

Session #4

Explore the Iceberg

Pre-Reading: by Pete Scazzero (Part of the Day by Day book)

To “explore the iceberg” is to look beneath the surface of our lives, identifying the hidden but powerful forces that shape the way we navigate choices and relationships. By acknowledging and naming these realities, we raise our emotional awareness, which in turn enables us to process our emotions in a healthy way, and to integrate them into our discernment of God’s will.

In the Psalms, King David offers us a powerful example of this when he pours out his heart to God (see Psalm 62:8). When we embark on a similar journey, we experience a newfound grace to be increasingly approachable, kind, and gentle — not only with God, but also with those around us.

Matthew 26:36-44

Then Jesus went with His disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and He said to them, “Sit here while I go over there and pray.” He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along with Him, and He began to be sorrowful and troubled. Then He said to them, “My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with Me.”

Going a little farther, He fell with His face to the ground and prayed, “My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from Me. Yet not as I will, but as You will.”

Then He returned to His disciples and found them sleeping. “Couldn’t you men keep watch with Me for one hour?” He asked Peter. “Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.”

He went away a second time and prayed, “My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may Your will be done.”

When He came back, He again found them sleeping, because their eyes were heavy. So, He left them and went away once more and prayed the third time, saying the same thing.

In some Christian circles, repressing or disavowing authentic emotion is considered a virtue or perhaps even a gift of Spirit. Denying anger, ignoring pain, skipping over depression, running from loneliness, and avoiding doubt are not only considered normal but actually virtuous ways of living out one’s spiritual life.

But this is not the model we find in Jesus, who freely expressed His emotions without shame or embarrassment:

He shed tears (Luke 19:41).

He was filled with joy (Luke 10:21).

He felt overwhelmed with grief (Mark 14:34).

He was angry and distressed (Mark 3:5).

He was sorrowful and troubled (Matthew 26:37).

His heart was moved with compassion (Luke 7:13).

He expressed amazement (Mark 6:6, Luke 7:9).

Jesus was anything but an emotionally frozen Messiah. ^[1]_[SEP]In Gethsemane, we see a fully human Jesus — anguished, sorrowful, and spiritually overwhelmed. He is pushed to the extremes of His human limits:

and being in anguish, He prayed more earnestly, and His sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground. — Luke 22:44

So, we must ask ourselves: Where did we get the idea that acknowledging and expressing authentic emotion is somehow less than spiritual? And why do we believe that we can — or somehow should — grow in spiritual maturity without simultaneously growing in emotional maturity?¹

In light of Jesus' ability to express His feelings to His closest friends, how would you describe your ability to do the same? Do you do so easily, awkwardly, with great difficulty, or never?

Prayer

Lord, help me to slow down enough to feel and acknowledge what is going on inside me. Grant me the courage to enter into honest and authentic relationship — with You, with others, and with myself — trusting that You will carry me. Help me to rest and relax in You as I take the risk to be more transparent and vulnerable with my emotions. In Jesus' Name, amen.

Daily Office

Introduction

As you look at the image of an iceberg about ten percent is above the surface. This is also an accurate representation of the part of our lives that is visible to others. The part under the water represents much of who we are. It is even possible we are unaware of what lies beneath the surface of our own lives. We may react in certain situations with anger but not know why, how or where that anger came from. every year there are around 2 recorded iceberg ship collisions that happen. Often these strikes happen below the surface of the water. Many people shipwreck or live inconsistent lives because of what is below the surface of their lives that may have never been considered.

In Proverbs 4:23 Solomon said, "Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it." Jesus was someone who was deeply aware of what he was feeling. In him we see someone who experienced the full range of human emotions and how they were part of him living a sinless human life. His invitation to us is to journey into that same life,

We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. —Romans 6:4

Growing Connected

Handbook to Renewal Day by Day Debrief: What obstacles, difficulties, or success did you experience in meeting with God this week using the daily resource?

In your groups share on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the highest, how you would rate your awareness of what is going on inside of you.

Bible Study

Have someone read Psalm 22:1-2, 12-14. Try to put yourself in David's shoes (and in Jesus' place as these verses speak prophetically to his death on the cross). Name a few of the emotions David may have been feeling as he wrote this psalm.

“My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?
I groan in prayer, but help seems far away. My God,
I cry out during the day, but you do not answer,
and during the night my prayers do not let up.”

“Many bulls surround me; powerful bulls of Bashan hem me in.
They open their mouths to devour me like a roaring lion that rips its prey.
My strength drains away like water;
all my bones are dislocated; my heart is like wax;
it melts away inside me.”

If David visited your church and shared what he wrote in this text, how might you respond?

Video: Explore the Iceberg

Purpose: To become aware of our emotions, with the goal of processing them and discerning God's will.

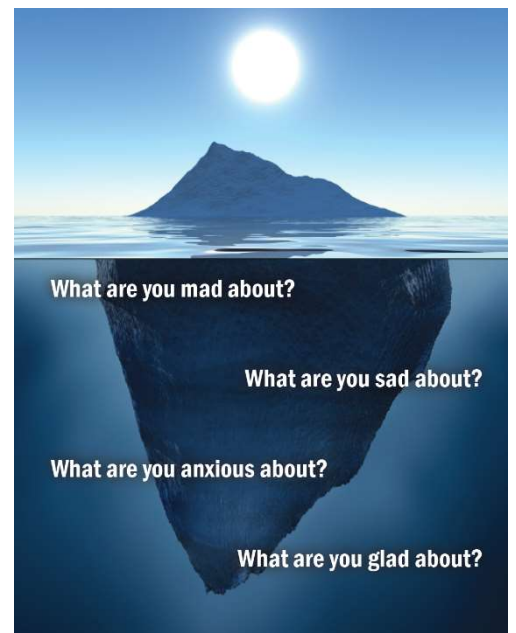
Three truths about emotions

1. Unprocessed emotions don't die.
2. Healthy community requires that people know themselves.
3. Feelings help us discern God's voice.

Ask yourself: *How is God coming to me through how I am feeling?*

Activity

1. Four questions will be read aloud and you will be given two minutes per question to write your answers in the spaces provided on the following pages.
2. Write as many responses that come to mind. Draw from the present, recent past and distant past.
3. For some, this will flow easily, and time will go by quickly. For others, it may be difficult and uncomfortable. Do this exercise before the Lord as a spiritual practice of prayer, letting God guide you. If you finish early embrace the silence don't be afraid of it. Be open to anything else God might want to surface.
4. You may want to begin each of the four questions by closing your eyes for a few moments before you start writing.



What are you angry about (from the past or present)?

What are you sad about (e.g., a small or big loss, disappointment, or choice)?

What are you anxious about (e.g., your money, future, family, health, job)?

What are you glad about (e.g., a relationship, an opportunity, your church)?

Group Discussion

What was the individual activity like for you? What did you learn?

How did the family you grew up in express anger, sadness or fear?

How do you deal with your anger, sadness or fear?

Conclusion

Final Reminders

1. Difficult emotions that go unprocessed cover over pleasurable feelings.
2. If we don't process our emotions, we end up leaking them and often not taking responsibility for them.
3. Anger is often a surface or secondary emotion.

Personal Action Step

Practice the Explore the Iceberg skill at least once per week, either alone, in a journal, or with a trusted friend.

I plan on practicing the Explore the Iceberg skill:

With whom? _____

When? _____

Handbook to Renewal Day by Day: Use days 11-15