

Session: Body Language

Description

Brain science has always been fascinating to me. If you want to read an interesting book on how our brains process things, you'll want to check out Kahneman's *Thinking Fast and Slow*. But even more intriguing to me are the things that are more difficult to explain, like why I can feel someone watching me even though I can't see or hear them. My grandmother always knew when her identical twin sister was sick even though she lived in another state. And my friend has detailed dreams that often come true. I'm amazed at God's incredible human design, the ethereal things about us that can't be explained.

I'm going to go a little deeper in this session because that's what Conversatio is about. We stretch ourselves and dig into some of the deeper things in life in order to grow spiritually. Every faith tradition has different practices for this purpose but one way toward formation and transformation is through questions and conversations. Your family is a great place to start this practice, thus the Questions for Discussions sections in each of these sessions. We don't, and probably won't have many of the answers in life but the process of questioning and wrestling with deeper issues will draw us closer to God.

Ronald Rolheiser says that our soul isn't something we have it is something we are.ⁱ Psychotherapist Richard Schwartz says that the "self" is innately good and has the ability to manage and lead the partsⁱⁱ. He's referring to those inner parts of us that control (or don't control) our responses. Freidman tells us that it is good to be "self" ish. We need to take care of ourselves (self) to be healthy.ⁱⁱⁱ And Ken Shigematzu's writings on having a Rule of Life help us begin to value "self" enough to pare down and find a healthy rhythm to life.^{iv} We can't give to ourselves or anyone else if we have nothing left to give.

The common thread here is that if we do the spiritual work that moves us toward a self (soul) that is the healthy and whole part of us, this can lead the other parts (our body, our relationships, our mental health) toward fullness of life.

In Conversatio, we commit, in baby steps over a lifetime, to be surprised by the breadth and depth of God's creation and love for us.

Sometimes our body language gets in the way of our communication and our relationships with others. In this session you will be paying attention to body language and discussing what people are saying without using words.

Materials Needed

A TV, smart phone, or computer to watch a TV show or video of people interacting.

Handouts

None

Body Language

Read aloud the quote or scripture

"Spiritual disciplines are concrete, observable practices that form us into life with Christ. They are things we do, and the doing of them makes a difference not only in us, but in those around us."

– Dr. MaryKate Morse

Questions for discussion (10 minutes)

1. Have you ever had an experience that can't be explained by earthly logic? Please share the story.
2. Do you think God has anything to do with these ethereal types of experiences? Explain.
3. Do you think there is a difference between your "self" and your "soul"? Explain.
4. Do you think God created your soul? Did God create your "self"? Is there a difference between the two? Explain.
5. Do you think people are "innately good"? If you were raised to believe that we all sinners, does that mean we are all innately bad? Explain.

Rule of life activity

Body language

1. As a family list some non-verbal body postures or actions that communicate a feeling such as folding your arms, rolling your eyes or sighing deeply.
2. Now set a timer for 10 minutes.
3. Turn on a movie or show that your family enjoys for 10 minutes with **no sound**.
4. As you are watching the show with no sound, identify the nonverbal messages and emotions that are being expressed.
5. When 10 minutes is up turn off the TV.
6. Discuss what you noticed.
7. Was any of the nonverbal communication confusing?
8. How do you think nonverbal communication impacts your relationships with each other?
9. Do you think turning the sound off and only paying attention to the nonverbal communication impacted how you perceived the movie or show?
10. Is there anything you could do to improve your nonverbal communication in your family?

Examen

How did it go? Debrief highs and lows

1. Each person shares their favorite part of the conversation / activity and why.
2. Each person shares their least favorite part and why.
3. Did you do a serving / giving activity last week? How did it go?

Serving /giving ideas for any time this week: Choose one or create your own. These can be done individually or as a group. You will be sharing your serving experience in the next session.

- Compliment someone this week (genuinely).
- Leave an umbrella at a bus stop with a nice note attached to it.
- Let someone go before you (in line, at a meal etc.).
- Leave a kind note of encouragement for someone in your family, a friend, teacher, coworker or a neighbor.

ⁱ Ronald Rolheiser, *The Holy Longing: The Search for a Christian Spirituality* (New York: Image, 1998), 217.

ⁱⁱ Richard Schwartz and Martha Sweezy, *Internal Family Systems Therapy* (New York: Guilford Press, 2020).

ⁱⁱⁱ Edwin H. Friedman, *A Failure of Nerve: Leadership in the Age of the Quick Fix* (New York: Church Publishing, 1999).

^{iv} Ken Shigematsu, *God in My Everything: How an Ancient Rhythm Helps Busy People Enjoy God* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2013).