

Module One Group Process

The Cause and Cure for Stress and Conflict

Activity #1: The Power of Thought

The leader begins by sharing: In the last lesson we learned how every feeling we have comes from what we think in the moment and that the human mind thinks. Let's play with this. Close your eyes and think about holding a lemon in your hands, see the color, feel the texture of the skin. Now cut it open, and take a bite.

Now ask everyone to open their eyes and ask them if their mouth is watering if they were able to see it, if they were able to taste it.

Ask them if there really was a lemon there or did their thoughts create the entire experience.

That's what we do moment by moment, the power of thought creates sensory experiences that may or may not be real.

Ask the group and discuss if they ever had an experience that they thought one thing and it turned out to be completely different.

Activity #2: Trains of Thought

As we said before, we all hop on trains of thought; it's just what our minds do. But sometimes we have a train of thought we hop on over and over and over again, and it takes us in a direction we don't want to go. Everybody does this. For some people it's an insecure train. For some people it's a scared train. For some people it's a reckless train. For some people it's a "I'm going to hurt myself" train. For some people it's an "I'm going to hurt somebody else" train. For some other people it's an "I'm not good enough" train. For some people it's an "I just don't like who I

am” train. And, many times when we hop on these trains of thought, our brain can feel scrambled. I don't know if you feel like that, but I do sometimes. I think every human being gets like that sometimes.

But what if you simply noticed that you hopped on a train and that train of thought really wasn't true? Most of the time your mind quiets down, and what you're learning now through God's Word is you can pause and pray, take a deep breath, ask the Holy Spirit to guide you, to help quiet down your mind to guide you to what your next right step is.

As a group, talk about those trains of thought, the ones you hop on, and see how many other people hop on that same kind of train. Discuss how these trains are nothing more than thoughts and they will start to make you feel a certain way. But even though you'll have feelings with those trains of thought, you don't have to act on them. You just have to notice them, and the more you do, you'll understand it's a thought and you don't have to take them so seriously.

Activity 3: Resiliency

The leader asks the group if anyone has a diamond. The leader holds up the diamond and says, When this diamond began it was a dark dirty piece of coal with no value. Then through years of pressure it becomes a valuable gem. This is just what God does in our own lives. The painful, difficult circumstances don't destroy us but transform us.

Have the group talk about the blessings that God has brought out of the hard times they have faced.

Scriptures on the Mind

Jeremiah 33:3 Call to me and I will answer you and will tell you great and hidden things that you have not known.

Philippians 2:5 Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus.

Colossians 3:1-2 If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.

Proverbs 3:5 Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding.

Matthew 22:37 And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.

Isaiah 43:18-19 Remember not the former things, not consider things that are old. Behold I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.

1 Peter 1:13 Therefore preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Resilience

Romans 8:18 For I consider the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.

2 Corinthians 4:17-18 For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.

Isaiah 40:41 But they that wait for the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.

Psalms 31:24 Be strong, and let your heart take courage, all who wait for the Lord.

Romans 12:12 Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer.

Questions for Reflection

Where do stress and conflict really come from?

What trains of thought do you have frequent flyer miles on?

When and where have you seen your own resiliency and in your loved ones?

What blessings have come out of the hard times you have faced?

Which scriptures speak to your heart?