

Practice Guides
Emotionally Healthy Relationships Pt. 2 (11/15/20)

Sharing Your Story

“Your story can shape how you see your reality. Your reality can become your frame of reference, influencing how you know, experience, and respond to life.”

- Robert Cheong

It's impossible to be spiritually mature while being emotionally immature. But emotional maturity requires us to learn and develop critical skills to love God and others well. One of the most powerful skills we can develop is understanding our story and its effects on our relationships with God, self, and others.

Together we want to invite God into the process of understanding our past so that we can learn, grow, and be healed as we live into our future. Exploring our past and sharing your story in a safe and supportive community is an essential building block to becoming a wholehearted community.

Below you will find an abbreviated version of how you can share your stories in your Missional Community or Discipleship Group. This could take your group several weeks for everyone to share, so take your time. But if your group would prefer to go through a more robust version of sharing your stories or other self-awareness other tools, please skip to the last page.

There are 4 critical steps to sharing your story:

- 1- Exploring Your Story
- 2- Sharing Your Story
- 3- Listening to Others Story
- 4- Next Steps

Exploring Your Story: Adapted From Robert Cheong's "Restore - Facing Reality Through Story"

Pray: Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you and comfort you as you explore your past.

Remember: Create a timeline highlighting the most influential events, experiences, and relationships in your life. (This should be a diverse list of positives, negatives, joys, and pains.)

Reflect: Explore the most significant 3-5 events, experiences, and relationships of your past by asking these questions:

How did those events, experiences, or relationships you impact you?

What did "X" teach you about God?

What did "X" you about yourself

What did "X" teach you about others?

Do you notice any repeated themes or narratives that shape/impact your life today?

Recap: After exploring your past, synthesize your story into a narrative of themes, experience, and relationships that had the most significant impact on you. You will not be able to cover everything, but consider journaling through your story in one of these ways:

Crafting an outline with subpoints of impact

Write your story as though a 3rd party had interviewed you for a newspaper article.

Journal through dominant themes that shape you today.

Sharing Your Story: Everyone gets ten uninterrupted minutes to share their story in a small group in this format, followed by 5 minutes of questions from your group.

1. Pray
2. Share a brief overarching time-timeline of your life, including the 3-5 of the most influential themes, relationships, or experiences from your life.
3. Summarize how your past has shaped your view of God, Yourself, and others.
4. How do you see the impact of your past still impacts your life today?
5. Ask if anyone has any questions.

Listening to Others Story: This is a time for seeking understanding and empathy, not correction or fixing problems. Listen with loving curiosity to understand their reality, pain, joys, and fears. Consider following these principles while someone sharing their story with you:

- Listen more than talk
- Be curious to understand more
- Expect to hear hard things
- Make empathy your aim (celebrate joys/express sadness for pains)
- Ask questions for a better understanding
- Thank every person for sharing

Next Steps: It may take you several meetings to get through everyone. But once everyone has shared their story, celebrate what you learned about yourself, about God, and about the others in your group. Consider following this format:

1. What did you learn about yourself?
2. What did you learn about God?
3. What did you learn about others in this group?
4. How will this better help us to better practice the way of Jesus together?
5. Where do we go from here? (Resume normal rhythms or explore next steps resources below)

Other Resources for Sharing Your Story

Jon Tyson- Mountains & Valleys: [Link](#)

Emotionally Healthy Relationship Course: [Link](#)

Emotionally Healthy Spirituality Course: [Link](#)

Relational Soul: [Link](#)

Robert Cheongs' "Facing Reality through my Story": [Link](#)