



Session One: Circles of Stability

Key terms:

Childhood Stability: a sense of a manageable worldview and set of experiences and information.

Instability: a developmental period of about 10 years where information and experiences come at a rapid rate and are experienced as unmanageable and therefore unstable.

Adult Stability: A sense of cohesion and a worldview that is equipped to handle nuance, struggle and new information.

Formation Forward: An internal move towards adult stability, through instability, towards a grander worldview and experience of coherence.

Formation Backward: An internal move towards childhood security, away from instability, back to known comfort and safety.

Scripture Offering:

Old Testament

Review the story of Israel in the Exodus.

Movement one – Childhood stability of a sort: Exodus 1:6-14

They had been told what to do and how to do it – essentially parented by Pharaoh (though we would not say he was a good Father figure) and Pharaoh's systemic oppression – for generations.

Movement two – Instability: Exodus 14: 5-15; 16:3; 17:3;

When God frees them to follow him, they face a period of instability EVEN THOUGH the instability is brought on by their new freedom. When the challenges and questions of instability come up, the Israelites first inclination is to run back to the last place they knew the comfort of what to expect.

Interesting that the Israelites equate feelings of orientation to their environment, schedule, relationships, and even power structures as comfort and being taken care of.

Movement three – Adult stability: Exodus 19:3-9, 23:20

God continually reminds Israel not to seek the “stability” of their infancy as a people of God by darting back to Egypt, but to courageously walk through the questions and doubts of instability WITH God, embracing it as a time of formation.

New Testament

Encouragement for formation forward: Hebrews 6:1-3; 1 Peter 2:2-3; Philippians 1:4-6

Chastisement for failing to mature spiritually: 1 Corinthians 3:1-2; Hebrews 5:11-14 (emphasis on v. 12)



Discussion Questions:

General

- What idea or term stuck out to you from the video today?

Empathy Practice

- Remember a time of transition in your young adulthood in between ages 23-29 (e.g. new relationship, moving from one place to another, new responsibilities and expectations, etc.)
 - What kinds of new information and experience did this transition present for/require of you?
 - Do you remember how you felt, or some of the thoughts you had in the middle of that transition?
 - What did safety and comfort look like/feel like to you in that time?

Instability

- How do you receive/hear the phrase “New information, relationships, expectations, and experiences, coming at a rapid rate are experienced as instability”?
- How might instability be a form of growth?

Formation Backwards and Forwards

- What does Formation Forwards/Backwards mean to you? Have you ever seen this play out in real life?
- Have you experienced anything in a time of transition that helped propel you forwards in growth? What about backwards? (Jobs friends come to mind here.)
- Can you think of any examples of formation backwards in a family context? Work context? Church context?
- What about formation forwards? What might some examples of formation forwards look like in a family context? Work context? Church context?
- Are you willing to consider/pray/wrestle through your role in formation forwards with young adults in your sphere of influence?

Books Referenced:

Growing Young: 6 Essential Strategies to help Young People Discover and Love Your Church by Kara Powell, Jake Mulder, and Brad Griffin



Session Two: Longings, Losses and Empathy

Key terms:

Longing: What we yearn for.

Loss: What we lose. What we feel is at stake in change and transition.

Empathy: being intentionally with someone in whatever they are going through. Seeing their experiences through their eyes. "Sitting on the curb with someone" – Fuller Youth Institute

Scripture Offering:

Read or review the story of Hannah found in 1 Samuel 1:1-2:26.

Note scripture movements related to loss, longings and empathy:

1 Sam 1:2 – Hannah's loss

1 Sam 1:10-13 – Hannah's longing

1 Sam 1:14 – The religious establishment's response

1 Sam 1:15-16 – Hannah's courage to name her loss and longing to a person in power who has already judged her.

1 Sam 1:17 – Religious establishment practices empathy, suspending judgement and adjusting response.

1 Sam 1:18 – Hannah receives empathy – is "no longer downcast".

1 Sam 2:1-26 – God meets Hannah in her places of loss and longing. Hannah finds church a safe place to work out her loss, and entrust with the results of her deepest longing.

When our longings and losses do not match another's it's easy to judge other people. Take for example, people's responses to Hannah. They:

- a) Ridicule and provoke the place of loss and pain (Peninnah, the sister-in-law)
- b) Say the place of loss does not matter or does not exist (Elkanah, the husband)
- c) Prescribe a fix for bad behavior (Eli's first response, the Priest).

However, judgement must be suspended in order to truly practice empathy with someone else. Eli listens to Hannah, believes her, and enters into her place of loss, believing that God will meet her there. May we do likewise as we journey with our young adults.

Discussion Questions:

- What is a longing you remember from your 20s? What is a longing you have today?
- What is a loss that impacted you in your 20s? What about a loss you have experienced recently?



- How have your longings and losses shifted over the years?
- Place yourself in this story. Can you identify with Hannah? What are some of the things she might be feeling?
- Now identify with Eli. What is he feeling as he offers empathy to Hannah?
- Where might God be inviting you to allow Him to meet you through someone else at your place of hurt?
- Where might calling you to offer empathy to those in your sphere of influence?

Books Referenced in this Session:

Hurt 2.0 by Chap Clark

On the Brink of Everything by Parker Palmer

Growing Young by Kara Powell, Brad Griffin and Jake Mulder



Session Three: Negative Instability

Key terms:

Childhood Stability: a sense of a manageable worldview and set of experiences and information.

Instability: a developmental period of about 10 years where information and experiences come at a rapid rate and are experienced as unmanageable and therefore unstable.

Adult Stability: A sense of cohesion and a worldview that is equipped to handle nuance, struggle and new information.

Shipwreck: An experience of loss brought on by the shattering of expectations and/or experience of “life as normal”.

Gladness and Amazement: The invitation on the other side of shipwreck, to a grander, richer worldview and capacity to act in the world.

Formation Forward: An internal move towards adult stability, through instability, towards a grander worldview and experience of coherence.

Formation Backward: An internal move towards childhood security, away from instability, back to known comfort and safety.

Scripture Offering:

Exodus Story (many parallels to the journey from childhood to adulthood)

One way to understand Negative Instability is when rapid change and disorientation is experienced as crisis and loss by those who are undergoing the change.

Israelites are the poster children for Negative Instability.

In Exodus the Israelites undergo a transformation of becoming the people of God. This transformation requires a significant period of disorientation as everything that was understood as “normal” shifts.

In short, the movement of God on the Israelites’ behalf causes a shipwreck experience. On the other side of shipwreck is gladness and amazement: a renewed and enlarged capacity to act. The Israelites are invited into the grandness of being God’s holy people in the world. What that process of becoming requires from them is everything.

The disorientation the Israelites feel,

- As their day-to-day labor becomes increasingly difficult as Moses goes to Pharaoh (Ex 5),
- As they feel trapped on one side of the Red Sea (Ex 14:10-12)
- When they feel abandoned in the desert (Ex 16:3),

and so on, is not a bad thing. It is an opportunity for growth and intimacy with the God who journeys with them.



However, they often practice formation backwards, panicking, accusing, chafing against the new way of being, desiring to sprint back towards the last “safe” or manageable thing, even if that thing was oppression and slave labor.

Moving forward through shipwreck and instability to gladness and amazement is difficult, courageous work that takes place in community. The easy thing is always the thing we’ve done before – whether we are young adults moving into uncharted territory, older adults being asked to change our ways of thinking or Israelites being invited to walk out of slavery. As communities of faith, we are called to move forward towards the amazement of being holistically transformed into God’s people.

As our young adults grow into their callings, undergoing a transformation of maturity, our challenge is to enter the times of disorientation, not to fix or diagnose the disorientation away, but to walk with them towards gladness, amazement and formation forward.

Instability is the by-product of transformation and becoming. The Israelites set a bad example for us with their panic and accusations and their preference for formation backward. Healthy maturity calls for formation forward.

Discussion Questions:

- What is one of your experiences of shipwreck?
- Think of a young adult you know. What is a shipwreck experience they may be going through?
- What is your response to the idea that Shipwreck or instability is a critical time of growth and faith formation in young adults?
- What does it mean to you to move from shipwreck into amazement and gladness?
- How are amazement and gladness good news to young adults?
- How might elders in a faith community keep from enabling formation backward and help their young adults practice formation forward?

Books Referenced in this Session:

Big Questions Worthy Dreams: Mentoring Young Adults in Their Search for Meaning, Purpose and Faith
by Sharon Daloz Parks



Session Four: Young Adults as Agents of Transformation

Key terms:

Longing: What we yearn for.

Loss: What we lose. What we feel is at stake in change and transition.

Prophetic voice: Speaking to the community on behalf of God on an issue where the community has lost their way.

Empathy: Intentionally being with someone in whatever they are going through. Seeing their experiences through their eyes. "Sitting on the curb with someone." – Fuller Youth Institute

Scripture Offering:

Read or review the story of David and Goliath found in 1 Samuel 17:1-58.

Note scripture movements related to the establishment (The Israelite King Saul, and the army) and the young adult (David):

1 Sam 17:10 – Goliath's taunt and challenge

1 Sam 17:11 + 16 – Establishment's response to Saul (In their terror, they try to wait out the challenge until they can go back to fighting as they are used to.)

1 Sam 17:12-14 – David's youth established.

1 Sam 17:23-24 – Goliath's "usual defiance" meets the establishment's habitual fear

1 Sam 17:26 – David's indignation with Goliath requires an answer from the establishment

1 Sam 17:28 – David chastised for bringing it up

1 Sam 17:29 – "Can't I even speak?" – David, as he continues to try to find courage for response within the establishment

1 Sam 17:33 – David, chastised by authority on the basis of youth

1 Sam 17:34-35 – David refuses to be disqualified. Cites God's training and presence in his life as credentials.

1 Sam 17:38-40 – Authority gives in, but wants David to solve issue according to institutional entrapments. David says, "These don't fit".

1 Sam 17:31-55 – David thoroughly defeats the Philistines to the glory of God, leading the establishment to courage and victory.

1 Sam 17:55-58 – Authority figure finally asks David's name/heritage.

Discussion Questions:



- What could it mean that young people are our prophets, “Requiring response, demanding participation”?
- How are the voices of young adults exposing “invisible rules” and inadequate or unjust institutional responses to current challenges in our world?
- How do you see young adults calling you to courage? What is your response?
- Have you tried to dress up young adults “in your own tunic” (1 Sam 17:38) before?
- Is there any way in which you try to control the response of young adults to institutional injustice? Are there any ways in which you have responded to challenges by waiting it out like the Israelite army?
- Where/how does the prophetic voice of young adults scare you?
- What is at stake when/if we ignore the prophetic voice of young adults?

Books Referenced in this Session:

Hurt 2.0 by Chap Clark

On the Brink of Everything by Parker Palmer

Like Dew Your Youth by Eugene Peterson



Session 5: Identity, Belonging and Purpose: Theirs and Ours

Key Questions of adolescence:

Identity: Who am I?

Belonging: Where do I fit?

Purpose: Do I and my choices matter?

Three key contexts in which these questions are asked:

Early adolescence – IBP questions explored in the context of family

Mid adolescence – IBP questions explored in the context of peers

Late adolescence (young adulthood) – IBP questions explored in context of greater community

Scripture offering:

Review the story of Moses formative years, focusing on these highlights leading up to his calling:

Who am I?

As the biological son of Israelite slaves, raised as Egyptian royalty by Pharaoh's daughter as perhaps one of few surviving males of his generation (Exodus 1:22), Moses has every right to ask, "Who am I? Where do I fit?"

Where do I fit?

It seems he tries to force his identity and belonging as an Israelite when he kills an Egyptian who was beating an Israelite. Note that the text says "his people" twice in 2:11 in reference to Moses trying to identify with the Israelites.

Do the Israelites respond to his "advocacy" by saying, "you're one of us!"

No, they scoff at him (Exodus 2:14) and Moses runs away.

When he gets to the wilderness of Midian, he is identified as an Egyptian (Exodus 2:19).

Do I and my choices matter?

"Moses was content to dwell with them" in Midian – Exodus 2:21, but the questions of identity, belonging and purpose are still simmering.

Note that in Exodus 2:22 Moses has a son and names him Gershom because he "is a sojourner (or wanderer) in a foreign land."

For the next forty years Moses lives as a shepherd in Midian. Perhaps he has decided to put the Israelite/Egyptian question out of his mind, and do something else entirely. When God calls Moses into the fullness of identity, belonging and purpose, he is terrified (Exodus 3:6).



It takes personal courage as well as a courageous community to walk into the fullness of calling.

Exodus 3:14-18 lists what will be necessary for questions of IBP to be realized in Moses' life:

- The ongoing presence of God
- The faith of previous generations as a trustworthy legacy
- The support of the current elders in the community
- God's specific promise of a good future.

Questions for Discussion:

- Who are you in the story of Moses?
- Where do you sense questions of IBP stirring in your own life?
- Think of a young adult you know. Have you witnessed any similarity between their quest for identity, belong and/or purpose, and Moses' early life?
- What gifts might God be forming in this young adult for the sake of his glory and fame?
- What role are you being called to play in this young adult's search for IBP?

Books Referenced in this Session:

Starting Right by Chap Clark

Growing Young by Kara Powell, Jake Mulder and Brad Griffin



Session Six: Biblical Hospitality

Key terms:

Outsiders: Strangers, “the other”, those who are outside of our typical experience and network of relationships

Insiders: Those in the inner circle of who we trust, spend time and resources with, and allow to affect our lives and decisions.

Biblical Hospitality: Extending insider status to outsiders

Scripture Offering:

(Taken from “The Practice of Hospitality” by Scott Cormode)

God initiates hospitality by welcoming Adam, and later, Eve, into the Garden of Eden.

Abraham welcomes the strangers who turn out to be angels at the trees of Mamre in Genesis 18. Note that Abraham’s life is significantly changed by the interaction he has with these three guests. Abraham invites the strangers or outsiders fully into his life, sharing his best food (Gen. 18:6-8), his personal space, his time, and his story. A critical element of hospitality that Abraham practices is receiving: in the exchange with the three strangers, the course of Abraham and Sarah’s life is dramatically altered and improved. Biblical hospitality is the practice of inviting people who are currently “out there” at a distance, close enough to affect your life and it involves as much receiving as it does giving!

Dr. Steve Argue of Fuller Theological Seminary says, “If the Gospel is shouting from a distance, it is not the Gospel.”

Rahab hides the spies in Joshua 2, the Widow of Zarephath extends hospitality to Elijah in I Kings 17-18, later in II Kings 4, Elisha receives the hospitality of the Shunammite woman. What are the images of hospitality from Scripture that come to your mind? There are over 92 references in the Old Testament alone to how to treat the stranger or outsider*, cementing hospitality as a key part of what it means to be the people of God.

Biblical hospitality is not about meals, it is about identity. Miroslav Volf says, “Having Been embraced by God, we must make space for others and invite them in – even our enemies.” Scott Cormode interprets this to mean, “we practice hospitality because we were created to emulate God.”

Discussion Questions:

- Fill in the blank: when I hear the word hospitality, I think _____ ; How does your immediate association with hospitality align or disalign with the idea of Biblical hospitality we have talked about today?
- How do you respond to the idea that hospitality is about identity?
- Who is someone who has practiced hospitality with you by letting you speak into their lives? How did this relationship begin? Develop?
- What is your gut reaction to the idea of inviting a young adult in your life to come so close they begin to affect who you are?



*The Hebrew word ger, the closest word to our concept of an immigrant or stranger, appears 92 times in the Old Testament alone - World Relief

Books Referenced in this Session:

Exclusion and Embrace by Miroslav Volf

Making Room: Recovering Hospitality as a Christian Tradition by Christine Pohl

Session Seven: Insider Privilege

Key Terms:

Insider Privileges: Knowledge, resources and relationships that others may not have access to

Bounded-sets: Homogenous groups, defined by external characteristics, defined by tight boundaries. Static groups.

Centered-sets: Non-homogenous groups, defined by orientation to the center. Non-static groups – members can move towards or away from the center at any time.

Further information on Bounded/Centered Sets:

1. Bounded: Focused on external characteristics used to define the type or category of thing. If a thing has a seat, a back, and four legs, it is a chair. Centered: each member of the set is defined by orientation to the center.
2. Bounded: Category is defined by a clear boundary. A thing is a chair or it is not a chair. There is no gray.
3. Bounded: Members of a category create a homogenous group. Centered: Members of the set can form non-homogenous and/or homogenous groups.
4. Bounded sets are essentially static because it focuses on external characteristics. The only movement is from inside to outside the set and vis-versa. Centered sets are constantly in motion as members move towards or away from the center.

In bounded sets, the boundary critical to maintaining the category, therefore the boundary must be protected. “[...] boundaries define the ultimate nature of reality” (Heibert, p. 116).

Church as bounded set: “Bounded-set church would act like clubs- voluntary associations of like-minded people who share a common interest, that of meeting specific personal needs. Other people would be permitted to join if they acquired the characteristics of the association, and if the people in it were willing to admit them” (Heibert, p. 166).

Show video here

What example can you think of in Scripture of a bounded set?

What example can you think of in Scripture of a centered set? (OT centered set – Promise to Abraham)

Scripture offering:

In the Gospels, the Pharisees were part of a bounded set of religious elite, who enjoyed favor, power, and derived a sense of belonging and identity from being part of the “in” group of religious people. **Their ongoing issues with Jesus revolved around the issues of boundaries and control.** They wanted to control Jesus – to have him as part of their group, adhering to their religious norms. They also wanted to control the boundary of “the set” that is, who was in and who was out of the family of God.



They exerted control via dogmatic adherence to the letter of the Torah, obsessing over external measures of faithfulness such as sacrifice, church attendance, clothing, and ritual observance.

In contrast, Jesus tells story after story illustrating that the kingdom of heaven is one of personal. The king leaves the kingdom in pursuit of the one who is not yet there. **The Kingdom of heaven is like a centered set, with the king at the center.** Those who are moving towards him, no matter their externalities are “in”.

Q; All of us are insiders in some groups. How will we steward the knowledge, resources, and relationships that come with being an insider?

The Pharisees created a bounded-set by protecting the boundary of their privilege. In contrast, Jesus didn't seem care about externalities or protectionism. He constantly expanded the boundaries of who was in the family of God. The Pharisees cared so much that they organized a plot to murder Jesus.

Jesus opens up the bounded set, saying in essence, “the kingdom is all about orientation towards me.”

Centered set allows us to hold our privileges lightly, because our orientation is towards the king, rather than the benefits or swag that come from being in the kingdom.

Discussion Questions:

1. What groups or situations are you an insider in? What knowledge, relationships, resources and forms of identity flow from being an insider?
2. Are there any groups or settings in which you feel like an outsider? In what ways do you experience disorientation in these groups or settings? What knowledge, relationships, resources and/or form of identity are you conscious of missing out on as an outsider? What boundaries would need to be crossed, barriers overcome, etc. for you to become an insider?
3. Think of a young adult you know. In what contexts do you think they are insiders? In what contexts do you think they are outsider?
4. Are there any contexts in which they are outsiders, but you are an insider? What is your role in these contexts?
5. If bounded sets are defined by their boundaries, what boundaries may we be protecting in spaces/groups/places where we don't see young adults?

Books Referenced this Session:

Anthropological Reflections on Missiological Issues by Paul Hiebert



MIYA Session 8: Final Thoughts + Continuing On

Key Terms:

Remembering: Looking back

Attentiveness: Asking thoughtful questions and listening attentively, drawing out the person behind the words.

Envisioning: Active modeling within an intimate relationship

Scripture offering:

Review the story of Ruth and Naomi found in the book of Ruth.

Note the interplay of the women's lives and name the times one or the other was the "expert" or insider in the relationship.

For example, when we meet Ruth, she is in her native homeland while Naomi is a refugee in the same place. Through marrying into Naomi's family, Ruth submits to some of Naomi's culture and norms. The familial power structure shifts again when Naomi's husband dies and she depends on her sons and daughters-in-law. When Naomi's sons die, she is the elder among the three widows and begins a journey to her homeland with them, where she will have the best chance of navigating the social safety nets that will keep her alive. And that's just the first seven verses!

Naomi knows the social safety nets established in the Torah, Ruth does not. However, Ruth can access the safety nets in a way Naomi cannot. The women are interdependent and their decisions and actions affect the other. Ruth and Naomi embody friendship, with Naomi taking the primary roles of remembering, attentiveness and envisioning.

Remembering: Naomi reaches back into the Torah to access the laws of justice and mercy that will ultimately sustain her and Ruth and wrap them into the lineage of Jesus (Deuteronomy 5:5-10, Leviticus 25:23-28).

Attentiveness: Naomi strategically guides Ruth (who as a Moabite woman may have been considered immoral to Israelites of that day -Genesis 19:30-38; Number 25:1-3) into the society of the town of Bethlehem.

Envisioning: Naomi is with Ruth at every step, actively modeling transitions of geography, culture, and relationships under duress. After all, Naomi has done this once before. She helps



bring Ruth out of her grief and into a marriage with a prominent “kinsman-redeemer” who will secure Ruth’s future, though much is working against her.

Questions for Discussion:

- What is at stake in the story of Ruth and Naomi if these two very different women do not practice interdependence?
- Can you find yourself in the story of Ruth and Naomi? Who are you...with whom do you identify most closely?
- Where do you experience deep friendship in your own life?
- Who has practiced remembering, attentiveness and envisioning with you when you were a young adult? Now?
- What role are you being called to play in friendship with a young adult you know?

Books Referenced this Session:

Spiritual Formation in Emerging Adulthood: A Practical Theology for College and Young Adult Ministry by David Setran and Chris Kiesling