

THE DEVASTATION OF ISOLATION

Foundational Knowledge and Understanding Video

KEY CONCEPTS AND IDEAS

We have a LANGUAGE PROBLEM

Significance and Relevance:

- ⇒ The idea that faith and mental health communities are distinctly separate communities is a falsehood. The greatest distinctions are often found within the language used, not the object or objective (i.e. people).
- ⇒ Our language needs to lead to life and the fruit of abundant life.

Scriptural Support:

"Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruits." ~Proverbs 18:21

We need the RIGHT APPROACH

DICTIONARY APPROACH -The Wrong and Often Harmful Approach

Significance and Relevance:

Dictionaries serve the purpose of providing definitions, and definitions by nature lead to divisions and separation.

THESAURUS APPROACH - The Correct and Unifying Approach

Significance and Relevance:

- ⇒ A Thesaurus takes things that are separate and works to bring them together in unity.
- ⇒ Terms such as "Unconditional Positive Regard," a term often found in clinical vernacular, and "Love," a term often found in faith vernacular, can actually be synonyms with the same fundamental meaning.
- ⇒ These fundamental meanings can be tested by holding them against the truths of Scripture.

Scriptural Support:

"God showed His love (unconditional positive regard) for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." ~ Romans 5:8

"For God so loved (had unconditional positive regard) for the world, that He gave His only son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life." ~ John 3:16

"A new commandment I give to you, that you love (have unconditional positive regard for) one another; just as I have love (had unconditional positive regard) for you, you also are to love (have unconditional positive regard for) one another." ~ John 13:34

We are made for RELATIONSHIP & CONNECTION

Significance and Relevance:

- ⇒ The Kingdom of Heaven is made known to the world by the love and lasting and caring connections we have for one another.
- ⇒ Opposite of feeling loved is not feeling hated, but feeling **alone**.

Scriptural Support:

God is love ~ 1 John 4:8b and we are made in God's image ~ Genesis 1:27

*By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have **love for one another**. ~ John 13:35*

*For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him who is alone when he **falls** and has not another to lift him up! ~ Ecclesiastes 4:10*

LOVE can transform how we EXPERIENCE THE WORLD

Significance and Relevance:

- ⇒ Brain scans can measurably show differences in fear and pain responses when we feel loved.
- ⇒ The need for secure attachments is prevalent throughout the lifespan.

Scriptural Support:

*that their **hearts** may be encouraged, being knit together in **love**, to reach all the riches of full assurance of understanding and the knowledge of God's mystery, which is Christ, ~ Colossians 2:2*

LISTENING well REBUILDS CONNECTIONS

Significance and Relevance:

- ⇒ Key to rebuilding relational connections is to listen long and hard as a service to one another.
- ⇒ The Transformative Power of God's love for us, and our love for one another, both begin with the loving act of listening.
- ⇒ Listening is a much greater service to our brothers and sisters than talking.

Scriptural Support:

*"A new commandment I give to you, that you **love** (listen to) one another; just as I have **loved** (listened to) you, you also are to **love** (listen to) one another." ~ John 13:34*

*"**Love** (listening) is patient and kind; **love** (listening) does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. **Love** (listening) does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; **love** (listening) does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. **Love** (listening) bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all thing. **Love** (listening) should never end, but because God doesn't stop **loving** (listening) to us." ~ 1 Corinthians 13:4-8*

QUOTES

"The most traumatic aspects of all disasters involve the shattering of human connections...Because humans are inescapably social beings, the worst catastrophes that can befall us inevitably involve relational loss.. Of course, medications can help relieve symptoms and talking to a therapist can be incredibly useful. But healing and recovery are impossible—even with the best medications and therapy in the world—without lasting, caring connections to others."

- Bruce Perry



"The first service that one owes to others in the fellowship consists in listening to them. Just as love to God begins with listening to His Word, so the beginning of love for the brethren is learning to listen to them. It is God's love for us that He not only gives us His Word but also lends us His ear. So it is His work that we do for our brother when we learn to listen to him. Christians, especially ministers, so often think they must always contribute something when they are in the company of others, that this is the one service they have to render. They forget that listening can be a greater service than speaking.

Many people are looking for an ear that will listen. They do not find it among Christians, because these Christians are talking where they should be listening. But he who can no longer listen to his brother will soon be no longer listening to God either; he will be doing nothing but prattle in the presence of God too.

This is the beginning of the death of the spiritual life, and in the end there is nothing left but spiritual chatter and clerical condescension arrayed in pious words. One who cannot listen long and patiently will presently be talking beside the point and be never really speaking to others, albeit he be not conscious of it. Anyone who thinks that his time is too valuable to spend keeping quiet will eventually have no time for God and his brother, but only for himself and for his own follies."

— Dietrich Bonhoeffer



"There is a kind of listening with half an ear that presumes already to know what the other person has to say. It is an impatient, inattentive listening, that despises the brother and is only waiting for a chance to speak and thus get rid of the other person. This is no fulfillment of our obligation, and it is certain that here too our attitude toward our brother only reflects our relationship to God. It is little wonder that we are no longer capable of the greatest service of listening that God has committed to us, that of hearing our brother's confession, if we refuse to give ear to our brother on lesser subjects.

Secular education today is aware that often a person can be helped merely by having someone who will listen to him seriously, and upon this insight it has constructed its own soul therapy, which has attracted great numbers of people, including Christians. But Christians have forgotten that the ministry of listening has been committed to them by Him who is Himself the great listener and whose work they should share. We should listen with the ears of God that we may speak the Word of God."

— Dietrich Bonhoeffer



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