

CLEAR VISION

A monthly publication of the Center for Christian Life Enrichment

Praying with Positive Regard



I was in my hot tub this morning praying. I was experiencing lots of emotions;

however, the predominant feeling was scared. I was aware of so many different things I was afraid of. First, my long time client at the Center for Christian Life Enrichment who is in the final stages of prostate cancer came to mind. He is valiantly battling to live one day at a time. I also thought about my son who is individuating and living his life as an adventure. His most recent daring episode involves traveling by land from the southern tip of South America to California. Finally, my wife, Sue, was on my heart. She is battling through challenging side effects associated with this rig-

orous 12 week detoxification process she has introduced us both to. (I might add, I may have been foolish when I decided to join her in this self imposed food famine. At the moment, I think I would rather be facing the dangers of backpacking through Central America than exorcising my toxins!)

As I was praying for Sue and the others, I suddenly noticed that there was a degree of desperation in my prayers. I was pleading and begging God for his support. I realized my prayers were full of drama and doubt. It was as if I was putting on a show for God, acting as if I needed to

exaggerate and be overly dramatic in order to solicit his support. In an instant, I became aware of myself and how I was being with God while I was praying. At CLE, we would say I was growing in consciousness. This was a very meaningful moment for me in my relationship with God and in my relationship with myself.

I am becoming increasingly aware of how uncomfortable I am being—being with myself, with others, and with God.

I am becoming increasingly aware of how uncomfortable I am being—being with myself, with

others, and with God. In the same way I use food to numb myself from what I am feeling and experiencing in the moment, I can see how I have

[Continued on page 2]

Praying with Positive Regard

used praying to do the same thing. I have a conversation with God, yet I am distracted and unaware of what I am feeling and thinking in the moment. It is like trying to have a meaningful conversation while watching TV. My prayers become like mindless chanting. They are actually distracting me from what I am doing and numbing me from what I am truly feeling and thinking in the moment.

This morning in that instant of insight, it was like I was witnessing the burning bush with Moses. I had a moment of

awareness. I suddenly realized I was praying for Sue as if she was a victim and asking God to rescue her. I was lobbying for a divine bailout. I was not being respectful of Sue nor holding her in positive regard. I was not picturing Sue as being whole and complete, made in the image of God, capable of navigating her life. I was seeing her as weak, pitiful, and incapable of facing the challenges before her on the journey of transformation into her most Christ-like self.

I felt free. I no longer needed to hold Sue as a victim. I was

not responsible for Sue. I did not need to manipulate God for divine aid. I felt hope. I knew Sue was strong, steadfast, capable, determined, and courageous. She was in a tough fight and needed powerful and wise coaches in her corner. She needed the support of the cloud of witnesses surrounding her and cheering her on spoken of in Hebrews 12. I was remembering both who I was praying for and who I was praying to. I was accurately perceiving her in the here and now. I was praying with positive regard.

Upcoming Events at CLE

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

Running Club	April 2nd , 2011
CLE Spring Retreat	May 13th-15th, 2011

Stay connected with CLE online!

Like us on Facebook, and read even more articles on our blogs

www.facebook.com/CenterforChristianLifeEnrichment.CLE

www.askmerce.com

www.amygayer.wordpress.com

www.johnnynoto.com

www.cle.us.com/blog

www.outoftheblueblog.us

Also, check out our CLEar Vision archives at www.cle.us.com



Paired Sharing with God

By: Rich Blue



One of the simplest yet powerful tools we use at CLE is paired sharing*. This is an exercise where two or more people agree to purposefully and intentionally alternate between sharing and listening to one another. We ask people to use a timer and have a set period of time in which they share, beginning with rounds of two to three minutes each. One person talks while their partner listens silently. The listeners suspend performing any of the normal activities associated with social and active listening. We ask them to avoid making empathic sounds and offering non-verbal gestures such as nodding, smiling, raising of the eyebrows, etc. When the speakers have completed their time to share, then the partners switch roles and the listeners becomes the sharers.

The speakers have the opportunity of having others listen to them without the fear of being interrupted or having the focus of attention taken off them. They have the chance to articulate what they think and how they feel without being influenced by the thoughts and cues of those who are listening to them. They are able to get to know themselves in a whole new way. The speakers are encouraged to free associate, speaking to themselves as if no one was there listening to them. As counselors at CLE, we teach them to almost ramble or babble, following their feeling and urges instead of speaking as if they were writing a paper or giving a speech. The objective is for the speakers to express their thoughts and feelings without attempting to control or censor them.

The listeners are asked to listen in an unorthodox way. While listening, they are expected to hold the speaker in positive regard. This means that the listeners envision the speakers as whole and complete persons who are able to support themselves in getting what they want and need. Listeners are asked to make their own internal process the priority of their focus and attention. Listeners are to pay attention to what they are thinking and feeling while listening attentively to their partners. They are not expected to reflect back what they have heard their partners say.

This exercise has been life transforming for those who have made paired sharing part of their ongoing disciplines at CLE. We are finding it to be especially effective with couples, helping them to connect, see, and hear each other. We have also found paired sharing to be beneficial in our relationships with God. We actually have an assignment in our spiritual growth series where people are invited to do a three minutes (sharing) by three minute (listening) paired share with God once a day for thirty days. This is proving to be a very challenging exercise which is deepening and strengthening peoples personal relationships with God.

Consider the opportunity to build your relationship with God through having a regular time of paired sharing. Consider it as a form of prayer or meditation designed to increase the openness and intimacy in your relationship with God.

** I am grateful to Bob Wright at the Wright Leadership Institute for introducing me to paired sharing.*

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.wordpress.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

You can now sign up to receive the CLEar Vision monthly newsletter when you visit our website www.cle.us.com.

You can also read and download back issues of the newsletter or find out other information about the Center for Christian Life Enrichment from our site.