



## **Immanuel, An Especially Pernicious Blockage, and Truth Carried in Non-Traumatic Memory Files**

Enhanced Manuscript of lecture available on DVD/VHS,  
from March 2006 seminar in Bolingbrook, Illinois  
(©Copyright 2005 K.D. Lehman MD, New 3/2006, Last revised 3/27/2025)

**I. An Especially Pernicious Blockage (to perceiving and receiving the Lord's Immanuel presence):** As we have discussed in our previous presentations, there are many things that can hinder perceiving the Lord's presence and/or receiving his help, and identifying and resolving these hindrances is one of the most important parts of Immanuel Interventions. In this presentation, I am going to discuss one specific example in much greater detail. This particular example is important because it is common, because it is very toxic, because it is very difficult to resolve without adequate understanding, and because it illustrates how *common, simple, smaller* phenomena can *combine* to cause especially pernicious blockages to perceiving and receiving Immanuel.

### **Five Common, Simple, Smaller Components:**

**A. First component – motivation:** The first component of this particular especially pernicious blockage is anything that motivates us to *hide from the Lord*, to *push the Lord away*, or to *turn away from the Lord*. For example, many of us have beliefs and emotions from traumatic memories that get transferred onto the Lord, such as “If He sees me like this, He will just humiliate me,” or “He’ll be angry at me and punish me for being bad,” or “He was supposed to take care of me, but He betrayed me.” If it *feels true* that the Lord will shame me or hurt me, it makes sense that I might want to hide from Him, and if I feel like the Lord has betrayed me, it makes sense that I might want to push Him away. Another common reason for pushing the Lord away, and also a common reason for turning away from the Lord, is being angry at Him for allowing the trauma (it’s narcissistically mortifying, but many of us still occasionally do this one: “If that’s the way You’re gonna be, then I’m not gonna talk to You anymore!” (turned away, arms across chest, lower lip sticking out)). Another common reason for turning away from the Lord is refusal to accept the painful truth. In some situations, the Lord is inviting us to turn to Him for help, but His invitation includes a requirement that we accept the truth: “I’m here with you, and I can help you, but to receive my help you need to accept the painful truth – you need to *turn away* from your futile attempts to make the painful truth different, and then *turn to Me*.” If I am still refusing to accept the painful truth, and still focusing on my own solution of trying to make the truth different, then I will turn away from this invitation, and from the Lord who is making it.

**B. Second component – choices/vows that directly block perceiving and/or receiving Immanuel:** When we experience the thoughts and feelings just described, one option is to choose to confess them and turn to the Lord for help. But, unfortunately, we often respond with choices to *hide from the Lord*, *push the Lord away*, or *turn away from the Lord*. These choices/vows are the second component of this especially pernicious blockage, and our experience is that the Lord respects these free will choices, even though they prevent us from

perceiving His presence and/or prevent us from receiving the help He has for us. If a person is working on a traumatic memory, and one or more of these choices are active, she won't be able to perceive the Lord's Immanuel presence, and/or won't be able to receive His Immanuel help *because her own free will choices are in the way.*

**Third and fourth components – two “special ingredients”:** The next two components are the ones I especially want you to remember from this presentation. I think of these two components as the “special ingredients” in the recipe for this especially pernicious Immanuel blockage.

**C. “Anti-Immanuel” beliefs and emotions:** The first “special ingredient” is *any package of beliefs and emotions from traumatic memories that are transferred onto the Lord and that specifically and directly oppose Immanuel truth.* I think of these as “anti-Immanuel” beliefs and emotions. Examples would include “He has abandoned me,” “He doesn't love me or want me, so He won't come,” “He will just disappoint me again,” and “He's not really good or safe – He says He loves me, but then He betrays me and hurts me.”<sup>1</sup>

The reason these “anti Immanuel” beliefs and their associated emotions especially increase the hurtful power of the *whole package* is that they undermine any attempt to expose and remove the first two components. If a person *is* believing these memory anchored “anti Immanuel” thoughts, then she will *not* be holding onto the Immanuel truths carried in her non-traumatic memory files.<sup>2</sup> She will *not* be thinking: “I know the Lord is good, He is *here with me*, and He has help for me; but I can't perceive His presence, so there must be something in the way.” And she will *not* be praying: “Lord, please show me what's in the way – please show me the thoughts I'm misplacing onto You and the wrong choices I've made that are preventing me from perceiving Your presence and receiving Your help.”

**D. External-locus-of-control beliefs, emotions, and choices:** The second “special ingredient” is often very subtle, but it is very common and very important. The most complete form of this second “special ingredient” is a particular package of beliefs, emotions, and choices that are *developmentally appropriate for a very young child*, but that become a sneaky, immobilizing trap when we bring them forward into our adult lives. When you are an infant or very young child, it is often true that pain you are experiencing *is caused by somebody else's failure*; and it is usually true that *it is somebody else's responsibility to fix the problem*, and that **your** *only responsibility is to express your unhappiness and then wait for somebody else to do something.* Furthermore, it is understandable and expected that *you will become increasingly distressed*<sup>3</sup> *if somebody does not fix the problem in a timely fashion.*

Those of you familiar with Dr. E. James Wilder's material on stages of maturity will recognize that these are all *appropriate* beliefs, emotions, and behaviors for the *developmental stage of*

---

<sup>1</sup>Note that these “anti-Immanuel” beliefs can overlap with and/or reinforce the beliefs and emotions from the first component.

<sup>2</sup>“Truth carried in non-traumatic memories” includes both cognitive semantic information (such as truths learned from studying scripture and brain science), and also truths/beliefs learned from non-traumatic experiences (such as truth about the Lord's character and heart learned from interacting with Jesus in Immanuel sessions as the recipient, or from watching Jesus interact with recipients in sessions you facilitate).

<sup>3</sup>“Increasingly distressed” can include a variable mixture of unpleasant emotions, such as angry, confused, frightened, hopeless, and overwhelmed.

*infant maturity.*<sup>4</sup>

For example: if you are in pain because your Dad has not changed your wet diaper, it is your Dad's fault that your diaper has not been changed, it is your Dad's responsibility to fix the problem, it is appropriate for you to simply cry and wait for Him to change your diaper, and it is appropriate for you to get increasingly angry if your Dad ignores your crying and leaves you with a wet diaper. And since these beliefs, emotions, and choices *were true and appropriate in the original early childhood experiences*, the memories for these experiences will include the deep subjective conviction that these beliefs, emotions, and choices are reasonable and appropriate. When these memories are triggered forward, the person being triggered will also re-experience the original intense subjective conviction that these infant maturity beliefs, emotions, and choices are reasonable and appropriate.

When a situation in the present includes an interaction with the Lord that triggers these beliefs and emotions, *with the Lord as their target*, it will *feel intensely subjectively true*

*that it is the Lord's fault that you're in pain,*

*that it is His responsibility to fix the problem,*

*that it is reasonable for you to simply wait for Him to (finally) do His job,*

*and that it is reasonable for you to become increasingly distressed if the problem is not solved in a timely fashion.*

As with the first "special ingredient," the reason these external-locus-of-control beliefs, emotions, and choices especially increase the hurtful power of the whole package is that they can undermine any attempt to expose and remove any of the other components. If a person is believing "it's the Lord's fault that I'm in pain, it's His responsibility to fix the problem, and it's reasonable for me to simply wait for Him to do His job (in fact, I'm *outraged* that you even suggest there's something *I* might need to do differently, and I'm angry that He has not *already* fixed the problem);" then she will *not* be really submitting to the possibility that there is something *she* needs to do differently. She will *not* be thinking: "I know the Lord is good, He is *here with me*, and He has help for me, but I can't perceive His presence, and these truths don't *feel* true. *I* must be making choices that are blocking me from perceiving Him, and these distorted, anti-Immanuel beliefs that *do* feel true must be coming from unresolved memories." She will *not* be praying: "Lord, please show me what's in the way – please show me any choices *I am making* that are preventing me from perceiving Your presence and receiving Your help, and please show me the source of these misplaced beliefs that *I am transferring onto You*."

There is also a partial version of the second "special ingredient" that comes from beliefs, emotions, and choices that are *developmentally appropriate for an older child*. When you are an older child, it is often true that the problem in front of you is too big for you. Even after

---

<sup>4</sup>See, for example, Dr. Wilder's discussion of infant and child maturity in *The Complete Guide to Living With Men*, (Pasadena, CA: Shepherd's House Publishing), 2004, pages 11-68, and the chapter on maturity in Friesen, James G., Wilder, E. James, Bierling, Anne, M., Koepcke, Rick, and Poole, Maribeth. *The Life Model: Living From the Heart Jesus Gave You*. (Van Nuys, CA: Shepherd's House Publishing), 2000 revision, pages 15-35.

doing everything you are able to do, you are still unable to resolve the problem. In these situations it is appropriate for you, as an older child, to take responsibility for asking “grownups” for help. However, it is *the grownups’* responsibility to figure out what kind of help you need, and it is *the grownups’* responsibility to give you this help in a way that you can use. If there is something blocking you from being able to receive the help they are offering, it is *the grownups’* responsibility to identify and resolve these problems. As an older child, it is *developmentally normal and appropriate* to ask for help, but then to *believe* the next move belongs to the grownups, to *feel* dependent, and to *wait* for the grownups to figure out what kind of help you need and deliver it in a way that you can receive. And it is developmentally normal and appropriate for you to become increasingly distressed if the grownups do not provide usable help in a timely fashion. These are *appropriate* beliefs, emotions, and behaviors for the developmental stage of *child maturity*.

For example: When I had dyslexia and could not learn to read like the other kids in my class, it was my responsibility to tell the teacher that I needed more help. But it was the grownups’ responsibility to figure out that simply repeating the usual methods over and over again was not working, it was the grownups’ responsibility to figure out that I had dyslexia, and it was the grownups’ responsibility to develop a customized teaching plan that took my disability into account. It was *developmentally normal and appropriate* for me to ask for help, but then to *believe* that the grownups needed to solve the problem, to *feel* dependent, and to *wait* for them to figure out what kind of help I needed and deliver it in a way that I could receive. It was developmentally normal and appropriate for me to expect the grownups to identify and resolve any problems preventing me from being able to use the help they were offering.<sup>5</sup>

And since these beliefs, emotions, and choices *were true and appropriate in the original childhood experiences*, the memories of these experiences will include the deep subjective conviction that these beliefs, emotions, and choices are true and appropriate. When these memories are triggered forward, the person being triggered will also re-experience the original intense subjective conviction that these child maturity beliefs, emotions, and choices are true and appropriate.

When a situation in the present includes an interaction with the Lord that triggers these beliefs and emotions, *with the Lord as their target*, it will *feel intensely subjectively true* that you have tried everything you know how to do, that this problem is too big for you, that you have asked for help, and that now it is the Lord’s job to give you appropriate help (up to this point these beliefs are all true). However, it will also *feel intensely subjectively true*

*that if you are not getting help you can understand and use, it’s because the Lord is not giving you the right kind of help,*

*that it is the Lord’s responsibility to identify and resolve any problems preventing you from being able to receive the help He is offering,*

*that it is reasonable and appropriate for you to wait for the Lord to figure all of this out and do whatever is necessary to get you help you can use,*

*and that it is reasonable for you to become increasingly distressed if the Lord does not solve*

---

<sup>5</sup> Unfortunately, the needed grownup interventions did not occur for several years, and I did indeed become increasingly distressed.

*the problem in a timely fashion.*

Just as with the infant-maturity external-locus-of-control package, these older-child external-locus-of-control beliefs, emotions, and choices *inherently* block participating in the healing process, and inherently block owning responsibility *now, in the present, as an adult*, for whatever is in the way of perceiving the Lord's presence and receiving His help. As with the infant-maturity external-locus-of-control package, these child-maturity external-locus-of-control beliefs, emotions, and choices can undermine any attempt to expose and remove the other components. If a person *is* believing "I'm still stuck because the Lord is not giving me help that I can understand and receive, and it's reasonable and appropriate for me to *wait for Him* to figure it out and deal with any problems that are in the way;" then she will *not* be really submitting to the possibility that there is something *she* needs to do differently. She will *not* be thinking: "I know the Lord is good, He is *here with me*, and He has help for me, but I can't perceive His presence, and these truths don't *feel* true. *I* must be making choices that are blocking me from perceiving Him, and these distorted, anti-Immanuel beliefs that *do feel true* must be coming from unresolved memories." She will *not* be praying: "Lord, please show me what's in the way – please show me any choices *I am making* that are preventing me from perceiving Your presence and receiving Your help, and please show me the source of these misplaced beliefs that *I am transferring onto You*."

**E. Optional final component – bitterness transferred onto the Lord:** Bitterness transferred onto the Lord is an "optional" final component. In my experience, bitterness always adds an extra layer of "hardness" (hardness of the heart, that is). Bitterness always makes it more difficult to "get at" whatever other problems it has gotten attached to.

To summarize briefly, the five components that combine to create this especially pernicious blockage are:

1. Motivation to hide from the Lord, push the Lord away, or turn away from the Lord.
2. Free-will choices to hide from the Lord, push the Lord away, or turn away from the Lord.
3. Anti-Immanuel beliefs and emotions (special ingredient #1).
4. External-locus-of-control beliefs and emotions (special ingredient #2).
5. Bitterness transferred onto the Lord.

Those of you who have heard our teaching on implicit memory will especially understand the hurtful power of the trauma-anchored beliefs and emotions from the two special ingredients. Because of how implicit memory works, when the trauma-anchored beliefs and emotions are triggered forward as implicit memory, and transferred onto the Lord, the person has no awareness or insight regarding "oh, these thoughts and emotions are from a traumatic childhood memory." Instead, it *feels subjectively true*, that the thoughts and emotions are *about the Lord*, and that they are *true in the present*.



## II. Truth carried in non-traumatic memory files,<sup>6</sup> and it's role in exposing and neutralizing this especially pernicious blockage:<sup>7</sup>

**A. Multiple parallel memory systems:** The more carefully we study the mind and brain, the more complexity we discover with respect to memory. *One of the most important developments in memory research has been the discovery of a number of parallel memory systems. These parallel memory systems are qualitatively different, and can operate independently.*<sup>8</sup>

There is a LOT of evidence demonstrating the reality of these different memory systems, and I discuss this evidence in much more detail in “Basic Memory Phenomena, Explicit and Implicit Memory.”<sup>9</sup> Some of the most easily understood data proving the existence of these parallel memory systems are observations from medical situations where a particular neurological injury affects the different memory systems in different ways. The most easily observed form of this kind of neurological case study are situations where a specific injury, such as a brain tumor, severely damages one of the memory systems, but does not damage other memory systems.

For example, Dr. Oliver Sacks describes a carefully documented case study of a young man with complete loss of ability to lay down new autobiographical<sup>10</sup> memory due to a brain tumor that destroyed the hippocampus on both sides of his brain. Within minutes after the actual event, Greg would lose every trace of autobiographical memory for any personal experience – if you spoke with him for an *hour*, and then left briefly to use the restroom, when you returned *five minutes* later, he would have no conscious memory of ever having met you before.

However, his other memory systems were still intact. For example, he could learn new pieces of cognitive-semantic factual information – even though he did not have any *conscious, autobiographical* memories of his conversations with Dr. Sacks, he could remember the *facts of news trivia* from these conversations. Cases of differential memory damage as dramatic as

---

<sup>6</sup>Again, truth carried in non-traumatic memory files includes both cognitive-semantic information, and also truths/beliefs learned from non-traumatic experiences.

<sup>7</sup>The discoveries and principles I discuss here regarding truth carried in non-traumatic memory files are actually valid and helpful for dealing with many other emotional healing issues, but they are particularly valuable and needed when dealing with especially difficult problems, such as the especially pernicious blockages just described.

<sup>8</sup>“Contemporary memory research has demonstrated the existence of a great complexity of memory systems within each individual. Most of these memory functions take place outside of conscious awareness, and each seems to operate with a relative degree of independence from the others.” Van der Kolk, Bessel A, McFarlane, Alexander C, Weisaeth, Lars, Editors. *Traumatic Stress: The Effects of Overwhelming Experience on Mind, Body, and Society*. (New York: Guilford Press) 1996, pg 280.

<sup>9</sup>Karl Lehman, “Basic Memory Phenomena, Explicit and Implicit Memory,” available as free download from “Kleelman.com Website Archive” section of [www.immanuelapproach.com](http://www.immanuelapproach.com).

<sup>10</sup>Autobiographical memory is memory for the *story* of your life. For example, if I asked you “what did you do this morning?” you would access your autobiographical memory and tell me a *story* about this morning’s events. For example: “I got up at 6:30 because we had to get the kids ready for church, and they also had to be prepared to be at the babysitters afterwards, since we were planning to come to this presentation. Then we had our usual pancake breakfast – that’s a Sunday morning tradition at our house – and Bobby spilled his milk all over....etc.” Your memory for this story of your morning adventures is autobiographical memory. Remembering the meaning of the word “autobiography” helps me to remember the definition of autobiographical memory: If I wrote a *book* about the *story* of my life, it would be called an *autobiography*; similarly, *memory* for the *story* of my life is *autobiographical memory*.

this are almost hard to believe unless you see them for yourself. If you asked him: “Greg, have you spoken with Dr. Sacks today?” He would respond with something along the lines of “Who’s Dr. Sacks? I’ve never met the man.” But if you then asked him: “Who won the baseball game last night?” He could often respond with accurate sports trivia from his conversation with Dr. Sacks earlier that morning: “The Mets won, 7 to 5, with two runs in the ninth inning.”

He could learn to find his way around the hospital – even though he did not have any *conscious, autobiographical memories* of his years of living at the hospital, he could walk from his room to the cafeteria without getting lost. If you asked him: “Greg, can you show me the way to the cafeteria?” He would respond with something along the lines of “I’ve never seen this place before this morning! How could I know the way to the cafeteria?” But when it was time for lunch, he would get up and walk to the cafeteria.

He could learn to type or play the guitar – even though he did not have any *conscious, autobiographical memories* of his many practice sessions, if you put him in front of a typewriter, he could type, and if you gave him a guitar, he could play.

He could learn new songs – even though he did not have any *conscious, autobiographical memories* of ever hearing the new songs before, if someone started humming the tune, he could sing the rest of the song.

And he could form new emotional associations – even though he did not have any *conscious, autobiographical memories* of previous interactions with people on the staff, his face would light up when he met those who had been especially kind to him.<sup>11</sup>

The most dramatic demonstration of the difference between his severely damaged conscious autobiographical memory and his “other” memory functions was his experience with attending a rock concert. Dr. Sacks took him to a Grateful Dead concert – a band he loved, but that he had not heard for many years. Rock concerts are not particularly subtle – not something you would forget easily. This concert was an *all day* event, and Greg participated *enthusiastically* and *passionately*. The next day, he had *no* conscious, autobiographical memory of going to the concert – *the morning after the concert*, when Dr. Sacks asked him about the Grateful Dead, he reported that he really liked the group, but that it had been many years since he had been to one of their concerts. But he *could* remember and sing the songs from the concert, and he had new positive emotional associations. For example, if Dr. Sacks played one of the new songs from the concert, Greg would immediately begin to sing along – accurately remembering both the words and the melody; and after the concert, whenever Dr. Sacks came to visit Greg’s face would light up and he would greet Dr. Sacks as a fellow Grateful Dead fan.<sup>12</sup>

Another especially dramatic case study is presented by Dr. Claparede. Dr. Claparede describes a 47 year old woman who had neurological injury that, like Greg’s brain tumor, destroyed her ability to form new explicit autobiographical memory. Like Greg, she would lose all conscious, autobiographical memory of personal experiences in a matter of minutes. Her inability to record new autobiographical memory was so severe that she still did not recognize her surroundings, even after living at the chronic care facility for *five years*. She did not recognize

---

<sup>11</sup>Sacks, Oliver. *An Anthropologist on Mars*. (New York: Vintage Books) 1995, pp 42-76.

<sup>12</sup>Sacks, Oliver. *An Anthropologist on Mars*. (New York: Vintage Books) 1995, pg 76.

the doctors she saw every day, and continued to greet her nurse as a complete stranger, even after this nurse had been with her for six months.

However, the memory system for establishing new beliefs remained intact, as demonstrated by a famous experiment performed by Dr. Claparede. While shaking hands with the patient, Dr. Claparede stuck her with a pin hidden between his fingers. Several minutes later, when Dr. Claparede again reached out for her hand, she pulled it back, and refused to shake his hand. When questioned about her behavior, she persisted in her refusal to shake his hand, but appeared to have no conscious memory or insight regarding the recent incident with the pin. Any normal person would have responded to his questions with something direct and obvious, such as “Why do you *think* I don’t want to shake your hand? You just stuck me with a pin! (You Jerk!)” Instead, this patient seemed confused, and had difficulty explaining her persistent refusal to shake his hand. Eventually she commented “Is there perhaps a pin hidden in your hand?” When asked why she would have this fear, she again had difficulty explaining herself, and eventually responded with comments such as ‘That was an idea that went through my mind,’ or ‘Sometimes pins are hidden in people’s hands.’ She *believed* that it was not safe to shake Dr. Claparede’s hand, and she held this belief with enough conviction that she refused to shake his hand, even in the face of awkwardness and embarrassment, but she had no conscious autobiographical memory of getting stuck by the pin only minutes before.<sup>13</sup>

The point with respect to multiple memory systems is this: The patient still had the memory system necessary to form *new beliefs*, even though she had completely lost the memory system necessary to establish *new explicit autobiographical memories*.

### **B. Information/beliefs carried in non-traumatic memories vs trauma-anchored beliefs:**

**2025 update:** In the twenty years since first developing this material, my understanding regarding the *explanations* for the qualitative differences between trauma-anchored beliefs and information/beliefs carried in non-traumatic memory files has changed. Instead of believing that the qualitative differences are primarily explained by non-traumatic information & beliefs being processed by a different neurological system from trauma-anchored beliefs, my current understanding is that the differences are due to a *combination* of:

- **Processed differently:** Non-traumatic experiential-learning memory files are *qualitatively* different from traumatic experiential-learning memory files because non-traumatic experiences are *processed differently* from traumatic experiences. As explained at great length in my essay about the pain processing pathway,<sup>14</sup> with a non-traumatic learning experience, all of the tasks in the processing pathway *are* successfully completed – even if it is painful, the experience is metabolized in a healthy way and contributes to empathy, wisdom, skills, and maturity. In contrast, with a traumatic experience, all of tasks in the pain processing pathway are *not* successfully completed. The experience is *not* metabolized in a healthy way, and instead of contributing to healthy learning, the memory for the traumatic experience carries toxic content, including distorted, erroneous beliefs.

---

<sup>13</sup>Claparede, Edouard. “Recognition and ‘me-ness.’ In D. Rapaport (Ed.), *Organization and pathology of thought* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press), 1951, pages 58-74, specific quotes pages 69-70 (translated from Claparede, E. “Recognition et moiite.” *Archives de Psychologie*, 1911, Vol. 11, pages 79-90).

<sup>14</sup>Karl Lehman, “Brain Science, Psychological Trauma, and the God Who Is with Us, Part II: The Processing Pathway for Painful Experiences and the Definition of Psychological Trauma,” available as a free download from the Special Subjects/Advanced Topics section of [www.immanuelapproach.com](http://www.immanuelapproach.com).



- **Psychological and spiritual factors:** As discussed in detail in “Brain Science, Psychological Trauma, and the God Who Is with Us: Part III,”<sup>15</sup> traumatic memories are associated with *psychological and spiritual factors* that resist both accessing and modifying the memories, whereas this is not the case with non-traumatic memories.
- **Different neurological pathway:** First: As discussed in detail in “Brain Science, Psychological Trauma, and the God Who Is with Us: Part III”<sup>16</sup> and “Different Types of Traumatic Memory,”<sup>17</sup> *some* parts of the processing pathway are different for traumatic experiences as compared to non-traumatic experiential learning, *but much of the processing pathway is the same*. Second: *more* of the processing pathway is different for cognitive-semantic learning, as compared to the processing pathway for traumatic experiences.

**However**, my observations regarding the actual qualitative differences, and the practical implications for trauma-healing work, remain the same. One of the most important differences between 1, beliefs carried in non-traumatic experiential-learning memory and cognitive-semantic information and; 2, Experiential learning carried in traumatic memories is the ease with which mistaken or distorted information can be corrected.

- **Cognitive-semantic information:** Cognitive semantic information, such as the correct dose of Paxil for major depression, is easily modified, and simply requires the presentation of new information to be able to correct errors.
- **Beliefs carried in non-traumatic experiential-learning memory:** Beliefs carried in non-traumatic experiential-learning memory require a new learning *experience* in order to change, but they are still relatively easy to modify. For example, if I go to a local Thai restaurant, try a certain dish, and discover that I like the flavor blend but that the spicing is way too hot for my taste, when I return to this restaurant a month later I will believe that this dish is too hot and will not order it. However, if I am visiting this restaurant again at some point in the future, and the friend I am with says, ‘Hey, you should try this dish again – they have adjusted the heat for Americans. The flavor blend is still delicious, but now it’s not too hot,’ I will try the dish again, *experience* that it is indeed now spiced for my American palate, and my belief will change. Going forward, I will believe that this particular dish in this particular restaurant is **not** too hot.<sup>18</sup>
- **Trauma-anchored beliefs:** In contrast, beliefs associated with unresolved trauma *are much more difficult to modify, and errors can not be corrected by simply challenging them with*

---

<sup>15</sup>Karl Lehman, “Brain Science, Psychological Trauma, and the God Who Is with Us, Part III: Traumatic Memories vs Non-traumatic Memories,” available as a free download from the “Special Subjects/Advanced Topics” section of [www.immanuelapproach.com](http://www.immanuelapproach.com).

<sup>16</sup>Karl Lehman, “Brain Science, Psychological Trauma, and the God Who Is with Us, Part III: Traumatic Memories vs Non-traumatic Memories,” available as a free download from the “Special Subjects/Advanced Topics” section of [www.immanuelapproach.com](http://www.immanuelapproach.com).

<sup>17</sup>Karl Lehman, “Different Types of Traumatic Memory,” available as a free download from the “Klehmman.com Website Archive” section of [www.immanuelapproach.com](http://www.immanuelapproach.com).

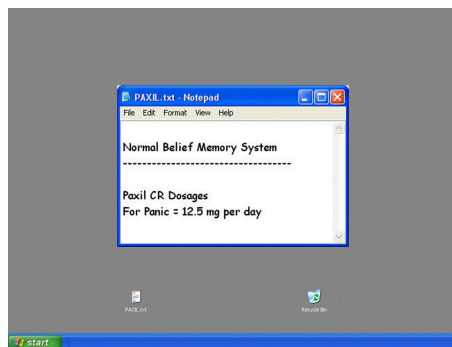
<sup>18</sup>For readers familiar with memory reconsolidation research: being at the same restaurant and thinking about this particular dish will activate the memory file for the earlier learning experience, being with a friend who assures me that the spice level has been adjusted will fulfill the criteria for something being different, and then trying the dish again and confirming that it is no longer too hot will provide the required corrective experience.

*new information or even new experiential learning.*<sup>19</sup>

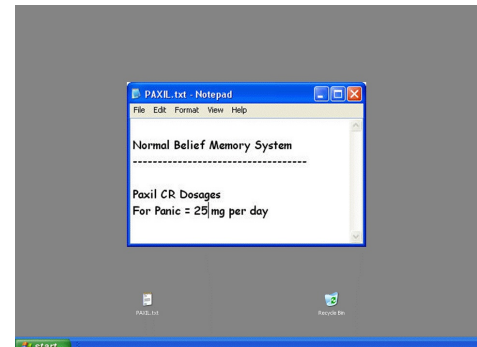
**Note: the lecture presented in the DVD set includes animated slides that many have found to be especially helpful in understanding the analogy discussed below. We have included several frames from two of the animated slides sets, and slide prompts from our presentation to indicate where other animated sets have been omitted, but we recommend the DVD for optimal presentation of this material.**

An analogy that has been helpful for us is to think about files and windows on your personal computer. **SLIDE 19.0** When you open a non-traumatic information/belief memory file, and then present new information to correct an error, it's as if you can easily work in the same window, and use the new information to modify the original file. Whenever this file is opened in the future, it will contain the new, updated, correct information. **SLIDE 20.1** However, *in most situations*, **SLIDE 20.2** when you open a trauma-anchored-belief memory file, it will open in "read only" status. **SLIDE 20.3** You can present new information by creating new files in new windows, **SLIDE 20.4** but you can't work in the same window to permanently correct the error in the original file. **SLIDE 20.5** The new information can *compete* with the distorted belief associated with unresolved trauma, and this will *moderate/manage* the distorted beliefs and associated emotions, *but the original file will not be permanently corrected*. In the future, **SLIDE 20.6** *every time* the memory file for the trauma-anchored belief is activated, **SLIDE 20.7** the distorted beliefs and associated emotions will still be there, and you will have to repeat the process of trying to moderate/manage the problem by opening other, separate files that carry truth that challenges the distorted beliefs.

For example, information about medication dosages is mostly carried in my normal belief memory system. If I believe that 12.5mg/day is the appropriate dosage of Paxil CR (controlled release) for the treatment of panic disorder, but then I come across a new, carefully documented



study that shows 25mg/day is actually more effective for most patients, the new information will permanently modify my original beliefs about Paxil dosages. In the future, when questions about Paxil dosages for panic disorder come up,

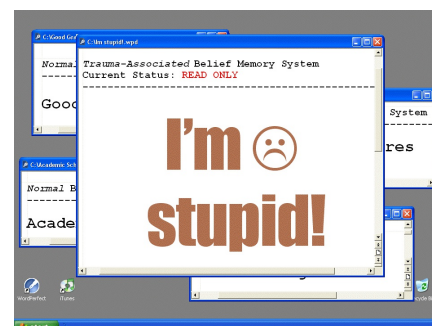
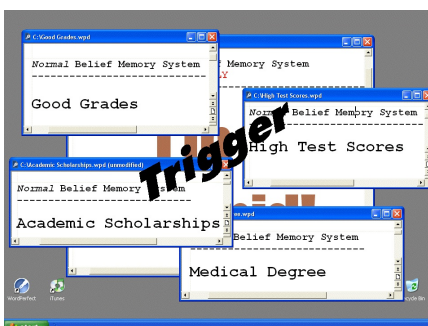
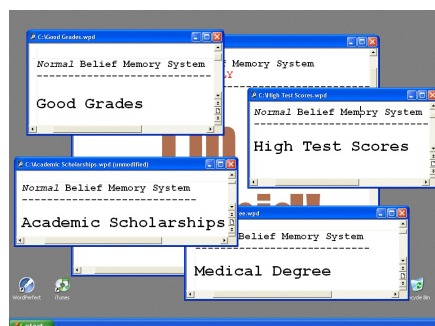
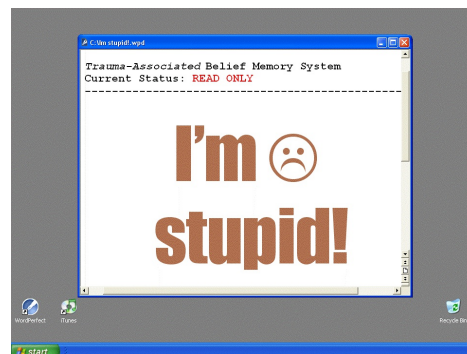


the new, correct information will come forward. There won't need to be a fight, every time the question comes up, between a persistent erroneous file and the newer, more accurate information.

In contrast to information about Paxil dosages carried in non-traumatic cognitive-semantic memories, I had distorted beliefs about my intelligence that were anchored in unresolved

<sup>19</sup>For a brief discussion of the research proving that trauma-anchored beliefs cannot be modified by simply challenging them with new experiential learning, see either Karl Lehman, *An Introduction to the Immanuel Approach for Mental Health Professionals*, (Evanston, IL: Immanuel Publishing, 2023) or Karl Lehman, *An Introduction to the Immanuel Approach*, (Evanston, IL: Immanuel Publishing, 2024), pages 76 to 82 (yes, the exact same page numbers in both books).

traumatic memories of having undiagnosed dyslexia while I was trying to learn to read. My trauma-anchored-beliefs memory files contained the belief that I was stupid. Even though other evidence accumulated that challenged this belief, this opposing evidence was carried in separate non-traumatic experiential-learning files. This opposing evidence could challenge and compete with my distorted beliefs, but it was never able to get *inside of* the trauma-anchored-beliefs files in order to permanently correct my “I’m stupid” beliefs. In spite of all the evidence to the contrary, every time my dyslexia trauma would get activated by some trigger, my “I’m stupid” beliefs anchored in unresolved trauma files would come forward, and it would *feel true* that I’m stupid.



**C. True beliefs vs pseudo-beliefs:** Before moving on with the rest of the presentation, I would like to take a moment to distinguish between true beliefs, and what I call “pseudo-beliefs.” A **true belief** contains content that you really do think and feel is true – content that you actually *believe*. It is important to note that true beliefs *may or may not* be accurate. For example, at one point in history, scientists *truly believed* that the sun orbited around the earth, even though this belief was erroneous. Whether or not a true belief is accurate, it will *feel* true whenever its file is open and its window is forward.<sup>20</sup>

A **pseudo belief** contains content that you *want* to believe/feel you *need* to believe/think you *ought* to believe, and that you *try* to believe, but that you *don't actually believe*. In your heart of hearts, you are not convinced that it's actually true and it *never feels* true – in your heart of hearts, you don't actually *believe* it. Pseudo-beliefs can be mistaken for true beliefs when the person perceives an intense *need* for the pseudo-beliefs to be true, and significant amounts of denial and self deception are involved. In these situations, our *emotions* will reveal what we *truly believe*. For example, if I truly believe that I am competent and that my job is secure, I will *feel* calm and secure. However, if I *truly believe* that I am incompetent, and at risk of losing my job, and “I am competent and my job is secure” is actually only a psychological defense *pseudo-belief*, I will *tell myself* “I am competent and my job is secure,” but I will *feel* anxious and insecure.

If the phenomena of pseudo-beliefs is not recognized, it can cause a lot of confusion as we

<sup>20</sup>Note that “true beliefs” can be carried in both non-traumatic memories and in traumatic memories, and this is because my definition of a “true belief” is that you truly believe it – not that it is necessarily accurate/true. In fact, the reason that distorted beliefs anchored in unresolved trauma cause so much trouble is that we do *truly believe* them. If we didn't truly believe them, they wouldn't have any power to cause trouble.

study cognitive-semantic information memories, beliefs carried in non-traumatic experiential-learning memories, and beliefs anchored in unresolved trauma.

#### **D. Conditions for correcting distorted, erroneous beliefs carried in traumatic memories:**

You may have noticed that I said “in *most* situations” when I was describing the frustrating persistence of erroneous beliefs anchored in unresolved trauma. *The good news is that beliefs carried in unresolved trauma **can be permanently corrected under certain conditions**.* Any time you meet these necessary conditions, you can access and correct erroneous beliefs carried in traumatic memories. Any time a therapy session or emotional healing ministry session produces *permanent resolution* of trauma-anchored beliefs, it is because these necessary conditions have been met. For example, this is exactly what happens when Immanuel Approach emotional healing is successful, and this is exactly what happens when Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) is successful.

This all leads to a very practical and very important bottom line: *If you want to design a therapy or ministry intervention that **consistently** provides permanent resolution for distorted, trauma-associated beliefs,<sup>21</sup> then you need to figure out, and **intentionally set up**, the conditions necessary for opening, and making corrections in, the memory system that carries trauma-associated beliefs.*

Dr. Shapiro, the developer of EMDR, does not formulate the question in exactly this way, but this is essentially what she tries to do in the material she teaches regarding practical tools and techniques. Of all the approaches to psychotherapy and/or emotional healing ministry (that I am aware of), the Immanuel Approach does the best job of identifying, and systematically setting up, the necessary conditions for permanently resolving distorted beliefs anchored in unresolved trauma. And this is why, predictably, the Immanuel Approach is the most effective intervention for accomplishing this specific goal.

At this point, some of you in the audience may be asking: “so *what are* the necessary conditions for permanently correcting distorted trauma-anchored beliefs?” We could obviously take an entire seminar to answer this question in detail, and the specific necessary conditions are actually *not* directly relevant for the purposes of this presentation. However, since there are probably some of you who will be distracted by lack of closure if I leave this question completely unanswered, here is a *very* short summary of my current formulation of the necessary conditions for opening the trauma associated belief memory system, and for correcting distorted beliefs carried in this system:<sup>22</sup>

Conditions necessary for accessing and correcting distorted beliefs carried in traumatic memories:

---

<sup>21</sup>Note that resolving trauma-anchored distorted beliefs is an important *part* of establishing optimal emotional health, but this should not be the *only* focus of therapy and ministry. For example: helping the person connect with Jesus is even *more important* than resolving trauma-anchored distorted beliefs, and other important objectives include helping the person increase his capacity, helping the person address areas of immaturity, helping the person do remedial work in areas where they are missing important life skills, and helping the person develop appropriate sources of joy.

<sup>22</sup>This question is addressed in much more detail in Karl Lehman, “Brain Science, Psychological Trauma, and the God Who Is With Us, Part IV: Conditions and Resources Necessary for Resolving Traumatic Memories,” available as a free download from [www.immanuelapproach.com](http://www.immanuelapproach.com).



**1.) The traumatic memories must be activated.** My perception is that this happens when the traumatic memories are triggered to the point that the trauma-anchored beliefs *feel true*. My perception is that this will *necessarily* involve activation of the negative emotions associated with the distorted beliefs. That is, being connected to, or *feeling*, the negative emotions associated with the distorted beliefs indicates that the underlying traumatic memory anchors are sufficiently activated. Correspondingly, being disconnected from, or *not feeling*, the negative emotions associated with the distorted beliefs indicates that the underlying traumatic memories are *not* sufficiently active.

**2.) The person must be accepting, facing, and acknowledging the truth about what happened in the traumatic memory, as opposed to fighting it, running away from it, or denying it.** The memory of being separated from my parents at two years old, which I will describe in the case study included later in this presentation, provides a good example. Until the recent breakthrough, I had always been stuck at the point of trying to make it different – when I was triggered, and *inside the thoughts and emotions from the memory*, I was still fighting the truth of what had actually happened. In order to get healed, I had to release my attempt to make it different, and accept the truth of the painful history that had already occurred: “Mom and Dad didn’t come back for a long, long time, it was overwhelming, there was nothing I could do about it,...etc.”<sup>23</sup> In some way, it felt like continuing to fight to make the past different was focusing and facing in the wrong direction, and this “facing in the wrong direction” hindered me from being able to receive truth into the anchoring traumatic memories.

**3.) The person needs to be facing and acknowledging the erroneous trauma-anchored beliefs, as opposed to fighting them, running away from them, or denying them.** Note here that I am *not* saying the person needs to accept that the erroneous trauma-anchored beliefs are true (because they aren’t). I am saying that the person needs to face and acknowledge “when I am triggered, and blended with the thoughts and emotions from the inside of this memory, it feels true that \_\_\_\_\_ (fill in the distorted trauma-anchored beliefs).” And furthermore, the person needs to let himself connect to the implicit memory package from the traumatic event, so that *from the inside of the memory*, he can say “Lord Jesus, it *feels* true that \_\_\_\_\_ (fill in the distorted trauma-anchored beliefs). Please help me to know Your truth in this place.”

**4.) The person needs to be facing, acknowledging, and “standing straight” in the painful emotions associated with the erroneous trauma-anchored beliefs,<sup>24</sup> as opposed to fighting them, running away from them, or denying them.** Many things can get in the way of facing, acknowledging, and standing straight in the painful emotions, and these hindrances must be resolved in order for this necessary condition to be fulfilled. For example, we have often seen people who have made choices/vows along the lines of “I will never feel the pain from this memory.” We worked with one woman who had spent many emotional healing sessions trying to resolve the distorted beliefs carried in a specific traumatic memory, but she would never report or display any emotions as she would talk about the painful event. Eventually, we discovered that at the time of the trauma, she had made a choice/vow that she

---

<sup>23</sup>Note that I am *not* talking about accepting the erroneous, distorted beliefs anchored in the unresolved trauma, but rather about accepting the actual history.

<sup>24</sup>Painful emotions associated with the erroneous trauma-anchored beliefs = what it *feels like* to believe that the erroneous trauma-anchored beliefs *are true*.



would never again feel the pain from this event. Within seconds of resolving this vow, she began sobbing intensely, reported that she was finally feeling the emotions from the traumatic memory, and then proceeded to permanently resolve the distorted beliefs anchored in the traumatic memory.

**5.) The person must be willing to allow/accept correction of the distorted trauma-anchored beliefs.** That is, issues opposing correction, such as guardian lies, vows, and willful sin must be resolved. For example, the person might have traumatic memories where she was betrayed by important men in her life, and have associated distorted beliefs that no men can be trusted. With these unresolved traumatic memories and associated beliefs, she may also have a guardian lie, such as “I will get hurt if I ever trust a man again;” and this guardian lie could lead her to vow “I will never trust men,” which could also be formulated as “*I will **never believe** that men are trustworthy.*” This vow is a *free will choice* that will obviously block her from being able to receive the truth that some men are trustworthy, and this guardian lie and vow will have to be resolved before she is able to allow correction of her trauma-anchored beliefs about *all* men being unworthy of trust.

**6.) Any other “hindrances” need to be removed (other psychological defenses hindering the process, demonic interference, others?).** For example, the person must resolve any ways in which dissociation, or any other psychological defenses, are hindering him from being adequately connected to the material being processed, so that the traumatic memory files are adequately activated.

**7.) Something must be different, so that the brain authorizes the memory circuits to be opened back up for permanent modification:** As explained in more detail in my discussion of memory reconsolidation,<sup>25</sup> when the traumatic memory is activated, so that the recipient feels like she is inside of the memory experience, something must be different so that the brain authorizes the neuron connections to be opened back up for permanent modification. A piece of really good news is that perceiving the attuning presence of Jesus with her in the memory will always fulfill this requirement.<sup>26</sup>

**8.) The person must have a *corrective experience*, from *inside* of the traumatic memory.** While connected to (inside of) the activated traumatic memory, the person must have a corrective *experience* that carries the *opposite* meaning from the toxic learning produced by the original traumatic experience – the person must have an experience that presents truth directly opposing the distorted, erroneous beliefs carried in the traumatic memory. A piece of really good news is that Jesus seems to be fully aware of this requirement for healing, and He always includes it in one way or another.<sup>27</sup>

---

<sup>25</sup>Either Karl Lehman, *An Introduction to the Immanuel Approach*, (Evanston, IL: Immanuel Publishing, 2024), pages 76 to 82, or Karl Lehman, *An Introduction to the Immanuel Approach for Mental Health Professionals*, (Evanston, IL: Immanuel Publishing, 2023), pages 76 to 82 in both books. (The same content is presented in each of these two sources.)

<sup>26</sup>Fortunately for healing interventions that do not include the tangible presence of Jesus, perceiving a relational, attuning therapist or prayer minister with her as she is connected to the traumatic memory can also fulfill this requirement.

<sup>27</sup>Fortunately for secular psychotherapy that does not include receiving truth from Jesus corrective experiences, it is possible to construct the required corrective experiences in other ways. But this requires quite a bit of skill, and is a big part of what professional therapists provide when they use interventions that produce permanent healing for traumatic memories.

Again, when these conditions have been met, the truth goes into the traumatic memories that carry the distorted, erroneous beliefs, and is able to **permanently modify the original memory files**, so that the **original belief errors are replaced with truth**.

**E. The role of truth carried in non-traumatic memories:**<sup>28</sup> People who are immersed in emotional healing ministries that emphasize receiving truth from God (such as Theophostic and the Immanuel Approach) can sometimes undervalue truth carried in non-traumatic memories.<sup>29</sup> Therefore, I think these comments about the role of non-traumatic-memory truth are especially important for those of us who have been immersed in this kind of ministry.

So what is the value, or function, or role of cognitive-semantic truth carried in non-traumatic memories and experiential-learning truth carried in non-traumatic memories?

**1.) Can be the source of truth that replaces the erroneous, distorted beliefs carried in unresolved trauma:** The truth that replaces the erroneous beliefs carried in unresolved trauma can sometimes come from the person's own non-traumatic experiential-learning memory files. This transfer of truth from non-traumatic memories to traumatic memories can only happen when the necessary conditions are in place; but when these conditions are met, non-traumatic experiential-learning memories are actually *often* the source of truth that permanently replaces erroneous, distorted beliefs carried in unresolved trauma.

My own healing journey has provided many examples of this phenomena. In many Immanuel Approach sessions I *have* perceived replacement truth coming directly from Jesus; however, in all of my EMDR healing experiences and in almost all of my Theophostic sessions it seemed like truth from non-traumatic memory files simply transferred across to the traumatic memories carrying the distorted beliefs in question. As all of the conditions for opening and modifying the traumatic memories anchoring the distorted belief were met, I could feel myself, *from the **inside** of the unresolved traumatic memory*, become aware of truth in my own mind (in my non-traumatic experiential-learning memory files) that I suddenly realized was true. At that moment, my subjective experience was that, even from the *inside* of the triggered, activated traumatic memory package, the distorted, erroneous belief no longer felt true. It felt, subjectively, like the erroneous, distorted belief from the inside of the traumatic memory was simply replaced with the truth carried in my non-traumatic experiential-learning memory files.

Before receiving healing, whenever I had been *inside* the triggered place, I was *aware* of the truth in my non-traumatic memory files, but it had always seemed far away, without power, and did not *feel* true. I could remember that it was there, and I was aware of it's presence, but somehow I couldn't access it so that it *felt* true, or had power to displace the distorted, triggered beliefs. At the moment of healing it felt like the usual barrier between the traumatic and non-traumatic memories went down, and I was suddenly able to access the non-traumatic memory truth in a new way, so that it could come into the traumatic memory in a way that *felt* true and had power to permanently correct the distorted beliefs.

---

<sup>28</sup>The role of truth carried in non-traumatic memories is especially relevant for preaching and teaching, since preaching and teaching present truth that is carried in non-traumatic cognitive-semantic memories.

<sup>29</sup>Once again, truth carried in non-traumatic memories includes both cognitive-semantic information (such as truths learned from studying scripture and brain science), and also truths/beliefs learned from non-traumatic experiences (such as truth about the Lord's character and heart learned from interacting with Jesus in Immanuel sessions as the recipient, or from watching Jesus interact with recipients in sessions you facilitate).

Note that my description of this kind of “healing moment,” that seems to occur when there is finally an effective connection between the traumatic memory carrying the distorted belief and the non-traumatic experiential-learning memory carrying the relevant truth, is very consistent with memory reconsolidation research. According to the theory based on this recent, compelling research, the traumatic memory is open to permanent modification/resolution because the traumatic memory is activated and something is different (there is an attuned, caring therapist with them). And then, in this context, as the recipient connects emotionally with both the traumatic memory carrying the distorted belief and the non-traumatic experiential memory carrying truth, the non-traumatic experiential-learning memory can supply the *corrective experience* that is required as the third ingredient for permanently resolving the trauma-anchored distorted interpretation.<sup>30</sup> My hypothesis is that this is the usual mechanism for the “healing moments” in psychotherapy sessions with any of the methods that apply memory-reconsolidation principles (for example, EMDR and Coherence Therapy).

Note also that truth carried in non-traumatic memories is especially important for those who have lots of blockages in the way of connecting with Jesus more directly *because non-traumatic experiential-learning memories will then be the primary source of replacement truth*. That is, those who have difficulty perceiving and connecting with Jesus will need to rely more heavily on truth carried in their own non-traumatic experiential-learning memory files. The more truth you have in your non-traumatic memories, the better off you will be!

**2.) Helps to *expose* the true nature of the problem, helps the person *choose to cooperate* with the Lord’s healing work, and helps the person *choose righteous behavior*:** A second important role of truth carried in non-traumatic memories is to help *expose* wrong choices and unresolved traumatic content, including distorted interpretations and the associated dysfunctional left-hemisphere emotions.<sup>31</sup> A third important role of truth carried in non-traumatic memories is to help the person *choose to cooperate* with the Lord’s healing work. And a fourth important role of truth carried in non-traumatic memories is to help the person *choose righteous behavior*, even when unresolved traumatic content is triggered forward and *feels* true.

My experience is that when we are triggered, the toxic content associated with the triggered traumatic memories is activated *but we are still **also** aware of the truth carried in our non-traumatic memory files*. There is always a battle between the unresolved traumatic content and the truth in our non-traumatic memories, and one or the other is more or less dominant, depending on the strength of the truths carried in our non-traumatic memories, the intensity of the current triggers, the intensity of the traumatic memory content, and the extent to which the traumatic content includes unfinished processing tasks that impair our ability to function

---

<sup>30</sup>Again, my discussion of memory reconsolidation, and of how it applies to the permanent resolution of traumatic memories, is presented in both of my new introduction books (*An Introduction to the Immanuel Approach* and *An Introduction to the Immanuel Approach for Mental Health Professionals*). Pages 76 to 82 in both books.

<sup>31</sup>For discussion of left-hemisphere emotions (emotions that are fueled by what we believe to be true, such as left-sided shame that is fuel by believing “I am bad,” or “I am worthless”), and right-hemisphere emotions (emotions that are *not* fueled by what we believe, such as right-hemisphere fear that is produced by the amygdala before the left hemisphere even begins to formulate thoughts about being in danger), see Karl Lehman, “Brain Science, Psychological Trauma, and the God Who Is with Us: Part II,” available as a free download from the “Special Subjects/Advanced Topics” section of the Resources page of [www.immanuelapproach.com](http://www.immanuelapproach.com).

at levels 3, 4, and 5.<sup>32</sup> If the truth carried in our non-traumatic memories is sufficiently compelling, the truth will *expose* the erroneous beliefs, the associated dysfunctional emotions, and the wrong choices that contribute to the pernicious blockage described above. If the truth carried in our non-traumatic memories is sufficiently compelling, then when we are in the furnace of really difficult situations – when triggered traumatic content is intense and *feels* true in the present – the truth carried in our non-traumatic memory files can help us *choose to cooperate* with the Lord’s healing work. And if the truth carried in our non-traumatic memories is sufficiently compelling, then when we are in the furnace of really difficult situations – when triggered traumatic content is intense and *feels* true in the present – the truth in our non-traumatic memories can help us *choose righteous behavior*.<sup>33</sup>

For example, when a person is suffering from the pernicious blockage described above, if she has sufficient Immanuel truth in her non-traumatic memory files<sup>34</sup> she can counter the enemies schemes with: “Even though \_\_\_\_\_ (the distorted beliefs described above) *feel* true, I know, from the Immanuel truth carried in my non-traumatic memory files, that the Lord *is* good, and that He *is* here with me. Since these Immanuel truths don’t *feel* true, ***there must be something in the way.***” And recognizing “*there must be something in the way*” is the first step in exposing the beliefs, emotions, and choices of the pernicious blockage. If the Immanuel truth in a person’s non-traumatic memories is sufficiently compelling, when it comes into conflict with the distorted, toxic content, instead of being overwhelmed by the triggered beliefs and emotions, *the truth carried in her non-traumatic memory files will expose the triggered beliefs and emotions for what they really are.*

If the truth in her non-traumatic memory files is sufficiently compelling, and especially if the person understands implicit memory and recognizes the triggered beliefs and emotions for what they are, the person can *choose to cooperate* with the Lord’s healing work, *even when she is in the furnace of being intensely triggered*. Even though “God has abandoned me,” “He won’t come,” and “It’s His fault and His responsibility to fix it” all feel true, the person can still *choose* to submit these distorted trauma-anchored beliefs to the Immanuel truth carried in her non-traumatic memories, and then *choose* to pray “Lord, please show me what’s in the way. Show me what ***I need to do differently*** – show me any misplaced beliefs that ***I am transferring onto You***, and any choices ***I am making*** that are preventing me from perceiving Your presence and receiving Your help.” As the Lord then reveals the blocking choices, the person can revoke these choices. As the Lord reveals the memories carrying the beliefs and emotions that have been misplaced onto Him, the person can invite the Lord to bring truth into these memories to permanently replace the distorted beliefs and resolve the associated

---

<sup>32</sup>For those who are familiar with Richard Schwartz’s Internal Family Systems theory, we can add “the degree to which the triggered material has *blended* with our *core selves*.”

<sup>33</sup>My perception is that truth carried in non-traumatic memories is a resource that can augment our maturity skills and help us to complete the unfinished processing tasks carried in the traumatic memories. Along these lines, note that recognizing the triggered material for what it really is (even in the middle of being triggered), choosing to cooperate with the Lord (even in the middle of being triggered), and choosing righteous behavior (even in the middle of being triggered) are all examples of the level 4 maturity task of “acting like our true selves.”

<sup>34</sup>“Immanuel truth in her non-traumatic memory files” can include both cognitive semantic truth (for example, biblical principles she has learned from studying the Bible), and experiential-learning truth (for example, truth about the Lord’s character and heart learned from interacting with Jesus in previous Immanuel sessions, or from watching Jesus interact with recipients in sessions she has facilitated).

distorted emotions.<sup>35</sup>

If the truth carried in the person's non-traumatic memory files is sufficiently compelling, she can *choose righteous behavior, even when she is in the furnace of being intensely triggered*. When she is triggered, and she does *not* have enough non-traumatic memory truth to challenge the triggered beliefs and emotions, then she will make choices that are hurtful to herself and others *and she will feel entitled to them*. She will feel entitled to them, defend them, and justify them, instead of asking for help to choose to act differently. However, truth carried in non-traumatic memories can help her choose constructive behavior and avoid toxic behavior. If she has non-traumatic-memory truth that is *sufficiently compelling*, she can *choose constructive behavior even when she is triggered*.

My experience with getting triggered to my two-year-old separation memories provides a good example. Before I understood triggering, implicit memory, VLE explanations, or the specific components of this pernicious blockage, when these memories would get triggered I would become intensely blended with my child implicit-memory thoughts and emotions, and I would swallow my VLE confabulations hook, line, and sinker, with absolutely no insight regarding what was really happening. It would *feel true, in the present*, that the Lord wasn't with me when I needed Him, that He wouldn't come even though I was calling and calling, that I couldn't trust His heart for me,...etc. Furthermore, my two-year-old implicit memories included the small child external-locus-of-control component, so it would also *feel* reasonable that I should be allowed to signal my distress by simply being increasingly unpleasant, and it would *feel* reasonable that it was Charlotte's responsibility to figure out what was wrong, and her responsibility to do whatever was necessary to fix it. So instead of *asking* for her help, and appreciating anything she was able to give me, I would simply become increasingly unpleasant, and then judge her and point more unpleasantness in her direction if she didn't do whatever was necessary to make me feel better.

*And I felt entitled to my triggered thoughts and emotions, and to my inappropriate, hurtful behavior, and would defend them*. I had no insight regarding how my anti-Immanuel thoughts and emotions were actually implicit memory content coming from childhood wounds that had been triggered forward, and I had no understanding regarding how my hurtful, entitled, external-locus-of-control behavior was also coming from my two-year-old implicit memory package. My triggered thoughts and emotions *felt* true in the present, *I accepted* VLE confabulated explanations regarding both the Lord and Charlotte *as valid*, and my inappropriate, hurtful behavior towards Charlotte *felt* reasonable. It *felt* reasonable and appropriate to point my negative emotions and unpleasant behavior at Charlotte until she did whatever was necessary to fix the problem.

Before I understood triggering, implicit memory, VLE confabulations, or the specific

---

<sup>35</sup>After the recipient asks the Lord for help, it seems that sometimes truth carried in her non-traumatic experiential-learning memories simply transfers across, *without* any subjective perception of the Lord's presence. In these cases, since she has asked Him to bring truth, we believe *in faith* that He is facilitating the normal brain-mind process of truth transferring from non-traumatic memory files to the traumatic memory files where the distorted beliefs are carried. In other situations, the recipient *can* perceive the Lord's presence in some way, and it is clear that He is facilitating the process of truth transferring from her non-traumatic experiential-learning memories to her traumatic memories. For example, she will perceive His presence in some way, and it will feel like He is pointing out to her the truths in her non-traumatic memories that He wants her to notice. In still other situations, the recipient can subjectively perceive His presence in some way, and He *directly brings new truth that has never occurred to her before*.



components of this pernicious blockage, *I did **not** have truth in my cognitive-semantic memory files that could adequately challenge my triggered, erroneous beliefs and emotions, my VLE confabulations, or my hurtful, inappropriate behavior choices.*

However, this has been steadily changing over the past several years<sup>36</sup> as I have been learning about triggering, about implicit memories, about VLE confabulations, and about the specific components of this pernicious blockage. Now, when lingering splinters from my two-year-old separation memory get triggered,<sup>37</sup> I still experience anti-Immanuel beliefs and emotions, small child external-locus-of-control thoughts and emotions, and VLE confabulated explanations, *but now I usually quickly recognize these triggered implicit memory contents and VLE confabulations for what they are.* Instead of arguing with Charlotte about why my anti-Immanuel beliefs and emotions are true in the present, and pointing my external-locus-of-control stuff at her, I usually quickly acknowledge both of these pieces as triggered implicit-memory contents and ask her for help in working with the Lord to find and resolve the remaining splinters.

*Before*, my triggered thoughts and emotions, my hurtful and inappropriate behavior, my confabulated explanations, and my lack of insight would usually trigger and alienate my number one ally. Instead of getting help in exposing and resolving my toxic traumatic content, I would get a miserable experience of back and forth escalating triggering. *Now*, when I quickly recognize the triggered implicit memory content for what it is, acknowledge to Charlotte that I am triggered, and ask her for help in an appropriate fashion, I am much more likely to get assistance.

It is important to note that I make these constructive choices *while I am still triggered, while the triggered beliefs and emotions still **feel** true, while the VLE confabulations still **feel** valid, and while the entitled, hurtful behavior still **feels** reasonable.* Furthermore, while I am making these new, constructive choices, I am acutely aware of the new truth in my cognitive-semantic memory files *and I can **feel** it helping – it feels, subjectively,* like holding onto this non-traumatic-memory truth helps me to make these new, constructive choices.

In addition to increasing the likelihood of getting help from those around us, and thereby indirectly helping to expose and resolve especially pernicious blockages, this helps-choose-righteous-behavior feature of truth in our non-traumatic memory files *also decreases hurtful behavior associated with **any other** distorted, trauma-associated beliefs and emotions.* To put it another way: this helps-choose-righteous-behavior feature of truth in our non-traumatic memories *helps decrease hurtful behavior associated with **any** triggered, distorted, trauma-associated beliefs and emotions.*

To summarize regarding the three points presented in this section: Having clear, strong, cognitive-semantic-memory truth regarding implicit-memory phenomena, regarding VLE confabulation, and regarding these specific pernicious blockage components helps us

---

<sup>36</sup>Note that this paragraph and the following two paragraphs are from the perspective of when I first wrote this material in 2005.

<sup>37</sup>Much of this two-year-old separation trauma has been resolved, so that these anti-Immanuel beliefs and emotions, and these external-locus-of-control implicit-memory contents, don't get triggered as often or as intensely. But the point here is that when the remaining splinters *do* get triggered, and these anti-Immanuel and external-locus-of-control implicit-memory contents *do* get activated, I am now able to make new, much more constructive choices with respect to how to respond to these situations.

*recognize these things in ourselves.* And having this clear, strong non-traumatic memory truth also helps us *choose* “out” of their influence by helping us own our triggered beliefs and emotions, by helping us surrender our confabulated explanations, by helping us revoke our wrong choices, and by helping us turn to the Lord and to others for help.

To summarize regarding the three points presented in this section: Having clear, strong cognitive-semantic-memory truth regarding implicit memory phenomena, regarding VLE confabulations, and regarding these specific pernicious blockage components, helps us *recognize these things in ourselves.* And having this clear, strong non-traumatic memory truth also helps us *choose* “out” of their influence by helping us own our triggered beliefs and emotions, by helping us revoke our wrong choices, and by helping us turn to the Lord and to others for help.

**3.) Increases the efficiency and effectiveness of emotional healing work:** Truth carried in our cognitive-semantic non-traumatic memory files can dramatically increase the efficiency and the effectiveness of emotional healing work. For example, knowing about the necessary conditions for opening and permanently modifying traumatic memory files allows us to intentionally and systematically establish these conditions in emotional healing sessions. When we accurately identify these necessary conditions, and systematically establish them, then the success rate for permanently correcting distorted beliefs associated with unresolved trauma goes way up. None of this will work if the person receiving ministry does not *choose* to cooperate with the Lord’s healing work, *but once the person does choose to cooperate*, applying these principles from truth carried in our cognitive-semantic memory files dramatically increases the efficiency and effectiveness.

Using specific tools and dealing with specific hindrances provide additional examples. I ask the people I work with to do a lot of homework reading, because then when we are in actual sessions we can simply refer to information that is already present in their cognitive-semantic memory files instead of taking time to present the information as new material. For example, the technique of reporting everything that comes into your mind during a session is very important, but people often have difficulty with it. If the person receiving ministry has studied my material regarding the *compelling* reasons for applying this tool, then, when we are in a session and I notice that she seems to be analyzing and editing before reporting, I can simply remind her of the material she has already studied instead of taking time in the session to discuss the reasons for submitting to this important discipline.

A session I facilitated several weeks ago provides a good example of the value of truth carried in non-traumatic memories when working with specific hindrances. We were coming to the end of the time available for the session but the person was still in a very painful, unresolved place. At this point, I realized that a combination guardian lie/vow was hindering him from being able to perceive the Lord’s presence. Since he was already familiar with these concepts, all I had to do was name the guardian lie and vow, and say that I thought they were in the way. He was able to quickly and efficiently cooperate with resolving the guardian lie and vow, and then was able to perceive the Lord’s presence and receive powerful healing in the last minutes of the session. *The necessary information was already present in his cognitive-semantic memory files, so that he could simply plug this package of material in at the appropriate spot in the session and keep moving forward.* If he had *not* already been familiar with these concepts, we would have had to stop to discuss them, we would have run out of time half way through my explanations, and he would have left the session still unable to perceive the Lord’s presence and still miserably tangled in his triggered thoughts and

emotions.

**4. Provides reference points for our error-trapping “safety nets”:** *Information in our non-traumatic memory files provides the reference points for both the left- sided and right-sided error trapping “safety nets” that protect us from unintentional error and/or malicious deception.*

The more I study psychological and neurological research about the mind and brain, the more I appreciate how the Lord has carefully designed the right and left sides of the brain to work together in an elegant and complimentary fashion. Not only do they work together to solve problems and develop new ideas, but they also provide complementary error trapping “safety nets” that help protect us from being mislead by unintentional error and/or malicious deception.

For example, the left-sided system provides an error trapping “safety net” based on language, linear thought, cognitive information, and logical analysis:

“Yes, I realize that you have an intuitive hunch this should work, and that you have a subjective sense that this idea is from the Holy Spirit, but is it consistent with scripture? Is it consistent with firmly established scientific data and principles? And if you do try it, make sure to include follow-up that carefully evaluates the ‘fruit.’”

There have been many situations in which cognitive information and careful logical thought has helped to distinguish between intuitive brainstorms that were brilliant and intuitive “brainstorms” that turned out to be very bad ideas. And there have been many situations in which cognitive information and logical analysis has helped to distinguish between true guidance from the Holy Spirit and triggered thoughts and emotions that had been mistaken for guidance from the Holy Spirit.<sup>38</sup>

On the other hand, the right-sided experiential system provides a non-logical, intuitive error trapping safety net:

“Yes, I know it sounds good, and seems to make sense, but it just doesn’t *feel* right. I especially have a sense of uneasiness about their conclusions regarding \_\_\_\_\_ (fill in the blank). I’m going to go over the whole thing again and see if I can figure out what’s bothering me.”

There have been many situations in which a subjective, intuitive sense of caution has helped catch an important error/deception that had slipped past the left-sided logical analysis.

And the raw material that both error-trapping safety-net systems use is the information carried in non-traumatic memories – the information in our cognitive semantic memory files and the truth in our non-traumatic experiential-learning memory files are the *reference points*

---

<sup>38</sup>For discussion of how triggered thoughts and emotions can be mistaken for guidance from the Holy Spirit, see the essays, “Triggered ‘Positive’ Thoughts and Emotions,” and “Guidance from Holy Spirit vs Triggering.” (Both available as free downloads from the Special Subjects/Advanced Topics section of [www.immanuelapproach.com](http://www.immanuelapproach.com).)

that both systems use as they search for error and/or deception.<sup>39</sup> This is another reason why it is so important to have good teaching and good experiential learning that put *accurate* information into our non-traumatic memory files.

**5. Supplies the truth that we use to run our “normal” lives:** A quiet, but *HUGE*, function of truth in our non-traumatic memories is to govern our “normal” lives – *truths in our non-traumatic memory files are the beliefs and factual reference points that feel true, and that guide our thoughts, emotions, and choices whenever we are not triggered.*

**6. Supplies the truth that we use in cognitive-therapy type tools:** The effectiveness of cognitive therapy is compellingly demonstrated by many careful research studies, and in my assessment cognitive-therapy type tools are an important part of a well rounded tool box. Truth carried in our non-traumatic memory systems, such as truth that we learn from scripture and truth we learn from science, is an important, necessary ingredient for cognitive therapy.

**F. Non-traumatic memory truth cannot directly resolve trauma:** Now that we have discussed these various functions of truth carried in our non-traumatic memories, I want to emphasize again a very important point: putting truth into our non-traumatic memory files – even powerful, faith-building, experiential truth such as witnessing the Lord heal others – *can not*, by itself, resolve the erroneous beliefs that are carried as part of unresolved traumatic memories. Trying to *directly* resolve trauma-associated lies by putting truth into non-traumatic memory files is a fruitless and endless endeavor. Truth in non-traumatic memories *can be a part of permanent healing*, in all the ways just described above, but you cannot *directly* correct distorted, erroneous beliefs *carried in traumatic memories* by just loading more and more cognitive semantic truth and experiential truth into non-traumatic memory files.

**G. A widespread and expensive *false* dichotomy:** In case this point is not already sufficiently clear, I want to explicitly expose and challenge what I perceive to be a widespread and expensive *false* dichotomy. In logic, a dichotomy is a situation where we face two *mutually exclusive* choices, and must choose *one or the other*. A *false* dichotomy is when we *think* we are facing mutually exclusive alternatives, and must choose one or the other, but this is not actually true. We need to recognize the value and role of truth carried in cognitive-semantic non-traumatic memories, AND we need to recognize the need for working *inside* of traumatic memories to resolve distorted beliefs that are anchored in unresolved trauma. Recognizing the importance of truth carried in *non-traumatic memories* and recognizing that special conditions and interventions are required for resolving distorted beliefs carried in *traumatic memories* are *not* “either/or” options. We *do not* have to choose one or the other.

My perception is that many in the church somehow get into a *false* dichotomy with respect to these two pieces. Some Christians perceive the importance and value of truth carried in non-traumatic cognitive-semantic memories, and do a good job of studying, teaching, and preaching to provide this truth; but these people often fail to recognize the reality or importance of trauma-anchored distorted beliefs, and think that the only problem with those who have distorted beliefs is that they have not yet loaded enough truth into their cognitive semantic memory files. Other Christians recognize the reality of distorted beliefs anchored in unresolved

---

<sup>39</sup> Note that the Holy Spirit can also supernaturally supply information and guidance that does not come from information in our non-traumatic memory files.

trauma, and recognize the importance of working *inside* the traumatic memories to resolve these beliefs; but these people often devalue cognitive semantic truth, and come to the mistaken conclusion that healing work to resolve trauma-anchored beliefs is the *only* important work.

These approaches that choose *one or the other* have been misled by *false*-dichotomy thinking.

Again: We need to recognize the importance and role of truth carried in cognitive-semantic non-traumatic memories, AND we need to recognize the reality of distorted beliefs that are anchored in unresolved trauma, and recognize the importance of working *inside* the traumatic memories, with effective interventions for healing, in order to resolve these distorted beliefs. I propose that we recognize and learn about *both* non-traumatic cognitive-semantic memories *and* traumatic memories, so that we can work with them in ways that are complimentary. The role of truth carried in cognitive-semantic memories in exposing and neutralizing especially pernicious blockages, as presented in this discussion, is an excellent example of recognizing and working with *both* of these pieces in a way that is complimentary.

**III. A “case study” example from my own healing journey:** My own healing journey provides an excellent example of the pernicious blockage recipe I have just described, and also provides an example of how truths in carried in our non-traumatic memory files can help in exposing and neutralizing pernicious blockages.

**A. New Immanuel truths in my normal belief memory system:** An important part of my healing journey during the past 18 months<sup>40</sup> has been receiving Immanuel truth into my non-traumatic memory files.

Some of this Immanuel truth came from Charlotte’s message.<sup>41</sup> As I was hearing Charlotte’s thoughts and insights, and working with her to refine her presentation, I found the content of her message speaking powerfully to my own heart, I felt like I received important truth for my own life when she shared this message with our church, and I felt like I received important truth each time I listened to the tape.

Some of this Immanuel truth came from what I observed as I facilitated Theophostic®-based therapy sessions. Over and over again, people receiving healing would suddenly become able to perceive the Lord’s presence, *with them, in the traumatic memories*, and then they would report something along the lines of, “Jesus is here, *with me*, in the middle of \_\_\_\_\_ (fill in the horrible memory). I can see now that He was with me when it happened, and that He has *always* been with me.” Or something along the lines of, “Jesus is going through my whole life, and showing me how He’s been with me in all the memories where I was hurt....” And as we describe in more detail elsewhere in our teaching regarding the Immanuel Approach, perceiving the Lord’s presence, *with them, in the traumatic memories*, has often been an important part of the healing process.

And some of this Immanuel truth came from very specific words the Lord spoke to a number of our clients in the context of emotional healing sessions. In the fall of 2004, as Charlotte and I

---

<sup>40</sup>Note that this case study is described from the perspective of when I first wrote it up in 2005.

<sup>41</sup>“Charlotte’s message” refers to the presentation she gave at the same conference at which I presented this content regarding pernicious blockages. Her message, *Immanuel: God With Us*, is available as both DVD and digital download from the Store page of [www.immanuelapproach.com](http://www.immanuelapproach.com).



were working together to develop the material for her Immanuel message, I facilitated a number of Theophostic®-based therapy sessions in which the Lord spoke what I felt was an “Immanuel” message, to both the clients and to myself. All of these people were working on particularly horrible memories, and with persistent Immanuel Interventions they were all eventually able to perceive the Lord’s living presence *with them, in the memories*. At some point in their subsequent interactions with the Lord, each of these people asked Him: “Lord, why did You allow this to happen to me?”

And in each of these situations, His response was something along the lines of: “Your limited, human mind is not able to understand why the Father and I chose to allow \_\_\_\_\_ [fill in the corresponding evil/trauma/tragedy], but I am here with you, and **because of who I am, that is enough.**”

In my experience, when somebody asks “Why did God allow my grandfather to rape me?” or “Why did God allow both my parents to die in a car wreck when I was only three years old,” no answer I can give seems to do much good. I can say “We’re not able to understand God’s plan, but He loves you and He’s with you,” but my words seem to wither and stumble as they confront the magnitude of the person’s pain.

In marked contrast, each of the people in the ministry sessions I was just describing perceived that they were hearing these words directly from Jesus, they felt the words were true, *and these words carried so much emotional and spiritual authority that **they accepted them as an adequate answer to their questions.*** When these people reported this Immanuel truth from the Lord, I could immediately see the effect it had on them, and I could *also* feel it’s emotional and spiritual authority. These words carried a living, kairos truth for me as well, and I could feel them resonating powerfully in my heart.

As I was meditating on this truth from Charlotte’s teaching, meditating on this truth from observing the Lord’s work in therapy sessions, and especially meditating on the specific “Immanuel” message from the Lord, all of this material condensed into a core of potent cognitive-semantic and non-traumatic-experiential-learning truth for me:

**One:** “God is good, and I can trust His heart for me, but my finite mind is not big enough to understand some of His choices. **‘I am with you’** is the Lord’s answer to many of our hardest questions (such as ‘why did You allow this to happen to me?’).”

**Two:** “The Lord is **always** with me, and **because of who He is, that is enough.**”

**Three:** “This is the truth. If it doesn’t **feel** like the truth, now, or in any memory I’m working in, then there’s something in the way.”

I began to apply these Immanuel truths in my own life. I found myself often thinking about this material as I was working with clients – it strengthened my faith in the Lord’s presence and goodness, and encouraged me to be more persistent in rooting out the hindrances that were preventing people from perceiving and receiving the Lord’s Immanuel presence. I found myself focusing on this material in my personal devotional time. And I also found myself thinking about these truths at strategic moments in my own healing work.

Particularly relevant for this presentation is that ***these Immanuel truths proved to be very important in helping me expose and neutralize my particular version of the pernicious***

*blockage I described earlier.*

**B. My pernicious blockage:** As Charlotte mentioned in her message, the whole situation with our car was INTENSELY triggering for me.<sup>42</sup> It stirred up a number of different childhood memories, and especially triggered thoughts and emotions from the extended separation from my parents that happened when I was almost two years old. Mom had Mononucleosis during her pregnancy with my younger sister. Between the pregnancy and the mono, she was so ill that Dad had to carry her across the hallway to the bathroom, *and* so ill that my brother and I were sent to stay with friends in another city for three weeks because Mom was too sick to care for us. To put this in perspective: a two-year-old will experience a three week separation from his parents in much the same way as he'll experience his parents dying suddenly – they disappear suddenly, and stay away longer than any possible two-year-old ability to understand or cope with their absence. Furthermore, a two year old perceives his parents to be omnipotent – he believes nothing happens unless they allow it, and that nothing could make them do anything they don't want to do. This means he will believe he is separated from his parents because they *want* to be away from him, and he will believe that they can hear his calls and could come if they wanted to, but that they are *choosing* to ignore his cries for help.



By the end of three weeks of separation, I had come to many erroneous conclusions, including: “I’m on my own (the Ones I need are not here with me),” “It’s hopeless and I’m powerless – the Ones I need are not coming, and nothing I can do will make them come,” “There’s no possible justification for allowing this to happen to me – I can’t trust their hearts for me,” “they won’t help me when I’m overwhelmed and need their help,” and “this situation is overwhelming – it’s more than I can handle, and I might as well just give up and disconnect.” Along with these erroneous conclusions came a miserable morass of associated emotions – loneliness, rejection, hopelessness, powerlessness, feeling overwhelmed, and confusion. And I was also very angry that they had left me, that they were allowing me to suffer so intensely, and that they wouldn’t come when I called for them.

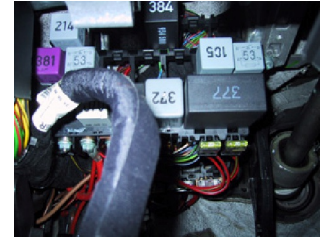
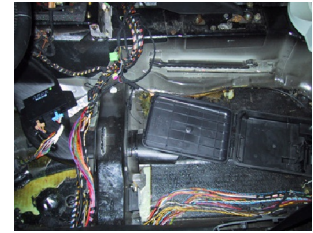
Possibly the most toxic effect of this experience is that I have often transferred these thoughts and feelings towards my parents onto the Lord. I used to think that this phenomena – children transferring beliefs and emotions from traumatic memories onto the Lord – happened by some mysterious process, but just recently I realized that it’s actually straightforward. Any time a traumatic memory gets triggered, and *our interaction with the Lord* in the present, triggering situation parallels some part<sup>43</sup> of the original memory, then *the Lord* will be the target for the corresponding triggered beliefs and emotions.

---

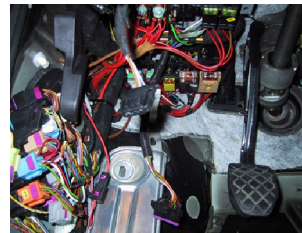
<sup>42</sup>For the details of the car story, see Charlotte’s teaching from earlier in the conference at which the pernicious blockage material was presented, *Immanuel: God With Us*, or *Outsmarting Yourself*, pages 51-56, or *The Immanuel Approach*, pages 402-404.

<sup>43</sup>Note that the interaction with the Lord in the present sometimes matches the original memory in many ways, like with my situation in the example described here. However, an extensive and/or close match is not necessary. Sometimes only one small part of the situation in the present matches the original memory, but this small and partial match can still be adequate to trigger the earlier memory.

For example, any time I would become stuck in a situation that felt overwhelming, and call out to the Lord for help, but then not be able to perceive His presence or help, the beliefs and emotions from this two-year-old separation memory would be activated, *with my interactions with the Lord in the present triggering situation paralleling my interactions with my parents in the original memory*. Whenever this has happened, it has *felt intensely true* that I can't trust God's heart towards me because He chooses to allow things for which there is no possible justification, it has *felt intensely true* that He's not with me now, and won't come even though I call and call for Him, and it has *felt intensely true* that He won't help me when I'm overwhelmed by a situation and need His help.



For those of you who have heard our teaching on implicit memory, this is a good example of what it looks like when implicit memories are activated. The situation in the present triggered implicit-memory beliefs and emotions, with the Lord as their target, but I had no awareness or insight regarding “oh, these thoughts and emotions are from traumatic childhood memories.” Instead, it *felt true, subjectively*, that the thoughts and emotions were *about the Lord*, and that they were *true in the present*.



As I spent hours paging through the one-thousand-page technical mechanics manual, hours looking through hundreds of on-line “help” documents, and many more hours trying to make sense out of the complex tangle of wires, fuses, relays, and circuit boards that had been hiding



under the carpet and behind the dashboard of our car; and as I asked the Lord for help, but did *not* perceive dramatic intervention, the whole experience was enough to trigger many of the beliefs and emotions from my two-year-old separation trauma. As the two-year-old memories got stirred up, “It’s hopeless and I’m powerless – there’s nothing I can do to fix this problem,” “this situation is overwhelming – it’s more than I can handle, and I might as well just give up” *felt true*. It also *felt, subjectively, intensely true* that I couldn’t trust God’s heart towards me – that there was no possible justification for his

choice to allow this horrible mess. It *felt, subjectively, intensely true* that God was *not* with me, that He wasn’t coming even though I was calling and calling, that He would *never* come, and that He wouldn’t help me in this situation where I was overwhelmed and needed His help. And along with these thoughts (beliefs) from the two-year-old memory came the associated emotions – the miserable morass of loneliness, rejection, hopelessness, feeling overwhelmed, confusion, and bitterness.

In the past, when these beliefs and emotions had gotten stirred up to this intensity, I had always gotten stuck in the place of transferring the triggered thoughts and emotions onto the Lord. And all of these triggered thoughts and emotions, being transferred onto the Lord, would *feel, subjectively*, reasonable and justified. It may seem outrageous, but when I would get *really* triggered and *really* stuck in this place, I would challenge the Lord with something along the lines of:

“There’s no possible justification for allowing \_\_\_\_\_ (fill in the blank) to happen, and especially no possible justification for not being with me or helping me when I’m in trouble and asking for help. The only possible explanation is that You’re not trustworthy – You’re an idiot, a jerk, or some combination of the two, and I certainly can’t trust Your heart towards me. I *dare* You to explain Yourself. If You can’t explain Yourself (and I doubt You can), then I *demand* that You admit You’re wrong, apologize, make restitution, and promise that You’ll never let this happen again.”

As many of you may also have discovered, tantrums, demands, and threats seem to have little power over the Lord (they may work with your grandmother, but they don’t work very well with the Lord). As I describe below, on previous occasions when I had gotten triggered in this way, my distorted beliefs and angry choices had always blocked the way forward, and I would just circled, miserably, in this stuck place.

### **C. New truths in my non-traumatic-memory files open the way for breakthrough:**

*However*, on this occasion things were different, *and the difference had to do with these new Immanuel truths in my non-traumatic-memory files*. Even while blended with the triggered thoughts and emotions, including intense anger toward the Lord, I was still able to hold onto these new Immanuel truths. The compelling clarity and undisputable scriptural foundation of Charlotte’s Immanuel teaching, the observable emotional and spiritual potency of the Lord’s Immanuel presence in therapy sessions, and the resonance in my own heart with the “Immanuel” words from the Lord – these combined sources of Immanuel truth *directly opposed* the anti-Immanuel and external-locus-of-control beliefs and emotions, and helped me hold onto the possibility that there might be another explanation. I can clearly remember sitting in the car, surrounded by tools, repair manuals, wires, circuit boards, and spare parts, and thinking: “Maybe God *isn’t* choosing to withhold His presence because He’s a perverse tormentor – maybe there’s something *I* am doing that’s preventing me from perceiving His presence and receiving His help.”<sup>44</sup>

I could feel myself making a choice to turn away from my old, stuck place. On this occasion, I was able to choose a new response: “Lord, I’m tired of being stuck here. Even though the thoughts and emotions from my childhood memories still *feel* true, I know that there must be some explanation that I haven’t thought of. I’m ready for something different to happen here,” and then “Lord, please show me what’s in the way. I’m even willing to see if there’s something *I’m* doing that blocks me from perceiving Your presence and receiving Your help. Show me what *I* need to do differently to be able to perceive your presence and to be able to receive the help You have for me.” And this last prayer wasn’t just my adult mind praying, while ignoring continued bitterness and defiance in my child thoughts and emotions. I could feel *internal unity* regarding this prayer – I could feel agreement (grudging, but still agreement), even from my angry, hurting, two-year-old ego-state package.

In the past, I’d never been able to get past the two-year-old beliefs and bitterness that had been transferred onto the Lord. It *felt* so true that my pain was being caused by *His* failure to be with

---

<sup>44</sup>Before absorbing these new Immanuel truths, my question to the Lord had always been “why aren’t You with me,” as opposed to the more truth-based “Why can’t I perceive Your presence?” It seems like it’s good to start with as much truth as possible, so now I always try to pray “Lord, I know You’re with me here. Please help me to perceive Your presence,” instead of “Lord, please come and be with me here.” And I try to ask “Lord, why can’t I perceive Your presence?,” instead of “Why aren’t You with me?”



me – not my failure to perceive His presence; and it *felt* so true that it was *His* responsibility to fix the problem – not my responsibility to do something different. Note that these thoughts were *accurate* for me as a two year old *with respect to my parents* – my pain *was* caused by their failure to be with me, not my failure to perceive their presence, and it *was* their responsibility to fix the problem, not my responsibility to do something different – but these thoughts became distorted, erroneous beliefs when I transferred them onto the Lord.

These trauma-anchored beliefs that I had misplaced onto the Lord, combined with the anger and bitterness from the triggered memories, had always blocked me from *really* submitting to the possibility that *I* was doing something that was preventing the Lord from helping me.

As soon as I turned away from my stuck, angry place, and gave the Lord permission to show me any way in which *I* was blocking His presence and help from reaching me, an insight came to me. I had an awareness, and a brief image, of myself in the two-year-old memory. The Lord showed me that He was there with me, wanting to help me, but *I* was holding out for the only answer I was willing to consider. Jesus was there, offering comfort and help: “Karl, your parents don’t understand, and they’re not going to come for a long time. But I’m here, and I can help you.” But in my hurt and anger, I was responding with “If you don’t have my mother with you, then I don’t want to talk to you.” Instead of accepting the painful truth, and allowing Him to be with me and help me, I was still stuck in the place of demanding that reality be different. I didn’t want to accept the Lord’s answer and offer – I wanted Him to make it different: “No, I refuse to accept that my parents aren’t coming! Make it different! I want You to make them come now. I’m not interested in any other plan – I’m not interested in accepting the painful truth, and allowing You to be with me and help me.”

Another way to put it is that in order to remain focused on my mother’s immediate presence as the only acceptable solution, I had to turn away from the Lord. In order to perceive the Lord’s presence and receive His comfort, I would have to turn my focus away from demanding my mother and turn towards the Lord.

At this point, I made the choices that He had been waiting for for 42 years. I chose to release my previous choice/vow “I will not accept any solution other than ‘here’s your mother,’” I chose to accept the painful truth, I chose to release and turn away from my demand that reality be different, and I chose to turn towards the Lord – to focus on Him, to allow Him to be with me, and to receive His comfort. As soon as I did this, I was able to perceive the Lord’s presence with me, in the memory and in the present, even as I was sitting in the overwhelming mess of the car. And this was BEFORE anything had worked out with respect to actually fixing the car.

This was something new for me. I was sitting there, feeling frustrated, over my head, and deeply disappointed in the natural, but *not* feeling triggered, hopeless, discouraged, overwhelmed, bitter, or alienated from the Lord. In fact, what *felt* true was “I don’t understand why You’re allowing this mess, and it’s really hard, but I know that You’re with me, and because of who You are, that’s enough.”

Another encouraging aspect of this whole story has to do with interactions between Charlotte and I. During previous episodes of being intensely triggered and getting tangled in the components of this pernicious blockage, I had often dumped my misery on Charlotte. As described in the example presented earlier, I would become increasingly unpleasant, argue with her about why my triggered thoughts and emotions were valid, expect her to do something to help me feel better, and then get angry at her and judge her if she *didn’t* help me feel better.



*And* I would defend all of this as reasonable behavior.

Our experience with this whole car scenario was different. As I was intensely triggered and tangled in the components of my pernicious blockage, I could *feel* the temptation to revert to my old, toxic patterns of behavior; but I could also *feel* the influence of the truth in my non-traumatic memory files. I could *feel* cognitive-semantic information about implicit memory phenomena helping me to recognize and own my tangle of triggered thoughts and emotions, and I could *feel* the new Immanuel truth especially helping to expose the anti-Immanuel beliefs and emotions for the triggered, implicit-memory content that they were. *I could feel the truth in my cognitive-semantic memories and in my non-traumatic experiential-learning memories helping me choose righteous behavior with respect to Charlotte.*

I was still miserably triggered and tangled in my pernicious blockage, but instead of dumping this mess on Charlotte, I was able to *own my* triggered thoughts and emotions, and to ask her for help in ways that were appropriate. She was very supportive and encouraging through the whole ordeal, and this helped me persist in wrestling with the car, and also helped me persist in turning to the Lord for help with my pernicious blockage tangle. It was inherently right and good for me to choose this new behavior, but I am guessing that the absence of inappropriate, toxic behavior from me made it easier for her to be supportive and encouraging, as opposed to triggered and adversarial.

#### **D. Summary regarding my experience as an example of an especially pernicious**

**blockage:** For those of you watching the video, if you want to engage more actively with the material, you can stop the tape here and take a little “self-test” – see if you can outline how the components of my experience fit into the framework of the especially pernicious blockage I discussed earlier.

For those of you who took the “self test,” here are the “answers at the back of the book”:

**First component – motivation:** The first component of my especially pernicious blockage was my *desire to avoid the painful truth*.

#### **Second component – choices/vows that directly block perceiving and/or receiving**

**Immanuel:** The second component of my especially pernicious blockage was *choosing* to demand that reality be different, and to focus on the immediate arrival of my parents as the only solution, instead of *choosing* to accept the painful truth, turn to the Lord, focus on Him, and receive His help.

**Specific anti-Immanuel beliefs and emotions (special ingredient #1):** This is one of the special ingredients that I especially want you to remember from my earlier discussion. The specific anti-Immanuel beliefs and emotions that were transferred onto the Lord – the beliefs and emotions that directly opposed Immanuel truth – were “*He’s not here,*” “*He won’t come,*” and “*I can’t trust His heart towards me,*” and the associated emotions of hopelessness, fear, and anger. These anti-Immanuel beliefs and emotions were certainly hindering me from exposing and dealing with *my* wrong choices, because instead of feeling hopeful, thinking “I know the Lord is with me, but I can’t perceive Him, so there must be something in the way,” and asking for His help to expose and resolve the blockage, I was believing these anti-Immanuel lies, losing much of my emotional energy to discouragement and anxiety, and focusing the rest of my energy and attention on being angry at the Lord for not being with me and not taking care of me.

**External-locus-of-control beliefs, emotions, and choices (Special ingredient #2):** This is the second special ingredient that I especially want you to remember from my earlier discussion, and it's the pernicious blockage component that's most often missed.

I'm sure many of you were able to spot this second special ingredient in my experience – the specific package of beliefs, emotions, and choices that are appropriate for a young child, but that become a sneaky, immobilizing trap when we bring them forward into our adult lives and transfer them onto the Lord:

*the beliefs* “it's the Lord's fault that I'm in pain, it's His responsibility to fix the problem, and it's reasonable for me to simply wait for Him to do something;”

*the associated emotions* of powerlessness and anger;

and *the associated choices* to “wait for Him to do something” (instead of actively turning to Him and asking for help).

This second-special-ingredient package of beliefs, emotions, and choices was certainly hindering me from exposing and dealing with *my* wrong choices, and *my* misplaced anti-Immanuel beliefs and emotions. *Believing* “it's the Lord's fault that I'm in pain, it's His responsibility to fix the problem, and it's reasonable for me to simply wait for Him to do something,” *feeling* powerless and angry, and *choosing* to “wait for Him to do His job” *are inherently incompatible* with submitting to the possibility that *my* wrong choices and *my* distorted beliefs are the real problem.

There are a lot of *false* dichotomies we can fall into, but this is a *true* dichotomy – you have to choose either one or the other. You cannot have external-locus-of-control beliefs and emotions **AND** truly submit to the possibility that *your* wrong choices and *your* distorted beliefs are the real problem.

When I was *believing* “It's the Lord's fault that I'm in pain, it's His responsibility to fix the problem, and it's reasonable for me to simply wait for Him to do something,” *feeling* powerless and angry, and *choosing* to wait sullenly for the Lord to do His job:

I was *not* able to think: “I know the Lord is good and that He's with me, but this doesn't *feel* true, so *I must be misplacing beliefs and emotions from somewhere else onto the Lord,*” or able to think “I know the Lord is here, *with me,* but I can't perceive His presence, so *I must be making choices that are blocking me from perceiving Him;*”

I was *not* able to pray: “Lord, please show me any choices *I am making* that are preventing me from perceiving Your presence and receiving Your help, please show me any misplaced beliefs that *I am transferring onto You;*”

I was *not* able to receive His guidance;

I was *not* able to revoke the choices that blocked my ability to perceive and receive His Immanuel presence;

and I was *not* able to receive His truth in the traumatic memories where my distorted beliefs and emotions were carried.

**Component #5:** Anger and bitterness transferred onto the Lord as the final “hardener of the

heart” was also certainly present in my experience.

**E. Summary of my experience as an example of the role of non-traumatic-memory truth in exposing and resolving pernicious blockages:** As described throughout the above narrative, it is clear that the meditating I had been doing on these Immanuel truths played an important role in exposing and neutralizing this pernicious tangle of beliefs, emotions, and choices that had hindered my ability to perceive the Lord’s presence and to receive His help. Truth in my non-traumatic memory files – truth from good teaching and truth from observing and hearing what the Lord said and did in other’s sessions – helped to *expose* the beliefs and emotions that I had transferred onto the Lord. These Immanuel truths were so compelling that when they came into conflict with the beliefs and emotions from my childhood memories, they were able to expose the distorted beliefs and emotions for what they were, even as the distorted beliefs and emotions were doing the classic implicit-memory thing of *feeling, subjectively intensely true in the present*. The strength of these Immanuel truths helped me choose to submit the triggered, distorted beliefs and emotions from my traumatic childhood memories to what I know is true in my non-traumatic memory files. The strength of the Immanuel truth in my non-traumatic memory files helped my whole mind choose a place of humility and submission in a new way, and this humility and submission made it possible for me to release the bitterness, ask for help, receive guidance, and then revoke the choices that had been preventing me from perceiving and receiving the Lord’s Immanuel presence.

Note that choosing to submit the beliefs and emotions from my traumatic childhood memories to the truth in my non-traumatic memory files was *not* what permanently resolved the distorted beliefs associated with my unresolved traumatic memories. Choosing to submit my distorted, trauma associated beliefs to the Immanuel truths in my normal belief memory system made it possible for me to release the bitterness, ask for help, receive guidance, and revoke the choices/vows that had been blocking me from perceiving His Immanuel presence. This then made it possible for me to perceive His presence and to receive His comfort *from the inside of the two-year-old memories*. And perceiving His presence and receiving His comfort *from the inside of the two-year-old memories* then permanently resolved the distorted trauma-anchored beliefs by replacing them with truth. For example, replacing “The Lord is not with me, and He won’t come even when I call,” with “He *is* with me, and He has always been with me;” and replacing “There’s no explanation for this, and I can’t trust His heart for me,” with “He has been here with help for me, but *my* own choices and bitterness were blocking the way. I *can* trust His heart for me.”

Note also that we’re *not* talking about using good teaching to reinforce denial. For example, I did *not say*: “This is what the Bible says is true, so I will just choose to believe,” *and then ignore my trauma-anchored beliefs and emotions to the contrary*. As just described, it was important for me to *choose* to hold onto the truth in my non-traumatic memory files, even when it didn’t *feel* true, AND it was *also* important to acknowledge my triggered childhood-memory beliefs and emotions, to *recognize them for what they were*, and then to cooperate with the Lord in working to resolve the underlying traumatic memories.

When I was in the furnace of a really difficult situation, where distorted beliefs and emotions from childhood memories *felt* true, having a truth anchor that was strong enough to hold helped me recognize the trauma-anchored beliefs and emotions for what they were, and helped me choose to cooperate with the Lord’s healing work.

Furthermore, when I was in the furnace of a really difficult situation, where distorted beliefs

and emotions from childhood memories *felt* true, having a truth anchor that was strong enough to hold helped me recognize my triggered, trauma-associated beliefs and emotions for what they were, and helped me choose righteous behavior in my relationship with Charlotte. As described above, in addition to being good and right, this made it easier for Charlotte to help me as I struggled with my intense triggering and with my pernicious blockage.

And here's the end of the story, and the *really* good news: when the old wounds are resolved, so that there are no distorted, trauma-associated beliefs and emotions opposing the truth, then the truth *feels* true, even in the furnace. It was good to be able to hold onto the truth, choose righteous behavior, and choose to cooperate with the Lord's healing work *even when I was miserably triggered in the middle of the car situation. But it was even better* to have an initial, spontaneous response of: "Wow. This is really a bad situation. But I know You're with me, Lord, and because of who You are, that's enough. I trust Your heart towards me, and feel safe in Your care, even in this furnace. Lord, show me how to cooperate with Your plan in this painful mess."

**IV. Summary/Conclusions:** We have been amazed and blessed by the healing power of Immanuel – the Lord's living presence, *with us* – and we have been sobered by the number of people we have worked with who have been stuck *for decades* with respect to certain important healing targets because of pernicious blockages that have prevented them from perceiving and receiving Immanuel. Being more aware of this kind of hindrance should help people to become aware of it, and compelling non-traumatic-memory truth about the presence and character of the Lord should help both to identify and to neutralize these blockages. Our teaching regarding trauma, triggering, implicit memory, and VLE confabulation (now presented in *Outsmarting Yourself*)<sup>45</sup> also provides non-traumatic-memory truth that will be helpful in both exposing and neutralizing pernicious blockages. Our hope is that these tools will be used to remove these hindrances that prevent so many from perceiving and receiving Immanuel – God *with us*.

---

<sup>45</sup>Karl Lehman, *Outsmarting Yourself* (Evanston, IL: This Joy! Books, 2014), pages 5 through 65.