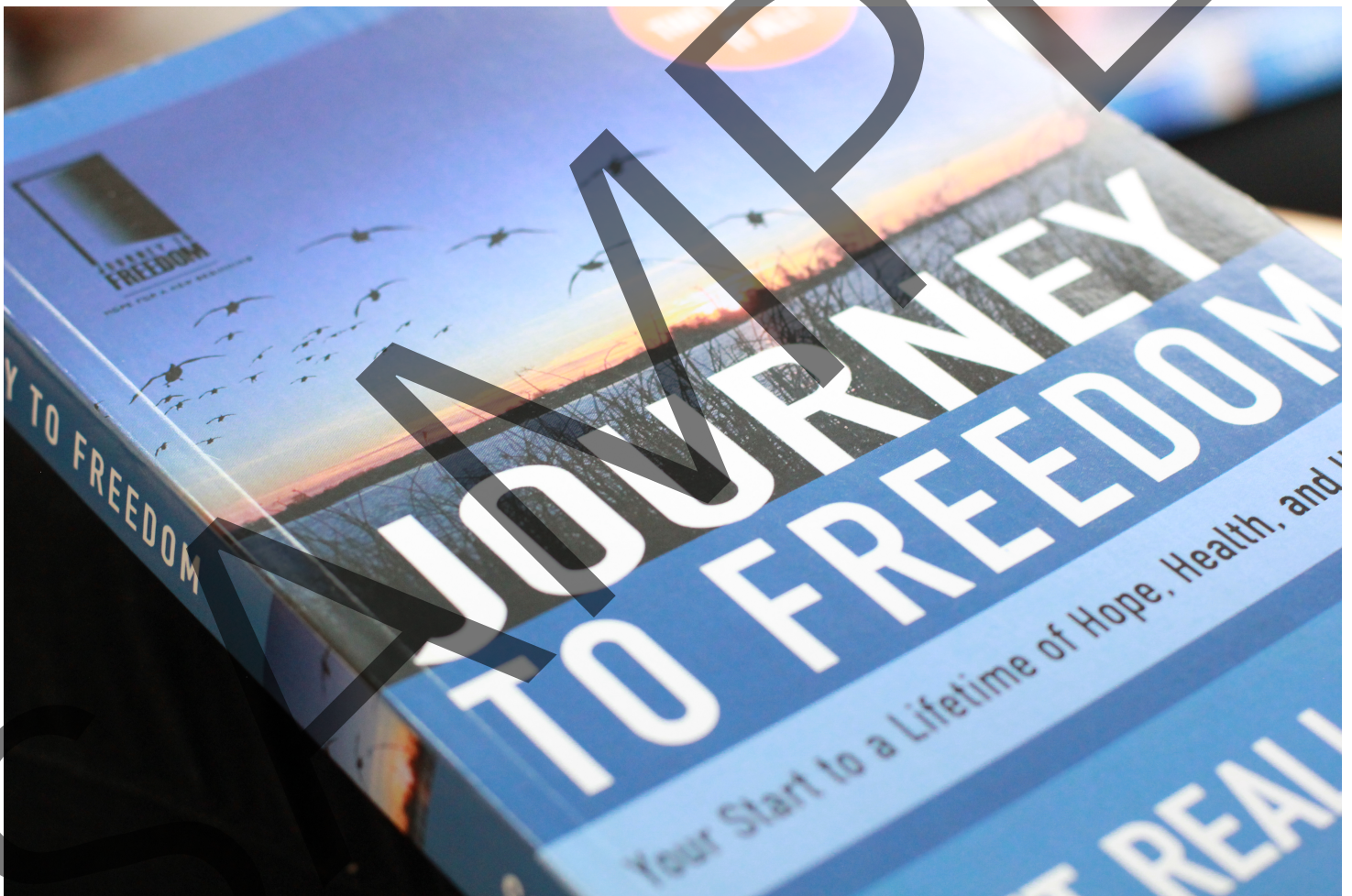




YOUR GUIDE TO FACILITATING
JOURNEY TO FREEDOM



"JOURNEY TO FREEDOM" IS DESIGNED TO BE LED BY CERTIFIED FACILITATORS WHO HAVE BEEN TRAINED IN ACCORDANCE WITH BEST PRACTICES BY RESTORE SMALL GROUPS.

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Journey to Freedom - Week 2

The Facilitator Mindset

Topic: Defining Hope

Objective: To introduce the concept of true hope, to build self-awareness around the need for change, and discover the gift of feelings on the journey.

This week, we introduce participants to the concept of true hope. True hope is described as open-ended and as belief existing outside of circumstances (p. 11). We introduce true hope by first allowing group members to evaluate how they currently view hope in their lives. It is the human condition to desire certain outcomes for our lives; to wish that some things could happen and to wish that other things might not happen. True hope exists above circumstance. True hope is trust that God is always faithful to our needs.

Romans 5: 2b-4 says, "We boast in the hope of the glory of God. Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope."

In Days 1 and 2, we are told the stories of Luther Gulick and James Naismith (p. 3-4) inventing basketball at the YMCA, and Michelangelo carving an angel out of stone (p. 5). Both of these stories speak to what it means to have hope rooted in God's vision and possibility for our lives; to find newness in the ordinary; to be open to guidance by a force outside our own will. We want to start orienting participants towards the possibility of life change rooted in this hope. They will need help from God and from others on the journey. A supportive community will help make change concrete rather than theory.

The key concept for this week comes from the story of Jesus talking to the paralyzed man at the Pool of Bethesda (p. 7). In this story, Jesus asks the man, "Do you want to be made well?" It is a question with deep roots. The paralyzed man has spent thirty-eight years in his current state. In being made well, the man's whole life will change. Yes, he will be able to walk, but he will also have to be responsible for himself in a new way. Jesus is asking, "Is this really what you want?" This is the same question Jesus is asking us all. He will make us well, but do we really want Him to?

If we can embrace true hope and the desire to be made well, then that leads us to vision. In Days 3 and 4, we are planting the seeds of vision for participants. In Day 3, we emphasize striving to end normality and to make life better, not perfect. The story of Charles Steinmetz (p. 14-15) pinpointing the place on the machine that is broken is a wonderful analogy for our own journey. We must place the "X" on our broken parts. If we cannot name our brokenness, we cannot redeem it.

There are some important concepts participants must learn to move toward a new vision. The first is that willpower does not sustain change. Instead, we must learn to "train" rather than

simply “try”. Change takes time and discipline. We will fail and learn from those failures. We must not disqualify the positive strides we make in learning to change. We must move away from living our lives to please others toward a more intrinsic motivation.

In Day 5 and 6, we move participants toward finding their emotional voice. It will be absolutely crucial on their journey. We must exemplify the value of feeling rather than numbing and embracing all the emotions as healthy, normal, and acceptable. As group members continue each week to express their feelings, remarkable change can occur. As facilitator, you may begin to see true joy (gladness) emerge just through the simple exercise of the Feelings Check-In. In valuing their feelings, group members will begin to value themselves more. Feelings are the gateway to honesty, integrity, and abandoning our false selves.

Supporting Quotes:

“We live in a world where people don’t know much about hope. We know about wishes. The whole Christmas period is full of wishes. I wish this, or I want that. It’s very concrete: I want a toy or a car or a new job. These are all very specific requests. But hope is precisely to say, ‘I don’t know how God is going to fulfill His promises, but I know that He will, and therefore I can live in the present with the knowledge that He is with me.’ I can then know and trust that the deepest desires of my being will be fulfilled. This way keeps the future very open... Hope is to open yourself up to let God do his work in you in ways that transcend your own imagination. As Jesus said, ‘When you were young you put your belt on and went where you wanted to go. But when you grow spiritually old, then you stretch out your hands and let others and God lead you where you rather wouldn’t go.’ That’s hope, to let yourself be led to new places.”

-Henri Nouwen, Henri Nouwen (edited by Robert A. Jonas), p. 35-36

“Statistics dictate that there are very few people who haven’t been affected by addiction. I believe we all numb our feelings. We may not do it compulsively and chronically, which is addiction, but that doesn’t mean that we don’t numb our sense of vulnerability. And numbing vulnerability is especially debilitating because it doesn’t just deaden the pain of our difficult experiences, numbing vulnerability also dulls our experiences of love, joy, belonging, creativity, and empathy. We can’t selectively numb emotion. Numb the dark and you numb the light.”

-Brené Brown, Daring Greatly, p. 137

Discussion Guide - Week 2: Days 1-6 (Pages 3-50)

A Note from Scott Reall - "How we define hope will have a huge impact on our lives. Most people have a dysfunctional definition of hope because it is tied to circumstances, instead of in the goodness of God."

"Moment of Hope" Video Content - www.vimeo.com/restoresmallgroups

- Defining Hope
- Answering the question, "Do you want to be made well?"

You will not have time to revisit the longer explanations of the Process of Attachment, Group Guidelines or Feelings Chart from Week 1. Make sure to give a brief explanation of Guidelines and the Feelings Chart to anyone who has joined in Week 2. Offer to answer any questions .

Circumstantial hope example: I am hoping that I get accepted to medical school because my dream is to be a doctor. And if I don't, I will be devastated . I have no other plans.

True hope example: I am hoping to get accepted to medical school, but if I don't, I will need to find the right place for my interest and gifts, with God's help.

We recommend asking the most profound questions in group in "go-around" (GAQ) format. This means intentionally giving all the group members a chance to answer.

INTRODUCTION

- Welcome everyone back to group
- Have participants re-introduce themselves for anyone who might be new
- Have the group re-read the group guidelines
- Give quick reminder of how to do a feelings check, and allow everyone to check in with their name and feeling(s)
- Allow time for elaboration on feelings to anyone willing to share

KEY CONTENT:

Q: In the reading, what spoke to you this week?



TOPIC 1: HOPE AND CHANGE (Days 1-2 Pages 3-16)

JOURNEY TO FREEDOM SAYS:

"Hope is a fundamental part of change. Henri Nouwen writes, 'Hope is trusting that something will be fulfilled, but fulfilled according to the promises and not just according to our wishes. Therefore hope is always open-ended.' Hope believes in spite of circumstances. Hope is open to change. It is not dedicated to doing the same things over and over again with the same old results. Hope thinks new thoughts." (11)

Q: What does hope mean to you?

Q: Can anyone share an example of circumstantial hope?

GAQ: What is something you've been hoping for? Is this a true hope or a wish?

Q: If your hope is actually a wish, what would it look like to change that wish into hope? How would that look different in your life?

JOURNEY TO FREEDOM SAYS:

“One day Pope Julius II watched Michelangelo hammering away at a slab of marble. ‘Why are you working so hard?’ he asked. Michelangelo replied, ‘Can’t you see there’s an angel imprisoned in this block of stone? I’m working as hard as I can to set him free.’ Inside us is the person we were meant to be. We only need to chip away the parts that keep us in bondage to fear, to addictions, to low self-esteem, to feeling unworthy to be loved by God and others. Change is what happens when we break free from these hindrances.” (5)

Q: What does this story (angel in the stone) imply about the process of change? (change takes vision and might be painful)

JOURNEY TO FREEDOM SAYS:

“We must consider whether we want to take concrete steps toward change. Christ asked the same question of the paralyzed man at the Pool of Bethesda. He asked ‘Do you want to be made well?’ (John 5:6) He did not doubt the man’s sincerity. He’d been lying by the pool for thirty-eight years. The paralytic man thought that he wanted to be made well, but Christ was asking something different. In essence, he was saying, ‘A healing will change your life. You will have to get a job to support yourself. You will have to learn a new way of life.’ Christ was not questioning the theory of healing, but the concrete steps that he’s have to take to enjoy his freedom. At some point, healing and growth require concrete steps.” (7)

Q: Why did Jesus, who had the ability to heal, ask the man at the pool if he “wants to get well”? What will change about this man’s life if he says ‘yes’?

GAQ: How would you respond if Christ asked you personally, “Do you want to be made well?” If you said yes, what would be different about your life?

JOURNEY TO FREEDOM SAYS:

Charles Steinmetz was an electrical engineer genius who worked for General Electric in the early part of the twentieth century. After his retirement, they called him in because the other engineers were baffled about the breakdown of a complex of machines. They asked Steinmetz to pinpoint the problem. He walked around the machines for a while, then took a piece of chalk out of his pocket and made a big cross mark on one particular machine. When the engineers disassembled that part of the machine, it turned out to be the precise location of the breakdown. A few days later, the engineers received a bill from Steinmetz for \$10,000—a staggering sum in those days. They asked him to itemize it, and he returned the bill with a note that read: Making one cross mark: \$1.00. Knowing where to put it: \$9,999.00. Changing our lives always starts with putting the cross mark on the right spot. (14)

CONNECTING CONCEPTS: Without hope, there is no vision for the future. They are intertwined. We will need to go through a process to discover that vision by evaluating our current thoughts and feelings, challenging what we have come to accept as normal, and learning to reframe failure as a way to learn more about ourselves.

GAQ: If someone instructed you to mark an X on each part of your life that needs improvement, where would you put the X(s)?
Q: How long have you been thinking about changing these areas of your life?

Q: Have you lost hope that these areas can change? Why?



TOPIC 2: VISION (Day 3 Pages 17-24)

JOURNEY TO FREEDOM SAYS:

"A recent television program showed a method for trapping monkeys. The natives made a hole in a log and put bait inside. The hole was just big enough to allow the monkey room to get his opened hand inside the log. The monkey reached his hand in to get the bait, but when his fingers closed on it he couldn't get his fist back through the hole. The monkey was determined to hang on to what he had, and soon he was captured, trapped by his own greed. We are much like this monkey when we hold onto a life of normality. We fail to do the one thing that would free us, which is to let go and try a new way of life." (19)

Q: Why do we have a hard time letting go of some things, even when we know they are bad for our lives?

Q: What are some things in your life that you feel trapped by?

Q: What has been your "normal" up to now?



TOPIC 3: TRAINING NOT TRYING (Day 4 Pages 25-32)

JOURNEY TO FREEDOM SAYS:

"Willpower is an element of change, but it is not the deciding factor. The way we overcome the self-defeating behavior of giving up is to *train*, not to *try*. Training versus trying is the key to success. John Ortberg writes, "Spiritual transformation is not a matter of trying harder, but of training wisely...There is an immense difference between training to do something and trying to do something." When we try to change and do not succeed, we tend to give up after a few attempts. But when we train to do something, we set our minds on learning. No matter how many times we fail, we see ourselves as being one step closer to succeeding. An Olympic athlete doesn't just show up and try really hard on the day of an event. She trains her spirit, mind and body long before the Olympics even begin. Trying is the raw use of willpower, nothing more. Training is learning the life skills needed for long-term change." (26)

Q: What might be a first step for you to grow in spirit, body or mind?

Q: What do you see as the difference between trying to change and training for change? In what areas do you try and in what areas do you train?

CONNECTING CONCEPTS:
Part of ending normality and moving toward hope and vision is learning to observe our feelings and to understand them. We must also learn to lean into our pain rather than away from it. The more we try to avoid our pain, the more stuck we become in unhealthy behaviors. There are many real and valid reasons we may want to avoid our pain. In group, we have a chance to process it safely and with compassion.



TOPIC 4: THE GIFT OF FEELINGS (Day 5 Pages 33-43)

JOURNEY TO FREEDOM SAYS:

"We all struggle with our feelings on a daily basis. Most of us are afraid to feel our feelings because of what we think it means or what might happen. We also have been taught that some feelings are bad, and we shouldn't feel them. Feelings are not bad; it is the actions that sometimes result when we experience a feeling that can push us to anxiety, depression, isolation, confusion and self-destructive outlets. Our journey to freedom must take us through our feelings. Our feelings must be embraced and be processed if we are to find freedom and fullness of life. When we avoid our feelings, we are going to stay stuck." (34-35)

Q: What feelings have you been avoiding or suppressing because of the pain that comes with them?

Q: Which feelings do you have the hardest time seeing as beneficial?

Q: How could understanding your feelings help your relationships?



TOPIC 5: THE IMPORTANCE OF PAIN (Day 6 Pages 44-49)

JOURNEY TO FREEDOM SAYS:

"In the book, *Voyage of the Dawn Treader*, C.S. Lewis introduces a character named Eustace—a disagreeable boy who seems to delight in being a nuisance. He travels to Narnia, a fantasy world, and finds himself in a dragon's cave filled with treasure. Eustace falls asleep on the dragon's hoard and wakes up to find he has turned into a dragon. Eustace wants to be himself again. However, he is at a loss as to how he can get rid of the dragon shell. Eustace attempts three times to peel off his scaly skin, but each time he is just as rough and wrinkled as before. He realizes that he must let Aslan, the lion, take his skin off, but he is afraid that the lion's claws will hurt. However, Eustace's desire to change outweighs the fear of the pain. Eustace describes the way that Aslan tore off the dragon skin: 'The very first tear he made was so deep that I thought it had gone right to my heart. And when he began pulling the skin off, it hurt worse than anything I've ever felt. The only thing that made me able to bear it was just the pleasure of feeling the stuff peel off...And there I was as smooth and soft as a peeled switch and smaller than I had been. Then he caught hold of me—I didn't like that much for I was very tender underneath now that I'd no skin on—and threw me into the water. It smarted like anything but only for a moment. After that, it became perfectly delicious and as soon as I started swimming and splashing I found all the pain had gone.'" (47-48)

Q: What are the “tender” parts of yourself that you have covered with a “thick skin” so they do not get hurt?

Q: In what ways and in what places do you present your covered or false self to the world? Why?

Q: What fears do you have around revealing your true self?

FINAL QUESTION:

Based on what you have shared here today, name one thing that you need for yourself in this moment and going forward into the week.

CLOSING

- Assign homework for next week: Read Journey to Freedom Days 7-12 and answer the reflection questions.
- Let participants know that Week 3 is a very important week in this process and to make every effort to attend.
- Say the Serenity Prayer together.

Serenity Prayer: God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things that I can and the wisdom to know the difference.

SAMPLE