

the
end
of
me



**LEADER'S
GUIDE**

the end of me



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Are you ready to be used by God?

*Are you interested in a deep, authentic
relationship with Jesus?*

**The end of you is
the beginning.**

WHY THE JOURNAL?

We strongly encourage the use of *The End of Me* journal. We can hardly emphasize it enough. Why? Groups using the journal repeatedly report how doing so dramatically ups the study's value. It becomes not just another study, but a mile-marker, a course correction, an a-ha!

Moreover, using the journal will make your job as leader indescribably easier. Groups that use the journals find their interactions unforced, effortless and deep. The journal basically will lead the group for you. Glance through the first week of the journal and imagine how your group's conversation might flow.

A KEY TOOL FOR GROUP LEADERS

Leading a group well can be difficult. An extremely effective, but often neglected, tool for any facilitator is the practice of self-awareness.

Self-awareness is a conscious knowing of what is going on internally, and how that is affecting what one is doing externally.

Self-awareness sounds simple, but it isn't particularly common. We've all known people who have no idea why they work 70 hours a week, why they must keep their houses so neat, why they spend money they don't have or why they still shudder when their mother walks through the door.

Most people walk through life on autopilot, doing what they have always done and not knowing why. Even when they learn new things, they repeat the same old behaviors.

Wherever you are on the self-awareness spectrum, here is a simple tool that might improve your group leadership. At any given time, merely notice which of these three emotions is most prominent in you:

Assurance

confidence, serenity, openness

Anxiety

fear, uneasiness, distraction

Anger

irritation, frustration, ire

Each of these emotions leads to one of three modes of interaction:

Assurance leads to **Approach Mode**

Anxiety leads to **Avoidance Mode**

Anger leads to **Attack Mode**

THREE EXAMPLES

1. A participant is dominating the group discussion.

An *anxious leader* likely will *avoid* any conflict, not say or do anything, and hope the situation will work itself out. Over time, group members will become tired of the diatribes and stop coming.

An *angry leader* likely will *attack* by cutting the person off, complaining behind his back and/or withdrawing emotionally, hoping the participant will get the message and either shut up or stop coming.

An *assured leader* likely will *approach* the person privately, express concern for their needs but also ask for cooperation in creating a more balanced group. If the behavior continues, the assured leader may say something in front of the whole group, such as, “Thanks, Bill, now I would like to hear from others,” or even, “Bill, I appreciate your input, but I need your help in allowing everyone to have an opportunity to share.”

2. A participant begins crying.

An *anxious leader* might *avoid* the discomfort by ignoring the tears and asking a new question, promising the person everything will be alright, or asking

someone to pray, which can be a “spiritual” way of dismissing the person’s pain (“There, there, now we’ve prayed about it, so we can all move on”).

An *angry leader* might *attack* the discomfort by telling the person exactly what he should do about his trouble, or by suggesting counseling, then abruptly moving on.

An *assured leader* might *approach* the discomfort by saying, “I see your tears. Would you tell us about them? How can we as a group help?”

3. Two group members get in a tense disagreement.

An *anxious leader* might *avoid* by changing the subject or just letting the argument go on until it burns itself out.

An *angry leader* might *attack* by taking one side, then quoting a “slam dunk” scripture with a tone of finality.

An *assured leader* might *approach* by asking open-ended questions in a composed, curious voice. “I can sense how passionate both of you feel. Tell us where your passion comes from and what makes this so important to you? How have your views changed over time? What has changed them? How would you describe the tone you were using just now? Would you like to hear

what the rest of the group has to say?”

Both anxiety and anger have to do with a perceived threat. “I will mess it up. It will be too hard. I will be left with all the work.” But “perfect love drives out fear,” and “human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires” (1 John 4:18; James 1:20). So, as a leader, get curious rather than threatened.

A SIMPLE THREE-STEP TOOL

1. Notice which of the three emotions you are feeling most.

If you aren't sure, notice your behavior. Are you procrastinating? You are likely anxious. Do you want to hit something or somebody? You likely are angry. Are you calmly moving toward what's in front of you? You likely are feeling assured.

2. Go into approach mode toward this emotion.

In a compassionate, curious fashion, ask yourself, “If my anxiety could speak, what would it say? What is my worry worried about? What is my anger angry about?” Then listen.

If you catch yourself saying something like, “What in the world is wrong with me? Why am I so angry? There is no

reason for me to be so anxious,” change that accusatory tone to something more open. Self-accusations rarely produce clarity, but gentle probing often opens inner doors.

Lean into your feeling—not as a harsh judge, but as a caring friend. Then let the emotion have its say. Your anxiety might mumble something like, “How can I lead a group when I’m screwing up all the time. I’ve only been a Christian for a couple of years. I don’t know what I am doing!”

Or your anger might shout, “I am sick of these people not taking the group seriously, showing up half the time and expecting me to do all the work. I’d like to kick some you-know-what!”

3. Share what you find with Jesus. Then ask, “What are we going to do about this?”

Tell Jesus, “I’m really afraid I’m going to bomb.” “I am mad as you-know-what at my group.” When you take it to Jesus, you are not only more self-aware, you also are no longer alone. And you are bringing your real self to Jesus. You are in approach mode with Jesus and, therefore, much more likely to be led by his Spirit.

TRYING THE TOOL

Try it right now.

1. Which of the three emotions are you feeling in this moment: anxiety, anger or assurance?
2. Whichever it seems to be, approach this emotion with curious compassion. What is it trying to tell you? Let it speak freely.
3. Share it with Jesus. “Here’s what I am thinking and feeling. I am open to what you will show me. I want to know what we might do with this feeling and these thoughts.”

Even if you don’t sense a response, this process will move you from avoid and attack modes to approach mode and greater self-awareness.

Try this practice several times over the next few days and note below what you discover. Consider reading through the 3 questions before each group session. The more you practice, the more likely this tool will become a permanent part of your toolbox.

BROKEN *to*
be **WHOLE**

the end of me

SESSION 1

CONNECT

As you can tell by the title, we are going to spend the next few weeks discussing the idea of coming to the end of ourselves. To start our series and help break the ice, go around and answer one of the following questions:

When you were young, who did you want to grow up to be like?

OR

If you had to describe yourself in 5 words, what word would you choose and why?

WATCH

PLEASE PLAY THE “END OF ME” DVD EPISODE #1

While you watch Episode 1, write down notes, questions or comments you want to bring up in the discussion later.

GROW

In the following section, you will explore Bible passages and take part in discussions to help expand your knowledge on the topic of this session. If time is a concern, please choose just a few of the questions to answer and discuss in your group.

1) What struck you from the video? What did the video teach you about brokenness?

2) Kyle said that Jesus is going to show us that much of what we have been taught in this world about happiness, purpose, and fulfillment is in direct conflict with the Kingdom of Heaven. In what ways are Jesus' teachings in conflict with what most people in the world believe about happiness? Purpose? Fulfillment?

3) Rachele shared how she had tried to find purpose, happiness and fulfillment in the pursuit of money and achievements. What are some other things people in our culture pursue? What are some things that you sometimes find your worth in?

4) Kyle said we think what will make us fulfilled and happy is to pursue our own desires. Why do you think we have this false understanding?

5) Kyle and Rachele both talked about getting to the "end of me", in other words the place where we stop trying to make it on our own and turn to God. How would you describe the state of being at the "end of me"?

6) Read Matthew 5:3 and Jeremiah 17:5-9. Compare and contrast these two verses.

7) *Why do you think being poor in spirit is directly connected with being blessed? How would you describe the differences between the person described in verses 5 & 6 of Jeremiah 17 and verses 7-9?*

8) *In what ways has the person described in Jeremiah 17:7-9 a person who has reached the “end of me”? What was the result?*

9) *Kyle shared about the story of the woman who washed Jesus feet. What did this story teach you about brokenness? What did it teach you about God? What did it teach you about God’s view on brokenness?*

10) *Why do you think it is so hard for us to come to the end of ourselves and let go? In what ways do you try to cover your brokenness?*

11) *How have you experienced God taking something that was broken and making it whole again?*

12) *Rachelle said “the humility that it takes to recognize our brokenness only brings us closer to God and that’s when our lives change and that’s when we can change other people’s lives.” Why does it take humility to recognize our brokenness? How does recognizing our brokenness bring us closer to God? What is the connection between having our lives changed and helping others change their lives?*

13) *How is coming to the “end of me” something that needs to be done once for someone who is not following Jesus? How is it something that needs to be done repeatedly for the follower of Jesus?*

14) *How does this lesson bring you hope when it comes to your own brokenness? How do the truths and insights in this lesson encourage you to come to the end of you?*

IMPACT

This section is designed to help the insights and the lessons you learned in this session have an impact on your heart and not just your mind. In other words, to allow this session to go from just knowledge to seeking transformation. Please take some time to do the following exercise as a group.

Give everyone a sheet of paper or notecard. This will be an anonymous exercise. Please do not write your name on the paper. Take some time and on one side of the paper finish the following sentence: “I am broken because...”. Please write the things that have caused you to be a broken person.

Once you are done please pass your paper, face down to the leader. Once everyone’s papers are collected, shuffle them and pass them out again still facedown. Divvy out the verses below to the group, one verse per person. Each person will look up the verse and write it on the blank side of the paper.

Once everyone is done, go around and have each person first read the side of the paper which completes the question “I am broken because...”. Immediately turn the paper over and read the verse on the other side. Once the verse is read, go to the next person and continue this process until all the papers have been read.

Verses:

1 Corinthians 5:17

1 Peter 2:9

Ephesians 2:10

Romans 8:1

John 1:12

Revelation 21:4

Psalms 34:5

2 Corinthians 3:18

Psalms 139:14

Ecclesiastes 3:11

2 Corinthians 4:16

Isaiah 40:31

Jeremiah 30:17

Revelation 21:5

REFLECT

This section is to help you reflect on what God has taught you in this session. It is also a great place to help decipher where God is leading you. This section may be done in the group but can also be done outside the group if time is a factor. Take a couple of minutes to write down how God has personally spoke to you through this session in your journal.

SEEK

There is a place in your journal where you can write each other's requests for prayer. You can also make a note when God answers a prayer. Pray for each other's requests. If you're new to group prayer, it's okay to pray silently.