



Dealing with Triggers as a Facilitator during Rock Work

- It is normal and healthy to be impacted by a person's story. A facilitator may connect to feelings of sadness, compassion, and anger while listening to a story.
- Our goal is to be present with the attendee, which may mean experiencing emotion with them, but to remain in an objective space. In this space we are not sidetracked by our emotions and rendered incapable of guiding the person through a process that will be helpful to them.
- Having an emotional reaction to a person's story does not necessarily mean that you are being 'triggered.' It can be an empathetic response to their story, which creates a connection with the attendee.

How do you know when you are triggered?

- What does being "triggered" look like?
 - A strong emotional reaction to the person's story
 - Judgments about the person(s) who has wounded the attendee
 - Aligning yourself with the attendee "against" that person(s)
 - Clouded vision and insight into how best to help the attendee work through their block
 - Failure to see that the person who has inflicted the harm is NOT the block, but rather the messages, beliefs or false self who is in reaction to the wounding
 - Misidentifying the "part" as the wounding party and creating a process that focuses on him/her as opposed to finding the part within the attendee which is in reaction to the wounding party

Note: Our goal in Rock Work is to help the attendee experience a connection to their truest self which is anchored in God and in his love and power. Failing to direct the attendee to their own inner work in relation to their story by focusing on the external person or situation will not accomplish our goal. It is important to find "the part" **within the attendee** that needs to be addressed. For example: a false self which attempts to protect or provide for the wounded/broken self (the bitter one, the unforgiving one, the judge, the withdrawer...), or the beliefs/messages which block the person from experiencing strength, love, identity, etc. Dealing with this core part will not change what happened to the attendee but it will help the attendee to live life from this true self, connected to God's love and power.

The Facilitator's response to being triggered and potential personal work:

- As a facilitator it may be necessary to step back from leading the attendee through a process if you are not able to regain objectivity and lead from a centered place.
- You can share in a huddle what is going on to gain perspective and determine with the team if you need to have someone else step in.

- The question you can ask yourself: “Am I able in this moment to acknowledge that this person’s story has touched an area of my life which needs attention, and can I lay that aside for now to be fully present to what the attendee needs?”
- If you find yourself still reacting as described above, the answer is no. There is no shame in this. What is most important is what does this attendee need.
- What they don’t need is for the facilitator to exacerbate a person’s wound and their response to it by failing to help the attendee deal with their own inner struggle and block around the wound.
- We fail to help the attendee when we remain triggered and in reaction to their story – which now brings our own story into the process.
- Note: Pay attention to the staff when you notice that a person’s story is having a deep impact on them and possibly “triggering” deeper wounds within them. You may need to acknowledge this in a huddle, bringing into the light, and guiding the staff to center themselves in the moment, in order to be present to the attendee.

Being triggered is an opportunity for growth and healing:

- What is this person’s story touching in my own story?
- What is the “block” within me that has kept me in my own wound, thus keeping alive a hurt or pain from others?
- Where is God in this story? Consider becoming more aware of God’s presence in your story and how he is there to meet you with compassion, healing, and freedom.
- We can use the trigger to move out of our false selves and out of our broken, wounded self by turning to God to experience his healing presence, giving space for the true self to emerge.

Thoughts and Questions to consider:

- How do you navigate triggers in your personal life?
- Do you have a pattern of being reactive to difficult encounters with others? This may be a sign that there is unfinished work to be addressed.
- Triggers remain as long as we are placing too much emphasis on externals (people and circumstances) to secure us – through whatever means we typically search for security.
- Being triggered can reveal those parts of us which we are expecting others to be the solution to our inner pain, hurts and wounds. When they fail to measure up, we are triggered and can react in defensive ways. Typically, this is unconscious on our part.
- What aspects of your “broken self” are stuck in a wound or story?
- Every false self is brought to life as a way to protect and defend our painful story and the wounds. In surrendering the false self and bringing the story and wound into the light with God and trusted others we are on the hopeful journey of freedom.
- One key way to know you have been healed of your wounds, and thus from the trigger, is when you have compassion for the person or situation who inflicted the wound.