

Rules that Keep You Unhealthy: Part 2

Jesus was asleep! The storm was raging. The boat was being tossed about and Jesus was sleeping. The disciples assail him with an accusation, “Don’t you care that we are perishing?” Jesus calms the sea and turns to the disciples and says, “Why are you afraid?” Mark 4:35-41

The second rule that keeps us unhealthy according to Subby and Friel: “Feelings should not be expressed openly.” We don’t talk about what is going on inside of us. We don’t allow others to really know us. Jesus breaks this rule time and again. When people make judgments against us we tend to react and fight back. But that is not what Jesus did. The disciples didn’t share their feelings. They made a judgment in the form of a question, “Don’t you care?” Jesus does not react to their attack. Instead, he identified their feelings. He addressed what was really going on inside of them, “Why are you afraid?”

Breaking this rule - sharing our feelings - allows others to know us more fully; allows us to know ourselves. But we need to move from judgment to feelings. The disciples would have said, “We are sharing our feelings, Jesus. We feel that you don’t care.” And Jesus could have defended himself and said, “I do too.” “No, you don’t.” “I do too ...” But thankfully, that is not what happened. But it does sound like what too often happens in our congregations and families.

A clarification: if you can substitute the words **I am** for **I feel** then you have a feeling. I am hungry, I feel hungry, I am sad, concerned, angry, happy, afraid. I feel sad, concerned ... Feelings disclose what is going on inside of us. And it is not up for debate. If I say I am hungry or am concerned, how can anyone argue with that? If you can substitute the words “I think” or “I judge” for “I feel,” then you have a judgment, not

a feeling. If the verb is followed by the word “that,” then duck, because a judgment is flying your way; I feel that ... This is a judgment cloaked in feeling language.

Change something in the worship and you will probably hear the judgments, including, “You don’t care about us.” Instead of reacting to the judgments, what if we all try to break the unhealthy rule and help each other identify the deeper feelings; feelings of being lost or confused, feelings of being out of control, feelings of insecurity or inadequacy. Add to that feelings of anger because one may not be involved as they use to be and they don’t have the same degree of power or control. Or, the frustration that goes with not having the ear of the pastor like one had with the previous pastor. Judgments build walls between us. Each time we are able to share a feeling, we remove a block from the wall.

Jesus shows us that we need not be afraid of our feelings or of showing our emotions. “Jesus wept.”