

# PRESENCING

The deepest connections happen as we feel understood and valued.

## EMPATHY

Empathy is stepping into the feelings and the world of another. We are trying to identify with the experience of the other by putting ourselves in their place.

The only way to enter into the world of another is by creating a space where the other feels safe enough to share.

This means that you are not trying to find a solution, you are not trying to fix the situation, and you are not formulating judgments.

Creating a safe environment implies that you are listening with attentiveness and with no ulterior motives but to understand their experience.

We all think we are better listeners than we actually are.

1. Make sure you are hearing correctly
  - “Are you saying...”
  - “Did you mean...”
  - Summarize what they said
2. Validate
  - “That sounds difficult”
  - “I can see how that must have been so hurtful”

## SAMPLE QUESTIONS

1. Can you tell me more?
2. What was that like for you?
3. Can you help me understand what that feels like for you?
4. How long has this been going on?
5. Is this a new experience for you?

Validating does not mean that you are agreeing with what was said, but that you are understanding how they must have felt.

# SLOWING DOWN

In order to see how God is present in the ordinary and mundane experience of a person, we need people to process through their experience. Most people don't look at where they are, preferring to keep themselves busy and distracted. But the everyday is where God has placed us—this is the place where He desires to encounter each of us. So, we want to (need to) slow down.

Most often, the area you want to focus on is where they experienced either a strong emotional response or no emotional response.

## SAMPLE QUESTIONS

1. Can you tell me a little more about \_\_\_\_\_?
2. What did you feel?
3. How are you feeling now?
4. Does this affect the way you understand yourself?
5. How does this affect the way you understand yourself?
6. How might this story fit into the story of your life?
7. Is there something deeper about this that you would like to share about?
8. How does this situation touch you?

Bridging the gap between our heads and our hearts requires us to slow down to see God the “not-so-holy” parts of our lives—the parts that we would rather ignore and overlook.

# TURNING TOWARDS GOD

Finally, you are trying to uncover what longings, desires or dreams this person has. In uncovering one's desires, you are turning them to God, so that they can encounter God directly. This is the heart of prayer—when we are turning towards God.

When we experience God responding to us in our reality (which includes our hopes and fears, our dreams and brokenness, our good and our not so good), we cannot help but be transformed because He is touching us in the deepest parts of who we are.

The best part is that the weight of transformation is not on us. We are simply creating the space for God to be present to this person, in His time, in His way.

## SAMPLE QUESTIONS

1. What do you desire?
2. What do you need from God?
3. What would you really like to ask God for?
4. How would you like God to meet you?



As their deeper desires and longings are uncovered, invite them to offer those directly to God.

Then, invite them to take time to see how God is responding to them.