

# Tri-Life Leadership Training

## The Connection Process

### **Getting Ready: Establishing Rapport and Trust**

Have the Participant get their pillow and blanket and then have them take their nametags off. Put the nametags into a plastic bag with the Participant's name on it. Do not take the nametags off for them. Both the Primary and Secondary should have note pads, pens and flashlights. Make sure you also have your Participant's homework folder.

Lay them down on their blanket and pillow and have them close their eyes. Introduce yourself and the Secondary. Let the Participant know you are there by touching them. However, before you touch any Participant, ask their permission and the most comfortable position (the shoulder is usually safe). Acknowledge their great work. Let them know that you will be with them throughout their work on the floor and that they are safe. You might say something like, "You are the guide; this is your journey. But no matter what happens, no matter how challenging, one or both of us will be with you every step of the way. We will be right here with you and you are safe. We are here for you and you alone right now." Tell them it will get noisy. Tell them to breathe. Talk right into the ear at the beginning.

Let them know your role: to help them, to support them completely, to offer guidance, to tell the truth as you see it, and to challenge them, if necessary. Ultimately, the Participant is in charge and will have the final say on their floor work. Ask them if this arrangement is okay with them; get them to buy in.

Ask them if they are ready. Say whatever comes to you. Time breaths, relax. Be in your feelings – could be scary. "What do you need to do now? "Where do you need to go?" Whatever they call it, the Abyss, the Cave, the Graveyard, etc., that's what you call it. Stay aware of how they may change the name or description of their abyss during their process and adjust your verbiage accordingly.

### **Going Down to the Abyss: Facing the Demons**

The purpose of facing their demons (people, concepts, shame) is to help them identify and begin healing the root causes of their anger, shame, guilt, rage, sadness, despair, and their addictions.

Primary will do this. When they are ready, go to their abyss. Remember to ask them about and validate their feelings and actively listen; they will supply all the information and direction you need. Have them visualize their abyss and go to its edge, entrance, or starting point. Ask them how they want to go in (jump, climb, walk, swim, fly, etc.) Remind them that they are the director of the "movie" and they can literally make

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anything happen. Have them take three deep breaths and enter. This is their sacred space; let them describe and create it. Be patient and flexible – everyone's abyss is different and each Participant will have their own unique way of creating and facing their demons.

Have them describe the place in detail. "Are you there? Where are you? What does it look (feel, smell, sound, color, etc.) like?" Ask them to use all their senses: sight, sound, smell, touch, taste, temperature, humidity, etc. Ask them if there is anybody or anything there with them and why they might be there.

Sometimes demons start appearing immediately and other times they will have to search around a while. Some questions to help this process along are: "What are you feeling right now?" "What is making you feel this way?", "When have you felt this way before?", "Who made you feel this way?" You could then probe when/where they last felt these feelings, or who might have made them feel this way in the past.

Keep them aware of their feelings and their body. Ask them frequently what they are feeling and where those feelings reside. Help them develop a vocabulary for and discernment of their feelings.

If they have trouble visualizing, remind them of the handout. If it is dark, ask them, "Why is it so dark? Feel around. What does this place feel like?" Body references can be effective also; are they having any sensations in different parts of their body? After asking them what they are feeling, ask them where in their body does this feeling reside? Have them touch that part of their body and breathe into the feeling.

As soon as a demon is identified, the Secondary should get a role player as quickly as possible. Very briefly describe the role and give them the summary card for that demon, if available. Have the role player lie down and listen as the Primary helps the Participant describe the demon. (The Secondary should also record the demon and the role player in their notes to use during the forgiveness process.)

The Primary should ask questions that paint pictures for the role player. "What was he/she like?" "How did he/she talk to you?" "What did they say?" etc. If they seem unclear on what they want to do with this demon, you could ask, "What have you always wanted to do or say to this person? This is your golden opportunity to...(get even, stand up to, get clear with, etc.)." Ask them what is their fantasy, their dream in dealing with this demon. "What do you need to say to this person?" "What do you need to do to this person?"

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Remember: Let the Participant decide how best to deal with the demon. Not all demons will result in a standard pounding burn. The Participant may need to yell, cry, or simply talk. They may just need to be listened to. They may need to be held. Let them decide what they need to do to feel complete with this demon.

If the Participant is doing a pounding burn, the safest method is to have the Participant on their knees, hitting a mat that is lengthwise in front of them, and the role player on the other side of the mat. You can tape things on the mat. For some demons, it might be more appropriate (or the Participant will suggest) to face the demon standing up with the demon holding the mat. If so, have the Participant stand their ground and strike the mat below the taped line. If they start moving around or strike the mat inappropriately, yell STOP NOW! Acknowledge their feelings but correct their behavior immediately with clear directions. The safety of the Participants and Staff is the ultimate concern at all times. While they are facing a demon, you might make suggestions on phrases to use, but encourage them to use their own words.

If your Participant is stuck for more than a few minutes or you are unsure how to proceed, ASK FOR HELP from the Facilitators. This is a normal occurrence and the expectation is that every team on the floor will need help sometimes. There is no virtue in doing it all yourself. **The most important consideration is what is best for the Participant.**

Many times during the floor work Participants may become “stuck” – meaning they do not seem to be making any progress towards facing their demons. This “stuckness” probably is a result of long-established patterns.

In general, if you see a behavior three or more times, it is a pattern. Deal with the patterns just like any other demon. “Peel the onion” back to the base hurt or fear that causes the pattern: “What would happen if you did **not** do this behavior? When have you felt this way in the past? When was the first time you can remember feeling this way? Who made you feel this way?

Below are listed several patterns that may lead to being stuck:

Intellectualizers/“Head Cases”: Keep them aware of their feelings and their body. Have them regularly “check in” by getting quiet, feeling, breathing, and then describing those feelings. Get them to place their hands where in their bodies they are feeling. Cut short long discussions and ask them to check-in. During burns, get them to use their voice with little or no words. You might ask them “What sound does that feeling make?” and have them make that sound.

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Dealing with “the Committee” or “I don’t know which voice to listen to”: Identify the roles and voices they hear. Have them describe in detail each role and voice and give them names. Have a voice dialogue between each role and with the person actually changing chairs and assuming each role completely. Ask each voice what it feels, what it needs, and what it fears. Ask each role what it thinks of the other roles. After a while, bring their adult to observe and talk to them. The goal is for the adult to acknowledge each part and get them working together toward a common, integrated whole.

“I don’t know what I’m feeling”: You might ask, “What does not knowing what you are feeling feel like?” Numb? Confused? Scared? Let them identify and feel completely whatever that feeling is. Then start “peeling the onion.” If they are not feeling anything, there are a few techniques that may be appropriate: Cover them with a blanket and isolate them for a while – put them in a paradox (see below). Another way to get them to feel is to have them stand on their toes, knees bent, arms out holding sand bottles. Have them breathe and yell. Ask the Facilitators before using either of these techniques.

Defending perpetrators: This happens many times with parents and the Participant does not want to hate or rage at them. Capsulate the good and loving part of the perpetrator and have them put in a safe place of their choice and description. Then deal with the part of the perpetrator that hurt them, did not care, or did not defend them. After dealing with the bad part, you can bring back the good part to cherish and lock away somewhere in their body so that part is always accessible to them.

“What do you want me to do?”: Maybe they really do need to be told what to do. Or, maybe you are not being clear. Have them use behaviors, not words. They may not know the words. Alternatively, there may be a dependency issue. If this is a pattern, identify it to the Participant and “peel the onion” again: You feel like you cannot do it alone. How did you learn that? Who made you feel this way? Etc.

Minimizers: This pattern can show itself in many ways: Everything is ok; I’ve already worked on that; I don’t need to feel that, etc. If you sense these are walls they are constructing NOT to feel, explore around and be patient. Deal with it like any pattern.

“I’m too scared to go on”: Let them live out their worst fantasy. What is the most frightening, awful thing that could happen to you? Have them describe it in detail and then make it happen. Show them they can live through it.

**Using Paradox:** One way to deal with blocking behavior is to make the Participant do much more of the behavior, thus putting them in a paradoxical situation. Examples: A

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perfectionist might be required to build blocks in a very specific, perfect way that is torn down by the role player (a teacher, a parent) as not perfect enough. Someone who is not feeling can be put under a blanket and told not to feel anything – to feel nothing, less than nothing, to feel a vacuum. An intellectualizer might be asked to analyze the situation and not feel at all – No, no, no, don't feel – analyze it – make it ok by thinking about it instead of feeling it. The whole point is to make the Participant break through a pattern and feel the feelings beneath.

**After each Demon:** After they have dealt with a demon, lay them back down. Acknowledge their courage and their work. Let them breathe into the feeling of success and power. Acknowledge the progress they have made. "How does that feel?" Let them be with those feelings for a few moments.

When they are ready, go to their abyss again. Note any changes that have taken place, if any. Look, touch, feel, and/or listen for another demon.

When they think they are done, you might say, "Let's be sure you have done all the work you came here to do – that there is nothing left that needs addressing in your abyss. Let's look around and turn over everything and look behind every corner." From their homework, demon cards, and the 5-Day cheat sheet, you will know if there are any obvious demons remaining. If they seem to be avoiding any demons, or if they are not sure, you can gently ask them about potential demons they have identified in their homework, etc. When in doubt, ask the Facilitators. Sometimes a balance must be sought between the number of issues, the importance of each issue in the Participant's healing, time and energy constraints of the Participant and Staff, and the readiness of the Participant to deal with particular issues. Remember that the floor work is not meant to heal everything. Instead, it simply starts an on-going process of healing and awareness.

When the Participant is ready to move on, then it's time for them to find their Inner Child. The Secondary should get an Inner Child doll.

## **Meeting the Inner Child**

After all the demons are met and dealt with, acknowledge and honor their success and strength. Let them bask in the feeling of being totally finished and clear with their demons. Give them feedback on how you are experiencing them physically and emotionally. Remind them that no one can ever take this success away from them – they will have this available to them whenever they want it. You might also remind them that demons will return, but they can deal with them differently now: from a position of awareness and strength and compassion.

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Let them describe the place they are in now. Let them explore. "What does it look like? Where are you? How do you feel? Is there anyone else there with you?" Let **them** find their Inner Child. When they do, let them fully describe him or her. Have fun with this. "What is their name? What is \_\_\_\_\_ wearing? How old is \_\_\_\_\_? What does \_\_\_\_\_ look like?"

Ask the Participant to hold up their arms and ask for little \_\_\_\_\_ to come to them. Give the doll to the Participant to hug and hold.

Have the Participant ask their Inner Child for forgiveness for abandoning, hurting, neglecting, and not protecting them (whatever is appropriate). "Are you ever going to allow anyone to hurt \_\_\_\_\_? Will you fight for \_\_\_\_\_ and protect him/her no matter what?" Have the Secondary pull on the doll as if to take the doll away.

Tell the Participant that this is their opportunity to re-parent their Inner Child; to give him/her the love, acceptance, and support that he/she has always wanted and needed. By re-parenting, we heal and grow.

## **Forgiving the Demons**

After letting the Participant bond and cherish their Inner Child for a few moments, gently suggest that a very powerful way they can continue to grow and heal is to forgive. Discuss what forgiveness means to the Participant.

The philosophy of this forgiveness process is that forgiveness is not about the person or thing we forgive; it's about healing the hurt inside ourselves. It's about letting go of the hurt and anger we may hold, and letting go of its destructive power to hurt us further. Forgiveness does not condone abusive and hurtful acts. By forgiving in any way we can, we acknowledge the pain with loving compassion, and choose to move a little further from it.

Suggest to the Participant that each time they forgive someone after acknowledging the pain and anger, they allow that much more space in their heart, their loving center, for their Inner Child to reside and flourish.

During this introductory period, the Secondary should inform all the role players that they will be needed shortly and be ready to retrieve each role player as the Participant names the demon they wish to forgive.

Have the Participant call for and forgive the people they wish to forgive. Let them know that the forgiveness can take any form they wish; silence, talking, hugging, etc. They have full control over the boundaries they wish to have with each demon. Be

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prepared for a different order or an individual that did not come up in the floor work. There will be some demons that the Participant does not want to hug (perpetrators for instance). After each forgiveness, ask the Participant if there is anything else; any final words they need to say to this person to be fully finished with this demon.

When finished with each demon, acknowledge the feeling and success – have them lock it in. Breathe into it. How did it feel? Check in on their Inner Child and acknowledge how much more it is a part of their heart.

When all finished with forgiveness, let the Participant bask in the peace and joy of the moment.

If there are any abortion or miscarriage issues, prepare a list of occurrences, names, father/mother, and ages. The Secondary should get a small doll for each occurrence and then get the designated Facilitator for the abortion/miscarriage process.

## **Play with the Inner Child and Friends**

After forgiving the demons and completing the aborting/miscarriage process, if applicable, it is time to play. Here is an example of what you might say: “How are you doing? How do you feel? How is \_\_\_\_\_? He/She has really become a part of your heart. You have a terrific opportunity now. You’ve done a great amount of work and healing and you are a different person now, complete with a playful, loving, Inner Child that is a part of your heart and soul. It’s time to play and celebrate that child. What do you think \_\_\_\_\_ would like to do? You guys are going to go out and play with your friends. What shall you do?” After the Participant identifies what they want to play, the Secondary should get the appropriate props. Have the Participant get up and go get some friends to play with. After playing for about 10-15 minutes, call the Participant back “home”.

Lay them down and ask them how they feel. Let them revel in the playfulness and joy in themselves and their Inner Child. It is time to get one of the Facilitators to take them into the Light.