

QUESTIONS TO HELP YOU UNDERSTAND YOUR EMOTIONS WHEN YOU HAVE BEEN TRIGGERED

When you recognize that you have been triggered, asking effective questions is key to help you move forward. Much of this dialogue is with oneself, but it can include a conversation with God or a trusted support person. The goal is compassionate self-understanding.

WHAT AM I FEELING? // It is hard to know what to make of a feeling, let alone have any idea what to do with it, until one can identify what it is. When triggered, this likely involves asking, “What button got pushed?”

HAVE I EVER FELT THIS WAY BEFORE? // Is this a familiar feeling? Is the feeling a reminder of past hurts or fears (childhood, previous relationships, in marriage, etc.)? A helpful question can be, “How old do you feel when this button is triggered?” Whether asked by the therapist or asked of oneself, if the answer is five or twelve or whatever, the follow-up question is: “And when you were _____ (5, 12, ?), do you remember anything that happened where you felt in any way similar to this? Amazing insights and powerful aha! moments frequently follow.

IS THERE ANYTHING I’M DOING THAT IS AMPLIFYING OR INFLATING THESE FEELINGS? // This question can reveal a variety of uncaring behaviors such as personal neglect, not setting appropriate boundaries, indulgence and acting out of various kinds, and a host of others, all of which will result in feelings. This question can also help identify unhealthy thought patterns including catastrophizing, minimizing, exaggerating, ruminating, personalizing, and black-and-white thinking.

WHAT IS THE TRUTH? // This is another commonly profitable question to explore. Some questions FMT therapists ask to explore more under this area are things like “Are you believing something here about your spouse (God, the circumstances, marriage, your marriage, etc.) that may be complicating your emotions and may not actually be true?” “Are there beliefs about yourself that are operating in the moment? Can those beliefs be challenged?”

WHAT DO I WANT? // This question in the internal dialogue begins to prepare the person to respond. Ask yourself, “What is it that I want in the current situation?” “What would I rather experience and feel instead?” “What are my deeper longings here?”

ADDITIONAL HELPFUL QUESTIONS

“Who did God create me to be?”

“Who do I want to be in this moment and in this circumstance?”

“Who do I want to be moving forward?”

“What attributes will increase my chances for what I want?”

“God, what do you want me to see and consider at this moment?”

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