**Emotionally Healthy Relationships - Week 2 - Become Self Aware (Good)**

**Introduction: “Tip of the Iceberg”**

How many of you are familiar with the term “the tip of the iceberg?” Raise your hands. Yes, it’s a very familiar term that we use when we want to point out that what you are seeing, hearing or experiencing is only about fraction of what is really happening. That what is happening on the surface is nothing compared to what is going on undernearth the surface. Like this iceberg. (pic of iceberg) Only 10% of this iceberg is actualy visible above the water, the other 90% of the iceberg is hidden below the surface.

Most of us are familiar with the phrase “tip of the iceberg” because of the story about the most famous iceberg...the one that sank the Titanic!

On April 14, 1912, one of the greatest tragedies in modern history unfolded as the Titanic unknowingly collided with a gigantic iceberg in the Northern Atlantic. The navigators on the Titanic saw a small iceberg from a distance and were sure they had steered clear and avoided it. But the navigators could only see 10% of the iceberg’s mass that was above the surface of the water. They only saw what? (“tip of the iceberg”). The result? The death of 1635 people!

The truth is our relationships are a lot like an iceberg. Maybe 10% of what is going on lies at the surface. This is what we say and what we do. However, every one of us has stuff going on below the surface. Most of our emotions and motivations lie below the surface and many times we are unaware of them.

And here is why today’s talk is so important -- many people shipwreck their relationships because we ignore the emotions and motivations that are going on below the surface in our relationships.

And we do all sorts of things to avoid dealing with our emotions...

* We make different friends.
* We change churches.
* We go through a divorce.
* We lose ourselves in an addiction.

Why? Because we only acknowledge the 10% of what is going on above the surface and we ignore the 90% of what is going on emotionally below the surface! And switching friends, churches or partners can be like switching chairs on the Titanic. It’s not going to matter or make any difference. You are still on the Titanic and still headed toward that giant iceberg!

So please hear me on this -- unprocessed emotions don’t die. They get buried alive. If emotions aren’t properly acknowledged, they will find a way to come to the surface…and when they do it often at inopportune times and in very destructive and deadly ways.

To have emotionally healthy relationships we must deal with what is below the surface and honestly examine our emotions and motivations, so that we can fully love others the way God wants us to.

**EHR Series Recap**

And that is what makes this Emotionally Healthy Relationship series we are doing together so important! All of us experience disappointments in relationships. All of us long for healthy, meaningful relationships. But the reason we rarely experience what we long for has nothing to do with the 10% of what is on the surface – that’ just the “tip of the iceberg” - but the 90% that is below the surface.

Our goal is that by the end of this series we wll all learn how to better love the people God has placed in our lives. Because nothing is more important than growing in our ability to love well! When Jesus was asked to identify the single most important commandment, he said, “Love God, Love People.” (Matthew 22:37-39). The single most important mark of a growing Christ-follower is a deepening love for God and a deepening love for people.

Here is my challenge for you today and throughout this series – be courageous enough to look below the surface in your relationships and recognize what is going on inside you (not them, but you!) that is keeping your relationships becoming all that God meant for them to be! As you do that, we will give you 5 relational skills, one each week, that will help you have emotionally healthy relationships. Todays relational skill is Becoming Self-Aware.

**Defining Self-Aware**

Now, about this time some of you might be thinking, *“Under the surface... tip of the iceberg…the other 90%?? This sounds like pyschological mumbo-jumbo?!?”* Well, just to remind you how important it is to be self-aware, let’s go back to this classic scene from the Academy Award winning movie *Inside Out.*

(Video: <https://www.rewriting-the-rules.com/self/inside-out-getting-in-touch-with-your-emotions/>)

To be self-aware simply means knowing and understanding your emotions and ~~you’re~~ your motivations. (Self-aware = Knowing your Emotions and Motivations) And everyone of us has a choice when it comes to this conversation and we all fall into one of 3 categories:

1. Resistant - This is the person who just will not go there. You are defiant and thinking, *“I’m not going to do all this touchy feely stuff and you can’t make me!”* My experience is that most often this reaction is because we are afraid of what we might discover. I get it. I’m a guy. I’d rather watch sports than talk about this – but I know if I don’t deal with it I will pay the price. If you are resistent to this conversation, please give it a chance and lean in.
2. Resigned – The other reaction I often see to this conversation is the person who is just giving up. They will say something like, “It’s just how I am. It’s how I will always be.” They may be aware of emotions, but are not interested in exploring why they feel what they feel and consequently not interested in changing them.
3. Resolved – This is how I’m challenging you to respond today. With resolve say, “I’m ready.” This is the person ready to go there and do the hard work. I’m resolved that I want emotionally healthy relationships. My friends are worth it. My family is worth it. My marriage is worth it! And this is one more way I can apprentice in the ways of Jesus.

**Jesus was Self-Aware**

Let’s take a look at the life of the most self-aware person who ever lived!

Jesus, who was divine, and also fully human, walked this earth with all the same emotions as you and I. He experienced and expressed the full range of emotions that you and I have. He was not ashamed of His emotions. He was not controlled by His emotions. He did not project His emotions on others. Jesus showed real self-awareness! Let’s take a look at a few examples.

**Add Jesus Felt Anger**

Jesus spent a lot of time among people from all walks of life. We read that Jesus has compassion on the crowds in several places, we see how he heals the sick in many of the communities he visits, and we see how reaches out to those that are far from God in several places. But there are some groups he grows weary of – or probably more accurately - tick him off – those are the Pharisees and the Sadducees.

The Pharisees and Sadducees were religious leaders of the Jewish people during Jesus' day. Most of the Jewish people during that time believed their religious practices held importance over every part of their lives. Therefore, the Pharisees and Sadducees each held a lot of power and influence over not just the religious lives of the Jewish people, but their finances, their work habits, their family lives, and more. Both the Pharisees and Sadducees both made it their business to create hundreds of extra instructions and stipulations based on their interpretations of God's laws. These extras distorted God’s laws and were becoming quite burdensome to the people. And it ticked Jesus off. He didn’t go behind the Pharisees and Sadducees’ backs – he was upfront and direct with his feelings. Matthew 23 includes His exchange with them and with the crowds following Him. *“Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples:****‘****The teachers of the law and the Pharisees sit in Moses’ seat. So you must be careful to do everything they tell you. But do not do what they do, for they do not practice what they preach. They tie up heavy, cumbersome loads and put them on other people’s shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to lift a finger to move them.’” Matthew 23:1-4*

Later in that same passage He says this, *“Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You shut the door of the kingdom of heaven in people’s faces. You yourselves do not enter, nor will you let those enter who are trying to.”*[Matthew 23:13](http://www.biblestudytools.com/search/?t=niv&q=mt+23:13)

He continues to let them have it as recorded throughout this chapter of Matthew. In addition to calling them hypocrites, He calls them blind guides, snakes, a brood of vipers, and even sons of hell. There’s no denying it - Jesus is angry. (Anger)

But this was not about Himself - while it could have been because the religious leaders had been trying to entrap Him for awhile, in this case it was because the religious leaders were placing unnecessary burdens on people Jesus loved – and it made it him angry! He didn’t stuff it, He didn’t decide it wasn’t worth the fuss, He expressed it in no uncertain terms.

**Add Jesus Felt Sad**

In another instance Jesus shares more straightforward words. While visiting some friends’ home, he is chatting with Mary, one of the women who lived there, when her sister, Martha, who has been fretting and fussing in the kitchen charges in and blurts out to Jesus, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!" Luke 10:40

Jesus replies, “Martha, Martha, you are worried and upset about many things,but few things are needed—or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her.” (Luke 10:41)

I’ve often read Jesus’s reply to her as being said with a tone of disappointment. But as I’ve come to know and understand Jesus more, I’ve come to realize that it was said with sadness (Sad) toward Martha as Jesus wants the best for Martha! He is sad that Martha feels she has to earn His approval with all the fuss, and in love He expresses and shares that sadness with her. He speaks the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15) because He is sad that she is living in a way that is not best for her. Being self aware, Jesus didn’t make it about Martha “attacking” Him, in love; He makes it about what’s best for Martha.

**Add Jesus Felt Fear**

While Jesus spent much of His time meeting the needs of others, He also had no problem ~~expresses~~ expressing His own emotions – including anxiety. (Fear) On the night he was to be betrayed, He went to the Garden of Gethsemane, knowing what was ahead of Him, He began to pray, *“Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Yours be done…And being in* ***agony*** *He was praying very fervently; and His* ***sweat*** *became like drops of blood, falling down upon the ground. Luke 22:41, 43,44* He didn’t deny His emotions or hide them from His Father – instead He expressed them and cried out for help!

**Add Jesus Felt Glad (Grateful?)**

One last way that Jesus expressed healthy self-awareness was through expressing gratitude. (Glad)

Full of joy through the Spirit? Luke 10:21

Jesus lived a life of thankfulness to God.  He expressed his thanks privately and He expressed his thanks to God publicly for the benefit of others that they too might learn to be grateful to God (John 11:41-42).

Jesus appreciated God as the Father who watched over all his creation, even the little sparrows thought to be of little value. He thanked him for providing food (Luke 24:30), for listening to him (John 11:41), and for the opportunity to minister to others (Matthew 14:19, 15:36).

Jesus began and ended his prayers with words of thanks and praise to his father. He even thanked God for the opportunity to sacrifice his life for the world (Matthew 26:26-27). Being self-aware includes recognizing and being grateful for all the gifts from God. And being grateful for the fact that He provides for us, that He sustains us, and that He has a good purpose for us. Expressing gratitude is important to becoming a self-aware person that loves God and loves others.

**Challenge: Get Honest with Yourself**

As Christ followers our goal is to become more like Jesus and that means becoming more self-aware. Being aware of the emotions we experience and not just what shows on the surface, but what’s behind them. This is not about becoming self-absorbed – actually it’s quite the opposite. It’s about becoming more self-aware, so that we can love God and love others better.

We would like to give you an opportunity to become more self-aware right now! Let me start by saying that if you have been sitting here this whole time thinking, “I wish so and so were here to hear this,” then my bet is you have some work to do in the area of self-awareness – just sayin’!

**Iceberg handout with 4 Questions**

*(Lead people into a response time where you give them some space to reflect on the following 4 questions and write on the iceberg handout.)*

You were given a handout when you came in today. On there are four questions to reflect on. I’m going to read through these and give you some time to think about each one and respond.

* What are you angry about? Is there something unresolved from your past? Did you walk in here today angry about something that happened at home, work, or school this week? Add instructional words for each of these. (PAUSE)
* What are you sad about? Are you walking through a disappointing season? Did you get passed up for an opportunity you were hoping for? Are you missing someone you love?

(PAUSE)

What are you anxious about? Did you take a hit when the stock market plunged? Are you waiting on some test results that have you worried? Are there conflicts happening in your family that you are not sure what to do about? (PAUSE) Decide on fear or anxious.

* What are you grateful for? Family? Friends? Your church? An opportunity? (PAUSE)

It is important to give ourselves time and space to ask and reflect on these types of questions.

Jesus was fully human and experienced all the emotions that we experience, but as fully self aware, he expressed them in healthy ways that were always in line with His purpose of loving God and loving others.

**Conclusion: Daily Self-Awareness**

Before we wrap this up, I want to challenge you to not make this a one time event where you pause for few minutes to look below the surface and ask, “What am I angry, sad, anxious and glad about?” This is something we can do everyday.

There are two questions I have started trying to ask myself everyday. I force myself to write them in my daily journal and then write a response. I got these two questions from one of the most spiritually mature people I know. Everyday he asks himself these two questions as he starts the day:

1. How am I feeling right now? Let’s focus on these… There are only about 4 primary emotions: Anger, sad, anxious and glad. Identify which one’s you are feeling at that moment.
   1. Add the four emotion bullets under this heading.
2. Why do I feel this way? Then ask yourself why you are feeling that way! Often it will become clear that it goes back to a previous experience or interaction. One that you might be hanging onto. And if you feel certain emotions over and over and you don’t know why – it’s a sign you may need to get some outside help! Talk to a trusted friend or see a counselor.

Please remember – this is not an exercise in self-indulgence. This is not about becoming preoccupied and focused on ourselves. This is about you and me understaning who we are SO THAT we can love others the way God intended us to. And so that we can apprentice in the ways of Jesus by growing in our love for others.

The Gospel frees us to

* Be mad about the things that make God angry
* Be sad about…
* Be grateful for…

Jesus shows us that we can live in step with the Spirit instead of being enslaved to our emotions.

* Bring back 10/90 language
* The cross frees us to live without shame and guilt

Pray after communion prep

Prayer team emphasis?

**Communion Idea:**

Even in the midst of extreme pain and exhaustion Jesus stayed true to Who He was and His calling.  He was able to stay true to His motivation in some extreme circumstances.  While Jesus was on the cross the chief priests and elders continued to mock Him and challenge Him.  They said things like – “He saved other, but can’t save himself.  Come down from the cross and then we will believe in you.”

Remember Jesus was fully human, so perhaps there was a moment where He was tempted to “show them.”  But Jesus was so aware of the truth of who he was and whose opinion mattered most, that even in those hard moments he stayed true to his call – which allowed him to pay a price for the times we have not stayed true …  the times we gave into the temptation to “show them” with our actions or words – actions or words that do not honor others or God.  Because Jesus knew the supreme calling of loving God and others he stayed on that cross when he could have come down – and He said, “Father forgive them because they know not what they do…”