

T Cell Training #5

How do we develop friendships that help others change?

Step #1: Get to know the other person.

This seems obvious.

But it is actually rare.

Paul Tripp writes, "I want you to consider two questions: First of all, how many people do you know? And second of all, how many people know you?"

If I were to scroll through the contacts on my phone or search through my Facebook friends or look at the people I follow on Twitter, I could come up with a fairly long list of people I know. I could tell you where they lived, what they did for work, who they were married to, what their kids were doing, and even a few personal preferences or hobbies.

The opposite would also be true - there's a fairly long list of people who would know where I live, what I do, who my wife and kids are, and a few things that I enjoy in my free time. But here's the real question - how many people do I actually know, and how many people really know me?

I'm afraid that, in the body of Christ, we settle for terminally casual relationships all the time. Sure, we have acquired some superficial data on people we call friends, but we don't actually know them. We participate in weekly or monthly "church fellowship" but there's actually very little fellowship going on. We have become masters at casual conversations and non-answers. We have honed our skills at deflecting questions and staying hidden. Ignore your long list of contacts, Facebook friends, and Twitter followers: how many people actually know you, and how many people do you actually know?

Here are a few questions that get past the public persona:

How many people know the specific places where you are susceptible to temptation? How many people know the responsibilities that tend to overwhelm you? How many people know the idols that war on the turf of your heart? How many people know the secrets of your past that still haunt you? How many people know the places where you try to find substitute identities? How many people know the reasons why you might doubt the goodness and power of God?

Of course, the opposite would be true - how many of those questions could you answer about someone you call a friend? You see, your life was meant to be a community project. You were never meant to live in isolation. You simply weren't meant to do life on your own."

And yet unfortunately sometimes we do, which is why we are putting an emphasis on biblical friendships and saying we want to make a priority when we are seeking to help someone else to work on getting to know them.

But how?

What should we do to develop these kinds of relationships with someone?

1. **Care about them.**
2. **Show you care by listening to them.**

I know you have been thinking about listening quite a bit, but in our class today I want to put an exclamation point on listening by thinking about why listening is important and how you can become a better listener.

- Why is listening important?
 - If you don't listen, you aren't showing love to the other person.
 - If you don't listen, you are acting like you are more important than the other person.
 - If you don't listen, you are going to have a hard time hearing what the other person is actually saying.
 - If you don't listen, it's likely the other person won't listen to you.
 - If you don't listen, you may end up saying things that don't relate to the issue the person is talking to you about.
 - If you don't listen, you won't know how to sever the other person.
 - If you don't listen, you are not acting like Jesus.
 - If you don't listen, you are not treating the other person the way you would want to be treated if you were in their shoes.
- How do we become good listeners?
 - Some you need to put off to become a better listener:
 - Talking too much
 - Talking too little
 - Fear of man
 - Lack of love
 - Busyness
 - Assumptions
 - Lack of focus
 - Wanting to win the conversation
 - Defensiveness
 - Using the conversation to build our identity
 - One big thing to pursue to become a better listener:
 - Learning to ask good questions.
 - General kinds of questions

■ Six problem focused questions

- What's really going on in your life?
- How do you feel about what's happening?
- What are you thinking about it all?
- What are the people around you telling you about what's taking place?
- What do you think God has to say about what's going on in your life?
- What does God actually say He is doing in the middle of what is going on in your life?

■ X Ray Questions