

HEART RESPONDING PRACTICE GUIDE

1. Grab a friend with whom you want to make a stronger connection. Show that person this guide, and ask if he/she will help you practice “mourning with those who mourn” (like in Roman 12:15).
2. Think about a recent (in the past two weeks) experience that caused you to feel hurt. It could be a major sadness or something as minor as a rude grocery clerk. (Don’t choose a hurt that your friend caused.)
3. Share about your experience with your friend. Give some details, but not a ton. Mostly, share about your *emotions* related to feeling hurt. Don’t take more than a few minutes to share.
4. While sharing, avoid the following:
 - offering yourself solutions: “I probably ought to...”
 - self-critique: “I know I should have...”
 - guessing what the listener is thinking: “I know you probably think...”

If anger rises up while you’re recalling the situation, try to put it aside and focus on the hurt.

5. Consider these words if you get stuck:
 - hurt
 - wounded
 - sad
 - disappointed
 - rejected
 - judged
 - criticized
 - lonely
 - depressed

Your Friend’s Job

1. **Listen:** While you’re speaking, your friend should focus on listening without interrupting.
2. **Respond:** When you’re finished, your friend can practice emotional responding. He/she should avoid the “unhelpful responses” from Core Teaching 1:
 - advice giving
 - blaming
 - overanger
 - minimizing
 - making it all about him/herself
 - overspiritualizing

Instead, your friend should try to respond to the emotions you are feeling, and just experience them with you. Pats on the back, caring words, hugs, even tears are all appropriate here.

Finally, switch places! Your friend is now the sharer, and you are the listener-responder!

Then, do the activity again, but this time, share a recent event that made you feel happy. You and your friend practice “rejoicing with those who rejoice.”

*“Rejoice with those who rejoice;
mourn with those who mourn.”*

—Romans 12:15