

# *The Immanuel Approach (to Emotional Healing and to Life)*

## **Chapter 26: Intermediate/Advanced Troubleshooting**

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**DRAFT**

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.<sup>1</sup>

**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 troubleshooting 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 hinder the healing process, and about how to recognize and systematically dismantle them.<sup>2</sup> 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.<sup>3</sup> And they can learn about how deliberate attunement can help the recipient stay connected, augment the recipient's capacity,<sup>4</sup> and augment the recipient's maturity

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> 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>.

<sup>3</sup> 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>.

<sup>4</sup> 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*.

skills.<sup>5</sup>

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,<sup>6</sup> 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 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

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<sup>5</sup> 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).

<sup>6</sup> 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.

waiting (and waiting and waiting) for something more dramatic to happen,<sup>7</sup> 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.<sup>8</sup> 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 – 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.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> 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.

<sup>8</sup> 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.

<sup>9</sup> 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

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.<sup>10</sup> And they can also get their own healing so that they can work with increasingly intense/difficult aspects of sessions without getting triggered.<sup>11</sup> (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.<sup>12</sup> And facilitators that are more serious can develop skill in deliberately

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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.

<sup>10</sup> 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).

<sup>11</sup> 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>.

<sup>12</sup> 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.

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.<sup>13</sup>

**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.<sup>14</sup>

**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 God seems to respect our choice and request.<sup>15</sup>

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

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<sup>13</sup> 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*.

<sup>14</sup> 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.

<sup>15</sup> 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.



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 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,<sup>16</sup> and the healing process began to move forward again.

**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

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<sup>16</sup> 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.



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 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."<sup>17</sup>

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 remind my mom to come pick me up after the

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<sup>17</sup> This example has not been taken from one, specific session, but rather has been compiled from many sessions with similar interactions.

gymnastics meet, instead of letting me stand outside the school, 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.<sup>18</sup> 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 to 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 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](http://www.immanuelapproach.com) and as a free download essay from [www.kclehman.com](http://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

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<sup>18</sup> "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."

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).