

Laying the Foundation

Session One

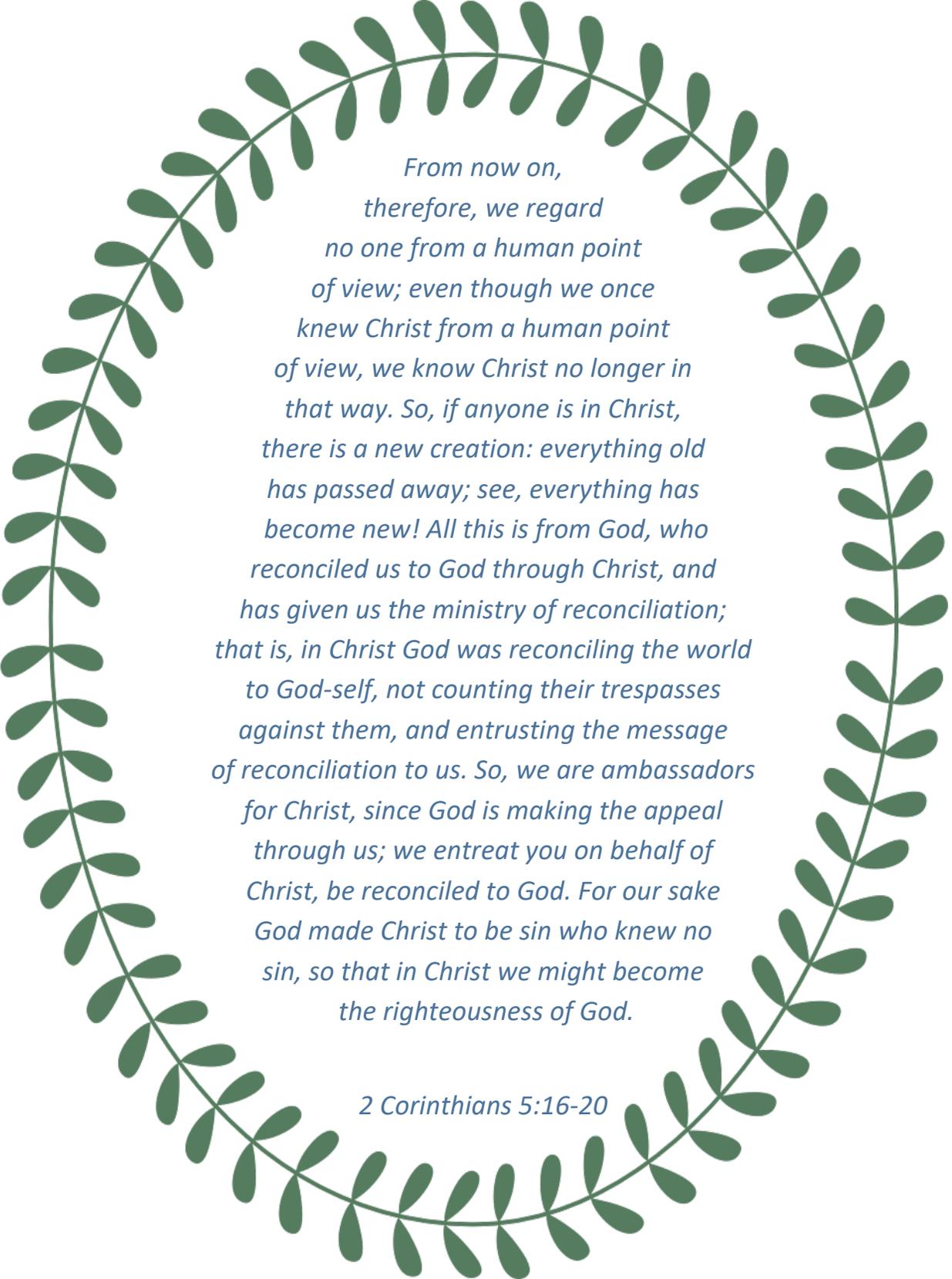
Regional All Day Gathering



Rocky Mountain Synod, ELCA

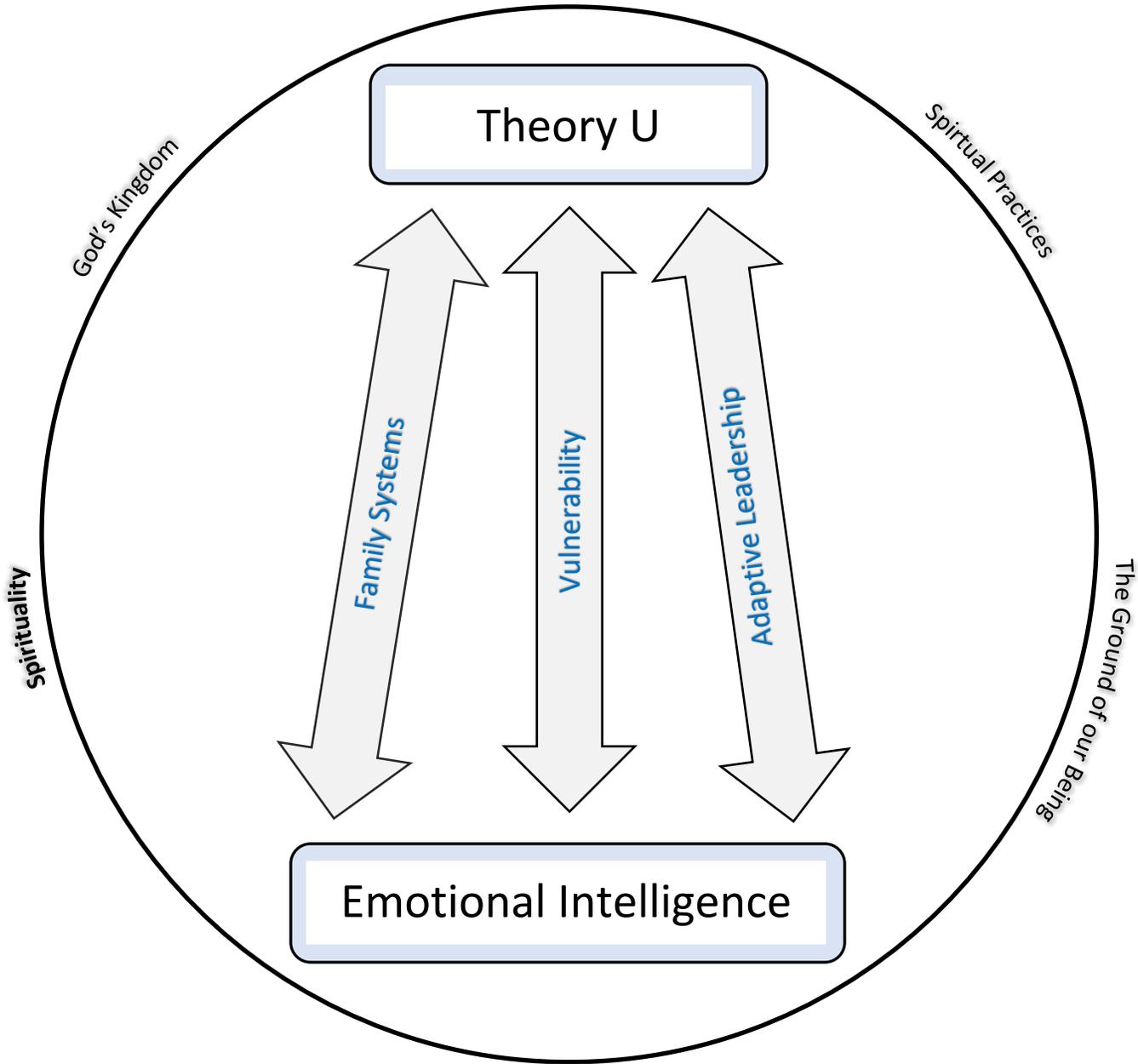
Courageous, resilient, and faithful leaders for the sake of the world

Excellence in Leadership



*From now on,
therefore, we regard
no one from a human point
of view; even though we once
knew Christ from a human point
of view, we know Christ no longer in
that way. So, if anyone is in Christ,
there is a new creation: everything old
has passed away; see, everything has
become new! All this is from God, who
reconciled us to God through Christ, and
has given us the ministry of reconciliation;
that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world
to God-self, not counting their trespasses
against them, and entrusting the message
of reconciliation to us. So, we are ambassadors
for Christ, since God is making the appeal
through us; we entreat you on behalf of
Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake
God made Christ to be sin who knew no
sin, so that in Christ we might become
the righteousness of God.*

2 Corinthians 5:16-20



Theory U

Family Systems

Vulnerability

Adaptive Leadership

Emotional Intelligence

God's Kingdom

Spiritual Practices

The Ground of our Being

Spirituality

Laying the Foundation

Session One Participant Outcomes:

1. Articulate emotions felt and expressed when in a group conversation.
2. Propose a plan for better self-awareness and self-expression that may be contributing to unwanted behavior.
3. Analyze relationships using family systems concepts of self-differentiation, anxiety, and triangles.
4. Practice spiritual behaviors of silence, self-reflection, breathing, and journaling.
5. Document self-reflective practices by journaling progress of silence and prayer.

Preparation for this Session:

- Read this section of the Manual and bring it with you
- Acquire books from the Reading List
- Acquire a journal to keep for the course and bring it with you

Found in this Section:

Introduction to Excellence in Leadership	page 2
Philosophy of Excellence in Leadership	page 4
Some Program Nuts and Bolts	page 6
Introduction to Theory U	page 9
Emotional Intelligence Framework	page 11
Discovering and Improving Emotional Competence	page 12
Spiritual Practices Supporting Excellent Leadership	page 15
Johari Window	page 17
Family Systems Theory – Brief Overview	page 18

Introduction to Excellence in Leadership

“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you.”

Matthew 28:18-20

We are at a crossroads. We know that the old way of making disciples for Jesus no longer works. Many books over the last two decades have given us theory, statistics and anecdotal evidence to this reality. We don't even need to rely on the books; we just need to attend a familiar church to know that something has changed significantly. Knowing that we are at the crossroads, however, doesn't give us a roadmap or specific instructions for how we move forward. Those of us firmly planted in the institutional Church are unsure of what our spiritual home will look like in fifty years. If we are honest with ourselves and our siblings in Christ, this uncertainty can lead to grief and anxiety. Although we may not be able to see too far down the road, I do believe that we have a way forward if we are willing to both let go of comfortable assumptions and remain open to a future not yet visible.

So, what if we shifted the story we are telling ourselves about the impending demise of mainline religion as we know it, and see this crossroads as an opportunity to realign ourselves and our expectations of Church with the teachings of Jesus? Living during this historical intersection, we can recalibrate our aim toward Gospel values, let go of primarily focusing on institutional preservation and begin to listen deeply to where God is calling us as the body of Christ. Today is a fine time to be the Church.

Jesus prioritized the commandments of love; love God with your whole being and love your neighbor as yourself. Jesus, in all that he said and did during those short, yet profound three years of ministry lived out the Creator's unconditional love for all of creation. Jesus embodied what God intended for humanity in order to be fully human. As followers of this One, love becomes our starting point, love remains our ending point, and love must be the process by which we move through our life journey. And yet . . . loving is a complicated, complex, nuanced human endeavor. Culture, history, the wounds of our parents, the systems we humans build all muddy our real-world experience of loving. As Jesus, the crucified and risen savior of the world, ascended into heaven to sit at the right hand of the Father, he commissioned his followers “to go and make disciples of all nations.” A daunting task!

Too often, Christians have seen this charge through the very human lens of the ends justifying the means. Consequently, we used very unloving methods to convert, subdue and conquer those who didn't know Christ. We Christians have also used judgment, shame and a narrow litmus test for who is inside the Christian fold and who remains outside God's salvation. The irony throughout much of Christian history is that we have used broken and damaged human lenses to define or meet out God's salvation.

God's salvation is the abundant life that comes when we find our lives "interrupted by and reinterpreted by the crucified and risen Lord,"¹ when we experience the peace of Jesus Christ, the peace that surpasses all human understanding. The truth of God's salvation is unchanging. The opportunity of our time in history is to hear this truth in a way that transforms our own hearts and then begins to shift the systems we humans have created, systems that have become obstacles to making disciples in this generation. When we live out of a story of scarcity, when we argue over power and money, when we are stuck grieving the loss of the way it has always been done, God's salvation goes out of focus.

From my own experience, which comes from my own life-long personal spiritual journey and my twenty years of work in the Church, I believe that God's salvation, abundant life, the kingdom on earth as it is in heaven is the process, the way we experience God. How we interact with one another, the quality of our relationships, living and acting congruent with who God is calling us to be, is our experience of God's salvation, our immersion into the Kingdom of God. Attending to relationship – honest, humble, courageous relationship – is the work of the kingdom and therefore the work of every faith community. Strong, healthy leadership is knowing ourselves well and from that place of deep knowing, reaching out to others in life-giving and world changing ways.

Christianity, being the Church, the Body of Christ in the world is a communal event. God calls each and every one of us to be our best selves, and we only become our best selves when authentically engaging with the world around us. We need supportive, deeply loving relationships that will encourage and challenge us to become who God is creating us to be. Excellent leadership begins with spiritually connecting our true identity with our surrounding community (friends, family, work, faith community and civic community) and then learning how to use ourselves as primary agents in practicing God's kingdom on earth, proclaiming God's unconditional love for the sake of the world.

As we move forward as the Rocky Mountain Synod we will be creating learning opportunities for all leaders; lay people in the pew, Congregational Councils and ministry boards, deacons and pastors. We are calling this leadership effort "Excellence in Leadership." We don't know exactly what the future holds, but we do know that it begins with each personal journey toward emotional and spiritual wholeness. The eighteenth-century poet, Goethe articulates well the essential relationship between self and community:

**Humans become aware of themselves only within the world,
and aware of the world only within themselves.²**

This is the life-giving work we have in front of us as we seek to become the people God is creating us to be. Please join the conversation.

Reverend Sarah Moening

¹ Alison, James, *Jesus the Forgiving Victim: Listening for the Unheard Voice*, Pg 72.

² Inclusive language version of a poem by Johann Wolfgang v. Goethe used at the beginning of Otto Scharmer's book, *Theory U*.

Philosophy of Excellence in Leadership

Our capacity to lead depends on our ability to maintain strong, healthy relationships. Emotional intelligence is key to maintaining and improving the quality of our relationships throughout all aspects of our lives. The better our relationships, the better we will be at embodying and proclaiming God's love for the world. The Excellence in Leadership campaign recommends three methods for engagement with EQ: a) informal reading and conversation with peers and neighbors around the five theories listed below; b) one on one engagement with a coach; and c) joining the two-year program also known as called Excellence in Leadership.

Much has been written about leadership in business and in the Church. As I have read and studied leadership, five thinkers/theories have captured my imagination. All five theories overlap and intersect in ways that have been transformational for me personally and professionally. All come from outside the world of institutional church, and yet, all five have a deeply spiritual aspect and are congruent with the Biblical values of caring deeply for all relationships, whether in our own homes, in our neighborhoods, in our faith communities, our work communities or the world at large. The five thinkers are, in alphabetical order:

- **Dr. Brené Brown's work on shame, resiliency and vulnerability**
- **Dr. Edwin Friedman's work on family systems**
- **Dr. Rueven Bar-On's framing of emotional intelligence**
- **Dr. Ronald Heifetz's theory of adaptive change**
- **Dr. Otto Sharmer's work on transformational leadership**

As we engage this work together as the people of God in the Rocky Mountain Synod, I encourage those who are gifted in studying and reading on their own to look into these leadership experts. For all congregations and faith communities listening deeply to where God is calling, I invite you to begin these conversations within your own community and among your local neighboring communities. If you are at a place in your own life where you need an outside conversation partner, consider finding a coach or spiritual director³ to help you think about possible areas of growth in your own life. For those of you who learn best in the midst of conversation with peers, I am so glad you are a part of the Excellence in Leadership workshop where we will practice with and learn from one another. If we are to make disciples of all nations/generations, we must start with ourselves and our own ability to engage in life-giving relationship.

³ A list of coaches and spiritual directors can be found on the Rocky Mountain Synod webpage: www.rmselfca.org.

This two-year workshop will use the five composites of emotional intelligence as the structure for our learning. The five composites are: Self-Perception, Self-Expression, Interpersonal, Decision Making and Stress Management. Within this structure we will compare and contrast, overlay and experiment with these five thinkers and any other voices brought to the discussion by members of the learning community. The focus of our time together will be mutual engagement, real life case studies and experimentation. We will know that we have achieved our objectives when the quality of our conversation deepens, and the community honestly and lovingly challenges and supports one another in creative growth. Our ideal will be a time of real connection, creating an open space for a different type of learning, a different type of engagement. Each gathered community will determine the level of involvement with the material and the interaction with each other.

Self-awareness is the starting point for these learning opportunities. God has created us and gifted us uniquely and wonderfully. We are loved beyond price by the Creator of all that is. As people who know this love and grace, our journey begins with exploring our own identity, our own self-awareness. As we learn more about who God continues to create us to be, we are invited to experiment in our community to learn what we don't know we don't know and practice authentic relationship with people who will love us enough to give life-giving feedback. This journey takes great courage and humility. The result of such daring relationships brings us abundant life beyond our imaginations. Knowing ourselves, being willing to undergo the grace of God changes us and the world around us.

A shared vocabulary and basic understanding of leadership and theological concepts are the building blocks for the experiential workshops. In the Excellence in Leadership (EiL) workshop we will learn about ourselves in the midst of community, discuss concepts and theory, and practice effective leadership tools by planning and implementing appropriate projects in our various ministry contexts. As we present and discuss the leadership theory, we will weave in Biblical concepts and spiritual practices that keep this work focused on God's dream for humanity and all creation. Jesus came that they (the sheep), and we (the sheep that follow him) may have life and have it abundantly.⁴ These words echo the promise of wholeness which is the very definition of salvation. We were created good, very good⁵ - for wholeness, for abundant life. When we attend to the integrity, the integration of our own life process, we find abundant life. Our awareness of ourselves and others expands, increasing our capacity to embrace the life God is calling us toward.

⁴ John 10:10b

⁵ Genesis 1:31



In summary, the Excellence in Leadership initiative seeks to increase the capacity of all leaders in the Rocky Mountain Synod by deepening emotional capacity and fostering authentic relationship through integrating emotional intelligence into all our conversations, by encouraging coaching and in gathering for the Excellence in Leadership workshops.

Reverend Sarah Moening

$$\text{Excellence in Leadership} = \int EQ (IC + LC + ELC)$$

Where: \int = the symbol for integration

EQ = emotional intelligence

IC = informal conversation

ELC = Experiential Learning Communities

LC = one on one leadership coaching

Some Program Nuts and Bolts

Participation in Experiential Learning Community:

To build healthy, effective, experiential learning communities assumes that participants will make the gatherings of these communities a priority, be as fully present as possible, and engage in the learning activities. Preparation for the gatherings is important to enhance the learning opportunity for individuals as well as the group. Group norms of respect, confidentiality, honesty, and engagement are all important in developing trust and shared leadership of the group. Since these learning communities will also be a crucible for self-awareness and spiritual development, it is also important to cherish one another in God's love and prayer. These communities need to become brave, safe, hospitable places for growth and transformation.

Reading List and Bibliography:

The following books are **strongly recommended** to be read as assigned throughout the program.

- Bradberry, Travis, and Greaves, Jean, *Emotional Intelligence 2.0*, Talent Smart, 2009.
Participants need an original copy to access the EQ Appraisal found at the back of the book.
- Brown, Brené, *Daring Greatly: How the Courage to Be Vulnerable Transforms the Way We Live, Love, Parent, and Lead*, Penguin Random House, New York, 2012.
- Friedman, Edwin, *A Failure of Nerve: Leadership in an Age of the Quick Fix*, Seabury Books, New York, 2007.
(continued on next page)

- Heifetz, Ronald, Alexander Grashow and Marty Linsky, *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership: Tools and Tactics for Changing Your Organization and the World*, Harvard Business Press, Boston, 2009.
- Scharmer, Otto, *The Essentials of Theory U: Core Principles and Application.*, Inc. Cambridge, Mass., 2018.

Additional readings for exploring the Excellence in Leadership material in deeper ways is available on the Rocky Mountain Synod website – www.rmselfca.org – under “Leaders.”

General Outline:

Excellence in Leadership is a two- year program consisting of four all day sessions each year and three webinars each year. This workshop weaves together the theory of emotional intelligence and incorporates family systems, vulnerability/connectedness, adaptive leadership, and generative/transformational change.

Our mission is to:

**Grow authentic and effective leaders –
free from fear, free to love for the sake of the world:**

- **Deepening emotional capacity,**
- **Growing effective leaders,**
- **Fostering authentic relationship.**

1. **Laying the Foundation:**

Emotional intelligence (EQ), family systems, and Biblical grounding will be introduced. Learning groups will be formed, intentionally paying attention to group norms and expectations.

2. Webinar: **Use of Self as a Leader (Followers of Jesus):**

Focus will be on how we use ourselves as leaders incorporating EQ, family systems, and Christian values.

3. **Becoming Connected, Adaptive Leaders/Disciples:**

This session delves into vulnerable and adaptive thinking. We will explore the roadblocks to connectivity and the invitation to adaptive change.

4. Webinar: **Aware of Ourselves as Connected, Adaptive Leaders:**

We will discuss the practice of resiliency to enable connectivity and how we can practice adaptive leadership in faith communities.



5. **Freed from Fear:**

Our time together in this session begins to integrate EQ, Family Systems, Adaptive Leadership, and Vulnerability so that we might free ourselves from mechanisms which cripple our ability to love and be authentic.

6. Webinar: **Overcoming Obstacles of Loving Neighbor as Self:**

During this webinar we introduces practices to help us become more self-aware, aware of our relationships, and using ourselves as leaders.

7. **Free to Love:**

We will explore and develop tools to free our faith communities to love.

The second year takes us deeper into each of these areas: Family Systems, Adaptive Leadership, Vulnerability, and Leading from the Future, with the intent to use the increased capacity in all areas of ministry throughout the RMS and especially in the following areas:

- Congregational Life
- Specialized Ministry
- Congregational Transitions
- Synodically Authorized Lay Leaders
- Anti-Racism
- Conflict Management
- Part Time Ministry
- Youth and Young Adults

8. **Deepening Emotional Capacity:**

In the first session of the second year we will take a deeper dive into Family Systems and Emotional Intelligence.

9. Webinar: **Growing Effective Leaders:**

In this webinar, we will be introduced to methods of community relationship management.

10. **Fostering Authentic Leadership:**

During this session we will practice adaptive and generative leadership, monitoring anxiety for optimal transformation.

11. Webinar: **Awareness of the Current Cultural Context:**

We will explore our rapidly changing culture and wrestle with ways for our ministries to adapt so that they may thrive into the future.



12. Appropriate Vulnerability:

Continuing to deepen our emotional capacity and foster authentic relationships, this session will introduce concepts from the Daring Way.

13. Webinar: Environment for Transformative Change:

In preparation for our last time together, this webinar will introduce key concepts from Scharmer’s transformative change through Theory U.

14. Being Transformed for God’s Emerging Future:

Our last session will consolidate all five theories in a review that celebrates our increased growth as followers of Jesus and as leaders in our faith communities.

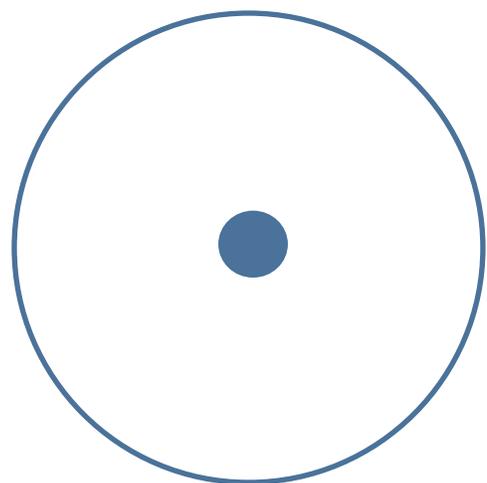
Introduction to Theory U

Theory U is a leadership concept based on work by Otto Scharmer, Senior Lecturer at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). Throughout *Excellence in Leadership*, Scharmer’s revolutionary approach to learning and leadership is being adapted for the faith-based community. Scharmer, Otto, *Theory U: Leading from the Future as it Emerges*, The Society for Organizational Learning, Inc. Cambridge, Mass, 2007.

Luke 12 Jesus explains the importance of being awake and ready for what might catch you asleep and unaware. Jesus cautions the disciples, “be dressed for action” and “have your lamps lit.” Awakening to the world around us can be both a developmental and a spiritual experience. How we perceive the world and our place in the world changes over time and experience. Being awake, seeing through fully awake eyes, means shifting both how we are seeing and what we choose to look at. Shifting perspective, having the eyes to see and the ears to hear is essential for the life of a follower of Christ.

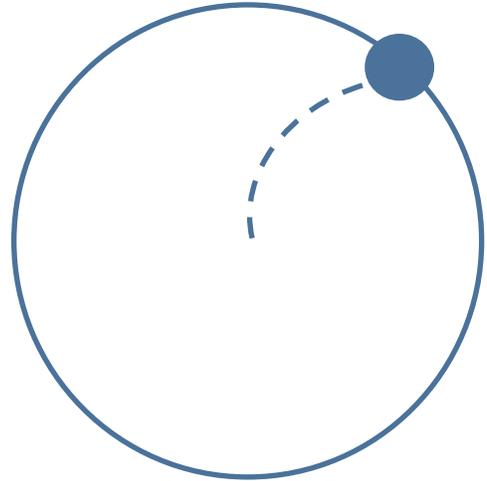
Field 1

In the first field of perspective we see the system, the organization we belong to, the community that surrounds us as something that simply is. In the first field I see my place in that system from an unexamined and unquestioned perspective. Because I haven’t questioned my community everything appears fine, just fine. People are polite and tend to conform.



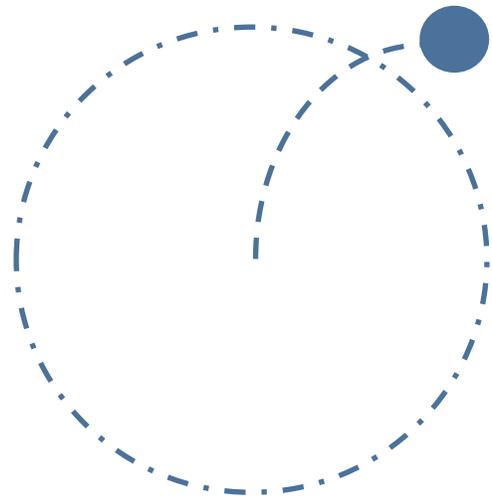
Field 2

In the second field, the individual's perspective changes and I am no longer at the center of my community, but rather at the edge, the periphery. Now I can see the system in a more detached manner and with a more critical eye. I can begin to distinguish that my community is not a given and my place in the system cannot be assumed. I will question, debate and even confront.



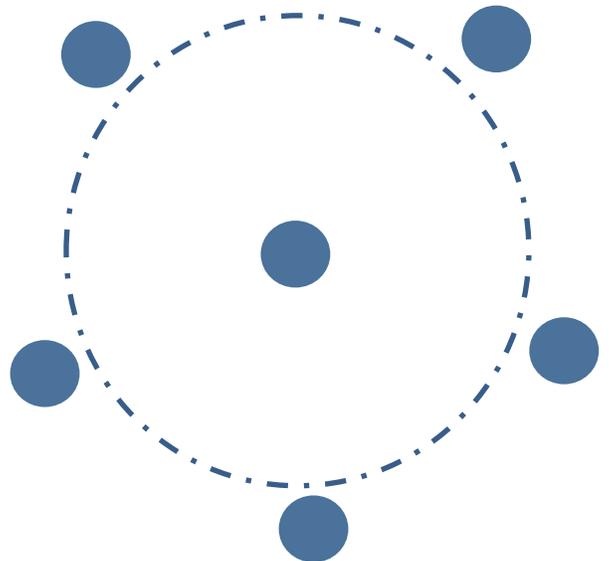
Field 3

Seeing from the third field happens when the personal perspective shifts to seeing the self as an agent within the system. In this field the individual sees from two perspectives at once. I can see my own place in the system and see the system as a whole. From here, I can see others have valid perspectives and can dialogue together for even greater clarity.



Field 4

Moving down to the fourth field allows us to access the much bigger picture. It opens the possibility of seeing the world as God sees it – connected, beyond one human understanding, beyond me and my community, beyond the confines of time. Reaching down to the fourth field allows me to connect to the breadth of life streaming through me.



Emotional Intelligence Framework

When Jesus talks about having abundant life, salvation, wholeness, he is talking about living into all that gives life joyful: identity, purpose and belonging. This well-being, a sense of wholeness is directly connected to the health and quality of our relationships. Jesus knit abundant life together with loving God and loving neighbors. This coupling is foundational in Christianity and many spiritual traditions. Emotional intelligence is our ability to know ourselves well enough to build these significant, healthy, loving, honest relationships.

While innate intelligence, that which can be measured with an IQ test, has proven to be static throughout our lives, emotional intelligence can change. Emotional intelligence or EQ in shorthand, can increase when we intentionally attend to our emotional and spiritual selves or it can decrease by closing off when confronted by hardship, pain and trauma. Jesus teaches us a way forward toward wholeness. Jesus teaches a path toward life-giving relationships. Emotionally intelligent people are able to express their feelings in non-destructive ways in order to maintain mutually satisfying relationships. Healthy, life-giving relationships increase our effectiveness in the world as we participate in God's kingdom on earth as it is in heaven.

Excellence in Leadership will be using the original Bar-On EQ-I model authored by Reuven Bar-On and copyrighted in 1997. This framework differs from the more commonly found framework of Bradberry and Graves found in *Emotional Intelligence 2.0*. Either model is helpful in increasing self-awareness and the quality of interpersonal relationships. The model we will be using describes five composites with three subcategories for each composite. Attending to and intentionally thinking about these personal characteristics allow each of us to increase our effectiveness and engagement with the world.

The five composites are Self-Perception, Self-Expression, Interpersonal, Problem Solving and Stress Management. There is a nuanced momentum from Self-Perception through Stress Management only in that knowledge of self or self-awareness is a good starting point. Each composite and subcategory, however, intersects and interacts with other elements in non-linear ways.

If we are to make disciples of all nations/generations, how might we go about this work being as wise as serpents and gentle as doves?⁶ How might we lead communities of faith in ways that participate in what God is doing in the world? How might we use our self and our influence to cultivate relationships in meaningful and life-giving interaction? As followers of Christ, we are called to proclaim the Gospel for the sake of the world, to make a difference in this world. Managing our lives, our families, our work, our faith communities is critical work and integral to the reign of God. We are commissioned to witness to and participate in God's work in the world. Witnessing is meant to influence people, to produce direct consequences that actually and positively affect the world around us.

⁶ Matthew 10:16

Discovering and Improving Emotional Competence

Emotional Intelligence:
A set of emotional and social skills that influence the way we perceive and express ourselves, develop and maintain social relationships, cope with challenges and use emotional information in an effective and meaningful way.

The Theory of Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence is a strong predictor of success in life, even stronger than innate cognitive intelligence often referred to as IQ. The good news is, unlike, IQ, emotional intelligence or EQ changes with maturity and intentional social skill building. As Bradberry and Greaves point out, psychologically all rational thought must travel through the part of the brain (limbic node), where emotions are experienced. Yet, sometimes mainstream North American culture has sidelined emotions, suggesting that there is a way to leave emotions out of rational discussions. What experience and research tells us is, the more aware we are of our emotions, the better able we are to use them in and for positive personal and professional relationships.

In this session we are simply introducing the concepts of EQ and not promoting one framework over another. This session will introduce the components of EQ for your deeper personal consideration. After reading this section, spend time observing yourself in natural situations and notice when you are implementing or ignoring aspects of EQ.

We begin with the popular framing of EQ found in *EQ 2.0* which uses a four-quadrant graph.

	Awareness	Control or Management
Personal Competence	Self-Awareness	Self Control or Management
	Self-Perception	Self-Expression
	Self-Regard	Emotional Expression
	Self-Actualization	Assertiveness
Social Competence	Emotional Self-Awareness	Independence
	Community Awareness	Managing Community Relationships
	Interpersonal	Decision Making
	Interpersonal Relationships	Problem Solving
	Empathy	Reality Testing
	Social Responsibility	Impulse Control
	Stress Management	
	Flexibility	
	Stress Tolerance	
	Optimism	

The highlighted blue quadrants are based on the EQ model by Peter Salovey and John D. Mayer, 1997. The green highlighted areas are the corresponding sub-scales and elements from the Reuven Bar-On Model (Copyright 1997)



Copyright © 2011 Multi-Health Systems Inc. All rights reserved.
Based on the Bar-On EQ-i model by Reuven Bar-On, copyright 1997.

Rueven Bar-On, the first person to begin research on the concepts of EQ back in 1997, articulates a few more elements involved in EQ and our success in human relationships. Bar-On names five composites with three subcategories in each composite.

For our purposes in this workshop, we will navigate between the two models with the goal of finding common language and increasing our individual and communal capacity to form and maintain healthy relationships.

Self-Perception: knowledge of your true self; your gifts, liabilities and potential.

- **Self-Regard** – the ability and the tendency for you – in full light of both your positive and negative qualities – to both like and have confidence in yourself
- **Self-Actualization** – your ability and tendency to want to grow, to stretch and to strive – to see your potential, set meaningful goals and work toward your betterment and fulfillment
- **Emotional Self-Awareness** – the degree to which you are in touch with your feelings and emotions, are able to distinguish one emotion from another and understand why that emotion has resulted



Self-Expression: how you interact with the world around you.

- **Emotional Expression** – the degree to which you share, communicate and remain transparent with your feelings and emotions
- **Assertiveness** – your ability to put your needs, thoughts and opinions out into the world – even when doing so invites opposition or conflict or causes you to take a stand
- **Independence** – your ability and tendency to be self-directed in your thinking, feeling, and actions – to go it alone when needed

Interpersonal: your ability to build relationships within your community.

- **Interpersonal Relationships** – your ability and tendency to give and receive trust and compassion and to establish and maintain mutually satisfying personal relationships
- **Empathy** – your ability and willingness to take notice of and be sensitive to other people’s needs and feelings
- **Social Responsibility** – your ability and tendency to cooperate and contribute to the welfare of a larger social system, to have and act in accordance with a social consciousness and to show concern for the group or the greater community

Decision Making: using yourself in the work you do.

- **Problem Solving** – your ability and tendency both, to solve problems that involve emotions and to use emotions as an effective problem-solving tool
- **Reality Testing** – the ability and tendency for you to assess the here-and-now reality of any given moment or situation – what is actually going on – and compare that objectively to your fantasy of what is going on, thus avoiding being overcome by fantasies, daydreams and biases
- **Impulse Control** – the ability to resist or delay a drive or temptation to do or say something or to decide too quickly or rashly

Stress Management: handling internal self as you engage your world.

- **Flexibility** – your ability and tendency to adjust your emotions, thoughts, and behavior to changing situations and conditions, to adapt – to take in new data and change your mind or approach
- **Stress Tolerance** – the ability to function well in the midst of challenging and stressful situations – to shoulder stress without getting overwhelmed



- **Optimism** – your ability and tendency to look at the brighter side of life and to maintain a positive attitude even in the face of adversity. Optimism gives you hope and enables you to see the future as a positive, inviting place

Happiness- your ability and tendency to feel joy and satisfaction with the process of living and be able to embrace all aspects of life with cheerfulness and enthusiasm

The three subcategories in Stress Management actually bring us back to the beginning of self-awareness. Managing the stress of our daily lives is a constant, copiously written about topic in the fields such as psychology, business, leadership and spirituality. What we will assert here is that self-awareness and self-differentiation can positively affect one's ability to manage stress. Much of what we will be discussing, experiencing and building in this workshop has to do with our impact on the world. In this last composite we are also talking about the world's impact on us. Here, in this area, our spiritual practices significantly influence how we show up in the world.

Spiritual Practices Supporting Excellent Leadership

Prayer:

Richard Foster in his book on Prayer says: "To pray is to change. This is a great grace. How good of God to provide a path whereby our lives can be taken over by love and joy and peace and patience and kindness and goodness and faithfulness and gentleness and self-control." Prayer is opening ourselves up to God, listening to God, and allowing God to create us in God's image. It is laying our hearts bare before our Maker and bringing those we love into the heart of God and inviting God into the places of our deepest concern. Prayer is being genuine and authentic, who we really are. As C.S. Lewis says: "May it be the real I who speaks. May it be the real Thou that I speak to." We need to make sure we are listening to God and not just some voice in our own heads that we think or hope might be God made in our image instead of the other way around.

Excellent leadership is grounded in prayer from beginning to the end. We lead as God directs, so we must learn to recognize God's voice in prayer, be honest and real about ourselves and our limits, and have the courage and will to follow. As Jesus was immersed in God's love, knowing through and through that he is God's Beloved, so must we know our true identity. Otherwise we will never have the courage and freedom to risk being a part of God's radical transformation of this world to God's realm of love. The systems of this world are too focused on the human, material perspective and are deeply threatened by God's freedom of love. Prayer is our pathway to God's perspective. We must immerse ourselves daily in prayer for the sake of the world.

Self-Reflection and Journaling:

Spiritual growth is concerned with our relationship with God (love of God), and also with our relationship with others (love of neighbor). If we only focus on love of God, we tend to spiritualize everything. Our love of God is realized in our love of neighbor. To get a realistic perspective on ourselves we need ways to distance ourselves from events, to observe ourselves as in looking in a mirror, and receive feedback. A trusted spiritual friend, soul mate, coach, or spiritual advisor is certainly helpful. Being in community where we receive feedback is also another way we can gain this perspective. Keeping a journal of what we think and feel is also a way to get some perspective on patterns and ways we get caught in unhealthy patterns. In this Excellence in Leadership program, we encourage you to keep a journal utilizing some of the methods and questions introduced throughout the course to help you with your own spiritual growth and self-reflection.

Meditation:

Meditation means putting on the mind of Christ as Paul writes: “Let that mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus”. (Phil. 2:5) In meditation, we let go of our surface thoughts and sink into deeper levels of consciousness, Christ consciousness. We lean into Jesus sharing his outlook and attitude as we read, contemplate, and imagine with a passage of Scripture. We enter into Jesus’ heart and will with a particular teaching, story, or parable to help us become more and more one with him. We allow the sights, sounds, smells of the scene enter our beings as it was with Jesus and become one with it all allowing Jesus to transform us to his way of being in community. In our gatherings, we will have time for meditation on Scripture.

Breathing:

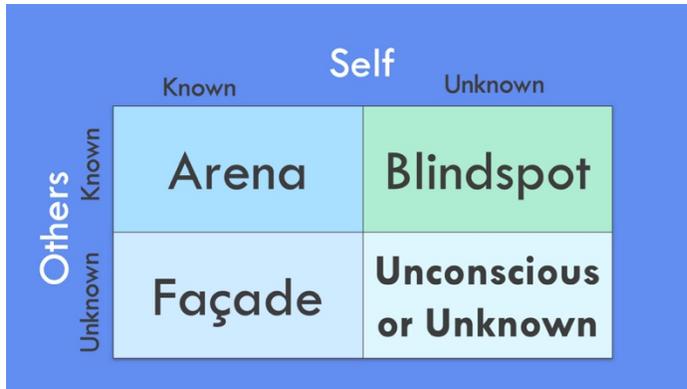
“Every time you take in a breath, you are repeating the pattern of taking spirit into matter and thus repeating the first creation of Adam. And every time you breathe out, you are repeating the pattern of returning spirit to the material universe.” Richard Rohr, The Universal Christ p. 99

The practice of slow, intentional breathing centers us. One way to engage this practice is to inhale to the count of four, hold your breath for four counts, then exhale for four counts. Repeating this practice slows us down, grounds us, and helps us enter God’s presence.



Johari Window

The Johari Window is a model created by Joseph Luft and Harry Ingham and often used over many decades to examine social relationships. This model is a helpful way to begin contemplating self-awareness and our ability to interact with others. It is a simple graph with two axes and four quadrants. The four quadrants are delineated by what is known and unknown to self and what is known and unknown to others.



The Arena is that area which is known to both self and others which consequently allows for true interpersonal interaction.

The Façade is that area of our lives that we keep hidden or private. As trust is developed and we begin to know someone, we begin to share more of ourselves, thus increasing the size of the arena and decreasing our hidden self.

The Blindspot is that part of ourselves that we do not know, but others can see and experience in us. It is the part of each of us that we don't know we don't know. As trust is developed and others feel more comfortable with us, they may choose to help us see these hidden parts of ourselves. With this sharing or feedback, the arena grows and the blindspot diminishes.

The Unknown or Unconscious area is that part of ourselves we don't know and that others don't know. In this model, this area can seem finite, and yet what mystics teach us is, this area can almost be an unfathomable well. Through prayer and meditation, deep listening to God, we can begin to uncover the gift of ourselves that God is creating us to be.

In a new group, the Arena can be very small; there is not much free and spontaneous interaction. We often protect ourselves, taking time to size up the group, listening for hints of whether or not it is a safe place. As the group matures, hopefully the Arena expands in size. We are free to be more like ourselves and to interact with others in authentic and generative ways.

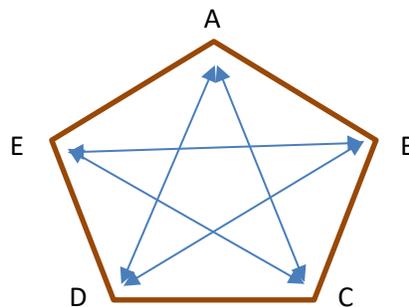
In an atmosphere of growing mutuality there is less need for hiding pertinent thoughts and feelings. God calls us to bring our whole selves into the arena where we engage in honest, authentic relationship. Strong leadership means intentionally growing and connecting with people in ways that offer God's love and purpose to the world.



Family Systems Theory – Brief Overview

Family systems theory was developed by Dr. Murray Bowen, who became interested in psychiatry after serving as an Army doctor and seeing the varying effects of trauma on soldiers. In researching whole families at the US National Institute of Mental Health in the late 1950s, Bowen noticed patterns of managing anxiety in families that were similar to the instinctive ways other species dealt with threats in (or to) their herds and packs. The theory developed from there.

Systems thinking is also a response to the “information age,” in which we are faced with enormous amounts of data and the complexity of making sense of all that data and information. Systems thinking focuses less on content and more on the emotional processes that governs the data. *It focuses on the organizational principles that give the data meaning thus establishing new criteria about what data and information is important.* Systems thinking takes into account the relationships of the various components.



The components function according to their position and relationship in the network of the system. The components might function differently outside of the system or within a different system. We see this all the time when we behave differently at home than we do at work for example.

There are eight interlocking concepts of Family Systems Theory:

- 1) Differentiation of Self
- 2) Triangles
- 3) Nuclear Family Emotional Process
- 4) Family Projection Process
- 5) Cutoff
- 6) Multigenerational Transmission Process
- 7) Sibling Position
- 8) Societal Emotional Process



1) Differentiation of Self

Depicted with a theoretical scale, differentiation of self describes how people cope with life's demands and pursue their goals on a continuum from most adaptive to least. Variations in this adaptiveness depend on several connected factors, including the amount of solid self, the part of self that is not negotiable in relationships. For example, a person with well thought out principles enhances solid self and will not be swayed by fads or opinions. A person with less solid self will feel more pressure to think, feel, and act like the other. This fusion between two people generates more chronic anxiety as one becomes more sensitive to what the other thinks, feels, and does. Acute anxiety also plays a role. A fairly well differentiated person can develop symptoms under acute anxiety but will probably return to adaptive functioning soon after. A less differentiated person may live in a stress-free environment and therefore function quite well for long periods of time.

Level of differentiation refers to the degree to which a person can think and act for self while in contact with emotionally charged issues. It also refers to the degree to which a person can discern between thoughts and feelings. At higher levels of differentiation, people maintain separate, solid selves under considerable stress and anxiety. They manage their own reactivity and choose thoughtful actions. At lower levels of differentiation, people depend on others to function, and they develop significant symptoms under stress. They act, often destructively, based on anxious reactions to the environment. Their intellectual reasoning fuses with emotionality. Even highly intelligent people can be poorly differentiated.

Dr. Bowen said that if levels of differentiation could be measured on a scaled of 1-100, the highest levels most persons could achieve would be no higher than 35 (so don't be too hard on yourself!). One cannot actually measure level of differentiation because it requires observation of multiple areas of functioning over a life course. However, the scale gives a way of conceptualizing variability in coping among people. For example, the concept gives a way of thinking about variability in the functioning among children of the same parents.

Rather than Systems Theory being deterministic (as it may appear), it actually promotes personal agency and improving one's life, the life of one's children, and the life of one's family. The process of differentiating a self involves a conscious effort at strengthening or raising the amount of solid self by defining beliefs and principles, managing anxiety and reactivity, and relating differently to the system. People engaged in these efforts reap positive benefits for their own functioning, and they automatically raise the level of differentiation in the whole system.

2) Triangles

Triangles are the basic molecule of human relationship systems. A two-person dyad becomes unstable once anxiety increases. Then, one or both members of the dyad usually pulls in a third person to relieve some of the pressure. In a three-person system, anxiety has more places to go, and the relationship where it originated experiences some relief. When the three-person system can no longer contain the anxiety, it involves more people and forms a series of interlocking triangles. Bowen researchers consider triangles a natural function of living systems. Triangles can have either negative or positive outcomes

depending on how their members manage anxiety and reactivity. Bowen postulated that if one member of the triangle remains calm and in emotional contact with the other two, the system automatically calms down. On the other hand, with enough stress and reactivity, members lock into a triangular position, and develop symptoms.

3) Nuclear Family Emotional Process

The nuclear family manages differentiation and anxiety with conflict, distance, over and under-functioning reciprocity, which at extremes can lead to dysfunction in a spouse, and child focus. People engaged in conflict fight, argue, blame and criticize each other. Partners who distance tend to be emotionally unavailable and to avoid potentially uncomfortable, though important, topics. Reciprocity in relationships occurs when one person takes on responsibilities for the twosome. The two people slide into over-adequate and under-adequate roles. This can become so extreme that one partner becomes incapacitated either with an illness or a general lack of direction. Child focus is discussed more under the next concept.

4) Family Projection Process

The fixed triangle is evident in the family projection process, where parents in a nuclear family focus anxiety on a child and the child develops problems. Parents then usually attempt to get the child to change or they ask an expert to "fix" the child. Experienced Bowen family systems consultants report that when parents can instead manage their own anxiety and resolve their own relationship issues, the functioning of the child automatically improves.

5) Emotional Cutoff

An extreme distancing posture constitutes the concept of emotional cutoff, where family members discontinue emotional contact with each other. This has significant implications for the functioning of future generations, as the emotional family unit is severed in such a way that anxiety has fewer places to be absorbed in the extended family system. Consequently, chronic anxiety increases. People look for other relationships to substitute for the cut off relationship. These new relationships intensify and people become vulnerable to symptoms.

6) Multigenerational Transmission Process

Differentiation of Self is transmitted through the multigenerational transmission process. This concept describes patterns of emotional process through multiple generations. It offers a way of thinking about family patterns that goes beyond a dichotomy of genes versus environment. One of the ways family patterns are transmitted across generations is through relationship triangles.

7) Sibling Position

Sibling position, a concept which Bowen adopted from the research of Walter Toman, affects variation in basic and functional levels of differentiation as well. Oldest, youngest, and middle children tend toward certain functional roles in families, influenced also by the particular mix of sibling positions in it and the sibling positions of parents and other relatives.

8) Societal Emotional Process

The last concept Bowen developed is societal emotional process. It refers to the tendency of people within a society to be more anxious and unstable at certain times than others.

References for this Section

- Bradberry, Travis, and Greaves, Jean, *Emotional Intelligence 2.0*, Talent Smart, 2009. **Participants need an original copy to access the EQ Appraisal found at the back of the book.**
- Foster, Richard, *Prayer, Finding the Heart's True Home*, Harper San Francisco, 1992.
- Friedman, Edwin, *A Failure of Nerve: Leadership in an Age of the Quick Fix*, Seabury Books, New York, 2007.
- Friedman, Edwin, *Generation to Generation*, Guilford Press, 1985.
- Le Clair, Arthur, *Living by Grace*, Spiritual Life Center, 1995.
- Lynn, Adele, *Emotional Intelligence Activities for Busy Managers*, American Management Association, 2007.
- Rohr, Richard, *Universal Christ*, 2019.
- Vermont Center for Family Studies, *The Eight Concepts of Bowen Theory*.

