the prayers and commands dealing with possible demonic interference might confuse and/or trigger them.

Therefore, if you are leading a group exercise and you happen to know that the participants are familiar with demonic phenomena, I think it is ideal for each practice team to start the exercise with my sample opening prayer and commands (or at least something similar). And if you are leading a group exercise in a situation where you are unsure regarding the participants' perspective on possible demonic interference, I encourage you to go through my sample opening prayer and commands (or something similar) silently, before starting the exercise.

N. Closing prayer (optional, depending on context): Whenever I facilitate the Immanuel approach I end the session with a carefully-thought-out closing prayer and with specific commands to any spiritual forces that might be associated with the memories we have been working with.¹⁰ And if I am coaching Immanuel approach prayer partners or a small study/practice group, I usually encourage the facilitators to close the sessions and practice exercises with my sample closing prayer and commands.¹¹ However, with large group exercises I usually say the closing prayer and commands myself, silently, after we finish the group exercise. This is because most of the larger groups I have worked with have included participants who had very little teaching or experience with demonic phenomena, and I was concerned that they might be confused and/or triggered by prayers and commands dealing with demonic spirits that might be associated with the traumatic memories they have been working with.

⁷Although we usually instruct participants in group exercises to make sure to use our guidelines for choosing minor traumatic memories, coach people to use our think that our very specific instructions about choosing minor traumatic memories, in certain situations it will be right to use group exercises to help participants work with similar severe trauma. In these situations it will be especially important to coach the participants regarding how to avoid overwhelming each other with traumatic details that can be intensely triggering.

⁸For description and discussion regarding each point of my opening prayer and initial commands, see Appendix D in the big lion book, or the "Opening prayers and commands" essay at the bottom of the "Exercises for groups and beginners" section of the "Resources" page of www.immanuelapproach.com.

⁹Both the sample opening prayer and commands and the sample condensed opening prayer and commands are included at the end of Appendix D in the big lion book, and as separate documents at the bottom of the "Exercises for groups and beginners" section of the "Resources" page of www.immanuelapproach.com.

¹⁰For description and discussion regarding each point of my closing prayer and commands, see Appendix E in the big lion book, or the "Closing prayers and commands" essay at the bottom of the "Exercises for groups and beginners" section of the "Resources" page of www.immanuelapproach.com.

¹¹The sample closing prayer and commands is included at the end of Appendix E in the big lion book, and as a separate document at the bottom of the "Exercises for groups and beginners" section of the "Resources" page of www.immanuelapproach.com.

Therefore, if you are leading a group exercise and you happen to know that the participants are familiar with demonic phenomena, I think it is ideal for each practice team to close the exercise with my sample closing prayer and commands (or at least something similar). And if you are leading a group exercise in a situation where you are unsure regarding the participants' perspective regarding the possibility that demonic spirits might be associated with traumatic memories, I encourage you to go through my sample closing prayer and commands (or something similar) silently, at the end of the exercise.

O. Four to six repetitions: Almost everybody will feel a bit insecure and clumsy the first couple of times they go through any new procedure. This is normal and to be expected. In addition to providing reassurance for those who are feeling the most insecure, we need to be aware of this extremely common reality because it is very important to deliberately help people get through it. Studies of the neurology of learning, and also research focusing on observable behavior with respect to learning, both show a dramatic tipping point for most people at four to six successful repetitions. People who go through a new procedure only two or three times will often still feel insecure enough that they will be reluctant to continue on their own (that is, when they no longer have a trainer providing supervision and encouragement). However, if trainees persist until they have gone through the new procedure four to six times, most of the people who initially felt uncomfortably clumsy and insecure will feel dramatically more comfortable and confident, and they will be much more likely to continue using the new procedure even without coaching or supervision.

Therefore, whenever possible we should deliberately plan our training so that participants successfully get through the full Immanuel Approach process at least four times. The best-case, ideal scenario is for each facilitator to experience at least four successful journeys through the final practice exercise (that is, the third variation of the basic Immanuel Approach healing process). But four-or-more successful journeys through the full process in any form (any of the last three practice exercises) is a really good start.¹²

P. Cautions regarding large groups: If you are an emotional healing ministry leader and/or an Immanuel Approach trainer, and you are thinking about using these exercises in group settings:

- I recommend that you do not try leading large group exercises until you are comfortable with facilitating the Immanuel approach in individual sessions, and you have been getting consistently good results.
- I recommend that you begin experimenting with group exercises in settings where you know the people that will be participating (so that you have a sense regarding the amount of trauma they carry, the strength of their support systems, and the health of their coping skills), and in settings where you will be working with smaller groups (twenty-five people or less).
- Finally, when working with large groups (more than 25 participants), it is ideal to have a few experienced facilitators available to deal with the possibility that a small number of participants may encounter especially complicated difficulties – complicated difficulties that can actually hinder them from cooperating with the safety net intervention.¹³

¹²If you pay attention, you will notice this phenomena occurring, with respect to the first components of the process, as you go through the sequence of practice exercises. That is, by the time your group has gotten through the basic safety-net exercise, most participants will have five successful repetitions of facilitating the process through the initial steps of positive memory recall, deliberate appreciation, and connection with Jesus. And it should be easy to see that most participants are clearly, tangibly more comfortable with facilitating these initial steps.

¹³For additional discussion of these intermediate and advanced scenarios, in which the recipient will have difficulty cooperating with the safety net, see the final sections in the chapter on safety nets in the big lion book and/or the three video training segments addressing intermediate and advanced safety-net scenarios.

Q. Helpful handouts: Instruction handouts for each of the practice exercises are available as free downloads from the “Exercises for Groups and Beginners” section of the Resources page of www.immanuelapproach.com).

R. One page summaries: Once they have gone through all of the practice exercises, and they have gone through the third variation of the basic Immanuel Approach healing process several times and have become comfortable with it, many facilitators find that the one page summaries are adequate. Also, there are several different versions of the one page summaries (all provided as free downloads from the bottom of the “Exercises for Groups and Beginners” section). I would encourage you to experiment with all of the options to find the best fit for your personal style and preferences.

S. Let us know how it goes: More raw data is helpful as we continue to experiment and learn about the best ways to do group exercises. If you try Immanuel approach group exercises, please let us know what happens (e-mails to drkarl@kclehman.com).

V. Summary regarding the “Safety net” intervention (going back to the initial positive memory, appreciation, and interactive connection with the Lord): When encountering any of the difficulties below, the recipient can go back to her interactive connection from the beginning of the exercise, and then get help from Jesus in that positive, safe context. This simple but effective intervention can be a resource and/or “safety net” in various ways at various points throughout the exercise.

- *During the middle of the session:* If the recipient connects with a traumatic memory, but then is not able to perceive the Lord’s presence inside the traumatic memory, even after asking “what’s in the way?” and troubleshooting;

if the recipient should become stuck at any point in working with the traumatic memory, and especially if the recipient becomes stuck and has lost her interactive connection with Jesus;

if the facilitator and recipient run into trouble, and feel like they are in over their heads for any reason;

or if the recipient is able to perceive the Lord’s presence in the traumatic memory, but does not experience a strong enough connection to be able to receive the help she needs;

– for each of these situations, the facilitator can deploy the safety-net intervention by coaching the recipient to go back to her positive, safe connection with Jesus from the beginning of the exercise. And then in the context of this positive, safe, interactive connection the facilitator can coach her to ask Jesus for help, and to specifically ask Him about the difficulties they encountered in working with the trauma. Then if time permits, the recipient can go back to the traumatic memory and apply the new guidance/help she just got from Jesus. This can be repeated as many times as necessary.

- *At the end of the session:* If the facilitator and recipient run out of time before the traumatic memory has been fully resolved, the facilitator can deploy the safety-net intervention by coaching the recipient to go back to her positive, safe connection with Jesus from the beginning of the exercise. And then, after she has reestablished this positive, safe connection, the facilitator can coach her to spend time focusing on Jesus and appreciating both the initial positive memory and the Lord’s goodness until gratitude and peace have fully replaced any lingering negative thoughts and emotions from the traumatic memory

And, again, the recipient will sometimes return to an initial connection with Jesus in the context of the positive memory from the beginning of the session, and at other times she will return to an initial connection in which she perceives Jesus to be right in the room with her in the present. Also, in some situations the recipient will be able to return directly to her initial positive connection, and in other situations she will need to repeat the steps of reconnecting with the initial positive memory and deliberately stirring up appreciation before she is able to re-establish her connection from the beginning of the session.

The Immanuel Approach (to Emotional Healing and to Life)

Chapter 25: Let Jesus Drive (with Respect to Non-process Aspects of the Session)

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DRAFT

Comments regarding advanced topics: I want to address advanced topics for mental health professionals and experienced emotional healing ministers who are encountering more complicated situations, but I don't want to discourage or overwhelm part time lay ministers and beginners. So if you're a part time lay minister or beginner, you're already convinced regarding the need for the Immanuel approach structure, and you are already convinced regarding the importance of letting Jesus lead with respect to every non-process aspect of Immanuel approach sessions, then just skim over everything except the stories. You don't need the theoretical discussion regarding the importance of the facilitator providing the structure for the Immanuel approach process, you don't need the theoretical arguments for letting Jesus lead with respect to every other aspect of the session, and you don't need the caveats regarding exceptions for complicated situations. Just enjoy the stories, and let them encourage you regarding how effectively Jesus can lead when you constantly coach the recipient to focus on Him and ask Him for guidance and help. If you encounter a more complicated situation in which the basic Immanuel approach tools don't seem to be fully effective, you can just end the session with helping the person get back to her initial positive memory and interactive connection, and then read more/get a consultation/refer the person to a more experienced facilitator.

If you are *not* fully convinced about the importance of the Immanuel approach structure, and you have thoughts along the lines of "Why do we need any of this – why don't we just pray, 'Jesus, please come and heal me?'" then please read the first part of the discussion with special care.

If you are a mental health professional or experienced emotional healing minister, you already have other emotional healing tools and techniques which you mix in with the Immanuel approach process, and you frequently find yourself providing direction with respect to non-process aspects of Immanuel approach sessions, then please read the second part of the discussion with special care.

I frequently receive questions along the lines of, "When should I take responsibility for leading the session?" or "How much direction should I provide?," and I am constantly asking myself these same questions. One of the most important points with respect to these questions is differentiating between direction with respect to the Immanuel approach *process* and direction with respect to *non-process* aspects of the session (timing, pacing/intensity, specific content, and the details of the pain processing pathway).

It is important to provide direction with respect to the *process*: With respect to the Immanuel approach *process*, I occasionally hear someone comment, "It's all about Jesus – *I don't do anything.*" This is a very catchy sound byte, and "It's all about Jesus" is certainly true from a certain perspective, but this comment always makes me nervous.

The facilitator provides the overall structure/framework for the Immanuel approach by directing the recipient through the steps for establishing the initial interactive connection with Jesus, by coaching the person to focus on Jesus and ask Him for help at any point she needs guidance or other assistance, by repeatedly coaching the person to describe whatever comes into her awareness, by periodically checking the status of the recipient's connection with Jesus, by helping the person re-establish an interactive connection at any point this is lost, by employing troubleshooting tools when the recipient has difficulty connecting with Jesus, and by leading her back to the initial positive memory and interactive connection

whenever this safety net is needed. If the facilitator doesn't recognize the importance of providing the structure for the Immanuel approach by providing direction with respect to the process, then she won't take responsibility for providing this structure carefully and competently.

Along the same lines as the "It's all about Jesus – I don't do anything" comments, some have asked, "Why do we have to provide any direction at all, even regarding the process? Why can't we just invite Jesus to be present, ask Him for emotional healing, and then let Him do the whole thing?" Actually, I asked this question myself, especially in light of the fact that this approach occasionally works. I have read a number of case studies in which the person has made this kind of simple request for emotional healing – sometimes just in her private prayer time and sometimes in the context of a worship service, but not in an emotional healing session, and not with anyone providing direction with respect to the Immanuel approach (or any other approach to emotional healing). And even without any of this emotional healing process or structure, the person had a powerful encounter with Jesus that looked exactly like the core of a successful Immanuel approach session – the person perceived Jesus' tangible presence in some way, He led her to important root memories, she perceived Jesus' presence in the traumatic memories, He walked her through unfinished processing tasks to accomplish resolution of the trauma, and then the original emotional problem went away and never came back. I have even heard this exact same story from several people that I know personally. However, my observation is that this is rare. I have known hundreds of people who have tried this super simple approach, with nothing more than persistent "Jesus, please be with me and heal me" prayers, but only a handful have experienced a tangible healing encounter with Jesus that produced lasting fruit.

Furthermore, my assessment from extensive reading, hundreds of conversations with colleagues, 25+ years of clinical experience, and my personal emotional healing journey is that we have gotten progressively better results as we have developed approaches to emotional healing that apply increasingly complete understanding of the underlying psychological and spiritual phenomena. For example, we got better results than with the "Jesus, just heal me" approach when prayer ministers in the 1950's and 60's helped the person focus on the presenting problem, specifically asked God to reveal the underlying roots, and then explicitly invited Jesus to come with healing into the traumatic memories that came forward.² Positive results increased another notch in the 1970's and 80's when emotional healing ministries incorporated more understanding with respect to troubleshooting to remove blockages.³ We saw another increase in positive results when Dr. Ed Smith developed Theophostic, which incorporated more understanding regarding the importance of connecting with the emotions in traumatic memories, more understanding with respect to certain processing tasks (e.g., correctly interpreting the meaning of the experience), and another round of progress with respect to troubleshooting. And now the Immanuel approach, with new pieces such as starting with appreciation, establishing an interactive connection with Jesus at the beginning of the session, and making sure to maintain the interactive connection throughout the session is yielding yet another bump in positive results.

My observation is that the Immanuel approach is consistently easier and safer to use, consistently easier and safer to teach, and consistently more effective than any previous approach to emotional healing. It is therefore important that we provide the structure/framework for the Immanuel approach by being

¹My assessment is that when people use only the super simple "Jesus, please be with me and heal me" prayer, less than 1% get the kind of healing we see with the Immanuel approach.

²See, for example, the approach to emotional healing described in chapter 11 ("The Healing of the Emotions") in Agnes Sanford, *The Healing Light*, revised edition (St. Paul, MN: Macalester Park Publishing, 1972), pages 117-126, and in chapter 7 ("The Healing of the Memories") in Agnes Sanford, *The Healing Gifts of the Spirit* (New York: J.B. Lippincott, 1966), pages 109-123.

³The approach to emotional healing described in chapter 13 ("The Inner Healing of Our Emotional Problems") in Francis MacNutt, *Healing* (Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 1974), pages 178-191, provides a good example.

adequately directive with respect to the details of the process.

Let Jesus drive with respect to *non-process* aspects of the session: In contrast to providing a lot of direction with respect to the Immanuel approach *process*, I try to let Jesus drive as much as possible with respect to everything else – I try to let Jesus choose when to address a particular memory or issue, I try to let Jesus guide with respect to how quickly/intensely we press into a memory/issue, I try to let Jesus choose which traumatic memories and/or other issues to bring forward, I try to let Jesus answer any questions that come up, and I try to let Jesus manage the details of working through the different tasks on the pain processing pathway. The most important reason to let Jesus drive as much possible is that He is the best therapist in the world. The judgment calls just mentioned, such as when to bring forward memories that are especially traumatic or how intensely to push into these memories, can be very tough; and making the wrong call can cause the recipient to tumble into varying degrees of decompensation, sometimes even ending up in the hospital. However, when we are able to let Jesus drive, He happily carries the responsibility for these tough decisions and always makes the right call. Furthermore, as limited human facilitators we periodically encounter problems that seem tangled, huge, and impossibly unsolvable; but when we let Jesus drive, He comes up with amazing, creative interventions that we never would have thought of (and they work!). When we let Jesus drive, facilitating sessions becomes much less stressful and the recipient receives the best possible care.

Another really important reason to let Jesus drive is that this keeps the Immanuel approach simple enough and safe enough that the average lay person can actually learn it and use it. If the facilitator is driving, she will need very high levels of technical skill and clinical discernment to make the tough judgment calls mentioned above, to navigate through sophisticated defenses, and to unravel complicated problems. However, a lay person with a small amount of training, minimal technical skills, and humble clinical discernment can provide the structure/framework for the Immanuel approach, and then let Jesus drive with respect to the non-process aspects of the session. If Jesus takes responsibility for all of the complicated, difficult, dangerous stuff, then the average lay person can quickly learn to safely facilitate emotional healing sessions. And this is HUGELY, strategically important as we are trying to make emotional healing accessible to every person on the planet.

Earlier I discussed the end of the spectrum where people ask, “Why do we need to provide any direction at all? It’s all about Jesus – let’s just let Him do everything.” At the other end of the spectrum are people who feel most comfortable when they are driving, and therefore tend towards grabbing the wheel with respect to all aspects of the session. My observation is that many mental health professionals and experienced emotional healing ministers fall into this category. We have spent many years learning the principles and developing skill with the tools of emotional healing, we feel most secure with the familiar techniques that we have successfully applied in many prior situations, we have gotten to the point where we get reasonably consistent and robust positive results, and we feel most comfortable in the driver’s seat when facilitating therapy/ministry sessions.

The first challenge for those of us who already have lots of training and experience with other approaches to emotional healing is to actually stick with the Immanuel approach process at all. We have no problem with the “provide direction” piece, but when stressed or unsure, instead of providing the structure for the Immanuel approach, the direction we provide leads back to whatever techniques and process we were using prior to trying the Immanuel approach.⁴ Especially at first, it takes a lot of deliberate effort to stay with the Immanuel approach process, instead of reverting to previous approaches to emotional healing that feel more familiar and comfortable.

The next challenge for those of us with lots of training and experience, after staying with the larger framework of the Immanuel approach, is to let Jesus lead with respect to the non-process aspects of the

⁴ I have been using the Immanuel approach for so long now that I no longer notice this pattern in my own practice, but I certainly struggled with this as I was first transitioning from Theophostic-based emotional healing and EMDR to the Immanuel approach.

session. My own experience actually provides an excellent (but humbling) illustration. For example, let's say I perceive a strategic issue that is clearly affecting the person's life. To my perspective, it's just sitting out in plain sight, the person seems to be deliberately ignoring it, and the Lord seems to be letting them just ignore it.⁵ Unless I'm consciously thinking about the importance of letting Jesus drive and therefore deliberately restraining myself, the next thing I know I'm in the driver's seat, trying to get the person to deal with what I perceive to be the elephant in the living room (or at least the donkey in the living room).

Or I spot subtle clues indicating an important unresolved trauma. I've spent thousands of hours over many years sharpening my ability to spot these clues and recognize what they mean, and it's very satisfying to use these hard earned skills. Unless I'm consciously thinking about the importance of letting Jesus drive and therefore deliberately restraining myself, the next thing I know I'm in the driver's seat, trying to steer the person towards the traumatic memory I know is there.⁶

Or the person is working with a memory and I recognize which unfinished processing tasks are causing the memory to linger as trauma. I've spent thousands of hours learning how to help people take memories through the different tasks in the processing pathway, and it's satisfying to use these hard earned skills. Unless I'm consciously thinking about the importance of letting Jesus drive and therefore deliberately restraining myself, the next thing I know I'm in the driver's seat, guiding the person in the work of taking her memories through the unfinished processing tasks.

Or the person asks a question. Now, I love understanding how things work, I've spent twenty-four years in school, I've spent tens of thousands of hours studying the professional literature since finishing my formal training, I have twenty-five years of clinical experience, I've been deliberately pursuing my own growth and healing for 35+ years, and I've spent tens of thousands of hours deliberately pondering all of this data. All of this interest and work has resulted in having some pretty good answers to many of the questions that come up in emotional healing sessions, and I really enjoy teaching. On top of all of this, I also have triggered energy that contributes to the problem. As a child, I was skinny, short, slow, without any discernable artistic or musical talent, and I had a difficult time getting started academically due to having dyslexia. But I loved science and math. If I studied hard (and I always did), I usually knew the answers, so when the teacher asked a science or math question I felt like for once I had something to offer. I was the kid bouncing up and down in his seat, waving his hand frantically, and pleading earnestly, "Oh, oh, oh, oh! I know! I know! Pick me! Pick me! Pick me!" Not surprisingly, unless I'm consciously thinking about the importance of letting Jesus drive and therefore deliberately restraining myself, the next thing I know I'm in the driver's seat, sharing my really good answer to the question that has just been asked.

Another part of the humbling truth with respect to myself is that I usually underestimate the Lord's willingness to provide adequate leadership and help.⁷ I also often underestimate the recipient's ability to receive and cooperate with the Lord's guidance. At some deep level, I often feel like the session will move forward more quickly and produce better results if I do most of the driving. (I want the Lord to ride shotgun – I want Him to participate as a consultant at strategic points in the session, and I'm more than

⁵In many situations, Jesus doesn't push as hard as I would. In my opinion, He often seems way too relaxed with respect to letting people wait until they're ready.

⁶Note that even when I know there is an underlying traumatic memory, and I'm steering the person towards it, I never make suggestions regarding the specific memory content. See Karl Lehman, "Discerning Truth In Memory," for discussion regarding why it is important to NOT make suggestions with respect to specific memory content. (Available as a free download from www.kclehman.com.)

⁷Even though I realize that this erroneous underestimate regarding the Lord's willingness to provide adequate guidance and help is triggered implicit memory being transferred onto the Lord, and even though this is steadily decreasing as I work away at the underlying trauma, it still affects me.

happy for Him to take the wheel when I get lost – but I still feel most comfortable when I spend the majority of the trip in the driver’s seat).

Putting all of this together, the bottom line is that I often grab the wheel when I should be coaching the person to focus on Jesus and ask *Him* for guidance and help. So I try to constantly, deliberately challenge myself to lean towards letting Jesus do more of the driving.⁸ In addition to this logical, left hemisphere discussion, I would like to provide a couple of stories that will help this point about letting Jesus drive sink deeply into your emotional, intuitive right hemisphere.

Eileen, “She’s been sitting in Jesus’ lap.” At the end of the session presented in the *Eileen: “Immanuel Interventions”* DVD, Eileen was in a three-year-old memory in which she was sitting in Jesus’ lap and listening to His heart beat as He spoke words of reassurance and blessing. At this point in the session it was obvious that Eileen had received some powerful, beautiful healing work, but it was also clear to me that there was a lot more that needed to be done, especially regarding trauma related to her mother. I didn’t say this out loud, but I was thinking, “If we had more time, I would coach Eileen to press into this remaining trauma.” As I was having this thought, and also thinking about how I might encourage Eileen to pursue this healing work in some other setting, she made a spontaneous comment along the lines of “Jesus is saying that for right now He wants me to just stay in His lap and enjoy being with Him, and then at some time in the future we need to do more healing work about my mother.” I thought, “Wow. That’s interesting. Jesus is obviously aware of the healing work that still needs to be done, but He also seems very clear that right now is not the time to do it.” So I let it go and closed the session.

Another part of this story is that in addition to her participation in one of our mentoring groups, Eileen would also come in for an occasional individual session. She did a lot of Immanuel healing work in personal prayer times with just herself and Jesus, but occasionally she would get really triggered, be unable to resolve the problem on her own, and then come in for a consultation session for help with getting unstuck. This happened every two to three months, and with each session we would start by helping her to establish an interactive connection with Jesus, ask Him to show us where to go and what to do for the rest of the session, and then just follow His lead. This seemed to be working very well so I wasn’t worrying about setting the agenda, and I had forgotten all about the comments from the end of the mentoring group session.

And then, in a session about a year-and-a-half after the healing work presented in the training DVD, Eileen established a good connection with Jesus, asked for guidance, and reported, “Jesus says that now it’s time to do the healing work about my mother.” Somehow the matter-of-fact way she stated this, and then looked at me with calm patience (as if she was waiting for me to take the next obvious, logical step), gave me the impression that she expected me to know exactly what she was talking about. It felt as if she were referring to something that had happened to both of us just a few minutes earlier, and that I should know what she meant by “...the healing work about my Mom.” I had no idea what she was talking about, and I’m sure I looked as clueless as I felt, because she eventually explained, “You know – the little girl – she’s been sitting on His lap, building capacity, learning to trust Him, and just enjoying being with Him – and He says that now it’s time to go and work on the painful memories.” I’m still totally lost. “Okay,...uhm,...ahh,...I’m not sure I’m exactly clear about which little girl and which memories we’re referring to – I think somehow I missed something.” So she explained further, “You know, the three-year-old child part from the memory in the kitchen, where my Mom was doing dishes and I was trying to get her attention, but she was so depressed that she was just staring blankly out the window. And Jesus told the little girl that He wanted her to just sit in His lap for a while, but sometime later we would need to do more healing work about my mother.”

⁸ I realize that I provide a particularly dramatic example, but I have noticed that there are quite a few others that share many of these same issues, and have similar struggles with grabbing the wheel when Jesus should be driving.

The lightbulb finally went on for me, “Oh! You mean from the session a couple of years ago – the session on the DVD? You’re saying that the little girl child part from that session has been sitting on Jesus’ lap all this time? She’s been sitting on Jesus’ lap for the last couple years, building trust and capacity, and now Jesus is saying that it’s time to work on the traumatic memories regarding your mother He was referring to at the end of the session?” “Exactly!” says Eileen. “She’s been with Jesus all this time, and Jesus says she’s ready to do the healing work now.”

Oh, wow. Amazing. I had never seen this one before, but in light of the dramatic fruit in Eileen’s life after the earlier session (and also in light of the other things I had been seeing the Lord do in Immanuel sessions), it all seemed quite possible. So making direct eye contact,⁹ I spoke directly to the three year old child part and asked if she would be willing to cooperate with whatever Jesus wanted to do regarding the painful memories with her mother. She promptly said “Yes,” and within minutes Jesus had taken her to some very intense memories in which she had been terrified that her mother would die. After this initial intervention to help her get started, all I did was coach her to focus on Jesus and ask Him for help at every point in the healing work, and the memories were resolved in less than twenty minutes. As we finished working through the memories, I remember thinking that this was some of the smoothest, easiest work I had ever done, when working with such traumatic early childhood experiences, and I especially noted that Eileen did not have any problems with disconnection or inadequate capacity.

As I pondered this session, it became increasingly clear that Jesus is an excellent therapist, with a very high level of skill and excellent clinical judgment. He had made a very good clinical judgment call at the end of the initial session in directing us to wait before trying to work with the traumatic mother memories, He had obviously been very skilled in building trust and capacity with the child part as she spent 18 months sitting in His lap, He obviously made the right call in saying that she was now ready to work on this material, and He did a beautiful, gentle, extremely effective job of leading us through the healing work when Eileen finally did go to the memories. Furthermore, I am convinced that this healing work would have been much more difficult if I had tried to get Eileen to go to these memories prematurely. I’m sure we would have encountered complicated problems with inadequate capacity, and it would have been slower, messier, and much more painful. In addition to the theoretical reasons for letting Jesus lead, this kind of practical experience has taught me to deliberately lean towards letting Jesus drive as much as possible (regarding non-process aspects of the healing work).

Rita: Let Jesus answer the questions: Another particularly dramatic experience teaching me to let Jesus drive happened this past spring (2012). I was facilitating a demonstration session in one of our mentoring groups, and about ten minutes into the session the recipient, Rita,¹⁰ asked a question. It was a good question, asking for both clarification regarding the personal meaning of the memories she was working with and explanation regarding a theoretical point, and after a few moments of thought I had a really good answer. Just before opening my mouth to share my ideas, the thought occurred to me, “I wonder what would happen if I coach her to focus on Jesus and ask Him, instead of just giving the answer myself?” To be painfully honest, my immediate internal response to this thought was something along the lines of, “Yeah, that’s a nice idea, but the Lord sometimes seems to take His time with respect to answering questions – He’s too relaxed, too willing to waste time, and not adequately concerned about making the best use of the session.”¹¹ Furthermore, He often seems to speak so quietly that it takes a bit of work to make sure we are accurately hearing and understanding His answer. I think we’ll get a usable answer a lot more quickly if I just take care of it myself.”

⁹See “Direct Eye Contact (Technique for Making Contact with Internal Parts),” available as a free download from www.kclehman.com, for discussion of this simple but powerful tool for working with internal child parts.

¹⁰Yes, this is the Rita from several of our live session DVDs.

¹¹In addition to the long pauses, Jesus also seems to talk a lot more slowly than I do.

But then I had second thoughts, “You know, this is a training group, where trying new stuff and learning is more important than efficiency. So maybe I’ll coach her to ask Jesus, just to see what happens.” So I did, and sure enough, there was a long pause – we’re in this strategic training group, with a whole room full of busy people trying to learn stuff, and Jesus waits for a couple of minutes before answering the question. And then we had to take some more time for me to coach Rita to verbalize what she thought she was hearing from the Lord. But when Rita finally described what she perceived as the Lord’s answer, I was amazed to realize that it was exactly what I would have said. Well, actually, not *exactly* what I would have said. The Lord’s answer was actually more precise, more elegant, and more carefully nuanced than what I had been about to offer, and He didn’t repeat Himself or get distracted by tangential digressions. But the core content was the same. And the Lord seemed to have a quiet but profound authority clearly beyond what I carry. I’m sure that if I had answered her question Rita would have listened to me, and she would have seriously considered the probability that my thoughts were valid, but subtle uncertainties would have lingered around the edges. In contrast, when she heard these same thoughts from the Lord she immediately had a deep, peaceful sense of confidence that they were true. It was done. No additional discussion was needed, and we moved on.

And then about fifteen minutes later it happened again. Rita asked a good question, requiring an answer that would both clarify the personal meaning of the memories she was working with and explain a theoretical point; after a few moments of thought I had a really good answer; just before opening my mouth to share my ideas, the thought occurred to me, “I wonder what would happen if I coach her to focus on Jesus and ask Him, instead of just giving the answer myself?”; I felt the same skeptical assessment that we would probably get a usable answer much more quickly if I just answered the question myself; and I had the thought, “You know, this is a training group, where trying new stuff and learning is more important than efficiency. So maybe I’ll coach her to ask Jesus, just to see what happens.” Once again, I went ahead and did this, there was a long pause before Jesus answered the question, and then we had to take more time for me to coach Rita to verbalize what she thought she was hearing from the Lord. Once again, I was amazed to realize that the Lord’s answer was exactly what I would have said, except clearer, more elegant, more carefully nuanced, without repetitions or digressions, and carrying His special authority. And once again, when she heard the answer from Jesus she immediately had a deep, peaceful sense of confidence that it was true. It was done. No discussion was needed, and we moved on.

Ten minutes later Rita asked another question, and after a few moments of thought I had a really good answer, but this time I then jumped right to, “Okay Lord, I get the point. You want me to coach her to ask You.” So I coached Rita to focus on Jesus and present her question to Him, but this time I was much more patient through the long pause as we waited for Jesus to answer and I had more positive expectation as I coached Rita to verbalize what she thought she was hearing from the Lord. And even though it had just happened twice in the last 35 minutes, I was still amazed that the Lord’s answer was exactly what I would have said, except clearer, more elegant, more carefully nuanced, without repetitions or digressions, and carrying His special authority. Once again, when she heard the answer from Jesus she immediately had a deep, peaceful sense of confidence that it was true. No additional discussion was needed, and we moved on.

When Rita paused to ask another good question fifteen minutes later, I thought, “Wow. You’re really making a point here Jesus.” And even though I once again had a good answer that I wanted to share, I went right to coaching her to focus on Jesus and ask Him. There was the familiar long pause while we waited for Jesus to answer, I supplied the familiar coaching to help Rita verbalize what she thought she was hearing from the Lord, and then for the fourth time in less than an hour Jesus said just what I would have said, but better. On one hand, it was encouraging to see that I was thinking along the same lines as Jesus. It was kind of like being able to check the answers at the back of the book – “Hey, I’m still on the right track! That’s nice to know.” But it was also humbling to see Jesus provide yet another answer that was clearer, more elegant, more carefully nuanced, more concise, and carrying more authority than what I had to offer. And, not surprisingly, when she heard the answer from Jesus she immediately had a deep, peaceful sense of confidence that it was true. No discussion was needed, and

we moved on.

When Rita paused to ask yet another question ten minutes later, I immediately thought, “Okay Lord, I think we can all see that You are *really* trying to make a point here.” As usual, I had some good ideas about what needed to be said, but by this point in the session it was pretty obvious that I should just jump right to coaching her to engage directly with Jesus regarding her question. So I did. There was still a long pause while we waited for Jesus to answer, and I still had to coach Rita to verbalize what she thought she was hearing from the Lord, but this time I was waiting with eager anticipation to see if He would do it again. Sure enough, for the fifth time in little more than an hour Jesus brought truth that made the exact same core points I had wanted to make, but with more clarity, elegance, nuance, and efficiency. And, as always, His answer came with a special authority, so that Rita immediately had a deep, peaceful sense of confidence that it was true. She was thoroughly satisfied, no discussion was needed, and we moved on.

By this point in the session I was very impressed with the Lord’s thoroughness and cleverness with respect to the teaching point He had just made, and I also felt like I had a good sense of where the rest of the session was going to go. Rita was in the middle of working on an important unresolved issue, and the Lord had just taken her to what looked like the key root memory. It all looked fairly straight forward – she just needed to work through a few unfinished processing tasks, the key root trauma would then be resolved, and we would be home free. To be totally honest, I felt like I could handle the rest of the session by myself. I wasn’t planning on grabbing the wheel from Jesus, but I felt like I could have taken care of the situation if Jesus had gotten called away for an emergency.

And then Rita suddenly said something along the lines of, “I can’t do this....This memory is too big – it’s too much – I don’t know how to handle this....I feel like I’m not able to work through this one – I can’t do it.” We only had about twenty minutes left before the end of the group, and Rita seemed to be completely stuck. Even after taking some time to think and listen for guidance, I couldn’t come up with a plan that would quickly deal with her apparent lack of the capacity and maturity skills needed to work through the traumatic memory that had somehow suddenly gotten bigger and more complicated. The lesson so far seemed to have been, “Coach the person to take her questions to Jesus, even when you think you have good answers yourself,” but at this point I didn’t feel like I had much choice. I had no idea what to do, and was more than happy to apply the “Coach the person to engage directly with Jesus at every point in the session” Immanuel approach principle. So I coached Rita to focus on Jesus, ask Him for guidance/help, and then describe whatever came into her awareness.

After a long pause (Jesus, don’t You realize how little time we have left?), Rita reported that she was now in a completely different memory. This new memory was clearly much less complicated and less intense, and Rita seemed ready and willing to work with it, but it also seemed to be completely unrelated to the strategic traumatic memory in which she had just been stuck. I was actually quite disappointed. I had hoped that the Lord would have some clever plan for working through the larger memory that seemed to be so key to the issue we had been working with, instead of just saying, “I can’t help her get through that one either, so let’s just go find something smaller and easier.” I was a bit puzzled and disappointed, but I figured we might as well work with what we had, so I kept coaching her to ask Jesus for guidance and help regarding the new memory.

She worked through this new memory quickly and easily, and then with about five minutes left, she popped out with, “Oh, wow! Now Jesus is taking me back to the other memory, and I’m just realizing that the key issue in the little memory we just resolved is the exact same as the key issue in the other memory that felt like it was too big for me.” After pausing for a few moments to think about what she had just said, the rest of us were all able to see the connection; but none of us had caught this until she had pointed it out. Rita then went on to explain, “The main reason the bigger memory felt like too much for me was that I didn’t know how to go about working through the situation – I didn’t feel like I could handle such an intense memory when I had no idea regarding how to work with it. So Jesus took me to a smaller memory with the same issue, and then showed me what to do and helped me practice in

the less intense memory.” Now that she had a clear battle plan for how to work through the traumatic pieces, she willingly went with Jesus back to the memory that had previously felt impossibly difficult and intense, and with His help she was able to resolve it within the remaining five minutes.

We were all in awe. This was one of the most effective, efficient, brilliant, elegant, creative therapy interventions that any of us had ever seen. Not to mention the fact that the rest of us wouldn’t have even known about the smaller, simpler parallel memory. Somewhere in the back of my mind, after the fifth round of Jesus bringing an answer that was essentially the same as what I had I wanted to share, I was starting to feel pretty pleased with myself. I never would have said it out loud, due to the outrageous presumption, but if I gotten words for what was starting to feel true it might have been something like, “Well yeah, of course I know I’ll never be *fully* as good a therapist as Jesus. I mean, His answers and interventions are always a bit better than mine, *but I’m getting pretty close*. I mean – all false humility aside – I think I could take care of most of this by myself if I really needed to.” Now I was just in awe. “Jesus, You’re the man! I am definitely the humble student, and You are most assuredly still the master.” I think Jesus wants us to deliberately practice letting Him drive as much as possible, for all of the reasons described earlier, but it’s especially nice to let Jesus drive when we’re completely lost.

These two stories are particularly striking, and I think the Lord deliberately orchestrated them to make sure I clearly understood this teaching point, but I have also had many similar experiences that have conveyed the same truth (just not quite so dramatically). The steadily growing pile of these experiences in my own practice, along with a steadily growing pile of similar stories from others who are using the Immanuel approach, has lead me to increasingly lean towards letting Jesus drive with respect all non-process aspects of Immanuel approach sessions.

Persist with the Immanuel approach, and let Jesus drive even when it’s bumpy and slow: As just described, there have been times when I was tempted to just lead the healing work myself, instead of applying the Immanuel approach *process* and then letting Jesus drive with respect to everything else. I worried that Jesus would not provide adequate guidance and help, and I worried that the recipient would not be able to adequately understand and/or cooperate with the Lord’s guidance and help; but when I deliberately restrained myself, and coached the person to turn to Jesus instead of trying to do it myself, I was dramatically pleasantly surprised by the Lord’s competence. This has been tremendously faith-building with respect to the Lord’s character, heart, and faithfulness, and it especially encourages me regarding the possibilities for widespread lay ministry with the Immanuel approach to emotional healing.

However, there have also been situations in which the Immanuel approach was truly bumpy, cumbersome, and slow. For example, when both I and the recipients were just getting started with these new tools, the initial steps of positive memory recall, deliberate appreciation, and establishing an interactive connection were particularly slow and cumbersome. It would also slow things down when beginner recipients didn’t yet have skill with respect to the “describe *whatever* comes into your awareness” piece. Regarding these bumpy, cumbersome, slow situations, my assessment is that other tools and techniques have truly been more efficient than the Immanuel approach. For example, some of my clients have responded particularly well to certain other interventions, such as Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR). When one of these patients has had trouble with the Immanuel approach, I have switched (at least temporarily) to EMDR, and my perception is that it was more efficient.

Furthermore, there have been situations in which the recipient’s emotional healing actually did move more quickly when I provided a lot more direction. For example, when there have been a lot of blockages hindering the recipient’s perception of the Lord’s presence and she has only been able to receive a small portion of His guidance and help. In these sessions, I have had to provide more direction to make up for the recipient’s impaired ability to receive guidance from Jesus.

Nevertheless, I encourage you to be persistent in practicing with the Immanuel approach, even when it is

bumpy and cumbersome, and to keep leaning towards letting Jesus drive as much as possible, even when the recipient is having trouble perceiving His presence and receiving His guidance and help. As discussed in the “Caveats” section below, there are certain strategic clinical situations in which it is appropriate, and even necessary, to provide more direction and/or to use other tools and techniques; but *in general*, I want us to challenge ourselves to be persistent in practicing with the Immanuel approach, and to deliberately lean towards letting Jesus do more and more of the driving. First, we will often be pleasantly surprised – as illustrated by the true stories just described, we will often find the Immanuel approach to be less cumbersome and more effective than we had anticipated.¹²

Second, people will often experience an initial phase of slow, cumbersome inefficiency, as they are first learning to use the Immanuel approach and as they first experiment with letting Jesus do more of the driving, but if they persist this will steadily resolve as they gain experience and as the recipient removes blockages. In my own experience, I initially often had sessions in which the Immanuel approach felt slow and cumbersome; but now it usually flows smoothly, produces elegant results, and is more efficient than any other technique I have ever used.¹³ Athletic endeavors provide a good analogy. When an athlete changes some aspect of her technique, even if the new technique is clearly the better way to do things, she usually experiences an initial phase of frustration and her performance actually deteriorates. *Temporarily*. But then she begins to improve steadily as she makes the transition and gains expertise with the new form, and in the long run her performance with the new technique surpasses anything she had been able to do in the past.¹⁴

Finally, using the simplest possible techniques, where we just provide the structure for the Immanuel approach process and then coach the person to engage directly with Jesus regarding every other aspect of the session, is strategic with respect to the long term big picture. In order to make a real dent in the trauma and dysfunction that is pervasive throughout the entire planet, we need to get hundreds of millions of lay people incorporating the Immanuel approach into their daily lives – as part of their personal healing and growth, and as part of caring for their families and friends. My hope is that using (and simultaneously *modeling*) the simplest Immanuel approach techniques, in every possible appropriate setting, can be part of this larger vision. With the process and interventions being so simple and safe, recipients and observers will often learn the Immanuel approach easily and naturally as they participate in sessions.¹⁵ We have already been observing this on a regular basis. Because the most basic form¹⁶ of

¹²I know I’m repeating this point, but it’s really, really important. That is, I’m saying it over and over again to make sure that you get it. Just in case it didn’t really sink in, I’m making the point repeatedly.

¹³Rita’s session, described above, is a perfect example of smooth, elegant, and effective.

¹⁴Note that this pattern is most pronounced with mental health professionals and experienced emotional healing ministers (like myself). We have spent many years learning the principles and developing skill with other emotional healing tools, and we have gotten to the point where we get reasonably consistent and robust positive results with these other tools. Initially, when we try to switch from these other tools to the Immanuel approach we feel frustrated, clumsy, and less effective. The temptation to return to the old familiar techniques, with consistent moderately good results, is intense. However, if we persist with the new tools we begin to get increasingly good results with the Immanuel approach, and we eventually get better results than with any previous techniques.

¹⁵In addition to simply participating in Immanuel approach sessions, I offer brief explanations regarding the principles involved, and I ask the recipients and observers to do a moderate amount of reading regarding the Immanuel approach. But the bottom line is that most people doing emotional healing work with me eventually learn the Immanuel approach to the point that they actually start using it on their own.

¹⁶Part of why it is so important for the facilitator to provide only the structure for the process, and then lean heavily towards deferring to Jesus regarding every other aspect of the session, is that this is part of what makes the Immanuel approach so simple and safe for lay people and beginners.

the Immanuel approach is so simple and safe, the recipients (and also any supporting friends or family they bring with them) often learn it fairly quickly, and then feel safe enough and confident enough *that they actually begin to use it*. This does not happen with other techniques, such as EMDR,¹⁷ that require much more training and skill, and it also does not happen if we mix more complicated tools and techniques in with the Immanuel approach.

Caveats: As I look for ways to bring the Immanuel approach into every possible setting, and as I deliberately lean towards letting Jesus do more of the driving, I keep several caveats in mind.

Caveat #1: Some people are not yet able to use the Immanuel approach. The first, most obvious caveat is that some people are not yet able to use the Immanuel approach – they have blockages that are currently preventing them from perceiving the Lord’s tangible presence or establishing an interactive connection, and without these pieces the Immanuel approach process is not possible. With these people, I temporarily use other approaches, such as EMDR and Theophostic-based emotional healing, with an important part of the work being to find and resolve the hindrances that prevent them from using the Immanuel approach. And as we find and resolve traumatic memories (and other issues), I periodically check regarding their ability to perceive and connect with Jesus. I’m always working towards the Immanuel approach. My goal is for every person to eventually be able to embrace the Immanuel approach, as their primary way of receiving emotional healing and also as a lifestyle.

Caveat #2: Additional direction from the facilitator is needed to compensate for a poor connection with Jesus. As mentioned above, there are situations in which the recipient is able to use the Immanuel approach, but blockages hinder her connection with Jesus to the point that she is only able to receive a portion of His guidance and help. In these sessions, the facilitator has to provide more direction to make up for the recipient’s impaired ability to receive guidance from Jesus. The good news is that Immanuel approach healing will always result in resolving traumatic memories (and other issues) that hinder the person’s connection with Jesus, and as this happens her ability to receive the Lord’s guidance and help will steadily improve. Therefore, both the facilitator and recipient should constantly press towards allowing Jesus to do more of the driving. One of the most straight-forward ways to do this is to periodically experiment with deliberately stepping outside of your comfort zone, as I did in the session with Rita. Deliberately withhold guidance and help that you usually provide, coach the person to engage directly with Jesus, and give Him plenty of time in which to work.¹⁸ If the recipient is not able to obtain the resources you are temporarily withholding through engaging directly with Jesus, you can easily step back in; however, if you discover that the person is able to receive more guidance and help than you had thought possible, her Immanuel healing work will take a big step forward.

Caveat #3: Short term strategic clinical considerations. As also described above, there are situations in which other techniques may be more efficient than the Immanuel approach. And while I strongly encourage people even in these situations to be moving towards the Immanuel approach as the foundation for *long term* plans, there are sometimes short term strategic clinical considerations that require the use of other techniques.

For example, if a person is in crisis because his new job is intensely triggering his Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), the Immanuel approach is slow and cumbersome in your hands as an

¹⁷ In my observation, even techniques that are supposed to be open to lay ministers, such as Theophostic, Sozo, and various other approaches to emotional healing prayer, include too much complexity for the average lay person to use. Even in the context of ministry programs specifically designed to train lay people, we have noticed that many of the lay trainees never actually use these other approaches because they feel too complicated/intimidating.

¹⁸ It is usually best to let the recipient know what you are intending to do, so that she isn’t frightened and/or confused when you suddenly begin to provide significantly less guidance and help.

inexperienced facilitator, this person has issues that hinder his ability to connect well with Jesus, you are experienced and efficient with EMDR, and this person responds particularly well to EMDR, then choosing to use EMDR for dealing with his immediate crisis could make the difference between whether or not he is able to keep his job. Or if a person is in crisis because her mother's unexpected death has precipitated an episode of intense, suicidal depression, and EMDR is again more efficient than the Immanuel approach for a variety of reasons, then choosing to use EMDR for this immediate crisis could even save her life by finding and resolving the roots of her depression before she is able to kill herself. Or if a person is in crisis because his addictive sexual behavior is destroying his relationship with his wife, and EMDR is more efficient than the Immanuel approach in the context of your current work with this particular person, then choosing to use EMDR for this immediate crisis could save his marriage.

I would still encourage you to move towards using the Immanuel approach as the foundation for *long term* care in each of these situations; but urgent, strategic, practical concerns require that we use whatever is *currently* the most efficient intervention for the short term crises.

Caveat #4: Counterfeit/contaminated guidance. Nobody is able to perceive the Lord's guidance with 100% accuracy or follow it with 100% obedience. Even when we are able to establish a good interactive connection with the Lord, unconscious avoidance, subtle self deception, the complexity of the neurological processes involved, physical trauma in our fallen biological brains, psychological trauma in our fallen minds, internal dissociated parts with complex agenda, and deliberate demonic interference can all get in the way of receiving and following the Lord's guidance. This is why both the recipient and facilitator need to be constantly watching for observable, lasting positive changes in the recipient's life, as one of the most reliable methods for discerning whether or not the "guidance and help" the person describes is truly from the Lord.

Fortunately, counterfeit and/or contaminated "guidance and help" is usually a minor problem with the Immanuel approach.¹⁹ However, in some situations a combination of dissociated internal parts and/or other unconscious aspects of the person's mind and/or demonic spirits will send forward content that the person mistakenly perceives to be coming from Jesus, and this counterfeit/contaminated "guidance" causes bigger problems. In some of these cases the counterfeit/contaminated "guidance from Jesus" is directly toxic. For example, the person might receive "guidance" reassuring him that it's okay to continue having an affair with one of his co-workers, as long as he really loves her. Or the person may hear "words from Jesus" that are angry, condemning, and non-relational. An important part of the facilitator's role is to watch for this kind of toxic content that the recipient mistakenly perceives as coming from Jesus,²⁰ and in these situations the facilitator will have to provide a lot more direction

¹⁹ I have been consistently pleasantly surprised by how little this problem has prevented people from having life-giving interactions with Jesus in the context of Immanuel approach sessions. For additional discussion of counterfeit and/or contamination with respect to guidance and help that the recipient perceives to be coming from God, see chapter (****fill in when this chapter is complete.**** Currently available in part II, "Go back to the basics if you feel overwhelmed," in the "Where/how do I get training regarding the Immanuel approach?" essay (available as free download from www.immanuelapproach.com), section F, "Is it from the Lord?" – on discerning the source of Immanuel approach experiences," of Part III, "The Immanuel Approach, Additional Practical Considerations," in the "Brain Science, Psychological Trauma, and the God Who Is with Us, Part V: The Immanuel Approach, Revisited" essay (available as free download from www.kelehman.com), "Internal Dissociated Parts Presenting as Jesus" (available as free download from www.kelehman.com), and "Unresolved Issues in the Therapist/Facilitator: One of the Most Important Hindrances to Emotional Healing" (available as free download from www.kclehman.com).

²⁰ Having adequate discernment to be able to spot this kind of toxic counterfeit/contaminated "guidance" is an important qualification for anyone who wants to facilitate Immanuel approach sessions. For example, a facilitator should be sufficiently familiar with Biblical truth and the heart of God so that

until the source of the counterfeit/contaminated “guidance and help” has been identified and resolved. Thankfully, once the source of counterfeit/contamination has been resolved, the facilitator can go back to letting Jesus do most of the driving. Again, our observation is that this kind of serious problem with toxic content is rare, but facilitators working with extreme trauma and other complicated problems will need to be aware of these phenomenon.

In other cases the counterfeit/contaminated “guidance” is much more subtle, in that it leads to subtle, chronic avoidance of important issues (as opposed to introducing directly toxic content that is much more obvious). For example, if a person has internal dissociated parts that are very invested in avoiding certain particularly painful memories, they may deliberately fabricate thoughts, emotions, and images that the recipient will mistakenly perceive as Jesus’ presence leading away from the strategic memories.²¹ In these situations the facilitator will have to provide a lot more direction until the source of the counterfeit/contaminated “guidance” has been identified and resolved, and once the source of the counterfeit/contaminated “guidance” has been resolved, the facilitator can go back to letting Jesus do most of the driving. As with directly toxic content, our observation is that this kind of serious problem with subtle avoidance is rare, but facilitators working with extreme trauma and other complicated problems will need to be aware of these phenomenon.²²

When you do offer guidance and help, be humble and tentative: As just mentioned above, there will be times when the recipient is having difficulty with receiving guidance and help directly from God, and in these situations the facilitator will have to provide more direction and assistance. As discussed in chapter four, this especially becomes necessary when people doing intermediate and advanced Immanuel approach work encounter seasons during which they have difficulty establishing good connections with the Lord. As discussed in chapter 20, when we do offer guidance and help as the facilitator it is important to be humble and tentative as we give our input. For example, if I notice that the session is not flowing smoothly on it’s own, and I have a thought about something that might be helpful, I will gently say, “I have a thought about something that might be helpful. If you would like to hear it, let me know when you

she can recognize when supposed “guidance from Jesus” is inconsistent with these two important reference points. For additional discussion of this aspect of the facilitators role, see chapter (**Fill in when complete.***) Currently available in the essays referenced in footnote 18.

²¹This is not the place for a thorough discussion of this advanced topic, but I will offer a few quick thoughts: 1) This phenomenon is actually easiest to spot when it is widespread, because the person will have session after session after session in which they appear to have many positive, pleasant, painless interactions with Jesus, but they never deal with any difficult issues or memories and there is no observable fruit in their lives. 2) This phenomena can sometime present in much more subtle ways, and the best resource for recognizing these more subtle presentations is logging in many hours of Immanuel approach sessions. As you become more and more familiar with how the Lord works in Immanuel sessions, you will start to notice subtle clues when counterfeit/contaminated “guidance” shows up. In a variety of subtle ways, it won’t look and feel like “the real thing.” 3) For extensive discussion regarding how to recognizing subtle counterfeit/contamination, see chapter (**fill in when complete.***) currently available in the essays referenced in footnotes 18 and 19).

²²This is not the place to provide a thorough discussion of this advanced topic, but I will offer one quick thought. In many situations where you see an important issue and/or memory that seems to be getting ignored, you can gently describe what you are observing, and then make the following invitation: “I’m not sure whether Jesus is deliberately waiting, or whether some kind of avoidance/resistance on your part may be hindering your ability to get this one on the table, but would you be willing to ask Him about it, and see what He says?” You may perceive that the person just takes her avoidance to the next level (for example, generating a counterfeit Jesus that says, “No, it’s fine, we don’t need to look at that.”). However, I have been pleasantly surprised by how often this simple, gentle intervention helps the person move forward. And in other situations, the true, genuine Jesus will clearly say, “Yes, this is important, but now is not the right time,” as He did in the initial session with Eileen.

come to a good place to pause and I would be happy to share it with you.” And then if/when they ask for my input, I offer it gently, as a suggestion that they are free to accept or reject.

As also discussed in chapter 20, we should be especially humble and tentative when we perceive that the Lord is giving us guidance that he wants us to pass on to the recipient. And when the facilitator offers something as possibly from God, the recipient always makes the final call regarding whether or not to accept the guidance and/or help as from the Lord.

Final thoughts:

Long term benefits of taking it home. As you are thinking about whether or not to use the Immanuel approach, and thinking about whether or not to let Jesus do most of the driving, it’s important to remember that it will be a HUGE long term, lasting benefit for the recipient to eventually be able to use the Immanuel approach on her own. With most situations in which the Immanuel approach is less efficient in the short term, the benefit of eventually being able to use the simple Immanuel approach tools on her own, as an ongoing resource that she can take with her, will outweigh the short term loss of efficiency.²³ Even in situations where the Immanuel approach is initially very bumpy and cumbersome, I encourage you to think about moving toward using the Immanuel approach more and more over time. At the very least, include occasional sessions in which you very deliberately use the Immanuel approach (with only the simplest tools and techniques), explain the underlying principles as you apply the Immanuel approach tools and techniques, and explicitly name the goal of the recipient eventually being able to have these tools and techniques as a resource that she can take home with her.

Part time lay ministers and beginners: just focus on the stories and let them encourage you. I made this point at the beginning, in the “Advanced topics warning” section, and I want to make it again here. I don’t want the advanced/complex aspects of this discussion to discourage or overwhelm part time lay ministers or beginners. So if you’re a part time lay minister or beginner, you are already convinced regarding the need for the Immanuel approach structure/framework, and you are already convinced regarding the importance of letting Jesus lead with respect to every non-process aspect of Immanuel approach sessions, then just enjoy the stories and let them encourage you regarding how effectively Jesus can lead when you constantly coach the recipient to focus on Him and ask Him for guidance and help. If you encounter a more complicated situation in which the most basic Immanuel approach tools don’t seem to be fully effective, you can just help the person get back to her initial positive memory and interactive connection from the beginning of the session, and then afterwards you can take time to study more of our material and/or get a consultation and/or refer the person to a more experienced facilitator.

²³ In this discussion, the cost/benefit analysis is referring to the cost of the healing process slowing temporarily as you transition from other approaches to the Immanuel approach, with the Immanuel approach being bumpy and cumbersome at first. This cost/benefit discussion is *not* referring to situations with urgent, strategic clinical concerns, such as the cases with PTSD, depression, and addictive sexual behavior crises described in the “Caveat #3” section above.

The Immanuel Approach (to Emotional Healing and to Life)

Chapter 26: Intermediate/Advanced Troubleshooting

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In chapters twelve and thirteen I described troubleshooting tools and 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. When we encounter difficulties, we should of course start with these basic, simple tools and interventions that are especially easy and safe. However, as described in chapters four and twenty-two, we sometimes encounter more complicated blockages that require more advanced troubleshooting tools and Immanuel interventions. In this chapter I would like to present a brief introduction to intermediate/advanced Immanuel approach troubleshooting and Immanuel interventions, to give the reader a feel for the kinds of blockages that can be identified and resolved with intermediate/advanced tools and interventions.¹

Advanced topics warning: Some are intimidated by the complexity of the blockages, resources, and interventions that I discuss in this chapter. If you are going through this book for the first time, just to get an overview of the Immanuel approach, one option is to simply skip this material for now and then come back for it when you have become comfortable with the basic Immanuel approach tools and process and want to begin helping recipients with intermediate and advanced blockages. However, if you decide to look at this material now please don't let it scare you away. If you find yourself feeling intimidated or overwhelmed by the discussion of more complex blockages and more advanced trouble-shooting, I strongly encourage you to skim (or skip) the rest of the chapter, and to at least experiment with the basic tools and process. *Please* don't decide that the Immanuel approach is too difficult until you have at least tried the basic Immanuel approach exercises just described in chapter twenty four (and make sure to try these exercises with a facilitator or practice partner, so that you can take advantage of the ways in which your brain works better in community).

I. Intermediate/advanced Immanuel approach troubleshooting: As mentioned in chapter four, with additional study and practice people who are more serious about emotional healing can become effective in dealing with more complicated problems.

Facilitators who are more serious about emotional healing can learn about additional trouble shooting tools and Immanuel interventions, and they can gain more knowledge about the ones they are already using. For example, they can learn about variations for coaching the recipient to describe whatever is coming into her awareness and they can learn about variations for coaching the recipient to engage directly with Jesus. They can learn about self-protection vows that can

¹ I am working to put together a series of essays that will provide a much more detailed discussion of intermediate and advanced Immanuel approach troubleshooting and Immanuel interventions, but for the purposes of this book I want to give the reader at least an introductory overview of intermediate and advanced tools and interventions.

hinder the healing process, and about how to recognize and systematically dismantle them.² They can learn more about guardian lie fears that can block the healing process, and about how to uncover them and neutralize them. They can learn about the direct eye contact technique for working with internal parts.³ And they can learn about how deliberate attunement can help the recipient stay connected, augment the recipient's capacity,⁴ and augment the recipient's maturity skills.⁵

In addition to gaining *knowledge*, facilitators who are more serious about emotional healing can also gain more *skill*. First of all, as facilitators put in more time practicing they become more comfortable, confident, and smooth with respect to the whole process. When beginners facilitate their first few sessions they usually feel clumsy and awkward, and they often focus a lot of their attention on their notes as they worry that they might forget something or that they might not “do it right.” Fortunately, most facilitators become more comfortable and confident fairly quickly with regular practice,⁶ and as they become more comfortable with the basics they become more effective simply by being more fully present to the recipient. Furthermore, as they become more comfortable, more confident, and more present to the recipient they are more able to notice subtle clues, and they can begin to develop a second level of skills.

Learning to drive provides a good analogy for the way in which we need to master the basics before learning second level skills. I learned to drive in Chicago in fairly heavy traffic, and when I first got on the road I was totally focused on just the basics – stuff like obeying the speed limit, changing lanes without hitting other cars, not running through stop signs, using the clutch to shift gears correctly, and not hitting pedestrians in the cross walk when I was making turns through crowded intersections. However, with continued practice I eventually mastered these basic skills, and when these skills became automatic to the point that I hardly even thought about them any more I started to develop a second level of driving skills and habits. For example, I learned to watch for people who were signaling to turn left, so that I could move into the right lane and slide around them instead of ending up stuck behind them while they were waiting for an opening to make their turn. And when I was driving on the highway I learned to watch for exit ramp congestion a mile down the road so that I could easily move into the passing lane before things

² For information regarding how to recognize and dismantle self-protection vows, see Karl D. Lehman, “Vows: ‘Clutter’ that Can Hinder Emotional Healing,” last modified 12/14/2013, <http://www.kclehman.com>, and Karl D. Lehman, “Self-protection Vows Worksheet,” last modified 12/12/2013, <http://www.kclehman.com>.

³ For information regarding this simple, powerful technique, see Karl D. Lehman, “Direct Eye Contact (Technique for Making Contact with Internal Parts),” last modified 12/12/2013, <http://www.kclehman.com>.

⁴ For a brief refresher regarding capacity, review the section on capacity from chapter three. For a much more detailed discussion of capacity as it relates to emotional healing, see either the essay or DVD set titled *Immanuel, Emotional Healing, and Capacity*.

⁵ For information about attunement and how it can be a resource for emotional healing, see Karl D. Lehman, “Brain Science, Psychological Trauma, and the God Who Is with Us ~ Part II,” last modified February 4, 2011, <http://www.kclehman.com>, and Karl D. Lehman, *Outsmarting Yourself*, (Libertyville, IL: This Joy! Books, 2011).

⁶ If you have facilitated more than ten sessions and still consistently feel anxious, awkward, and clumsy, I would encourage you to receive a session for yourself, specifically focusing on triggers that might be getting stirred up when you facilitate.

got crowded. Furthermore, I had additional capacity available to be emotionally present and carry on conversations with anybody that might be riding with me. (This was definitely *not* the case during my early practice drives in crowded Chicago traffic.)

Learning to use variations for coaching the recipient to describe whatever is coming into her awareness provides a good example of second level Immanuel approach skills. The super basic, “Describe whatever comes into your awareness, regardless of whether it makes sense, feels important, or is nicely packaged” is a good start, and many sessions will go well from beginning to end with nothing more than this simple sentence whenever coaching with respect to “describe everything” is needed. However, after facilitators have become fully comfortable with the basics they can learn variations that can be very helpful in certain situations. For example, sometimes I go through several rounds of coaching the recipient with the basic “describe whatever...” sentence, but she repeatedly reports “I’m not getting anything,” even though I can observe subtle thoughts and emotions going across her face. I realize that she’s ignoring subtle clues as she’s waiting (and waiting and waiting) for something more dramatic to happen, so I provide some additional coaching along the lines of,

“I’m noticing thoughts and emotions going across your face, and I’m wondering if there might be subtle clues that you’re missing. When I’m receiving, I sometimes catch myself focusing just on the center, or front, of my internal mental awareness, and ignoring subtle thoughts, emotions, physical sensations, or fragments of memories that are just barely perceptible on the periphery. If you’re willing, I’d like you to deliberately check for anything on the periphery of your internal mental awareness, even if it’s faint, subtle, and doesn’t feel important and/or make sense.”

And then the recipient will usually acknowledge that yes, there have been some things lingering on the periphery of her awareness, but she insists that they are “faint,” “vague,” and “just unimportant distractions.” When I finally coax her to describe them out loud, we are able to recognize them as important clues and then the whole process starts to move forward again.

Or I go through several rounds of coaching the recipient with the basic “describe whatever...” sentence, but then I notice that she’s becoming increasingly anxious and embarrassed as she alternates between long pauses and changing the subject.⁸ At this point I will provide some additional coaching, along the lines of:

“I’m noticing that you’re having difficulty responding, and that maybe you’re getting a bit anxious and embarrassed. I’m just wondering if content might be coming forward that you’re uncomfortable sharing? If I’m way off target just let me know – I’m sure I’ll survive – but if this is what’s happening then there are several things that might be helpful. One possibility is that you can just talk directly to Jesus, silently, without telling me any of the details. Another option is that I can help you find a way to talk about it in general terms. As long as I can understand the general ideas we’re working with, I don’t need to know any of the details –

⁷ Note that I am able to notice the subtle facial expressions that indicate thoughts and emotions because the basic Immanuel approach process and tools have become second nature, and I therefore have plenty of mental capacity available for observing the recipient and listening for the Lord’s guidance.

⁸ Again, I’m able to notice these clues because the basic Immanuel approach process and tools have become second nature, and I therefore have plenty of mental capacity available for observing the recipient and listening for the Lord’s guidance.

sometimes people find that this feels much less vulnerable or embarrassing, and then they're able to move forward. The last option is that we can just stop here, and go back to the positive memory and connection with Jesus from the beginning of the session. But if I'm guessing correctly, and this *is* what's happening, if you're willing I'd like to try one of the other two options."

After this explanation and invitation the recipient usually gives just the slightest nod, and says (very quietly), "Yes. Yes, that's what's happening." Thankfully, the recipient is almost always able to work with me to implement one of the first two options, and then the whole process starts moving forward again.⁹

Learning to use variations for coaching the recipient to engage directly with Jesus provides another example of second level Immanuel approach skills. The super basic, "Ask Jesus for guidance," and "Ask Jesus for help" are a good start, and many sessions will go well from beginning to end with nothing more than these two simple phrases whenever coaching to engage directly with Jesus is needed. However, after facilitators have become fully comfortable with the basics they can learn variations that can be very helpful in certain situations. For example, sometimes I coach the recipient to just focus on Jesus and to observe his behavior as a source of subtle (or sometimes not so subtle) guidance and encouragement. Sometimes I coach the recipient to ask Jesus for specific feedback ("Tell him that you're afraid he's angry with you, and ask him if it's true"). Sometimes I coach the recipient to observe Jesus' face as part of asking for specific feedback ("Look at Jesus' face – does he look angry?," "Does he look frightened?," "Does Jesus look like he's upset or disgusted with you?," or "Does Jesus look overwhelmed, or worried that he might not be able to handle the situation?"). Sometimes I coach the recipient to ask Jesus for very specific guidance, such as "What choices do I need to make to take the next step forward?" or "How can I best cooperate with what you're doing?" Sometimes I coach the recipient to ask Jesus for very specific assistance, such as "Please help me dismantle this disconnection defense that is preventing me from feeling your love," or "Please give me more strength, grace, and capacity." And sometimes I employ a fair amount of intermediate/advanced skill in helping the recipient to find the right words for what's in her heart and then helping her to share them directly with Jesus.

In addition to gaining additional knowledge and skill, facilitators who are more serious about emotional healing can learn to recognize when they are triggered and then use specific interventions for getting their relational circuits back on line.¹⁰ And they can also get their own

⁹ Several quick comments. One is that the process sometimes will eventually move forward if the facilitator just keeps gently coaching with the super basic one sentence invitation. Eventually the recipient decides to describe the faint, vague content in the periphery of her awareness, or she decides to report that she is having trouble because the content coming forward is too embarrassing. But the intermediate coaching variations described here can help things move forward more quickly and easily. Also, if the facilitator is only equipped with the basic tools and they aren't working, she can always just coach the recipient to go back to the safety net initial positive memory and connection. In some cases the recipient will be able to identify and resolve the problem by talking to Jesus in the context of the initial safe, positive setting; and if she isn't, then they can just stop the session and the recipient will still be okay, back in a positive, safe place with Jesus.

¹⁰ For additional discussion and resources regarding how to recognize when you're triggered into non-relational mode, and then how to get your relational circuits back on line, see Karl D. Lehman, *Outsmarting Yourself*, (Libertyville, IL: This Joy! Books, 2011), especially chapters 12, 15 through 21 (pages 101-108, 115-204).

healing so that they can work with increasingly intense/difficult aspects of sessions without getting triggered.¹¹ (Both of these interventions increase their ability to stay emotionally present and retain good discernment, even when working with more intense trauma). Facilitators that are more serious can deliberately build their capacity, further increasing their ability to stay emotionally present when working with more intense trauma. Facilitators that are more serious can strengthen their faith, so that they are more able to persist even when the process becomes slow and difficult.¹² And facilitators that are more serious can develop skill in deliberately offering attunement, so that the recipient can stay connected and keep moving forward even when things are difficult and she temporarily loses her connection with Jesus.¹³

II. Intermediate/advanced Immanuel interventions: Remembering from chapters three and thirteen, 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*. And since an adequate interactive connection with God is the center of the Immanuel approach, Immanuel interventions for recipients who are having difficulty with their interactive connection are an especially important component of Immanuel approach troubleshooting.

As mentioned above, chapter thirteen presents 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. When the recipient is having difficulty with her interactive connection with God, we should of course start with these basic, simple interventions that are especially easy and safe. However, we sometimes encounter more complicated blockages that require more advanced Immanuel interventions. This book is not the place for a detailed discussion of intermediate and advanced Immanuel interventions, but I want to provide just a few examples to give the reader a feel for the kinds of blockages that can be identified and resolved with more advanced interventions.¹⁴

A. An advanced intervention for blocking fears: Blocking fears are one of the most common problems that sometimes require more advanced Immanuel interventions. As described in chapter 13, in many situations in which the person is initially unable to perceive the God's presence we discover that she's actually afraid to let him be present. Instead of inviting God to be with her and asking for help in perceiving his presence, at some deep, often non-conscious level she is actually sending the exact opposite message: "Lord, stay away from me! I'm afraid to let you be with me – I *don't* want you to be here with me and I *don't* want to be aware of your presence." And when we are asking that God *not* manifest to us as a tangible presence

¹¹ For additional discussion of the importance of facilitators getting their own healing, see Karl D. Lehman, "Unresolved Issues in the Therapist/Facilitator: One of the Most Important Hindrances to Emotional Healing," last modified 12/18/2013, <http://www.kclehman.com>.

¹² Review chapter 21 if you want to refresh your understanding of how faith enables one to facilitate Immanuel approach sessions more effectively, and for specific interventions that can increase one's faith.

¹³ Again, for information about attunement and how it can be a resource for emotional healing, see "Brain Science, Psychological Trauma, and the God Who Is with Us ~ Part II" and *Outsmarting Yourself*.

¹⁴ Again, I am working to put together a series of essays (and eventually a separate book) that will provide a much more detailed discussion of intermediate and advanced Immanuel approach troubleshooting and Immanuel interventions.

God seems to respect our choice and request.¹⁵

As also described in chapter 13, blocking fears can often be resolved by very basic interventions, such as simply helping the person to focus and get words for the blocking fear, helping her to tell Jesus about it, and then coaching her to ask him for help. And even though these interventions are so simple, the recipient will often report that the fear becomes less intense (or resolves completely), and then she becomes willing to allow the Lord to be tangibly present. However, there are some situations in which these simple, basic interventions do not work, and in these situations we need to employ more advanced Immanuel interventions. The good news is that these advanced interventions are almost always (eventually) effective when applied with gentle persistence.

One of the advanced interventions I often use for persistent blocking fears is to work with the recipient to find a scenario that feels safe, even in spite of the blocking fears that are still present. That is, I negotiate with the recipient to find specific conditions that somehow get around or neutralize the blocking fears. In almost every situation we are eventually able to find some set of parameters that feel adequately safe, and the recipient becomes willing to let Jesus be with her. Once the recipient becomes *willing* to let Jesus be present she quickly becomes able to perceive his tangible presence in some way, and once she is able to perceive his presence she usually quickly discovers that he is safe and good, she is able to establish an adequate interactive connection, and she is able to receive whatever guidance, assistance, and gifts that he has for her.

For example, this type of Immanuel intervention with one particular recipient proceeded as follows:

Dr. K: “This seems like a pretty difficult memory. I think it would be really helpful if you could let Jesus be present, spend some time just being with him, and then let him help you with the healing work. Would you be willing to invite him to be with you, and to ask him to help you perceive his presence?”

Recipient: “No. I don’t want him to come.”

Dr. K: “You don’t want Jesus to come? Why not?”

Recipient: “I don’t want him to see me. I’m ugly.”

Dr. K: “Well, what if we ask him to face the wall so that he can’t see you? Would it be okay for him to come if he faces the wall so he can’t see you?”

Recipient: “Yeah, that would be okay.”

Dr. K: “So, if he agrees to face the wall and not look at you, you’d be willing to invite him to be with you and to ask him to help you perceive his presence?”

Recipient: “He’s already here. He’s facing the wall but he’s talking to me. He says...,” and

¹⁵ I believe that God is actually still with us, but when we do not *want* him with us he seems to respect our desire/request/choice by allowing us to not perceive his presence.

she goes on to describe original, gentle, and beautifully appropriate comments from Jesus.

Within minutes of allowing Jesus to be present, the recipient decided that he was kind and friendly and safe, and that it would be okay for him to turn around and come closer. She was able to let him be with her and to receive from him, and then the rest of the healing process began to move forward again.

I also use a variation of this negotiation intervention with people who *are* able to perceive the Lord's presence, but who are so afraid of him that they won't let him come close enough to do any good. When I started experimenting with Immanuel interventions, I assumed that all we had to do was get to the point at which the person could perceive the Lord's presence. However, I quickly discovered that there are some people who can perceive the Lord's presence but keep him so far away that he can't really provide any significant help. These people are usually either pushing him away out of anger or unwilling to let him come close because of blocking fears, but the good news is that Immanuel interventions are almost always able to resolve the problem.

Just as with all other blocking fears, these fears can often be resolved by very basic interventions, such as simply helping the person to focus and get words for the blocking fears and then helping her to tell Jesus about them and ask him for help. However, as is also true with other blocking fears, I occasionally encounter persistent fears that require more advanced Immanuel interventions. And in these situations I use an interesting intervention that is very similar to the one just described for people who are afraid to even let God be present. I work with the person to figure out a "safe" plan – specific conditions *that feel safe to her* – for obtaining more information about Jesus from the Lord himself. In almost every situation we are eventually able to find some set of parameters that feel adequately safe, so that the recipient becomes willing to interact directly with Jesus to learn more about his true character and heart. And the blocking fears resolve as she learns the truth about Jesus – she discovers that he is safe and good, she allows him to come closer, and she is able to receive whatever guidance, assistance, and gifts that he has for her.

For example, in one particular session I was working with a person who needed more capacity. I was pretty sure that she could quickly gain the needed capacity if she would just spend some time in a positive place with Jesus, but she did *not* want to try anything that included "being with Jesus." I was also pretty sure that her reluctance to be with Jesus would resolve if she would just learn more truth about his character and heart, and at this point in the session our interactions went something like this:

Dr. K: "Would you be willing to let Jesus be present and just learn more about him – just get to know him? Not any kind of intimate "be *with* him stuff," not dealing with any of the hard, scary, painful parts of the memory – just let Jesus be present and learn more about him?"

Recipient: "No! No way!"

Dr. K: "Why not?"

Recipient: "He's too scary."

Dr. K: "Can you think of any conditions – any way in which it would feel safe to learn more

about him?” Recipient: “No. He’s not safe.” Dr. K: “Would you be willing to just look at him? To just see what he looks like?” Recipient: “I can’t see much – he’s too far away.” Dr. K: “Jesus is already there with you in the memory? You can see him?” Recipient: “Yeah, he’s here and I can see him, but he’s so far away I can’t see much.” Dr. K: “Would it be okay for him to come close enough for you to be able to see him better?” Recipient: “No!” Dr. K: “Even just a *little* closer?” Recipient: “No!” Dr. K: “Why not?” Recipient: “If he gets mad he’ll hit me.”

At points like this I pause to ask the Lord for inspiration and creativity, and in this session a very interesting idea occurred to me immediately after this prayer: Dr. K: “What about using a telescope – then he could stay far away? You could see him better, but he’d still be too far away to hit you if he gets angry.” Recipient: “Okay.” (brief pause) “Yeah, I can see him a lot better now.” Dr. K: “You have a telescope?” Recipient: “Yeah, I’m looking at him through a telescope. I can see him a lot better now, but he’s still too far away to hit me.” Once she could see Jesus more clearly, I simply encouraged her to observe him: Dr. K: “So,...what’s he look like? Are his fists balled up, like he’s angry?” Recipient: (Pause) “No...” Dr. K: “Does his face look mean?” Recipient: (Pause) “No...” Dr. K: “Well, why don’t you just watch him for a while, and see what happens.” And within minutes, the previously frightened recipient decided that Jesus had a nice face –

that he looked friendly and safe – and that it would be okay for him to come closer. The closer Jesus came the more she learned about him, and each time she learned more she was willing to let him come closer. Eventually she was able to allow Jesus to be close enough so that she could receive encouragement and strength from him, her capacity was further increased just from having him standing beside her,¹⁶ and the healing process began to move forward again.

*****Note to draft version readers: The recipient in this story gave me verbal permission to use this example in our teaching material, but now I can't find my notes regarding these details. If this was your session, please contact me (drkarl@kclehman.com) so that we can send you the forms for written permission that the publisher will request for including this in the final version of the book.*****

B. An advanced intervention for blocking anger: Blocking anger is another common problem that sometimes requires more advanced Immanuel interventions. In many situations in which the person is initially unable to perceive God's presence, we eventually discover that she's so angry at God that she does not want to *let* him be present. I have a godson who helped me as I was developing this material by providing a particularly clear demonstration of the phenomena. I cared for him during our church services while his father helped to lead worship as a member of the praise team, and being an active, intelligent, resourceful six year old boy, he would do things like bring a baseball to church and want to continue throwing it up in the air and catching it even as he was seated in the worship space and the service was about to begin. It was therefore often my job to tell him that he was not allowed to do things that he wanted to do. Sometimes he handled this with surprising grace, but when other things in his life were not going well he would respond with, "You're mean! I don't like you! Leave me alone and don't talk to me." And then he would turn away from me, squeeze his eyes tightly shut, put his hands over his ears, and refuse to respond to anything I did or said.

As I have been working with the Immanuel approach to help people connect with God, I have discovered that many of us have places in our hearts where we are reacting to God in much the same way as my godson was reacting to me. We are so angry at God that we are pushing him away. Instead of inviting God to be with us and asking for help in perceiving his presence, at some deep, often non-conscious level we are actually sending the exact opposite message: "Lord, stay away from me! I'm SO angry at you – I *don't* like you, I *don't* want you to be here with me, and I *don't* want to be aware of your presence." And, again, when we are telling God that we do *not* want him to manifest to us as a tangible presence he seems to respect our choice and request.

As with most other blockages, these problems can often be resolved by very basic interventions, such as simply helping the person to focus and get words for the blocking anger, and then helping her to tell Jesus about her anger and ask him for help. However, as is also true with other blockages, I occasionally encounter blocking anger that is particularly intense, particularly persistent, and that requires more advanced Immanuel interventions. In these scenarios I find that I can usually attune to the person in the place she is angry, validate the pain underneath the anger, and then work with her to come up with an acceptable plan – specific conditions that *feel acceptable to her* – for allowing the Lord to be present. And then after she's able to perceive the Lord's presence I help her to engage directly with Jesus regarding her

¹⁶ Remember the analogy from chapter three, of a child going down into a dark basement by herself versus going into the same dark basement while holding her father's hand.

The Immanuel Approach..., Chapter 26: Intermediate/Advanced... (New 1/23/14) Page 10 of 14 anger and pain. One of these interventions might look something like the following: Recipient: “Lord, I invite You to be with me in this place, and I ask You to help me perceive Your presence.” Dr. K: “So, what’s happening?” Recipient: “I’m still in the memory, but nothing has changed and I can’t sense or see or feel anything that I perceive to be the Lord’s presence.” Dr. K: “Would you be willing to ask what’s in the way?” Recipient: “Sure. Lord, what’s in the way of my being able to perceive your presence?” (Pause) “Nothing’s happening.” Dr. K: “Just describe whatever’s coming into your mind, whether or not it makes sense.” Recipient: “Well, I just keep getting the word ‘Anger.’” (pause) “And then sometimes the thought comes, ‘I don’t want him.’” Dr. K: “Huh.” (pause) “I know your adult wants to cooperate with the Lord, but I wonder what the kid in this memory thinks about the Lord. That is, I know you know what you *ought* to think and feel, but if you just listen to what *feels* true, I wonder what the kid in this memory would say?” Recipient: (Long pause) “Wow. I don’t know if I should say this.” (Another long pause) “The thoughts that come to me are, ‘I hate God! He didn’t protect me, He’s an idiot, and I sure as h#%l don’t want him in here with me.’” Dr. K: “Well, it sounds like there’s some place inside of you – maybe a child part of you from inside this memory – that’s pretty angry at God. Would you be willing to go inside the memory, and let the child part of you from inside the memory tell me more about why you’re so angry at God?” Recipient (speaking from inside the memory): “You want to know why I’m angry at God? I’ll tell you why I’m angry at God!....” At this point the recipient provides many additional details regarding her anger towards the Lord and where it comes from, and I focus on attuning to her anger (and especially on attuning to and validating the pain underneath the anger). Eventually I invite the person to transition to talking directly to the Lord: Dr. K: “I think your anger and pain make a lot of sense. Would you be willing to allow the Lord to be with you in this place, and then once you’re able to perceive his presence you

can tell him what you've just been telling me?"

Recipient: "No! I don't want him to be with me! He let this happen – he's stupid and incompetent – why would I want someone who's so stupid and incompetent to be with me in this place?"

"And besides, he won't listen to me. He'll just blame *me* for what happened – we'll just end up talking about how I'm bad, and why it's all my fault."

"And he's mean – he'll slap me if I get angry at him."

Dr. K: "I'm wondering if we might be able to make a deal with the Lord. What if the deal is that you get to say whatever you want to say, he agrees to listen to you, and he promises that he won't blame you or punish you for being angry? If Jesus would agree to those conditions, would you be willing to let him be with you and to ask him to help you perceive his presence?"

Recipient: (Pause) "Okay."

"What Dr. Karl said, Lord. I invite You to be with me *as long as You're okay with those conditions*. I'm still angry at you and I still don't like you, but you can be here with me if You want to."

Dr. K: (pause) "So what's happening now?"

Recipient: "Well, now I can see Jesus." (Pause)

"He's just standing there, looking at me." (Pause)

"He's not doing anything. He's not upset. He looks like he's just listening..."

Dr. K: "So, can you engage directly with Jesus regarding all of this? Can you talk directly to Jesus about all of the stuff you've been telling me?"

Recipient: "Yeah. I think I can do that. So, Jesus, I'm really angry about the way you didn't protect me, and I'm angry about....etc."

*****Note again to readers of the draft version: The recipient in this story gave me verbal permission to use this example in our teaching material, but now I can't find my notes regarding these details. If this was your session, please contact me (drkarl@kclehman.com) so that we can send you the forms for written permission that the publisher will request for including this in the final version of the book.*****

At this point I often have to include an additional intervention to help the person engage with Jesus *in a way that is relational*. This may seem strange at first, but it is surprisingly easy for a person to perceive God's presence but continue to be totally stuck in non-relational mode. For example, I've worked with people who can get to the place where they're able to allow God to be tangibly present, but they're still so angry that they won't let him really be *with* them and they refuse to receive any of the help that he has to offer. As I repeatedly encountered these scenarios and persistently asked God for guidance, I eventually came up with the following

intervention that seems to be effective in most of these situations. I say something along the lines of, “You can be as angry as you want to, and you can express your anger in any way you want to (as long as you don’t throw furniture in my office), *but I ask that you express your anger directly to Jesus, and that you continue to focus on him as you’re expressing your anger.*” And then, as they’re expressing their anger, I periodically check-in to make sure they continue to focus on Jesus *and I ask them to observe and report regarding how he’s responding.* As the reader will probably realize, coaching people to keep focusing on Jesus, and to observe and describe his responses, helps them move from their initial place of being stuck in *non-relational* non-productive spewing to a new place of *relational* interactions that actually help them move forward.

One of these interventions went something like this:

Dr. K: “You can be as angry as you want to, and you can express your anger in any way you want to, but I ask that you express your anger directly to Jesus, and that you continue to focus on him as you’re expressing your anger.”

Recipient: (with lots of intensity) “So, Jesus, why didn’t You *do* something?! If You’re so big and wonderful, why didn’t you help my Mom stop drinking? Why didn’t You remind her to come pick me up after school, instead of letting me stand in the cold for hours?...And where were You when I needed You the most – when I was so frightened and lonely? You say You were with me, but why didn’t You let me see You or feel You?...etc.”

Dr. K: “So,...what’s Jesus doing, as you’re saying all this stuff?”

Recipient: (pause) “He’s just standing there, looking at me and listening to what I have to say.”

Dr. K: “Is he upset?”

Recipient: (pause) “No...”

Dr. K: “Is he trying to invalidate your anger?”

Recipient: (pause) “No...”

Dr. K: “Is he making excuses?”

Recipient: (pause) “No...”

Dr. K: “Does he look frightened?”

Recipient: (pause) “No...”

Dr. K: “Is he angry at you for expressing your anger?”

Recipient: (pause) “No... he’s holding my gaze – he’s looking me right in the eyes – but he’s not at all scared or angry.”

Dr. K: “Well, keep talking to him about your hurt and anger, until you feel like you’re really finished. And as you’re able, tell me about anything he says or does in response.”

I keep checking/coaching periodically to make sure the recipients continue to focus on Jesus, speak their anger directly to Jesus, and pay attention to his responses, and eventually they will start to describe more details with respect to what he is saying and doing. Jesus’ responses have been quite variable, but they have always been perfect. His responses have always been timed just perfectly. His responses, including his facial expressions, have always been nuanced just perfectly – with just the right balance of validation, attunement, compassion, and challenge for each particular situation. His responses have always included just the right reinforcing information, such as appropriate scriptures, or particularly relevant pieces of information from the people’s own lives. And he’s never the least bit afraid of people’s anger, or punitive towards them for being angry.

And then, eventually, I ask, “So..., what do you think? What do you think about how he’s responding?” And when the person has actually stayed connected to Jesus – when she has actually continued to focus on him while she was expressing her anger and when she has actually been paying attention to his responses – she *always* reports feeling satisfied with Jesus’ responses, she reports a sense of resolution with respect to her anger, and the healing process begins to move forward again.

I’ve been especially interested to observe that many of these people have already spent a lot of time venting anger towards God, *but that they have never continued to focus on him as they were expressing their anger nor paid attention to how he was responding to their anger*. Many seem to get lost in the process of venting their anger, and no longer even perceive the Lord’s presence by the time they’re finished. For example, one woman I worked with reported, “I’m stuck. I can perceive the Lord’s presence in the memory, but I’m so angry at him that I won’t let him come close.” When I suggested that it might be helpful for her to express her anger directly to Jesus, she responded with a bit of discouragement: “I’ve already done a lot of venting anger directly to Jesus – in lots of other memories – but it hasn’t seemed to do much good.” However, when I asked a few clarifying questions she realized that she had always lost track of Jesus somewhere in the process. By the time she would get done venting she would no longer perceive his presence.¹⁷ She had never continued to perceive his presence and focus on him all the way through her angry venting, and she had never paid attention to nor thought about how he was responding.

So I encouraged her to go back to the memory in which she was so angry at Jesus and to express her anger directly to Jesus, but this time make sure to look at his face, make sure to *keep* focusing on him as she expressed her anger, and make sure to pay attention to his responses. When she did this she was immediately able to perceive that Jesus was listening to her – hearing and understanding every word she was saying. And she was also able to see that he was looking at her with profound compassion. As soon as she looked at his face, and focused on how he was responding to her anger, she was able to perceive his heart for her, and then also able to hear him and to let him help her. And as soon as she was able to see his heart, hear him, and let him help her, he began to lead her forward into healing for this traumatic memory that had been stuck for so long. This five minute intervention of coaching her to

¹⁷ “As I’m venting, everything just goes black. By the time I get done venting, the memory [and the perception of Jesus with me in the memory] is gone.”

continue focusing on Jesus, and to deliberately pay attention to and ponder how he was responding, resulted in her being able to move forward into healing.

C. Identify and resolve pernicious blockages: Some people will have particularly complex blockages, with a number of different pieces all tangled together. 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 both as a DVD teaching set from the “Store” page of www.immanuelapproach.com and as a free download essay from www.kclehman.com).

Before closing this chapter, I want to remind the reader again that many (even most?) blockages can be resolved with the basic, simple, easy troubleshooting tools and Immanuel interventions described in chapters twelve and thirteen. And I also want to remind the reader to not let this advanced material scare you away. If you felt intimidated or overwhelmed by this discussion of more complex blockages and more advanced trouble-shooting, I strongly encourage you to just go back to the basics. *Please* don’t decide that the Immanuel approach is too difficult until you have at least tried the basic Immanuel approach exercises just described in chapter twenty four (and make sure to try these exercises with a facilitator or practice partner, so that you can take advantage of the ways in which your brain works better in community).

The Immanuel Approach (to Emotional Healing and to Life)

Chapter 27: India, Human Trafficking, and Immanuel

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In the fall of 2013, myself and a friend of ours, Mark Hattendorf, provided Immanuel approach training for a team with Bright Hope Ministries that went to India in December. Part of the plan for the trip was to teach about the Immanuel approach at a large conference, and this turned out pretty well. Mark ended up going along on the trip, and he was able to give a brief presentation to about a thousand church leaders. Another part of the plan, associated with this same conference, was to provide Immanuel approach training for women in church leadership. This also turned out pretty well. The Bright Hope team was told to prepare for fifty women, but three hundred showed up. This was initially overwhelming, but eventually exciting and hopeful. In addition to explaining about the Immanuel approach, the ministry team was also able to coach the women through group exercises, and even in the first group exercise most of the women reported experiencing connections with Jesus. By the end of the several training sessions many of the women were successfully facilitating Immanuel approach ministry with each other.

The third part of the plan, which was really at the heart of the vision for the trip, was to provide assistance to an anti-human trafficking team. This is a team of courageous individuals who risk their lives to rescue and care for girls who have been sold into the human trafficking system. The men on the rescue squad raid brothels, sweatshops, and other situations in which girls are being held in slavery. The rescued girls are taken to a safe house, where they live together with safe house “moms” who help them with day to day practical needs, provide parental type supervision, and try to create a safe family environment. And there are also aftercare counselors who provide therapy and pastoral care for the girls’ emotional wounds.

The Bright Hope team facilitated Immanuel sessions for the men on the rescue squad, for the aftercare counselors, and for the safe house “moms,” and almost all of them had powerful, beautiful encounters with the living presence of Jesus.¹ That was cool. The Bright Hope team was able to provide training for the rescue squad, for the aftercare counselors, and for the safe house “moms,” and a number of the trainees seemed to be able to facilitate for each other by the end of the very brief training. That was cool. But what touched me the most were the stories about the sessions with the girls. These are girls between the ages of 11 and 24, some of whom had been sold into the human trafficking system as early as 5 years of age. A common story was that the young girl would initially be trained and used as a beggar, and then sold to men for sex when she was older (but not much older). The women on the ministry team spent a morning with the girls, just loving on them in practical ways (like painting their nails, singing with them, and giving them lots of hugs), and then in the afternoon the women on the team facilitated Immanuel approach exercises in small groups.

The exercises started with positive memories and appreciation, and then the girls were invited to simply invite Jesus to be with them and ask Jesus to help them perceive his presence. There were a number of Hindu and Muslim girls in the group, but they also wanted to participate and were willing to try this simple prayer and invitation. Note that the girls were not told that they had to be Christians in order to participate and they were not told what to expect. The ministry team

¹ Several of them were “completely undone” by their experiences with the living presence of Jesus – how he came to them and cared for them.

women simply explained the exercise and then invited the girls to participate if they wished to do so.

And even though the ministry team was familiar with the Immanuel approach, and had seen many of the people they prayed with connect with Jesus, they were still amazed by the results. Out of about 20 recipients (15 safe house girls and then some of the staff), all but two had profound, beautiful experiences with Jesus. One of the most interesting parts of the experience was that many of the girls (including the Hindus and Muslims) started to describe vivid mental imagery of a man in a white robe who was gentle and kind. And even though they had spent most of their lives being abused by men who used them as beggars and then forced them into prostitution, they immediately felt safe with this “man in a white robe.” With tears streaming down their faces, they described being held, comforted, and encouraged. They reported that this man in the white robe held them in his lap, hugged them, stroked their faces, told them that he loved them, reassured them that he was with them in their pain and sadness, told them that they were good and beautiful, and told them that he had good plans for their lives. And again, amazingly, they all felt safe as he held them, and felt that his gentle touch as he stroked their faces was safe and good and life-giving. Furthermore, all of these girls (including the Hindus and Muslims) somehow came to realize that this man in the white robes was Jesus.

Interestingly, Jesus did not take the girls to traumatic memories.² He just spent the whole time holding them, loving them, comforting them, and encouraging them. At first this puzzled Mark and I and the ministry team, since we knew that all of these girls desperately need healing for their many traumatic experiences, and we assumed that Jesus would start right out with emotional healing work. But then we realized that Jesus actually knew what he was doing. Those who know about working with trauma know that the first thing you do is to establish a safe place of connection and trust, which then serves as the context and foundation for the healing work. Sometimes this can be established very quickly, especially when the recipient already knows Jesus and already has a relationship with the facilitator. But as we thought about the sessions at the safe house we realized that these girls would understandably need some extra time, just being in a safe place and building trust with this “man in a white robe.” I expect that Jesus will lead them to do healing work when the time is right, but I’m glad that he had better clinical judgment than the rest of us, so that he knew to start with an entire session of just loving on these girls.

² With one exception. The oldest of the girls did recall a traumatic experience, apparently spontaneously, after she had been laying in Jesus’ lap for a while. Unfortunately, the translator wanted to move on to the next person so the facilitator only had time to coach the girl to go back to her safe, positive place in Jesus’ lap, and didn’t get any other details regarding the traumatic memory or about what happened once the girl got back to Jesus. The good news is that the girl was at a joyful, peaceful place by the end of the exercise, so I’m guessing that Jesus took care of the situation in one way or another.