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Ideas to Form Deeper Connections with Others©

- Realize that the less experience you have with love and acceptance, the harder it will be to share your real self with others, and then be able to accept their love
- Go slow
- Think of someone who is safe to risk with by sharing a little more of yourself with
- Start by sharing something small, and see how it goes. Does this person treat your vulnerability with respect and keep what you shared confidential?
- Share with a safe friend something believe about yourself (because it was mirrored to you). Ask them how they see you (i.e., mom always told me I was stupid, and I believe this deep inside — how do you see me?)
- Don't put yourself out there with people who give you "shoulds" and criticism
- Ask a friend what he/she sees as your positive qualities
- Find a Friend, Coach, Group, or Counselor who would be willing to listen as you talk through thoughts and feelings you have on the inside
- Begin to “test the waters” with someone by sharing a small part of yourself (thoughts and/or feelings you may have not shared before) and see how it goes.

- Begin to allow yourself to become involved in relationships at a slightly deeper level than you have been before.
- Allow yourself to begin to feel the need for closeness.
- Start to form new relationships or deepen current ones by doing fun stuff together.
- Ask someone to go out for coffee after a meeting / Group / Bible Study / Work Lunch/ Exercise class that you already go to.
- Ask someone to do a task with you that you might normally do alone (fix car, grocery shop, mall, go on a walk).
- Ask a friend to deepen your friendship in ways that are good for the both of you (exchanging calls, voice mail, e-mails, going for coffee, etc.)
- Start slow, but start. Realize that “starting” can be as slow as considering growing in this area, praying God will help you, observing others for safety, etc.)
- If someone risks being more open with you, strive to be safe by listening, being non-judgmental, and being empathetic.

Giving Grace to Others

- As we are able to accept imperfections in ourselves, we will be more readily able to give grace to others.
- Realize that our goal is to have mature love in our relationships with others: Mature Love sees the faults in others and ourselves and learns to love flawed people.
- Slowly consider giving up your idealized view of people,

and begin to give love and grace to who is actually there.

- Try to put yourself in the other person's shoes. Try to empathetically see and feel what they might have been going through---even when they hurt you.
- Realize that when someone hurts you there are almost certainly other factors involved in the situation besides just you. Try to be open to the whole story.

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