

PUSHING BOUNDARIES AS A MENTOR

{ adapted from the teaching material of Dr. Amy Davis Abdallah, Dr. Wanda Walborn + Lisa Plunket }

As mentors, we push boundaries with our women not because we are curious, or nosy, or want to be controversial. We push boundaries because doing so -- with love, wisdom and discernment -- is what we learn from Jesus Himself.

In John 4, Jesus engages with the Samaritan woman. In Matthew 19, Jesus has a conversation with the rich young ruler. In both encounters, Jesus speaks firmly, moving step by step to go deeper and deeper into the hearts and minds of these two. But He also approaches each one differently; it is likely that He was watching them as they conversed, learning about them, and “double-listening” so that the Holy Spirit could sharpen His discernment about each of them. Jesus established trust with each one, then asked hard, probing, open-ended questions intended to allow the woman and the ruler to arrive at their own conclusions.

The beauty of what Jesus models for us here is surely rooted in the fact that He knew who He was and Whose He was. He trusted God His Father and was not afraid or insecure to speak or act from His place as beloved Son. He did not believe the lies that He needed something other than the words of His Father to sustain Him, save Him or fulfill Him (see Matthew 4). As mentors, it is important that we stand firm in Truth as well. We must know and internalize our true identity as beloved and fully accepted daughters of God, and speak and act from a foundation of fearlessness, security and intimacy with Jesus. Dr. Rob Reimer likes to say that we can only take others as far as we ourselves have gone. If we are at a 6 out of 10 on the scale of spiritual health, we can only take our women to a 6 out of 10 on the same scale. Let's always be moving together toward complete spiritual wholeness and healthfulness.

Key Points to Remember

Go after the lies that you have internalized:

- The lies we believe affect our interactions with others.
- When we interact poorly, we can trigger other people's lies and pain. • Work with the Holy Spirit to know the Truth of your worth, value, acceptance and significance, so that you can move your women toward spiritual healthfulness.

Different kinds of questions:

- Informative Questions (to gain general information)
 - Be a student, not a detective
 - Look for trauma, triggers, lies, wounds, vows, patterns
- Leading Questions (to intentionally direct conversation toward areas of strength or weakness)
 - Lead, but let the woman discover for herself
- Directive Questions (to initiate an anticipated insight or action)
 - Help the woman connect the dots of her story

Some good questions to ask:

- What do you think God thinks of that?
- If Jesus were here right now, what would He say to you?
- Where do you think God was when that happened?
- Why do you think that upset you so much?
- Why do you think you reacted that way?

Application Points + Suggestions Add a link to the videos that discuss the mentoring groups and types of folks in them

Don't get stuck:

- **The Venters** complain week after week about the same thing, but don't deal with their own stuff and do not seem to make forward progress with Jesus.

Ask: "What exactly is the Lord bringing up for you to deal with right now?" Urge her toward the issue underlying her venting.

- **The Hiders** give the classic answer, "I don't know" and try to bury their heads in the sand. ○ Tell them: "We'll give you time to think, and we don't mind the silence as we wait for you to formulate your answer." Urge them to understand that they are worth waiting for.

- **The Mask-Wearers** present something other than what is really going on, and often respond with, "Fine. I'm fine. Things are good."

Ask: "What is the primary feeling you've been living with for the last month?" Urge them to move past the discomfort of someone (or the Holy Spirit!) pressing in, often for the first time.

- **The Talkers** want/need attention and to take control of the conversation or the group. State: "We're focusing on what the Lord is doing in ____ right now. Let's listen to the Holy Spirit for her." or "Let's hang on a moment, and listen in silence. Let me take the lead here until / unless I sense it's the right time for others to jump in." Urge them to become comfortable with silence and a healthy dose of introspection.

Be intentional:

- During EMPOWERone lectures, discern what is going on in the classroom, and keep track of where the Holy Spirit landed. In particular, pay attention to the women in your group, so you can appropriately follow up with them later.
- If there seems to be a lack of engagement, discern when is the right time to address it, and why the disengagement might be happening. Simply asking, "Sue, you seem to be rather [*fill in the blank with the emotion / feeling you are discerning*]; what's going on in you right now?" can unlock a lot of doors to the heart
- Discern what your women need, NOT what makes you feel comfortable.