

WORKSHOP SUMMARY

LDS Singles Conference - June, 2008

"FINDING STRENGTH WITHIN ME"

INTRODUCTION:

Today we are discussing the emotional and spiritual part of the "Self Reliance Wheel" well-known in the church (See Self Reliance Diagram). Notice the fact that spiritual and emotional are two different areas in which we can become self reliant. It is common in the church to combine spiritual and emotional but they are quite separate. This is important because when we are troubled emotionally, we are often told that we simply need to increase our spirituality through scripture study, temple attendance, prayer, etc. But to increase spirituality, can we increase physical exercise? To become more educationally self reliant, can we ignore schooling in favor of attending Sacrament meeting? No. All areas DO influence and affect other areas, but we need to learn to do some emotional exercises specifically for our emotional health and emotional self reliance. Yes, our physical and spiritual "selves" can affect our emotional state, and we should pursue those areas, but that is not all we must do.

EMOTIONAL LITERACY:

- One thing about emotions is not to talk about them. - feel them!!
- Discussion of emotions caused by certain music (samples of 9 different pieces of music)
- With each piece of music - What feeling does this music bring up? It will be different for different people. There are no right or wrong answers.

THE "DIP STICK" ANALOGY AND EMOTIONAL LITERACY AND AWARENESS:

- We just experienced the nine families of emotions.
- How important is it to know what we are feeling?
- Dip stick of emotions - like a "dip stick" to check the oil in our car, do we have an emotional "dip stick" to determine how we are feeling? Why is this important?
- We need to have Emotional Literacy but before we can have that, we have to have emotional awareness.
- Think about how emotional awareness affects our lives and our relationships. Relationships really struggle when one or both people do not have awareness.

SOME FEELINGS ARE OFF LIMITS - STRIVING FOR JUDGEMENT-FREE FEELINGS

- In families all these emotions and feelings are treated differently
- In some families it is okay to cry, others it is not, in some families they deal with each by

being angry and expressing it, in other families it is not acceptable to raise your voice.

We (the Chamberlains) base our work with individuals and relationships on the idea that there is no right or wrong feeling . . . it just is. . . we can't make a judgement on someone based on how they are feeling. This is important, and has nothing to do with the potentially sinful expression of certain feelings. In other words, it is ok to feel, it is sometimes not ok to express those feelings in a hurtful or sinful way. But the feeling itself is important to be without judgement.

BOOK OF MORMON AND EMOTIONS

Book of Mormon is full of emotion. They felt everything so deeply from their conversion stories to their war stories!! They gave their heart and soul to whatever they were experiencing at the time.

NEPHI'S EXAMPLE:

- Let's look at Nephi for a minute What kind of a guy was he?
- He was faithful, committed, prophet.. obedient
- What role did his father Lehi play in his life?
- So you can imagine when his dad dies. It is not good for him. In fact it didn't take long before his brothers wanted to kill him!! Pretty strong language there!!

THINK ABOUT WHAT WAS HAPPENING EMOTIONALLY TO NEPHI

- In what is called the "Psalm of Nephi" (II Nephi 4), we get to see the process that Nephi used to deal with all the emotions and feelings that were descending upon him as he was dealing with life..
- See handout with notations on each set of verses in II Nephi 4: 12-35.

WHAT WE CAN LEARN ABOUT EMOTIONAL HEALTH FROM NEPHI'S EXPERIENCE

- We can learn a lot about emotional health from these verses.
- Why do you think this was included in the Book of Mormon?
- There is power in giving ourselves a voice when things happen in our lives that are upsetting.
- We are going to allow you the chance to do this same exercise.
- First of all let's talk about why this is important
- Baggage in our life comes from unresolved or unexpressed feelings.
- When we do not allow ourselves expression, we end up expressing them anyway but not in the way we would like.... We blow up, or we get angry.. if we can find a place that is appropriate for expression, then we can decide and choose which parts of us come

forward and which feelings we want to have expressed in which ways. In other words, awareness and expression allows more choices.

NOTICE THAT NEPHI DECIDED TO HANG ON TO HIS TESTIMONY AND MOVE FORWARD.. HE NEEDED TO GET OVER WHAT HAD HAPPENED.

DIRECTIONS FOR A GROUP EXERCISE:

- Think about a situation in your life that seems to bring up a lot of different feelings. This can be from childhood or just yesterday...
- Go to a table and with non dominant hand, draw out the situation that has been troubling.
- Example of situation where Laraine Chamberlain missed her plane.
- Using your right and left hands, write down all your feelings about it in one liners.
- It could be I'm mad.. I hate it.. I feel frustrated. . . I'm upset. . . List as many as you can possibly think of. Get it all out.
- This is totally private.. you may rip this paper up when you are done.. or you may take it home. We are not sharing it at all.

Write as many different feelings as you can think of ... then when done, take a look at what you have done. Think about which part of you is expressing those feelings.

GOING BACK TO WHAT YOU KNOW (YOUR TESTIMONY)

Remember what Nephi did at the end of the chapter. He went back to what he knew. He got all his feelings out, expressing them, then he remembered what it is he knew about God and his relationship to his creator. You will have a chance to do the same.

- Take 5 minutes and express: How can (or did) my testimony strengthen me through these difficult emotions?

HARD OR SOFT HEARTED? ITS YOUR CHOICE

Alma 62: 4 We do have a choice as to how to process our feelings even though sometimes we don't choose what has happened.