

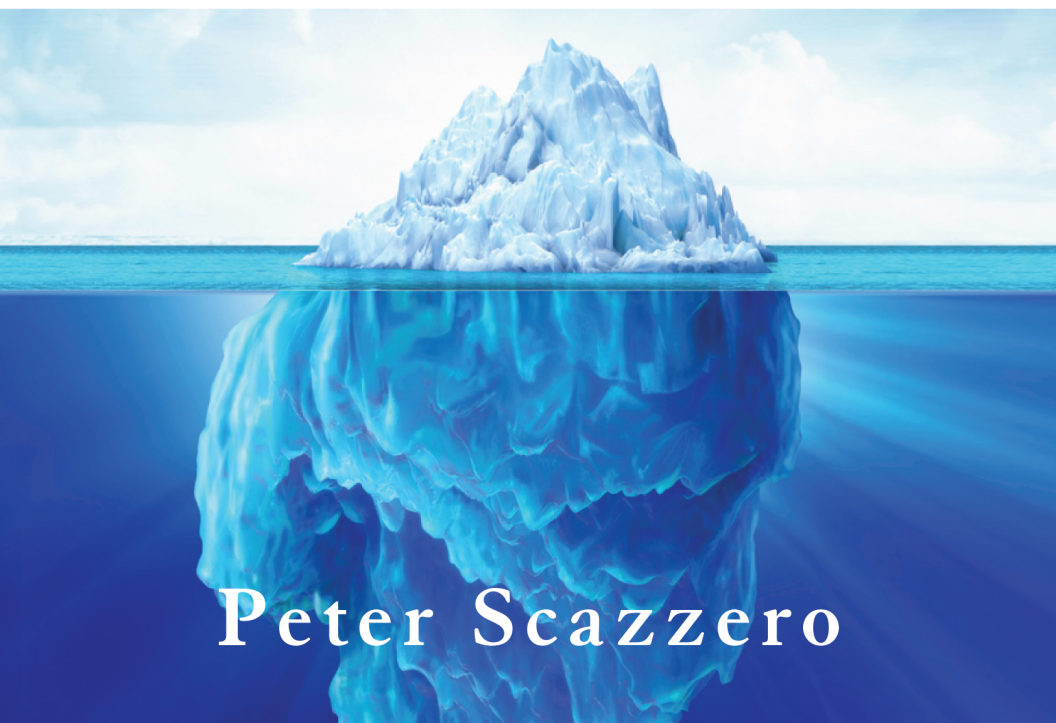
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Emotionally Healthy Spirituality

UPDATED EDITION

IT'S IMPOSSIBLE *to be* SPIRITUALLY MATURE
WHILE REMAINING EMOTIONALLY IMMATURE



Peter Scazzero

A PDF COMPANION TO THE AUDIOBOOK

ZONDERVAN

Emotionally Healthy Spirituality, Updated Edition

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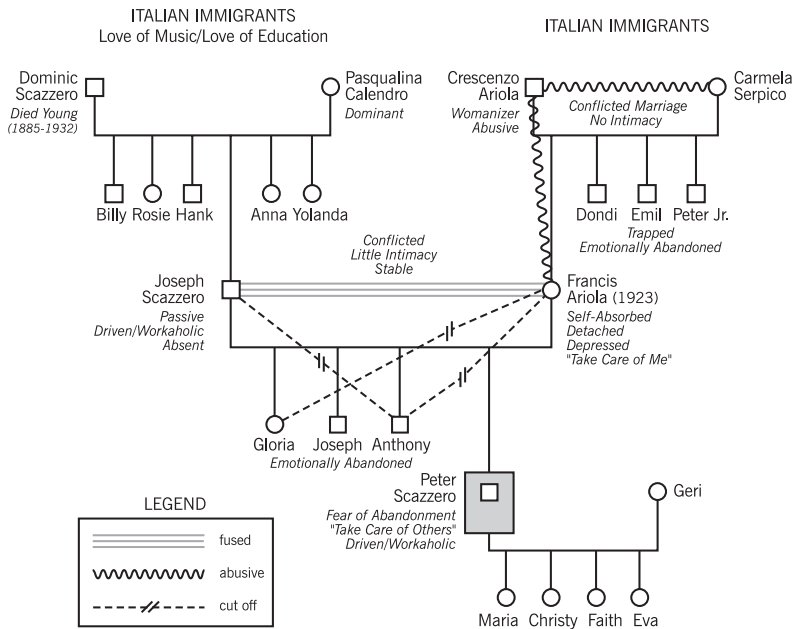
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PETER'S GENOGRAM



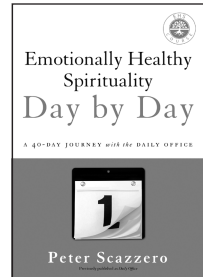
APPENDIX A

Excerpt from *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality Day by Day*

Introduction

I wrote *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality Day by Day* for churches doing The EHS Course (*The Emotionally Healthy Spirituality Course*). We call the book the core of The EHS Course because it slows us down to develop our own relationship with Jesus, introducing us to silence, solitude, and rhythms in a world that rarely stops.

Each of the eight weeks of Daily Offices is based on a corresponding chapter from this book. The two sample Offices included here are based on Chapter 1, “The Problem of Emotionally Unhealthy Spirituality.”



DAY 1: MORNING/MIDDAY OFFICE

Silence, Stillness, and Centering before God (2 minutes)

Scripture Reading: Mark 11:15 – 17

On reaching Jerusalem, Jesus entered the temple courts and began driving out those who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves, and would not allow anyone to carry merchandise through the temple courts. And as he taught them, he said, “Is it not written: ‘My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations’? But you have made it ‘a den of robbers.’”

Devotional

Jesus’ intense anger and overturning of the tables in the temple courts ought to make us gasp. He knows that if we don’t get to God, invaluable treasures will be lost or obscured. We lose the space where we experience God’s unfailing love and amazing forgiveness. We lose an eternal perspective on what is important and what is not. We lose compassion. We gain the world but lose our souls (Mark 8:36 – 37).

Be Free for God

I have a need
of such clearance
as the Savior effected in the temple of Jerusalem
a riddance of clutter
of what is secondary
that blocks the way

to the all-important central emptiness
which is filled
with the presence of God alone.
— Jean Danielou⁵

Question to Consider

How would you describe “what is secondary” in your life, the thing that might be “blocking the way” to experiencing God?

Prayer

Lord, help me to see how much I lose when I lose you. My perspective on my life and all of life gets distorted when I don't make space for you, obscuring your love for me. Your love is better than life, and truly I long for more tastes of that love. In Jesus' name, amen.

Conclude with Silence (2 minutes)

DAY 1: MIDDAY/EVENING OFFICE

Silence, Stillness, and Centering before God (2 minutes)

Scripture Reading: 1 Samuel 15:22 – 23

But Samuel replied:

“Does the LORD delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices
as much as in obeying the LORD?

To obey is better than sacrifice,
and to heed is better than the fat of rams.

For rebellion is like the sin of divination,
and arrogance like the evil of idolatry.

Because you have rejected the word of the LORD,
he has rejected you as king.”

Devotional

Saul, the first king of Israel, did not know much about silence or listening to God. Like David, he was a gifted, anointed, successful military/political leader. Yet unlike David, we never see him seeking to be with God. In this passage, Samuel the prophet reprimands Saul for doing many religious acts (i.e., offering burnt offerings and sacrifices) but not quieting himself enough to listen, or “to heed” God (v. 22).

We all must take the time to be silent and to contemplate, especially those who live in big cities like London and New York, where everything moves so fast. . . . I always begin my prayer in silence, for it is in the silence of the heart that God speaks. God is the friend of silence — we need to listen to God because it’s not what we say but what He says to us and through us that matters. Prayer feeds the soul — as blood is to the body, prayer is to the soul — and it brings you closer to God. It also gives you a clean and pure heart. A clean heart can see God, can speak to God, and can see the love of God in others.

— Mother Teresa⁶

Question to Consider

How could you make more room in your life for silence in order to listen to God?

Prayer

Unclutter my heart, O God, until I am quiet enough to hear you speak out of the silence. Help me in these few moments to stop, to listen, to wait, to be still, and to allow your presence to envelop me. In Jesus’ name, amen.

Conclude with Silence (2 minutes)

APPENDIX B

Defining Emotional Health and Contemplative Spirituality

A person can grow emotionally healthy without Christ. In fact, I can think of a number of non-Christian people who are more loving, balanced, and civil than many church members I know (including myself!). At the same time, a person can be deeply committed to contemplative spirituality, even to the point of taking a monastic vow, and remain emotionally unaware and socially maladjusted.

How can this be?

Few Christians committed to contemplative spirituality integrate the inner workings of emotional health. At the same time few people committed to emotional health integrate contemplative spirituality. Both are powerful, life-changing emphases when engaged in separately. But *together* they offer nothing short of a spiritual revolution, transforming the hidden places deep beneath the surface. When emotional health and contemplative spirituality are interwoven together in an individual's life, a small group, a church, a university fellowship, or a community, people's lives are dramatically transformed. They work as an antidote to heal the symptoms of emotionally unhealthy spirituality described in chapter 1.

Defining Emotional Health and Contemplative Spirituality

Emotional health is concerned with such things as:

- naming, recognizing, and managing our own feelings;
- identifying with and having active compassion for others;
- initiating and maintaining close and meaningful relationships;
- breaking free from self-destructive patterns;
- being aware of how our past impacts our present;
- developing the capacity to express our thoughts and feelings clearly;
- respecting and loving others without having to change them;
- asking for what we need, want, or prefer clearly, directly, and respectfully;
- accurately self-assessing our strengths, limits, and weaknesses and freely sharing them with others;
- learning the capacity to resolve conflict maturely and negotiate solutions that consider the perspectives of others;
- integrating our spirituality with our sexuality in a healthy way;
- grieving well.

Contemplative spirituality, on the other hand, is concerned with slowing down to be with God, focusing on such practices as:

- awakening and surrendering to God's love in any and every situation;
- positioning ourselves to hear God and remember his presence in all we do;

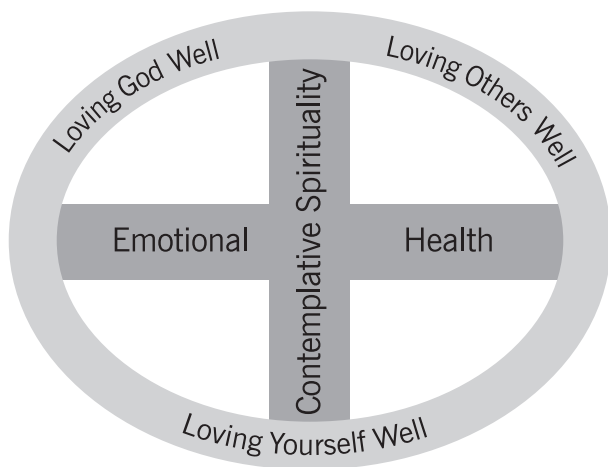
Defining Emotional Health and Contemplative Spirituality

- communing with God, allowing him to fully indwell the depth of our being;
- practicing silence, solitude, and a life of unceasing prayer;
- resting attentively in the presence of God;
- understanding our earthly life as a journey of transformation toward ever-increasing union with God;
- finding the true essence of who we are in God;
- loving others out of a life of love for God;
- developing a balanced, harmonious rhythm of life that enables us to be aware of the sacred in all of life;
- adapting historic practices of spirituality that are applicable today;
- allowing our Christian lives to be shaped by the rhythms of the Christian calendar rather than the culture; and
- living in committed community that passionately loves Jesus above all else.

The combination of emotional health and contemplative spirituality addresses what I believe to be the missing piece in much of contemporary Christianity. When practiced together, they unleash the Holy Spirit inside us in order that we might know experientially the power of an authentic life in Christ.

Both Are Needed

The following illustrates well how contemplation and emotional health are different and yet overlap. In a very real sense, both are necessary for loving God, loving ourselves, and loving others. For this reason, these form the outer circle around the diagram.



The greatest commandments, Jesus said, are that we love God with all our heart, mind, strength, and soul and that we love our neighbor as ourselves (Matthew 22:37–40). Contemplation has been defined in many ways throughout history. Brother Lawrence called it “the pure loving gaze that finds God everywhere.” Francis de Sales described it as “the mind’s loving, unmixed, permanent attention to the things of God.” For this reason, contemplation is the vertical line going upward toward God that cuts through emotional health. We are not simply about experiencing a better quality of life through emotional health. Awareness of and responding to the love of God is at the heart of our lives. We are first and foremost about God revealed in Christ.

At the same time, contemplation is not simply about our relationship with God. It is ultimately the way we see and treat people and the way we look at ourselves. Our relationship with God and relationship with others are two sides of the same coin. If our contemplation or “loving union with God” does not result in a loving union with people, then it is, as 1 John 4:7–21 says so eloquently, not true. Moreover, it is about seeing God in *all* of life, not just in what we might consider the spiritual aspects of life.

Emotional health, on the other hand, concerns itself primarily with loving others well. It connects us to our interior life, making possible the seeing and treating of each individual as worthy of respect, created in the image of God and not just as an object to use. For this reason, self-awareness—knowing what is going on inside of us—is indispensable to emotional health and loving well. In fact, the extent to which we love and respect ourselves is the extent to which we will be able to love and respect others.

At the same time, emotional health is not only about ourselves and our relationships. It also impacts our image of God, including our ability to hear God's voice and discern his will.

Allow me to share a personal story that illustrates how the tools of *both* emotional health and contemplative spirituality are essential to truly break free from our dysfunctions and illusions. I worked for several years on understanding the impact my family history had on my present relationships. While in an advanced program in marriage and family, my class was given the assignment of interviewing every living member of our families. The goal was to put together the jigsaw puzzle of our family history, to uncover any secrets, and to understand ourselves more accurately within the context of our families. God used that experience to make me aware of numerous generational patterns that negatively impacted my relationship with Geri, our daughters, my coworkers at New Life Fellowship, and myself. By the power of the Holy Spirit, I was able to make specific positive changes for Christ.

Two years later, during a lengthy time of silence and solitude (one of the gifts of contemplative spirituality), I found myself feeling angry at God. I not only yelled at God, I cursed him! I called him a liar. "Your yoke is not easy and light!" I screamed aloud. (Don't worry. I was by myself.) And even though I felt angry, I wondered where the anger was coming from.

This led me to weeks of meditating and pondering Jesus' invitation:

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. . . . For my yoke is easy and my burden is light” (Matthew 11:28, 30). Over time, I realized that underneath my preaching countless sermons on God’s grace and love, I perceived God as a perfectionist—a demanding taskmaster. But was it really him? Or was it part of my past I was unwilling to look at?

I came to realize during this time of solitude that the god I was serving reflected my earthly parents more than the God of Scripture. “I am never enough,” was how I often felt in my family growing up. Almost unconsciously, I had transferred that perspective to my heavenly Father. No matter what I did, all I could hear God saying to me was, “It is never enough, Pete.” I had never made that connection before.

I was stunned!

My point is this: There are powerful breakthroughs that can take place deep below the surface of our lives when the riches of both contemplative spirituality *and* emotional health are joined together. I have seen this again and again in my own life and in the lives of countless others. Together, they form a refining fire in which God’s love burns away what is false and unreal and his fierce and purifying love sets us free to live in the truth of Jesus.

APPENDIX C

The Prayer of Examen

An Adaptation of St. Ignatius Loyola's Examen

A classic spiritual practice developed by Ignatius Loyola (1491–1556) is called the “Prayer of Examen.” It is a prayerful reflection of your experience with Jesus over a specific time period. The goal is simple: increased awareness and attentiveness to the presence of God in your daily life.

While it is normally done at the end of each day, it can be prayed at any time. Get in a comfortable position and still yourself. Recall you are in the presence of God, inviting the Holy Spirit to guide you as you review the events of your day. Walk through the events in your day (or yesterday’s events if it is morning). Imagine yourself watching your day on a fast-forwarded DVD with Jesus. Let Jesus stop the DVD at any part of the day so you might reflect on it.

Notice those times when you were aware of God’s presence, when you felt you were moving toward God. How did you feel when you were open and responsive to God’s guidance? Give God thanks for those times.

End with prayer for grace to be more aware of God’s presence.

Close the time with a prayer of thanks for this time with God.

CHECKLIST

EMOTIONALLY HEALTHY SPIRITUALITY COURSE

SESSION #	 EHS BOOK	 DAY-BY-DAY	 WORKBOOK	 DVD (or live)
1. The Problem of Emotionally Unhealthy Spirituality	☐ Read Chapter 1	☐ Prayerfully read Intro & Week 1	☐ Read Intro and fill out Session 1	☐ Watch Session 1
2. Know Yourself That You May Know God	☐ Read Chapter 2	☐ Prayerfully read Week 2	☐ Fill out Session 2	☐ Watch Session 2
3. Going Back in Order to Go Forward	☐ Read Chapter 3	☐ Prayerfully read Week 3	☐ Fill out Session 3	☐ Watch Session 3
4. Journey through the Wall	☐ Read Chapter 4	☐ Prayerfully read Week 4	☐ Fill out Session 4	☐ Watch Session 4
5. Enlarge Your Soul through Grief and Loss	☐ Read Chapter 5	☐ Prayerfully read Week 5	☐ Fill out Session 5	☐ Watch Session 5
6. Discover the Rhythms of the Daily Office and Sabbath	☐ Read Chapter 6	☐ Prayerfully read Week 6	☐ Fill out Session 6	☐ Watch Session 6
7. Grow into an Emotionally Healthy Adult	☐ Read Chapter 7	☐ Prayerfully read Week 7	☐ Fill out Session 7	☐ Watch Session 7
8. Go the Next Step to Develop a “Rule of Life”	☐ Read Chapter 8	☐ Prayerfully read Week 8	☐ Fill out Session 8	☐ Watch Session 8

Congratulations on completing **The Emotionally Healthy (EH) Spirituality Course**, the first half of The EH Discipleship Courses.

Go to emotionallyhealthy.org to receive your **Certificate of Completion**.

