

Growing In Relational Intimacy

Exploring the Depths of Relationships Between Yourself,
Others, and God

Growing In Relational Intimacy: Session 1 Worksheet

Pre-Work

- Read Chapter 1 of Seven Levels of Intimacy by Matthew Kelly
- In your Journal write your own definition of Intimacy based on what you've read.
- Thinking about the four types of Intimacy (i.e. physical, emotional, intellectual, spiritual):
 - What does each type look like in your own life?
 - Who is someone that you have experienced each type of intimacy with (it may be different people rather than a single person)?
 - Is there one type of intimacy you idolize? That you long for? Why?

Core Teaching

- What is Intimacy?
- Why is Intimacy important?
- The Scriptures Perspective on Intimacy

Session Activities (Leadership Team)

Leaders should be the first to model intimacy through vulnerability and openness.

- Which of these descriptions of Intimacy from the book resonates with you and why?
 - "Intimacy is the one thing that a person cannot live happily without."
 - "Intimacy requires that we allow another person to discover what moves us, what inspires us, what drives us, what eats at us, what we are running toward, what we are running from, what silent self-destructive enemies lie within us, and what wild and wonderful dreams we hold in our hearts."
 - "Intimacy is the process of mutual self-revelation that inspires us to give ourselves completely to another person in the mystery of love."
 - "Intimacy means sharing our story."
 - "Intimacy is sharing the journey to become the best version of ourselves with another person"
- What most often blocks you in practicing intimacy?
Below are examples of what participants could say:
 - Feeling like relationships are too messy or hard.
 - I don't really like myself.
 - If people really knew me, they would not love me—probably not even like me.
 - I don't feel safe
 - I don't know any trustworthy person

- “The discovering and rediscovering of each other is intimacy. It is not a task to be finished...It is a process to be enjoyed.”
- Leaders give a quick overview of the four types of intimacy
 - What did you learn about yourself in the Pre-Work activity on the four types of intimacy?
- Review the **Follow Up Section** to set expectations. Also mention next weeks **Pre-Work**

Follow Up

- Reread the section on Getting Comfortable With Ourselves in the book (pp 27-31)
- In your journal write your own Story that helps you (or potential others) understand who you are.
 - The length is up to you. However, if it is too short it will not really disclose you.
 - It does not have to be an autobiography.
 - It is not a resume, only showing the best in you. It should be real life.
 - It should contain your uniqueness, your giftedness and your brokenness.
- In your journal, identify the world you are most comfortable in and why:
 - The Real World: messy but rewarding, marked by connections and openness, we are interdependent
 - A Fantasy World: significant investment in video games, pornography, romance novels or movies, theology, etc.; you are independent
 - An Escape From The World (you are dependent on these to cope): drugs, alcohol, sex, etc.

Growing In Relational Intimacy: Session 2 Worksheet

Pre-Work

- Read chapters 2 and 3 of The Seven Levels of Intimacy
- Identify your most intimate/close relationships (i.e. family, friendship, significant, co-workers, etc).
 - Why are each of these important to you?
 - What is the basis of each of these relationships?
- After reading about the Essential Purpose, identify and write down in your journal what that is for you.
- What things do you value that impact your relationships?

Core-teaching

- Essential purpose framed into discipleship
- What makes a safe person?
 - Gives gratitude
 - Gives respect

Session Activity

- Reflect on why certain relationships in your past have not worked (i.e. lacked depth, failed, let you down)
 - Why do you think those relationships did not work?
 - How did you contribute to the problem?
 - How did they contribute to the problem?
- Reflect on why certain relationships in your past worked?
 - Why do you think those relationships work/worked?
 - How did you contribute to making this relationship successful?
 - How did they contribute to the relationship being successful?
- Briefly discuss the difference in primary vs secondary relationships.
- Who brings you energy?
- Who do you give energy to?
- How do you respond when you have guilt and shame?
 - How does that impact your relationships?

Follow-Up

- In your journal, complete the SHAPE exercise: As stated in the last two chapters, an individual's essential purpose is key to growing in intimacy with God, self, and others. God has designed each of us uniquely and given us different gifts and passions that we can use for His glory. The

SHAPE acronym is a useful tool to help us gain better knowledge of ourselves and the essential purpose God has called us to.

- **Spiritual Gifts** - Every Christ-follower is given at least one spiritual gift. These are listed in 1 Corinthians 12 and Romans 12:6-8. If you are having trouble identifying yours, ask a mentor or a close friend.
- **Heart** - This refers to what you care about or feel passionately about. Examples include working with children or serving the homeless.
- **Abilities** - We're all good at something. Whether it is a natural talent or something we've studied and worked hard to develop, God has blessed us things that we can use for His glory.
- **Personality** - Think enneagram :-)
- **Experiences** - Everyone is shaped at least partly by their past. We all have a mix of good and bad experiences. These experiences influence what you're good at doing, what you care about most, and maybe even your personality. What are some of the defining experiences in your life?
- Talk to a friend and ask:
 - What things energize you? What sucks energy from you?
 - What things do I do that may take away energy from you? What do I do that gives you energy?
 - List of things that drain energy:
 - Whining
 - Someone who sits in self pity
 - Forcing others to prove they care for you
 - Not listening to encouragement -
 - Needs constant affirmation to prop up self esteem or identity
 - Etc.
- *"When we understand our essential purpose, a different set of values and priorities comes to the foreground."* p. 45 in book
 - In your journal, reflect on how your relationships are "you" focused.
 - What's in it for me?
 - What do I get out of it?
 - In your journal, reflect on how your relationships are "other" focused.
 - How can I help you become the-best-version-of-yourself?
 - How can I love you completely and selflessly?
 - How can I help you know and fulfill your dreams?
 - How can I help you use your talents to the fullest?
 - What are your needs, and how can I help you fulfill them?
- Discuss the following questions with your closest relationship:
 - Do you trust each other?
 - Do you believe that this person has your best interests at heart?
 - Is this person helping you to become the-best-version-of-yourself?

Growing In Relational Intimacy: Session 3 Worksheet

Pre-Work

- Read Chapter Six & Seven of The Seven Levels of Intimacy
- Reflect and Journal: If you are stuck at level one in your relationships, what in your past keeps you from moving forward in your intimacy?
- What are three relationships that you want to improve?
- What are your distractions?

Core Teaching

- The role of a disciple is being a “connector.”
 - John 15- Vineyard illustration of the Great Commission
- Guidelines for the Seven Levels of Intimacy (**pg 114-116**)

Session Activities

- Discussion:
 - What are the benefits of using cliches?
 - How can cliches be damaging to relationships?
- Teach *Carefree Timelessness* (**pg 124-130**)
 - What does carefree timelessness look like?
 - What are some practicals to implement?
- *It takes two to tango*
 - Not all relationships deserve/require to experience all 7 levels
 - Don't force yourself on people
 - Don't feel bad if others are not at your level/ not reciprocated

Follow-Up

- Have carefree timelessness with someone you want to learn more about? (Or primary relationship if you are dating/married)
- This week when you are out doing errands (i.e. grocery store, going to the bank, going through the drive thru) make an effort to smile, make eye contact, and engage in small talk.
 - Advanced: Bless, Pray for, Encourage
- Journal: My intimacy challenge is _____ because _____. (e.g. I hate small talk)
 - What area of my life have I chosen to isolate myself in?
 - Who are the people I am intentionally isolating from my life? Why?

Growing In Relational Intimacy: Session 4 Worksheet

Pre-Work

- Read Chapter 8 of The Seven Levels of Intimacy
 - Write down in your journal what had the most impact on you? Come ready to share.
- Write three letters:
 - One to someone who has had a positive impact on your life and send it to them.
 - One in your journal to someone in your past who has either passed away or you lost contact with but had an impact in your life
 - One to God, thanking him for things He has done in your life
- Refer to the list of your close relationships- reflect on which of your relationships are on the cliché level/fact level.
- In your circle of close relationships, identify which people are currently discontent or encouraged.
- How have your words impacted their state of mind?

Core Teaching

- Basic Sharing of Facts
- Sharing of Truth (speaking the truth in love)
 - James 3:1-12
- The power (good and bad) of speech

Session Activities

- Read criticism and correction (**pg 139-140**)
 - When was a time that the truth helped you? Why?
 - When was a time that the truth hurt you? Why?
- What blocks you?
 - Judgment
 - Gossip
 - Criticism vs Correction
 - Underappreciation
- Revealing yourself
 - Discuss the following quote with your group: *"If you are unwilling to tell me something about who you are and what moves and motivates you, then, quite frankly, you cannot tell me anything I can't read in a book. You become boring and uninteresting, not because you are boring and uninteresting, but because you refuse to reveal yourself. If you are willing to reveal yourself, then you've got my attention. If you are willing to share something about you, I'm all ears, because that is something I cannot learn from a*

book. It is people and personalities that elevate facts and make conversations dynamic and interesting.” (p. 148)

- What are some things that hold you back from revealing yourself to others?
- What are some ways you can try to grow in revealing yourself?

- Teaching (pg 147): The tongue is like money...
- Identify: What are the top “go-to” facts you use?
 - How can these facts help you in building greater intimacy in your relationships?
 - How can these facts discourage the growth of intimacy in your relationships?
- Refer to (pg 144-146): Underpaid and underappreciated (refer to core teaching)

Follow-Up

- In your journal: Fast from the what blocks you (i.e. refer to session activity)
- Find someone to talk to this week that you are comfortable with and ask them:
 - What are they interested in? What are they passionate about?
- Here is an exercise to improve your listening skills:
 1. Ask someone you know to share their opinion about a shared interested
 2. Repeat it back to them and say “What I heard you say is _____. Is that correct?”
 3. Have them correct your perceived understanding of what they said.
 4. Repeat step 2 and 3, until you both are in agreement of your understanding
 - Note: Do not judge what they say or respond to what they say. The goal is to simply try to understand what they are saying.
- Do the 3-minute fact exchange from (pg 150)

Growing In Relational Intimacy: Session 5 Worksheet

Pre-Work

- Read Chapter 9 in The Seven Levels of Intimacy
- In your journal, describe the last time you were in an argument and what was the result of that argument.
- In your journal, describe things that you have done that show you are open to new ideas; and also how you have **not** been open to new ideas.
- In your journal, write a paragraph explaining why it is important for you to have an opinion.

Core Teaching

- Why opinions are a Pandora's Box
- The Paths Opinions Can Go Down
- The difference between Acceptance and Approval
- Philippians 3: God handling differences
- Unity is not uniformity

Session Activities

- Share your Pre-Work thoughts about the importance of having an opinion
- How comfortable are you in a discussion that involves different opinions? Why is that the case?
- "Few arguments are resolved once it becomes a battle of the egos." Share one example of this from your own life.
- What is something you've changed your opinion on recently? What enabled this to happen?
- "Our culture fosters a skeptical, sometimes cynical approach that leads us to question everything." How has this impacted how you deal with things?
- Who or what have helped to form your opinions in the past? Who or what is forming your opinions presently?
- Are you generally an agreeable person or a disagreeable person? Why?
- How do you typically respond when you are faced with a differing opinion?
 - Surfacing technique: changing the subject, making a joke, using sarcasm, and offering a practical diversion, such as asking whether anyone wants some more coffee. **(pg. 152)**
- Discuss this quote: "Relationships are about teamwork, not about getting what you want. In fact, relationships are not about getting at all. They are about giving and receiving, about working together for the common good and toward the achievement of a common goal." **(pg 170-171)**

Follow-Up

- In your journal, write about an unresolved problem in your life and how you could handle it.
- In your journal, create two lists of friends:
 - One in which you have many commonalities with.
 - Another in which you have few commonalities with.
- What are the things that have influenced your opinions in the past? What most influences you now?
- In your closest relationships, discuss your common goal with one another (i.e. significant other, roommates, friendships, etc).
 - Questions to consider:
 - Are your common goals the same? Why or why not?
 - If yes, how can you continue to keep sight of this common goal?
 - If no, how can you develop one?
- In your journal, reflect on this quote: “Ask yourself whether there are any circumstances in which the other person might be right. If you discover that there are, describe these circumstances and express your agreement with his or her ideas under those circumstances.”
(pg. 158)

Growing In Relational Intimacy: Session 6 Worksheet

Pre-Work

- Read Chapter 10 in The Seven Levels of Intimacy
- In your journal, what are your own personal hopes and dreams? (i.e. physical, emotional, intellectual, spiritual, professional, financial, and adventurous)
 - If you are married/dating be sure to share your hopes and dreams with one another prior to the session.
- In your journal, write what you are willing to and/or give up to accomplish God's dreams.
- In your journal, think about your friends or your other closest relationships. Do you know their hopes and dreams? Write down what you think those could be for each of those individuals.

Core Teaching

- Acts 2: Us joining into God's dreams
- Dreams are costly (delay gratification)
- The importance of us sharing in our dreams

Session Activities

- Recall your hopes and dreams. How do they align and fit in pursuing discipleship?
 - Who do you need to help support you in dreams?
 - Who else knows about these dreams?
- "We generally reveal our dreams only to people we feel accepted by." (pg 174)
 - Who do you feel comfortable sharing your dreams with?
 - Who feels comfortable sharing their dreams with you?
- "Knowing the dreams of the people that you love and helping them fulfill those dreams brings a certain dynamism to relationships that is both energizing and inspiring." How have you experienced this in your life? (pg. 175)
- "Instant gratification isn't fast enough." (pg 176)
 - How has this mentality affected your relationships in the past?
 - How do you see yourself chasing instant gratification?
 - Are you willing to delay gratification? In what ways?
- What are you doing to help someone achieve their dreams?
 - If not, what can you be doing?
- **[Note- For a person who is struggling with knowing their hopes and dreams, follow up with the individual on a one on one basis and ask them the following questions:**
 - What are you passionate about?
 - Is there something you used to be passionate about?
 - What do you wish could happen in your life?
 - Is there something you used to dream about that you have given up on?]

Follow-Up

- In your journal- Reflect what is God's dream for you?
 - Pray, journal, talk with a mentor, set goals
- For the married couples: consider starting a dream journal together.
- Reflecting on your goals. What are steps you can develop to make your dreams into a reality?
 - Set SMART goals
 - Set deadlines
 - Refer to them often (i.e. quarterly, semi-annually, annually) to check your progress
- Select a partner to read and process the remainder of the book with.