

KILLING THE NICE GUY . . . MOVING FROM THE FALSE SELF TO THE TRUE

“I WAS A ‘NICE GUY’”

It took many years for me to realize it, but I (Jerry) operated from a place of *unmet needs* and it shaped many of my actions. I was what many would have considered a “nice guy,” but in reality, “my heart wasn’t so nice!” Because of some core love deficits that only became known to me in my middle 30’s, much of my love for others was driven by my own needs for acceptance. I became a people pleaser and a peace keeper. As a result, I would do whatever was necessary in relationships with others to avoid conflict or to not do anything that would place me in a bad light. I operated out of what is called a *shame-based identity*, which was built on a core of lies—mainly concerning myself.

UNHEALTHY, TOXIC SHAME IS THE “DRIVER”

Unhealthy, toxic shame, which is established very early in childhood, says that there is something inherently wrong, flawed or defective in me, and if you really knew me, you would not like me. As a result of this, you either grow up seeking to prove that you are O.K. (and not allowing anyone to see that you are not) or you grow up with a defeatist attitude and essentially give up on trying to prove that you’re O.K. I chose the former performance-based route and although I was fairly “successful” along the way, I was operating unknowingly from this unhealthy place and the driving needs still remained unmet.

TRUE LOVE ISN’T JUST DOING “LOVING” THINGS

So at the core, I did not know I was really O.K. (in fact it was quite the opposite) and, as a result, I did not love myself and I was unable to really love others. I often would “do loving things,” but it was coming from the wrong place and God could not continue to honor or bless it. You can imagine how this dysfunction manifested in my marriage with Denise! For many years she wanted more of my heart, but I was unable to offer it to her. I was unable to be emotionally intimate with her because I didn’t even know my own heart! There was way too much false self, and true intimacy requires truth in the innermost parts. It was only after trusting my heart to Christ and allowing Him to begin to find the *real* Jerry that the healing work began.

A PARADOX: LEARNING TO TRULY LOVE MYSELF GETS RID OF THE “NICE GUY”

I am very grateful that I am no longer that “nice guy” (a.k.a. the poser), and I am now able to operate so much more from the true self that God created. Dealing with shame and the lies underneath it was huge, as was the need for God to pour in His love to those places where it was most needed. And in that process I also had to learn to love myself—especially the younger self—for the healing to be most effective.

ASKING OURSELVES DIFFICULT QUESTIONS

As we both have walked through our own respective journeys of healing, we have had to ask ourselves many different questions, such as:

- When did I learn to start striving, performing, looking and acting a certain way to earn approval or avoid conflict?
- When did I start saying Yes when I needed to say No?

- When did I start hiding the real me because of feelings of not measuring up, of inadequacy, of insecurity, of guilt, of feeling alone and unloved, of self-contempt?
- When did I start making decisions in my heart, that I would *never* be weak, that I would *always* be in control, that I would *never* let anyone know I was hurting?

Finding answers to questions like these can become the doorway into the journey of healing that follows.

PRAYER

Please join us in this prayer . . . *Father, we see You in Your Son, Jesus, and He wasn't a "nice guy." He said what needed to be said to those who needed to hear it. Yet, He was full of both "truth AND grace." He was connected to Your heart and functioned from that place. He was and is the epitome of humility and compassion . . . even when He had to say and do difficult things. Help me to see myself the way You see me. Show me where there are wounded places within that hinder me from living from my "true self" . . . the self that You created from the very beginning. Reveal to me where shame and fear exist and give me Your grace to invite You in to heal and transform me more into the image of Your Son. I pray this in the name of Jesus, Amen.*

From the Father's Heart,

Jerry and Denise Basel