

3 Quick Keys to True Transparency

"I was admiring your nails from a distance," said my colleague after a meeting a few years back.

What a nice compliment, right? But instead of saying, "Thank you," I quickly blurted out something more like "Oh, just keep admiring them from a distance. If you look closely, you'll see how messy they are." And I began to share all the flaws before she could spot them.

Stay with me. This incident was about more than simple nail polish or learning how to take a compliment. As I was having this conversation, I got a picture of what many of us do when we don't want others to get close to us.

We try to keep people at a distance because we don't want them to see how messy we can be. We want them to stay far away in hopes that they won't discover our flaws.

Isn't it sometimes easier to push people away instead of letting them see the real you? Especially if you feel like the real you is chipped, faded or somehow missing the mark.

If you're tired of hiding, may I suggest you:

Open up to trustworthy people. Ask the Lord to show you whom to trust. Once God points them out, take step after step toward letting them into your world. Chances are they can probably see your flaws before you mention them or they can see them even more clearly than you can. Pray; then take a risk and share with them some of what you're struggling with. If they truly are your friends, they will love you even with your imperfections.

Remember that no one is perfect. We're all works in progress.

We all make mistakes. We're all learning and growing. And as the Bible says, we all sin and fall short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23). We're all in need of a Savior. How amazing it is to know that Jesus is the wonderful Savior who paid the price for our sins on Calvary. When we sin, we can ask God for forgiveness, and He is faithful and just to forgive us (1 John 1:9). We can also confess our sins to those trustworthy believers God has placed in our lives (James 5:16). That helps to bring healing.

Remain rooted and grounded in God's love for you. God loves you. Plain and simple. He's not surprised by your flaws and weaknesses. He loves you anyway. His grace is enough to help you in your weak areas and to transform you into the image of His Son Jesus. Even if others reject you, God's love remains.

The next time you're tempted to shrink back and hide, I hope you'll ask the Lord to give you courage to be transparent with others.

"As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another" (Prov. 27:17, NIV).

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