Session Two: 12 February 2016

Wholeheartedly Session 1

- Connection
- Belonging and worthiness
- Vulnerability
- Shame
- Empathy

What does it mean to be Wholehearted?

It means, "I'm all in."

It means engaging in our lives from a place of worthiness and having the courage to show up fully.

It means exercising

Courage
Compassion
Connection

Everyday

10 Guideposts to Wholehearted Living (Brene Brown)

1. Cultivating Authenticity –
   Letting go of what people think
2. Cultivating Self-Compassion –
   Letting go of perfectionism
3. Cultivating a Resilient Spirit –
   Letting go of numbing and powerlessness
4. Cultivating Gratitude and Joy –
   Letting go of scarcity and fear of the dark
5. Cultivating Intuition and Trusting Faith –
   Letting go of the need for certainty

10 Guideposts to Wholehearted Living (Brene Brown)

6. Cultivating Creativity –
   Letting go of comparison
7. Cultivating Play and Rest –
   Letting go of exhaustion as a status symbol and productivity as self-worth
8. Cultivating Calm and Stillness –
   Letting go of anxiety as a lifestyle
9. Cultivating Meaningful Work –
   Letting go of self-doubt and "supposed to"
10. Cultivating Laughter, Song, and Dance –
    Letting go of being cool and "always in control"

Wholeheartedly Session 2

1) Love & Fear
2) Growing Intimacy with God
3) Love & Intimacy
4) Love & Hurt
5) Self-love
6) The Practice of Compassion & Gratitude
7) Holding Space for Someone Effectively

Love and Fear

We live in a world that is full of anxiety. We know it by the type of questions we surround our lives with:

What if…

What if I don't find a partner, a house, a job, a friend, a benefactor? What if they fire me, if I get sick, if an accident happens, if lose my friends, if my relationship doesn't work out?

Love and Fear

How…

How can I survive in this rat race? How can I raise children in a world threatened by war, terrorists, global warming? How can we be safe in an increasingly volatile world? How can I be liked and accepted by my neighbors, friends, community? How can I make it to heaven?

Love and Fear

But…

Fear never gives birth to love

Which questions guide our lives? Which questions do we make our own? Which questions deserve our undivided attention?

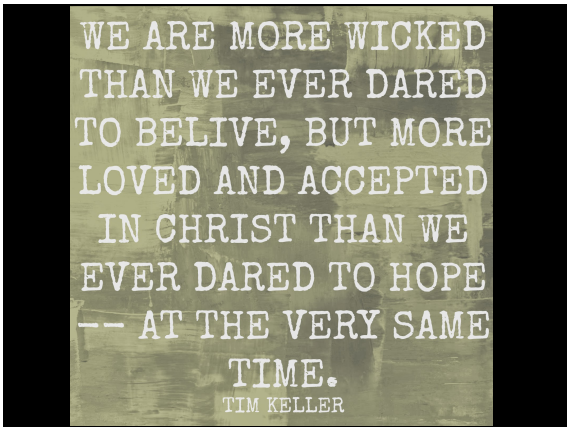
Are there ways we can gradually overcome our fears and let love be our guide?

Love and Fear

Video: The Vulnerable Journey – The Way of Jesus
Henri Nouwen

The way of Jesus is vulnerability

How can we overcome our fears and let love be our guide?



Growing Intimacy with God

Lifesigns: Intimacy, Fecundity & Ecstasy In Christian Perspective

Henri Nouwen

Growing Intimacy with God

"Speaking of himself as the vine and of his disciples as the brances, Jesus says: "Make your home in me, as I make mine in you" (John 15:4). This is an invitation to intimacy.
Then he adds: "Those who remain in me, and I in them, will bear much fruit." (John 15:5) This is a call to fecundity (or fruitfulness).
Finally, when he says: "I have told you this so that my own joy may be in you and your joy may be complete" (John 15:11), he promises ecstasy. These 3 themes are the golden threads woven through the whole of John's gospel."

Growing Intimacy with God

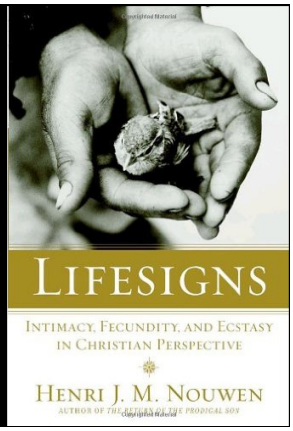
"When Jesus says: "Make your home in me as I make mine in you" (John 15:4), he offers us an intimate place that we can truly call "home". Home is that place or space where we do not have to be afraid but can let go of our defenses and be free, free from worries, free from tensions, free from pressures. Home is where we can laugh and cry, embrace and dance, sleep long and dream quietly, eat, read, play, listen to music, and be with a friend. Home is where we can rest and be healed."

Growing Intimacy with God

"Fear is the great enemy of intimacy. Fear makes us run away from each other or cling to each other but does not create true intimacy. Fear makes us move away from each other to a "safe" distance, or move toward each other to a "safe" closeness, but fear does not create the space where true intimacy can exist. Fear does not create a home….Whenever I create too much distance or too much closeness, I always sense a lack of inner freedom and a resentment toward the power they have over me."

The Intimate Space

"It is the space where growth can take place."



Growing Intimacy with God

"Intimacy is beyond fear. Those who have experienced the intimacy to which Jesus invites us know that they no longer need to worry about getting too close or becoming too distant. When Jesus says, "Do not be afraid; it is I," he reveals a new space in which we can move freely without fear.

Growing Intimacy with God

Jesus, in whom the fullness of God dwells, has become our home. By making his home in us, he allows us to make our home in him. By entering into the intimacy of our innermost self, he offers us the opportunity to enter into his own intimacy with God…God so much desired to fulfill our deepest yearning for a home that God decided to build a home in us. Thus God overcomes all distinctions between "distant" and "close" and offers us an intimacy in which we can be most ourselves when most like God."

For Reflection

1) What are you often anxious about?
2) What does Jesus' vulnerability mean to you?
3) Are you home? Can you hear the inner voice of love?

The voice of first love (1 John 4:19) says: "You are loved long before other people can love you or you can love others. You are accepted long before you can accept others or receive their acceptance. You are safe long before you can offer or receive safety."

For Discussion

1) How do you nurture your relationship with God?
2) How do you want to nurture intimacy with God in your daily life?

What is Love?

"We cultivate love when we allow our most vulnerable and powerful selves to be deeply seen and known, and when we honor the spiritual connection that grows from that offering with trust, respect, kindness and affection.

Love is not something we give or get; it is something that we nurture and grow, a connection that can only be cultivated between two people when it exists within each one of them – we can only love others as much as we love ourselves.

What is Love?

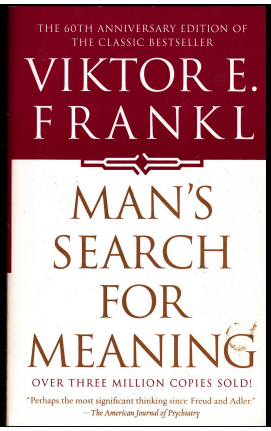
Shame, blame, disrespect, betrayal, and the withholding of affection damage the roots from which love grows. Love can only survive these injuries if they are acknowledged, healed and rare."

Brené Brown, *The Gifts of Imperfection: Let Go of Who You Think You're Supposed to Be and Embrace Who You Are*

What is Love?

"To be loved but not known is comforting but superficial. To be known but not loved is our greatest fear. But to be fully known and truly loved is, well, a lot like being loved by God. It is what we need more than anything. It liberates us from pretense, humbles us out of our self-righteousness, and fortifies us for any difficulty life can throw at us."

Timothy Keller,
The Meaning of Marriage



What is Love?

"For the first time in my life I saw the truth as it is set into song by so many poets, proclaimed as the final wisdom by so many thinkers. The truth - that Love is the ultimate and highest goal to which man can aspire. Then I grasped the meaning of the greatest secret that human poetry and human thought and belief have to impart: The salvation of man is through love and in love. I understood how a man who has nothing left in this world still may know bliss, be it only for a brief moment, in the contemplation of his beloved."

Viktor Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning*

What is Love?

"Love is the only way to grasp another human being in the innermost core of his personality. No one can become fully aware of the very essence of another human being unless he loves him. By his love he is enabled to see the essential traits and features in the beloved person; and even more, he sees that which is potential in him, which is not yet actualized but yet ought to be actualized. Furthermore, by his love, the loving person enables the beloved person to actualize these potentialities. By making him aware of what he can be and of what he should become, he makes these potentialities come true."

Viktor Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning*

What is Intimacy?

"Intimacy means we can be who we are in a relationship, and allow the other person to do the same. "Being who we are" requires that we can talk openly about things that are important to us, that we take a clear position on where we stand on important emotional issues, and that we clarify the limits of what is acceptable and tolerable to us in a relationship. "Allowing the other person to do the same" means that we can stay emotionally connected to that other party who thinks, feels, and believes differently, without needing to change, convince, or fix the other.

What is Intimacy?

An intimate relationship is one in which neither party silences, sacrifices, or betrays the self and each party expresses strength and vulnerability, weakness and competence in a balanced way."

Harriet Lerner, *The Dance of Intimacy*

Pause, Reflect & Discuss

1) What is something interesting you realized about love and/or intimacy today?

2) What is one thing you would like to do as a result of that realization or reminder?

Love and Hurt

"Every time we make the decision to love someone, we open ourselves to great suffering, because those we most love cause us not only great joy but also great pain. The greatest pain comes from leaving. When the child leaves home, when the husband or wife leaves for a long period of time or for good, when the beloved friend departs to another country or dies… the pain of the leaving can tear us apart.
Still, if we want to avoid the suffering of leaving, we will never experience the joy of loving. And love is stronger than fear, life stronger than death, hope stronger than despair. We have to trust that the risk of loving is always worth taking." - Henri J.M. Nouwen, *Bread For The Journey*

Love and Hurt

Video: Brené Brown Breaks Down Common Types of Armor

Love and Hurt

"There is no such thing as selective emotional numbing. When we numb the dark, we numb the light. When we numb pain and vulnerability, we also unintentionally numb our experiences of good feelings, like joy.

Joy is one of the most tender and vulnerable things. To love someone fiercely, to believe in something with your whole heart, to celebrate a fleeting moment in time, to fully engage in a life that doesn't come with guarantees – these are risks that involve vulnerability and often pain. "

People are like stained-glass windows.
They sparkle and shine when the sun is out,
but when the darkness sets in,
their true beauty is revealed only if there is
a light from within.

- Elisabeth Kübler-Ross
pinmquotes.wordpress.com

What is self-love?

1) Do you take responsibility for your own emotional and mental well-being?

2) Do you speak to yourself as respectfully and lovingly as you do a loved one or close friend?

3) Do you criticize yourself more often than affirming your actions and decisions?

4) Do you back yourself up when you act on a decision or do you keep second guessing yourself?

What is self-love?

5) Do you know what you like or dislike? What is important to you? What are your core values in life? Do you live by them?

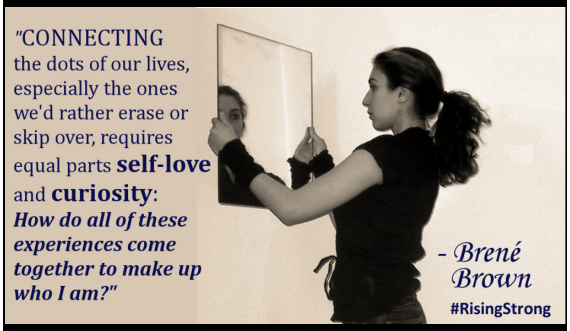
6) Do you set and maintain clear boundaries for yourself and others?

7) Are you able to say no without feeling guilty or worrying about what people think of you?

8) What nourishes your soul?

What is self-love?

Video: Are You Hooked On A False Story?
Brené Brown



Owning Our Story

"Owning our story can be hard but not nearly as difficult as spending our lives running from it. Embracing our vulnerabilities is risky but not nearly as dangerous as giving up on love and belonging and joy – the experiences that make us the most vulnerable. Only when we are brave enough to explore the darkness will we discover the infinite power of our light."

Brene Brown

Practising Compassion

To what extent are we compassionate towards ourselves?

Because how hard we are on ourselves will determine how hard we are on others

Practising Compassion

12 Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.

-Colossians 3:12

What does it mean to be Wholehearted?

It means, "I'm all in."

It means engaging in our lives from a place of worthiness and having the courage to show up fully.

It means exercising

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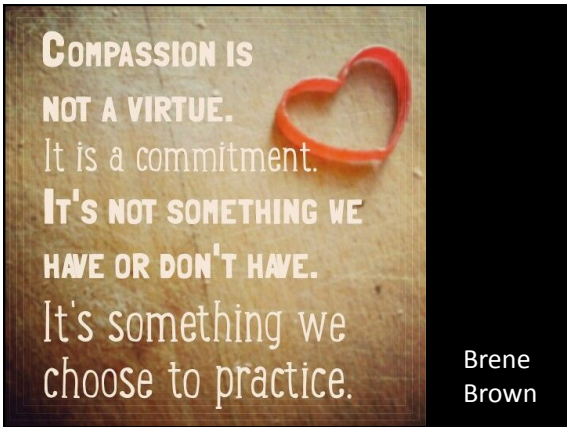

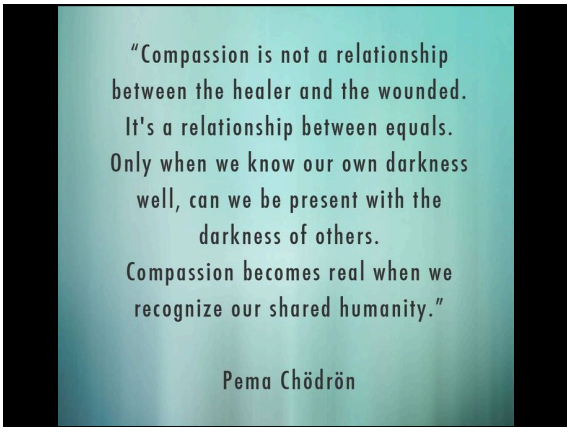

The Gift of Compassion

"Everyone's heard this self-help platitude: We need to love ourselves before we can love anyone else. This may sound wise, but it misses a great truth; if we want to experience true intimacy, we need to be *taught* to love aspects of ourselves--again and again--by the people around us.

As much as we want to control our own destiny, the humbling truth is that sometimes the only way to learn self-love is by *being* loved-precisely in the places where we feel most unsure and most tender. When that happens, we feel freedom and relief-and permission to love in a deeper way. No amount of positive self-talk can replicate this experience. It is a gift of intimacy, not of will-power." – *Ken Page*

The Gift of Compassion

"There is a twilight zone in our hearts that we ourselves cannot see. Even when we know quite a lot about ourselves-our gifts and weaknesses, our ambitions and aspirations, our motives and our drives-large parts of ourselves remain in the shadow of consciousness. This is a very good thing. We will always remain partially hidden to ourselves. Other people, especially those who love us, can often see our twilight zones better than we ourselves can.

The Gift of Compassion

The way we are seen and understood by others is different from the way we see and understand ourselves. We will never fully know the significance of our presence in the lives of our friends. That's a grace, a grace that calls us not only to humility, but to a deep trust in those who love us. It is the twilight zones of our hearts where true friendships are born."

Henri J.M. Nouwen

Practising Compassion

Entering into someone's pain/fear/ suffering/brokenness/shame/ confusion…

and holding space for them

Practising Compassion

- Having space within our hearts and minds
- Being fully present
- Listening and attending with our whole being
- Creating a non-judgmental and safe space

Pause, Reflect, Discuss

1) What is one thing I would like to do to practise compassion on myself?

2) What is one thing I would like to do to practise compassion on others better?

Joy & Gratitude

Video: Brene Brown on Joy and Gratitude

Joy & Gratitude

"It is not joy that makes us grateful; it is gratitude that makes us joyful."

David Steindl-Rast

Joy & Gratitude

"Always be joyful. Never stop praying. Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you who belong to Christ Jesus."
- 1 Thessalonians 5:18

"Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds us all together in perfect harmony. And let the peace that comes from Christ rule in your hearts. For as members of one body you are called to live in peace. And always be thankful."
- Colossians 3:14-15

Pause, Reflect, Discuss

What is one thing I can do to cultivate gratitude daily or regularly?

My Pledge

Today I choose Authenticity and Wholehearted living.

Even when it's hard. Even when I'm wrestling with the shame and fear of not being enough, and especially when the joy is so intense that I'm afraid to let myself feel it.

I will practise courage by being emotionally honest, setting boundaries, and embracing my vulnerability.

I will exercise compassion by remembering that we are all made of strength and struggle, and connected to each other through a loving and compassionate God and a resilient human spirit.

I will nurture connection and belonging by letting go of what I think I'm supposed to be and embracing who I am – God's beloved.

Today I invite gratitude, grace and joy into my life. Today I will live and love with my whole heart.

Homework

1. Go through the reflection questions again and commit to new intentions and practices with God
2. Practise what you commit yourself to even if it's just one thing
3. Find an accountability buddy

Homework

Reflection Questions:

1) What are you often anxious about?
2) What does Jesus' vulnerability mean to you?
3) Are you home? Can you hear the inner voice of love?
4) How do you nurture your relationship with God?
5) How do you want to nurture intimacy with God in your daily life?

Homework

Reflection Questions:

6) What is something interesting you realized about love and/or intimacy today?
7) What is one thing you would like to do as a result of that realization or reminder?
8) How do you nurture your relationship with God?
9) To what extent are we compassionate towards ourselves?

Homework

Reflection Questions:

10) What is one thing I would like to do to practise compassion on myself?
11) What is one thing I would like to do to practise compassion on others better?
12) What is one thing I can do to cultivate gratitude daily or regularly?