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CD702: Working With People

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Learning Experience 4: Triad Review

During our four-day intensive course, we had the opportunity to process and debrief what we learned through a small group in the form of a triad. As a triad, each group consisted of three people and each had a role to fulfill: speaker, listener, and observer. As a speaker, I had the opportunity to share my thoughts and insights acquired from each lecture. As a listener, I was given the role to carefully listen, reflect, empathize, and form questions that allowed the speaker to dig deeper into processing their thoughts, feelings, and experiences. Finally, the observer gave feedback to both roles to positively affirm what went well and critically analyze areas of growth. The two other colleagues in my group were A Reum Song and Hervé Talom whom I had roughly 10 hours to share our time with.

Our first session on the first day mostly consisted of introducing ourselves and learning how to follow the three roles effectively. In all honesty, because we were new to each other and the system of communication, it took us some time to feel comfortable. I remember initially thinking that the triad system felt limiting and kept me from sharing my thoughts and inputs freely. However, I quickly learned why the system was in place: as an active talker, I found myself talking a lot in the first session to not only lead, but to fill the gap of awkward silences. It was pretty much obvious to the whole group, especially myself, that I needed to grow in being a better listener and learning to be comfortable with silence. All things considered, I believe we had a successful session as we began implementing the triad communication system. Each person was given ample time to introduce themselves, share their thoughts, and be heard.

By the second session of Day 1, we were quick to begin our conversation by following the triad guidelines. Knowing that I was in a safe place with colleagues who had understanding

of soul care and dedication to confidentiality, when it was my turn to share my areas of “darkness” I felt comfortable to commit to honesty. I shared about my life-long issues dealing with my addictive personality where I jumped from addictions to addictions. Some addictions like working out and learning to play the drums brought healthy benefits to me while strong pull to gambling and drinking wreaked havoc. Through our conversation, we attempted to narrow down what led me to addictions. A Reum, who was the listener, recognized that addictive personality may not be the issue but identifying the hurt or pain that lead me to run away to my vices.

Through this session, I was once again astounded by the power of healthy vulnerability. After I shared, when it was my turn to listen and observe, I noticed how both A Reum and Herve were a lot more comfortable than before. I believe they felt safer sharing their heart after I displayed trust in them first. Another thing that stood out to me was that I was able to gather more information whilst being an observer than a listener; again, indicating the fact that I needed to learn to listen better. While observing, I was free from having to respond and simply focused on listening. On the other hand, while listening, instead of simply focusing on the speaker, I found my mind wandering off to similar situations I had in my experience. Naturally, I was tempted to share my thoughts, not to smolder them with information, but to provide guidance and empathize through my experiences. However, even with good intentions, I realized that I am in error of hindering the speaker to have their time to gather their thoughts and emotions, and process. Instead, I was left with the task to ask better questions that allowed the speaker to go deeper. Even these questions did not come naturally to me and I had to learn by imitating questions asked by my colleagues. Questions such as “how did that situation make you feel?” or “what emotions describe your feeling when you think of so and so” or “why do you think that person’s remarks brought those thoughts and feelings out of you?” were found to be extremely effective and quick to lead the speaker to honestly assess the condition of their heart.

By the third day, I found myself growing as both a speaker and a listener. As we spent more time together, I was better able to organize my thoughts and share them using precise

words to describe what I was feeling in times of pain and trauma. As a listener, I learned that the key was to do “less with my mind.” Active listening requires that I simply focus on the speaker. When I let go of my urge to fix or solve their problems, I was simply left to better empathize with open ears. My mind stopped racing to find solutions and simply listened. Through it, I also realized that I was observing the person as a whole better, not just what was spoken. Facial expressions, tone of voice, body language and more were all useful information that helped me better ask the right questions at the right time. The right question at the right time was more effective than any advice that I could provide: it allowed the speaker to think of solutions themselves while considering their emotions and situation better than anyone could ever do. Furthermore, when directed correctly, I realized that I can direct them to find Jesus in every situation of their life. When the speaker found Jesus in the very moment they faced, it became a kairos moment where now they were able to engage God and communicate with Him through it all. I learned that an active listener is someone who sacrificially gives their time to get his/her focus off themselves and onto the speaker. I was able to make it less about myself and more about the speaker and how God is working through them. I was actually doing ministry and making it about God, not me.

In my assessment of my colleagues, I want to say that they were hard workers who desired to learn and grow. A Reum had a deep level of understanding emotions and asked powerful questions. She was an amazing listener and I found myself sharing and understanding myself better through our sessions. Herve had a vast amount of knowledge and experience and shared his insights in ways that were helpful. He deeply empathized as a listener and, as a speaker, I clearly felt that I was cared for. If anything, Herve had a few distractions from where he was tuning in that could possibly bother the speaker. If I were to give them a grade, I would give A Reum Song: A+; Hervé Talom: A-.