



R-Group Process

CONNECTED OR DISCONNECTED FROM DAD

Setup: Put a candle in the middle of the circle, have the men sit on the floor in a tight circle.

Share: for generations, men have gathered around campfires. This is a primary way they experienced community, shared wisdom, and passed on oral traditions of the tribe. The men who had been initiated into the tribe sat closest to the fire, an inner circle. They spoke, contributed and listened. On many nights, the boys who had not yet been initiated stood just behind these men and listened. They did not speak, but were allowed to experience the community of men.

In the modern era we have missed this circle. Many of us have not seen our fathers in authentic community. Many of us did not receive wisdom, counsel, and tradition passed down to us from our elders. This has left a deep void in our culture.

Facilitator: Have the men stand up and place their chairs in a tight circle around the candle. Have the men stand just behind the chairs.

Share: For most of us, there were some things that we lacked in our relationship from dad. Many of us as sons did not experience dad as present, strong and loving, involved in our lives. Even for those of us who had good experiences with our fathers, there may have been some things lacking.

Imagine your father in this chair. Feel his energy. Move into this space yourself as a little boy.

As little boys, to miss having strong connection with dad is a significant disappointment and can have long reaching impact in our lives. It may impact our ability to live from a place of

strength and power or confidence. We may be hindered in our ability to father and to call our sons and daughters into maturity.

We missed things. We desired things. We didn't know how to say what we wanted.

As adult men, we can reclaim the grief of the little boy within. We can own the sorrow of the disappointments. We can grieve the losses we experienced in our relationship with dad.

Why is this important? It is important because in our hearts we do grieve and if this grief and disappointment is left to itself it will impact us negatively. Unaware of our sorrow we cover our pain with addictions, rage, silence, withdrawal, passivity....

Prayer: "Heavenly Father, we come to you this evening to open our hearts. Help us to expose the truth in our hearts about our experience with our earthly dads."

Facilitator to men: Men, close your eyes. What we are going to do is give you an opportunity to express some things that you may not have expressed before. I will give you a sentence to complete. When it is your turn take your time and say whatever comes from your heart and mind. Take as long as you need. When you are done say, "I'm finished."

Then, the next man may volunteer and with his eyes closed complete the sentence. Go until every man has had a turn. There will be several questions. Have each man finish the first sentence before going forward with the second sentence, and so on.

First sentence to complete: "When I was a little boy I wish my father would have...."

Second sentence to complete: "When I was a little boy my father never...."

Third sentence to complete: "When I was a little boy I really wish my father had...."

Fourth sentence to complete: "The one thing I need to say to my father is...."

Facilitator: Ask the group: "Does any man need anything from the group right now?"

Note: This process is designed to access any sadness, anger or any other emotion that a man might be holding back. In doing so, a man may need to express this anger or sadness in a safe way. Be open to providing this opportunity for any men desiring it.

(Prayer, a connection process to the sadness or anger, freedom to use his voice (yell/cry), a hug, to be held..... Be open.)

Closing: Encourage the men to remain open to this place in their hearts. Encourage them to bring this before God and to allow themselves to experience the sorrow, the anger... in His presence.

Tell the men that they can invite God into this part of their heart that has come into the light. Grace, love, power all come into this wound in order to heal it.

It takes time. Will you risk touching this for as long as you need to in order to find freedom and healing? And, ultimately, to find connection with your heavenly father who gives you all that you desire. Will you risk it?

Don't sell yourself short by cutting off this process because you think that you have dealt with it in one night. Be open to working this out for as long as it takes you to experience what God intends. What you need.

“Men, we are standing in the place of boys. We are not little boys anymore. The world needs men. Our families, churches, communities...they need strong and loving men who live in authentic community with others. We are aware of our faults and failures, but also aware of our worth and purpose.

Recognizing the wounds, we still have the choice to live as men.

When you are ready, move into the inner circle and sit in the chair representing your place in the fellowship of men.

“What are you aware of?”

If any man does not move, “What's coming up for you?”