

INTRODUCTION TO HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND ATTACHMENT THEORY

By Dr. Paula Davis



let's get
acquainted!

The m&m's Game

Grab a small handful of m&m's and based on the colors you have in your hand, share two facts about yourself. Don't forget to eat the m&m's too... we wouldn't want any chocolate going to waste, now would we?



Share about
your favorite
hobbies!



Share about
your favorite
foods!



Share
about your
hometown!



Share about
your favorite
books or movies!



Share about
something you
did this summer!



Wild Card!
Share about
anything!

HOPES



CONCERNS



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- Paula

Attachment Theory

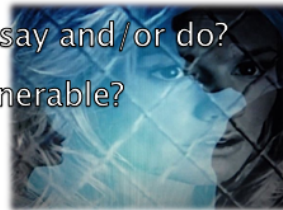
- ▶ Attachment theory is a psychological model that attempts to describe the dynamics of long-term and short-term interpersonal relationships between humans.
- ▶ Attachment Theory mostly focuses on the work of John Bowlby (1969) and Mary Ainsworth (1973).

- Bowlby suggests that children are programmed to form attachments in their life due to their innate drive to survive.
- Crying, smiling, and other interactions with care givers ensure a secure relationship that will help the child have his/her needs met.
- Bowlby suggests that if a secure attachment isn't formed in the first five years of life, he/she will suffer from insecurity, reduced IQ, and aggression.
- Ainsworth developed attachment styles that determine how children will act in all relationships within their lives.



**What is important for intimacy
in close relationships?**

- Do you have difficulty understanding why you think and feel the way you do ?
- Are you disappointed with some of your closest relationships?
- Do your emotions get out of control easily?
- Do you sometimes feel unloved?
- Do you wonder how you can avoid repeating the same relational mistakes?
- Are you guarded about what you say and/or do?
- Do you often feel emotionally vulnerable?





1. Who and what do you need in your life if you are to grow and become a healthy and whole person?
2. What happened in the past if/when important people and experiences were missing from your life?



What experiences and relationships have transformed your sense of yourself?

What conditions are required for you to grow and change/mature spiritually?



- Donald Joy once penned these words, *“The persistent human cry is hold me tight.”*
 - Most people feel a disconnect; a lack of love because at heart of relationship are deeply held attachment beliefs/ core beliefs.
- **Attachment Theory is a theory of relationship/ theory of emotions.**
 - Meta-model of Therapy:
 - Helps me make sense of what people do or don't do.
 - Child who is having problems with oppositional acting out/defiant,
 - Couple who is in distress,
 - Person depressed about a broken relationship,
 - Person who cannot tame their emotional storms.
- Helps me make sense of the drama played out between 2 people & gives me a map.
 - About how one does intimacy!
- Does not have any specific techniques.
 - Helps me make sense of what I am doing in therapy.
 - Helps me choose which techniques to use & when.



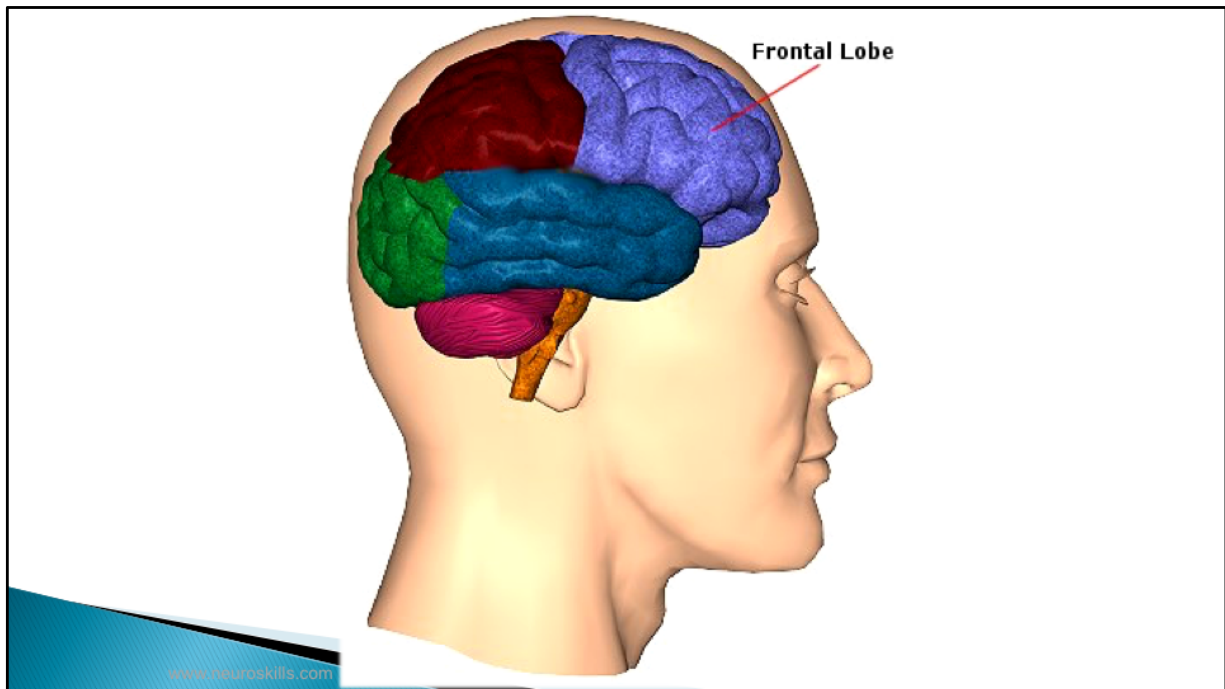
<http://img.aws.livestrong.org/images/1200x630/ds-photo/getty/article/106/18/476743520.jpg>

- Imagine a mother in a park with 15mth old.
 - She is sitting on a park bench while child explores world around him.
- Ability to do that is in part the belief that his mother is near/ close by.
- If he needs her he can go back to her/ if anything were to upset him he could look back to her/ if anything upset him a lot he could run back to her looking for comfort.
- Belief that mother is nearby & accessible/ ability to manage his emotions rides on that belief.
 - In earliest years of life beliefs about relationships/ emotions are laid down.
- Made for relationship/ God pursues as lover of our soul.
- God is social in His orientation → Trinity- deep approval & intimacy.
- One thing in garden is not good- that man is alone (Genesis 2:18- man had God, but still said this).
- Same orientation in God's heart he gives to man in significant relationships.



news.bbc.co.uk

- Researchers believe attachments in first 2 years affect how chemicals in developing brain shape & organise life.
 - Responsible for how we control impulses, calm strong emotions & develop memories of early life.
- Babies don't come into world knowing how to manage frustration, delay gratification, handle social conflict, perseverance in times of trouble- brain learns how to do that in context of safe attachment.
 - Rough & tumble of Dad's - boy learns this type of arousal is OK, not dangerous, you don't have to hit or punch someone.
- Boys who are aggressive often have not had fathers to play with in this way & can mistake this kind of arousal as a sign of danger & act out angrily.
 - Can't read social cues because of lack of practice.



- **Front of brain → frontal cortex:**
 - Works like a muscle → use dependent.
 - If you don't use it, you lose it.
- This part of brain is developing, it needs dynamic interactions in safe context → develops use-dependent neural pathways → implications for spirituality.
- Allows you to label internal experiences → how I feel, why I feel that way.
 - Enables person to delay their responses → control impulses
 - Enables person to know what others are feeling → foundation of empathy/ understanding others.
- Lays groundwork for prayer → idea of empathy is that my thoughts & feelings can influence your thoughts & feelings (aggressive people have no sense that their words can do anything to affect another person so what do they use? → behaviour.
 - When we pray to God, we trust that God is influenced by us.
- All mediated by frontal cortex.
 - Does not develop properly if they do not have secure attachment relationships.
- Can be changed but foundation is laid down.
 - Optimal times to learn, e.g. reading. Lot harder the longer you leave it.
- If never learned how to label internal world, how people feel, that relationships are warm, safe, interesting, it is going to be harder (but not impossible) to learn these later.
 - Also harder to experience God's intimacy later.

Core beliefs are laid down early in life

► *Self:*

- Am I worthy of love?
- Am I competent? Am I capable of getting the love I need when I need it?

► *Others:*

- Are other people trustworthy? Reliable?
- Can I trust them to be there for me when I need them? Are they accessible?



- Family is crucible of how to love, be loved, & how to deal with feelings.
- Where a grid of beliefs about the self & other people laid down

How do you react under stress?

- ▶ This is when attachment beliefs come to the surface and form the basis of our attachment style.

- **Fundamental question children ask:**
 - Is my attachment figure sufficiently near, responsive, or attuned to me?
- If answer is yes, felt security, confidence → willing to explore, play, smile, etc.
 - If answer is no, child feels anxiety & fear → attachment behaviour kicks in → scream, kick, yell to get caregiver to respond to them. If they do, child feels safe.
- If chronically no, parent unavailable → insecure child develops defences → *“I don’t need you.”* (Avoidant defence) or *“I will become more upset, more clingy, angry, so as to pull you toward me.”* (Ambivalent defence)
 - Develops relationship rules → internal working model in brain.
- Fundamental beliefs about self & other people → template → tells you how to label experiences → expect to be let down/ rejected.



**We are broken in relationship and
healed in relationship.**

www.camifds.org

The Journey of Healing

- We are broken in relationship & healed in relationship. How do we help people find life?

1. A good place to start is learning to experience God's closeness & nearness/ connect with God.

- Phil. 4:4-7 has all essential components of attachment relationship.

"Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

- Expresses a belief that Lord is near → then statement about not being anxious.
 - Goes back to child at park.
 - Can play because of belief that mother is near.
- If child questions that → overwhelmed with anxiety.
 - In same way, this requires not just a cognitive way of experiencing God's nearness, but heart level. Involves an interpersonal process (not just telling someone!).
- We need to cultivate behaviours designed to build a sense of His closeness to us (spiritual disciplines).



2. Changing core beliefs through therapy.

People have really hurt us & that led us to have really negative beliefs about whether we can really trust anyone.

- Involves getting in touch with those feelings around when those thoughts were initially laid down; if you never react those feelings, you can never change the thoughts.
- Need to do it in context of safe, secure relationships within church, therapeutic relationship.
- Ultimately tearing down of idolatry → where you have tried to satisfy longings in own way without Christ.
- If person can transform relationship with God & begin to experience the nearness of God, it is then God begins to change/transform relationships.
 - Trickle down effect → more secure relationships with God & others.
 - Builds sense of hope- something medication cannot do.

PSALM 139:23

*“Investigate my life, O God,
Find out everything about me;
Cross-examine and test me,
Get a clear picture of what I'm about...”*



KEEPING A PROCESS JOURNAL



"One can't be an expert in process. By its very nature process can't be mastered. Because it's not finished. And who knows what will happen next?"

(Nancy Mairs, *Ordinary Time*)

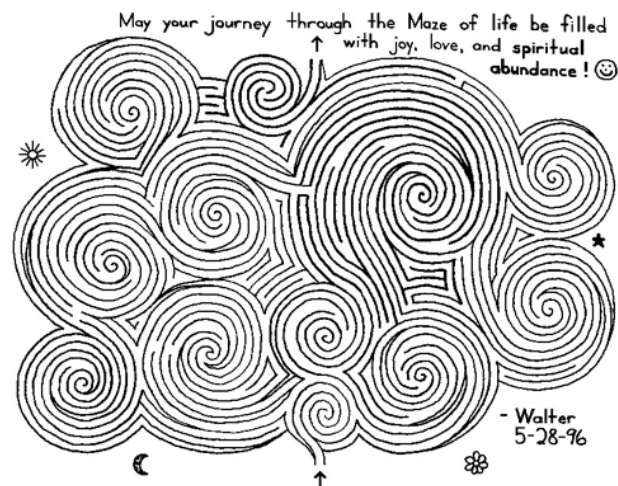
infed.org

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- The word *journey* comes from ancient vocabulary and the original meaning is a single day or the travel or work of a day.
- In the Middle Ages, the distance one could travel in a single day was about 20 miles.
- People extended their use of this word by saying things like "two days' journey" or "five days' journey."
- It was also used to mean a day at some point in the future when a battle was going to happen.
- A variation in meaning was a complete course of travel, from beginning to end, usually over land.
- From *journey* we get *journey-book*, or the log or itinerary kept of the trip, which is essentially a *journal*.
- *Journal* also comes from a French root which is descended from the Latin *diurnal*.

- In this case, the French root is, *jurnal*, which means day-book.

Depictions of 'journey'



<http://www.astrolog.org/labyrinth/art.htm>

Depictions of 'journey'

Scrapbook of the significant experiences of one's life:

- › *Photos*
- › *Drawings*
- › *Pictures*

All symbolic expressions and representations of one's life.



***“What is to give light must
endure burning.”***

(Viktor Frankl)



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- The Process Journey:
- ***Keeping a Process Journal:***
 - A counsellor's job is to not politely look away from weakness, darkness, frailty, ours or others, because this is the only level of engagement where what is authentic may be revealed.
 - If we need to help others to cultivate behaviours designed to build a sense of God's closeness, we cannot do that if we do not experience it ourselves.
 - Journal writing can be a way to form a spiritual discipline, not to bind us, but to free us to experience nearness of God.

Scheduling Time to Write

*“What holds
you back in
life?”*

*“What blocks
your heart?”*

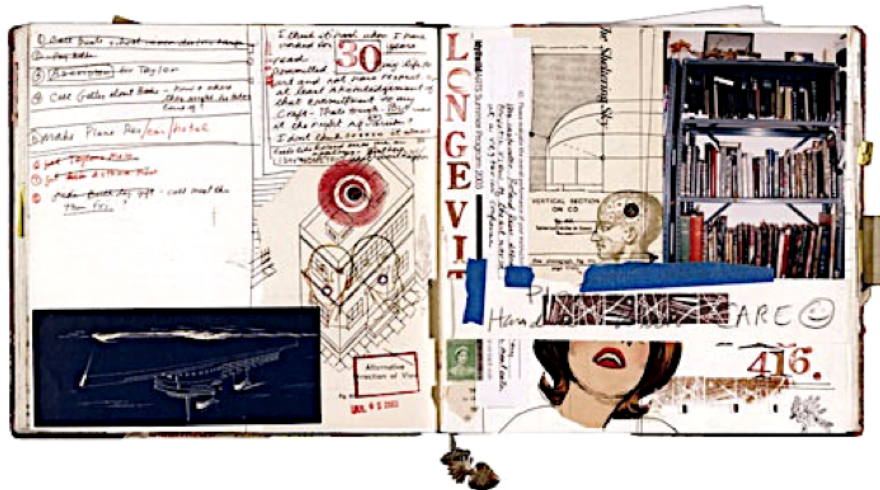


www.neilbeynon.wordpress.com

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- **Scheduling Time to Write:**

- Writing down our stories puts our into context.
- Each of us has a unique story to write, yet each of us is connected to the stories of each other, the larger universal human story-
(pain of people in Uganda & Sri Lanka is connected to mine).
- Here is a saying that we apply to our clients, perhaps we can also apply is to ourselves:
 - *“Whatever you bury, you bury alive.”*
- Examples of journal keeping →



Artist Janice Lowry regarded the journals as “126 chapters of a memoir.” Her life’s journey, chronicled in her journals, ended Sept. 20, 2009, when she succumbed to liver cancer.

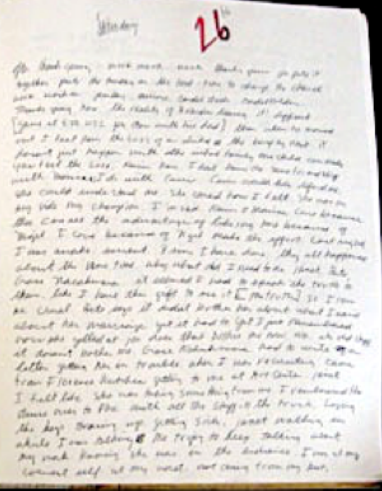
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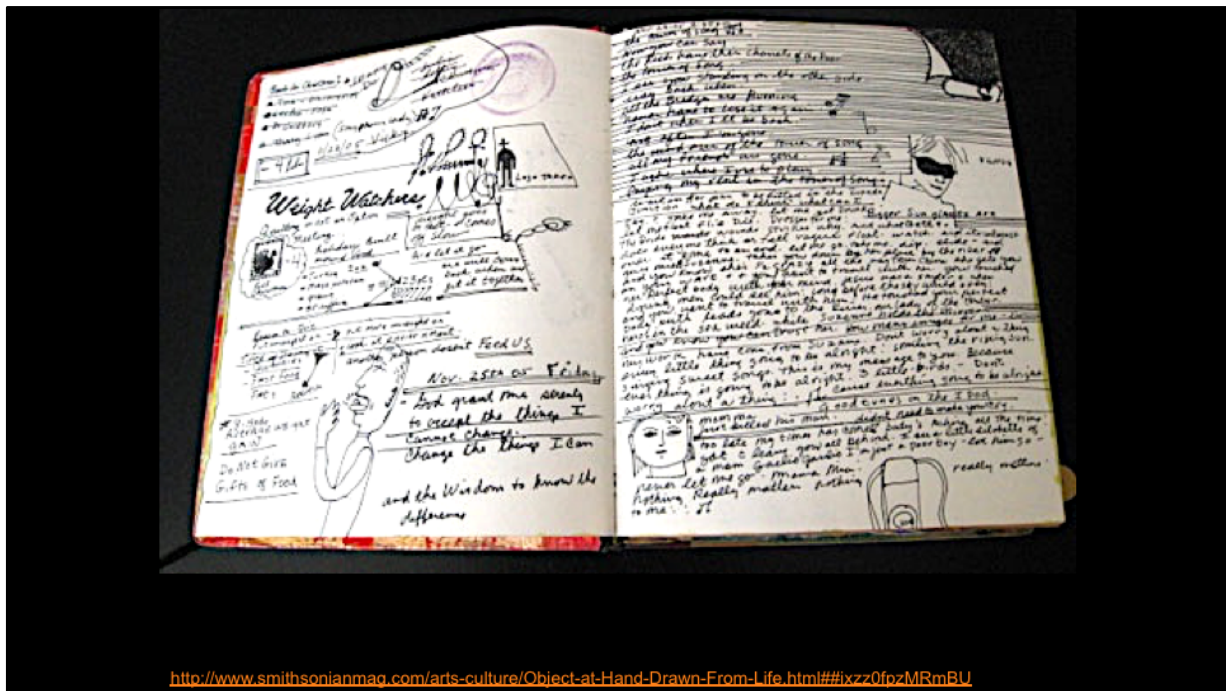


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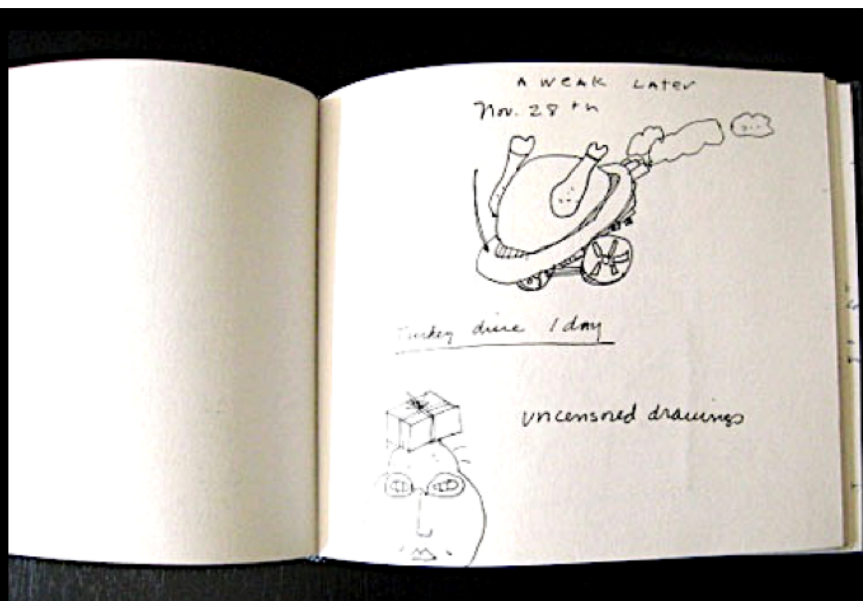


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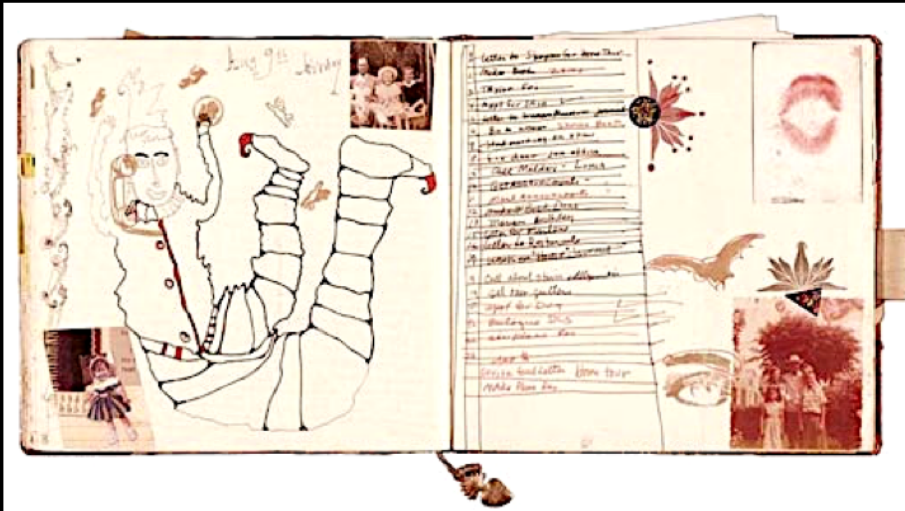




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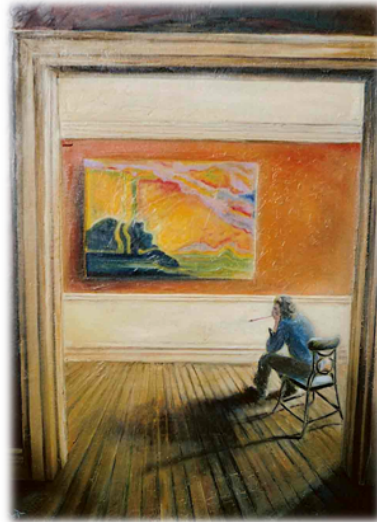
Carl Rogers (1961, p.56) concluded:

:...the degree to which I can create relationships which facilitate the growth of others as separate persons is a measure of the growth I have achieved in myself."



SELF-CARE

It is important to
enact principles
of *self-care* as
you write.



What do I write about....



What do I write about...

- ▶ *I want to honestly ask myself what is true of me?*
- ▶ *What is true of me in my relationships?*
- ▶ *What is true of my relationship with God?*
- ▶ *What is true of me as counsellor?*
- ▶ *What do I need to keep working at?*



*I want to honestly ask
myself what is true of me?*



- ▶ What are my beliefs?
- ▶ Where do I believe I will find life?
- ▶ How do I soothe my anxiety and worry?
- ▶ How do I regulate my emotions?
- ▶ How has my upbringing influenced my sense of self?
- ▶ What were the '*conditions of worth*' (Dryden et al., 1995) which operated in my early development?
- ▶ How do they continue to influence my self-concept?
Relationships? Work with clients?
- ▶ How have I handled the transitional stages or experiences of my life?

What is true of me in my relationships?



- › What do I believe about others and human behaviour?
- › Where do these beliefs come from and how do they affect my perceptions and behaviour?
- › Can I identify my patterns of relating?
- › What fears, needs, feelings lie behind these patterns?
- › How do I avoid, deny or control these fears, needs, emotions?
- › How is my gender expressed in my relationships?

What is true of my relationship with God?



- › What image of God do I hold?
- › What image of God has been suggested or taught to me?
- › What image of God comes from my searching and/or experience of Him?
- › What do I feel towards God?
- › How would I like my image of God to be?
- › How am I moving toward this image?
- › What are the biggest questions I have about my relationship with God?
- › In what area of my life is it most difficult to trust God?

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- What image of God do I hold?
- What image of God has been suggested or taught to me?
- What image of God comes from my searching &/or experience of Him?
- What do I feel towards God?
 - (Feeling feelings exposes the illusion that life is safe, good, predictable→ can lead us to the far deeper issue of what our hearts are doing with a God who does not always relieve our pain.)
- How would I like my image of God to be?
- How am I moving toward this image?
- What are the biggest questions I have about my relationship with God?
- In what area of my life is it most difficult to trust God?

What is true of me as counsellor?



- › How do my values, judgements, behaviours influence my clients?
- › Am I aware of those things that 'block' my 'personal presence.'
- › Am I aware of my motivations, e.g., rescuing, over-involvement, under-involvement?
- › What am I inclined to 'project' on my clients?
- › Am I separate enough not to be drawn into my client's problems?

*What do I need to
keep working at?*



- Am I able to tolerate the uncertainty and confusion of necessary change?
- Am I open to knowing myself and critically examining my thoughts, attitudes, behaviour, relationships, and practice?
- Am I willing to take responsibility for the above?
- Am I willing to ask for help and reach out to others?



MATTHEWS

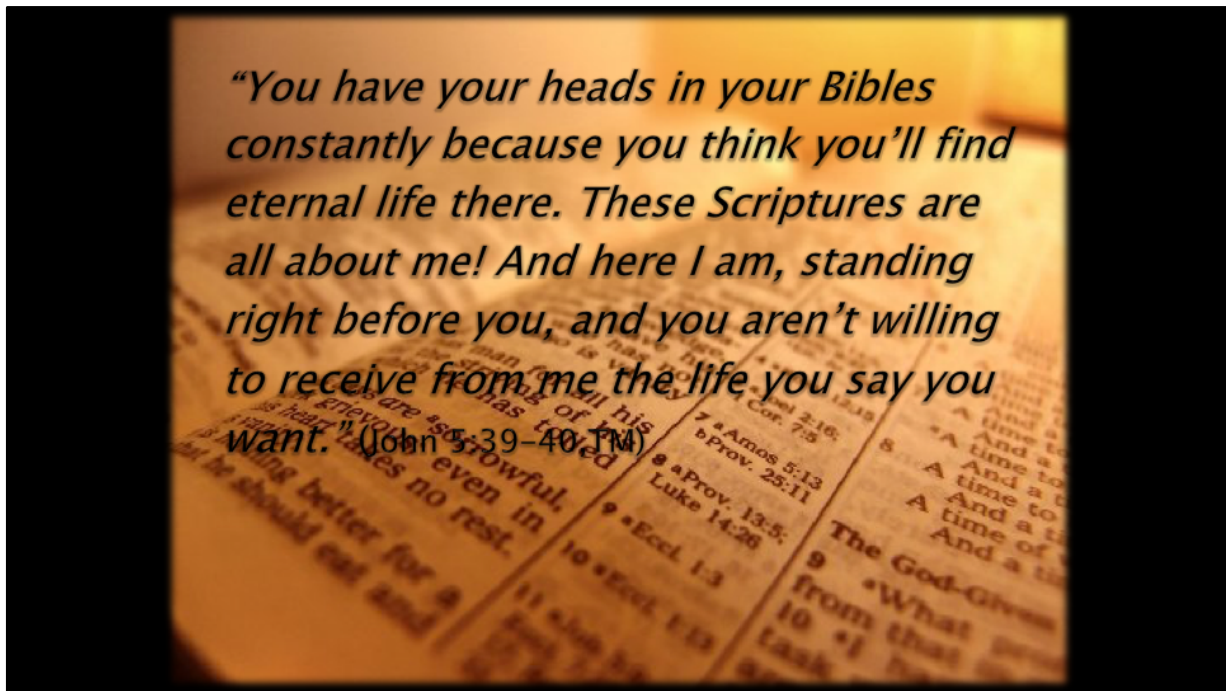
"But before I look out... let me first gaze within myself."
(Rainer Maria Rilke)

Why do this?



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- Why do this? → when painful things might emerge!
- Sometimes the thought crosses my mind: Why open the door to anything more?
- Is it encouraging self-absorbed introspection?
- Can self-absorbed preoccupation with our inner world run counter to spiritual maturity?
 - Yes!
 - It can lead to false sense of independence by giving illusion that we can exert control over our lives/become masters of own fate.
 - It can lead to confusion & arrogance.



- We are encouraging honest inward examination for purpose of gaining wisdom/learning to love well.
- This is not only to explore question of *“What’s going on here in my relation to myself & how I relate to others?”* but even more *“What am I doing with God?”*
- If you allow it, you will go through a process of deep awareness & understanding about yourself, how you relate to others, how you relate to God.
- This will lead to repentance, the outcome will result in action → the opportunity to experiment with new, Godly attitudes/behaviours.

Naming and Framing: Word Sketches (From *Pain and Possibility* by Gabrielle Rico)



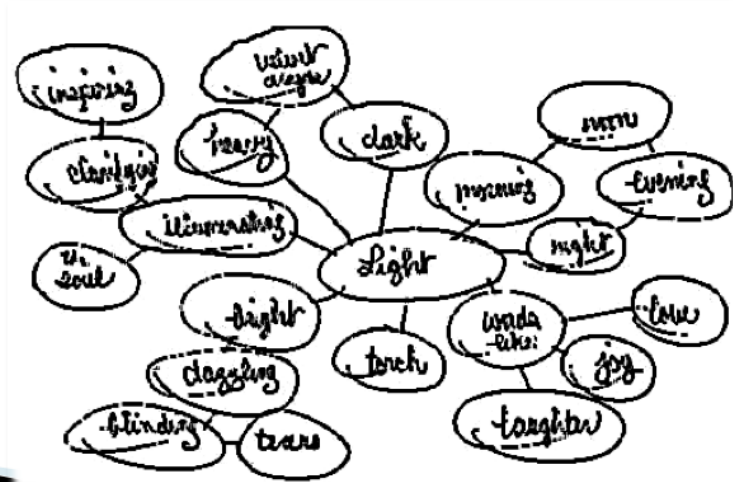
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1. Breathing:

- The quickest way to become receptive to feelings is to allow yourself to sit quietly in any position you choose, close your eyes & become aware of your breathing.
 - Tension, fear, anxiety, all produce shallow breathing, your body's way of keeping feelings at bay so you can function!
- If you breathe more deeply & softly, you allow feelings to surface.
 - If your mind begins to wander, don't resist it.
 - Accept that thinking may let feelings come in sideways.
- Move into an exploratory mode.
 - Attune yourself to your inner ear.
- Try to name the feeling or phrase, "content, content, content; sad; sad; sad; dumb, dumb, dumb; whatever emerges for you."
 - If you have trouble naming a feeling, identify a bodily sensation in a specific area, like "knot, knot, knot."
 - This repetition will keep you in a state of expectant stillness where any here-&-now feelings can unfold.

Naming and Framing: Word Sketches

(From *Pain and Possibility* by Gabrielle Rico)



www.artbywicks.com

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2. Exploring the Act:

- Reflect on what words or phrases emerged.
 - Jot it down in the centre of a page.
 - Create a cluster of any or all associations in any direction.
 - Then stop, reflect on what you see on the page, & let them resonate internally.
- Write a few sentences of a paragraph about what you see emerging. (You can write it in a prayer if you like)
- Reread what you have written. Does it feel honest? Confusing? Other? Is it fuzzy or clear?