

CLEAR VISION

A monthly publication of the Center for Christian Life Enrichment

Grappling with God Preview | Divinely Designed Relationships



The LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him." (Genesis 2:18)

At the Center for Christian Life Enrichment, we are divinely designed for relationship. Created in the image and likeness of God, we are born with certain traits that encode us for connection. Even our personalities are shaped by experiences we have with others. From our nature to our nurture, we hunger and yearn for safe, nourishing, affectionate, comforting, supportive, mature, and intimate relationships.

And yet, we spend so much of our time trying to hide from others. As much as we long to be seen and known, we constantly try to conceal ourselves behind masks and facades. The reason, I believe, is that we see ourselves as flawed and lacking, and some-

how totally unworthy of being loved. Afraid of being exposed as objectionable and unlovable, we try to become invisible, or else we project a superior air to keep everyone else at arm's length. Out of fear and shame, we hold back our spouses, families, friends, and even God. We are even disconnected from ourselves.

This epitomized my life in the late 1980s when, as a Christian counselor, I joined a therapy group in downtown Chicago led by a man named Bob Wright. It has been suggested to me that I participate in Bob's groups in order to become more alive and potent. I came to this experience being very comfortable with groups. I had been participating in them all the way back to high school, and I had been lead-

ing groups in the ministry for ten years. This group, however, was nothing like any of my prior experiences. First of all, it was not a traditional group in which people talk about their issues or recent experiences. It was what Bob called an "assignment group," meaning people were intently focused on learning, growing and experiencing genuine openness and honesty with each other in the here and now. I found it totally chaotic, confusing, and unnerving.

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Although I pretended to be engaged, I sat back and observed, silently judging everyone else. I

couldn't connect with these people because I saw myself as superior to them. The truth, however, was that I was terrified! With their emotional intensity and angry

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confrontations at times, the group made me extremely uncomfortable. What I couldn't see, however, was that the source of my unease was myself—not them.

As soon as group was over, I tore out of there, sometimes literally running down the hall under the guise of catching my train. One night as I rushed to leave, Bob Wright raced after me and literally pushed me up against the wall. With his finger in my face he yelled, "I know your game. I know what you're doing. You come across as if you are so caring and kind, but you're mean and judgmental. You're not what you make yourself out to be."

My first instinct was to fling this guy off me. But on a much deeper level, I had the completely opposite reaction. For the first time, I was seen and known. As Bob ripped into me, exposing me as a fraud to myself, he gave me the most loving of gifts—the truth. Only by embracing that difficult truth could I ever break through the shell I had built over the years in hopes of becoming invulnerable to pain and hurt. Only then, could I truly connect with others, to see them as they were and to allow them to see me.

My relationships with others and God have been the founda-

tion of my journey of transformation. Reaching out to others for feedback about myself has been the cornerstone of the remaking of my most authentic self. The truth I have received from others has been the raw materials used in the reconstruction of my most Christ-like self. I now trust that for me to become like Jesus, I must be fostering authentic community with others who are dedicated to our mutual transformation through the sharing of truth with each another.

*This article is from the first chapter of my soon to be released book, *Grappling with God: The Battle for Authentic Faith*. Watch for the pre-release resources we will be making available.

Upcoming Events at CLE

You can get more information on these events on our website: www.cle.us.com/events

Women who Work Seminar	April 14th, 2011
The Wright Developmental Model Unpacked	April 16th, 2011
CLE Spring Retreat	May 13th-15th, 2011
Leadership Group for Graduates	May 21st, 2011

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Calling All Graduates: Leadership Group Launch

By: Rich Blue



We all want to finish well. Whatever race or battle we are in, we want to triumph over all our challenges and adversities. The Apostle Paul wrote:

Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last, but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. Therefore I do not run like someone running aimlessly; I do not fight like a boxer beating the air. No, I strike a blow to my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.

1 Cor 9:24-27

The Leadership Group for Graduates (LGG) is going to be an exceptional venue in which graduates from CLE's Assignment Groups will be able to further their growth and training in order to continue to live exceptional lives. Without ongoing support and coaching, all of us will lose our edge and suffer the effects of transformational erosion. Though we are tempted to slip back into the illusion of self-sufficiency; wisdom knows that we all will gradually lose our effectiveness without the kind of ongoing support and training we received while we were in our Assignment Groups. We know the CLE model for personal transformation works. What meaningful reason would we have to not continue?

To facilitate that ongoing support, we have created an advanced leadership program that will

inspire you to take your life to the next level of power, meaning and satisfaction. You will build on the foundation you have laid in your Assignment Groups and be encouraged to fight the good fight of becoming our most Christ-like selves. Candidates for LGG must have graduated from a CLE Assignment Group and are presently (or willing to start) leading a group. Groups may include CLE Satellite Groups, small groups at church or in your neighborhood, and training groups at work.

We would love to have you consider this powerful avenue to continue your growth work and will be kicking off the start of the LGG with an all day training on *Saturday, May 21st from 7:00am-4:30pm*. During this interactive workshop, participants will have an opportunity to take part in shaping their own Ideal State Action Plan (ISAP). The ISAP is a tool devised by Bob Wright that helps leaders and organizations create a strategic plan to transform their lives and or businesses. As a result of this all day workshop, you will get a jump start in identifying your life mission, vision, and purpose. You will learn how to identify a BHAG (Big Hairy Audacious Goal) and use it to inspire your growth.

At CLE, our dedication to mutuality, self-knowledge, and a relentless pursuit of the truth informs the LGG approach to leadership and leadership development. What better way to deepen the positive potential impact you can have on your world by continuing to build and sharpen the skills you have already begun to develop.



Christian Life Enrichment Staff Directory



Richard Blue
M.A., LCPC, NCC
Clinical Director
rich.blue@cle.us.com
(847) 272-3684, ext. 14
www.outoftheblueblog.us



Andrew Mercer
M.A., LPC
andrew.mercer@cle.us.com
(847) 272-3684, ext. 17
www.askmerce.com



Nancy Rollins
M.S., LCPC, NCC
nancy.rollins@cle.us.com
(847) 272-3684, ext. 13



Amy Gayer
M.A.
amy.gayer@cle.us.com
(847) 272-3684, ext. 18
www.amygayer.com



Gabriela Caballero Cantú
M.A., LPC
gabriela.cantu@cle.us.com
(847) 272-3684, ext. 15



Johnny Noto
M.A., LPC
johnny.noto@cle.us.com
(847) 272-3684, ext. 11
www.johnnynoto.com



3100 Dundee Rd. Ste 102, Northbrook, IL 60062
(847) 272-3684 | www.cle.us.com

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