

Chicago West Clergy Wives Peer Learning Group

Session 2:

4 hours

Theme: Vulnerability, Joy

Schedule for the Day (Actual)

1. Prayer and Silence
  2. Review Charter (5 minutes)
  3. General check in. How's everyone been doing since we last talked? Any major changes or challenges? Any significant life events? What's new??
  4. Check in regarding COVID--do we want to talk about the impact on our lives or do we want this to be a space where we don't have to think about it for a day? If yes, (20 minutes)
    - a. what has been the hardest?
    - b. What has been a blessing in disguise?
    - c. how have you changed during this time if at all? For better or for worse?
    - d. how can this group help one another?
  5. Lunch and Table Topics (Table Topics is a conversation starter card game that can be purchased on Amazon)
  6. Show Brene Brown Power of vulnerability. <https://youtu.be/iCvmsMzIF7o>
  7. Discuss throughout. 1:15 minutes
    - a. In order to truly have connection we have to allow ourselves to be seen When are you most likely to let yourself be seen? What makes you want to hide in the corner? (this was a lengthy discussion)
    - b. Reflect on courage (to be imperfect), compassion (for themselves first), connections (as a result of authenticity)
    - c. POST Questions: Dr. Brown defined the the following strategies we use in our attempt to eliminate or minimize the feeling of vulnerability:
      - We NUMB it (e.g., over-spending, over-eating, over-medicating). The problem is, we cannot selectively numb our emotions. When we numb negative feelings (vulnerability, grief, shame, fear, disappointment) we numb positive ones, too (joy, gratitude, happiness, love).
      - We make things CERTAIN. We don't leave room for ambiguity or uncertainty in our opinions and beliefs.
      - d. ● We PERFECT. We attempt to remove or replace perceived imperfections in our lives and in our children's lives.
      - e. ● We PRETEND. We act as though we are not responsible for the way our lives affect others instead of accepting responsibility, especially when we have caused hurt.
- Reflection...
- Which of these do you tend to use most often?
  - List some examples of the ways you've used that strategy in order to minimize feelings of personal vulnerability.

- Are you aware of ways in which those choices and behaviors have had negative impact on any relationships? If so, how?

Dr. Brown suggests "another way" of dealing with vulnerability:

- To let ourselves be seen, deeply and vulnerably.
- To love with our whole hearts, even when there is no guarantee.
- To practice gratitude and joy, even in moments of fear and uncertainty.
- To believe "I am enough."

Reflection...

- Do any of these challenges stir a longing in you to be more like that? If so, take the risk of being vulnerable and TALK about it with someone.

8. break 10 minutes

9. What's the difference between joy and happiness?

10. What brings you true joy? What takes your joy away?

11. Play Paul Karos on Joy played 23:00-30 (the end of the talk) <https://youtu.be/dTsTK68vRIg>

- Have you thought about ways to put joy into practice?
- Brainstorm some ways to put joy into practice. Do you have particular ways that you put joy into practice?
- Clear conscience/forgiveness; believe and trust that good can come from anything and we can grow; be thankful and grateful for what we already have; sacrifice for others in humility and love. What do you think of these?
- Share about the Putting Joy into Practice book
- Kh Phoebe notes to practice joy we: 1.praying the hours, visiting the sick, repentance, giving thanks, hospitality, arrow prayers, singing praise to God.
- What practices do you have or aim to have or wish you could establish for practicing gratitude and thanksgiving?
- Big blessings** (things we are deeply grateful for, such as people we love, times our loved ones were saved from death, etc), **daily blessings** (special things we noticed today, kindness others have done for us today, etc), **invisible blessings** (what she describes as the 99% of things that almost always go right, but which we don't usually notice, such as good health or people who work hard and do right), and last are the **challenge blessings** (the painful things we wish would go away. It's hard to thank God for them, but we are called to thank God for everything—even the challenges). **Go ahead and take 5 minutes or so to journal right now. (did the journaling for 5 minutes, but specifically did not share)**
- What about hospitality--why would hospitality bring joy?
- 1."It might be said that Mary herself offered the first act of hospitality to the Lord. Her acceptance of God's will allowed Him to dwell in her, and

through her enter the world and dwell in all of us....The Theotokos' acceptance of the will of God at the Annunciation birthed more acts of hospitality, and with every act JOY. Upon learning of her cousin Elizabeth's pregnancy, Mary, pregnant herself, travels to her home to serve her. When she arrives, Elizabeth tells her, "As soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy (Luke 1:44). Everywhere Christ is present there is joy, even when he was in the womb of his mother. **And thus, in the very definition of hospitality in Christianity, opening the doors of our homes to others is opening our doors to God Himself.**"

- j. What do you think of that quote? Someone want to reflect on that?
  - k. Who do you know who might be in need of hospitality right now? Are you in need of that hospitality and who can you reach out to to receive it?
  - l. How can we share hospitality during COVID?
  - m. Kh. Phoebe says singing praises to God give joy. What songs bring you joy? Make you feel that deep down in your soul joy? Church or not. Can use youtube to play them.
12. Break
13. Discuss plans for future meetings.
- a. How did this work today, clearing the whole day? Next meeting
  - b. Do we want to connect between sessions? Facebook group? WhatsApp group? Email group? To share ideas, events,
  - c. Pass out cards and ask them to write down ideas for topics

**Bring to meeting:**

Prayer book

Putting Joy in to Practice book

Hand sanitizer, clorox wipes, masks

pens, notecards, journals (?) or notebooks

desserts

drinks

table runner

mints/nuts, candy dishes, spoons

portable speaker

computer AND ipad and chargers

table topics

kleenex

Take pictures!!

printed charter