



R-Group Process

What To Do With Triggers

We know we are “triggered” when we have an emotional or mental reaction to a particular event. When we yield to the trigger, we react – take action – out of our broken and/or false self.

The Broken Self is comprised of our personal history, our personality, our wounds, our convincing illusions, and our unresolved issues, among other things.

The False Self is our attempt at Self-Protection and Self-Provision.

The greater the reaction, the deeper the trigger is anchored within our Broken Humanity.

It is our tendency to blame others when we are triggered: “You triggered me.”

Matthew 7:3-5 - ³“Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother’s eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? ⁴How can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? ⁵You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye.”

OWNERSHIP LEADS TO FREEDOM AND LOVE

The key to overcoming triggers and growing into maturity is to own this truth: The trigger is in ME.

Let your reaction be your teacher. Owning your trigger does not mean that the other person may not have something he or she needs to deal with, as well. However, that is their responsibility. Your responsibility is you and your behavior. You may indeed need to address someone else’s behavior, but who is going to do it? Your Broken Self? Your False Self? Or, will it be you in your True Self, anchored in grace in truth?

In any given moment you can ask yourself: “Who is showing up within me right now? My True Self, My Broken Self or my False Self?”

The Path to Maturity:

- Use the trigger. Own it as being about you. It is within you no matter what happened. Your thoughts and your emotions are 100% about you.
- Look in the mirror: What is my reaction (emotions/thoughts/actions) telling me about ME – my Broken Self (my history, personality, wounds, illusions, unresolved issues...) and my False Self (the ways I self-protect and self-provide)?
- Identify who is showing up within you: The specific False Self and what aspect of your Broken Self (humanity) is showing up in this moment.
 - Example: The False Self of the Judge or the Withdrawer, or the Blamer...
 - Example: The Broken Self which is caught up in “stories” or “convincing illusions” about self or others, or the unhealed wounds from the past that have just been touched....
- Own the truth about you and bring God into each of the above (the false and broken selves). Identify the fears and the holy desires beneath the False and Broken Selves.
- In the presence of God, choose to “let go” of the False Self and its messages.
- In the presence of God invite His Spirit into your fears and your deep longings.
 - Example: Fear of being rejected or judged
 - Example: Your deep longing for acceptance and affirmation
- Risk believing that you are connected to God’s love and power – by His mysterious presence within you he comes as you yield to Him, consenting to HIS PRESENCE to heal you and to fulfill your longings. HE comes and affirms and accepts. It is the True Self who is present in this moment – walking in truth (owning your reality) and consenting to God’s Divine action – AS OPPOSED to you living out of your False Self or your Broken Self (with its wounds and stories).

The True Self

- You know you are in your True Self when you remain open to the one before you – the one whose actions touched something in you and triggered you. Your True Self is open to love. It is authentic and centered in God’s grace and truth.
- The True Self is able to see clearly and engage others appropriately from a place of love. The True Self knows WHEN and HOW to deal with the actions of others.

To Consider: What happens when your triggered self meets someone else's triggered self?

DO YOUR OWN WORK FIRST! Take the board out of your own eye before trying to take the speck out of someone else's eye. This is the path of Christ. This is the path of humility.

There is a greater likelihood that you will have healthy interactions with others as you do your own work and meet God in your deepest human self. As you do so, you are renewed in your mind, your heart is healed and you are increasingly anchored in wise love (Philippians 1:9-10). From this place you will mature in knowing how to show up when someone else experiences triggers within them.

The Process - Ask for a Volunteer to go first.

Stand up.

Leader - "What is a situation where you have been triggered?"

Volunteer responds.

Example - "I walk in the door from work, and my wife doesn't say anything to me, or she says something like, 'Can you do this?' or 'You need to take care of your children?'"

Leader - "What happens inside you when that happens?"

Example - "I get angry and resentful because that was the first thing said or unsaid."

Leader - "Where do you feel that in your body? What does it feel like? Place your hands there."

Example - "I feel it in my gut, and its like a knot."

Leader - "Ball up your hands like a knot and press into your gut."

Teaching Piece: There is often a pattern in life to how we feel things and where they show up in our bodies, our deep wounds are felt in the same place as low level triggers, which is why our reaction is sometimes so far out of balance, a small thing becomes irrationally large because it triggered a deeper wound. Pay attention to where you feel the triggers in your life.

Leader - "Where does this reaction come from? What is your reaction telling your about yourself? What's the story behind the reaction? What are your judgements that come from the reaction?"

Example - "The story/judgements are that my wife doesn't care about me, she doesn't see how much I've done for the family, she doesn't respect me. It's telling me that I want something

different when I come home. It comes from a desire to be loved when I come through the door, and welcomed.”

Leader - “Thank you. In a normal situation what will you do when you are triggered this way. How will you act?”

Example - “I get angry, and go to my office and do some more work, so I guess I withdraw. Sometimes, I’ll ask how I can help, and try to fix and make things right for her. I’ll get angry with the kids immediately, and stern with them, telling them how they should treat their mother better. And sometimes I’ll walk up and give my wife a hug and tell her, it sounds like it’s been a hard day, I’m sorry about that. Whats going on for you and is there anything you need?”

Leader - “What part of you do those actions come out of - False, Broken, or True?”

Example - “In my brokenness I’m triggered and thats the stories and judgements, I act out of my false self when I withdraw to my office, when I fix and please her, and my tyrant when I get angry with the kids without knowing what happened. And I act out of my true self when I hug her and acknowledge her and put aside my own hurt of not being greeted.”

Leader - “Thank You. Are you aware of what you are afraid of and what your good and holy desires are beneath each of those false and broken ways of showing up?” You might have to ask follow up questions or break it down for the volunteer.

Example - “I’m afraid of other people not being ok, because then I’m not ok, so I fix and please, I scared of rejection, so when I’m rejected I get angry and withdraw or please or fix. And the Tyrant is really about pleasing and fixing as well. The good and holy desire is to be loved and accepted, to be respected and acknowledged for what I do for the family when I come home.”

Leader - “What are the messages you hear from your false self in those places?”

Example - “I hear, you need to make her happy or life is going to be miserable; I hear, you’re a failure, you’re not loved, so why even try.”

Leader - “Thank You. Would you take a moment to speak with God, and tell him about this situation, your fears, your good and holy desires, your emotions?” (you can do it as a prayer, have a cross, or have another man/woman stand in the place of God)

Example - “Father, when I go home I’m often triggered, and I feel angry, because I’m scared of rejection, and scared the I’m not respected. I want to be acknowledged, respected, and I want love and acceptance.”

Leader - “What do you notice in your body (with that knot in your gut), now that you have spoken this out?”

Example - Its loosening or its tightening

Leader - "Now if you're willing, take an open posture, and invite God into those places."

Example - "Father, I invite you into my anger, and fear, and I invite you into my longings and desires to be loved, respected and accepted."

Leader - "Thank you. Now, where in your body do you feel being loved, respected, and accepted?" (or whatever it is the man or woman desires...often we feel it in the same place in our body, so if that happens point it out, that this is how our brokenness and wounding can be redeemed)

Example - "I feel that in my gut as well but it's slightly different, a loosening."

Leader - Ask men in the R Group to one at a time, press in to that place (in his gut) and speak what's in their heart for the men, a couple words, of blessing. Remind the volunteer that our bodies have memory, to take it in this blessing.

Leader - "Now whenever you are triggered in this same way, remember this position of openness to God, and being loved and blessed by your brothers."

Leader - Awareness Round - Ask the man or woman what they are aware of after going through that process. (if it's been intensely emotional, you may need to give the man or woman some space to be on their own, to let it sink in before you ask these questions. If ask him if he'd like to take a moment to himself, and then, go to the group questions)

Leader - Any action you would like to take around this awareness, a stretch?

Leader - Awareness Round - Men in the Group, what are you aware of after seeing this?

If you have time, you could process another man or woman. If not you could ask the other men in the group if there is a stretch that they would like to do based on seeing this process.