

IA Basic Troubleshooting Overview

Common simple difficulties with first step (positive memory & appreciation): There are several common, simple difficulties which recipients sometimes have right at the beginning -- with the very first step of recalling and connecting with a positive memory.

1. ***Never done it before:*** Occasionally a recipient will have trouble with the first step because they have simply never done it before. Of course everybody has recalled positive memories, but some people have never recalled and connected with a positive memory as part of a deliberate, proactive exercise. That is, some people have never deliberately, proactively identified a positive memory, and then focused on it, pictured themselves inside of it, and described all of the details until they feel appreciation. This is actually a skill that we learn, and if a recipient has never done this before, they will find this simple first step in the Immanuel Approach process to be more difficult than you might expect.

The good news is that this simple difficulty is easy to address. You will just need to provide a little extra encouragement and direction in helping them to find an appropriate positive memory, and in helping them to picture themselves inside of it and describe the details until they feel appreciation.

2. ***Mild depression:*** If the recipient has mild depression, they often won't feel like remembering and describing a positive memory, and it will also be significantly more difficult for them to find and connect with a positive memory.

The good news is that the recipient will still be able to find and connect with a positive memory. *Eventually.* But this step will require more work. First, you will need to validate and attune to their experience of feeling like they don't want to recall a positive memory and stir up appreciation – you can validate their experience by acknowledging that it is normal and usual for a person with depression to not want to participate in this kind of exercise, and you can empathize with them regarding the reality that this part of the process will be especially difficult for them. And then gently encourage/invite/challenge them to do it anyway, even though they don't feel like it.

Secondly, you will need to be especially persistent and directive with helping them to find a positive memory, and with helping them to describe the memory in detail. If it takes a long time for them to start feeling appreciation, you can validate and encourage them by letting them know that this is also usual and normal for recipients struggling with even mild depression.

3. ***Positive memories with splinters:*** Especially with recipients who are not familiar with the Immanuel Approach, and who have not been exposed to the teaching about the importance of using splinter-free positive memories, it is fairly common for the person to come up with a positive memory that still has big splinters in it.

Fortunately, this simple difficulty is also fairly easy to address. You can briefly explain the importance, in this particular context, of using a splinter-free positive memory, and then help them keep looking through positive memories until they find one without splinters. Also, remember that using a super-simple positive memory (for example, enjoying a slice of pizza with a friend) is a reliable way to find a splinter-free positive memory.

4. **Recipient begins session in significant distress:** Occasionally, the recipient will already be in significant distress when they come in/sit down for the session. In this scenario, it will usually feel bad (misattuning) to the recipient to just jump right to, “Okay, I want you to find a positive memory, and then tell me all about it until you feel appreciation.” The recipient will need help with changing gears from their initial distress to the positive-memory-and-appreciation step.

Once again, the good news is that this simple difficulty is fairly easy to address. You just need to validate and attune to their initial distress, and reassure them that you will come right back to the issue/problem they are upset about, as soon as you help them connect with Jesus. (As you may have already noticed, this is very similar to the intervention we use if someone is in a lot of distress when we need to deploy the safety net—they will need some validation and attunement regarding their distress, and reassurance that it is not just being dismissed, in order to change gears and go back to the initial positive memory.)

Difficulties perceiving/connecting with Jesus—the two most basic troubleshooting tools: As discussed in the new basic training videos, when the recipient is having trouble with perceiving and connecting with Jesus, there are two especially simple troubleshooting tools that I always start with.

1. **Extra careful “describe everything” to catch subtle manifestation:** One of the most common reasons a recipient fails to perceive and connect with Jesus is that He is manifesting in some subtle way, and the person fails to feel the importance or recognize the meaning of the thoughts, emotions, images, and other sensory perceptions that represent the Lord’s presence. And this is especially true for recipients who have not yet had much experience with the Immanuel Approach. Therefore, when an inexperienced recipient reports “It’s not working,” or “I’m not getting anything,” or some other form of “I’m not perceiving Jesus’ presence,” the first intervention I turn to, before bringing in any other troubleshooting tools, is to coach another round of “Describe everything that’s coming into your awareness.” And I especially help them to look for subtle manifestations of Jesus’ presence.

I usually offer a brief reminder/explanation along the lines of “Sometimes there will subtle manifestations of God’s presence, but we won’t recognize them until you describe them out loud. So be especially careful to notice even subtle internal mental content, and describe it even if it doesn’t make sense or feel important.” And I offer specific coaching to help them notice and report subtle content:

- “Describe everything that comes into your awareness, *even if it doesn’t make sense or feel important.*”
- “Notice anything that might be in the ‘peripheral vision’ of your internal awareness.

- “If you are noticing internal content and dismissing it because it seems like it’s just a distraction, or that it’s just coming from your own mind, Just describe it anyway, and then we can discern together”
2. **“What’s in the way?”**: In addition to simply failing to recognize Jesus’ presence, there are a number of common, straight-forward blockages that can hinder a person from perceiving God’s presence; and most of these blockages can usually be quickly discovered and resolved with simple prayers asking God for guidance and help. So if the first intervention, just described above, does not resolve the problem, I implement the following simple, basic troubleshooting intervention:
- I coach the recipient to pray something along the lines of, “Jesus, what’s in the way of my being able to perceive Your presence?”
 - I coach them to describe whatever comes into their awareness, and if they describe anything that seems to be any kind of blockage, I help them to focus it, get words for it, and then talk directly to Jesus about it (in faith, since they are not yet perceiving Him). And I help them ask Jesus for guidance and help. Often, this is all that is needed, the blockage will resolve, and they will then be able to perceive Jesus’ tangible presence.
 - If there is any guidance regarding something they need to do and/or cooperate with to resolve the blockage, I help them with this.