



Clergy Leadership Institute

ENABLING INNOVATION AT THE **SPEED OF LIFE**

Competent Coaching

Joining and Blessing

Fact Sheet 3

Blessings and Curses

A blessing is an external (to us) voice that speaks a word of truth about us, that resonates deeply within us, and calls forth that truth from within us to be manifested in the world. A blessing is also perceived as something of value, or leaves us in a more desirable or valued state.

A curse is an alien voice that tells a lie about us, calls forth that lie, and leads to alienation. Curses devalue or leave us in a less desired or valued state.

The pursuit of blessing is an archetypal phenomenon. Every human encounter we have will end up blessing or cursing us. We cannot change what has happened in the past; however, we can change what we focus on and how we will let the past inform our future. We can mine our history to discover the blessings and use them to inform our future or we can discover the curses and live those lies. Unfortunately, many important people in our lives either intentionally or unintentionally have both blessed and cursed us. In these circumstances we may neglect large portions of our history because we cannot separate the blessings from the curses.

Joining

To create a sustainable change the outcome must be perceived as a blessing, or something more valuable than the original state. Sustainable change is always an inside job. Rather than imposing change, leaders and helpers need to join with people and organizations at **A** (see fact sheet 1 for details on **A**→**B**) by entering into and valuing their world and then co-creating with them the future **B** from the inside out. How and where we join is important because what we join with and bless will grow. We need to join with what is good in people in order for that which is good to grow. Focusing on what is valuable and appreciating is the easiest way to connect or join with someone. If we focus on what is wrong we will connect with what is unhelpful, or what we do not value, which will unhelpfully cause it to grow.

In order to join with someone we must have a shared or common experience that enables us to have empathy for the person. If we do not have a shared experience we may end up having an interaction with someone in which we “do to them” however we will not have joined with them in a way that leaves them feeling blessed.

Transactional Analysis Model of Joining and Blessing

The language “I’m OK, You’re OK,” made popular in Eric Berne’s theory of transactional analysis, describes four potential ways that we can interact with others. Joining requires an empathetic valuing of the other. Where there is a discrepancy of being there is judgment and there will be no joining or connection just a sense of grinding and resistance. Unfortunately a lot of well intentioned charity, caring and general helping is provided from the perspective of the Helper being OK and the recipient being Not OK. Despite the good intentions such helping is belittling rather than empowering and does not lead to sustainable change.

While being equal joining at a place of both being Not OK will not create blessing. Rather, it will simply magnify the Not OK state of both which will leave both feeling cursed.

To join with someone we need to find the place of shared values and deep respect. In Quaker terminology “the light in me sees and values the light in you.” It is in the glow of that light that people feel blessed and affirmed and have the power to make changes in their lives.

**“People do not want to be changed.
They want to be blessed”** Stephen Gilligan

