

Renae: Healing Helps Parenting (Immanuel approach, basic-intermediate)

Explanatory comments, condensed version

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The main purpose of the DVD “Renae: Healing Helps Parenting (Immanuel interventions, basic-intermediate)” is to provide live ministry session examples of the principles, techniques, and process described in our essays and presentations about the Immanuel approach to emotional healing. This DVD will be encouraging and educational for any viewer, but it will be much more valuable if you have first read the “Brain Science, Psychological Trauma, and The God Who is With Us” essays. If time constraints preclude reading all five Parts, I would encourage you to at least read Part I and Part V. This session demonstrates **Basic and Intermediate** principles, techniques, and process.

Original session, debriefing immediately following the session, one month follow-up interview, and five month follow-up interview: This DVD presents portions of the original session (April 2008), portions of the debriefing discussion immediately following the session, and portions of the follow up interviews that took place one and five months later.

Session summary: In this session, Renae asks for help with angry outbursts towards her son. She reports that she has been getting triggered by his “whining,” and that when this happens she feels an *intense* need to make him stop the offending behavior *immediately*. She has been very disturbed by the sense that she is only marginally able to control her responses, she finds herself communicating anger, contempt, and disgust as she tries to make him stop, and she is very concerned about the possible harmful effects of her angry outbursts. We start the ministry time with Renae focusing on past experiences of positive connection with the Lord, deliberately appreciating specifics regarding these past experiences, and then asking the Lord to refresh her connection with Him in the present. After establishing a good connection with the Lord, she focuses on Him and asks for guidance, and He takes her to memories where *her father* responded to *her* in the same way *she* is now responding to *her son*. Throughout the rest of the session I coach her to engage directly with Jesus at every point, and she appears to have beautiful interactions with Jesus and to receive important healing as she does this. Finally, during the five months following the session Renae observes that instead of getting triggered to the point of angry outbursts ~once/day, she notices the triggering only once every one to two weeks, and that actual angry outbursts have decreased to ~once/four months. This is certainly a dramatic, lasting improvement, but also indicates that some pieces of the problem have not yet been *fully* resolved.

Deleted material: To put the “Condensed Version” in perspective: In order to make the 19 minute condensed version, 73 minutes of material have been deleted from the 92 minute complete version. The condensed version is valuable for providing an *overview* of what an Immanuel approach session looks like, and it’s great for inspiration and faith building; but if you are actually trying to learn how to facilitate Immanuel approach sessions, you will definitely want to view the complete version.

The Immanuel approach to emotional healing: One way to define our current version of the Immanuel approach to emotional healing would be to first identify the contributing components:

- Recall of previous positive connections with the Lord, in combination with deliberate appreciation, to prepare for connecting with Jesus;
- Refreshed perception of the Lord's presence, and establishment of a living, interactive connection with the Lord *in the present* as the starting foundation;
- Once the person has established a living, interactive connection with Jesus in the present, coach her to engage directly with Jesus for guidance and assistance at every point in the session;
- Immanuel Interventions, especially from inside traumatic memories, but also at any point the person loses connection with the Lord;
- Describe whatever comes into your awareness (your brain works better in community)
- Our modified version of Theophostic® theory, tools, and techniques;
- Understanding regarding capacity;
- Understanding regarding attunement and relational connection circuits; and
- Understanding regarding processing tasks at each of the brain levels.

Then, if you take all of these components, organize them around the living presence of Jesus as the central focus, and clearly identify connecting more intimately with Jesus as the primary objective (with resolution of trauma as a secondary objective), you have the Immanuel Approach to emotional healing. This is all described at more length in the "Brain Science, Psychological Trauma, and The God Who is With Us" essays, but for those of you who have not yet had a chance to review the more detailed discussion, here is a very brief summary of the key process components:

•Recall of previous positive connections and deliberate appreciation to prepare for connecting with Jesus: Recalling past positive experiences and deliberately appreciating them prepares your brain–mind–spirit system for positive relational connection. At the beginning of each Immanuel approach session, we therefore include positive memory recall and deliberate appreciation *focused on the Lord* to prepare the person's brain-mind-spirit system for refreshing/re-establishing a positive relational connection with Him. With people who are new to the Immanuel approach, I very deliberately lead them through this process – we ask the Lord to bring forward a memory of a previous positive experience with Him, I ask the person to describe this experience (in detail), and I coach the person to describe specific things she especially appreciates about the Lord in the memory experience. In contrast, people who are familiar with the process usually go through an abbreviated version (asking the Lord for help, thinking about the positive memories that come forward, and deliberately appreciating the Lord in the context of the positive memories), without the need for coaching from me. In fact, this often happens smoothly and quietly during the opening prayer.

Renae's session provides an excellent example of this initial positive memory recall and deliberate appreciation (time on tape 1:41 to 4:10).

•Refreshed perception of the Lord's presence and connection with Him in the present as the starting foundation: After the person has identified one or more memories of past positive connection with the Lord, and *feels* appreciation for His presence and care in these past experiences, I coach the person to spend several minutes reentering/reconnecting with the

memory/memories.¹ As she does this, I ask the Lord to help her perceive His presence and establish an interactive connection,² so that these are real and living in the present, and then I coach the person to describe whatever comes into her awareness. The person is usually able to transition smoothly and easily from positive memory recall and appreciation to a living, interactive connection with the Lord in the present (and if this doesn't happen, we troubleshoot regarding what's in the way). Again, with people who are new to the Immanuel approach, I carefully coach them through this process; whereas people who are familiar with the process often recall a positive memory, feel appreciation for the Lord, reenter/reconnect with the memory, and then perceive the Lord's living presence and establish an interactive connection with Him without the need for coaching from me. As with the positive memory and appreciation steps, the whole initial process to the point of establishing an interactive connection often happens smoothly and quietly during the opening prayer.

Renae's session provides an excellent example of establishing this ideal starting foundation of refreshed connection with Jesus (time on tape 4:11 to 4:45).

- *Ongoing coaching to engage directly with Jesus:* Once the person has a connection with Jesus in the present, the therapist/ministry facilitator coaches the person to turn to Jesus, focus on Jesus, and engage with Him directly at every point in the session. The person might engage with Jesus for guidance in choosing an initial target, for help with finding underlying memories, for assistance with resolving unfinished processing tasks, for capacity augmentation when dealing with inadequate capacity, or for help with any other questions, needs, or problems that come up.³ This session provides several good examples of coaching to turn to Jesus, focus on Jesus, and engage directly with Jesus regarding whatever is being dealt with at the moment (time on tape 7:14 to 8:02, 10:23 to 10:50, and 12:14 to 12:55). As described in more detail below, the point where Renae focuses on Jesus and asks Him to help her connect with triggered emotions and find the underlying memories is an especially good example of “engaging directly with Jesus” (time on tape 7:29 to 8:42).⁴

- *Immanuel Interventions, especially from inside traumatic memories, but also at any point the person loses connection with the Lord:* As described at more length in “Brain Science, Psychological Trauma, and The God Who is With Us, Part V,” Immanuel interventions are

¹ Note that coaching the person to spend several minutes very deliberately reentering/reconnecting with the memory is a new piece as of fall 2010.

² In most cases, the person perceives the Lord's living presence and establishes an interactive connection in the context of the memory imagery. That is, they perceive that the Lord's presence in the memory imagery comes alive, and that (still in the context of the memory imagery), His presence begins to engage with them interactively. However, some people will perceive the Lord's living, interactive presence in the room where they are receiving ministry; some people will perceive the Lord's living, interactive presence in the context of a different memory that comes forward spontaneously; some people will perceive the Lord's living, interactive presence in the context of imagery that does not seem to be coming from any specific memories, and some will experience two or more of these simultaneously.

³ The therapist/ministry facilitator will also want to coach the person to engage directly with Jesus when good things happen, to thank Him and share her heart with Him.

⁴ Note that portions of these examples of coaching Renae to engage directly with Jesus have been deleted in editing for the condensed version. The full version of the session includes all of the details of these examples, and also several more examples.

specific, focused, systematic interventions with the goal of helping the person receiving ministry to perceive the Lord's presence, connect with Him, receive from Him, and be **with** Him. For those of you who have not yet had a chance to review the more detailed discussion, here is a very brief summary:

Specific, explicit invitation and request: The most basic, simple component is the specific, explicit prayer: "Lord, I make a heart invitation for You to be *with me*, here in this place. I also ask You to help me perceive Your presence, to help me connect with You, to help me receive from You, and to help me be *with You*."

Trouble-shooting: If the person is *not* able to perceive the Lord's presence (or connect with the Lord, receive from the Lord, or be with the Lord), you "trouble-shoot." Start with praying "Lord, what's in the way of my being able to perceive Your presence? (or connect with You/ receive from You/ be with You)" and then follow-up on whatever the Lord brings forward. For those who are able to establish a refreshed connection with Jesus, *in the present*, at the beginning of the session, an additional resource is available if the person loses connection with Jesus at some later point in the session and is *not* able to receive adequate guidance in response to the direct question: "Lord, what's in the way of my being able to perceive Your presence (or connect with You/ receive from You/ be with You)?" You coach the person to return to the place of refreshed positive connection from the beginning of the session, and then *in the context of the refreshed connection*, you coach her to ask the Lord about the place where she is *not* able to perceive His presence.

This session provides two examples of the specific, explicit request (time on tape 4:11 to 4:45, and 9:44 to 10:03),⁵ but does not provide examples of Immanuel trouble-shooting because Renae is able to perceive the Lord's presence and connect with Him without difficulty.

Engage directly with Jesus to find the underlying memories: One of the best examples in this session of "engaging directly with Jesus" comes at the point where Renae is trying to find the underlying source of her triggered thoughts, emotions, and reactions.

The traditional approach, taught as part of Theophostic, EMDR, and many other ministries and therapies, is to focus on the triggers, stir up the negative thoughts and emotions associated with the triggers, and then wait for stimulation of the neurological association networks to access the underlying memories. This is an excellent technique, and it is consistently effective in enabling people to connect with unresolved content from traumatic memories; but it sometimes requires a significant amount of time and skill in order to find the best initial triggers, stir up adequate emotional intensity, navigate blockages, follow a trail of associations that can sometimes be complex, and then recognize the material that comes forward.⁶ For example, my perception of

⁵ Note that portions of these examples of Renae inviting the Lord to be with her have been deleted in the editing for the condensed version. The full version of the session includes all of the details of these examples, and also several more examples.

⁶ This technique for accessing unresolved content from traumatic memories can be especially difficult for early, intense traumatic experiences where the hippocampus was significantly impaired (or even entirely "off line"). In these situations, the components of the memory are not organized into a coherent autobiographical package, and are therefore both more difficult to activate and more difficult to recognize once they do come forward. For additional discussion of the storage and retrieval of traumatic memories, see "Brain Science, Psychological Trauma, & The God Who is With Us," Parts III & IV, in

Jesus' presence and sense of connection with Him are still usually very faint, and so I am usually not able to use the "engage directly with Jesus" approach. In the sessions where I have to use the traditional approach, I often spend 30 - 45 minutes focusing on triggers, talking about them, and deliberately trying to stir things up before I am able to connect with emotions from the underlying memories.

With people who have an especially clear perception of the Lord's presence and an especially clear connection with Him, an alternative technique can be more effective. Instead of using the "traditional" technique just described, the person asks the Lord to help her connect with target triggered emotions and to help her find the underlying memories, *and then continues to focus on Him as she waits for the emotions and memories to come forward*. This session happens to provide a particularly nice opportunity to observe the two approaches side by side: after an initial attempt with the traditional technique proves unsuccessful (time on tape 6:42 to 7:29), we try the "keep focusing on Jesus" approach (time on tape 7:29 to 8:02). I coach Renae to go back to the place where she perceived the Lord's presence and felt a refreshed connection with Him *in the present*; and then *in this context* I coach her to focus on Him and engage with Him directly regarding "help me connect to the triggered emotions," and "help me find the underlying memories." As you can observe, with the "engage directly with Jesus" approach she connects with the target negative emotions, and then accesses the underlying traumatic memories (time on tape 8:03 to 8:42 and following). I think the "traditional" technique would have eventually been effective if we would have persisted with it, but it is striking that the "engage directly with Jesus" approach did not require any additional trouble-shooting.

An especially beautiful interaction with Jesus: Renae experiences an especially beautiful interaction with Jesus between 11:02 and 12:04.

Additional follow-up (17 months): At the five month follow-up interview Renae reported that episodes of getting triggered had been occurring ~once every two weeks and that she had actually responded in anger only once during the preceding three months, in contrast to the daily episodes of both triggering and angry outburst that had been occurring at the time of the original session. This was certainly a dramatic improvement, but we noted that some "splinters" must have remained to cause these occasional problems. I spoke with Renae a year after the second follow-up interview (17 months after the initial session), and she reported that episodes of getting triggered by her son's whining and responding in anger had been completely resolved for many months. It's not clear what happened to resolve the underlying roots of the lingering occasional episodes, but we are grateful for the eventual complete resolution.

More information: For more information from Karl Lehman M.D. and Charlotte Lehman M.Div, including our teaching about the Immanuel approach to emotional healing, our teaching about how Christian emotional healing can fit into professional mental health care, and much more, please help yourself to the free information on our website, www.kclehman.com.

the "Immanuel Series" section of www.kclehman.com.