

## **Understanding Relationships in Recovery**

Raymond led a workshop on the fourth step of recovery, focusing on examining relationships to understand how choices, beliefs, and behaviors lead to unhealthy or destructive relationships. Participants discussed the importance of writing about all relationships, including family, friends, and authority figures, to identify patterns and take responsibility for their actions. James raised a question about where to start when writing about numerous relationships, and Raymond advised focusing on the most significant ones and identifying key beliefs or behaviors learned from them. Participants shared personal experiences and reflections on how their choices and beliefs have influenced their behaviors and relationships, with Lydia discussing her struggle with self-esteem and the impact of her family's beliefs on her life choices.

## **Beliefs and Healthy Relationships**

Lydia shared her personal struggles and fears, which led Raymond to discuss the concept of beliefs and their impact on choices and relationships. He emphasized that healthy people can only have healthy relationships and that choices reflect one's internal health. Raymond also explained the definitions of beliefs, stating that actions, not words, reveal true beliefs. He concluded by encouraging participants to reflect on their beliefs about intimacy, love, and other aspects of life.

## **Aligning Actions with Authentic Beliefs**

The group discussed the importance of aligning one's actions with their beliefs, with Raymond emphasizing that people often hide behind various masks, including religion and intelligence. Blake shared how this principle had helped him improve discernment and honesty in his relationships. Raymond explained that beliefs shape choices and behaviors, and encouraged the group to examine their own beliefs and behaviors in relationships, particularly addressing patterns of ignoring red flags or enabling harmful behaviors.

## **Codependency and Personal Growth**

Angie shared her struggles with a toxic relationship, acknowledging her codependency and the need to prioritize her own well-being. Raymond encouraged Blake to remain single and reflect on his beliefs about love, intimacy, and codependency, emphasizing that relationships can be a form of addiction. Both Angie and Blake expressed gratitude for their current situations and the opportunity to focus on personal growth and peace.

## **Addiction Recovery and Intimacy**

Cristian shared his experience of substituting one addiction for another during early recovery, including using relationships to cope with drug cravings, until he met his wife whom he hoped would fulfill his needs. Raymond discussed his realization that he had confused sex with love, and emphasized that true love involves sacrifice and service rather than seeking personal benefits. Robbie contributed to the discussion about intimacy in relationships, sharing his

experience of struggling with insecurities and learning to let his partner into his fears and vulnerabilities.

## **Journey to Emotional Growth**

Robbie shared his journey of personal growth and change in his relationships, particularly with his partner Liz. He discussed how he has been working on letting go of his dominant and controlling tendencies, and learning to be more vulnerable and emotionally open. Raymond provided insights on the importance of understanding and practicing intimacy, and emphasized the role of honesty and love in relationships. Kay added that honesty and a better understanding of love, gained through reading the Bible and attending groups, have helped improve his relationship with his wife.

## **Exploring Love and Relationship Choices**

The group discussed the nature of love and its importance in relationships, with Raymond sharing his perspective on love as a deep affection arising from emotional closeness and personal attachment. Kay shared her experience of healing in marriage and the role of her wife in correcting his behavior. Lydia expressed uncertainty about her future relationship choices, citing cultural and personal challenges, and Raymond offered support by sharing his own journey of choosing love and freedom over religious and cultural constraints. The discussion concluded with an invitation to reflect on the first question in their guide.

## **Overcoming Character Defects in Recovery**

The group discussed personality conflicts and their impact on relationships, with Raymond encouraging members to identify and address character defects such as machismo, control issues, and fear of being hurt. Cristian shared his struggle with racial biases, while Blake spoke about overcoming homophobic programming from his past. Raymond emphasized the importance of the fourth and fifth steps in recovery, where individuals confront and confess their issues to God, allowing them to break free from the prison of their past.

## **Fourth Step: Relationships and Growth**

The group discussed the fourth step of their recovery program, focusing on relationships and personal growth. James shared his reflections on spiritual fulfillment and family relationships, while Raymond emphasized the importance of authenticity and breaking free from past patterns. The discussion included insights on humility, honesty, and addressing character defects in relationships. The group also touched on sexual experiences and their impact on personal development. Raymond announced that next week they would continue working on the fourth step, with a focus on relationships, and encouraged participants to be honest with themselves.