

OPEN



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I allow myself to be truly seen and known

TRY THESE IDEAS

Similar Struggle: Find someone of the same gender who is struggling with the same things you are in life and meet with them for prayer and mutual encouragement. (meet via skype if necessary)

Read Together: Find someone, or a couple of people, who have similar struggles as you. Read and discuss a book together on the subject matter.

Practice Vulnerability: Practice being honest about areas of doubt, shame and regret with another person. Use discernment about what details and with whom to share.

Ask For Help: Think of an area where you are struggling. Ask a friend who is strong in this area to share their strategies with you. Ask them to follow up after a set time to share how the strategies are working, or not, and discuss next steps.

Slow Down: Instead of rushing home, or to the next thing after church, take time to meet someone new, or connect with someone you haven't seen in a while. Give them some insight into what is happening in your life right now.

Journal: Take some time to write out who you think you really are. Use this as a stepping stone to getting more comfortable about sharing more of your thoughts and life with others.



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I allow myself
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and known



Developing rhythms
in my relationship
with the church

Open *I allow myself to be truly seen and known*

Many people choose to relate to each other from the surface of their lives. While it may feel safer to be self-protective at the beginning, if a relationship remains there it will not only stunt the growth and depth of the relationship, it will also cause us to feel alone. We may wonder if the other person really likes “me” or just the surface part of me I’ve chosen to share. Those in healthy relationships choose to take a risk of trust by being vulnerable with one another, consistently growing deeper. We learn to live authentically by sharing the real us.

PRACTICES

DRIVER REFLECTION : We must take time to stop and think deeply about who we are, and why we act the way we do. We all have “drivers,” or motivators that cause us to act and respond the way we do. Most people are unaware of these. While a counselor can be helpful, we can discover many of them ourselves by pausing and reflecting on recent events and look for the drivers. Sometimes the drivers are pain from our past, fears, insecurities, or desire for something in our future. The better we understand how we’re wired, the better we will be able to share more of ourselves in our relationships.

LAST 10%: People tend to share about 90% of what they really feel or think about something. This practice involves building relationships where we all share the “last 10%” in the context of safe and trusting relationships. This could involve confessing something to an accountability partner. It could mean lovingly sharing a hard truth with another person. It may mean discussing how you truly felt during a conversation. The more we withhold from the people we are in relationship with, the more shallow and lonely our connection will be. Sharing the last 10% isn’t a license to be hurtful, but it’s an opportunity to be vulnerable. We all benefit when we humbly and lovingly share the last 10%.

BE REAL: In authentic relationships we choose to allow others to see us as we are. So many relationships suffer from individuals trying to be someone they are not or say things in order to be liked or accepted. When we know we are loved and accepted by God, we are willing to risk revealing more and more of ourselves to others. Be willing to explore any fears, failures, or rejection you are struggling with in your life. Talk about your dreams and hopes in life. Share your fears and insecurities, and what tends to activate them. Often, as we begin to share, we will hear “me too” more times than we anticipate, and our connection will deepen.

TAKE INTEREST: One of the best ways we can be known and seen is to know and see others. Brainstorm questions or things you can share about yourself that will help you find common ground with the other person. Take a true interest in what makes others “tick.” Find out what has shaped them into who they are, who’s influenced them, and where they’re growing. As we take an interest in others, they often will want to know more about us as well.

DIG IN

Read Genesis 27:1-36

Why was Jacob and his mother so focused on deceiving Isaac?

Jacob’s name means “deceiver” and his life story plays it out in many ways. Jacob seemed to find ways to benefit himself regardless of the impact on others around him. What are some of the primary reasons people today deceive and make themselves seem better than they really are?

What do you think someone like Jacob has to believe about God in order to act so deceptively? Do you think he trusted God?

In order to be open with others and let them know us, flaws and all, we need to believe that God is for us and we are secure in His love for us. What benefits could you see in allowing yourself to be authentically seen and known by others?

Read 1 John 1:5-10

When he compares light and darkness, what might he be referring to?

Darkness is often used to talk about deception and light refers to openness (i.e. Bring it into the light). According to verse 7, in addition to God, who else do we have fellowship (closeness) with when we live open and in the light?

Note the authenticity that John invites us into. Even our flaws and sins can be forgiven if we just live authentically.

RESPOND

Of the four practices (Driver Reflection, Last 10%, Go First, Take Interest), which feels most natural to you? Which stands out as an area for growth? If a practice is natural for you, take it to the next level. If a practice is an area where you would like to grow, make a plan to read more about it, and seek out others who do it well or have incorporated it into their lives. Then, actively and intentionally try out that practice for a month. Write down how you have seen God working in you, and others, as a result of anticipating God's movement through the practice.

Take some time to reflect on your drivers behind the way you act or respond. Consider times when you have not spoken up or shared something with another. Why did you keep it to yourself? Was it out of fear, insecurity, anxiety? Record your thoughts. For a period of time, be intentional about observing how you respond to others. Pick a practice to risk sharing yourself.

Go out for a meal/coffee with a friend. Talk to them about this rhythm and what you've been learning. Ask them if they'd be interested in having more open conversations about the real you (and the real them). Share a fear, dream, past pain or something they may not yet know about you. Talk about how that thing is affecting you and your actions today.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

When People Are Big and God is Small: Overcoming Peer Pressure, Codependency, and the Fear of Man by Edward T. Welch

The Key to Everything: Unlocking the Secret to Why Some People Succeed and Others Don't by Matt Keller

FOR KIDS

What Am I Feeling? by Dr. Josh Straub



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