

Playing By The General Rules

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Playing

∞ “To become a playful person is to imaginatively and creatively engage one’s self, others, and God and all of reality so that peace and justice reign within, between (you and others), and without.” Jaco Hamman, *On Becoming a Pastor: Forming Self and Soul For Ministry, Revised and Expanded* (Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 2104),175.



God's Imagination

- ✧ Giving a baby to an old couple .
Sarah laughs at the idea.
- ✧ Be born again. Nicodemus can't
imagine how this is possible.
- ✧ You are loved. Imagine that.

A Theological Vision





**God's Love Not Only Points You In The Right Direction,
It Also Gives You The Power To Make The Trip.**

Love Defined

- ∞ “To love is to act intentionally,
- ∞ in sympathetic/empathic response to God and others,
- ∞ to promote overall well-being.”

[Thomas Jay Oord, *The Nature of Love: A Theology*, (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2010) 17.]



Contributions of Positive Psychology

- ❧ Studies human strengths, rather than pathologies.
 - ❧ What makes life worth living?
- ❧ Positive psychology studies the factors that contribute to flourishing, which are not always the same as the factors that diminish distress or disease.
- ❧ The absence of mental illness (depression) is not the same thing as mental health.

Life Orientations

- ∞ “The pleasant life:” focuses on happiness and sensory delights.
- ∞ “The engaged life”: striving for positive attributes.
- ∞ “The meaningful life:” service to something larger than oneself to contribute to communal well-being.

Bell, Eisenberg, Adams, Smith, LeGrand Wilk, “The Glory of God is a Human being fully alive: Predictors of Positive versus Negative Mental Health Among Clergy,” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, (2015) 54(4):702-721, 702-703

The General Rules

- ☞ Guidelines for growing in love and moving toward flourishing.
- ☞ Wesley's view of grace: Divine love.
- ☞ Authentic Christian life flows out of love.
- ☞ Human love is a response to God's love .



Positive Mental Health in Clergy

- ✧ Engaged and meaning life orientations: correlates to PMH
- ✧ Factors related to PMH:
 - ✧ Positive congregations
 - ✧ Congregational support
 - ✧ Appointment considerations
 - ✧ Being pleased with one's appointment.

Rule #1
Do No Harm

Do
GOOD

Spiritual Disciplines

Do No Harm

- ❧ Examples of self-harm (the big ones)
- ❧ Examples of Self harm: everyday ones
 - ❧ Not paying attention to what my body or emotions tell me.
 - ❧ Perfectionism
 - ❧ Inner Critic
- ❧ Wesley: “avoid uncharitable conversations.



Growth in Love is a Process

- ✧ We won't get it right the first time.
- ✧ Even clergy are still growing in grace.
- ✧ Tripudium: two steps backwards and one forward.

Do Good

- ☞ Practice Self-Kindness
- ☞ Practice Self-Compassion
- ☞ Celebrate strengths
- ☞ Increase positive emotions
- ☞ Be a friend (social support)



Be Compassionate

“You must be compassionate just as your Father is compassionate.”

Luke 6: 36 (New Living Bible)

Self-Compassion



∞ Self Kindness

∞ Acknowledge our common humanity

∞ Mindfulness or Awareness

Kristin Neff, *Self-Compassion: Stop Beating Yourself Up and Leave Insecurity Behind*, (New York: Willima Morrow, Harper Collins, 2011).

Kristin Neff. “Definition of Self-Compassion” <http://self-compassion.org/the-three-elements-of-self-compassion-2/> (accessed 7/17/16)

Self-Kindness

∞ Notice your suffering.

∞ Be moved by your own suffering.

∞ Be kind to yourself while suffering.

(Neff,2011,41)

Common Humanity

☞ Acknowledge our common humanity.

☞ We are not alone in our suffering.

☞ We are creatures, not the creator.

☞ We will make mistakes and we are forgiven.

Mindfulness or Awareness



- ☞ Being aware of our thoughts and feelings.
- ☞ Non-judgmental awareness of our feelings.
- ☞ Non-reactive, self-differentiated leader (family systems language).
- ☞ Centering prayer as a means of cultivating this awareness.

Practice Spiritual Disciplines

- ✧ Writing as a spiritual Practice.
- ✧ Writing as a healing practice.
- ✧ Crafting an alternative or preferred story.





John 15:1-16

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See David Denborough, *Retelling the Stories of Our Lives*, Tree of Life Exercise

Story Care

- ❧ Story Care is Self-Care
- ❧ Requires paying attention to our stories.
- ❧ Can call for restorying.
- ❧ Play by the General Rules
- ❧ Grow in Love



be you

BRAVELY



FLOURISH