

Critical Assessment Form

List the 8 books (4 required, 4 chosen) and/or any handouts, articles, blogs, videos you've read/watched:

1. *Power of Mentoring* – Martin Sanders
2. *Soulcare* – Rob Reimer
3. *Troubled Minds* – Amy Simpson
4. *How People Change* – Timothy Lane & Paul Tripp
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.

1) Why were these chosen?

Power of Mentoring was chosen because mentoring is an area that I am developing in my ministry. I am also a mentoree and have witnessed first-hand the benefits of mentoring.

Soulcare was chosen because a mentor of mine highly recommended it to me. They recommended it to me so that we could walk together through it to help me grow in my own awareness and brokenness for God to be able to redeem and restore those areas of brokenness. They claimed it helped their walk with God grow deeper as well. I want this for my walk with God, so it only made sense to read it.

How People Change was chosen because I wanted to dive deeper into understanding how people can biblically change to be able to help others (and myself) to live a changed life in Jesus. This was another recommended book by a mentor of mine many years ago, so I figured now is the time to read it!

Try Softer was chosen because anxiety and stress are commonplace for everyone including myself. As the subtitle states, I wanted to learn about a fresh approach to moving out of anxiety and stress and into a life with connection and joy, but obviously with a Christ-centered view.

2) What was challenging? What was the most helpful? What was not helpful?

In *Power of Mentoring*, what was helpful is that discipleship is about specific spiritual maturity and developmental issues. Sometimes, when a person that I am discipling doesn't seem to be taking any steps in their faith is because they didn't think of a step to take. Asking someone that I am discipling what kinds of steps that they want to take has been helpful already.

In *Designing Your Life*, what was most helpful was the concept of mind mapping for getting unstuck. A false belief about myself is that I am not creative, so this tool will help me to get the creative juices flowing. What was challenging was chapter 11 about "Failure Immunity." It was challenging because failure is a concept that I struggle with and find it challenging to see my failures as "just the raw material of success."¹

In *Soulcare*, the most helpful areas of the book were the first two chapters on identity and repentance. Reimer reinforced that God loves me before I ever did anything and that my value and worth was settled at the Cross. His chapter on repentance reinforced the conversation about living in the light during one of our class sessions. I am challenged by when and where to share

¹ William Burnett and David J. Evans, *Designing Your Life: How to Build a Well-Lived, Joyful Life*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2016, 187.

the victory from my sin struggles, so Reimer's chapter on repentance was a helpful guide on this as well. A challenge for me is to understand if I need deliverance.

In *How People Change*, the model for change that the authors give in HEAT-THORNS-CROSS-FRUIT was a helpful guide to what Scripture says about how people change. This model will be helpful in walking people through change that are in my sphere of influence. What was challenging, but convicting was the part about heart idolatry and tying this back to the Ten Commandments. While I already knew that the sin beneath sins was idolatry of the heart, this is a continual challenge in any Christ-follower's life (so of course in mine as well).

What was challenging about *Creative Minority* was about the loose network vs. the covenant community contrast. I have only witnessed communities where they are more like loose networks despite being a formal church community. What was helpful is a reminder of how my generation, the Millennials, are narrative driven as authoritative. This is a reminder that our stories are much more powerful than our truths in a secular context.

In *The Road Trip that Changed the World*, what was most helpful was how the author utilized a historical person's life as the vehicle for how the world changed and what is the Christ-follower's response. Sayers's reminder that the everyday aspect of living is what should drive the Christ-follower into the spiritual and is in fact intrinsically spiritual.

In *Difficult Conversations*, what was challenging was about the Third Story. What I was taught in both my personal and professional settings was to share how another person's actions made me feel, so starting from an impartial observer perspective will be challenging. What was helpful were the objections and questions at the latter end of the book. Exploring the roots of the identity issues and re-evaluating them will be a helpful tool when challenged with identity in difficult conversations.

In *Try Softer*, the chapter on Attachment Theory was personally unnecessary since I have either read about this or have had multiple lectures on it. Understandably, many others have not heard of this, so it's presence in the book makes sense. What was helpful were the practical tools at the end of chapters.

3) How have the readings continued to develop your approach to working with people? Were there any paradigm shifts for you? If so, what?

Designing Your Life will be a useful tool to lead my own life to be an example to others especially for those who are looking to get closer to Jesus. While there were no paradigm shifts in this book, this will be a tool to point others to (which I already have with my wife).

In *Power of Mentoring*, there were no paradigm shifts, but an affirmation of the importance of mentoring and being mentored. I am a product of mentoring, so continuing this legacy is a key aspect of my life.

Soulcare, along with other books about the internal life of a believer, have shifted the paradigm in which I approach working with people. It has challenged me to go much deeper with the people in my area of influence and my network of people. There is a holy discontent in me now with staying at the surface when I interact with others.

In *How People Change*, this provides me with a model to use for those who maybe looking for biblical change in their life. It wasn't a paradigm shift, but this added more tools in my discipleship toolbox to be able to develop myself and others.

Creative Minority was a reminder that a characteristic of Christ-centered relationships is stubbornly loyal. While not a paradigm shift, this is a reminder that I cannot simply write off a relationship simply because that person has bothered me or moved away (as many do in one's lifetime).

A nugget from *The Road Trip that Changed the World* that could be helpful in working with people is found in his topic about relationships especially that of marriage. I primarily minister to young adults, so romantic relationships and marriage are on many of their minds. Sayers reminds me that people expect marriage to help themselves individually self-actualize and providing transcendent meaning to life. This is a selfish and self-centered view on marriage and can corrupt the meaning of marriage in a single Christ-follower.

As mentioned above, in *Difficult Conversations*, a helpful tool in my approach to working with people will be this "Third Story" approach when conflicts arise. This was a paradigm shift for me. It will be helpful to bridge the gap between myself and the people that I have been in conflict with. My tendency is to think objectively about the conflict, but oftentimes my objectivity is really my subjectivity. Starting with the Third Story is a great place to start.

No paradigm shifts from *Try Softer*, but this book has increased my awareness of anxiety and stress in myself and will be helpful when working with others.

4) How will the readings be applied to your personal and professional life?

From *Designing Your Life*, I plan to incorporate the Odyssey Planning as well as the Mind Mapping concept by adding these tools into my regular rhythms of life. Mind mapping will be a regular tool to use, but Odyssey Planning will happen less.

From *Power of Mentoring*, I recently started a "Ministry Philosophy" in which mentoring is emphasized in it (both as a mentor and as a mentoree).

For *Soulcare*, this is a book that I plan to use to develop leaders and other congregants in my church community.

For *How People Change*, I would like to go through the study guide with groups of people in my life that are looking to see transformative, biblically rooted change in their lives.

Creative Minority can be applied to my life as a reminder to live a holistic life in Jesus where a relationship with Jesus must also result in the participation of the Church throughout the world.

From *The Road Trip that Changed the World*, Sayers points out how new movements can influence or add an extra layer of identity to our faith. The application is to approach popular Christian books and conferences with the right heart posture. Instead of becoming followers of this book, conference, or new movement, I am reminded to follow Jesus and what the Word has to say about looking to God for my identity.

I have a tendency to avoid challenging conversations, so *Difficult Conversations* encourages me to have tools when approaching difficult conversations to restore relationships.

The practices and exercises at the end of chapters in *Try Softer* will help not only in my personal life, but in my ministry when ministering to others that are challenged with stress and anxiety.