



# Emotionally Healthy Relationships

DISCIPLESHIP *that* DEEPLY CHANGES  
YOUR RELATIONSHIP *with* OTHERS



Peter & Geri Scazzero

# Emotionally Healthy Relationships

WORKBOOK

## **The Emotionally Healthy (EH) Discipleship Courses**

### ***The Emotionally Healthy (EH) Spirituality Course***

*Emotionally Healthy Spirituality*

*Emotionally Healthy Spirituality Workbook*

*Emotionally Healthy Spirituality Day by Day*

*Emotionally Healthy Spirituality DVD*

### ***The Emotionally Healthy (EH) Relationships Course***

*Emotionally Healthy Relationships Workbook*

*Emotionally Healthy Relationships Day by Day*

*Emotionally Healthy Relationships DVD*

## **Other Resources by Pete and/or Geri Scazzero**

*The Emotionally Healthy Woman* (book, workbook, and DVD)

*The Emotionally Healthy Leader*

*The Emotionally Healthy Church* (book and workbook)

# Emotionally Healthy Relationships

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YOUR RELATIONSHIP *with* OTHERS

WORKBOOK  
EIGHT SESSIONS

**Peter and Geri Scazzero**

 ZONDERVAN®



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*Emotionally Healthy Relationships Workbook*

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This title is also available as a Zondervan ebook.

Requests for information should be addressed to:

Zondervan, 3900 Sparks Dr. SE, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49546

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# Acknowledgments

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We wish also to thank the New Life Fellowship Church family, along with the many pastors and leaders from around the world with whom we have been piloting and revising these skills over the past twenty-one years. Your honest feedback has given each of these skills precision, depth, and cultural nuancing.

Finally, thank you to John Raymond, TJ Rathbun, Greg Clouse, and the Zondervan team for kindly and widely shepherding this project to completion.



# Introduction

Have you ever wondered why we recycle the same problems in the church year after year? Broken relationships, unresolved conflicts, inability to speak the truth, pretending things are fine because we're concerned about being nice. Week after week we hear sermons about loving better, but little changes in people's lives.

It's been rightly said that 85 percent of Christians are stuck, stagnant in their spiritual lives. We were among that number, especially as it related to how to grow practically into more loving people. We discovered that a commitment to a personal relationship with Jesus and to spiritual disciplines does not automatically equip us to love like Jesus. That requires intentional discipleship.

We spend a lot of money to learn, and become competent in, our careers, but few of us have learned the skills or gained the competency to love well. Most discipleship approaches do not include the necessary tools to mature us as followers of Jesus Christ who love God, ourselves, and others well.

To address this need, we developed this *Emotionally Healthy Relationships Course* (or *The EH Relationships Course*) over a twenty-one-year period. We believe these eight skills are foundational for building healthy churches where our love for one another is so distinct that the world will know Jesus is truly alive today. Our hope and prayer is that you will learn these skills so well that they become second nature to you and that you carry them into your church, workplace, family, school, and neighborhood.

This workbook is part of a larger course that includes two companion resources—the *EH Relationships Course* video and the *Emotionally Healthy Relationships Day by Day* devotional. On the video, we explain and model each of the eight skills before you actually practice them yourself during the sessions. The *Emotionally Healthy Relationships Day by Day* devotional is designed to deepen your personal, firsthand relationship with Jesus by incorporating, stillness,

silence and Scripture into your daily life rhythms. Why? Loving God and loving people, as Jesus said, are inseparable.

On the last page of the workbook, you will find a checklist to keep you on track as you move through the course. Fill it out along the way and, when completed, go to [emotionally-healthy.org](http://emotionally-healthy.org) to receive your certificate of completion.

Don't worry if the skills feel a bit awkward at first. That is to be expected as you step into a wonderfully, new way of relating to God, yourself, and others.

# How to Use This Workbook

## Before Session 1

- Purchase *Emotionally Healthy Relationships Day by Day* and this workbook.
- Read the introduction to Session 1 in the workbook.
- Watch the five-minute video that introduces how to use *Emotionally Healthy Relationships Day by Day* at [www.emotionallyhealthy.org/ehrcourse](http://www.emotionallyhealthy.org/ehrcourse).

## Throughout the Study

Before each group meeting, you are strongly encouraged to complete the pre-session reading that corresponds with each session in this workbook. We also ask that you pray the devotionals found in *Emotionally Healthy Relationships Day by Day* during the week that follows each study. You will notice that the devotionals expand on and link to the biblical content you will receive in the video itself.

Each group meeting includes the following components:

- Introduction
- Growing Connected
- Bible Study
- Video Presentation
- Practicing of the EH Relationship Skill
- Small Group Sharing
- Video Closing Summary
- Optional Session Wrap-up
- Between-Sessions Personal Study

Space is provided throughout for you to record your responses, questions, or other insights that God may bring to you during your meeting time as well as during your personal study time between meetings.

The Leader's Guide found in the back of this workbook provides extremely helpful information to supplement the studies. The key to the course, however, is that you *practice* the skills during the week.

## Note

The video presentations for each session are available wherever books/DVDs are sold or by digital video through sites such as: CBD.com, amazon.com, vimeo.com, Gottothehub.com, and studygateway.com.

# Suggested Guidelines for the Group

## **Be Prepared**

To get the most out of your time together, we ask that you do the pre-session readings. Please also bring your workbook and the *EH Relationships Day by Day* book with you to each meeting.

## **Speak for Yourself**

We encourage you to share and use “I” statements. We are only experts on ourselves. For example: Instead of saying, “Everyone is busy,” say, “I am busy.” Instead of saying, “We all struggle with forgiving,” say, “I struggle with forgiving.”

## **Respect Others**

Be brief in your sharing, remaining mindful that there are time limitations and others may want to share.

## **No Fixing, Saving, No Setting Other People Straight**

Respect people’s journeys and trust the Holy Spirit inside of them to lead them into all truth—in his timing. Resist the temptation to offer quick advice as people share in the group.

## Turn to Wonder

If you feel judgmental or defensive when someone else is sharing, ask yourself: *I wonder what brought him/her to this belief? I wonder what he/she is feeling right now? I wonder what my reaction teaches me about myself?*

## Trust and Learn from Silence

It is okay to have silence between responses as the group shares, giving members the opportunity to reflect. Remember, there is no pressure to share.

## Observe Confidentiality

In order to create an environment that is safe for open and honest participation, anything someone shares within the group should not be repeated outside of the group. However, feel free to share your own story and personal growth.

## Punctuality

Resolve to arrive on time.

# Take Your Community Temperature Reading (CTR)



*Session One*

## PRE-SESSION READING

It is easy to grow physically into a chronological adult. It is quite another to grow into an emotional adult. Many people may be, chronologically, a young adult, middle age, or older, but remain an emotional infant, child, or adolescent.

The following diagnostic is a simple tool to help you determine your level of spiritual/emotional maturity.

Take a few minutes to reflect on this simple assessment to get a sense of where you are as a disciple of Jesus Christ. It will help you get a sense of whether your discipleship has touched the emotional components of your life and, if so, how much. It will challenge you to consider whether you are an emotional infant, child, adolescent or adult. We encourage you to take the assessment now as you begin *The EH Relationships Course*, and then to take it again the completion of the course. This way you will be able to measure any progress you have made.

It's natural to feel uneasy or uncomfortable about some of the questions. Try to be as vulnerable and open as possible. Remember that the inventory will reveal nothing about you that is news to God. Take a moment to pray that God will guide your responses and to remember that you can afford to be honest because he loves you dearly without condition.

Because of space limitations, I have kept Part A to a minimum. I suspect most readers will be far more familiar with the concepts indicated in Part A than in Part B.

Note: This inventory can also be taken free online at [www.emotionallyhealthy.org](http://www.emotionallyhealthy.org).

## Emotional/Spiritual Health Inventory

Please answer these questions as honestly as possible.  
Use the scoring method as indicated.

Not very true  
Sometimes true  
Mostly true  
Very true

### PART A: General Formation and Discipleship

- |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. I feel confident of my adoption as God's son/daughter and rarely, if ever, question his acceptance of me.        | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 2. I love to worship God by myself as well as with others.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 3. I spend regular quality time in the Word of God and in prayer.   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 4. I sense the unique ways God has gifted me individually and am actively using my spiritual gifts for his service. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 5. I am a vital participant in a community with other believers.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 6. It is clear that my money, gifts, time, and abilities are completely at God's disposal and not my own.           | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 7. I consistently integrate my faith in the marketplace and the world.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

TOTAL \_\_\_\_

### PART B: Emotional Components of Discipleship

*Principle 1: Look beneath the Surface*

- |  |   |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|---|
| 1. It's easy for me to identify what I am feeling inside (Luke 19:41–44; John 11:33–35).   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 2. I am willing to explore previously unknown or unacceptable parts of myself, allowing Christ to transform me more fully (Rom. 7:21–25; Col. 3:5–17).                     | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 3. I enjoy being alone in quiet reflection with God and myself (Mark 1:35; Luke 6:12).   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 4. I can share freely about my emotions, sexuality, joy, and pain (Ps. 22; Prov. 5:18–19; Luke 10:21).   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 5. I am able to experience and deal with anger in a way that leads to growth in others and myself (Eph. 4:25–32).  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 6. I am honest with myself (and a few significant others) about the feelings, beliefs, doubts, pains, and hurts beneath the surface of my life (Ps. 73; 88; Jer. 20:7–18). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

TOTAL \_\_\_\_

*Principle 2: Break the Power of the Past*

- |  | Not very true | Sometimes true | Mostly true | Very true |
|--|---------------|----------------|-------------|-----------|
| 7. I resolve conflict in a clear, direct, and respectful way, not what I might have learned growing up in my family, such as painful putdowns, avoidance, escalating tensions, or going to a third party rather than to the person directly (Matt. 18:15–18).            | 1             | 2              | 3           | 4         |
| 8. I am intentional at working through the impact of significant “earthquake” events that shaped my present, such as the death of a family member, an unexpected pregnancy, divorce, addiction, or major financial disaster (Gen. 50:20; Ps. 51).                        | 1             | 2              | 3           | 4         |
| 9. I am able to thank God for all my past life experiences, seeing how he has used them to uniquely shape me into who I am (Gen. 50:20; Rom. 8:28–30).   | 1             | 2              | 3           | 4         |
| 10. I can see how certain “generational sins” have been passed down to me through my family history, including character flaws, lies, secrets, ways of coping with pain, and unhealthy tendencies in relating to others (Ex. 20:5; cf. Gen. 20:2; 26:7; 27:19; 37:1–33). | 1             | 2              | 3           | 4         |
| 11. I don’t need approval from others to feel good about myself (Prov. 29:25; Gal. 1:10).  | 1             | 2              | 3           | 4         |
| 12. I take responsibility and ownership for my past life rather than blame others (John 5:5–7).  | 1             | 2              | 3           | 4         |

TOTAL \_\_\_\_

*Principle 3: Live in Brokenness and Vulnerability*

- |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 13. I often admit when I’m wrong, readily asking forgiveness from others (Matt. 5:23–24).   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 14. I am able to speak freely about my weaknesses, failures, and mistakes (2 Cor. 12:7–12).   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 15. Others would easily describe me as approachable, gentle, open, and transparent (Gal. 5:22–23; 1 Cor. 13:1–6).                                 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 16. Those close to me would say that I am not easily offended or hurt (Matt. 5:39–42, 1 Cor. 13:5).   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 17. I am consistently open to hearing and applying constructive criticism and feedback that others might have for me (Prov. 10:17; 17:10; 25:12). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 18. I am rarely judgmental or critical of others (Matt. 7:1–5).   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 19. Others would say that I am slow to speak, quick to listen, and good at seeing things from their perspective (James 1:19–20).                  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

TOTAL \_\_\_\_

*Principle 4: Receive the Gift of Limits*

- |  | Not very true | Sometimes true | Mostly true | Very true |
|--|---------------|----------------|-------------|-----------|
| 20. I've never been accused of "trying to do it all" or of biting off more than I could chew (Matt. 4:1–11).   | 1             | 2              | 3           | 4         |
| 21. I am regularly able to say "no" to requests and opportunities rather than risk overextending myself (Mark 6:30–32).  | 1             | 2              | 3           | 4         |
| 22. I recognize the different situations where my unique, God-given personality can be either a help or hindrance in responding appropriately (Ps. 139; Rom. 12:3; 1 Peter 4:10).  | 1             | 2              | 3           | 4         |
| 23. It's easy for me to distinguish the difference between when to help carry someone else's burden (Gal 6:2) and when to let it go so they can carry their own burden (Gal. 6:5). | 1             | 2              | 3           | 4         |
| 24. I have a good sense of my emotional, relational, physical, and spiritual capacities, intentionally pulling back to rest and fill my "gas tank" again (Mark 1:21–39).           | 1             | 2              | 3           | 4         |
| 25. Those close to me would say that I am good at balancing family, rest, work, and play in a biblical way (Ex. 20:8).   | 1             | 2              | 3           | 4         |

TOTAL \_\_\_\_

*Principle 5: Embrace Grieving and Loss*

- |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 26. I openly admit my losses and disappointments (Ps. 3; 5).  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 27. When I go through a disappointment or a loss, I reflect on how I'm feeling rather than pretend that nothing is wrong (2 Sam. 1:4, 17–27; Ps. 51:1–17).              | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 28. I take time to grieve my losses as David (Ps. 69) and Jesus did (Matt. 26:39; John 11:35; 12:27).   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 29. People who are in great pain and sorrow tend to seek me out because it's clear to them that I am in touch with the losses and sorrows in my own life (2 Cor 1:3–7). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 30. I am able to cry and experience depression or sadness, explore the reasons behind it, and allow God to work in me through it (Ps. 42; Matt. 26:36–46).              | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

TOTAL \_\_\_\_

	Not very true	Sometimes true	Mostly true	Very true
<i>Principle 6: Make Incarnation Your Model for Loving Well</i>				
31. I am regularly able to enter into other people's world and feelings, connecting deeply with them and taking time to imagine what it feels like to live in their shoes (John 1:1–14; 2 Cor. 8:9; Phil. 2:3–5).	1	2	3	4
32. People close to me would describe me as a responsive listener (Prov. 10:19; 29:11; James 1:19).	1	2	3	4
33. When I confront someone who has hurt or wronged me, I speak more in the first person ("I" and "me") about how I am feeling rather than speak in blaming tones ("you" or "they") about what was done (Prov. 25:11; Eph. 4:29–32).	1	2	3	4
34. I have little interest in judging other people or quickly giving opinions about them (Matt. 7:1–5).	1	2	3	4
35. People would describe me as someone who makes "loving well" my number one aim (John 13:34–35; 1 Cor. 13).	1	2	3	4
TOTAL ____				
<i>Principle 7: Slow Down to Lead with Integrity</i>				
36. I spend sufficient time alone with God to sustain my work for God.	1	2	3	4
37. I regularly take a 24-hour period each week for Sabbath-keeping—to stop, to rest, to delight, and to contemplate God.	1	2	3	4
38. Those closest to me would say that my marriage and children take priority over church ministry and others.	1	2	3	4
39. I am not afraid to ask difficult, uncomfortable questions, to myself or to others, when needed.	1	2	3	4
40. I do not divide my leadership into sacred/secular categories. I treat the executive/planning functions of leadership as meaningful as prayer and preparing sermons.	1	2	3	4
TOTAL ____				

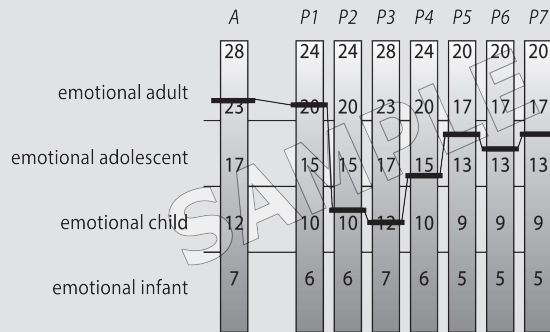
## Inventory Results

For each group of questions on pages 17–20:

- Add your answers to get the total for that group. Write your totals on the top portion of page 22, as the sample at the bottom of this page illustrates.
- Next, plot your answers and connect the dots to create a graph on the middle portion of page 22, again following the sample on this page.
- Finally, see page 23 for interpretations of your level of emotional health in each area. What patterns do you discern?

### SAMPLE

	Questions	Total
<b>Part A</b>		
General Formation and Discipleship	1 – 7	<u>24</u> / 28
<b>Part B</b>		
Principle 1 – Look beneath the Surface	1 – 6	<u>20</u> / 24
Principle 2 – Break the Power of the Past	7 – 12	<u>11</u> / 24
Principle 3 – Live in Brokenness and Vulnerability	13 – 19	<u>12</u> / 28
Principle 4 – Receive the Gift of Limits	20 – 25	<u>14</u> / 24
Principle 5 – Embrace Grieving and Loss	26 – 30	<u>16</u> / 20
Principle 6 – Make Incarnation Your Model for Loving Well	31 – 35	<u>14</u> / 20
Principle 7 – Slow Down to Lead with Integrity	36 – 40	<u>15</u> / 20



## Part A

General Formation and Discipleship 1 – 7 \_\_\_/28

## Part B

Principle 1 – Look beneath the Surface 1 – 6 \_\_\_/24

Principle 2 – Break the Power of the Past 7 – 12 \_\_\_/24

Principle 3 – Live in Brokenness and Vulnerability 13 – 19 \_\_\_/28

Principle 4 – Receive the Gift of Limits 20 – 25 \_\_\_/24

Principle 5 – Embrace Grieving and Loss 26 – 30 \_\_\_/20

Principle 6 – Make Incarnation Your Model for Loving Well 31 – 35 \_\_\_/20

Principle 7 – Slow Down to Lead with Integrity 36 – 40 \_\_\_/20

	A	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7
emotional adult	28 23	24 20	24 20	28 23	24 20	20 17	20 17	20 17
emotional adolescent	17	15	15	17	15	13	13	13
emotional child	12	10	10	12	10	9	9	9
emotional infant	7	6	6	7	6	5	5	5

## Interpretation Guide: Levels of Emotional Maturity<sup>1</sup>

**Emotional infant.** I look for other people to take care of me emotionally and spiritually. I often have difficulty in describing and experiencing my feelings in healthy ways and rarely enter the emotional world of others. I am consistently driven by a need for instant gratification, often using others as objects to meet my needs. People sometimes perceive me as inconsiderate and insensitive. I am uncomfortable with silence or being alone. When trials, hardships, or difficulties come, I want to quit God and the Christian life. I sometimes experience God at church and when I am with other Christians, but rarely when I am at work.

**Emotional child.** When life is going my way, I am content. However, as soon as disappointment or stress enter the picture, I quickly unravel inside. I often take things personally, interpreting disagreements or criticism as a personal offense. When I don't get my way, I often complain, throw an emotional tantrum, withdraw, manipulate, drag my feet, become sarcastic, or take revenge. I often end up living off the spirituality of other people because I am so overloaded and distracted. My prayer life is primarily talking to God, telling him what to do and how to fix my problems. Prayer is a duty, not a delight.

**Emotional adolescent.** I don't like it when others question me. I often make quick judgments and interpretations of people's behavior. I withhold forgiveness to those who sin against me, avoiding or cutting them off when they do something to hurt me. I subconsciously keep records on the love I give out. I have trouble really listening to another person's pain, disappointments, or needs without becoming preoccupied with myself. I sometimes find myself too busy to spend adequate time nourishing my spiritual life. I attend church and serve others but enjoy few delights in Christ. My Christian life is still primarily about doing, not being with him. Prayer continues to be mostly me talking with little silence, solitude, or listening to God.

**Emotional adult.** I respect and love others without having to change them or becoming judgmental. I value people for who they are, not for what they can give me or how they behave. I take responsibility for my own thoughts, feelings, goals, and actions. I can state my own beliefs and values to those who disagree with me—without becoming adversarial. I am able to accurately self-assess my limits, strengths, and weaknesses. I am deeply convinced that I am absolutely loved by Christ and, as a result, do not look to others to tell me I'm okay. I am able to integrate *doing* for God and *being* with him (Mary and Martha). My Christian life has moved beyond simply serving Christ to loving him and enjoying communion with him.

Permission is granted for any purchaser of this book to make copies of this inventory as long as it is not changed or sold for a profit, and this credit is included: Taken from Pete Scazzero with Warren Bird, *The Emotionally Healthy Church: Updated and Expanded Edition* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009). For more information and further resources, contact [www.emotionallyhealthy.org](http://www.emotionallyhealthy.org).

## GROUP MEETING

### Daily Office (10 minutes)

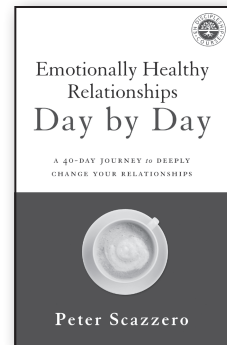
Do one of the Daily Offices from Week 1 of *Emotionally Healthy Relationships Day by Day* to begin your session. **(Leaders, please see point number two in the “General Guidelines” on page 160.)**

### Introduction (2 minutes)

The essence of true Christian spirituality is to love well. This requires that we experience connection with God, with ourselves, and with other people. God invites us to practice his presence in our daily lives. At the same time, he invites us to “practice the presence of people,” within an awareness of his presence, in our daily relationships. Sadly, the two are rarely brought together.<sup>2</sup>

The Christians in the church in Corinth failed to make that connection. They were zealous, diligent, and absolutely committed to having God as Lord of their lives. They had the faith to move mountains, gave great amounts of money to the poor, and were incredibly gifted, but they did not love people. They did not link loving God to loving people.

Jesus always integrated the presence of God with the practice of loving people. He summarized the entire Bible for us in light of this unbreakable union: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments” (Matthew 22:37–40).



**Growing Connected** (10 minutes)

1. Take a minute each to share your name, what you hope to get out of this course, and what makes you feel fully alive.

**Bible Study** (10 minutes)

The Corinthian church was a gifted, influential, intelligent (high IQ—intellectual intelligence) church that was weak in its ability to love well (low EQ—emotional intelligence).

Read aloud 1 Corinthians 13:1–3:

If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.

2. How do you understand the words, “If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, *I am nothing*” (emphasis added)?
3. How might this passage clash with your understanding of spiritual maturity?

4. As you think back over the past week, can you give one or two examples of how you separated your love for God from your love for people?

## ▶ VIDEO: Take Your Community Temperature Reading (20 minutes)

### *Video Notes*

#### *Something Was Wrong; Something Was Missing*

- People were growing in their love for God, but it wasn't translating into their love for other people.
- The quality of love inside the church was not really that different from the quality of love outside the church.
- We hit this wall.
- What is missing in our spiritual formation/discipleship and the way we handle our relationships?

#### *We Call This Emotionally Healthy Spirituality*

- Emotional health and spiritual maturity are inseparable. It is not possible to be spiritually mature while remaining emotionally immature.

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.” . . . And the second is like it: “Love your neighbor as yourself.”  
(Matthew 22:37–39)

- Loving God and loving others is the essence of true spirituality.

If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do have not love . . . and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do have not love, I am nothing.  
(1 Corinthians 13:1–2)

- Paul links true spirituality with our ability to love other people well.
- We need to give people the skills to “do” the Bible.

- Every Christian needs practical skills in order to grow into emotional/spiritual adulthood.
- To get these skills you must experience or practice them.

### *Eight Emotionally Healthy Skills*

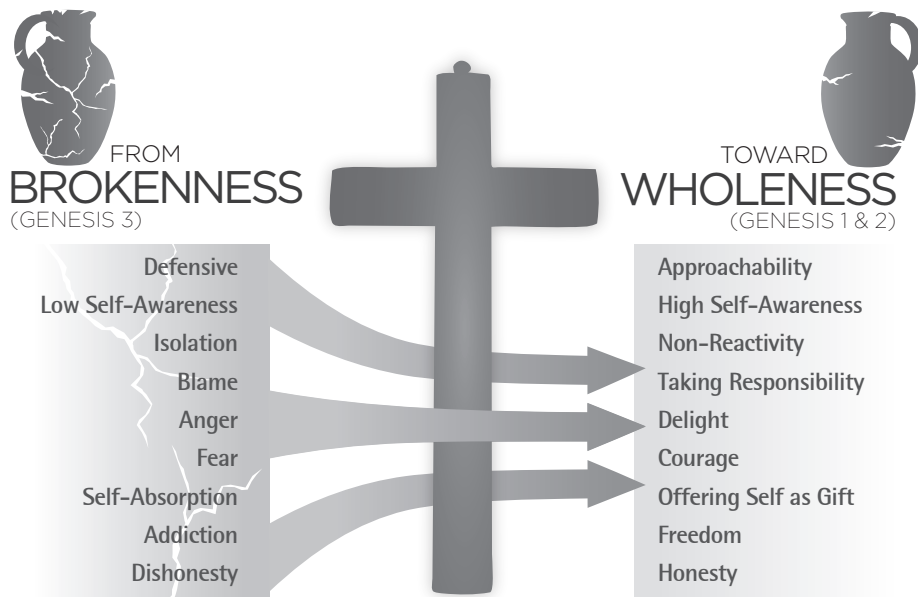
1. The Community Temperature Reading (CTR)
2. Stop Mind Reading and Clarify Expectations
3. Genogram Your Family
4. Explore the Iceberg
5. Listen Incarnationally (or Incarnational Listening)
6. Climb the Ladder of Integrity
7. Fight Cleanly (or Clean Fighting)
8. Develop a “Rule of Life” to Implement Emotionally Healthy Skills

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## The EH Discipleship Courses

### RELATIONSHIPS IN THE NEW FAMILY OF JESUS

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### *Community Temperature Reading (CTR): What Is It?*

- This is the building block for the rest of the skills that follow.
- **The purpose:** To discover and express your God-given voice and to build healthy relationships with others.
- It's about brief sharing.

### *The Five Categories*

#### 1. Appreciations

- We think them in our heads but often only say them when someone has gone above and beyond the call of duty.
- Some families and cultures never express appreciations.
- Appreciations are important to the life of any community or relationship.

e.g., "I appreciate you waiting for me last night when I was running late."

e.g., "I appreciate you arriving early and getting the coffee ready before the meeting."

#### 2. Puzzles

- We use them when we don't want to make negative assumptions about people, especially when we don't have all the information.
- Puzzles prevent us from jumping to conclusions and negatively interpreting what is going on around us.
- Puzzles give us an opportunity to slow down and ask questions instead of making judgments.
- *Puzzle* is a loving word.

e.g., Instead of being upset and not saying anything at all or angrily saying, "Why didn't you return my phone call?" you can say, "I'm *puzzled* as to why you didn't return my phone call."

e.g., Instead of thinking, *No one washed the dishes last night. I live with a bunch of slob!* you can say, "I'm *puzzled* as to why you left your dirty dishes in the sink last night."

### 3. Complaints with Possible Solutions

- All relationships have complaints or things they don't like. This is normal.
- Two challenges with complaints: (1) Some of our families grew up with an unwritten rule: If you don't have anything nice to say, don't say anything at all. (2) It is very easy to complain and not take *any* responsibility for a possible solution.
- The purpose of "Complaints with Possible Solutions" is to help you with small irritations and annoyances that arise each day.
- Use the phrase "I notice . . . and I prefer . . ." <sup>3</sup>

e.g., "*I notice* you often leave the lights on in our apartment when you leave, and *I prefer* you turn them off."

e.g., "*I notice* our meetings start late, and *I prefer* we start at the agreed upon time."

- The person with the complaint takes responsibility for a possible solution.
- Keep complaints light in the Community Temperature Reading.

### 4. New Information

- This can take many forms—events, appointments, new decisions, achievements, opportunities, or activities. Relationships can only grow when people know what is happening in each other's lives, both the trivial as well as the important.

e.g., "Our professor moved the exam so I can go to the movies this week."

e.g., "I'm exploring a different job within my company!"

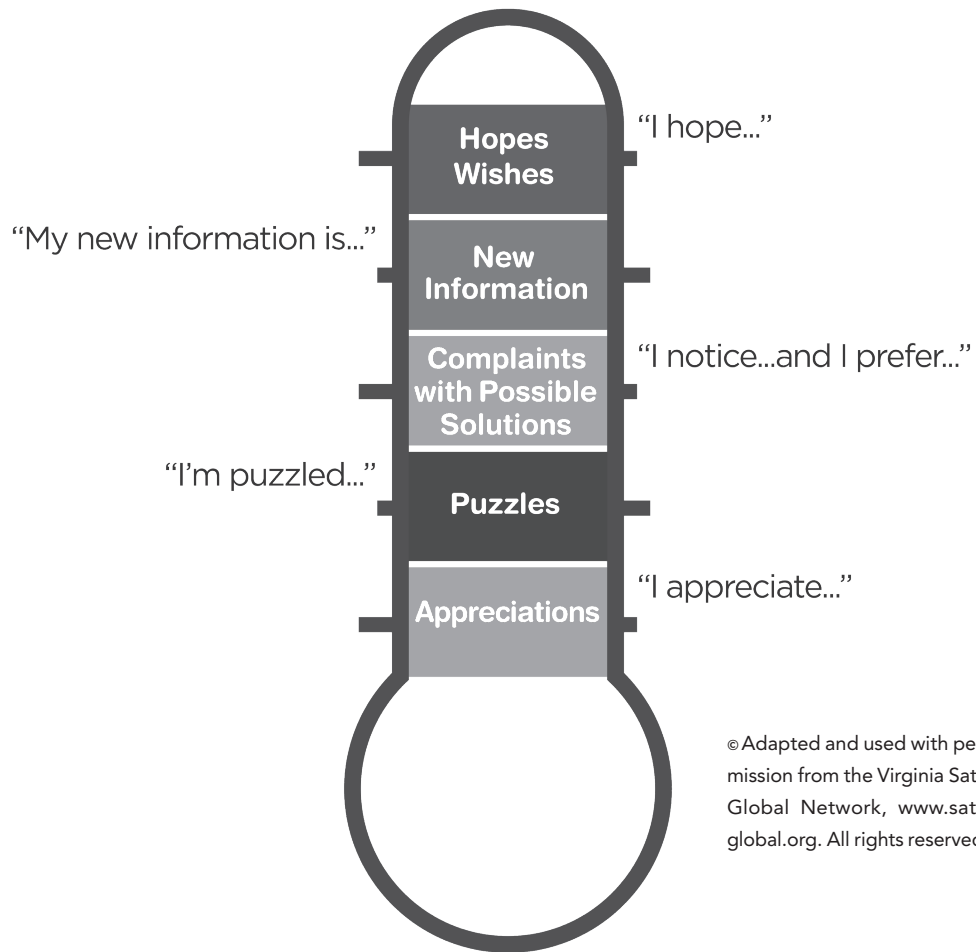
### 5. Hopes and Wishes

- Hopes and wishes offer windows into our unique souls, revealing significant parts of who we are.
- Family life in particular becomes richer as we support and listen to each other's hopes and dreams.

e.g., "I hope we can get away for vacation this year."

e.g., "I hope to get a master's degree in nursing someday."

*Pete and Geri Model a CTR*



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⏸ *Pause the Video*

**Workbook Activities (25 minutes)*****Partner Activity: CTR (10 minutes)***

1. Pair up with one other person—or with two others if there is an uneven number in your group.
2. Review the Guidelines for the CTR:
  - Face each other as you share.
  - Take turns sharing back and forth.
  - Keep sharing light and brief.
  - Use only the sentence stems given.
  - Do not interrupt or respond. Only respond to puzzles or complaints with a few words if appropriate.
3. Using the graphic of the Community Temperature Reading on page 30, begin at the bottom of the thermometer, with “Appreciations,” and take turns.
4. Work on only one category at a time. Feel free to skip a category if nothing comes to your mind.
5. Keep it light, especially with the “Complaints and Possible Solutions.”

***Small Group Sharing (10 minutes)***

In groups of three or four:

5. How did your family of origin share appreciations? Complaints? Hopes and wishes?
6. What was it like for you to express yourself in these different categories?
7. Which was easiest for you? Which was most difficult for you?

## ▶ VIDEO: Closing Summary (6 minutes)

### *Video Notes*

Healthy ways of relating clash with most families and cultures. This is one practical way to put off the old self and put on the new self in Christ (Ephesians 4:22–24).

The CTR is a flexible, elastic tool that can be used one-on-one or in a group setting.

It can be used with children/families, with friends, at the workplace, in classrooms, or in a small group.

How it is used is dependent on two factors:

1. Time: How much time do you have? Feel free to use only one or two elements if time is limited.
2. Environment: If there is a lot of tension in the group, you may want to skip “Complaints and Possible Solutions.”

Remember, the CTR is meant to be used as a tool, not a weapon.

Practice the Community Temperature Reading two to three times a week throughout the course.

**Conclusion:** When we try to love in our own strength, we discover we can’t. We naturally fall back to unhealthy ways of relating, especially under stress. We need Jesus’ love to flow *into* us if it is to flow *out* of us.

That is why developing and deepening your relationship with Jesus by using *EH Relationships Day by Day* is core to this course.

**Optional Session Wrap-up (5 minutes)**

Together with your small group, ask any questions of clarification regarding this session and then briefly close in prayer.

**PERSONAL ACTION STEP**

Decide when you will practice this skill before the next session. (We recommend two to three times.) Write your response below.

I plan on practicing the CTR:

With whom? \_\_\_\_\_

When? \_\_\_\_\_



# Between-Sessions Personal Study

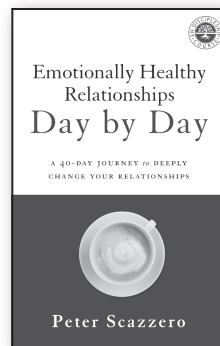
## *Session One*

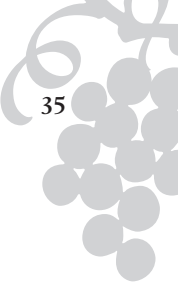
Read the pre-session assignment for Session 2 on pages 40–42. Use the space provided to note any insights or questions you might want to bring to the next group session.

Prayerfully read Week 1 of the *Emotionally Healthy Relationships Day by Day* devotional, “Take Your Community Temperature Reading.” Use the space provided to answer the Questions to Consider and/or to journal your thoughts each day.

### **DAY 1 Questions to Consider:**

When can you set aside uninterrupted time each day to begin cultivating an awareness of the presence of God?





Whose beauty might you be bypassing because you are too busy or distracted?

## **DAY 2 Questions to Consider:**

In what areas of life might your pursuit of “getting things done” or “doing right things” be more important to you than seeking a loving relationship with God and others?

Consider your present balance between solitude and community. To what degree is it adequate for you to be growing in love for God, others, and yourself?

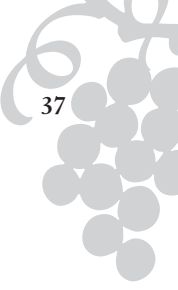
**DAY 3 Questions to Consider:**

What difference might it make in your day to remember that, in every moment you turn your heart to God—including this very moment—he is waiting for you and loving you first?

Think back over the last few days. In what way(s) did your to-do list, distractibility, or perfectionism keep you from loving and enjoying Jesus or the people around you?

**DAY 4 Questions to Consider:**

In what subtle or perhaps even unconscious ways might you be judging or despising someone in your life?



In your own life, how might it be true that falling in love with Jesus and staying in love with Jesus will decide everything? How could it change you, as well as your relationships?

### **DAY 5 Questions to Consider:**

What two or three things from the past week are you most thankful for? (For example, good health or healing, people in your life, possessions, opportunities, trials, closed doors, spiritual blessings, etc.) Express your heartfelt gratitude to God for these gifts.

What is your biggest challenge in integrating these two loves in this season of your life?

