



## **Unresolved Issues in the Therapist/Facilitator: One of the Most Important Hindrances to Emotional Healing**

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### **I. Introduction**

After first learning Theophostic<sup>®</sup>, I was applying all the principles and techniques as described by Dr. Smith, but I was not getting very good results – an occasional glorious healing, but lots and lots of frustration. The improvement with Theophostic, as compared to the results I had been seeing with previous tools, was only *barely* enough to prevent me from quitting. However, when I went to Alathia and observed Dr. Smith working with both volunteers from the audience and patients that attendees had brought with them, I witnessed an efficacy far beyond anything I had ever seen. I witnessed profound and rapid healing in every person with whom Dr. Smith worked, and I knew enough to recognize he was working with people with the same clinical picture and trauma history as my own clients. In four to eight hours of session time (or less), he would consistently navigate past interference, dissociation, guardian lies, demonic interference, and psychological defenses, and then help the person permanently resolve core traumatic memories. In contrast, my clients with similar clinical pictures were still stuck, even after 6 to 12 months (or more) of weekly sessions. Every time I went to Alathia I saw the same thing – Dr. Smith working with clients like my own, but demonstrating effectiveness that was 10 times what I was seeing in my practice. The fact that I didn't see anybody else (other than Dr. Smith) getting results any better than my own helped keep me from quitting, but once I had seen Dr. Smith working the bar had been raised to a whole new level.

Observing Dr. Smith helped me to identify a number of “new” principles and ministry tools that he had not described in the videos or manual<sup>1</sup>, but often he would move smoothly past the places I usually got stuck and I couldn't figure out what he was doing differently – I couldn't perceive him applying any theory or ministry tools that I wasn't also using. This was incredibly frustrating and painful, but also hopeful – I knew there must be something I was still missing, and I was determined to figure out what it was.

Then I began to notice that each time the Lord revealed and resolved an issue in my own life, my efficacy as a facilitator immediately increased a notch (initially, we saw more dramatic and more consistent results when working with me than when working with any of our clients). I became increasingly convinced that the difference between what I saw at Alathia and what I saw in my office was due to my own unresolved issues interfering with my ability to effectively facilitate emotional healing. This growing conviction, coupled with the daily pain and pressure of clients who were still healing slowly and who were suffering tremendous pain and disability in their lives in the meantime, drove me to constantly press into my own healing work. The “Examples Catalogue” section at the end of this essay is my “trophy” list of resolved issues, and includes brief descriptions of the ways in which they had been hindering my efficacy as an emotional healing facilitator.

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<sup>1</sup> See “Theophostic Ministry: What is Unique?” on the Articles and FAQs page of our web site for a description of these “new” principles and ministry tools.

At this point, our assessment is that unresolved issues (truth-based pain, unresolved trauma, judgments, vows, other sinful defenses, other sin, and demonic infection) in the facilitator are some of the most important hindrances decreasing the efficacy of emotional healing sessions. Furthermore, our perception is that unresolved problems are being stirred up in the facilitator any time he or she is experiencing anything other than calm, clear thinking, and confidence in the Lord's desire and ability to heal. Some may feel that this is an overstatement, but it has certainly been true for us.

We encourage and challenge every emotional healing facilitator to test the following hypothesis in his or her own experience: "Some truth-based pain, unresolved trauma, sinful defense, other sin, or demonic infection is being stirred up in me if, while ministering to another, I am experiencing anything other than calm, clear thinking, and confidence in the Lord's desire and ability to heal."

**II. Unresolved traumatic memories:** We have observed a number of ways in which unresolved wounds in the facilitator can hinder his efficacy and/or safety.

**A. Direct triggering of unresolved wounds:** Just like any other trigger, the process of emotional healing can activate unresolved wounds in the facilitator when any aspect of the session is similar to the original traumatic events that created the wounds. And unresolved wounds getting activated will always hinder the efficacy of the facilitator.

For example, I observed cheating, stealing, verbal abuse, physical abuse, sexual abuse, and drug dealing on my childhood playground, but it was not a good idea to notice or comment on these activities. If I was so foolish as to even look directly at the activity in question, one of the angry and dangerous kids involved would glare angrily, and yell something along the lines of: "Hey punk! Whatchoo lookin at?" In the context of these experiences I learned, in no uncertain terms, "It's not safe to look at or talk about problems." And then in my adult life, in therapy sessions my clients would sometimes remind me of these angry kids from my childhood. Without my even realizing it, these memories from my childhood playground would get triggered forward and I would go into "stay out of trouble" mode, which meant "Don't look at or comment on anything that might make somebody angry." This was a good strategy for not getting beaten up on my childhood playground, but it was a bad strategy for facilitating emotional healing. I finally discovered this (usually subtle) impairment when an angry client yelled at me, causing the unresolved content from these traumatic memories to come forward so strongly that I could finally recognize it for what it was. Now I can see that whenever one of my clients triggered these memories, I would miss important clues in the session because I was afraid to look at problems. Or I would notice something like self pity or bitterness, but not say anything because I was afraid to talk about problems. After working on these memories I noticed that I was able to calmly observe and comment on defenses, sins, etc. that I had previously been afraid to notice and/or talk about. Not surprisingly, this resulted in an immediate and dramatic increase in my efficacy.

**B. Resonance triggering of unresolved wounds:** In addition to some aspect of the session directly triggering a memory in the facilitator (like a client getting angry with me directly triggering my memories of kids on the playground getting angry with me), there is a second kind of triggering that I call resonance triggering. When a recipient is working on trauma that is similar to unresolved trauma in the facilitator, the content that the recipient is describing and the emotions that she is displaying trigger the facilitator by *resonating* with the trauma in the facilitator.

The phenomena of physical resonance provides a very helpful analogy. In physics, resonance occurs when the timing of a power source matches the timing of the receiving physical system. Pushing a child on a swing set is an example we are all familiar with. Your push will do the most good if you push them at just the right time (when they have come to a stop right in front of you, and are about to start swinging away from you). If you push them at any other time your pushing will not be as effective (or will even slow them down). Another way to understand resonance at an experiential level is to do a simple experiment with two guitars. If you pluck a given string on one guitar, the corresponding string on the second guitar will start to vibrate (assuming they are both in tune). This is because it is *resonating* with the “same note” sound energy from the first guitar. It is impossible for the “B” string on the second guitar to sit, unaffected, if you play the “B” string on the first guitar. Also, the second guitar will only respond if it has a string tuned to the same frequency as the sound energy being sent from the first guitar.<sup>2</sup>

We have observed a similar pattern with respect to unresolved wounds. If one person is describing details and expressing emotions from an unresolved wound, anybody else in the room with a similar unresolved wound will start to “resonate” – the words and emotions from the first person will stir up similar thoughts and emotions in anybody else who has a similar unresolved wound. We have often seen this in our group training settings, where everyone in the audience with unresolved wounds similar to those being addressed in the demonstration will be crying by the end of the session. Facilitators are no exception. If the facilitator has unresolved wounds similar to those that the recipient is working with, she will start to resonate with the recipient – the recipient’s words and emotions will stir up the similar unresolved wounds in the facilitator. Like the physics analogy parallel, where it is impossible for the “B” string on the second guitar to remain unaffected when “same note” sound energy is in the air, our experience is that it is extremely difficult (impossible?) to avoid resonance triggering if we have an unresolved wound that is similar/identical to the one being addressed by the recipient. Also like the physics analogy parallel, where the second guitar will only respond if it has a string tuned to the frequency of the sound energy in the air, we will only resonate with the recipient if we have unresolved wounds similar to those they are working on. That is, if we are resonating emotionally with the recipient we are resonating because we have places in our minds with which the client’s thoughts and emotions can resonate. Again, we will not resonate emotionally if we do not have similar wounds that are still unresolved.

Therefore, *resonance inherently includes triggering*. If the facilitator is resonating with the recipient’s unresolved wound, by definition a similar wound is being energized – stirred up – *triggered* in the facilitator. The facilitator may be intensely empathic and compassionate in this place of resonance, but he or she is *also* being triggered.

Resonance triggering vs. empathy and compassion: In our experience, resonance triggering is at least as common and as important as direct, reactive triggering, but it often goes unrecognized because we mistake it for empathy and compassion. **Empathy** is the intellectual identification with the thoughts and feelings of another – putting ourselves in the psychological frame of reference of the person receiving ministry, and thereby *understanding* his or her thinking,

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<sup>2</sup> Any musicians and sound engineers reading this will recognize that this is an extremely simplified summary of resonance, skipping all discussion of fractions and multiples of resonance frequency, etc. Also, a sound engineer in the audience at one of our seminars informed me that the two guitars would have to be extremely well tuned for this experiment to work, and that the chances of success would be much greater if the experiment were done with same frequency tuning forks in place of guitars.

feeling, and behavior. **Compassion** is feeling sorrow/regret that another is suffering, accompanied by a strong desire to alleviate his suffering and remove the source of his pain.<sup>3</sup> **Resonance triggering** is a spontaneous emotional response consistent with *actually having* the same/similar wounds and lies as the person receiving ministry. As opposed to understanding her suffering, being sad that she is suffering, and wanting to alleviate her suffering, resonance triggering is *actually experiencing* the same or similar thoughts and emotions as the person receiving ministry.<sup>4</sup>

Comparing our spontaneous emotional responses to recipients working with certain wounds, *before* and *after* resolving the same/similar wounds in ourselves, has been very helpful in learning to tell the difference between resonance triggering and “clean” compassion and empathy. Before resolving the same wounds in our own lives, we experience empathy and compassion mixed with thoughts and emotions consistent with *having* the same/similar wounds ourselves. After resolving the wounds in our own lives, we experience empathy and compassion, but *not* the thoughts and emotions corresponding to actually having the same wounds. Each time we have resolved a wound in our own lives that was resonating with material carried by one or more of our clients, our spontaneous emotional response has changed from the confusing mixture of empathy, compassion, and resonance triggering, to clean empathy and compassion. In fact, this is a good way to test emotional healing. If a certain wound has been completely resolved in my mind, I will no longer experience thought and emotion resonance when others talk about and/or work on similar wounds.

**9/2009 addendum regarding empathy, compassion, and resonance triggering:** Recent research regarding the neurology of empathy, and especially discoveries regarding the ways in which mirror neurons contribute to empathy, clarify that empathy *always includes at least some component of experiencing the emotions we are empathizing with*. When we empathize, “putting ourselves in the psychological frame of reference of the person receiving ministry, and thereby *understanding* his or her thinking, feeling, and behavior,” the neurological circuits<sup>5</sup> responsible for producing empathy look at the person’s face, produce simulations of the observed facial expressions in our own brains, and then tell us what the person must be feeling by pulling forward memory-based reproductions of the emotions that go with the simulated facial expressions. However, unless resonance triggering is also stirring up traumatic memories, *the intensity of the painful emotions will be low*. When you remember eating pizza, your brain pulls forward a memory-based reproduction of the taste of pizza, and (unfortunately) this memory based reproduction is a faded, much less intense version of the original experience. Similarly, when you remember negative emotions as part of the normal empathic

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<sup>3</sup> Definitions for empathy and compassion are adapted from *Webster’s Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary of the English Language*, (New York, NY: Portland House, 1989), and Kaplan, Sadock, and Grebb, *Kaplan and Sadock’s Synopsis of Psychiatry, Seventh Edition* (Baltimore, MD: Williams & Wilkins, 1994) p. 841. It is significant that the Webster’s definition of empathy includes “or the vicarious *experiencing* of the feelings, thoughts, and attitudes of another” (emphasis mine), and its definition of compassion also includes “sympathy,” which is defined as “*sharing* the feelings of another” (emphasis mine). This is consistent with the reality that most people routinely mix resonance triggering with what we call “clean” empathy and compassion.

<sup>4</sup> Note that we are referring to the *type* of emotion, not intensity. The *type* of emotion is the same or similar, but the intensity is usually much reduced.

<sup>5</sup> Note that this discussion of brain science addresses the physical/neurological component of empathy, but does not touch on the mind or spirit components.

process, your brain pulls forward memory-based reproductions based on previous painful experiences that have been successfully processed, and (fortunately) this memory based reproduction is a faded, much less intense version of the original experience. In fact, the intensity of the empathic negative emotions can be so low that they won't even enter conscious awareness unless you are deliberately watching for them. Furthermore, unless resonance triggering is also stirring up traumatic memories, *the negative emotions will not be accompanied by the impairment produced by unresolved traumatic content.* That is, when the memory-based negative emotions of empathy are coming forward from painful experiences that have been successfully processed, they will *not* come forward with disruptive unresolved content and your ability to facilitate the emotional healing session will not be impaired.

In contrast, when resonance triggering *is* also stirring up traumatic memories the intensity will be coming from the *combination* of empathic emotions and the negative emotions carried in the unresolved trauma, *and therefore be much higher.* Furthermore, these high intensity negative emotions *will* be accompanied by the impairment produced by unresolved traumatic content. That is, when resonance triggering activates memory-based negative emotions from painful experiences that were *not* successfully processed, then other unresolved traumatic content comes forward along with the negative emotions, *and this unresolved content will disrupt your ability to function as an optimal emotional healing facilitator.*<sup>6</sup>

Resonance phenomena with truth-based loss/grief/pain: I often cry when I am facilitating emotional healing sessions, and I used to think that this was simply a normal compassionate, empathetic response to the incredible truth-based destruction, loss, and sadness in the person's story. However, my current perception is that I only cry as the facilitator when I am experiencing resonance with unresolved truth-based pain in myself.<sup>7</sup> Charlotte was the one who first made this observation, and initially I disagreed with her perception – partially because I cried so often during sessions, and didn't want to believe that I was being triggered so much of the time, and partially because my subjective experience was "I'm not being triggered, I'm just crying because I am empathizing with the pain in his story." However, I have come to agree with her as I have observed myself carefully. As I have gotten more and more of my own healing, I have *more* empathy and compassion, but I cry less and less, and I have noticed a before and after difference for a growing number of specific issues. *Before* Jesus had taken the truth-based pain for the specific wound in question, I would usually find myself becoming tearful when a client was working with similar truth-based pain. Part of my emotional response would be true empathy and compassion, but when I looked closely, I could also identify truth-based pain in myself that was resonating with the client's similar truth-based pain. *After* letting Jesus come, and take onto Himself even the truth-based pain for the specific wound in question, I could feel a difference – I could feel that I no longer had my own pain resonating with the client's pain. I experienced empathy and compassion, but from a clear, calm place without tears – I experienced a mellow truth-based regret about what had happened to the

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<sup>6</sup> For an extensive discussion of successful vs unsuccessful processing of painful experiences, and discussion of the ways in which unresolved content associated with unsuccessful processing can impair your ability to function, see "Brain Science, Psychological Trauma, and the God Who is With Us, Part II," available as free download from [www.kclehman.com](http://www.kclehman.com).

<sup>7</sup> This is a tentative hypothesis, and I would appreciate feedback from you all regarding these thoughts.

client, and a deep desire to help them, but not pain and tears.<sup>8</sup>

Spiritual gift of empathy/prayer burden from the Lord?: Some have suggested that a resonance emotional response on the part of the facilitator during emotional healing work might be coming from a spiritual gift of empathy and/or might be a “prayer burden” from the Lord. I have heard anecdotal accounts that lead me to believe these are real phenomena, but they are somewhat mysterious, and I certainly don’t understand them. Observing your emotional reaction to similar scenes in movies can be very helpful in discerning whether you are experiencing a prayer burden from the Lord as opposed to being triggered. Our thought is that if the same emotions are stirred up by a movie, that would indicate resonance triggering (it seems less plausible that the Lord is giving you a prayer burden for the actors who are pretending to experience the traumatic event being portrayed).

**C. “Triggering” of positive emotions:** As discussed at length in “‘Triggered’ Positive Thoughts and Emotions” (on the Articles and FAQs page of [www.kclehman.com](http://www.kclehman.com)), all of us try to do things in the present that will temporarily comfort, cover, counteract, and compensate for the lies and pain from our old wounds. When we succeed in doing something that counter-acts an old wound, we experience “triggered” *positive* thoughts and emotions that are the opposite of the *negative* thoughts and emotions that come forward when the lie is triggered. Pursuing the temporary relief of these “triggered” positive thoughts and emotions will impair our discernment, and draw us into making poor decisions.

For example, when our clients first started displaying physical manifestations of demonic interference, I thought “Wow, something really *is* happening! God *is* answering our prayers, I *am* important, I *am* special!” Temporarily, these new, positive thoughts came forward and displaced the old, familiar, lie-based thoughts along the lines of: “Something’s wrong with me – I’m not important or special enough for God/Dad to want to spend time with me.” Temporarily, I felt encouraged, excited, important, and special instead of discouraged, flawed, unimportant, and ignored. Instead of recognizing these exaggerated, triggered positive thoughts and emotions for what they were, I thought they confirmed that the physical manifestations were somehow inherently important and valuable; and my triggered pursuit of these positive thoughts and emotions impaired my discernment, leading me to focus on the physical manifestations in a way that was unbalanced. Although the connection was indirect, the underlying unresolved trauma was the true source of my vulnerability to this error, and I can feel this area of impaired discernment losing power as the Lord has been healing the underlying wounds.

Another example we have seen occurs when a person with “I’m not important” and “I’m not wanted” lies experiences new dramatic success with Immanuel approach emotional healing. When the living Jesus Christ shows up and releases glorious healing right in front of her, it feels like the Lord has just chosen her to be one of His personal assistants – one of His special, inner circle – one of the disciples that travels with Jesus and gets to watch Him heal. The discouragement and low self esteem associated with the person’s usual “I’m not important” lies are temporarily replaced with the thrilling excitement of “I *am* important! God is answering *my* prayers. Jesus is showing up in *my* office!” The word spreads, and people start calling: “My friend just told me what happened last week. Can you make time in your schedule to pray with

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<sup>8</sup> See “Bereavement, Grief, and Mourning” on the Ministry Aids page of our website ([www.kclehman.com](http://www.kclehman.com)) for additional discussion of how Jesus can remove even the truth-based pain from old wounds.

me?”, “Oh, *thank you*, for giving me an appointment. I was afraid there wouldn’t be any space left,” and “Please, can’t you just see me for *one* session?” The feelings of loneliness and rejection associated with her usual “I’m not wanted” lies are temporarily replaced with the warm affirmation of “*Everybody* wants me!” Without even realizing what is happening, the person will begin to compulsively pursue these intense positive emotions. She will neglect other responsibilities, her family, and herself in order to pursue emotional healing work in a compulsive and unbalanced way. She will also make poor judgment decisions regarding when and where it is appropriate and/or safe to facilitate emotional healing sessions, and she will often make confidentiality errors out of the intense pressure to tell others about the exciting things that are happening in the context of her work.

Obviously, being misled by triggered positive emotions can only occur where there are unresolved underlying wounds and lies. Carrying more wounds and lies will make a facilitator more vulnerable to this problem, and resolving her own wounds and lies will make her less and less vulnerable to this particular variety of confusion and impairment.

**D. General Comments Regarding Triggering in the facilitator:** There are a number of observations, patterns, and principles that seem to be true for all forms of triggering in the facilitator.

1. Triggering *always* causes impairment: Our experience is that if we are being triggered, then we are always being impaired, and the degree of impairment correlates directly with the degree of triggering. Reactive triggering may occur in response to real, true problematic behavior on the part of the client, but the reactive triggering will also inherently cause impairment. Resonance triggering is usually associated with legitimate empathy and compassion, but the resonance triggering will also inherently cause impairment. Triggering of positive emotions will feel good, but it will also inherently cause impairment.

a) Impairment of mental and spiritual discernment, gifts, and abilities: When we are being triggered, we are not able to minister out of the full measure of our gifts, discernment, training, etc. Being triggered is like having background noise when we are trying to hear or like having dust in the air when we are trying to see. Our experience is that it is impossible to operate in the “zone” of optimal mental clarity, discernment, natural and spiritual gifting, courage, and non-anxious decision making when we are being triggered in any way.

b) Increased vulnerability to demonic interference: Our experience is that being triggered increases our vulnerability to demonic harassment/interference. And the degree of increased vulnerability seems to be proportional to the degree of triggering.

c) Internal child parts/child ego states:<sup>9</sup> I have noticed that I am especially impaired by

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<sup>9</sup> I am using the term “internal child part” to refer to the way in which a cluster of memories can carry a child ego state as part of the memory package. When these memories are triggered forward, *to the extent that the person is blended with the memories*, she will feel, subjectively, like she is inside of the experience of the child in the memories. *To the extent that she is blended with the memories*, she will experience the thoughts and emotions of the child in the memories, and she will also operate out of the capacity and maturity skills of the child in the memory. Note that experiencing internal child parts is *not* always a dissociative phenomena. Dissociation can be involved, but we can also experience internal child parts *without* dissociation. Note also that there is tremendous variability (striking *lack* of consensus) with

triggering if the triggering brings forward an internal child part. In this case, not only am I impaired by being triggered, but there is also a child ego state sharing the “driver’s seat.” One reason a person will be especially impaired when triggered to a child ego state is that any training obtained as an adult will be carried in her adult mind. To the degree that a child ego state is triggered forward, her adult self will be out of the driver’s seat, and any training carried in her adult mind will be temporarily offline.

Over and over again I have noticed that I will have a cluster of several clients, with similar wounds and lies, all being stuck at the same place. I can work and work, but just can’t seem to perceive/discern the way through. Then I get healing for wounds and lies similar to those carried by these clients, and suddenly I can perceive the way out of the stuck place for them. Some part of the problem that I could never focus clearly suddenly comes into focus. Some subtle detail that I could not previously see suddenly becomes visible. The overall problem, previously experienced as complicated and confusing, suddenly seems straightforward. Within weeks, each of these clients begins to move forward. When I look carefully at the whole situation, I can see that I was previously being impaired by my own resonance triggering. The problem that proved unsolvable when I was impaired suddenly becomes solvable when I am operating in the full measure of my gifts and abilities.

2. Triggering hinders, but does not preclude one from facilitating emotional healing: Our experience is that we can pick the low hanging fruit, even while being triggered, but that triggering blocks us from facilitating successfully in complicated situations. As mentioned above, the degree of impairment seems to correlate directly with the degree of triggering. The more intensely we are triggered, the more seriously we are impaired, and the less we are able to successfully navigate complicated situations.

**III. Sinful Defenses in the Therapist:** I have been sobered and humbled by how easily and how often my own sinful defenses interfere with my ability to facilitate emotional healing. Vows and judgments are the most common, but self-pity, denial, avoidance, and other sinful defenses also show up on a regular basis.

**A. Vows:** Unresolved vows carried by the facilitator will make it more difficult for him to perceive and follow the Lord’s guidance. The internal pressure to obey the vow/follow the vow/honor the vow can drive him to do things that will care for the vow, but that will hinder the emotional healing process. For example, the vow “I will never let anyone get angry at me” will hinder the facilitator from doing anything that might result in anger pointed back at him – the facilitator will avoid challenging sinful defenses (especially defenses like self pity that are usually painful to acknowledge), the facilitator will be reluctant to name and confront areas of unconfessed sin, the facilitator will be hesitant in stirring up anger-related triggers, and the facilitator will not want to work with angry internal parts. This vow will push the facilitator to *manage* the person receiving healing in order to make sure she doesn’t get angry at him, instead of providing an optimal healing environment by being able to ask tough questions when this is appropriate, challenge defenses when they are in the way, and provide a safe place where she has permission to feel and express *all* of her emotions.

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respect to how different mental health professionals and emotional healing ministers use the terms “child parts,” “internal parts,” and “internal child parts.” Being aware of this lack of consensus/variability, and then being careful to clarify how we are using the terms, can help to avoid unnecessary confusion and disagreement. (\*\*reference essay about the variability and lack of agreement regarding the definition and use of “internal child part,” “internal part,” “child part,” “dissociated part,” etc \*\*).



**B. Judgments:** In my own life, judgments and bitterness have provided the best examples of sinful defenses in the facilitator hindering the emotional healing process.

1. Judging the person receiving healing: Judging the person receiving healing will provide pernicious interference to the emotional healing process. I most frequently fall into judging the recipient when the session becomes “stuck” and I start to feel helpless and powerless. On good days, I recognize that I am being triggered, and that old wounds and lies are causing me to (erroneously) perceive that I am in the miserable corner of being responsible to fix the problem, but at the same time powerless and helpless to change the recipient’s choices that are blocking the way. I can then acknowledge this and ask the Lord to carry it (as described below). On bad days, I perceive the recipient to be thwarting me and start judging her in order to protect myself from feeling responsible, helpless, and powerless. I especially judge internal parts that I perceive to be invisibly blocking the process by withholding important information, but that don’t even have the decency to acknowledge what they are doing. If they won’t even acknowledge that they are present and that they are blocking the process because they are afraid, I can’t even begin to address the problem, and this makes me feel *really* helpless and powerless. Anytime I feel the desire to punish a client and/or his internal parts for not cooperating, any time I want to *make* them get better, I know I am judging them in an attempt to protect myself from feeling helpless and powerless. Most people, and especially internal child parts, seem to have very sensitive and accurate judgment detectors. The person receiving healing will not feel safe to expose his wounds, lies, and other areas of vulnerability if he is being judged, and this will surely hinder the emotional healing process.

2. Internal parts<sup>10</sup> with unpleasant behavior and important memories: Internal parts with unpleasant behavior and important memories create a situation in which the effects of judging the recipient are important but especially easy to miss. For example, we have known for some time that I have an internal child part that often expresses anger when it is triggered forward, and that Charlotte judges this part as a way of defending herself from the anger. What we didn’t realize was that her judging this angry part was interfering with her ability to help me work with certain traumatic memories and lies. Then one day when she was trying to help me work with these memories and lies I realized that I didn’t feel emotionally safe with her. When I focused on this, I realized that the vulnerable emotions associated with the memories and lies in question were carried by the same internal child part that she judged for getting angry. My spontaneous emotional response from this internal child part was: “Yeah, I know you. You’re the one that judges me and whacks me when I get angry. How am I supposed to feel safe connecting with my emotions when you’re around?” We experienced the same problem in reverse when I was trying to facilitate for Charlotte, and her internal child part carrying the emotions associated with certain memories and lies responded with “Yeah, I know you. You’re the guy who judges and whacks me for being needy. How am I supposed to feel safe working with you?”

It seems so obvious now, but it had not occurred to us that these same internal child parts we routinely judged when they presented with unpleasant behaviors also carried important memories and lies, and that our judging them for their unpleasant behaviors profoundly

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<sup>10</sup>Note again that internal parts are not always a dissociative phenomena. Furthermore, even if a person does have dissociated internal parts he may not have severe dissociative phenomena, such as Dissociative Identity Disorder (DID). There is a wide range of dissociative phenomena. Many of us have mild to moderate dissociative phenomena associated with a few of our most intense traumatic memories, and many dissociated internal parts are an example of this mild to moderate dissociative phenomena.

interfered with their willingness to let us facilitate healing for the traumatic memories they carried.

3. Especially important with spouses: These principles regarding judging the person receiving healing are *especially* important for spouses working with each other. The most profound examples of judgments hindering the emotional healing process have occurred in sessions in which I was attempting to facilitate for Charlotte. The therapeutic relationship between Charlotte and I is of course more complex than the therapeutic relationship between myself and my clients. With a client, if the session becomes stuck because she is afraid to go forward, I might get triggered about being stuck, powerless, and helpless in that session, but I wouldn't have to live with the daily consequences of her unhealed wounds and lies. Whereas with Charlotte, not only would her fear of going to certain memories or emotions stir up memories where I felt stuck, powerless, and helpless, but I would also have to live with the daily consequences of the wounds and lies that didn't get resolved. With a client, if the session became stuck I would usually assume that she simply lacked capacity, or that she was afraid to go forward for some reason. Whereas with Charlotte, the session would sometimes also be affected by unresolved conflicts in our marriage. If a particular marital conflict has been recently stirred up (so that I still have some lingering negative energy regarding the problem), and I perceived that the issues Charlotte is working on are connected to this particular problem in some way, my judgmental thoughts would be especially suspicious and adversarial, along the lines of: "She's not cooperating because she's selfish – she knows that if she acknowledges having this distorted interpretation then she'll have to admit that I'm right about...", or "She's not cooperating because she's stubborn and proud – she knows I'm right, but refuses to admit it because she doesn't want to deal with the narcissistic mortification," or "She's just being spiteful – she's not cooperating because she knows this particular issue means a lot to me, and she's still punishing me for the time I..."<sup>11</sup>

So, not only would the intensity of the judgment and bitterness be increased because the stakes were higher, but I would also judge Charlotte for being selfish, stubborn, proud, and vindictive in addition to judging her for being uncooperative out of cowardice (fearfulness turns into cowardice when it goes through the judgment filter). My judgments, self righteousness, and bitterness towards Charlotte would then trigger angry and defensive reactions in her, and these angry and defensive reactions would further hinder the emotional healing process. What a surprise! (sarcasm intended) – Charlotte couldn't open up her most vulnerable and shameful child places when she felt I was judging her for being a selfish, stubborn, proud, vindictive coward!<sup>12</sup> My ability to facilitate, her ability to receive, and our ability to work together as a team have all improved dramatically as I have diligently and persistently worked to dismantle my judgments towards her.

If you are trying to facilitate emotional healing for your spouse, *you **must** commit to watching for any judgments that come forward during emotional healing work*, and you must release

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<sup>11</sup> If you are familiar with our teaching about relational circuits, you will immediately recognize that I am *really* not aware of Charlotte's true heart as I am having these thoughts, indicating that I have *really* lost access to my relational connection circuits.

<sup>12</sup> Actually, most of the time only one or a couple of these would be present in a given session, but occasionally Charlotte would get the whole pile at once.

them as soon as you find them.<sup>13</sup> You will not be emotionally safe (or effective) as the facilitator if you are judging her (even subtly). This is so important that if I am facilitating for Charlotte and I become aware of judgments towards her, if I can't release them quickly and quietly I actually call "time out," and then do whatever I need to do to get rid of the judgements.

4. Judging perpetrators: I have also noticed that it is easy for me to judge the people who have hurt our clients. I love the people we minister to, and it is understandable that I will feel anger that they have been hurt, but this anger often moves into judgment and bitterness towards the perpetrators who have hurt them.<sup>14</sup> And when I have judgments and bitterness towards the perpetrators, I will have a blind spot with respect to perceiving and/or addressing any judgments and bitterness *the person receiving ministry* has against these same people.

5. Judging the Lord: Finally, I often fall into judging the Lord when a ministry session seems stuck, I don't know what to do, and it seems like He is not helping me.<sup>15</sup> This judgment and bitterness towards the Lord undermines the faith in His goodness and the confidence in His guidance that I need to have to be an effective facilitator.

Sin will always impair discernment and increase vulnerability to demonic interference: And any kind of judgment in the facilitator's heart (judging the person receiving ministry, the perpetrators, or the Lord) will therefore inherently impair her discernment and her ability to perceive the Lord's guidance, since it is sin. It will also give demonic spirits place and authority for interference harassment.

**C. Resonance phenomena with sinful defenses:** We have observed that we can resonate with respect to sinful defenses in much the same way that we can resonate with respect to unresolved wounds. For example, several of my clients had intense judgments and bitterness towards the Lord. When they would start to express their judgments and bitterness, my internal child parts with similar judgments and bitterness would begin to resonate. If the person receiving healing focused on this for more than a few minutes my own judgments and bitterness towards the Lord would be triggered forward. I was very empathically *with them*, but unfortunately I was *in the swamp* with them, and angry, triggered child parts were in the drivers seat. I was no more able to see the way out than they were. The person receiving ministry felt better in that they now had company in the swamp, but we would both wallow around in the same stuck place without any insight or movement forward. Fortunately, as soon as I dealt with my own judgments and bitterness towards the Lord, this stuck place with each of these clients began to move forward. When they would get triggered into judgements and bitterness towards the Lord, instead of resonating into child parts that would fall into the swamp with them I was able to remain in my adult self, on the edge of the swamp, and perceive the Lord's guidance with respect to how to help them get out.

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<sup>13</sup> You need to be especially, especially, especially careful to watch for judgments if you are working on issues that seem to tie into areas of marital conflict.

<sup>14</sup> I know I have slipped into judging the perpetrators when the recipient is describing what was done to her and I start to fantasize "Robocop" revenge – usually variations of using that big gun he carries to blow off various body parts.

<sup>15</sup> See "Judgments and Bitterness Towards the Lord" for a detailed description and discussion of this scenario.

**IV. Unconfessed Sin, Persistent Sin, Sinful Strongholds in the facilitator:** Any sin in the facilitator's life will produce a blind spot regarding that same sin in the people she ministers to, will impair her ability to hear the Lord's guidance, and will provide place and authority for interfering demonic spirits.

**V. Demonic Harassment, Oppression, Infestation/Infection in the Facilitator:** It seems that demonic forces are working especially hard to hinder Christians from becoming competent and confident with emotional healing. This has certainly been true for me. In retrospect, I am amazed at how difficult it has been to learn the Immanuel approach to emotional healing. Things that seemed so complex and confusing when I was learning seem simple and straight-forward now. As I was learning, I would often realize that some aspect of emotional healing seemed to suddenly become clear and simple (as opposed to confusing and complicated), and that this occurred immediately after I had received a new piece of healing. I often would feel that scales had fallen from my eyes – that fog had been cleared from my brain. Triggering had certainly been hindering my cognitive functions, but I also think that demonic infection attached to my wounds had been specifically and directly working to hinder my ability to understand the principles of emotional healing. The more demonic infection I am carrying, the more effectively the enemy will be able to hinder my ability to learn and apply the principles of emotional healing. Resolving my own issues, including exposing and removing demonic infection, will clear the way for me to learn and use emotional healing principles and tools.

Resonance phenomena with demonic interference: I don't know if resonance is exactly the right metaphor, but my experience is that there is some kind of phenomena that occurs when the facilitator and the person receiving ministry have similar demonic infections. For example, if both myself and the person receiving ministry have discouragement wounds and lies that are infected by spirits of discouragement, our corresponding demonic spirits seem unusually able to work together to interfere with the emotional healing process. The more demonic infection I am carrying, the more areas I will have that are liable to this kind of demonic resonance/teamwork. Exposing and removing demonic infection in my life will directly decrease this particular problem.

#### **VI. Miscellaneous Comments:**

Impaired recipient confidence in the facilitator: Activation of any kind of unresolved issues in the facilitator usually decreases the recipient's sense of safety. The person receiving healing can tell when some problem is being stirred up in the facilitator, and perceiving that the facilitator is impaired understandably hinders the recipient's confidence and his ability to go to deeply vulnerable places. Our experience is that internal parts have especially sensitive radar. If they sense we are impaired in some way, they conclude that it is not safe to cooperate. They will then keep their shields up, and may not even acknowledge that they are present.

Note: If you *are* being impaired by some unresolved issue, it is better to acknowledge this than to try to hide it. I can suppress my own triggering so that it is minimally apparent, but my experience is that the person receiving ministry can almost always (always?) still tell that something is wrong. Many of us have old wounds of being invalidated and/or feeling crazy when people in positions of authority deny or ignore problems that we can see and feel. If the facilitator denies or tries to hide when his old stuff is getting stirred up, it will re-traumatize these old wounds and make the person receiving ministry feel even more unsafe. This has been a very vulnerable and humbling thing to do as a facilitator, but I have been pleasantly surprised by people's responses. When I first started being more transparent about my own triggering, I was

expecting the person receiving healing to be upset, and possibly want to transfer to somebody else. However, almost everybody has responded more along the lines of “Boy, I’m so glad you said that. I knew something was wrong, and I was getting that old, terrible feeling that I must just be crazy. It feels so good to have you validate my perceptions.” In one situation in which I got especially triggered, I explained what was happening and then asked the client if it would be okay for Charlotte to join us to finish facilitating the session so I could “lean into” my own triggering in order to get more insight regarding how it was interfering with my ability to facilitate most effectively. This client was very informed regarding emotional healing, but I was still concerned that seeing me be so triggered would make it hard for her to trust me as her facilitator. However, she told us afterwards that she felt relieved that I could be so honest and vulnerable about what was happening, and was also grateful to finally understand that my triggering had been the cause of our being so stuck at that particular place. She continued to work with me, and got good results in later sessions, especially as we were able to quickly identify and openly discuss when my unresolved issues got in the way.

The best possible scenario is to press in to your own healing so that your own stuff will get in the way less and less often, but when your stuff *is* getting stirred up it is very helpful and important to humbly acknowledge this to the recipient.

Some might react to this essay with: “This is why I think emotional healing work is dangerous – look at all these problems and risks – all the ways in which our own woundedness can impair our efficacy as facilitators and even make us dangerous. This is why especially lay people should not be released to do emotional healing work.” I would respond with the opposite assessment: Churches, congregations, lay people, and ministers who do not understand emotional healing principles and who do not use the Immanuel approach to emotional healing carry the same woundedness. The wounds of each individual impair her efficacy in every ministry she attempts, and ministries other than Immanuel emotional healing have ways in which the woundedness of the minister makes her dangerous. It’s just that the churches, congregations, lay people, and ministers without Immanuel emotional healing principles and tools are less aware of the problems, and are using less effective tools to address them.

## VII. Summary Comments and Recommendations:

Sooo, **PLEASE** get your own healing: The most important way in which to address the phenomena discussed in this essay is for all emotional healing facilitators to be working on their own healing on a regular basis. Our experience is that facilitating for emotional healing sessions is one of the best ways to find your own unresolved issues. For me (Karl), getting stuck in emotional healing sessions has been one of the most persistent and effective triggers in my life. We strongly recommend that every facilitator have a setting in which she can work on her own issues on an ongoing basis, so that she can quickly address her own issues as each issue is identified in the refiner's fire of being a facilitator.

Include prayer for yourself as the facilitator at the beginning of each session: A second component of addressing the phenomena discussed in this essay is to acknowledge your woundedness and offer it up to the Lord as part of the prayer at the beginning of the session.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> See “Opening Prayers and Commands: Prayer for the Facilitator, Parameters for the Demonic, and General Introductory Prayer” on the “Ministry Aids” page of [www.kclehman.com](http://www.kclehman.com) and on the “Resources” page of [www.immanuelapproach.com](http://www.immanuelapproach.com) for additional comments about the prayers we use at the beginning of each session. (You will notice that acknowledging your woundedness and offering it up

And I encourage you to do this even if you are not aware of any specific unresolved issues being stirred up at the beginning of the session.

Acknowledge it if your own issues are being stirred up: As mentioned above, it is important to acknowledge it to the person receiving ministry if you notice that your own issues are getting stirred up.

Stop to pray for yourself as the facilitator if you notice you are getting triggered during the session: As mentioned above, I have found that after acknowledging that something is getting stirred up, it is important to pause briefly to lift my issue up to the Lord.

Consultations can be valuable: Another obvious implication of the material in this essay is that it can be very valuable to get a consultation. One of the simplest consultation options is to try having a different person facilitate if emotional healing work with one facilitator is persistently stuck at certain points. All of us have been wounded, none of us are completely healed, and none of us are completely free of any hindering or distorting junk. Our hope is that each emotional healing facilitator will be able to humbly acknowledge this reality, and recognize that their own unresolved wounds, lies, vows, judgments, other sins, and demonic infection may be contributing to the places they get stuck. We say, “a different set of eyes, a different set of lies,” meaning that other facilitators will have different unresolved issues hindering the process. They will be less effective in some areas, but then more effective in other areas where we have trouble. The key is that a different facilitator may not have a blind spot in a crucial place that was causing us to miss important clues, and the new facilitator will therefore be able to navigate past whatever was causing the process to be stuck. Ideally, each emotional healing facilitator should have a few close colleagues with whom they can exchange this kind of consultation.

Observation consultation: It can also be helpful to ask your colleague consultant to observe your work, with specific focus on any ways in which your own issues are getting stirred up. This will be especially valuable if you are repeatedly getting stuck with clients who have a certain clinical picture and you suspect your own issues are being stirred up, but you are having difficulty focusing exactly what is happening. Note: if you obtain consultation, the consultant moves smoothly past the places at which you had been getting stuck, and you immediately realize what it is she did differently – especially if she recognized a form of clutter you didn’t know about or used a ministry tool you weren’t familiar with – then the problem was probably a simple lack of knowledge. However, if she moves smoothly past the places at which you had been getting stuck *and you can’t figure out what she did differently*, then it is *very* likely that your own issues getting stirred up are interfering in some subtle way. In fact, this is exactly the experience that has motivated me to develop the material in this essay (and apply it in my own life). As described in the introduction, I kept observing Dr. Smith moving smoothly past the kind of places at which I had been getting stuck, but I couldn’t figure out what he was doing differently – I couldn’t perceive him applying any theory or ministry tool that I wasn’t also using.

The ideal situation is to have a mentor who is experienced in providing this kind of observation and supervision, but I think most facilitators will be surprised by how much a peer colleague will be able to help if she is asked to watch specifically for this concern. In fact, I have been pleasantly surprised by the benefit I have experienced from simply focusing the principles in this essay more clearly and applying them to myself.

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to the Lord is included in our sample opening prayer.)

Observation consultant tips and tools: The core of what I do when I provide this kind of observation consultation is watch for any place where the facilitator is stirred up (not peaceful and calm, not thinking clearly<sup>17</sup>), and then call a time out to have a mini session with the facilitator. I simply ask him to describe whatever he is thinking, sensing, or feeling, and I do this until there is clarity with respect to what is being stirred up in him. You can stop as soon as the issues have been focused, since that is the blind spot he is asking you to help with. The facilitator can then follow-up later in order to resolve the issues that have been identified. If the facilitator is stuck, but she is not stirred up in any way, I assume there is some aspect of the recipient's problem that she has simply not yet learned about and/or recognized, and we then focus our joint attention on identifying this missing piece.

I use these same tips and tools when providing "observation consultation" for myself. In fact, I have identified many of my own healing targets by using this simple technique on myself in sessions where I am facilitating. I watch for any places where I am stirred up, and then pause internally to observe my own thoughts, emotions, internal images, memories, and physical sensations. When I identify the issues that are being stirred up, I pause to acknowledge this to the person receiving ministry, pray as described above, and make a brief note to myself so that I can come back later to resolve the issues. Noticing when I am not thinking clearly has been especially helpful in identifying subtle triggering, and noticing persistent confusion in a session has been a helpful clue that I am not thinking clearly.

**VIII. Example Catalogue:** I am hoping (as time permits) to write out short case studies describing each of the specific examples listed below.

Examples of efficacy being hindered by direct triggering in the therapist:

**A. "Stay away from my apparent healing" vs. "Test the fruit:"** People who are receiving Immanuel emotional healing will sometimes try to do the Lord's job (for example, quoting appropriate scriptures and telling themselves the truth) because they want to stay in control, they are afraid the Lord won't come, or because they are so accustomed to using self-cognitive therapy that they do it automatically. Demonic spirits and/or internal parts will also often serve up false healing, usually in hopes that the ministry team will think that the healing target has been resolved and go somewhere else. Helping the person receiving ministry to "test the fruit" is therefore an important part of Immanuel emotional healing. If the facilitator and the recipient can non-anxiously test any apparent healing, true healing is confirmed and anything that is not from the Lord is exposed. And if counterfeit healing is exposed, the facilitator and the recipient can address the source of the false healing and then press on to work with Jesus to receive true healing.

However, if the facilitator is afraid of disappointment she will avoid doing this. When I first started doing emotional healing work, disappointment wounds and associated "God will disappoint me" lies made me afraid to test the fruit. My attitude was "Stay away from my apparent healing" instead of "Let's test everything to make sure it's real." If something happened that looked like it might be healing I got out of there as soon as possible. The last thing I wanted to do was to go back and try to stir up the original wound just to make sure the healing was legitimate. Why give the Lord a second chance to disappoint me? This fear of disappointment and avoidance of testing the fruit resulted in a costly blind spot in my ability to facilitate

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<sup>17</sup> The facilitator not thinking clearly is a good clue that his issues are being stirred up in some subtle way.

emotional healing. I would consistently miss false healing, and the recipient would not get true healing in these situations because we would not recognize the false healing, address the source of the false healing, and then press on for true healing. The person receiving ministry would then become confused and discouraged after the session when the false healing “fruit” vaporized or began to rot.

**B. “It’s not safe to see or talk about problems:”** Childhood playground cheating, stealing, and drug dealing. Described above under “Direct triggering of unresolved wounds in the facilitator.”

**C. “It’s not safe to challenge/confront, and it’s especially not safe to persist in conflict:”** kid defying bully and being verbally, physically, and sexually abused (forthcoming).

**D. “I’m gonna disappointment everybody,” “I’m gonna mess up in front of everybody:”** childhood athletic failures (forthcoming).

**E. “I’ll get sucked in over my head and drown:”** fear that a problem will be too big for me, fear that I will be overwhelmed and not be able to handle it. Childhood near drowning memory (forthcoming).

**F. “It’s my fault, it’s my responsibility, I have to fix it:”** white middle class American in the 1960’s, especially in our radical discipleship church with a heavy emphasis on social justice (forthcoming).

**G. All “I’m stupid” and “I can’t do it” lies that impair perseverance and confidence in myself:** see the “I’m Too Stupid” and “Dissociation, Repression, Denial, and Avoidance: ‘Where did kindergarten and first grade go?’” case studies.

**H. All issues that get triggered in me when I get stuck:** For example, “God will disappointment me,” “I can’t trust God to take care of me,” and judgment towards the client for making me feel helpless. Many of the other examples described above also fit into this category. See also the “Dissociation, Repression, Denial, and Avoidance: ‘Where did kindergarten and first grade go?’” case study.

**I. All lies impairing confidence in the Lord’s presence, competence, and goodness:** Lies about the Lord’s presence, competence, and goodness undermine my confidence in the Immanuel approach process, make me more vulnerable to other triggering, and undermine my authority in spiritual warfare.

“He won’t come,” “I can’t trust His heart for me,” “There’s no excuse for allowing this”:  
Two year old separation trauma.

“I don’t feel safe in the Lord’s care:” Losing my faith in God/Dad being omniscient and omnipotent when I got my head slammed in a car trunk. See the case study “Dad/God isn’t all-knowing or all-powerful: a case study and discussion.”

“God the psychotic cult leader:” God is insecure, jealous of my ten speed bicycle, and wants me to sacrifice anything good to prove my allegiance. See the case study “God, the psychotic cult leader.”

“God is like my first grade teacher:” God will complain and criticize, and will blame me for not trying hard enough, but He won’t give me the help that I need. See the case study



“Dissociation, Repression, Denial, and Avoidance: ‘Where did kindergarten and first grade go?’”

“God is like the absent playground monitor, God is like the absent high-school gym teacher:”  
“God is sitting in the teacher’s lounge drinking coffee when He should be on the job, protecting the vulnerable kids from being terrorized by the bullies.” (forthcoming)

“God, the incompetent and misdirected establishment:” Lie-based connections between God and the adult establishment at my school and in my neighborhood – well intentioned adults that did not understand what was happening on our playground and in our neighborhood, and that did not protect the vulnerable children. (Forthcoming)

“God is like the politicians:” Lie-based connections between God and the politicians that ran the world of my childhood. Lots of promises, but disappointing when it came to delivery. Excuses and explanations instead of actually fulfilling promises.

“Jesus the drug-using flower child/brain damaged hippie:” (forthcoming)

“Jesus, the naive, clueless liberal:” Lie-based connections between Jesus and the naive social activist of my 1960's childhood – people who believed that all of the problems in the world would be solved if the rich people would just give all their money to the poor people. (forthcoming)

“Jesus the angry liberal activist:” Lie-based connections between Jesus and the angry liberal activists of my 1960's childhood – people who told me that I was bad because I was a white, middle class American, and every problem in the world was my fault. (forthcoming)

Examples of efficacy being hindered by resonance triggering in the therapist: (forthcoming)

Examples of efficacy being hindered by triggering of positive emotions in the therapist: (forthcoming)