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Understanding Behavioral Change Through the Integration of Theology and Emerging Sciences

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GEORGE FOX UNIVERSITY

UNDERSTANDING BEHAVIORAL CHANGE THROUGH THE INTEGRATION
OF THEOLOGY AND EMERGING SCIENCES

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF GEORGE FOX EVANGELICAL SEMINARY
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

BY

WILLIAM DAVID PHILLIPS

SMYRNA, DELAWARE

MARCH 2009

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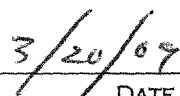
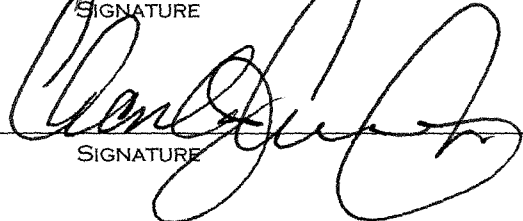

WILLIAM DAVID PHILLIPS

DATE: MARCH 10, 2009

TITLE:

**UNDERSTANDING BEHAVIORAL CHANGE
THROUGH THE INTEGRATION OF THEOLOGY AND EMERGING SCIENCES**

**WE THE UNDERSIGNED CERTIFY THAT WE HAVE READ
THIS PROJECT AND APPROVE IT AS ADEQUATE IN
SCOPE AND QUALITY TO COMPLETE THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DOCTOR OF MINISTRY IN
LEADERSHIP IN THE EMERGING CULTURE DEGREE**

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GEORGE FOX
EVANGELICAL SEMINARY

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DEDICATION

To Brenna...

You are the love of my life and my best friend. Your love, help, and support during this period of my life has been more than I could ever imagine. I could not have done this without you.

To my parents...

I cannot thank you enough for sacrificially allowing me to explore the many disciplines and dimensions of life. Your support has always been true and faithful. I could never express my love and appreciation with words.

To the Triune God...

Thank you for creating me in your image and for helping me know you as "Daddy". It has transformed my relationship with you and others. The shalom and wholeness you provide has been liberating.

THE PROBLEM

In many communities of Christ followers, there is the belief in the innate desire for a relationship with God. In fact, one Christian who is an experimental psychologist theorizes that belief in God is hard-wired in a person. "Christian theology teaches that people were crafted by God to be in a loving relationship with him and other people... Why wouldn't God, then, design us in such a way as to find belief in divinity quite natural?"¹

The second chapter of the book of Genesis describes the relationship between the Creator and the created. Man and woman walked in the garden together in complete love and in an unbroken relationship with God.² There was intimacy and peace, love and acceptance. It is the story of "the fatherly God who is near."³ It was a place where all their needs were met.⁴

When Adam and Eve sinned by choosing to disobey God's specific command, that relationship was distorted. The *eikon*, the image of God in which humanity was created,⁵ was distorted and a separation of their relationship occurred.⁶ The image of

¹ Henig, Robin Marantz. Darwin's God.
http://www.nytimes.com/2007/03/04/magazine/04evolution.t.html?_r=1&pagewanted=11&ei=5087%0A&em&en=166dbd9e75680e73&ex=1173243600 (accessed February 9, 2009)

² Dietrich Bonhoeffer, John W. De Gruchy, and Douglas S. Bax, *Creation and Fall: A Theological Exposition of Genesis 1-3* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997), 84.

³ Ibid., 72.

⁴ Tatha Wiley, *Original Sin: Origins, Developments, Contemporary Meanings* (New York: Paulist Press, 2002). 35.

⁵ Stanley Grenz, *The Social God and the Relational Self: A Trinitarian Theology of the Imago Dei*. (Louisville, KY.: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 204.

God was still present, but this distortion resulted in humans no longer *living* as those made in the image of God.⁷ Augustine also reminds us that “Man [sic] is one of your creatures, Lord, and his instinct is to praise you. He bears about him the mark of death...But still, since he is a part of your creation, he wishes to praise you. The thought of you stirs him so deeply that he cannot be content unless he praises you, because you made us for yourself and our hearts find no peace until they rest in you.”⁸

Humanity’s broken relationship with God results in the brokenness and helplessness of humankind.⁹ Consequently, humanity struggles to do the right things. Instead of doing what is right, mankind often does the destructive actions it does not want to do. For instance, in Romans 7:15 Paul says: “For what I am doing, I do not understand, for I am not practicing what I would like to do, but I am doing the very thing I hate.” It is an inner conflict; there is a desire to live righteous lives – “behavior in keeping with the two-way relationship between God and man,”¹⁰ but an inability to do so because of the brokenness, resulting from sin, of our lives.

⁶ Charles Sherlock, *The Doctrine of Humanity (Contours of Christian Theology)*. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996). 42.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Augustine, *Confessions*, The Penguin Classics, L114 (Baltimore,: Penguin Books, 1961)., 21.

⁹ Ron Martoia, *Static: Tune out the “Christian Noise” and Experience the Real Message of Jesus* (Carol Stream, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers, 2007). 170.

¹⁰ Colin Brown and David Townsley, *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, 4 vols. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Regency Reference Library, 1986)., 3:355.

Sin, from the Greek *hamartia*, means to miss the mark.¹¹ In Aristotle's *Poetics*, the word is usually translated "tragic flaw" or "tragic mistake."¹² Richard Rohr, expanding on the idea of "missing the mark," states, "Sins are fixations that prevent the energy of life, God's love, from flowing freely."¹³ He views sin as self-erected barriers that cut people off from God and from their own authentic potential.

Ron Martoia notes:

[W]hen we look at human sin, most of it swirls around our efforts to produce Garden [of Eden] type benefits and satisfactions that just can't be duplicated outside that context. We could say that sin is a fundamental effort to experience something the Garden had for us in its original setting, but through brokenness we attempt to experience it in inappropriate ways. When we end up alienated from God and need restoration, we are seeking a return to the Garden that is available only when we are in relationship with the God of the Garden. We are in exile, seeking a return to our homeland.¹⁴

Pascal, in his *Pensees* X.148 states, "What else does this craving, and this helplessness, proclaim but that there was once in man a true happiness, of which all that now remains is the empty print and trace? This he tries in vain to fill with everything around him, seeking in things that are not there the help he cannot find in those that are, though none can help, since this infinite abyss can be filled only with an infinite and immutable object; in other words by God himself."¹⁵ Ultimately, I

¹¹ Martoia, 160.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Richard Rohr, Andreas Ebert, and Peter Heinegg, *The Enneagram: A Christian Perspective* (New York: Crossroad Pub., 2001), 34.

¹⁴ Martoia, 170.

¹⁵ Blaise Pascal and A. J. Krailsheimer, *Pensées*, Rev. ed., Penguin Classics (London New York: Penguin Books; Penguin Books USA, 1995), 45.

believe sin is humans trying to be like God. Humanity, as God's creation, is attempting to find wholeness, meaning, and life within themselves rather than looking to God. It is because we are separated from God yet have that inner longing for a restoration of that garden environment ever since the Fall occurred.¹⁶

The sin of the one, namely Adam, introduced sin into the heart of every individual human born after him, what is termed *original sin*.¹⁷ Not everyone accepts in the concept of original sin. It is foreign in Jewish theology and a major departure from the Hebrew Bible.¹⁸ In addition, several theologians such as Barth, Bultmann, and Neibuhr reject the idea of original sin.¹⁹ These theologians take their position based on an overall rejection of a historical Fall as presented in Genesis 3.²⁰ However, Paul provides the framework for this in Romans 5:12-21 as well as I Corinthians 15:22. Historical theologians such as Augustine as well as contemporary theologians such as Hoekema affirm and support for the idea.²¹

The heart, in addition to its literal biological meaning, is regarded in contemporary thought as the seat of the emotions and the source of spiritual life in general. In the Old Testament, the most often used word for heart is *leb*, which meant

¹⁶ Bonhoeffer, 113. See also Ron Martoia, *Static: Tune out the "Christian Noise" and Experience the Real Message of Jesus* (Carol Stream, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers, 2007). 118.

¹⁷ Wiley, 5.

¹⁸ *Adam and Eve's Journey: An Original Look at Original Sin*. http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m1058/is_7_119/ai_84840948m (accessed February 9 2009)

¹⁹ Anthony Hoekema, *Created in God's Image* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1986). 143-144.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 147.

²¹ Hoekema, 143-167.

the seat of one's intellectual and spiritual life.²² Within this definition, a "close connection between the spiritual and intellectual processes and the functional reactions of the heart's activity is particularly seen."²³ It is also the seat of a person's emotional life and is the origination point of the will.²⁴ Yet the word heart encompasses multiple, interrelated aspects.²⁵ It is the individual with all of that individual's urges. The overarching meaning is that of the totality of the person. It is "a comprehensive term for the personality as a whole, its inner life, its character. It is the conscious and deliberate spiritual activity of the self-contained human ego."²⁶

In the New Testament, the word *kardia* is used to refer to the heart. *Kardia* frequently describes the place of intellectual and spiritual life.²⁷ However, a striking feature of the word is its interconnectedness to the word *nous*, or mind. These two terms can be used in parallel (2 Cor. 3:14ff) or even synonymously, depending on what aspect the author is trying to emphasize.²⁸ "The element of knowledge is more heavily emphasized with *nous* than with *kardia*, where the stress lies more on the emotions and the will. Thus [the heart] is the person, the thinking, feeling, willing, ego of man, with particular regard to his responsibility to God."²⁹

²² Brown and Townsley, 2:181.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Brown and Townsley, 2:182.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

Based on the information above, one could deduce that the insertion of sin into the heart of humanity thus introduced brokenness into the totality of humankind. With the mind, will, and emotions of human beings laid bare from the ruinous impact of sin, the now-destructive nature of mankind would lead them to choose to sin, thus producing broken and hurting people who would long for wholeness and hope.

I believe that embracing the gospel—the person and message of Jesus—enables wholeness. If sin has produced brokenness in our lives, the restoration that occurs would enable a journey towards wholeness.

Some people today appear to preach an overly simplistic gospel: Jesus died for the sins of humanity, and if we place our faith and trust in Christ, we get to stay out of hell and live in heaven when we die.³⁰ But the gospel transforms the whole life. The word for salvation in the New Testament, which is associated with the gospel is the same word for healing, total physical healing and wholeness.³¹ It is about experiencing a sense of God's *shalom* – wholeness and wellness.³² The gospel, also announces the coming reign of God as depicted in Isaiah.³³

Entrance into this coming reign depends upon repentance. Repentance is not simply a call for people to feel sorry about their actions. In the Bible, repentance was a call for “Israel to prepare for the end of her exile as a nation and to change agendas, specifically in the way she was not being the nation that God intended her to be. It

³⁰ See any number of Gospel presentations such as “The Roman’s Road,” “Evangelism Explosion” and “Continuous Witness Training.”

³¹ Martoia, 200.

³² Ibid., 221

³³ Ibid., 36.

was a call to re-engage with God's original purpose for Israel."³⁴ The nation of Israel had lost its identity, and it was time for the nation to re-orient and re-align its life around God and to be a blessing to the whole world.³⁵ I believe that for individuals, repentance is a call to a person to rediscover his or her identity as a creation in the image of God, re-orienting his or her life around God, and beginning the process of restoration through a personal relationship with God and others who have responded to the covenant love of God.

The gospel is *the* transformative relationship, the relationship that enable people become the human they were created to be. In embracing the gospel of Christ, a person embarks on a journey out of brokenness and into wholeness that will only be complete as God works to restore all of creation.³⁶ The working out of the gospel in a person's life, then, is a process where God seeks to re-shape and re-form that person into his or her original identity, and to re-fill that person with His original purpose of relationship with God.³⁷ It also is a process where human relationships are Christ-differentiated³⁸ – where a person is not manipulated or controlled by others, but

³⁴ Ibid., 61-62.

³⁵ Ibid., 62.

³⁶ Sherlock, 50.

³⁷ Bonhoeffer, in *Creation and Fall* states, "The prohibition [against the tree of the knowledge of good and evil] means nothing other than this: Adam, you are who you are because of me, your Creator; so now be what you are. (85)" From this, I deduce that finding our identity places us back into the Garden, though a metaphorical garden.

³⁸ This is a term I am deriving from an integration of "in Christ" and Murray Bowen's concept of self-differentiation. See Michael E. Kerr and Murray Bowen, *Family Evaluation: The Role of the Family as an Emotional Unit That Governs Individual Behavior and Development*, (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1988), 68.

where that person lives in peace with others out of an understanding of who the person is in Christ.

Sin introduced brokenness into the emotional, cognitive, and physical aspects of humanity. As fallen beings, humanity has an identity crisis. Humankind's relationship with God is broken, and humankind does not understand who it is.³⁹ Emotional brokenness deprives a person of emotional health, which affects how he or she makes decisions, react to experiences, and lives in relationship with others.⁴⁰ It also creates unhealthy, destructive behaviors that can wreck relationships as well as the human experience.⁴¹ It can lead a person to damage and destroy his or her body physically through addictions to food, sex, and legal and illegal drugs. These behaviors are an attempt to bring comfort resulting from a lack of emotional health.⁴² It also damages the person's relationship with God, the One who created humanity for relationship and in whom true identity and wholeness is found.

The unfortunate aspect of this issue is that I believe that much of the institutional Church has dismissed the issues of unhealthy behavior as simply sin or a lack of self-discipline. The antidote for dealing with the behavioral dysfunction, according to those who only emphasize this, is a need to do more things that resemble

³⁹ Hoekema, 104.

⁴⁰ Leslie S. Greenberg and Sandra C. Paivio, *Working with Emotions in Psychotherapy, Practicing Professional* (New York: Guilford Press, 1997), 14.

⁴¹ Daniel Goleman, *Emotional Intelligence* (New York: Bantam Books, 1995), 9, 14.

⁴² Greenberg and Paivio, 15-17.

religious activities: pray more, read the Bible more, and spend more time in church.⁴³

This prescription is limited in addressing the real cause of destructive behavior. It does not address the impact of other people's destructive behavior upon someone.

That spiritual prescription also does not take into account, for example, the multiple memory stores with which our minds are created.⁴⁴ The emotional memory holds traumatic experiences, which cause a person to react out of pain when one senses one is in a similar situation.⁴⁵ These experiences, while part of the cognitive memory, are rarely readily accessible.⁴⁶ These memories must be probed, remembered, and released. The person is allowed to experience the emotions and feelings associated with emotional memories so that more of the emotions and feelings can be understood.⁴⁷ The person, then, is able to accept them as being part of life. The experience is "re-owned" by the person and the person understands he or she has a right to have the emotions. Once the person acknowledges and re-experiences the pain of those emotions hope develops, and change can take place.⁴⁸

Changing behavior, therefore, is not simply a matter of being more disciplined or doing more religious activities such as reading the Bible and praying more. It requires engaging the deepest parts of a person's emotional life. Accessing emotions

⁴³ Peter Scazzero, *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality: Unleash the Power of Authentic Life in Christ* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2006), 24-25.

⁴⁴ Joseph E. LeDoux, *The Emotional Brain: The Mysterious Underpinnings of Emotional Life* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996), 180.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 181.

⁴⁷ Greenberg and Paivio, 99.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

leads to behavioral change.⁴⁹ Emotional health allows a person to change his or her thinking about his or her actions, his or her relationship to others, and to him- or herself. It offers the freedom to regain a healthy understanding of who that person is in Christ and their relationship with God the Father.

Changing behavior also requires the person to remember who he or she is as a person created by the Father.⁵⁰ I believe the ultimate impact of sin has been to destroy a person's sense of identity. Humans have lost the sense of being created in the image of God and being created for perfect relationship with our Creator. In being broken *eikons*, humanity is searching to discover who and whose it is. Unhealthy behavior is an expression of that searching and longing that is within all people. However, without the healing of the Potter, the broken pots cannot be made whole and thus continue the struggle of finding themselves in a world ignorant of the hope that brings wholeness.

⁴⁹ Leslie S. Greenberg and Jeremy D. Safran, *Emotion in Psychotherapy: Affect, Cognition, and the Process of Change* (New York: Guilford Press, 1987), 188.

⁵⁰ I John 2:6 gives us insight into this. The one who is in Christ obeys His word and commandments. This really is an expression of relationship and wholeness. In doing so, we live as Jesus lived, having a mature love.

OTHER PROPOSED SOLUTIONS

Willpower

When people began to explore behavioral change, an area often attempted is to simple willpower. People simply try to stop behaving in a way they do not want to continue or try to start behaving in a different way. However, whether it is a sin or a behavior that needs adjustment, willpower alone will never succeed in dealing with these issues.¹ It may produce outward success for a time, but eventually there will come a time when “the ‘careless word’ will slip out to reveal the true condition of the heart.”² In attempting to change behavior in this manner, they are starting with the behavior with little understanding as to the cause of the behavior.³ This is not to say, however, that willpower is unimportant in changing behavior.

Spiritual Disciplines

Christians also seek to change behavior through the implementation of spiritual disciplines. The spiritual disciplines are “those personal and corporate disciplines that promote spiritual growth. They are the habits of devotion and experiential Christianity that have been practiced by the people of God since biblical times.”⁴ Richard Foster states that the spiritual disciplines are “an inward and spiritual

¹ Richard J. Foster, *Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth* (New York: HarperCollins, 1988), 5.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid., 6.

⁴ Donald S. Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1991), 15.

reality”⁵ that seeks to bring transformation from the inside. “The needed change within us is God’s work, not ours. The demand is for an inside job, and only God can work from the inside.”⁶ The weakness of this statement is that it neglects the individual’s role in the process. For example, Paul tells the Corinthians they should take every thought captive⁷. There is a partnership between God and humanity, not God alone.

There are several lists of spiritual disciplines. Richard Foster stresses that there are inward disciplines (meditation, prayer, fasting and study), outward disciplines (simplicity, solitude, submission, and service) as well as corporate disciplines (confession, worship, guidance, and celebration). Donald Whitney’s book, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life* include a list that adds evangelism and journaling, while combining and renaming several in Foster’s list. These Disciplines, when followed, foster an experiential relationship with the true change agent, namely the Triune God.

The danger, Foster states, is, “[i]n our enthusiasm to practice the Disciplines, we may fail to practice discipline. The life that is pleasing to God is not a series of religious duties. We have only one thing to do, namely to experience a life of relationship and intimacy with God.”⁸ The warning Foster issues is a warning not to make the actions primary, but for the person to focus on the relationship with God

⁵ Foster, 3.

⁶ Ibid., 6.

⁷ 2 Corinthians 10:5.

⁸ Ibid., 4.

and others, including how that person works and relates to others. Anything done simply to complete the task does not develop the intimacy and relationship with our Father or others.

However, I believe the Disciplines are not enough to bring total behavioral transformation. Practicing the disciplines often ends up causing people to dwell on the pathology of the issues (the symptoms) rather than working on emotional health and strength. This is actually a form of displacement, protecting people from the more difficult task of behavioral change.⁹ Yet, while the Disciplines are not the total path to changing behavior, they do provide a part of the path. Disciplines provide a spiritual framework that opens the door for God's healing, hope, and grace to bring transformation to a person's life. The Disciplines are part of a path that will help "reconstruct [Christ-followers] in the image of Jesus Christ."¹⁰

Accountability/Support Groups

Another solution to behavioral change that has become popular, at least in American culture and evangelical churches, is the use of accountability groups. These groups include Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, Gamblers Anonymous, and other similar organizations.

Research into the effectiveness of twelve step and other support groups shows mixed results. In a 1967 study, researchers looked at the effectiveness of treatment when judges randomly sentenced chronic drunk offenders to one or another of three

⁹ Edwin H. Friedman, *A Failure of Nerve: Leadership in the Age of the Quick Fix* (New York: Seabury Books, 2007), 81.

¹⁰ Foster, 8.

treatment conditions: a psychiatrically oriented community alcohol treatment clinic, Alcoholics Anonymous, and no treatment. Their research showed no statistically significant differences between the three groups in recidivism rate, in number of subsequent rearrests, or in time elapsed prior to rearrest.¹¹ A study published in 1991 looked at a randomized trial of treatment options for alcohol-abusing workers. In the study, researchers “compared the effectiveness of mandatory in-hospital treatment with that of required attendance at the meetings of a self-help group and a choice of treatment options.”¹² Researchers found that “[a]ll three groups improved, and no significant differences were found among the groups in job-related outcome variables.”¹³ On seven measures of drinking and drug use, however, the researchers “found significant differences at several follow-up assessments. The hospital group fared best and that assigned to AA the least well; those allowed to choose a program had intermediate outcomes.”¹⁴ Additional inpatient treatment was required significantly more often by the AA group (63 percent) and the choice group (38 percent) than by subjects assigned to initial treatment in the hospital (23 percent). In addition, “[t]he differences among the groups were especially pronounced for workers who had used cocaine within six months before study entry. The estimated costs of inpatient treatment for the AA and choice groups averaged only 10 percent

¹¹ Keith S. Ditman and others, “A Controlled Experiment on the Use of Court Probation for Drunk Arrests,” *American Journal of Psychiatry* 124, no. 2 (1967).

¹² D. C. Walsh and others, “A Randomized Trial of Treatment Options for Alcohol-Abusing Workers,” *New England Journal of Medicine* 325, no. 11 (1991).

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

less than the costs for the hospital group because of their higher rates of additional treatment.”¹⁵ Other studies have determined that AA attendance can actually lead to poorer outcomes than other therapies.¹⁶ One of the main reasons for this is the issue of adherence to the twelve steps and attendance.¹⁷

However, other studies show different results. A recent study looked at the impact of religiosity and participation in support groups for addiction. A national survey of groups for addiction was conducted to “identify key differences between participants in recovery groups.”¹⁸ The data indicates that “active involvement in support groups significantly improves one's chances of remaining clean and sober, regardless of the group in which one participates.”¹⁹ In additions, study participants whose individual beliefs more closely matched those of their primary support groups showed greater levels of group participation. This resulted in better outcomes as measured by increased number of days clean and sober. In addition, the study found that religious participants were more likely to participate in 12-step groups.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ferri MMF, Amato L, Davoli M. Alcoholics Anonymous and other 12-Step Programmes for Alcohol Dependence. *Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews 2006*, Issue 3. Art. No.: CD005032

¹⁷ Mauro Barbosa Terra and others, “Do Alcoholics Anonymous Groups Really Work? Factors of Adherence in a Brazilian Sample of Hospitalized Alcohol Dependents,” *American Journal on Addictions* 17, no. 1 (2008).

¹⁸ G. Atkins Randolph and E. Hawdon James, “Religiosity and Participation in Mutual-Aid Support Groups for Addiction,” *Journal of Substance Abuse Treatment* 33, no. 3 (2007).

¹⁹ Ibid.

Nonreligious respondents were significantly less likely to participate in 12-step groups.²⁰

Additionally, a 2001 study of was done with 1,774 low-income, substance-dependent men who had been enrolled in inpatient substance abuse treatment programs at ten Department of Veteran Affairs medical centers around the United States. Five of the programs were based on twelve-step principles, but run by professional therapists. The other five used cognitive-behavioral therapy. The results showed that “[o]ver 45% of the men in twelve-step programs were abstinent one year after discharge, compared to 36% of those treated by cognitive-behavioral therapy.”²¹ The study concluded that “AA participation preceded reduced drinking.”²²

However, it is in the area of identity that support groups such as AA are most deficient. “A.A. members say that they are alcoholics today — even when they have not had a drink for many years...Once people have lost their ability to control their drinking, they can never again be sure of drinking safely — or, in other words, they can never become ‘former alcoholics’ or ‘ex-alcoholics.’ But in A.A., they can become sober alcoholics, *recovered* alcoholics.”²³ A.A. members maintain as part of their identity the behavior that they brought into A.A. despite the fact they may not engage in it any longer.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ “How Effective Is Alcoholics Anonymous?” *Harvard Mental Health Letter* 20, no. 6 (2003).

²² Ibid.

²³ Inc Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, “A Brief Guide to Alcoholics Anonymous, 1972,” New York, 7.

Professional Counseling

Professional counseling has been effective in dealing with negative, destructive, and addictive behaviors. In a recent position paper by the American Counseling Association's Office of Public Policy and Legislation, the National Institute of Mental Health has shown that "the success rates of treatment for disorders such as depression (70-80%) and panic disorder (70-90%) surpass success rates for other medical conditions."²⁴ Treatment for heart disease, as an example, has a success rate of 45-50%.²⁵

In addition, a 2002 study evaluated the "effectiveness of generic counseling in a primary healthcare setting during three months of counseling and followed up the patients' progress after counseling had finished for the next twenty-one months."²⁶ In the study, questionnaires were completed by patients within the Dorset Primary Care counseling service. "A naturally occurring waiting-list group was compared with patients receiving counseling at baseline and three months. Measurements were taken of patients' psychiatric symptomatology, quality of life (QOL) and self-esteem."²⁷ The study showed that patients who received counseling made highly significant improvements compared with those on the waiting list. These improvements were

²⁴ *The Effectiveness of and Need for Professional Counseling Services* (American Counseling Association, 2008).

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Roger Baker and others, "A Naturalistic Longitudinal Evaluation of Counseling in Primary Care," *Counseling Psychology Quarterly* 15, no. 4 (2002).

²⁷ Ibid.

maintained throughout the long-term follow-up.²⁸ This would indicate that “generic counseling has positive effects that can be maintained for a long period of time after counseling has been completed.”²⁹

However, other studies specifically in regards to areas of substance abuse, show that mental health professionals often have not fared well in treating this addictive behavior. “Khantzian argued that the proliferation of self-help groups such as Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) occurred because professional responses to substance abuse problems were ineffective.”³⁰ The reason for this was that “professionals were faced with a confusing array of professional and self-help models for substance abuse problems, none of which had demonstrated superior effectiveness.”³¹

Conclusion

In the instance of willpower, the person may attempt to address the behavior without dealing with the issues that cause the behavior. While some may succeed in changing behavior, for most, willpower alone is not effective. Research has show that support groups have helped many, but many more were not helped. In addition, specifically with regard to Alcoholics Anonymous, their identity as an alcoholic is maintained. While a person may see his or her identity as a recovering addict, it is important for a person to see themselves as loved by God, the divine parent from

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Douglas L. Polcin, “Professional Counseling Versus Specialized Programs for Alcohol and Drug Abuse Treatment,” *Journal of Addictions & Offender Counseling* 21, no. October (2000).

³¹ Ibid.

whom a person gets his identity and meaning in life, not the behavior. And identity, as will be shown, is crucial for how we behave.

Having spent almost four years in a pastoral counseling, and almost a year looking at a specific issue, I can attest to the effect of counseling, particularly Christian-based counseling. However, counseling alone was effective on a limited scale.

What has been effective in my case, and what appears to be effective for others at a point in crisis, is a holistic approach of counseling and information as well as exploring emotional and spiritual areas of life.³² One method alone does not appear to be sufficient. What is needed is a holistic solution.

³² Alan Deutschman, *Change or Die*.
http://www.fastcompany.com/magazine/94/open_change-or-die.html (accessed February 20, 2009)

THE THESIS

What a person believes about themselves becomes the foundation for behavioral change. It is also the basis for how they acts currently. “We cannot consistently behave in ways that are different from what we believe about ourselves.”¹

The movie *Freedom Writers* is based on the true story of Erin Gruwell. In the movie, she is a first-year teacher assigned to a group of students that the school administration had written off as failures. She is told that the majority of the students will drop out of school and live as street kids, gang members and thugs. Erin, played in the movie by Hilary Swank, does not accept the assertion of the school leaders. Through a variety of creative approaches, she helps the students see a larger picture of the world and helps them envision a new identity. As the students grasp a different identity, their behavior begins to change. They stay in school, their grades improve, and many actually graduate.²

What people do is a reflection of who they understands themselves to be. Therefore, in order for people to change behavior, they have to change who they understands themselves to be.³ When they do that, they are then able to understand their identity.

¹ Eric Geiger, *Identity: Who You Are in Christ* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing, 2008), 1.

² Ibid., 11.

³ Dennis McCallum, *Walking in Victory: Experiencing the Power of Your Identity in Christ* (Columbus, OH: Xenos Publishing, 2002), 13.

Identity

A person's identity is, in part, based on other people's opinion. One often derives one's identity from one's perception of how one is viewed by others. People construct an understanding of self "by selecting certain types of information about their own behaviors and drawing inferences about what they mean about themselves and their place in the world."⁴ Yet, this construction is not done in a vacuum; it is done in interactions with other people.⁵

A core sense of self develops at a young age, including infancy, from experiences of intersubjectivity, "a state of connection and mutual understanding that emerges during interaction with another person."⁶ Intentionally or unintentionally, an adult can influence the

infant's developing sense of self by selecting and emphasizing certain aspects of the infant's experience. When the child takes a tumble, for example, the parent can reflect back the silliness and fun of the situation, or, conversely, the danger and fear that the child may be feeling, and the child may use this communication to frame his or her own experiences.⁷

As one gets older, that person will attempt to control the impressions others have. People do this by limiting the contact they have with others.⁸ Additionally, they try to control more directly the impressions people form.

⁴ Rick H. Hoyle, *Selfhood: Identity, Esteem, Regulation*, Social Psychology Series (Boulder, Colo.: Westview, 1999), 31.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid., 32.

⁸ Ibid., 36.

This has been termed self-presentation, which is “the conscious or unconscious attempt to control identity-relevant images before audiences.”⁹

Through self-presentation, “the person begins with a self-image that he or she believes to be – or wants to be – true of the self and presents that self to some audience. He or she then looks for validation of this identity in the way others respond; the reactions of others provide a confirmation of that identity.”¹⁰

Ironically, public self-presentation often corresponds with how a person perceives who they are. This is because people often want others to see them as they truly are, or at least how they understand themselves.¹¹ For instance, if a person wants others to think of him or her as the smart person in the room, he or she may try to gather a lot of information about many topics so he or she can maintain this perceived identity.

However, people often begin to internalize the public persona, believing privately what they present in public. In fact, research has shown that a person’s self-presenting behaviors often have the greatest impact on the private sense of self when those behaviors are acted out in an intrapersonal context. A study by Dianne M. Tice asked eighty students to portray themselves in various ways – as introverted, sensitive, and thoughtful or as extraverted, outgoing, and socially skilled – and express that behavior by answering several questions. In this study, half the students performed the

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

behavior in front of an audience. The other half were asked to recite the answers into a recorder alone. After presenting themselves according to their designated behavior and answering the questions, they were asked to rate their true personalities. The results showed that people who self-presented publicly internalized their behavior more than people who did so anonymously. People who were instructed to self-present as introverted started to see themselves as introverts. Likewise, people who self-presented as extroverts began to see themselves in that manner. In contrast, people's ratings of themselves were not affected in the private, anonymous conditions.¹²

Those perceptions, made with a finite perspective, are based on sociological norms gathered from limited corresponding data.¹³ Yet God provides an infinite, limitless perspective that expresses the love of the Creator to the created. As the creator, he knows everything. He defines love. He defines life. As the one who defines everything, he is able to provide a perspective that the created cannot hold. This point of reference provides an absolute measure, a true north, not based on a limited understanding or cultural norms. Therefore, a person's true identity is only found in the context of a relationship with God, His people, and with the scriptures.¹⁴

A biblical understanding of identity must begin in understanding how humankind was created. Genesis 1:26-27 provides that answer. God created humans in His own image. Humankind was built for relationship, and God and the man and

¹² Dianne M. Tice, "Self-Concept Change and Self-Presentation: The Looking Glass Self Is Also a Magnifying Glass," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 63, no. 3 Sep 1992 (1992).

¹³ McCallum, 29.

¹⁴ Bonhoeffer, 62.

woman walked and talked in the garden together. When Adam and Eve chose to disobey God, the image of God in humankind was cracked and the relationship was broken, introducing sin into the identity of the human race.¹⁵ As a result, humanity has an identity inherited from its ancestor Adam.¹⁶ Having a nature and identity of wrath, humanity both collectively and individually create a destructive and broken environment that perpetuates humankind's so-called Adamic identity.

Theologian Anthony Hoekema notes that at the time of the Fall a "two-fold perversion of the self-image" occurred.¹⁷ He describes self-image using Webster's dictionary: "one's conception of oneself or of one's role."¹⁸ Hoekema believes that the Fall was first "preceded by an inordinate heightening of man's [sic] self-image. Adam and Eve wanted to be higher than God."¹⁹ In committing the first sin, Adam and Eve felt that they were able to decide what was right and wrong. It was a perversion of the self-image.²⁰ The second perversion occurred after the sin had been committed. Adam and Eve felt ashamed of themselves. Their self-image was excessively low.²¹ These perversions, because of that inherited identity, continue to be expressed in all of humankind. In other words, as a result of the Fall, humankind does not truly know who it is. Its identity has been perverted. Because of this

¹⁵ Sherlock, 42.

¹⁶ Sherlock, 61-65.

¹⁷ Hoekema, 104.

¹⁸ Ibid., 103.

¹⁹ Ibid., 104.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

perverted identity, before any behavior can change on the deepest levels of life, a person has to replace this rebellious and prideful Adamic identity. As long as that identity remains, a person may change his or her behaviors in the short term.

Changing one behavior, however, can result in other negative behaviors because behaviors are often a mask of other symptoms.²² For instance, addictive behaviors often result from a need to control or be comforted. A person may be able to overcome an addiction to food born from a sense of control or need for comfort, yet because they have not addressed those issues that caused the addiction, they fill the void with other addictive behaviors such as alcohol or shopping. Researchers call this addiction transfer.²³ Negative behavior is the symptom of deeper issues, just as a fever is a sign of infection. Controlling the fever is important, but it alone is insufficient. Likewise, controlling negative behavior, while important, is just as insufficient.²⁴

The Bible teaches that God has declared that Christ-followers are now actually “in Christ.”²⁵ In one sense, this means that God has acted in a way that Christ-followers have “become *identified with Christ*.”²⁶ In another sense, being in Christ “is not only the fundamental fact of the individual Christian’s existence, it is

²² Overeating Replaced With Other Compulsive Behaviors.
<http://www.intelihealth.com/IH/ihtIH/WSIHW000/333/8014/510565.html> (accessed November 24, 2008).

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ McCallum, 19-20.

²⁵ Colossians 1:3.

²⁶ McCallum, 22.

the whole new reality.’²⁷ By gaining a clear view of what it means to be “in Christ,” a person can have a glimpse inside the core of life’s meaning and mystery.²⁸

The expressions “in Christ,” “in the beloved,” “in him,” or similar phrases are used over one hundred times in Scripture to refer to Christ-followers. It defines for a person a sense of place. “In Christ” indicates a place.²⁹ A person “in Christ” is in a specific locale, and that locale is Jesus Christ. It is a “Christ-mysticism,” a mystical union, but different from oriental God-mysticism.³⁰ For instance, in Christ, a person does not lose oneself passively in the deity. The person is not swept into a world of visions or absorbed as a drop of water in the ocean of divinity. “We are moved to *act* as Christ acted; we are pushed into a moral effort.”³¹

It also indicates an ontological – relating to essence or the nature of being³² – change. The Christ-follower has been given a new footing for his or her existence.³³ The person has been recreated in, and into Christ. In Christ, “we have been given a share in the status enjoyed by Jesus Christ... We are sons of God *in* the Son of God. And this means nothing less than that we are infused with the divinized human life of

²⁷ Lewis B. Smedes, *Union with Christ: A Biblical View of the New Life in Jesus Christ*, 2nd. rev. ed. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1983), 59.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid., 60.

³⁰ Ibid., 61.

³¹ Ibid., 60-61.

³² Ontological. <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/ontological> (accessed: November 26, 2008).

³³ Smedes, 61.

Christ himself.”³⁴ Divinization, also called *theosis*, is the Eastern Christian idea that emphasizes the reality of a person’s communion, through the Spirit, in Christ.³⁵ Eastern Orthodox theology derives this concept from passages that speak of humans being “gods”. This includes passages such as Ps. 82:6, John 10:34 and 2 Peter 1:4.³⁶ It means the “elevation of the human being to the divine sphere, to the atmosphere of God.”³⁷ As Irenaeus and Athanasius put it, “God became man that man might become god.”³⁸

The Social Context of Biblical Identity

There is a social aspect to all of humanity as stated in the early creation narrative, “Then the LORD God said, ‘It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.’”³⁹ The creation of the female alongside the male began a process whereby families, communities and societies were created. As part of being created in the image of God, humanity reflects the social nature of God, made for relationships both with God and others.⁴⁰ Community cannot be an option

³⁴ Ibid., 61-62.

³⁵ Sherlock, 76.

³⁶ Daniel B. Clendenin, *Eastern Orthodox Theology: A Contemporary Reader*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2003), 184.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Vladimir Lossky, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church* (Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1976), 187.

³⁹ Genesis 2:18.

⁴⁰ Grenz, 52.

for it is necessary to being what humanity was created to be.⁴¹

In the Old Testament, the Jews organized their lives around the Temple and its festivals, as well as tribes and families. The desert tabernacle was the forerunner to the Temple, which became an essential part of the government and religious life of the people of Israel.⁴² Though no one knows how or why it came into being, the synagogue, defined by tradition rather than biblical statute, arose.⁴³ It had a three-fold purpose: (1) to be a place of assembly for the public discussion and celebration of meals; (2) a place of study; and (3) a place of prayer. It was a place where the Torah was read and studied.⁴⁴

After the Jerusalem temple was destroyed, the synagogue and the home took over many of its functions. The holidays that were originally practiced in the temple were now celebrated within the synagogue or the home.⁴⁵ The ritual of the synagogue is an adaptation of the ritual of the temple. However, almost every Jewish holiday and ritual had a focus in the home with only a secondary focus at the synagogue.⁴⁶ Additionally, instructing children occurred within the context of the family.⁴⁷ Through festivals and meals, as well as through family instruction, Jewish

⁴¹ Julie Gorman, *Community That Is Christian*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 2002), 29.

⁴² Richard N. Longenecker, *Community Formation in the Early Church and in the Church Today* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 2002), 21.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 25.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 29.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ Gorman, 100.

identity developed through socialization and enculturation primarily in the purview of the family.⁴⁸

In the New Testament, Jesus began to redefine the Jewish community experience. In the calling of the twelve disciples, Jesus called people out of the family context of community into a new community experience. Referring to the statements of Jesus in Matthew 10:37 and Luke 14:26, Gerhard Lohfink states:

Thus Jesus required of his disciples a determined turning away from their own families – this is what is meant by *hate*. Common life with Jesus took the place of family and all previous ties. This common life meant more than merely being with a teacher, listening to him and observing him, in order to learn the Torah from his statements and his manner of life. The disciple's community of life with Jesus was a *community of destiny*. It went so far that the disciples had to be prepared to suffer what Jesus suffered – if necessary, even persecution or execution.⁴⁹

Jesus would even go so far as to restate whom his own family was without disowning them. In Mark 3:35, Jesus states, “Whoever does the will of God, he is my brother and sister and mother.” He rejected pleas by his biological family to come back with him, instead choosing to be part of his new family organized around the Kingdom of God. To quote David Garland, in his commentary on Mark,

Jesus' response to the visit from his family would have been a shocker because it runs counter to the received wisdom of the age. The family was the basis of social and economic life and the source of one's identity. In the first-century Mediterranean world, an individual's identity was basically that of a member of a group. The genealogies and laws relating to family life in the Scriptures show the importance of membership in a family or clan (and village). In the Old Testament, “life” is used almost interchangeably with “family”. One's family was one's life, and to reject family or to be cast out of

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Gerhard Lohfink, *Jesus and Community: The Social Dimension of Christian Faith* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), 33.

a family was to lose one's life.

But Jesus affirms that life under God is not defined by relationships in a biological family...One's ultimate devotion is owed to God, who is head of a new divine family, and becoming a member of this family is open to all persons regardless of race, class, or gender. The only requirement is that they share Jesus' commitment to God.⁵⁰

Jesus thus transforms spiritual community formed from a national, familial, and racial scope to a community formed around the presence of God. Ironically, Jewish community originally centered around the presence of God, as typified in temple life and ritual.⁵¹

This transformation by Jesus led to the emphasis in Pauline literature that places community in the context of a loving family. Jesus stands behind Paul's usage in this manner. In the Spirit of Christ, the early Christian communities strived to become familial and familiar settings where love could be learned.⁵² Christians are to see themselves as members of a divine family.⁵³ Referencing Garland's thoughts above, then by being part of a divine family one finds their identity and life within the family of God, not within themselves because the "gospel is not a purely personal matter. It has a social dimension. It is a communal affair."⁵⁴

⁵⁰ David E. Garland, *Mark* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Pub. House, 1996), 131.

⁵¹ Longenecker, 21.

⁵² Robert J. Banks, *Paul's Idea of Community*, Rev. ed. (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), 56.

⁵³ Ibid , 49.

⁵⁴ Ibid , 26.

Emotions

For a person to have the wholeness that living out of identity offers, the person must remove layers of exposure and experience with people who are emotional unhealthy. I believe removing those identities requires dealing with an *emotional* past that makes meaning out of the current environment.

Why emotions? Aren't actions determined by thoughts? The answers to these questions have changed recently through research into the emotional brain and neuroplasticity, which is changing the order of how the brain's neurons fire.⁵⁵ Science has given the world insight into how the brain works, feels, and changes.

Assigning meaning to any experience is really a function of the brain.⁵⁶ The brain produces an image that integrates past experiences, memory, cultural learning, and other multi-sensory information.⁵⁷ Those experiences create an emotional memory that is capable of influencing behavior without a person even realizing emotions are involved. This is because emotional memory is not a "conscious recollection," which is the way the term memory is used in everyday conversation.⁵⁸ This is also called declarative or explicit memory.⁵⁹ Emotional memory, or implicit memory, is formed through fear conditioning and from memories from dangerous or

⁵⁵ Jeffrey Schwartz and Sharon Begley, *The Mind and the Brain: Neuroplasticity and the Power of Mental Force* (New York: Regan Books/Harper Collins, 2002), 15.

⁵⁶ Barry, 15.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ LeDoux, 181.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

threatening situations,⁶⁰ and involve implicit or unconscious processes.⁶¹

For example, before the last decade, it was believed that emotions came *after* the processing of conscious thought.⁶² However, research now demonstrates that information obtained from the senses travels in parallel neural pathways. Sensory information travels first to the emotional center of the brain (the amygdala) *before* a second signal is sent to the neocortex, which handles the cognitive processing functions. What this second route indicates “is the likelihood that much of cognition...is merely rationalization to make unconscious emotional response acceptable to the conscious mind.”⁶³ Assignment of meaning, therefore, occurs independently of conscious awareness.

In addition, 17th century philosopher Baruch Spinoza and contemporary neurologist Antonio Damasio both conclude that reason is founded on feeling.⁶⁴ A person’s rational thoughts are determined through perceptions, impressions, and emotions. Descartes, who believed that conscious rationality was the essence of self, postulated that “we first comprehend an idea and then accept it or reject it, with acceptance and rejection being equal choice alternatives. Rational people, in this theory, weigh things equally and then consciously decide on truth or falsity.”⁶⁵

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid., 182.

⁶² Ibid., 17.

⁶³ Ibid., 18.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 23.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

Spinoza, however, offered a different philosophical understanding, which is more consistent with neurological research. He believed that when a person understands something, he automatically accepts it as well.⁶⁶ Instead of a two-stage process of comprehension and then acceptance or rejection, he believed that acceptance was part of the interpretation. “If the ‘off switch,’ which signals ‘no’ to an idea is not activated, processed information – possibly emotionally-laden via the thalamo-amygdala pathway is simply accepted as true.”⁶⁷

Damasio found through research that “we are not primarily thinking beings who also feel, but essentially feeling beings who also think.”⁶⁸ Damasio’s conclusions were based upon work with a man he names Elliot.⁶⁹ Elliot had been a great husband, father, and employee until it was discovered that he had a brain tumor called a meningioma. This tumor arises out of the membranes covering the brain’s surface called meninges.⁷⁰ These tumors are generally benign but if they are not surgically removed, they can be as fatal as a malignant tumor.⁷¹

Elliot’s tumor was removed. However, despite what appeared to be normal brain functioning, he could not make decisions. This led to the termination of his job. Other vocational ventures left him penniless. In addition, his ability to function

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ken Smith, *Handbook of Visual Communication Research: Theory, Methods, and Media*, Lea’s Communication Series (Mahwah, N.J.: L. Erlbaum, 2005), 47.

⁶⁹ Antonio R. Damasio, *Descartes’ Error: Emotion, Reason, and the Human Brain* (London: Penguin, 2005), 35.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid.

created tension in his marriage and he and his wife eventually divorced. A second marriage and divorce later, he came to Damasio living with a relative and seeking disability from the government.⁷²

A series of tests by Damasio and his team revealed that Elliot was almost completely normal neurologically. He was almost a normal man who simply could not decide properly, particularly when those decisions involved personal or social matters.⁷³ Damasio concluded that the tumor had damaged an area of the brain that intersected emotions and reasoning. Elliot's defect "appeared to set in at the late stages of reasoning, close to, or at the point at which choice making or response selection must occur."⁷⁴ What Damasio and his team discovered was that Elliot was unable to process feedback from experience and emotional system. He could no longer make real-life choices.⁷⁵ Through this case, and multiple more patients with similar conditions, Damasio concluded that "[r]eduction in emotion may constitute an equally important source of irrational behavior."⁷⁶ Additionally, "[t]he power of reason and the experience of emotion decline together...."⁷⁷ Damasio saw that when emotional experience and presence declined, the ability to make rational decisions also declined.

⁷² Ibid., 36-38.

⁷³ Ibid., 43.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 50.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 53.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 54.

Defining Emotions

Emotion is a difficult term to define. Even though many people have tried to capture the word's meaning, it is very difficult to arrive at a generally accepted definition. According to Beverly Fehr and James Russell, "Everyone knows what an emotion is, until asked to give a definition."⁷⁸ Aristotle and Plato attempted to define emotion, as did philosophers such as Aquinas, Descartes, Hobbes, Hume and Kant.⁷⁹ For the past several centuries, psychologists worked to define emotions, but even with all the research and the scientific and technological advances, a broad, accepted definition has yet to be agreed on.

Etymologically, the word is composed of two Latin words: *e*, meaning out or outward, and *movere*, meaning movement, action, or gesture. Originally, the word meant moving out of one place and into another.⁸⁰ "The word came to mean a moving, stirring, agitation, perturbation, and was so used in a strictly physical sense."⁸¹ "To be emotional is to be literally moved, in a physical sense."⁸²

Psychologist Daniel Goleman agrees. In his book, *Emotional Intelligence*, he states that the simple etymology of the word suggests, "that a tendency to act is

⁷⁸ Beverley Fehr and James A. Russell, "Concept of Emotion Viewed from a Prototype Perspective," *Journal of Experimental Psychology - General* 113, no. 3 (1984), 464.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Paul Thomas Young, *Motivation of Behavior: The Fundamental Determinants of Human and Animal Activity* (New York, London: J. Wiley & Sons inc.; Chapman & Hall limited, 1936), 450.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² William E. Lyons, *Emotion* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 60.

implicit in every emotion.”⁸³ He also says, “All emotions are, in essence, impulses to act, the instant plans for handling life that evolution has instilled in us.”⁸⁴

While not being able to arrive at a clear definition, many psychologists agree that there are three aspects present in emotions. These aspects are as follows:

1. Conscious Experience – emotion can be felt and verbalized;
2. Emotional Behavior – emotional behavior is epitomized in actions such as laughing, crying, and smiling;
3. Physiological Events – these ‘events’ are primarily the reactions of the nervous system. We begin to sweat when we are afraid, or our heart beats faster when we are getting close to home after a long absence. These reactions often seem completely out of control.⁸⁵

Emotions and Feelings

Most people closely relate feelings to emotions. In everyday language most use the terms interchangeably.⁸⁶ At issue are the answers to the following questions: (1) Is there a difference? (2) What is the difference? and (3) If there is a difference, which helps a person make meaning of an experience?

In an interview, neuroscientist Antonio R. Damasio believes that feelings are derived from emotions. For the scientist, “emotions are more or less the complex reactions the body has to certain stimuli.”⁸⁷ An emotional reaction occurs automatically and unconsciously. Feelings occur after a person becomes aware in his

⁸³ Goleman, 6.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ R.L. Koteskey, “Toward the Development of Christian Psychology- Emotion,” *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 8, no. 4 (1980), 304-305.

⁸⁶ Manuela Lenzen, “Feeling Our Emotions,” *Scientific American Mind*, April 2005.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

or her brain of the physical changes. It is only then that a person experiences the feeling. Feelings are caused by emotions.⁸⁸

Others offer an opposite view. Psychologists Greenberg and Paivio offer a perspective by differentiating affect, feelings and emotions. Affect “refers to an unconscious biological response to stimulation”.⁸⁹ However, they do not involve reflective evaluation; they just happen.⁹⁰ Feeling “involves the awareness of the basic sensations of affect. This involves bodily felt experience such as ‘feeling shaky’ or ‘feeling tense.’”⁹¹ Emotions are consciously experienced and are the integration of action and feeling. They give person meaning to an experience.⁹²

Another offers a middle view. Jesse Prinz offers a qualified version of the thesis that emotions are feelings.⁹³ According to Prinz, “[e]motions are perceptions of bodily changes, and when those perceptions are conscious, emotions are feelings. Unconscious emotions are also possible, so not all emotions are feelings. Some emotions aren’t felt.”⁹⁴

Thought/Emotion Theories

The key to fully understanding emotions is to understand their relationship to

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Greenberg and Paivio, 7.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Ibid., 7-8.

⁹³ Jesse Prinz, “Are Emotions Feelings?” *Journal of Consciousness Studies* 12, no. 8-10 (2005).

⁹⁴ Ibid.

the mind. Psychologists over the centuries have developed both non-cognitive and cognitive theories related to providing understanding of how emotions are part of the human mind. The differences between the ideas revolve around determining what is the nature of an emotion.⁹⁵

Non-Cognitive Theories

The non-cognitive theories have their beginnings in the work of Rene Descartes. According to Descartes, emotions are “animal spirits reacting to the encountered situation.”⁹⁶ Emotions, he believed, are just reactions, like an animal reacting to an event in its environment.

Charles Darwin was a pioneer in the modern scientific approach to emotions, and his model provides a foundation for many researchers. For Darwin, emotions were an adaptation that grew into basic survival instincts.⁹⁷ An example of Darwin’s idea occurs when an animal shows its teeth in anger. In Darwin’s opinion, humans learned this reaction observing that those lower than humans on the evolutionary tree bite when they are aggressive or in a defensive mode. These expressions are a reaction to stimuli, just like a sneeze.⁹⁸

Descartes and Darwin laid down the foundation for future non-cognitive

⁹⁵ Matthew A. Elliott, *Faithful Feelings: Rethinking Emotion in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic & Professional, 2006), 19.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 20.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 21

⁹⁸ Ibid.

theories with the idea that there is a separation of emotion and cognition.⁹⁹ William James took the philosophical framework proposed by Descartes and modified it for psychology.¹⁰⁰ His adaptation became the birth of modern psychological theories about emotions. James believed that emotions were physical.¹⁰¹ A person feels sorry because they cry, feel angry because they strike someone and afraid because they tremble. Emotions without a physical arousal or change are impossible.¹⁰²

However, in the 1920s Walter Cannon was the first to question James' research, and thus the theory.¹⁰³ Cannon's experiments proved many of William James' theories to be false, paving the way for the development of non-cognitive theories that would give greater weight to cognition.¹⁰⁴ Others followed with multiple studies but today, while there is a move towards cognitive theories, the non-cognitive theories are not dead.¹⁰⁵

Cognitive Theories

Cognitive theories see emotion and cognition as integrated systems. Matthew Elliot says, "If emotions are merely physiological impulses, they can be ignored, controlled or trivialized, while, if they have as their essential elemental thinking and

⁹⁹ Ibid., 22.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ LeDoux, 45.

¹⁰⁴ Elliot, 23.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 24.

judgment, they are an essential part of almost everything that we think and do. Simply put, a cognitive approach makes thought, appraisal and belief central elements in emotion.”¹⁰⁶ In cognitive theories, the differentiation of emotions is not physiological but determined by belief, judgment or evaluation.¹⁰⁷ No two people have the exact same experiences of anything. They may have some of the same feelings but their stories will be different, thus their interpretive grids will be at least slightly different.¹⁰⁸ Therefore, if two people evaluate a similar situation similarly, they will exhibit the same emotion. If they confront different situations but have a similar evaluation, they may react the same. If they have the same experience but evaluate that experience differently, they will express a different emotion.¹⁰⁹ In a cognitive view of emotions, it is the evaluation of the environment that gives meaning to the emotion or even determines what the emotion is.

The Role of Emotions in a Person’s Life

Because there is a connection between the amygdala (the feeling area) and the neocortex, (the thinking area) of the brain, emotions are important to effective thought. Emotions are important to making wise decisions and allowing us to think clearly.¹¹⁰

However, emotions have more significance than only facilitating wise

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 31.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 24.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 32.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 27.

decision-making. First, emotions organize our lives. Emotions regulate mental functioning, organizing both our thoughts and actions by establishing goal priorities and then organizing actions.¹¹¹ For example, fear motivates us to flee or flight. Anger leads us to prioritize overcoming obstacles and preparing for attack. Also, emotions set goals that cognition and action work towards, making emotions a critical determiner for conduct.¹¹² Emotions work out the desired goal whereas cognition provides the best implementation for obtaining that goal. “Emotions, therefore, are the guiding structures in our lives especially in our relations with others.”¹¹³

Emotions influence memory and thought, and they exert a great influence on cognition. They can detract from decision-making, or they can enhance it.¹¹⁴ Emotions “enhance decision making by helping determine the significance to self of particular outcomes. They help to reduce one’s options by rapidly and preconsciously appraising things as good or bad for oneself.”¹¹⁵

Emotional Memory

It has been determined that there are multiple memory systems within the brain, each devoted to different functions.¹¹⁶ For example, one memory system allows a person to learn to hit a baseball. Another system causes a person to

¹¹¹ Greenberg and Paivio, 14.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 18.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ LeDoux, 180.

remember trying to hit a baseball and not succeeding. Still another memory system will make that same person tense when he or she comes to the plate after having been hit in the head by the pitcher the last time he or she was at bat. These memory systems are orchestrated by different networks.¹¹⁷

Dr. Joseph LeDoux tells the story of a French physician named Edouard Claparede. The good French doctor examined a female patient who had brain damage and seemed to have lost all abilities to create new memories. Every time Claparede walked into this patient's room he had to re-introduce himself, even if he left and returned just moments later. One day Dr. Claparede decided to attempt something new. He entered the room as normal and held out his hand to greet the female patient. She reached to shake his hand. When their hands clasped, however, she immediately pulled her hand back. Claparede had hidden a tack in his palm and pricked the patient with it. Interestingly, the next time Claparede entered the room she had no recollection of him but would not shake his hand. She was unable to tell him why she would not shake his hand, only that she would not do it.¹¹⁸

Claparede concluded that he had come to signify danger. He was no longer just a man to this woman, but a

stimulus with a specific emotional meaning. Although the patient did not have a conscious memory of the situation, subconsciously she learned that shaking Claparede's hand could cause her harm, and her brain used this stored information, this memory, to prevent the unpleasantness from occurring again...the patient's ability to protect herself from a situation of potential danger by refusing to shake hand reflects a different kind of memory system. This system forms implicit or nondeclarative memories about dangerous or

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ LeDoux, 180-181.

otherwise threatening situations. Memories of this type...are created through the mechanism of fear conditioning – because of its association with the painful pinprick, the sight of Claparede had become a *learned trigger* of defensive behavior (a conditioned fear stimulus).¹¹⁹

Claparede's experiment resulted in two important conclusions. The first is that learning is not completely dependent on conscious awareness.¹²⁰ The other is that once learning has taken place, the stimulus does not have to be consciously known to generate the emotional response. Humans, therefore, have an *implicit* emotional system of memory interdependent with an *explicit* conscious memory. This is called the emotional memory.¹²¹

The impact of both the explicit and implicit memory systems can be illustrated through the description of an accident. A person is driving down the road and has a terrible accident. In the midst of this accident, the horn is stuck and blares for what seems like an eternity. The person is in pain and is traumatized by the accident. Later, the person is riding with a friend and hears the horn of another car. The person has physical reactions such as muscle tension and increased perspiration, blood pressure, and heart rate. These are implicit bodily responses. The sound of the horn also travels to another memory system, which holds explicit memories. That person then may be reminded of the facts of the accident. Emotional arousal occurred through the implicit memory, causing bodily reactions. Without this, the person's conscious memory would be flat, where the emotions are numbed, covered and not

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 181.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 182.

¹²¹ Ibid.

expressed. The two memories are now unified into a potentially new area of long-term memory.¹²²

However, suppose that the accident happened so long ago that the explicit memory system has forgotten details of the event, or even the event itself. If the implicit emotional memory has not forgotten the accident, when a horn sounds, an emotional reaction could be triggered. The person would then be in an emotional state for which the person has no understanding. For this to happen, the emotional memory would have to be less forgetful than the explicit memory system. This, according to research, appears to be the case.¹²³

Two facts support this idea. First, the explicit memory system is incredibly forgetful and inaccurate.¹²⁴ One research project among many demonstrates the inaccuracy of the explicit memory system. The pioneer cognitive psychologist, Ulric Neisser, examined people's memories of the explosion of the space shuttle Challenger at two different times in the people's lives – the day after and several years later. While most of the subjects stated that their memories of what they were doing that day were clear, in many instances the memory at the later date was dramatically different than the memory reported the day after the tragedy.¹²⁵ Additionally,

¹²² Ibid., 200-203.

¹²³ Ibid., 203.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Eugene Winograd and Ulric Neisser, *Affect and Accuracy in Recall: Studies Of "Flashbulb" Memories*, Emory Symposia in Cognition; 4 (Cambridge ; New York, NY, USA: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 9-10.

emotional events are often accompanied by selective amnesia of the experience.¹²⁶

This is consistent with Freud's theory that unpleasant events are often repressed.

While it is not understood what conditions lead to the loss of memory rather than the facilitation of it, some contend that it relates to the intensity and duration of emotional trauma.¹²⁷

Second, conditioned fear responses diminish very little over time. They actually increase in potency as time goes on.¹²⁸ H. J. Eysenck labeled this the incubation of fear. His proposal attempts to explain the "persistence of neurotic activity and its liability to increase over time."¹²⁹ Eysenck argues that "under certain conditions (primarily a strong conditioned response and a short CS exposure time) *incubation* or strengthening of the conditioned response of anxiety will result."¹³⁰

The Emotional Path

To better understand the role of emotions in a person's life, it is necessary to understand how the brain functions and how the emotional and rational or cognitive work together. The two main structures in the brain that demonstrate this functionality are the amygdala and the neocortex.¹³¹ In humans, the amygdala - from

¹²⁶ LeDoux, 211.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Chris Brewin, *Cognitive Foundations of Clinical Psychology* (London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1988), 42.

¹³⁰ Ibid., 43.

¹³¹ Goleman, 15.

the Greek word for “almond” – is an almond-shaped cluster of structures just above the brainstem. There are two of these structures, one on each side of the brain that form the amygdala.¹³² The amygdala is the emotional specialist in the brain.¹³³ If it is separated or disconnected from the other structures in the brain, a person is unable to evaluate the emotional significance of events. Since it holds a person’s emotional memory, a disconnected amygdala will result in a life without meaning.¹³⁴

Joseph LeDoux’s research has given scientists a greater understanding of the information flow between experience, emotion, and cognition. In a summary of LeDoux’s research, Goleman states:

His research has shown that sensory signals from the eye or ear travel first in the brain to the thalamus, and then – across a single synapse – to the amygdala; a second signal from the thalamus is routed to the neocortex – the thinking brain. This branching allows the amygdala to begin to respond *before* the neocortex, which mulls information through several levels of brain circuits before it fully perceives and finally initiates its more finely tailored response.

Ledoux’s research is revolutionary for understanding emotional life because it is the first to work out neural pathways for feelings that bypass the neocortex. Those feelings that take the direct route through the amygdala include our most primitive and potent; this circuit does much to explain the power of emotion to overwhelm rationality...The amygdala can trigger an emotional response via this emergency route even as a parallel reverberating circuit begins between the amygdala and neocortex. The amygdala can have us spring into action while the slightly slower – but more fully informed – neocortex unfolds its more refined plan for action.¹³⁵

This pathway in the brain is crucial because it saves time in the case of an

¹³² Ibid., 14.

¹³³ Ibid., 15.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Ibid., 17-18.

emergency.¹³⁶ However, it carries a limited portion of messages while the major portion of messages takes the longer road to the neocortex. What registers in the amygdala is enough of a signal to issue a warning. However, in the case of an emergency, a person does not necessarily need to know all the details of the situation to know that he or she is in danger.¹³⁷

Though the amygdala is at work preparing the impulsive reaction, which may or may not be the appropriate response, another part of the brain is trying to prepare a more fitting response.¹³⁸ At the other end of a circuit to the neocortex, just behind the forehead, lie the prefrontal lobes.¹³⁹ The prefrontal lobes attempt to inhibit the influence of the reactive amygdala. The lobes are at work when someone is afraid or enraged, constraining the emotion to deal more effectively with the environment. This area brings a more thoughtful, analytical response, modulating the emotions.¹⁴⁰

Goleman continues:

Ordinarily the prefrontal areas govern our emotional reactions from the start. The largest projection of sensory information from the thalamus, remember, goes not to the amygdala, but to the neocortex and its many centers for taking in and making sense of what is being perceived; that information and our response to it is coordinated by the prefrontal lobes, the seat of planning and organizing actions toward a goal, including emotional ones. In the neocortex a cascading series of circuits registers and analyzes that information, comprehends it, and through the prefrontal lobes, orchestrates a reaction. If in the process an emotional response is called for, the prefrontal lobes dictate it, working hand-in-hand with the amygdala and other circuits in the emotional

¹³⁶ LeDoux, 163.

¹³⁷ Goleman, 23.

¹³⁸ Ibid., 24.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 24-25.

brain.¹⁴¹

The key to this happening appears to be the left prefrontal lobe.¹⁴²

Neuropsychologists who have done research with people with brain injuries in the prefrontal lobe areas have determined that the task of the left prefrontal lobe is to act as a “damper” or neural thermostat, which regulates unpleasant emotions.¹⁴³ The right prefrontal lobe is the location of negative feelings, like fear and aggression, whereas the left prefrontal lobe keeps the raw emotions constrained, possibly by inhibiting the right prefrontal lobe.¹⁴⁴

Emotion and Change

Behavioral change, particularly long-term behavioral change, is not easy. It rarely happens by accident. One issue with behavioral change, especially with respect to emotions, is that a person may have an emotional reaction without an understanding of why she or he reacts in that way. Therefore, dealing with emotions is necessary.

Sadly, most people have been trained or encouraged to avoid their emotions.¹⁴⁵ Certain expressions of emotions, such as crying in males, have been seen as a sign of weakness or lack of control. However, to begin to discuss changing

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 25.

¹⁴² Ibid., 26.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Benjamin L. Hankin and John R. Z. Abela, *Development of Psychopathology: A Vulnerability-Stress Perspective* (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications, 2005), 229.

behavior, a person must be able to access emotions. Accessing emotions leads to behavioral change.¹⁴⁶

Richard Boyatzis and Annie McKee look at intentional behavioral change in the area of leadership. In their book, *Resonant Leadership*, the authors discuss the impact of resonance and renewal on leadership. Resonance “means that people’s emotional centers are in synch in a positive way.”¹⁴⁷ In addition, resonance is “the ability of leaders to perceive and influence the flow of emotions (including motivational states) between themselves and others they work with.”¹⁴⁸ Resonant leaders work hard to develop emotional intelligence – self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management. Not only do they have it in themselves, they manage an environment where others’ can manage their own emotions and build strong and trusting relationships.¹⁴⁹ However, sustaining this kind of leadership requires renewal, which the authors define as “developing practices – habits of mind, body and behavior – that enable us to create and sustain resonance in the face of unending challenges, year in and year out.”¹⁵⁰

According to Boyatzis and McKee, recently completed long-term research

¹⁴⁶ Leslie S. Greenberg and Jeremy D. Safran, *Emotion in Psychotherapy: Affect, Cognition, and the Process of Change* (New York: Guilford Press, 1987), 188.

¹⁴⁷ Daniel Goleman, Richard E. Boyatzis, and Annie McKee, *Primal Leadership: Realizing the Power of Emotional Intelligence* (Boston, Mass.: Harvard Business School Press, 2002), 33.

¹⁴⁸ Bruce Wilson, *Primal Leadership and the Role of Listening in Emotional Intelligence, Part I* <http://www.businesslistening.com/primal-leadership.php> (accessed December 15 2008).

¹⁴⁹ Richard E. Boyatzis and Annie McKee, *Resonant Leadership: Renewing Yourself and Connecting with Others through Mindfulness, Hope, and Compassion* (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 2005), 4.

¹⁵⁰ Boyatzis and McKee, 5.

studies demonstrate that sustainable change takes place when we focus on five major discoveries:

1. The *ideal self*, or what you would want out of life and the person you want to be – leading to your personal vision, the deepest expression of what we want in life.
2. The *real self*, or how you act and are seen by others; the comparison of the real self to the ideal self results in identification of your strengths and weaknesses – leading to your personal balance sheet showing areas where the real self and ideal self are congruent and incongruent.
3. Your *learning agenda* enables you to capitalize on your strengths and moves you closer to your personal vision while possibly working on a weakness or two (or working to maintain the ideal current state of your life and work).
4. *Experimenting with and practicing new habits* or reinforcing and affirming your strengths.
5. *Developing and maintaining close, personal relationships* – resonant relationships – that enable you to move through these discoveries toward renewal.¹⁵¹

Reducing these five discoveries into three elements, Boyatzis and McKee state that to sustain resonance in themselves and others, leaders need to focus on three elements: mindfulness, hope, and compassion.¹⁵² These three elements “spark positive emotions and healthy relationships that enable us to be resilient and function effectively even in the face of challenges.”¹⁵³

Mindfulness is “the capacity to be fully aware of all that one experiences *inside the self* – body, mind, heart, spirit – and to pay full attention to what is happening *around us* – people, the natural world, our surroundings, and events.”¹⁵⁴ Being mindful means that a person is constantly and consciously in tune with himself

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 88.

¹⁵² Ibid., 8.

¹⁵³ Ibid., 72-73.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 112.

or herself; the person is self-aware.¹⁵⁵ Mindfulness starts with self-awareness. This involves people knowing themselves so well that they are able to consciously make decisions on how to respond to people and situations. It allows a person to be consistent and authentic.¹⁵⁶ Self-awareness is also a key component in emotional intelligence.¹⁵⁷

Experiences of hope and compassion actually spark changes in the brain and hormones that allow a person to renew the mind, body and spirit. When a person experiences hope, that person “feel[s] excited about a possible future, and we generally believe that the future we envision is attainable. Hope engages and raises our spirit and mobilizes energy. It causes us to want to act and enables us to draw on personal resources in the service of moving towards our goal. Beyond this, hope, and the visions that come with it, are [*sic*] contagious. They are powerful drivers of *others’* behavior.”¹⁵⁸ Hope is a “combination of clearly articulating goals, believing that one can attain those goals, charting a course of action or a path, and arriving at the goal while experiencing a sense of well-being as a result of the process.”¹⁵⁹ As with hope, compassion is an emotional expression.¹⁶⁰ It is empathy and caring in action. It is the emotional expression of the virtue of benevolence. It is “based on a

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 113.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 120.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 137.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 78.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 152.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 180.

wholesome desire to connect with others and meet their needs,” without the need for reciprocity.¹⁶¹

As demonstrated above, emotions are key. To truly be self-aware, people need to understand not only how they react and respond, but why. The “why” could be a result of some implicit emotional memory as a result of a traumatic event in a person’s life. The person must understand emotions and how those emotions are triggered to be completely self-aware.¹⁶²

Leslie Greenberg and Sandra Paivio also outline a process of dealing with the influence emotions have over a person. The process requires that the person approach his or her emotional pain rather than avoid it. The person is allowed to experience the emotions and feelings associated with emotional memories so the person can understand them and accept them as being part of life.¹⁶³ By “re-owning” experiences the person understands she or he has a right to the resulting emotions. Once a person acknowledges and experiences the pain of an emotion, she or he can develop hope.¹⁶⁴ “Hope develops, from the sense that ‘It is I who is feeling this, it is me [*sic*] who is an agent in this feeling’ and then ‘It is me [*sic*] who can do something about this.’ A sense of agency is created by recognizing oneself as a creator or author of one’s experience. While a sense of agency may not yet provide a concrete plan of action, there is a feeling of confidence that action is possible and that change can

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² Ibid., 113.

¹⁶³ Greenberg and Paivio, 99.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

occur.”¹⁶⁵

Emotional Health: Differentiation

Emotional health results in a person who has the strength not be manipulated or controlled by unhealthy others. Murray Bowen, the father of family systems theory, called this emotional healthiness *differentiation*.¹⁶⁶

Self-Differentiation

Differentiation has its origin in biology. Cells can have no identity, purpose, or distinctiveness until they have separated from (that is, left) their mother cell. In biology, differentiation is a prerequisite to specialization, even if the cell is ultimately going to fuse with other cells to accomplish its purpose.¹⁶⁷ Also implicit, however, in this biological metaphor is the idea that such individual identity has little meaning if the cell cannot connect. In its simplest terms, therefore, differentiation is the capacity to be one’s own integrated aggregate-of-cells person while still belonging to, or being able to relate to, a larger colony.¹⁶⁸

Differentiation involves the ability to “hold on to who you are and who you are not. The degree to which you are able to affirm your distinct values and goals apart from the pressures around you (separateness) while remaining close to people

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶⁶ Kerr and Bowen, 68.

¹⁶⁷ Friedman, Treadwell, and Beal, 179.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 182.

important to you (togetherness) helps determine your level of differentiation.”¹⁶⁹

People who have a high level of differentiation have their own set of beliefs, convictions, directions, goals, and values apart from the pressures that surround them. They can choose their actions without being controlled by the approval or disapproval of others.¹⁷⁰

Differentiation refers to a direction in life rather than a state of being:

- To the capacity to take a stand in an intense emotional system;
- To say “I” when others are demanding “we”;
- To containing one’s reactivity to the reactivity of others (which includes the ability to avoid being polarized);
- To maintain a non-anxious presence in the midst of anxious others;
- To knowing where one ends and another begins;
- To being able to cease automatically being one of the system’s emotional dominoes;
- To being clear about one’s own personal values and goals; and
- To taking maximum responsibility for one’s own emotional being and destiny rather than blaming others or the context.¹⁷¹

Differentiation is the capacity to “become oneself out of oneself.” This phrase means that a person lives his or her life out of his or her own identity.¹⁷² As a result, the person has minimum reactivity to the positions, actions, or reactions of others. It includes charting a direction for the person based on his or her own “internal guidance system” rather than scouring the polls or the breeze to determine direction.¹⁷³ Out of this wholeness, a person lives, responds, functions, loves, and

¹⁶⁹ Scazzero, 82.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹⁷¹ Friedman, Treadwell, and Beal, 183.

¹⁷² Ibid.

¹⁷³ Ibid.

integrates with others in a way that does not require that person to be manipulated by others.

The Mind and the Brain

Once a person deals with the emotional landmines that create an environment of destructive behaviors, the person must break old habits. Neurological processes in the brain create habitual processes that are so automatic a person does not realize how she or he is behaving.¹⁷⁴ To break these habits, the neurons in the brain that “fire” together have to be separated. In other words, a person has to recognize his or her behavior and learn to think differently in order to behave differently.¹⁷⁵ To consider how thinking determines behavior, I believe a person should have a basic knowledge of how the brain works.

The first element of the neurobiological parts of the brain is the *neuron*. The neuron consists of the *soma*, which is a cell body that carries out the major cellular functions.¹⁷⁶ *Dendrites* sprout from the soma. Dendrites are multibranched tentacles that receive incoming messages from other neurons and carry those messages to the soma of the cell of which they are a part. These dendrites are thick at the base but get thinner with each branch.¹⁷⁷

In addition to the dendrites, a neuron also sprouts *axons*, which are long and

¹⁷⁴ Richard M. Restak, *The Naked Brain: How the Emerging Neurosociety Is Changing How We Live, Work, and Love*, 1st ed. (New York: Harmony Books, 2006), 22.

¹⁷⁵ Schwartz and Begley, 103.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

fibrous strands that extend away from the soma. The job of the axon is to carry information to another neuron.¹⁷⁸ At the point of connecting to the other neuron, the axon creates tiny storage tanks of neurochemicals called *vesicles*.¹⁷⁹ These storage tanks will release chemicals that transmit messages to the next cell in a created circuit. This is called electrochemical stimulation.¹⁸⁰ At the end of the axon is the *synapse*. The synapse is actually almost nothing. It consists of the axon of the transmitting neuron, the dendrite or the soma of a receiving neuron, and a gap of one-millionth of a centimeter between them.¹⁸¹ The average brain neuron makes about 1,000 synaptic connections and receives even more of the connections (sometimes as many as 100,000) depending on its function and location in the brain.¹⁸²

When the electrochemical stimulation is received by the synapse, it stimulates the movement of calcium ions, which in turn start the process of the vesicles releasing their *neurochemicals* (also called neurotransmitters). These neurotransmitters are the language of brain communication.¹⁸³ These transmitters flow through the synapse. This activity will either excite the next neuron or inhibit the firing of the next neuron.¹⁸⁴ If the neurotransmitter creates a positive charge between the receptors in the synapse, the next neuron will create an action potential, a moving pulse of

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

¹⁸¹ Ibid., 105.

¹⁸² Ibid.

¹⁸³ Ibid.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

electrical charge that sends information from one neuron to another,¹⁸⁵ causing the next neuron to energize and continue the transmission to the next neuron in the circuit.¹⁸⁶ If a more negative charge is produced, the action potential will be inhibited from occurring and the transmission will stop.¹⁸⁷

The transmission has a greater potential of producing a positive charge if the synaptic strength, the ease with which a signal traverses the gap between two neurons,¹⁸⁸ between neurons is strong. If the synaptic strength is increased, the possibility of the next neuron energizing is greater. This has led to the maxim, “Cells that fire together, wire together.”¹⁸⁹ As one writer stated, “when neurons fire simultaneously, their synaptic connections become stronger, raising the chance that the firing of one will trigger the firing of the other.”¹⁹⁰ Synaptic strength is the key to creating neural circuits and to the brain’s ability to change. As such, it is the key to changing the wiring in the brain, which affects thinking, and thus changing behavior.¹⁹¹

Repeated actions, emotions, and experiences wire the brain in such a way that habits are produced. These habits are automatic and often, unless specifically noted,

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., 106.

¹⁸⁸ David Tenenbaum, “‘Home-Grown’ Proteins Build Synaptic Strength,” *HHMI Bulletin* 14, no. 4 (2001).

¹⁸⁹ Schwartz and Begley, 107.

¹⁹⁰ Sharon Begley, *Train Your Mind, Change Your Brain: How a New Science Reveals Our Extraordinary Potential to Transform Ourselves* (New York: Ballantine Books, 2007), 30.

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

are not a part of a person's conscious, explicit memories¹⁹². Changing the wiring that produces habitual behavior requires changing the order of how the brain's neurons fire. The brain's unique ability to do this is called *neuroplasticity*.¹⁹³

Neuroplasticity

The widely held belief for much of the past four centuries was that the only time the brain changed after childhood was when it began a long process of decline.¹⁹⁴ It was also believed that if brain cells did not develop properly or if they were injured or died, they could not be replaced. Conventional wisdom stated that the brain could not alter its structure or find new ways to function if part of it was damaged.¹⁹⁵ Despite the fact that “[s]tructure and function are really information processing being implemented by the physical and chemical properties made available for biological molecules, cells, networks of cells, and so forth,”¹⁹⁶ it was believed that information processing could not change.

However, in recent years, scientists have made breakthrough discoveries showing that the brain actually changed its structure with each different activity it performed. It modified and perfected its circuits. If parts of the brain failed, other parts would and could take over those tasks. The name scientists gave to this brain

¹⁹² LeDoux, 211.

¹⁹³ Begley, 30.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., 6.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁹⁶ Read Montague, *Why Choose This Book? How We Make Decisions* (New York: Dutton, 2006), 15.

property was neuroplasticity.¹⁹⁷

Despite the resourcefulness of the brain, this plasticity is not all good news. While it has the power to produce a wonderfully flexible organ, the brain's plasticity can also work to create behaviors that are more rigid.¹⁹⁸ Once a particular plastic change takes place, it can inhibit other changes from occurring, thus hindering or preventing functional and structural modifications that allow behavioral change. One scientist calls this the "plastic paradox."¹⁹⁹

The systems and structures that display the greatest plasticity are those most subject to experience and environment.²⁰⁰ Every brain system known is shaped by a person's experiences. Neuropsychologist Chris Frith notes, "[O]ur brain is hard-wired during the first few months of life as a result of our visual experiences."²⁰¹

The various experiences of our environment work to bring about changes in the brain. The brain's "neural architecture comes to reflect the environment that shapes it."²⁰² The more enriched the environment, the greater the level of stimulation and complexity. This stimulation enhances learning and growth. Each new stimulation adds an additional layer of experience to the brain, creating more complex

¹⁹⁷ Norman Doidge, *The Brain That Changes Itself: Stories of Personal Triumph from the Frontiers of Brain Science* (New York: Viking, 2007), xiii-xv.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, xvi

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁰ Begley, 102.

²⁰¹ Christopher D. Frith, *Making up the Mind: How the Brain Creates Our Mental World* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub., 2007), 128.

²⁰² Louis J. Cozolino, *The Neuroscience of Psychotherapy: Building and Rebuilding the Human Brain*, Norton Series on Interpersonal Neurobiology (New York: Norton, 2002), 22.

responses to those experiences.²⁰³ Likewise, an impoverished environment with limited variation provides little stimulation or challenge. Stimulation and challenge are necessary for brain plasticity because they keep the brain from functioning only via its automatic processes.²⁰⁴

A person's brain is largely under the influence of automatic processes.²⁰⁵ This is important for a person's survival and productivity. Without these processes, every time a person gets out of a chair to walk to the refrigerator, one would have to decide whether to lead with the left foot or right foot. In addition, people could not drive and talk at the same time. Multitasking would not be possible.²⁰⁶ The brain is also "organized so that once an activity becomes routine it doesn't require conscious effort but occurs automatically."²⁰⁷

In a study done by Alvaro Pascual-Leon, plasticity caused by environment and experience is demonstrated in a dramatic way. He set out to discover what would happen to adults who suddenly lost their vision.²⁰⁸ As part of this study, he used volunteers who could see and had normal vision. He then blindfolded them. The volunteers wore their blindfolds all day, every day, from a Monday morning to a Friday evening. They spent their days navigating their rooms in a Boston medical

²⁰³ Ibid.

²⁰⁴ Ibid., 23.

²⁰⁵ Restak, 22.

²⁰⁶ Ibid..

²⁰⁷ Ibid., 24.

²⁰⁸ Christian Casanova and Maurice Ptito, *Vision: From Neurons to Cognition, Progress in Brain Research; V. 134* (Amsterdam ; New York: Elsevier Science, 2001), 427.

center. They were taught Braille, the system of raised dots representing letters that enables blind people to “read,” all the while having their brains scanned while they were engaged in tactile and auditory activities.²⁰⁹

Prior to their five days of “blindness,” the volunteers had their brains scanned. The visual cortex of each volunteer showed expected activity: when they looked at something, it was highly active and when they listened to something or touched something, it was inactive. However, during their period of “blindness,” scans showed that when the volunteers did tactile or auditory tasks, their visual cortex became active. As the week continued, the brain system responsible for touch became increasingly quiet when the volunteers were feeling the Braille dots. The visual cortex became increasingly active. Neurologically speaking, “the ‘seeing’ brain was now feeling and hearing.”²¹⁰ In addition, when the blindfold was removed, the volunteer’s visual cortex stopped responding to the tactile and auditory stimuli within twelve to twenty-four hours.²¹¹

One conclusion of this study suggests that the ability for the visual cortex to feel and hear was always there.²¹² Neural connections that have kept silent (not firing) for decades can be recruited when needed. If those connections were used repeatedly, with the blindfolds staying on for years instead of days, researchers believe that those temporary changes could be made permanent, thus changing the

²⁰⁹ Ibid., 437.

²¹⁰ Begley, 114-115.

²¹¹ Doidge, 211.

²¹² Begley, 115

whole structure and mapping of the adult brain.²¹³

Thought and Brain Plasticity

It has been noted scientifically that “perception, sensation, and other subjective experiences reflect chemical and electrical changes in the brain. When electrical impulses zip through our visual cortex, we see, and when neurochemicals course through the limbic system, we feel – sometimes in response to an event in the outside world, sometimes as a result of a thought generated by the mind alone.”²¹⁴ But could the opposite be true? Is it possible that a person’s thoughts could bring functional and structural changes to the brain?

The idea that only the brain acts on the brain is a philosophical view called “causal closure.” This view states, “only the physical can act on the physical...But a nonphysical phenomenon is powerless to affect anything made out of tissues, molecules, and atoms.”²¹⁵ However, in recent years, scientists are discovering that the mind, the rational, thinking areas of the brain, can affect the brain.

People with Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD), are “terrified that some harm will come, or has come, to them or to those they love.”²¹⁶ These people are compulsive worriers. Those with OCD may attempt to get relief by focusing on what is worrying them.²¹⁷ For instance, if a person is germaphobic, he or she will try to

²¹³ Begley, 115-116.

²¹⁴ Ibid., 131.

²¹⁵ Ibid., 133-134.

²¹⁶ Doidge, 165.

²¹⁷ Ibid.

make sure there is no possible way germs can reach him or her. One may install filters in one's home to keep from breathing in germs out of the air in addition to constantly washing one's hands. Unfortunately, the more one thinks about one's fear, the more one worries about it.²¹⁸ When obsessive worrying begins, OCD patients will typically begin to do something to diminish the worry.²¹⁹ If, for instance, they feel germs have contaminated them when they touch something, they will wash their hands.²²⁰ The action of washing their hands allows them to feel that they have removed the threat.

The brain of an OCD patient does not allow the person to move past the feeling of regret when making a mistake, and, as such, the person obsesses about the mistake. Scientists have discovered through brain scans that three areas of the brain are involved in obsessions.²²¹ The *orbital frontal cortex*, which lies just behind the eyes, is the brain region where mistakes are detected. When the "mistake feeling," that nagging sense that something is wrong,²²² is detected, it signals the *cingulate gyrus*, an integral part of the limbic system, which is involved with emotion formation and processing, learning and memory.²²³ This in turn triggers the anxiety feeling that something bad will happen if the mistake is not corrected. The *caudate*

²¹⁸ Ibid.

²¹⁹ Ibid.

²²⁰ Ibid., 165-167.

²²¹ Ibid., 169.

²²² Ibid.

²²³ Adel K. Afifi and Ronald A. Bergman, *Functional Neuroanatomy: Text and Atlas*, 2nd ed. (New York: Lange Medical Books/McGraw-Hill, 2005), 31.

nucleus is the part of a person's brain that allows thoughts to progress from one thought to the next unless, as in the case of OCD patients, the caudate becomes stuck; many scientists refer to this as brain lock.²²⁴

James Schwartz set out to develop a treatment that sought to allow patients to release this brain lock. The approach Schwartz developed actually creates a new brain circuit. The new circuit gives pleasure and triggers the release of dopamine, which “rewards the new activity and consolidates and grows new neural connections. The new circuit can eventually compete with the older one, and according to ‘use it or lose it’ theories, the pathological networks will weaken. With this treatment we don’t so much ‘break’ bad habits as replace bad behaviors with better ones.”²²⁵

Schwartz’s therapy works in two stages. First, each time the patient feels an oncoming OCD attack, the person decides to think differently about the worrying by relabeling the worry. The patient thinks differently about his or her problem, noting that what he or she is experiencing is not an attack of, say germs or battery acid, but an episode of OCD. The patient reminds him- or herself that what is happening is the result of a faulty circuit.²²⁶ Second, the patient refocuses on something positive and pleasurable. By doing this, the patient fixes his or her transmission issues by growing and strengthening new circuits and altering the caudate.²²⁷ “By not acting on the compulsion, patients weaken the link between the compulsion and the idea it will ease

²²⁴ Doige, 169-170.

²²⁵ Ibid., 170.

²²⁶ Ibid., 171.

²²⁷ Ibid., 172.

their anxiety.”²²⁸ One principle of neuroplasticity states that “Neurons that fire together, wire together.” The corollary is, “Neurons that fire apart, wire apart.”²²⁹

Schwartz has seen tremendous results from his work. Eighty percent of his patients get better with this method in combination with medication. The medication helps ease the anxiety that comes with obsessive-compulsive disorder, allowing the patients to integrate the therapy. In time, many of the patients are able to discontinue their medication.²³⁰ In addition, in brain scans following therapy, the three areas of the brain that once were locked together show signs of firing separately as if the brain were normal.²³¹

Schwartz’s conclusion was that “[t]herapy had altered the metabolism of the OCD circuit....This was the first study to show that cognitive behaviour therapy has the power to systematically change faulty brain chemistry in a well-identified brain circuit.”²³² The brain changes showed that “willful, mindful effort can alter brain function, and that such self-directed brain changes – neuroplasticity – are a genuine reality.”²³³

Further evidence of the ability of thought to produce change can be found in a study done by researchers Guang Yue and Kelly Cole. Their study looked at two

²²⁸ Ibid., 174.

²²⁹ Ibid.

²³⁰ Ibid.

²³¹ Ibid.

²³² Begley, 141.

²³³ Ibid.

different groups of people. One group did physical exercise, and the other group simply imagined doing the exercise. Both of the groups “exercised” a finger muscle five days per week for four consecutive weeks.²³⁴ The group that physically exercised the finger muscle did

fifteen maximal contractions, with a twenty second rest between each. The mental group merely imagined doing fifteen maximal contractions, with a twenty second rest between each, while also imagining a voice shouting at them, “Harder! Harder! Harder!”

At the end of the study, the subjects who had done physical exercise increased their muscular strength by 30 percent, as one might expect. Those who only *imagined* doing the exercise, for the same period, increased the muscle strength by 22 percent. The explanation lies in the motor neurons of the brain that “program” movements. During those imaginary contractions, the neurons responsible for stringing together sequences of instructions for movements are activated and strengthened, resulting in increased strength when the muscles are contracted.²³⁵

From a neurological perspective, imagining an act and doing the act are not that different.

The Model

Jesus

Second Corinthians 4:4-6 describes Jesus as the *imago dei*, or image of God.

He is the supreme *eikon* or *imago dei*.²³⁶ He manifests who God is.²³⁷ Colossians 1:

²³⁴ Guang Yue Aand Kelly J. Cole, “Strength Increases from the Motor Program: Comparison of Training with Maximal Voluntary and Imagined Muscle Contractions,” *Journal of Neurophysiology* 67, no. 5 (1992).

²³⁵ Doidge, 204.

²³⁶ Grenz, 212.

²³⁷ *Ibid.*, 221.

15-20, according to Grenz, “must...be read in connection with the narrative of the creation of humankind in the divine image (Gen. 1:26-28), a reading in which the theme of dominion, found in the creation account, reemerges in the hymn’s focus on Christ’s preeminence. This preeminence places him, as the truly firstborn, above the first human, and it designates him as the true image of God and therefore as the true human.”²³⁸

Not only is Jesus the *imago dei*, “he is the head of a new humanity destined to be formed according to the image in fulfillment of God’s intent for humankind from the beginning.”²³⁹ According to Grenz, in Romans 8:29, Jesus, in his risen glory, now “radiates the fullness of humanness that constitutes God’s design for humankind from the beginning. Yet God’s purpose has never been that Christ will merely radiate this human fullness, but that as the Son he will be preeminent among a new humanity who together are stamped with the divine image. Consequently, the humankind created in the divine image is none other than the new humanity conformed to the *imago Christi*....”²⁴⁰

This new humanity finds its starting point “in the beginning.”²⁴¹ The last part of the biblical drama depicts

the new humanity as the final outworking of God’s intentions for humankind “in the beginning” to be the image of God according to the pattern disclosed by Jesus, who is the true *imago dei*. In depicting the new humanity as the image of God, the New Testament texts bring to its *telos* the trajectory that

²³⁸ Ibid., 216.

²³⁹ Ibid., 224.

²⁴⁰ Ibid., 231-232.

²⁴¹ Ibid., 268.

finds its starting point in the first creation narrative and plays such an important role in the Christological reflections of the New Testament writers.

The Christocentric, eschatologically focused anthropology of the New Testament...leads inevitably back to Gen. 1:26-27. This anthropology provides the theological vantage point from which to read anew the depiction of the creation of humankind. In short, the concept of the new humanity as the image of God that stands at the end of the biblical trajectory occasions a return to the “beginning”, a return that marks the exegetical movement from creation to new creation...with a parallel hermeneutical trajectory from the ecshaton to creation – that is, from the eternal city to the primordial garden.²⁴²

With this theological understanding, it can now be stated that the end of humanity’s transformational journey is from broken *eikon* to a restored *eikon*, a new humanity that looks, functions, acts, loves and relates as Jesus Christ.

The Process

Getting there, however, requires a process. Dallas Willard, in his book *Renovation of the Heart*, depicts human life as having six basic aspects.²⁴³ These aspects include:

1. Thought - what allows a person to move beyond the perception of his senses²⁴⁴
2. Feeling – what inclines a person toward or away from things that come before a person’s mind in thought²⁴⁵
3. Will – “the capacity of a person to originate things and events that would not otherwise be or occur”²⁴⁶
4. Body – action and interaction with the physical world²⁴⁷

²⁴² Ibid.

²⁴³ Dallas Willard, *Renovation of the Heart: Putting on the Character of Christ* (Colorado Springs, Colo.: NavPress, 2002), 32.

²⁴⁴ Ibid.

²⁴⁵ Ibid.

²⁴⁶ Ibid., 33.

²⁴⁷ Ibid., 30.

5. Social Context – personal and structural relations with others²⁴⁸
6. Soul – that which interrelates all the other aspects so they form one life.²⁴⁹

Out of these aspects he proposes that the entire human self is made up of the spirit, the mind, the body, the social, and the soul.²⁵⁰ It is out of this whole person that actions arise.²⁵¹

According to Willard, the dominance that each of the above parts has on the whole self is determined by a person's relationship with God.²⁵² In a life away from God, the order is the body, the soul, the mind, the spirit and God. In a life under God, the order is God, the spirit, the mind, the soul, and the body.²⁵³ In a life under God, life "flows from God throughout the whole person, including the body and social context."²⁵⁴ In the life apart from God, the body is the influencing agent, including a person's understanding of God. This makes it impossible to please God and ensures the futility of a person's life.²⁵⁵

Based on the research, I wish to propose a process of how a person experiences holistic and transformative behavioral change that resembles Willard's dominant order concept and assumes a person has a relationship with Christ. This is

²⁴⁸ Ibid.

²⁴⁹ Ibid., 37.

²⁵⁰ Ibid., 38.

²⁵¹ Ibid., 40.

²⁵² Ibid.

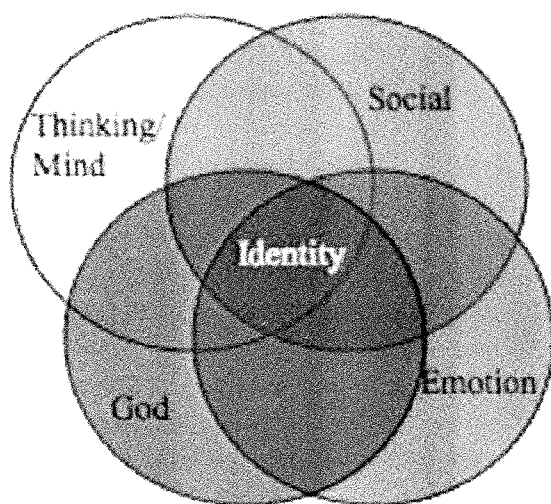
²⁵³ Ibid., 40-41.

²⁵⁴ Ibid., 41.

²⁵⁵ Ibid.

indeed a system. It is a continuous process of shaping behavior. This process includes the following aspects: God, our identity, our emotions, our thinking, and our social interactions.

I believe for a Christ-follower our identity is an integration of God, our social context, our emotional healthy, and how we think about ourselves and others. It is represented in the following diagram:



Each of these elements continually works to shape our identity “in Christ” so that we are continually being restored into the *eikon* we were created to be.

When we become a Christ-follower, we are “saved” into a community of faith. That community of faith should work to socialize us as a child of God by demonstrating right behavior, right thinking, healthy emotions, and a right relationship with God. As a person develops a deeper relationship with God in the

midst of community, the person begins to examine how his or her actions line up with the actions of the community, of scripture, and of Christ. The community, armed with a total understanding of how emotions and mind function, work together to help that person explore his or her emotions when he or she acts out of unhealthy emotions. The community of faith helps a person explore those points of pain, to re-own them, and then release them. At the same time, the socialization that takes place in the community helps the person unlearn behaviors. Not only does this work to help deepen the person's relationship with God, but it also works to shape that person's identity. Out of that transformed identity, the person continues to see his or her behavior fall more into line with that of Christ. It is a process that is only completed when the person enters into the fullness of the presence of God. It is then that the person loves the Lord with all his or her heart, soul, mind, and strength as well as loving his or her neighbor as himself. In doing so, that person has begun the process where the person re-shaped into the image of God, namely the new humanity formed out of the supreme *imago dei*, Jesus Christ.²⁵⁶

²⁵⁶ Grenz, 212.

THE PROJECT

Developing query letters for the publishing.

The process of submitting material for publication can be difficult and often a painful learning process. Many publishers do not want a completed manuscript, as they often will make a counter proposal, asking the writer to go in a very different direction from what was first submitted. Therefore, the focus on this project is to work through the specifications of developing publishing proposals and submitting them to various publishers for acceptance. This will all for the student to (1) to conceptualize a viable book for popular consumption, (2) to develop proposal letters for several publishers, which will be used in the process of getting a book to print.

Project Specifics

The project requires the development of a book proposal for three publishers that might consider publishing a book based on the research for a dissertation. It would include the following elements:

- 2 chapters, edited
- Book proposals for three different publishers per their proposal submission standards

Chosen Publishers

Zondervan Publishers

Requirements:

1. The book title
2. A table of contents, including a two or three sentence description of each chapter
3. A brief description of the proposed book, including the unique contribution of the book and why you feel it must be published
4. Your intended readers

5. Your vita (personal biographical sketch), including your qualifications to write the book.

Eerdmans

Requirements:

1. A query letter explaining what the book is about, for whom it is written, what distinguishes it from other books currently available on the subject, how long it is, and what the author's qualifications are for writing the book. The publisher also asks the author to disclose whether he or she is submitting the material simultaneously to another publisher.
2. A prospectus, table of contents, and perhaps an introduction and sample chapters. to the publisher gives authors the option of sending the entire manuscript. All manuscript material is to be typed or printed out, double-spaced, on one side of the paper. If the work was prepared on a computer, the publisher requests a copy of the disk only if it accepts the manuscript for publication.
3. A self-addressed, stamped envelope if the author wishes to have the material returned. The post office no longer accepts packages weighing more than one pound without a metered stamp; if the author sends a manuscript and wishes to have it returned, the author must include a check for the postage required.

Submissions are to be mailed to:
Jon Pott, Editor-in-Chief
Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.
2140 Oak Industrial Dr. NE
Grand Rapids, MI 49505

IVP Press

Requirements:

- A cover letter (about two single-spaced pages) including:
- A concept statement. In 50 to 100 words summarize what the problem or main issue is that the book will address, the book's subject, and scope, and what benefits it will offer readers.
- The author's passion for the book—why the author is passionate about the idea for the book, why its message is important, and how it will make a difference.
- An explanation of who the book is for, how the author knows this, and why the book will communicate effectively to them.
- The length of the book, either in terms of how many typewritten, double-spaced pages it will be or its projected word count.

- The schedule for the book. If the book is not already completed, the author is required to estimate when he or she thinks the first draft will be ready to submit.
- A chapter-by-chapter summary.
- A review of competing/similar books.
- One or two sample chapters.
- Biographical information.

POSTSCRIPT

Someone once asked me why I chose to pursue my Doctor of Ministry degree at George Fox Seminary. I told them that I had successfully gained entrance into two PhD programs, but both times God moved my family before I could get started. So I felt that I had better not attempt to gain entrance in another PhD program, because I really liked where I was serving in ministry. In addition, there was not a convenient school that had a Ph.D. program that was appropriate to my goals and desires..

My journey to George Fox was God-directed. I investigated two other D.Min. programs with similar emphases, but the timing for me was wrong. George Fox offered a new cohort-based program each year, and the thought of learning with Dr. Len Sweet was far too attractive an opportunity to let pass.

I still remember the day Len walked into our cohort. He told us two things: that all of us would be different when we ended the program, and that we were preparing for the next phase of our lives. He was right on both counts.

The journey through George Fox has been transformative for me personally. The research that I engaged in has impacted my life. I have lived my research. My research into how people change behavior has taken me along with it; my own behavior has changed because of my studies.

The abstract or project portion of my dissertation, where I put together book proposals for multiple publishing companies, itself has been especially helpful. I have always had a passion to write, although I have only recently realized that fact. Writing allows my mind to express itself, and it allows me to process what I learn in different ways. The project also taught me how poor a writer I was. I engaged a professional

editor who has become both a friend and a writing coach. She has helped me understand my writing tendencies and my assumptions. Her comments have opened my eyes to the work I must do to be effective in communicating what I am processing.

The research has also helped me understand how much I appreciate the intersection of disciplines. For me, that intersection is a catalyst of creativity. Continuing to read in areas of science, sociology, business, psychology, and other disciplines will be a large part of my future endeavors.

Most importantly, however, has been the growth in my *relationship* Christ over the past two years. Much of our first semester's reading was aimed at helping us understand the relational nature of Truth and Jesus. Because I come from a more fundamentalist tradition, this was difficult to grasp early on. Yet, it has transformed my life. It has changed how I read the scriptures and how I understand the interaction of Jesus with others both in the biblical text and in my life. It has deepened the relationship that I have with Christ.

I would like to say a word of thanks to Len. Len's ability to open up a new way of seeing the world, ministry, and God has prepared me for a new kind of ministry. His humility has been evident as he demonstrated to me how to handle success by being a servant. Thanks so much Len!

APPENDIXES

Book Proposal for InterVarsity Press

Date: 3/10/09

Subject: Manuscript Submission Request

Represented by: W. David Phillips, the author

Dear Editor,

I am requesting consideration for my manuscript, *Wholly Rewired: Science, the Gospel, and the Journey Toward Wholeness* (working title). It will be an approximately 40,000-word manuscript.

This is a book about the journey toward wholeness from a life of unhealthy, addictive, and sinful behavior. In it I examine how findings from emerging disciplines like neurobiology and behavioral science enrich and even validate the scriptures regarding the reason for unhealthy, addictive and sinful behavior.

In the book, I describe how changing our behavior is not simply a matter of being more disciplined about prayer and Bible reading or adding additional spiritual activities like fasting. Behavioral change requires accessing the deepest parts of our emotional lives. Engaging and dealing with our emotions leads to increasing emotional health, which in turn leads to behavioral change. Emotional health allows us to change our thinking about ourselves, our actions, and our relationship to others. It offers the freedom to regain a healthy understanding of who we are in Christ and in our relationship with God the Father. In this context, we can make progress in our journey toward wholeness.

In order to effectively change our behavior, we must also remember who we are as created by the Father. The ultimate impact of sin has been to destroy our sense of identity. We have lost the sense of being created in the image of God and being created for perfect relationship with our Creator. Because we are broken *eikons* (the Greek word for man being created in the image of God), we are searching to discover who and whose we are. Unhealthy behavior is an expression of that searching and longing that is within all of us. However, without the reshaping skill of the Potter, the cracked pots cannot be made whole and thus continue to struggle finding themselves in a world ignorant of the hope that brings wholeness.

Unfortunately, the institutional church has frequently dismissed the issues of unhealthy behavior as simply sin or a lack of self-discipline. The antidote for dealing with the behavioral dysfunction, according to those who emphasize spiritual disciplines, is to do more things that are spiritual: pray more, read the Bible more, spend more time in church. This prescription is limited in addressing the real cause of destructive behavior. It does not address the impact of other people's destructive behavior upon us. The unhealthy behavior of others can negatively impact our own behavior. The negative impact is often, perhaps even always, the source of the unhealthy and destructive behaviors a person exhibits.

In addition, the spiritual prescription does not take into account multiple memory storage areas with which our minds are created. The emotional memory holds traumatic experiences, which cause us to react out of pain when we sense we are in a similar situation. These experiences, part of our emotional memory, are rarely readily accessible in our cognitive memory. These memories must be probed, remembered, and released.

Drawing on recent research from emerging sciences such as neuroplasticity, emotional intelligence, and family systems theory, I propose that behavioral change is a result of our journey towards emotional health and wholeness. It requires us to unlearn and put aside the practices and effects of self-destructive behavior and fully embrace our identity as people created in the image of God for relationship with Him.

The market for this book will be pastors and other religious leaders looking to help people find wholeness in a broken world and people who long for effective and long-term spiritual formation.

Behavioral change and spiritual wholeness is deeply important to me for two reasons. First, I am a pastor and care deeply about those to whom I minister. Secondly, this process has been part of my own personal journey for the past four years.

The book is the product of doctoral studies, which I am in the process of completing at George Fox Seminary in Portland, OR. The degree, *Doctorate of Ministry, Leadership in the Emerging Culture*, is facilitated by Len Sweet. I scheduled to complete the program by May 1, 2009.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

W. David Phillips
149 Golden Plover Dr.
Smyrna, DE 19977
Phone: 302-355-0439
Email: wdphillips@gmail.com

Table of Contents

Working Title:

Wholly Rewired: Science, the Gospel, and the Journey Toward Wholeness.

Introduction

Why does a forty-year-old pastor who has two theology degrees and has grown up in church still struggle with destructive behaviors and emotions? While this struggle is nothing that would lead to dismissal, it does keep me from embracing who I was created to be. This is the story of my journey towards wholeness. But my own personal transformation did not come from praying more or reading the Bible more. It did, however, lead me into a deeper relationship with Christ Who now defines my identity.

Section 1: Brokenness

1. The Problem

We live in a broken world that is impacted by sin. Our sinful rebellion has caused us to lose our identity as *eikons*, or images of God. The loss of identity causes us to search for God and our identity through unhealthy emotions and destructive behaviors.

2. The Environment

The environment in which we are raised sets the stage for our emotional health and early behavior patterns. By looking at the life of Abraham and his descendents, I demonstrate how our character influences how we impact others for both good and bad. We do this both intentionally and unintentionally, and this impact is especially pronounced in families. We reproduce what we are in others, both the good and the bad.

3. The Emotions

In this chapter, I utilize recent neurological and psychological research to show that we are primarily emotional beings who reason, not rational beings that have emotions. The result is that we now understand that our behaviors are a result of our emotional health.

4. The Mind

I return to recent neurological research, particularly neuroplasticity, to describe how individual behaviors become wired into automatic processes. I also show how we fool ourselves regarding our ability to think rationally. Because we are primarily emotional beings, the rational areas of our brain simply rationalize what we feel, instead of expressing true rational thought.

Section 2: Journey Towards Wholeness

5. Emotional Healing

The first step in our journey to wholeness is dealing with the emotional pain of our past. We must rediscover and re-own the painful emotions of our experiences, set them aside, and allow God to heal the pain. This is an adaptation of research from Richard E. Boyatzis and Annie McKee's recently completed long-term research studies presented in their book *Resonant Leadership*.

6. Mental Unlearning

Changing behavior requires not only learning new behavior but unlearning current behavior. The brain, because of consistent and habitual behavior patterns, has structured itself to allow most actions to occur as part of automatic processes. This is done for efficiency's sake. To change behavior requires changing the relationship between the wiring of various pathways in the brain. That requires unlearning old thoughts and behaviors and learning new ones.

7. Christ Differentiation

I introduce and explain an adaptation of the self-differentiation of Murray Bowen's Family Systems Theory, which has been expanded by Edwin Friedman. *Christ Differentiation* is a state where we are not manipulated or controlled by others, but where we live in peace with others out of an understanding of who we are in relation to Christ.

8. Identity

What we do is a reflection of who we understand ourselves to be. Therefore, to change what we do, we have to change who we understand ourselves to be. When we do that, we understand our identity. Since our created identity is as the image of God, truly understanding that will cause us to live our lives as a reflection of God. We become the humans God created us to be, reflecting His image.

Book Proposal for Eerdmann Publishers

Date: 3/10/09

Subject: Manuscript Consideration Request

Status: This is a simultaneous submission. The manuscript is approximately twenty percent (20%) complete.

Represented by: W. David Phillips, the author

To: Jon Pott, Editor-in-Chief

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Based on my broad research, I have identified only a few books that deal with an integrated, multi-disciplinary approach to understanding our self and our behaviors. *How People Change* by Timothy S. Lane and Paul D. Tripp offers great insight but does not deal with areas such as emotional memory or how to unlearn behavior. The well-known and popular book *Inside Out* by Larry Crabb addresses many similar issues *Wholly Rewired* will. However, I deal with areas of contemporary brain research to show the *why* and *how* of changing behavior that Dr. Crabb did not. Daniel Goleman's *Emotional Intelligence* addresses the emerging research but fails to take into account the issues of wholeness and the Gospel. Thus, *Wholly Unwired* is unique and holistic in its scope.

The market for this book will be pastors and other religious leaders looking to help people find wholeness in a broken world and people who long for effective and long-term spiritual formation.

Behavioral change and spiritual wholeness is deeply important to me for two reasons. First, I am a pastor and care deeply about those whom I minister to. Secondly, because of my own personal journey over the past four years. Taking the advice of a friend, four years ago I began meeting with a counselor/coach who had pastored for more than twenty years before beginning a counseling practice. In the beginning we simply discussed the stresses of being a pastor. I shared how I dealt with issues and how I responded to criticism, emergencies, and ministry in general. We also talked about how all these things affected my marriage and other relationships.

Two years ago, however, I expressed to him that I was concerned about how I have always struggled with behaviors that I continued to participate in despite my attempts to deal with them through traditional Christian practices: praying, fasting, reading the Bible, and going to church. We began exploring the causes of the behavior, and I soon recognized that much of my behavior came from a lack of emotional health due to past painful experiences.

During this time, I had already begun working on my *Doctor of Ministry, Leadership in the Emerging Culture* at George Fox Seminary. I focused my research on the integration of emerging sciences and the scriptures to develop a theology of transformational behavioral change. I began to see through the research the incredible malleability of the brain and how it could be rewired to think differently. Changing my behavior would be a process of rewiring my brain by unlearning behavior. By unlearning behavior, I would actually be engaging in new behavior. However, thinking differently required me to deal with my lack of emotional health resulting from the painful emotional experiences in my past.

Doing that has brought to me an understanding of my own identity in Christ, which I now know not only cognitively but also emotionally and experientially. It now defines who I am, whereas previously I was defined by those painful life experiences and how I thought others viewed me. I see myself as God sees and created me: an *eikon* or image of Himself built for relationship with Him.

The result is that while my journey is not complete, many of the destructive behaviors that I used to engage in and many of the emotions I used to feel have been released, and I do not engage in them any more. In addition, understanding why I felt and acted the way I did helps me uncover and deal with emotions and behavior that God is continuing to reveal in my life through scripture and life experiences.

I am enclosing a self-addressed, stamped envelope for your response to my request. There is no need to return the actual manuscript.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

W. David Phillips
149 Golden Plover Dr.
Smyrna, DE 19977
Phone: 302-355-0439
Email: wdphillips@gmail.com

Prospectus and Table of Contents

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The environment in which we are raised sets the stage for our emotional health and early behavior patterns. By looking at the life of Abraham and his descendents, I demonstrate how our character influences how we impact others for both good and bad. We do this both intentionally and unintentionally, and this impact is especially pronounced in families. We reproduce what we are in others, both the good and the bad.

3. The Emotions

In this chapter, I utilize recent neurological and psychological research to show that we are primarily emotional beings who reason, not rational beings that have emotions. The result is that we now understand that our behaviors are a result of our emotional health.

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I return to recent neurological research, particularly neuroplasticity, to describe how individual behaviors become wired into automatic processes. I also show how we fool ourselves regarding our ability to think rationally. Because we are primarily emotional beings, the rational areas of our brain simply rationalize what we feel, instead of expressing true rational thought.

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The first step in our journey to wholeness is dealing with the emotional pain of our past. We must rediscover and re-own the painful emotions of our experiences, set them aside, and allow God to heal the pain. This is an adaptation of research from Richard E. Boyatzis and Annie McKee's recently completed longitudinal research studies presented in their book *Resonant Leadership*.

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What we do is a reflection of who we understand ourselves to be. Therefore, to change what we do, we have to change who we understand ourselves to be. When we do that, we understand our identity. Since our created identity is as the image of God, truly understanding that fact will cause us to live our lives as a reflection of God. We become the humans God created us to be, reflecting His image.

Review of Recent Books

Based on my research, I have identified only a few books that deal with an integrated, multi-disciplinary approach to understanding our self and our behaviors. *How People Change* by Timothy S. Lane and Paul D. Tripp offers great insight but does not deal with areas such as emotional memory or how to unlearn behavior. The well-known and popular book *Inside Out* by Larry Crabb addresses many similar issues *Wholly Rewired* will. However, I deal with areas of contemporary brain research to show the why and how of changing behavior that Dr. Crabb did not. Daniel Goleman's *Emotional Intelligence* addresses the emerging research but fails to take into account the issues of wholeness and the Gospel. Finally, Peter Scazzaro has two books, *The Emotionally Healthy Church* and *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality*. Both books look at similar issues. However, like *Inside Out* they do not deal with recent brain research nor the issue of identity. Thus, *Wholly Unwired* is unique and holistic in its scope.

Book Proposal for Zondervan Publishers

Date: 3/10/09

Subject: Manuscript Consideration Request

Status: This is a simultaneous submission, and the manuscript is approximately twenty percent (20%) complete.

Represented by: W. David Phillips, who is the author

To: Zondervan Editor

I am requesting consideration for my manuscript, *Wholly Rewired: Science, the Gospel, and the Journey Toward Wholeness* (working title). It will be an approximately 40,000 word manuscript.

This is a book about the journey toward wholeness from a life of unhealthy, addictive, and sinful behavior. In it I examine how findings from emerging disciplines like neurobiology and behavioral science enrich and even validate the scriptures regarding the reason for unhealthy, addictive and sinful behavior.

In the book, I describe how changing our behavior is not simply a matter of being more disciplined about prayer and Bible reading or adding additional spiritual activities like fasting. Behavioral change requires accessing the deepest parts of our emotional lives. Engaging and dealing with our emotions leads to increasing emotional health, which in turn leads to behavioral change. Emotional health allows us to change our thinking about ourselves, our actions, and our relationship to others. It offers the freedom to regain a healthy understanding of who we are in Christ and in our relationship with God the Father. In this context, we can make progress in our journey toward wholeness.

In order to effectively change our behavior, we must also remember who we are as created by the Father. The ultimate impact of sin has been to destroy our sense of identity. We have lost the sense of being created in the image of God and being created for perfect relationship with our Creator. Because we are broken *eikons* (the Greek word for man being created in the image of God), we are searching to discover who and whose we are. Unhealthy behavior is an expression of that searching and longing that is within all of us. However, without the reshaping skill of the Potter, the cracked pots cannot be made whole and thus continue to struggle finding themselves in a world ignorant of the hope which brings wholeness.

Unfortunately, the institutional church has frequently dismissed the issues of unhealthy behavior as simply sin or a lack of self-discipline. The antidote for dealing with the behavioral dysfunction, according to those who emphasize spiritual

disciplines, is to do more things that are spiritual: pray more, read the Bible more, spend more time in church. This prescription is limited in addressing the real cause of destructive behavior. It does not address the impact of other people's destructive behavior upon us. The unhealthy behavior of others can negatively impact our own behavior. The negative impact is often, perhaps even always, the source of the unhealthy and destructive behaviors a person exhibits.

In addition, the spiritual prescription does not take into account multiple memory storage areas with which our minds are created. The emotional memory holds traumatic experiences, which cause us to react out of pain when we sense we are in a similar situation. These experiences, part of our emotional memory, are rarely readily accessible in our cognitive memory. These memories must be probed, remembered, and released.

Drawing on recent research from emerging sciences such as neuroplasticity, emotional intelligence, and family systems theory, I propose that behavioral change is a result of our journey towards emotional health and wholeness. It requires us to unlearn, or put aside the practice and effect of, behavior and fully embrace our identity as people created in the image of God for relationship with Him.

Based on my broad research, I have identified only a few books that deal with an integrated, multi-disciplinary approach to understanding our self and our behaviors. *How People Change* by Timothy S. Lane and Paul D. Tripp offers great insight but does not deal with areas such as emotional memory or how to unlearn behavior. The well-known and popular book *Inside Out* by Larry Crabb addresses many similar issues *Wholly Rewired* will. However, I deal with areas of contemporary brain research to show the why and how of changing behavior that Dr. Crabb did not. Daniel Goleman's *Emotional Intelligence* addresses the emerging research but fails to take into account the issues of wholeness and the Gospel. Thus, *Wholly Unwired* is unique and holistic in its scope.

The market for this book will be pastors and other religious leaders looking to help people find wholeness in a broken world and people who long for effective and long-term spiritual formation.

Behavioral change and spiritual wholeness is deeply important to me for two reasons. First, I am a pastor and care deeply about those whom I minister to. Secondly, because of my own personal journey over the past four years. Taking the advice of a friend, four years ago I began meeting with a counselor/coach who had pastored for more than twenty years before beginning a counseling practice. In the beginning we simply discussed the stresses of being a pastor. I shared how I dealt with issues and how I responded to criticism, emergencies, and ministry in general. We also talked about how all these things affected my marriage and other relationships.

Two years ago, however, I expressed to him that I was concerned about how I have always struggled with behaviors that I continued to participate in despite my attempts to deal with them through traditional Christian practices: praying, fasting, reading the Bible, and going to church. We began exploring the causes of the behavior, and I soon recognized much of my behavior came from a lack of emotional health due to past painful experiences.

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Sample Chapter One: The Problem

In many communities of Christ followers, there is the belief in the innate desire for a relationship with God. In fact, one Christian who is an experimental psychologist theorizes that belief in God is hard-wired in a person. “Christian theology teaches that people were crafted by God to be in a loving relationship with him and other people... Why wouldn’t God, then, design us in such a way as to find belief in divinity quite natural?”¹

The second chapter of the book of Genesis describes the relationship between the Creator and the created. Man and woman walked in the garden together in complete love and in an unbroken relationship with God.² There was intimacy and peace, love and acceptance. It is the story of “the fatherly God who is near.”³ It was a place where all their needs were met.⁴

When Adam and Eve sinned by choosing to disobey God’s specific command, that relationship was distorted. The *eikon*, the image of God in which humanity was created,⁵ was distorted and a separation of their relationship occurred.⁶ The image of

¹ Henig, Robin Marantz. *Darwin’s God*. http://www.nytimes.com/2007/03/04/magazine/04evolution.t.html?_r=1&pagewanted=11&ei=5087%0A&em&en=166dbd9e75680e73&ex=1173243600 (accessed February 9, 2009)

² Dietrich Bonhoeffer, John W. De Gruchy, and Douglas S. Bax, *Creation and Fall: A Theological Exposition of Genesis 1-3* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997), 84.

³ *Ibid.*, 72.

⁴ Tatha Wiley, *Original Sin: Origins, Developments, Contemporary Meanings* (New York: Paulist Press, 2002). 35.

⁵ Stanley Grenz, *The Social God and the Relational Self: A Trinitarian Theology of the Imago Dei*. (Louisville, KY.: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 204.

God was still present, but this distortion resulted in humanity no longer *living* as those made in the image of God.⁷ Augustine also reminds us that “Man [sic] is one of your creatures, Lord, and his instinct is to praise you. He bears about him the mark of death...But still, since he is a part of your creation, he wishes to praise you. The thought of you stirs him so deeply that he cannot be content unless he praises you, because you made us for yourself and our hearts find no peace until they rest in you.”⁸

Humanity’s broken relationship with God results in the brokenness and helplessness of humankind.⁹ Consequently, we struggle to do the right things. Instead of doing what is right, we often do the destructive actions we do not want to do. For instance, in Romans 7:15 Paul says: “For what I am doing, I do not understand, for I am not practicing what I would like to do, but I am doing the very thing I hate.” It is an inner conflict; there is a desire to live righteous lives but an inability to do so because of the brokenness that results from sin.

Sin, from the Greek *hamartia*, means to miss the mark.¹⁰ In Aristotle’s *Poetics*, the word is usually translated “tragic flaw” or “tragic mistake.”¹¹ Richard

42. ⁶ Charles Sherlock, *The Doctrine of Humanity* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996).

⁷ Ibid.

21. ⁸ Augustine, *Confessions*, The Penguin Classics, L114 (Baltimore,: Penguin Books, 1961),.

⁹ Ron Martoia, *Static: Tune out the “Christian Noise” and Experience the Real Message of Jesus* (Carol Stream, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers, 2007). 170.

¹⁰ Martoia, 160.

¹¹ Ibid.

Rohr, expanding on the idea of “missing the mark,” states, “Sins are fixations that prevent the energy of life, God’s love, from flowing freely.”¹² He views sin as self-erected barriers that cut people off from God and from their own authentic potential.

Ron Martoia notes:

[W]hen we look at human sin, most of it swirls around our efforts to produce Garden [of Eden] type benefits and satisfactions that just can’t be duplicated outside that context. We could say that sin is a fundamental effort to experience something the Garden had for us in its original setting, but through brokenness we attempt to experience it in inappropriate ways. When we end up alienated from God and need restoration, we are seeking a return to the Garden that is available only when we are in relationship with the God of the Garden. We are in exile, seeking a return to our homeland.¹³

Pascal, in his *Pensees* X.148 states, “What else does this craving, and this helplessness, proclaim but that there was once in man a true happiness, of which all that now remains is the empty print and trace? This he tries in vain to fill with everything around him, seeking in things that are not there the help he cannot find in those that are, though none can help, since this infinite abyss can be filled only with an infinite and immutable object; in other words by God himself.”¹⁴ Ultimately, I believe sin is humans trying to be like God. Humanity, as God’s creation, is attempting to find wholeness, meaning, and life within themselves rather than looking

¹² Richard Rohr, Andreas Ebert, and Peter Heinegg, *The Enneagram: A Christian Perspective* (New York: Crossroad Pub., 2001), 34.

¹³ Martoia, 170.

¹⁴ Blaise Pascal and A. J. Krailsheimer, *Pensées*, Rev. ed., Penguin Classics (London New York: Penguin Books; Penguin Books USA, 1995), 45.

to God. It is because we are separated from God yet have that inner longing for a restoration of that garden environment ever since the Fall occurred.¹⁵

The sin of the one, namely Adam, introduced sin into the heart of every individual human born after him, what is termed *original sin*.¹⁶ The heart, in addition to its literal biological meaning, is regarded in contemporary thought as the seat of the emotions and the source of spiritual life in general. In the Old Testament, the most often used word for heart is *leb*, which meant the seat of one's intellectual and spiritual life.¹⁷ Within this definition, a "close connection between the spiritual and intellectual processes and the functional reactions of the heart's activity is particularly seen."¹⁸ It is also the seat of a person's emotional life and is the origination point of the will.¹⁹ Yet the word heart encompasses multiple, interrelated aspects.²⁰ It is the individual with all of that individual's urges. The overarching meaning is that of the totality of the person. It is "a comprehensive term for the personality as a whole, its inner life, its character. It is the conscious and deliberate spiritual activity of the self-contained human ego."²¹

¹⁵ Bonhoeffer, 113. See also Ron Martoia, *Static: Tune out the "Christian Noise" and Experience the Real Message of Jesus* (Carol Stream, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers, 2007). 118.

¹⁶ Wiley, 5.

¹⁷ Brown and Townsley, 2:181.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

In the New Testament, the word *kardia* is used to refer to the heart. *Kardia* frequently describes the place of intellectual and spiritual life.²² However, a striking feature of the word is its interconnectedness to the word *nous*, or mind. These two terms can be used in parallel (2 Cor. 3:14ff) or even synonymously, depending on what aspect the author is trying to emphasize.²³ “The element of knowledge is more heavily emphasized with *nous* than with *kardia*, where the stress lies more on the emotions and the will. Thus [the heart] is the person, the thinking, feeling, willing, ego of man, with particular regard to his responsibility to God.”²⁴

Based on this, we could deduce that the insertion of sin into the heart of humanity has introduced brokenness into the totality of humanity. With the mind, will, and emotions of human beings laid bare from the ruinous impact of sin, the now-destructive nature of mankind would lead them to choose to sin, thus producing broken and hurting people who would long for wholeness and hope.

Embracing the gospel—the person and message of Jesus—enables wholeness. If sin has produced brokenness in our lives, the restoration that occurs would enable a journey towards wholeness.

Some people today appear to preach an overly simplistic gospel: Jesus died for the sins of humanity, and if we place our faith and trust in Christ, we get to stay out of hell and live in heaven when we die.²⁵ But the gospel transforms the whole life.

²² Brown and Townsley, 2:182.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ See any number of Gospel presentations such as “The Roman’s Road,” “Evangelism Explosion” and “Continuous Witness Training.”

The word for salvation in the New Testament, which is associated with the gospel is the same word for healing, total physical healing and wholeness.²⁶ It is about experiencing a sense of God's *shalom* – wholeness and wellness.²⁷ The gospel also announces the coming reign of God as depicted in Isaiah.²⁸

Entrance into this coming reign depends upon repentance. Repentance is not simply a call for people to feel sorry about their actions. In the Bible, repentance was a call for “Israel to prepare for the end of her exile as a nation and to change agendas, specifically in the way she was not being the nation that God intended her to be. It was a call to re-engage with God’s original purpose for Israel.”²⁹ The nation of Israel had lost its identity, and it was time for the nation to re-orient and re-align its life around God and to be a blessing to the whole world.³⁰ For individuals, repentance is a call to a person to rediscover his or her identity as a creation in the image of God, re-orienting his or her life around God, and beginning the process of restoration through a personal relationship with God and others who have responded to the covenant love of God.

The gospel is *the* transformative relationship, the relationship that enable us to become the people we were created to be. In embracing the gospel of Christ, we embark on a journey out of brokenness and into wholeness that will only be complete

²⁶ Martoia, 200.

²⁷ Ibid., 221

²⁸ Ibid., 36.

²⁹ Ibid., 61-62.

³⁰ Ibid., 62.

as God works to restore all of creation.³¹ The working out of the gospel in our life, then, is a process where God seeks to re-shape and re-form us into our original identity, and to re-fill us with His original purpose of relationship with God.³² It also is a process where our relationships are Christ-differentiated³³ – where we are not manipulated or controlled by others, but where we live in peace with others out of an understanding of who we are in Christ.

Sin introduced brokenness into the emotional, cognitive, and physical aspects of humanity. As fallen beings, humanity has an identity crisis. Humanity's relationship with God is broken, and it does not understand who it is.³⁴ Emotional brokenness deprives a person of emotional health, which affects how he or she makes decisions, react to experiences, and lives in relationship with others.³⁵ It also creates unhealthy, destructive behaviors that can wreck relationships as well as the human experience.³⁶ It can lead a person to damage and destroy his or her body physically through addictions to food, sex, and legal and illegal drugs. These behaviors are an

³¹ Sherlock, 50.

³² Bonhoffer, in *Creation and Fall* states, "The prohibition [against the tree of the knowledge of good and evil] means nothing other than this: Adam, you are who you are because of me, your Creator; so now be what you are. (85)" From this, I deduce that finding our identity places us back into the Garden, though a metaphorical garden.

³³ This is a term I am deriving from an integration of "in Christ" and Murray Bowen's concept of self-differentiation. See Michael E. Kerr and Murray Bowen, *Family Evaluation: The Role of the Family as an Emotional Unit That Governs Individual Behavior and Development*, (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1988), 68.

³⁴ Hoekema, 104.

³⁵ Leslie S. Greenberg and Sandra C. Paivio, *Working with Emotions in Psychotherapy*, Practicing Professional (New York: Guilford Press, 1997), 14.

³⁶ Daniel Goleman, *Emotional Intelligence* (New York: Bantam Books, 1995), 9, 14.

attempt to bring comfort resulting from a lack of emotional health.³⁷ It also damages the person's relationship with God, the One who created humanity for relationship and in whom true identity and wholeness is found.

The unfortunate aspect of this issue is that much of the institutional Church has dismissed the issues of unhealthy behavior as simply sin or a lack of self-discipline. The antidote for dealing with the behavioral dysfunction, according to those who only emphasize this, is a need to do more things that resemble religious activities: pray more, read the Bible more, and spend more time in church.³⁸ This prescription is limited in addressing the real cause of destructive behavior. It does not address the impact of other people's destructive behavior upon someone.

That spiritual prescription also does not take into account, for example, the way in which our minds are created. We have multiple memory storage areas.³⁹ The emotional memory holds traumatic experiences, which cause a person to react out of pain when one senses one is in a similar situation.⁴⁰ These experiences, while part of the cognitive memory, are rarely readily accessible.⁴¹ These memories must be probed, remembered, and released. We are allowed to experience the emotions and feelings associated with emotional memories so that more of the emotions and

³⁷ Greenberg and Paivio, 15-17.

³⁸ Peter Scazzero, *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality: Unleash the Power of Authentic Life in Christ* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2006), 24-25.

³⁹ Joseph E. LeDoux, *The Emotional Brain: The Mysterious Underpinnings of Emotional Life* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996), 180.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid., 181.

feelings can be understood.⁴² If we can do this, we are then able to accept them as being part of life. The experience is “re-owned” and then we understand we have a right to have those emotions. Once we acknowledge and re-experience the pain of those emotions, hope develops and change can take place.⁴³

Changing behavior, therefore, is not simply a matter of being more disciplined or doing more religious activities such as reading the Bible and praying more. It requires engaging the deepest parts of our emotional life because it is the accessing of emotions that leads to behavioral change.⁴⁴ Emotional health allows a person to change our thinking about our actions, our relationship to others, and to ourselves. It offers the freedom to regain a healthy understanding of who we are in Christ and our relationship with God the Father.

Changing behavior also requires us to remember who we are as a person created by the Father.⁴⁵ The ultimate impact of sin has been to destroy our sense of identity. We have lost the sense of being created in the image of God and being created for perfect relationship with our Creator. In being broken *eikons*, we are searching to discover who and whose we are. Unhealthy behavior is an expression of that searching and longing that is within all people. However, without the healing of

⁴² Greenberg and Paivio, 99.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Leslie S. Greenberg and Jeremy D. Safran, *Emotion in Psychotherapy: Affect, Cognition, and the Process of Change* (New York: Guilford Press, 1987), 188.

⁴⁵ 1 John 2:6 gives us insight into this. The one who is in Christ obeys His word and commandments. This really is an expression of relationship and wholeness. In doing so, we live as Jesus lived, having a mature love.

the Potter, the broken pots cannot be made whole and thus continue the struggle of finding themselves in a world ignorant of the hope that brings wholeness.

Sample Chapter Two: The Environment

You can change who you are! That is the promise of the scriptures. First, however, you have to understand who you are and why you act the way you act.

Behaviors are habits that are often formed in our childhood. As behaviors are repeated, the brain evolves and its structure, once thought static, changes as activity and experience change. The brain changes its structure with each different activity it performs, modifying and perfecting its circuits so that it can be efficient in its working. Interestingly, if part of the brain fails, other parts can and will take over those tasks. The name scientists give this brain property is neuroplasticity.¹ Once a particular plastic change takes place, it can inhibit other changes from occurring, thus hindering or preventing the modifications that allow behavioral change. One scientist calls this the “plastic paradox.”²

The systems and structures that display the greatest plasticity are those most subject to experience and environment.³ Every brain system known is shaped by a person’s experience. Neuropsychologist Chris Frith notes, “[o]ur brain is hard-wired during the first few months of life as a result of our visual experiences.”⁴ The experiences we have and the environments we grow up in result in a formation of behaviors that, to be changed, must be unlearned by changing the way the brain

¹ Norman Doidge, *The Brain That Changes Itself: Stories of Personal Triumph from the Frontiers of Brain Science* (New York: Viking, 2007), xiii-xv.

² Ibid, xvi.

³ Begley, 102.

⁴ Christopher D. Frith, *Making up the Mind: How the Brain Creates Our Mental World* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub., 2007), 128.

functions.

Let me share with you one simple example from my own family. My wife and I have a dog and I have a cast iron skillet. I like to cook in that cast iron skillet because it has an awesome flavor to it. It has been seasoned well by years of use by my grandmother and my mother. However, often when I cook with my wonderful cast iron skillet I end up smoking up part of the house because either I cook on too high a temperature or I am just not smart about how I am cooking. When I do that, the smoke alarm starts blaring all over the house as they are wired together.

The first time the smoke alarm came on, my dog's whole body started Shaking. The second time the alarm sounded, the same thing happened. After about the third or fourth time that the alarm went off, my dog's body started to shake as soon as pulled the skillet out to use. She moves to another room and lies underneath a desk—a response similar to that of Pavlov's dog.

You are wired the same way. You engage in activity and if it is pleasurable, you will continue to do that activity. If it is not pleasurable, then you will not want to do that activity again. We learn, we act, and we behave out of the experiences that have happened in our lives.

All of us have learned behaviors from our childhood. The foundation of how we act, behave and think is our environment. Peter Scazzero, the author of *The Emotionally Healthy Church*, says that “[o]ur family is the most powerful influential group that has affected who we are today.”⁵ The environments in which we grow up

⁵ Peter Scazzero, *The Emotionally Healthy Church*. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing, 2003), 95.

and the environments in which we live provide experiences that are engrained within us. This is how Paul can make the bold statement that bad company corrupts good character.⁶ You become whom you hang around. Much of who you are results from the experience, actions and thoughts you have with your family, friends and other relationships.

A Biblical Example

An examination of the narratives of Scripture can provide evidence to corroborate this. One family tree that we have available to us is the lineage of Abraham found in Genesis 12-37. We are provided by Moses a broad look at many of the actions and experiences of his children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. By observing the actions of Abraham's descendents, we can see how the family dynamic and life experiences impact our own behavior. This will give us insight to be able to confirm much of what we already know: we act, think and talk like those with whom we are in deep relationship.

Genesis 12. In Genesis twelve, God introduces us to Abram. Beginning in verse ten, we find the story of Abram and his family traveling to Egypt during a famine. Abram feared that the Egyptian Pharaoh would impose upon his wife, Sarah, to become one of his concubines. Because of this insecurity, before entering Egypt, Abram told Sarah to tell the Egyptians that she was his sister. He believed that in doing so, they would treat him kindly and spare his life.

When they reached Egypt, Sarah did as request. As expected, the Pharaoh took Sarah to be his concubine. He also gave Abram many gifts. However, God sent

⁶ 1 Corinthians 15:30-34

plagues upon the Pharaoh for the deceit of Abram and revealed to Pharaoh Abram's secret. This led to Pharaoh banishing Abram, Sarah, and all their possessions from Egypt.

We now begin to see some of Abram's character flaws. This is more than sin. His life is filled with deceit resulting from fear. His fear has caused him to want to deceive others for self-preservation and advancement. He did this despite the fact that in doing so he placed his wife in the position of what would be considered adultery in a post-Exodus Israel.

Positively, we also note Abram's propensity for obedience. In Chapter 12, God approaches Abram with a promise to make him the father of a nation and one who would bless the nations. When God issued a call to follow Him into a land he did not know, Abram embraced the journey without question. He packed his belongings, gathered his flocks, his wife, and his extended family, and joined God on the journey.

Genesis 15. We are reminded that Sarah and Abram had no children. As Abram considered the idea that God would make him the father of a nation, he wondered to God how this would happen. He had a servant in his home. Unless God worked a miracle, Abram saw no way that he himself would be the father of a nation God was building. God spoke to Abram, telling him that a servant would not be the father of the nation. It would indeed be Abram. To demonstrate this, God entered into a covenant with Abram through a covenant ceremony wherein God would bring a child to Abram and Sarah.

Genesis 16. God's promise to Abram was a child. Sarah, however, Sarah decided that conception was not happening soon enough. She did not believe God's

promise—that despite her age God would bring about a child *through her*. Sarah therefore gave her Egyptian servant, Hagar, to Abram so she could bear a child for him. This was appropriate according to custom. Abram would have a son, whom he, Sarah, and her servant would raise. It would be Abram’s son and would allow the fulfillment of promise, at least in Sarah’s understanding. Sarah, however, would not be the one to conceive and give birth to the baby. By doing this, Sarah was attempting to circumvent the process and promise of God.

Upon learning that she was pregnant, Hagar started treating Sarah with contempt, ridiculing her and looking down upon her. Sarah confronted Abram about this. Abram told Sarah that because Hagar was her servant, she was to treat Hagar as she saw fit. Whatever Sarah wanted to do to Hagar, she needed to do it. As a result, Sarah treated Hagar so badly that Hagar eventually ran away. After an encounter with “the angel of the Lord,” Hagar returned to Abram. Eventually Ishmael, the child conceived through this relationship, was born to Hagar.

We can note from this part of the Abrahamic family story two things. First, Sarah displays a great deal of insecurity, most likely stemming from the pain she feels resulting from Hagar’s boasting and ridicule. Sarah was jealous of Hagar. As a result, she makes life unbearable for Hagar. It becomes so difficult that Hagar leaves knowing it might be the end of her and her baby’s life.

Genesis 21. In Genesis 21, Sarah gives birth to Isaac after eventually getting pregnant herself. After giving birth to Isaac, she hears Hagar and Ishmael making fun of Isaac. As a result, Sarah ordered Abram to banish them from the home. Abram was upset because Ishmael was his son. The Lord, however, told Abram to do what Sarah

said because Isaac was where his future descendants would come from. The blessing would come through Isaac. However, he would also make a nation out of Ishmael because he was also his son. Assured by this, he put together food and water for Hagar and Ishmael, and sent them out on their own.

Sarah continues to reveal her envy and jealousy. It is so much a part of her that she is willing to risk the death of Hagar and Ishmael just to be rid of them. Instead of working through the issues, the easy way to be relieved of the taunting from Hagar and Ishmael is to just have them removed from the family.

Regarding Abram's behavior, however, we can see a continued propensity to be obedient to God. Assured by God's protection, Abram did what God told him to do in putting Hagar and Ishmael out of his home despite the love he had for Ishmael as his son.

Genesis 25. At this point in the Abrahamic story, Sarah has died and Abram marries another wife, Keturah. Keturah gave birth to Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak and Shuah. Despite the fact he had more children, Abram gave everything he owned to Isaac. Before he died, he also gave gifts to the sons of his concubine. However, he sent them to a land in the East, far away from Isaac.

In the meantime, Isaac has married a woman named Rebecca. After some time, Rebecca became pregnant with twins. She had a hard time carrying them. She went to the Lord and asked why they were always struggling with each other in the womb. The Lord said that they were two nations and they would always be at odds. In addition, the older one would serve the younger. When the twins were born, Esau

was Isaac's favorite because he, like Isaac himself, was an outdoorsman. Jacob was Rebecca's favorite.

In chapter 21, Abraham plays favorites. He gave everything he had to Isaac, leaving the other sons with nothing. In addition, while he eventually did give them gifts before his death, he had them sent away in the pattern of Ishmael. He wanted great distance between Isaac and his brothers.

In addition, there is a pattern of tension between brothers, which leads to one party leaving or being removed from the household. First, there was Ishmael and Isaac. Isaac and his stepbrothers are then separated. Now, even before birth, God reveals that there will be conflict and tension between Jacob and Esau.

Genesis 26: Just like Abram, Isaac found himself in the middle of a famine. He had to leave his home and move to Gerar. When the town's men started asking about Rebecca, his wife, he lied and said that Rebecca was his sister. Isaac was afraid that the men would kill him. Some time later Abimelech, who was the King of the Philistines, observed the relationship between Isaac and Rebecca and confronted Isaac. Isaac confessed that he lied because he was worried he would be killed.

At the same time, Isaac hears from God regarding his presence in Gerar. God tells him to stay in Gerar. If he does, God will bless him while he is there. In addition, the promise God made to Abraham will continue on to Isaac. Isaac obeys, and God blesses him abundantly while he was in Gerar.

Isaac makes the same decision his father did while in a foreign land. Because of the beauty of his wife, and because he fears he would be killed by someone who wanted Rebecca as his own, he instructs Rebecca to lie about their relationship. The

fear and insecurity of his father continues through Isaac as he is willing to deceive others, put his wife in danger, and put a nation at risk of guilt for self-preservation. Also like his father, Isaac obeys God. When God spoke to Isaac about remaining in the land of Gerar, he did not hesitate. He simply obeys. God blesses Isaac and his family, bringing great prosperity to them, as a result of that daily act of obedience.

Genesis 27. When Isaac was old and blind, he called to Esau and told him to prepare his father's favorite meal. Isaac did not know how much longer he would live and wanted to bestow the blessing of the first born on Esau. Overhearing this conversation, Rebecca devised a plan that would allow *her* favorite son, Jacob, to receive the blessing. She told Jacob to prepare Isaac's favorite meal and to dress up as Esau. Jacob did as his mother said. He went to Isaac and gave him his meal. Isaac suspected that it was not Esau because of Jacob's voice. But Jacob's wearing clothes with hairy skin on the hands eventually deceived Isaac into thinking that it was Esau. Believing him to be Esau, Isaac blessed Jacob. After the blessing, Esau came in and discovered what had happened. Isaac said to Esau, "I have made Jacob your master." From that time on Esau hated Jacob and vowed to kill him. Rebecca, hearing the plans, told Jacob to flee to her brother's home in Haran and she would call for him when his brother calmed down.

The blessing of the firstborn was for Esau, yet Rebecca wanted her favorite son to receive that blessing. She set out to deceive Isaac, and in the process benefit Jacob. Favoritism and deceit continue to be lived out in Abraham's family. In the bigger theological picture, scripture reminds us of how God used this event to

continue His community and nation building through Jacob and not Esau.⁷ In addition, Esau expresses the anger and hate found in Sarah. Finally, a brother once again is pushed out of the household.

Genesis 34. Jacob, now named Israel, and his family have arrived in Shechem. One day, Shechem, the prince of the town raped Dinah. Soon afterwards, the prince fell in love with Dinah and courted her. He and his father Hamor approached Israel to determine if Shechem could make her his wife. In fact, Hamor suggested that Israel and his family intermarry with the locals. Israel, having discovered along with his sons what had happened to Dinah, said they would stay and exchange women only if the town's men were circumcised. The men of the town agreed, due to the size of Israel's fortune and potential for their own abundance. Three days after the "surgery" while the men were still sore, Jacob's sons, Simeon and Levi, entered the town and killed all the town's men including the king and the prince in retaliation for the rape of their sister. Then Jacob's other sons plundered and robbed the town, taking the children and women as slaves. When Jacob heard what had happened, he became outraged. The sons said, "Why should we let them treat our sister like a prostitute?"

When we examine this section of the story of Abraham's family, we notice how the sons of Israel let their anger simmer. When the opportunity arose to exact revenge, they took it. They did not simply take revenge on the perpetrator of their sister's rape, they killed every man in the city and took all the children and women as slaves. They destroyed an entire city because of the hate and anger in their lives.

⁷ Romans 9:10-12.

Looking back, we can see these same character flaws in Esau and Sarah. However, as those flaws flowed into the descendants, they become more intense. Sarah simply wanted to put Hagar out. Esau wanted to kill Jacob but did not. Jacob's sons not only wanted to kill those who had harmed their sister; they actually carried out.

Genesis 37. This begins the story of Joseph. Joseph's brothers hated him because he was his father's favorite. Early in his life, Joseph started having dreams that he was to be ruler over his brothers. When his brothers heard this they plotted to kill him. Reuben, however, convinced his brothers not to kill him but to dump him in a well and leave him to die. This would be a much better scenario.

Reuben, however, had a plan. The brothers would dump Joseph in a well and leave. He would come back and rescue Joseph and take him back to their father. Before the plan could be executed, however, a group of Ishmaelites came by. Judah, one of the brothers asked, "Why don't we sell Joseph as a slave instead?" The brothers agreed and sold Joseph to the Ishmaelites.

After selling Joseph, the other brothers took Joseph's multi-colored robe and poured goat's blood on it. They sent the torn and bloodied coat to his father with a message: "We found this. Isn't this your son's?" Assuming that an animal killed his son, Israel grieved. Meanwhile, the Ishmaelites sold Joseph as a slave to the Pharaoh in Egypt.

The environment of multiple generations of Abram can be described in this one story. The brothers of Joseph were jealous of him. That jealousy resulted from the favoritism of his father. In addition, their deceit cost a father time with his son. This deceit can be traced back to Abraham and Isaac, who deceived kings, thinking it

would save their own lives. These brothers did not care enough about their own father and the impact it would have on him.

It is important to note at least three common negative patterns through the life of Abraham's family. The first is a pattern of lies and deceit. This is evident in all four of Abraham's generations. A second pattern is that at least one parent in each of the generations has a favorite child. Finally, sibling rivalry and relational cutoff between family members create tension that shows up in three generations.

An Example from Science

A core sense of self develops at a young age, including infancy, from experiences we have in life, including the relationships we have with our family and other caregivers.⁸ Intentionally or unintentionally, an adult can influence an

infant's developing sense of self by selecting and emphasizing certain aspects of the infant's experience. When the child takes a tumble, for example, the parent can reflect back the silliness and fun of the situation, or, conversely, the danger and fear that the child may be feeling, and the child may use this communication to frame his or her own experiences.⁹

As we get older, we will attempt to control the impressions others have of us. We do this by limiting the contact we have with others.¹⁰ Additionally, we try to control more directly the impressions people form of us. This has been termed self-presentation, which is "the conscious or unconscious attempt to control identity-relevant images before audiences."¹¹ Through self-

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid., 32.

¹⁰ Ibid., 36.

¹¹ Ibid.

presentation, “the person begins with a self-image that he or she believes to be – or wants to be – true of the self and presents that self to some audience. He or she then looks for validation of this identity in the way others respond; the reactions of others provide a confirmation of that identity.”¹² Ironically, public self-presentation often corresponds with how we perceive who we are. This is because we often want others to see us as we truly are, or at least how we understand ourselves, which again, is at least partially shaped from the experiences and relationships we have had in our lives.¹³ For instance, if we want others to think of us as the smart one in the room, we may try to gather a lot of information about many topics so we can maintain this perceived identity.

However, we often begin to internalize the public persona, believing privately what we present in public. In fact, research has shown that a person’s self-presenting behaviors often have the greatest impact on the private sense of self when those behaviors are acted out in an intrapersonal context. A study by Dianne M. Tice asked eighty students to portray themselves in various ways – as introverted, sensitive, and thoughtful or as extraverted, outgoing, and socially skilled – and express that behavior by answering several questions. In this study, half the students performed the behavior in front of an audience. The other half were asked to recite the

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

answers into a recorder alone. After presenting themselves according to their designated behavior and answering the questions, they were asked to rate their true personalities. The results showed that people who self-presented publicly internalized their behavior more than people who did so anonymously. People who were instructed to self-present as introverted started to see themselves as introverts. Likewise, people who self-presented as extroverts began to see themselves in that manner. In contrast, people's ratings of themselves were not affected in the private, anonymous conditions.¹⁴

The environment in which we grow up and the relationships we have during those early formative years will impact our understanding about ourselves and how we act and feel. The emotions and behaviors prevalent in that environment will be engrained in our mind. Continuous exposure to people and experiences in that environment will literally hardwire our brain to automatically produce similar behaviors.

Not only does the environment hardwire behaviors in the brain, but those experiences can implant within our emotional memory banks the same fears, insecurities, and other damaging emotions that existed in that environment. Those emotions will drive our behavior, especially destructive behavior, though we may never consciously understand why we behave as we do. If we do not explore the impact our family, other relationships, and other experiences have on our lives, we

¹⁴ Dianne M. Tice, "Self-Concept Change and Self-Presentation: The Looking Glass Self Is Also a Magnifying Glass," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 63, no. 3 Sep 1992 (1992).

will recreate that same environment for our own family and close relationships. Those same behaviors and issues can be passed on to others as a result.

There is hope. Our hope comes from being “in Christ.” Often, however, before we can experience the hope, we need to confront the impact of our emotions and experiences.

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