

Letter 1

To Pastor or Clergy member:

Trauma causes people to have marriage problems and difficulty raising their children. There are two types of trauma, one is usually kept a secret (Type B) even though the results are visible. The second kind (Type A) is often unknown by the person themselves but strongly influences marriages, conflicts, divorces and child rearing. I am prepared to help you and your congregants in a Biblical way with these issues. I will follow up this introduction letter with a telephone call to your church. My name is Chris Coursey and I desire to help you and your people.

I seek to be a blessing to Lake County and the surrounding counties in Michigan by reaching out to local churches and various organizations who deal with the wounded. I desire to educate and equip the Body of Christ with tools and resources to help those who suffer from emotional and/or physical abuse and trauma. As you probably know, the need is extremely high on a national level as well as our own locale here in Michigan. **According to the Center for Prevention of Abuse, every ten seconds across our nation a child is reported abused or neglected while every nine seconds a woman is beaten.** The latest statistics on childhood sexual abuse state that a child is sexually assaulted every two minutes while one in four girls and one in six boys are victimized by the age of 18.¹ With numbers like these, we believe the need is overwhelmingly great. Sadly, the workers are few.

I have invested my time, energy and focus these past 10 years helping survivors of severe trauma and abuse live healthy, meaningful lives, the way God designed. I instruct and train individuals within the church to be all they were created by God to be individually and corporately. Healing and growth involves joy-filled loving relationships with people who can disciple, love and encourage the wounded so they can mature.

One of the valuable resources my ministry uses to equip individuals to identify needs, recognize deficits and gain tools for their growth process is a book called *The Life Model – Living from the Heart Jesus Gave You* written by individuals from Shepherd's House, a ministry located in Southern California. This resource has proven to be a tremendous asset for the church. The Life Model speaks to new converts, individuals who are young in the faith, the wounded, as well as pastors, caregivers and leaders who have wounded people in their congregations. The Life Model teaches that everyone has experienced some sort of trauma in their lives, some more than others. We all require life-giving relationships to grow and prosper. The Life Model distinguishes between two types of trauma, A and B. *Type A traumas come from the absence of necessary good things we should all receive, things that gives us emotional stability. These absences create difficulties in relationships.* (Page 42) Concerning Type B trauma, the Life Model states, *Type B traumas come from bad things. The brain is seriously effected by "B" traumas in the memory area, so it seems right to call Type B traumas fractures of the mind.* (Page 44)

¹ *Kids helping Kids – Break the Cycle of Sexual Abuse.* Copyright 2002-2003 Linda Lee Foltz.
www.kidshelpkids.net

What I am asking you to consider is this:

Please consider obtaining a copy of the *Life Model* for your own edification as well as to help your church lend a hand to the hurting and immature. In addition, I ask you to prayerfully consider learning more about nurturing emotional and spiritual growth by having a one or two hour presentation for those who are interested on various topics ranging from an understanding of trauma to helping people raise healthy children, families and communities. Additional topics include helping those who struggle with addictions, immaturity, depression and a host of other topics. A presentation would be led by myself on the basis of a love offering.

Copies of the Life Model can be obtained by emailing me at thrivingtoday@yahoo.com if you have any questions or would like further details. I will follow up this memo with another letter about the little understood problem of immaturity. Additionally, I will follow up with a personal telephone call to your church. Maturity and the lack of it is often overlooked and underestimated. My next letter will consist of how to recognize deficits in maturity and how to help individuals grow when maturity is missing. Did you know all addictions have one common element? Every person who struggles with an addiction has an absence in their maturity which oftentimes goes undetected and is overlooked. I look forward to an opportunity to speak with you.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Chris Coursey

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What people are saying about the Life Model

The Life Model is the best model I have seen for bringing Christ to the center of counseling and restoring the disintegrating community fabric within Christian churches.

Dr. Dallas Willard – National Speaker and Author of several books including *The Divine Conspiracy*. Dr. Willard is a Professor of Philosophy, USC.

The Life Model offers a Christ-centered approach to helping one another live out the abundant life God has promised.

Ruth Van Reken – Author and Advocate for Adult Third Culture Kids

"Being a new Christian and a naive 23 year old I knew nothing about why we humans acted the way we do. This book was so informative and easy to read that I was able to understand it quickly and really apply it straight away to my life. I am now applying it with everyone I know and especially my 2 year old daughter. The bottom line is this book should definitely be one that all new Christians should read. I think it would also make a great study guide to do within every church!!!!"

Jennifer Van Aelst, Baldwin, MI. Jennifer is a new believer in Jesus Christ.

"The answer given here is very real – a combination of healthy spirituality, intellectual insight, a need for community and friendship – all put together to help us become transformed."

Dr. Francis MacNutt, Founding Director, Christian Healing Ministries

Book Prices:

The Life Model gives you practical steps on how to mature, identifies specific ways to heal traumas and challenges you to change, grow and be the person that God designed you to be. *\$10.00 each (Quantity Pricing is available)*

The Study Guide, called **Bringing Life to the Life Model Study Guide** enables you to get more from The Life Model book by using this healing, growth and ministry workbook, designed for small group discussion, personal reflection, prayer ministry teams, parents and recovery groups. *\$8.95 each (Quantity Pricing available)*

Letter 2

Greetings Brother/Sister in Christ,

In the months since my last letter you have had many opportunities to notice the impact of trauma on marriages, child rearing and employment—even among the people you lead. My name is Chris Coursey, I am prepared to help you and your people be everything you are created to be both individually and corporately.

I desire to enhance your effectiveness and efficiency as you tend your flock, teach your students and run your business. In the next few weeks, I will call your office to see if I can assist your church, school or business. My primary goal is to bind up the broken hearted and proclaim freedom for the captives, both those who silently suffer and those whose pain is obvious.

Two types of trauma strongly influence our social and private areas of life causing enormous costs in time, emotions, damaged relationships and lost productivity. One (Type B) is usually kept a secret even though the results are visible while the second kind (Type A) is often unknown by the person. Trauma and its results, whether noticed or not, saturate our schools, churches and neighborhoods - even touching the homes of leaders. We cannot escape the consequences of Adam and Eve's fall but we can learn how to grow, recover and prosper with grace, style and poise when life produces pain and adversity.

A large part of being who we are created to be in Jesus Christ is the need to mature. In my last letter I mentioned I would write about recognizing deficits in maturity and how to help individuals grow when maturity is lacking. I mentioned all addictions have one common element - every person who struggles with an addiction has a painful deficiency in their maturation process. This agonizing gap in development often goes undetected and is overlooked. In fact, one of the leading causes of addictions, dissatisfaction, leadership failure, untamed cravings, depression and marital infidelity (among others) is unrecognized attachment pain. You can help individuals recognize and address their lack of specific maturing tasks by looking at the *Maturity Indicators Chart* in the **Life Model** * on page (s) 29+. Additionally, I have included a brief article on maturity that you can copy and pass out to people who could benefit from this information.

I ask you to prayerfully consider learning more about maturity, building healthy, strong communities and nurturing emotional and spiritual growth by having a one or two hour presentation on the basis of a love offering. I will follow up this memo with a telephone call. Thank you for your time, attention and consideration.

Chris M. Coursey

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Website www.thrivetoday.org

* *The Life Model- Living from the Heart Jesus Gave You* available by calling or emailing Chris Coursey

Got Satisfaction?

Various famous faces have found their way into our homes, cars and offices sporting a ring of milk around their mouths with the catchy slogan, “*Got Milk?*” Most of us have seen this infamous ad campaign (and successful at that) on television, billboards and in magazines. One cannot travel too far on the road, internet or even surf the television channels without running into this popular motto. The ad conveys to its audience, “Hey, if this race car driver, actress and musician drink milk, you should too.” (By no means am I complaining about this marketing, I am happy to see milk advertised rather than alcohol and tobacco products any day.) However, this ad reminds me of an issue we have in our culture known as maturity and the lack thereof.

As consumers we immediately recognize someone who has a ring of milk around their mouth and assume they just finished drinking a large cup of cool milk, and ‘Ahhh’, their thirst is quenched, they must be satisfied. After all, most of the faces are smiling, aren’t they? Maturity is largely overlooked in our society, culture, church, schools, government and entertainment, to name a few. The lack of maturity and our inability to recognize its absence is bound to cause problems in any place, from our home to our church or ministry.

I liken maturity and its effects to a gentle breeze. We cannot see the wind when it blows but we recognize its presence by how it feels on our face and by seeing the trees shake and leaves stir. In other words, though unseen to the naked eye we know it is there by what our senses inform us. The same is true for oxygen and gravity. Though invisible, take it away and we find ourselves in a heap of trouble. Maturity works along the same line. The average person may not completely understand maturity or the essence of maturity but you can look around and notice when maturity is missing. Let me share a practical example. According to the *Life Model, Living from the Heart Jesus Gave You*, one of the basic tasks of maturity between the ages of 4 through 12 is to learn what brings personal satisfaction. Children learn what is fulfilling and what is not by trial and error. This step is an integral part of childhood development. Children who fail to complete this task find themselves constantly searching, buying, drinking, eating, smoking and seeking to discover what satisfies. The more they search to find what satisfies the more they feel unfulfilled and empty. These individuals fall into two groups, those who *give in order to receive* and those who *receive but fail to give*. Both are unhealthy and neither brings personal satisfaction.

Children who *receive but fail to give* grow up to find the more they consume the more they feel unfulfilled and restless. They always want more and fear missing out on ‘something good’. Children in adult bodies who are in positions of authority often govern large numbers of people while others end up broken and destitute. Both can find themselves in bondage to addictions and compulsions. Raging, unmet cravings incessantly drive them. The deception occurs when those who are pastors, governors, CEO’s and presidents gain the trust of people yet are the kind of person you don’t want to leave alone with pretty young women as well as those who are vulnerable and susceptible to abuse. And we thought bulls and china glass shops don’t mix well.

Those who fail to finish their childhood tasks of maturity may be highly skilled but without experience at taming the brain’s nucleus accumbens, trouble lurks around the corner. Located deep in our brain, this small cluster of nerve cells tells our body we are going to die when we fail to get what it wants. The nucleus accumbens is in charge of our cravings for survival, from air to food, safety and sex. It motivates us by releasing dopamine into our system. Dopamine helps us focus and enhances our attentiveness. The conscious feeling we experience is, “*I Got to Have This, NOW!*” whatever “this” may be. We become agonizingly uncomfortable and only find

relief when we turn it off by getting something we need. Getting what we need releases enough serotonin to bring peace and calm. Problems arise when our brain associates “this” with sex, drugs, gambling, clothes, people, objects, etc. Just imagine the unhealthy, even deadly, possibilities.

Unless parents and communities teach children to learn consequences of their choices, behaviors and actions then identify what brings satisfaction we have the potential to raise power-hungry, obsessed, compulsive people who have little to no idea what brings him or her personal satisfaction. This can only produce one outcome – victims. There are countless victims resulting from those who lack the maturity and experience to know what satisfies them. However, there is one downside to having a population of people who has learned what satisfies them. Once a population learns and knows what brings satisfaction individually and corporately, those in marketing and advertising may experience a decline in sales and income. What does advertising have to offer people who can identify what satisfies them and what does not, except to tell the truth about a product? Since much of advertising is the business of telling you what you do not have and what you desperately need, maturing enhances our effectiveness and allows us to distinguish between our needs and cravings. That may be one risk we should be willing to take. We invest in ourselves, our families, communities and our ministries when we pay attention to and purposefully apply the Biblical principle of maturing.

The LORD will guide you continually, and satisfy your soul in drought, and strengthen your bones; you shall be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail.

Isaiah 58:11, NKJV

Got Satisfaction? is written by Chris M. Coursey. This piece is merely an introduction into maturity and satisfaction for a child. If you or someone you know wrestles with an inability to find satisfaction or if you would like more information on this issue, I encourage you to take advantage of various resources on maturity. Available resources are *The Life Model*, *Living from the Heart Jesus Gave You* and the *Study Guide*, both by Shepherd’s House, *The Stages of a Man’s Life* and *Living with Men* both by Jim Wilder. If you are interested in this information or in hosting a Maturity Retreat, please contact **Chris Coursey**, at thrivingtoday@yahoo.com.

Maturity Letter for Christians

Greetings!

This letter is a shofar call for those of us who slumber, hobble or are ‘going through the motions’ of worship and life. If you have room for growth and a desire to achieve your full potential, read on.

Scripture admonishes us to be fully alive, created to be sources of life to those around us. Paul reminds us in Ephesians 2:10 that we are designed by God in Jesus Christ to express our Master Designer in the form of ‘good works’. Good works are not a means to an end, rather the expression of our Creator through our words, actions, relationships and presence. The Body of Christ finds herself in trouble when she tries to convey the Creator in her own strength, abilities and creativity apart from her Designer. When separated and disconnected from the Author of Life we become stagnant, like a cesspool of stale water unable to sustain life. At this point kindred fellowship absorbs and deprives life, rather than refresh and satisfy others with her presence from the Living Waters of Jesus the Christ.

Solid, unwavering maturity comes from life training and fellowship with others. Gardens develop and flowers flourish when they have the necessary ingredients like fertile soil, sufficient sunlight, conducive temperatures and ample water. Subtract one or more of these ingredients, and the garden suffers loss. Similarly, when we have basic life elements, we prosper and mature. As we receive life from others who are ‘downstream’ from us in age, experience and life training, we develop deep roots to keep us firmly planted and secure. For this reason the ‘Timothys’ out there rely on the ‘Pauls’ to show them how to be strong in the Lord. When we lack essential nutrients, we wither and develop unhelpful coping mechanisms that leave us striving rather than thriving.

Trauma causes people to have marriage problems and difficulty raising their children. There are two types of trauma, one is usually kept a secret (Type B) even though the results are visible. The second kind (Type A) is often unknown by the person themselves but strongly influences marriages, conflicts, divorces and child rearing. Both are deadly. Type A traumas come from the *absence* of necessary good things we should all receive, things that gives us emotional stability. These absences create difficulties in relationships.² Type B trauma, on the other hand, comes from bad things such as physical and sexual abuse, natural disasters, combat and war related exposure and so on.³ Trauma and its results, whether noticed or not, saturate our schools, churches, fellowships and neighborhoods - even touching the homes of leaders.

We cannot escape the consequences of Adam and Eve’s fall but we can learn how to grow, recover and prosper with grace, style and poise when life produces pain and adversity. One of the greatest problems of being on the receiving end of trauma and/or deadly/lifeless relationships is the fact that we are left stunted and emotionally bruised with little life to give. Our active process of growth ceases, we are left to run on fumes, limp and go through the motions of life rather than being full of life with our Messiah. “But!” You may say, “I don’t have trauma in my life – I never have, so this letter does not pertain to me.” If you live in this world, you have been introduced to the toxic fruit of sin in the form of trauma and immaturity. If you interact with other people in the Body of Christ, you see the effects of sin through immaturity, division, gossip,

² The Life Model, Living from the Heart Jesus Gave You. Page 42

³ The Life Model, Living from the Heart Jesus Gave You. Page 44

conflicts and outbursts. In fact, the snare of immaturity plagues all of us in one form or another – some more, some less. You cannot afford to overlook this uninviting issue.

Let's look at Jacob for a moment. We read in Genesis 25:27, *So the boys grew. And Esau was a skillful hunter, a man of the field, but Jacob was a mild man, dwelling in tents.* (NKJV) Being a 'hunter' in Scripture is not a godly trait, considering Nimrod also was a hunter 'against the Lord'.⁴ Hebrews tells us Esau was a fornicator and one brief examination of his life tells us he was unstable, fleshly, restless and interested in satisfying his immediate cravings and lusts.⁵ Jacob, on the other hand, is described as being 'mild'. The Hebrew word for mild, **tam** means complete, finished, sound or whole, to name a few.⁶ Tam, an adjectival form has a verb that is used in 1 Kings 6:22 to describe the 'finishing' of the temple when there was nothing else to add. Some scholars associate tam's reference to Jacob as descriptive of his maturity. If so, we see a clear picture of what happens when we have maturity versus when we lack. Maturity does not mean we are perfect in the sense of never committing error or sin. Nor does maturity mean we have added value. Rather, maturity refers to being complete in terms of our life stages and accomplished tasks. Children become adults not only because their bodies develop but for the reason they *earn their stripes*, so to speak. Children must complete specific tasks that enable them to emotionally grow and develop. Explicit traits and behaviors differentiate adults from children. Clearly we recognize an absence when we observe individuals in adult bodies acting like children. Outbursts, rigidity, fearful motivations and addictions are just a few characteristics to look for.

One basic childhood task of maturing is learning what satisfies. When people learn what brings personal satisfaction, they no longer have to invest time and energy eating, drinking, smoking, buying and consuming. From experience adults know what is good for them and what is not and their behavior, choices and witness testifies to this reality. However, the painful failure to learn satisfaction comes awfully close to Esau who was unstable, restless, 'fleshly' and devoid of consistency. Among other absences, the lack of maturity causes individuals to act like a different person according to circumstances, environment and people. A 'dismembered identity' develops and we no longer live according to our heart. Our experience fails to match our theology, so we keep the two separate. What we believe and what we do detach so who we are at church is different than who we are at home, work or school. Being the same person over time and in all emotions is a clear indicator of maturity and stability.

I want to encourage you to invest in yourself, your family and your congregation. If any of this introductory information sparks a chord with you, please know there are several valuable resources available so you and your people can aim to be complete and thrive. Among these resources are two available forums designed to boost the maturity process in the Body of Christ. One is the *THRIVE* Conference, or weekend Maturity Retreats. Information is available at www.thrivetoday.org. Both are designed to instill the understanding we all need to purposefully address deficits in our lives as well as our people. These will provoke you and your people to improve and apply necessary ingredients so you, your marriage and your community mature and

⁴ First Fruits of Zion Parasha Toledot, Volume 1 points out this interpretation and the negative connotation associated with being a 'hunter' both for Nimrod and Esau

⁵ Hebrews 12:16

⁶ OT:8535 tam (tawm); from OT:8552; complete; usually (morally) pious; specifically, gentle, dear:

KJV - coupled together, perfect, plain, undefiled, upright.

(Biblesoft's New Exhaustive Strong's Numbers and Concordance with Expanded Greek-Hebrew Dictionary. Copyright © 1994, 2003 Biblesoft, Inc. and International Bible Translators, Inc.)

flourish. Contact me, Chris Coursey if you would like further information and available resources from books to study guides.