



R-Group Process

FINDING THE GOOD AND HOLY DESIRE BEHIND THE FALSE SELF

Purpose: When we hear what God has to say to us and about us we can become free. Cultivate your inner heart's ears to God's voice and to what he is constantly saying to you. Learn to listen and risk believing what you hear. He is always speaking from a place of love and truth. Dwell in this truth, live out of this truth, and you will be free.

Materials: Music, space for everyone on the floor (maybe some pillows), pen and paper for each person.

The Process: Have each person in the circle list off several of their false selves: (Examples: the controller, the performer, the perfectionist, the good boy/girl, the predator, the addicted one, the clown, the independent one, the isolator.....)

Teaching: It is encouraging to know that behind every false self is something holy and good. As destructive as our false selves are in our lives they are motivated by a desire for something good and God ordained.

Since all of the false selves are rooted in control, let's look at The Controller as a false self. The Controller is attempting to gain something. There is a payoff for controlling others and the situations in our lives. What might that be?

What is the primary emotion(s) that feed The Controller? (Fear, possibly fear and shame) If I have a Controller as a false self, and it is rooted in fear, then what does do you think I am afraid will *not* happen?

Is it possible that The Controller's entire purpose is to avoid what we are afraid of?

And in avoiding what we are afraid, it attempts to acquire for us what we really want.

What could be the good and holy thing behind attempting to control others and the world around us?

(Security and safety are the top two things to come to mind first. Anything else? Maybe control of the outcome. And if the outcome turns out the way I desire what does that give me? Meaning, Success, Peace, Power, Acceptance.....)

Let's see what might be behind your false selves.

Instructions:

Find an open space on the floor and lie down on your backs. Close your eyes. In your mind's eye scan your life, your relationships, your work... In this moment, what is the most predominant false self that you are aware of? (Give them several seconds.)

Bring it into the light. Speak it out loud.

Facilitator: This is a story that is to be told *slowly* with feeling at times. Take your time in going through this. Going too fast will lessen the likelihood that the participants will be able to follow and actually connect with their hearts. I recommend practicing this a couple of times on your own before reading it during the process.

The Transformation of the False Self Story

Start instrumental music

The Story: (Read out loud. Make sure you are heard over the music.)

"I am going to tell you a story. I am the screenwriter and you are the director. Let your heart and mind guide you as I tell this story.

Now, breathe in. Breathe out. Relax.

Picture yourself in a green valley. The sun is shining. There is a slight breeze. Now think about the most prominent false self that you are aware of today.

You are standing in this green valley looking out into the distance and you notice that someone is coming up to you. It's getting closer and closer. You can see his face now.

It's your false self.

What is his name? Say it out loud. What does he look like? What are his weapons? Does he use silence, isolation, withdrawal as shields? Does he use judgments, sarcasm, criticism, jokes, manipulations as swords? What does he use to accomplish his purpose in your life?

(Pause)

Notice that this false self of yours reaches out and takes you by the hand. Put your hand out.

He begins to lead you toward a small mountainside. He points to a cave entrance in the hillside close by and he takes you in. You may be afraid. But your false self doesn't mean you harm. Not today. It wants to show you something.

It leads you further in. The ceiling gets lower and lower. You now have to get on your hands and knees and crawl to go forward. Your false self is leading you forward. You can't turn back now. The walls are too tight. You are now crawling on your stomach and it's hard to breathe. You keep going. There is no light. A feeling of heaviness and dread may be coming over you. What is coming, you wonder.

Finally, it leads you into a small cavern. There must be some light coming in from somewhere because your eyes adjust and you can barely see your false self.

The two of you sit down face to face. Just look at him for a while. (Pause)

Now I want you to ask it a question:

What do you feel? Maybe it's anger, sadness, shame, fear. (Pause)

What happened that I chose to create you? What took place? Do you know when? (Lengthy Pause)

Do you see that way back then, the reason you created this false self was for some good purpose. Your intent in creating him was to give you something you needed in that moment.

Honor the creation of this false self. Thank him for helping you out so long ago. Thank him for his intention. (Pause)

Now, ask your false self “What are you afraid of?” (Pause)

And then the question it has been waiting all this time for you to ask: Ask it: “What do you really want?” (Lengthy Pause) Wait for it to reply.

What does it want? Say it out loud.

You see this is holy. This comes from God. This is a good thing. Do you see that?

Now that you have finally asked the question that has been buried deep beneath your false self, buried in your reality and unanswered for so long - you take the hand of the one who answered you and you see that it has been transformed. Go ahead and reach out and take its hand.

Something is different about him (or her). Now that you know what he (or she) has always wanted he (or she) has changed.

It's still too dark to see clearly, but you know something is different. He takes you by the hand. It feels good. Strong. Comforting. Safe.

He leads you toward a light. There's an exit to the cave. The light gets brighter. There is a breeze touching your face. Your eyes begin to adjust to the increasing light.

Then, you both step into the daylight. The transformed one turns around and looks you in the face.

What does he look like? This is holy desire, your deepest longing waiting to be brought into the light of day. He is rejoicing that you went deep within the cave to find him and bring him into the light.

Your holy desire takes you arm in arm and begins to slowly lead you toward a nearby river. A gently flowing river, clean, pure, just deep enough to stand in up to your waist. The current looks inviting.

In the distance, you see a man coming toward you and your deepest longing. He stops and leans against a tree just a few yards away.

The tree is beautiful. Its leaves are burning a red color. The breeze is blowing the crimson colored leaves to the ground. They cover the earth all around the tree. It's, it's breathtaking.

The man is standing in the leaves against the tree and he looks at you with eyes of love and compassion. Eyes that seem to draw you into him. He's Wonderful. He looks into your eyes, into your soul and he knows.

Your holy desire, your deepest longing, takes you by the hand again and leads you to this glorious tree, through the crimson leaves all around you, to this wonderful man. There you are face to face. You, with your deepest longing, your holy desire looking into this wonderful man's eyes, beneath the tree by the gently flowing current of water. (Pause)

You are looking in his eyes. What does he do?

What does he say to you?

(Facilitator: Give the men 5 minutes to sit with this and receive from Christ.)

After the 5 minutes, have the men journal what they heard, saw and felt at the end of this journey.

Turn off music.

After the men have finished journaling (another 5 minutes) have them return to their seats.

In any order, have the men share with the group what they experienced.

Closing comments from facilitator: In order to be free of the false self in our life we must know what it is afraid of and what it really wants. This was an exercise that can help us to do that with all of our false selves. It visually describes for us the process of coming to a place of embracing our holy desires behind the false selves. Once embraced we can bring our good and holy desires to Christ at the foot of the cross where we meet him in our brokenness and nakedness. There we risk believing that he will meet our longings with his love and strength. There we choose to remain in faith, instead of going back to the false self and its ways.

Remember, the false self was transformed as we saw it for what it really was. We must go deep into our hearts and let it die so that it can be transformed and come out of the dark places and into the light to be blessed by the Glorious One Himself. [Close in prayer for one another as a group.]