

TPM SESSION EXAMPLE TWO: Frank's Faltering Faith

EMOTION - MEMORY - BELIEF - TRUTH – TRANSFORMATION

Mentee: "I have been in a real funk for the past several weeks! It all started when our pastor presented his sermon series on intimacy with Father God. He talked about how we are children of God, that He loves us, that we can come boldly before Him, and all that kind of stuff. As I listened to what he was saying, I began to realize how little of it seemed true for me. I believe my pastor was doing his best to speak the truth, and some part of me knows that what he said is true. But most of what I heard had no impact on me. Like I said, very little of it seemed to apply to me personally. And ever since I left the church parking lot that day, I can't seem to shake the thought that maybe those truths really don't apply to me." (E1)

Mentor: "How does thinking that thought make you feel?" (E2)

Mentee: "It makes me feel hopeless. I just don't get it. I do my best to do what I believe God wants me to do: I pray, I read from my Bible, I go to church as often as I can, I listen to praise music in the car, I try my best not to sin, but none it seems to make a difference. I still feel distant from God, I still don't see Him working in my life, and I can count on one hand the times that I honestly felt loved by God. I don't know what else I need to do. I am burning out!" (E5) > (E8)

Mentor: "What comes to mind as you focus on how that makes you feel?" (E10)

Mentee: "I'm not really sure how to describe what I am seeing in my mind. It is like I'm standing at the edge of a dark chasm. It feels like I am supposed to cross it, but I can't even see the other side. I'm just standing there." (E13) > (E1)

Mentor: "How does that make you feel?" (E2)

Mentee: "Hopeless." (E5) > (E8)

Mentor: "And what comes to mind when you focus on that?" (E10)

Mentee: "I think about my parents divorce. I was nine years old. I specifically remember the day that my mom packed me and my brother in the car and drove across the country to my aunt's house. I felt so confused and hopeless; this is a lot like how I feel right now!" (E13) > (E1)/(E5) > (E8)

Mentor: "What comes to mind as you focus on that?" (E10)

Mentee: "I remember sitting in the back of the car during that trip. It seemed like my younger brother cried the whole time. We were both scared. I had a million questions for my mom, but she would just ignore me and tell us to keep quiet. I couldn't make sense of the situation, which left me feeling out of control and helpless!" (E14) > (E15) > (M1) + (M4) (*The Mentee's response was descriptive of both what he remembers and what he feels. Because of this, the "Looping Question" is asked.*)

Mentor: “Why does believing that make you feel out of control and helpless?” (M8)

Mentee: “Because, no matter what I did, I could not get my mother to explain what was happening. We were ripped from our home, mom was upset, dad was yelling at us from the end of the driveway, and the only explanation I could get was, “We are going to Aunt Mary’s house!” (M4) > (M6)

Mentor: “How does that make you feel?” (M3)

Mentee: “It makes me feel helpless.” (M1)

Mentor: “Why do you feel helpless?” (M2)

Mentee: “Because something bad is happening, but I don’t even understand it, let alone know how to fix it!” (M4) > (M6)

Mentor: “How does that make you feel?” (M3)

Mentee: “I feel like I am helpless.” (M4) > (M5)

Mentor: “Why does believing that make you feel helpless?” (M8)

Mentee: “Because I am helpless. There is nothing I can do to fix the problem.” (M12) > (M13) > (M14)

Mentor: “Not that it is true, but does it *feel* or *seem* true that you are helpless?” (BELIEF Box)

Mentee: “Yes. That feels very true.”

Mentor: “May we present that belief to the Lord?” (TRUTH Box)

Mentee: “Yeah.”

Mentor: “Lord, what do you want Frank to know?” (TRUTH Box)

Mentee: “...I don’t really hear or see anything...,but I do get the sense that it wasn’t really my problem to fix. It is as though I was attempting to fix a problem that was impossible for me to fix. That wasn’t my job.”

Mentor: “Does it still feel or seem true that you are helpless?” (TRANSFORMATION Box)

Mentee: “No, that doesn’t really seem true to me anymore. It was true that I was unable to get my questions answered at the moment, and I couldn’t really do anything to fix the problem, but that doesn’t mean that I am helpless.”

Mentor: (Checks the Clock) “What are you feeling now?” (E2)

Mentee: “I’m left feeling kind of depressed.” (E5) > (E8)

Mentor: “What comes to mind as you focus on that?” (E10)

Mentee: “I’m thinking again about being in the car with my mom and brother.” (E14) > (E15) > (M4) > (M6) (Because this memory came to the person’s mind earlier in the TPM session, this repetition indicates that he has moved to the MEMORY Box.)

Mentor: “How does that make you feel?” (M3)

Mentee: “I feel bad thinking about why we were driving away from my dad. I obviously know that it had to do with his drinking and outbursts. But I can’t help but also feel like I was partially to blame for the divorce.” (M4) > (M6)

Mentor: “How does that make you feel?” (M3)

Mentee: “It makes me feel kind of guilty. I feel like I could have done more to help mom with my little brother or with cleaning up after my dad. I know their divorce wasn’t my fault, but it feels like it was, at least, in part.” (M4) + (M1) *(Since the person has described a combination of emotion and belief, the “looping” question may be asked. Revisit the second part of Chapter 14 for more on this topic.)*

Mentor: “Why does believing that their divorce was partially your fault make you feel guilty?” (M8)

Mentee: “Because I should have done more! I never got to see my dad again after we left that day. I should have done everything I could to help them stay together!” (M9) > (M10)

Mentor: “How does that make you feel?” (M3)

Mentee: “I feel sad, depressed, guilty...hopeless.” (M1)

Mentor: “Why do you feel that way?” (M2)

Mentee: “...because...what kind of nine year old kid does nothing to help keep his family together?” (M4) > (M6)

Mentor: “How does that make you feel?” (M3)

Mentee: “I feel guilty. It was partially my fault. I am a terrible person. I was then, and I am now.” (M4) > (M6)

Mentor: “How does it make you feel to believe that you are a terrible person?” (M3)

Mentee: “I feel guilty and depressed.” (M1)

Mentor: “Why do you feel that way?” (M2)

Mentee: “Because I am a terrible person.” (M4) > (M5)

Mentor: “Why does believing that you are a terrible person make you feel guilty and depressed?” (M8)

Mentee: “Because that is what I am; a terrible person who is guilty of splitting-up his parents.” (M12) > (M13) > (M14)

Mentor: “Not that it is true, but does it *seem* or *feel* true that you are a terrible person?” (BELIEF Box)

Mentee: “Yes. That feels true.”

Mentor: “Lord, what do you want Frank to know?” (TRUTH Box)

Mentee: “...I sense that He wants me to know that even if I could have done more to help, my parents were responsible for what happened, not me. It wasn't that nine year old kid's fault that his parents split up. I am not a terrible person. I was just in a bad situation.”

Mentor: “Does it still feel or seem true that you are a terrible person?” (TRANSFORMATION Box)

Mentee: “No. What happened was terrible, but I am not terrible because of it. And as I am sitting here, it is like the Lord is reminding me of what I started with today. I can definitely notice a shift. When I came here, I felt stuck. I have been working as hard as I can to somehow fix my relationship with Him. But I sense that He wants me to stop. It is like He is trying to get me to see that the problem is bigger than I can fix, but that He has fixed it for me. And I think about those passages that my pastor was talking about and it now seems obvious that the reason why I can relate to God as my Father is due to what He has done, not because of something I have to keep on doing. That gives me hope!”

Mentor: (Checks the Clock) “What are you feeling now?” (E2)

Mentee: “I feel a lot better. I know that I am not done, but I can already tell that this was really helpful. This was important! And I guess I need to have God convince me of those truths my pastor was talking about just like He did with these truths today!”

Mentor: “Alright, then would this be a good place to stop for today?”

Mentee: “Yes, I think so...”