

Faithful Disagreement:

*Building Durable Relationships
with God & Each Other*

A Course in Three Parts
moderated by Tom Gamble & David Ealy



FORUM 101: WEEK 4
“Trusting What Is Heard”



DEFINITIONS

Trust | trəst |

verb [with obj.]

1 believe in the reliability, truth, ability, or strength of: *I should never have trusted her* | [with obj. and infinitive] : *he can be trusted to carry out an impartial investigation* | (as adj. trusted) : *a trusted adviser.*

- (trust someone with) allow someone to have, use, or look after (someone or something of importance or value) with confidence: *I'd trust you with my life.*
- (trust someone/something to) commit (someone or something) to the safekeeping of: *they don't like to trust their money to anyone outside the family.*
- [with clause] have confidence; hope (used as a polite formula in conversation): *I trust that you have enjoyed this book.*
- [no obj.] have faith or confidence: *she trusted in the powers of justice.*
- [no obj.] (trust to) place reliance on (luck, fate, or something else over which one has little control): *trusting to the cover of night, I ventured out.*

2 chiefly archaic **allow credit to (a customer).**

Hear | hi(ə)r |

verb (past and past participle heard |hərd|) [with obj.]

1 perceive with the ear the sound made by (someone or something): *behind her she could hear men's voices* | [with obj. and infinitive] : *she had never been heard to complain* | [no obj.] : *he did not hear very well.*

2 be told or informed of: *have you heard the news?* | [with clause] : *they heard that I had moved* | [no obj.] : *I was shocked to hear of her death.*

3 [no obj.] (have heard of) be aware of; know of the existence of: *nobody had ever heard of my college.*

4 [no obj.] (hear from) be contacted by (someone), esp. by letter or telephone: *if you would like to join the committee, we would love to hear from you.*

5 listen or pay attention to: [with clause] : *she just doesn't hear what I'm telling her.*

6 (hear someone out) listen to all that someone has to say: *Joseph gravely heard them out but never offered advice.*

7 [no obj.] (will/would not hear of) will or would not allow or agree to: *I won't hear of such idiocy.*

8 Law listen to and judge (a case or plaintiff): *an all-woman jury heard the case.*

9 listen to and grant (a prayer): *our Heavenly Father has heard our prayers.*

10 To act on what's been said: (Luke 14:34-35) *Whoever has ears to hear should pay attention.*

SESSION OUTLINE

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PHRASES

- **“be hearing things”**
- **“be unable to hear oneself think” informal** used to complain about very loud noise or music: *I hate bars where you can't hear yourself think.*
- **“hear! hear!”** used to express one's wholehearted agreement, esp. with something said in a speech.
- **“hear tell of (or that)”** be informed of (or that): *I heard tell that he went out west.*

DERIVATIVES

- “hearable” **adjective**
- “hearer” **noun**



In what is said, what matters more: what is able to be said or what is able to be heard?

Introduction

Remember the Ground Rules

Be mindful of the covenant we established as a class:

- Have respect for one another**
- Care enough to listen**
- One person speaks at a time**
- Confidentiality**
- Reserve Judgement**
- Speak Up**
- Listen**
- Pray**

Our Manner of Discourse

We established an invitational method of speaking. When one person is done talking, it is their job to invite the next person to speak (not necessarily the person to either side of them). Invitations can always be respectfully declined.

Homework

We will take time at the beginning of each class to review the homework. Think in particular about how it relates to the topic of speaking.

Illustrations

The illustrations and pictures used through the study guides are intended to provoke your thinking. It is not daydreaming for one or more of them to capture your attention from what's happening in class. Just be sure to write down a note or two about what an image provokes in you and get back in the fray!

Pushing the Edges

This particular class will press our senses. In particular, we are going to explore a bit how we interact with our senses and how that can affect what we experience. We will spend a fair amount of time talking about hearing as an active process rather than a passive one.

Facilitators

TOM GAMBLE has led development of self-managing work teams in manufacturing facilities. His contact information is rtgamble122@aol.com or 336-578-3632.

DAVID EALY has studied and practiced pastoral counseling. His contact information is david@hawfieldschurch.org or 336-524-1234.



Semantic Warnings

READ:

The definitions on page 2, paying particular attention to how the definition of one informs the other.

WRITE:

In the spaces below, take time to reflect on each question and to write down examples. Be prepared to share at least one.

What does it mean to you to hear someTHING?

What does it mean to hear someONE?

What does it mean to you to hear?

What does it mean for others to hear you?

Does someone have to agree with you in order for you to feel heard?

What do you need to know (about yourself, others, the topic, etc.) in order to trust what you hear?

Review the examples under "PHRASES." What kind of environment promotes hearing?

How do you know if you can trust what you hear? What matters more: their trustworthiness or yours?



While the laws of Cary, NC, require a public hearing on the issue in question, will the actual hearing really be a forum for the City Council to hear from the public or will it be a perfunctory exercise?

**Town Of
Cary**

PUBLIC HEARING

**Contact #
(919) 469-4082**

Generations will argue about the ability to hear while wearing headphones.



Hearing v. Being Heard

READ: The excerpts from *Faithful Disagreement* and from *Strength to Love* below.

I'm wondering then if Psalm 51, that most famous of penitential psalms, may be the best articulation of the good news we need to hear, for as the psalmist knows, our sin, our dirty laundry, is not the last word. To be sure, sin is a powerful, persistent reality in our lives, but God's grace is a more powerful, enduring reality,³⁵ which is why the psalmist looks beyond self to God, laying hold of the marvelous possibilities of God's grace: "Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin" (Ps. 51:1-2). What is most striking about this penitential psalm-which I hadn't noticed until James L. Mays helped me see it-is that although many of the prayers in the Psalter offer complaints against God or others, imploring God to "change my situation" or even to smite my enemy, in this one the psalmist prays, "Change me." I am the problem. Deliver me from the predicament of myself. "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me.... Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and sustain in me a willing" or "generous spirit" (Ps. 51:10, 12)....

...Did you ever wonder why Peter stepped out of the boat? I have a suspicion about that, for the church has been likened to Noah's ark in that if it weren't for the storm outside, we couldn't stand the smell inside. But I'm not so sure about that anymore, given the malodorous state of many of our own denominational boats at present. So I find myself thinking that maybe Peter needed some air! As noted in the last chapter, given the bad behaviors and polarizing rhetoric that have attended so much of current church conflict, the apostle Paul would be hard-pressed to describe many of our denominations at present as "the aroma of Christ" (2 Cor. 2:15). So I wonder if Peter had been to one too many

tense, argumentative presbytery, synod, or diocesan meetings. You know the kind I am talking about: the kind where people line up at microphones on opposite sides of the room and begin shouting past one another, not even pretending to listen, caricaturing and even demonizing each other, saying things about brothers and sisters in Christ that should not be said. Maybe he needed some air. Asphyxiation was at least part of what compelled our task force to take a risk, for we knew something had to change, that our current manner of conducting our life together had become intolerable. It frankly stank. But something else compelled Peter to step out of that boat and attempt walking on the water, something even more important: he wanted to be like Jesus. He wanted to emulate his Lord-to imitate Jesus Christ. He really doesn't get enough credit for that, for sometimes it is said that he was being his impetuous, overconfident self-or even that he was testing Jesus. But as Barbara Brown Taylor has astutely observed, if he was testing Jesus, wouldn't a saner and safer test have been simply to ask Jesus something like, "If it's really you, tell us what we all had for supper tonight"? Peter wasn't testing Jesus. There are, in fact, a lot of different ways to say "if" in Greek, but what Peter said bordered on "since it is you, command me to come to you on the waters." He gave expression to his faith and to an entirely appropriate desire to emulate his Lord, not just in intention but in action. He wanted to imitate Jesus Christ. Moreover, he didn't vault impetuously over the gunwales. He waited for the command of Jesus, for enabling grace. And Jesus didn't reprimand him for his request.

Frances Taylor Gench. *Faithful Disagreement: Wrestling with Scripture in the Midst of Church Conflict* (Kindle Locations 310-317, 384-398). Kindle Edition.

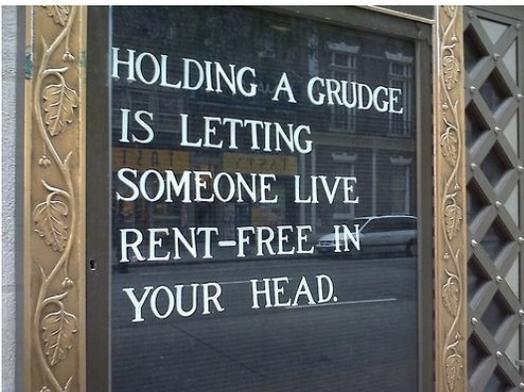
Hearing v. Being Heard

DISCUSS:

- What stands out to you from either excerpt?
- What conditions must be met in order for hearing to take place?
- What is your obligation to someone speaking to you?
- What is someone's obligation to you if you are speaking?
- How can someone know that you are listening to them?
- What is more important: hearing or being heard?

...Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick has made an impressive distinction between enforceable and unenforceable obligations. The former are regulated by the codes of society and the vigorous implementation of law-enforcement agencies. Breaking these obligations, spelled out on thousands of pages in law books, has filled numerous prisons. But unenforceable obligations are beyond the reach of the laws of society. They concern inner attitudes, genuine person-to-person relations, and expressions of compassion which law books cannot regulate and jails cannot rectify. Such obligations are met by one's commitment to an inner law, written on the heart. Man-made laws assure justice, but a higher law produces love. No code of conduct ever persuaded a father to love his children or a husband to show affection for his wife. The law court may force him to provide bread for the family, but it cannot make him provide the bread of love.

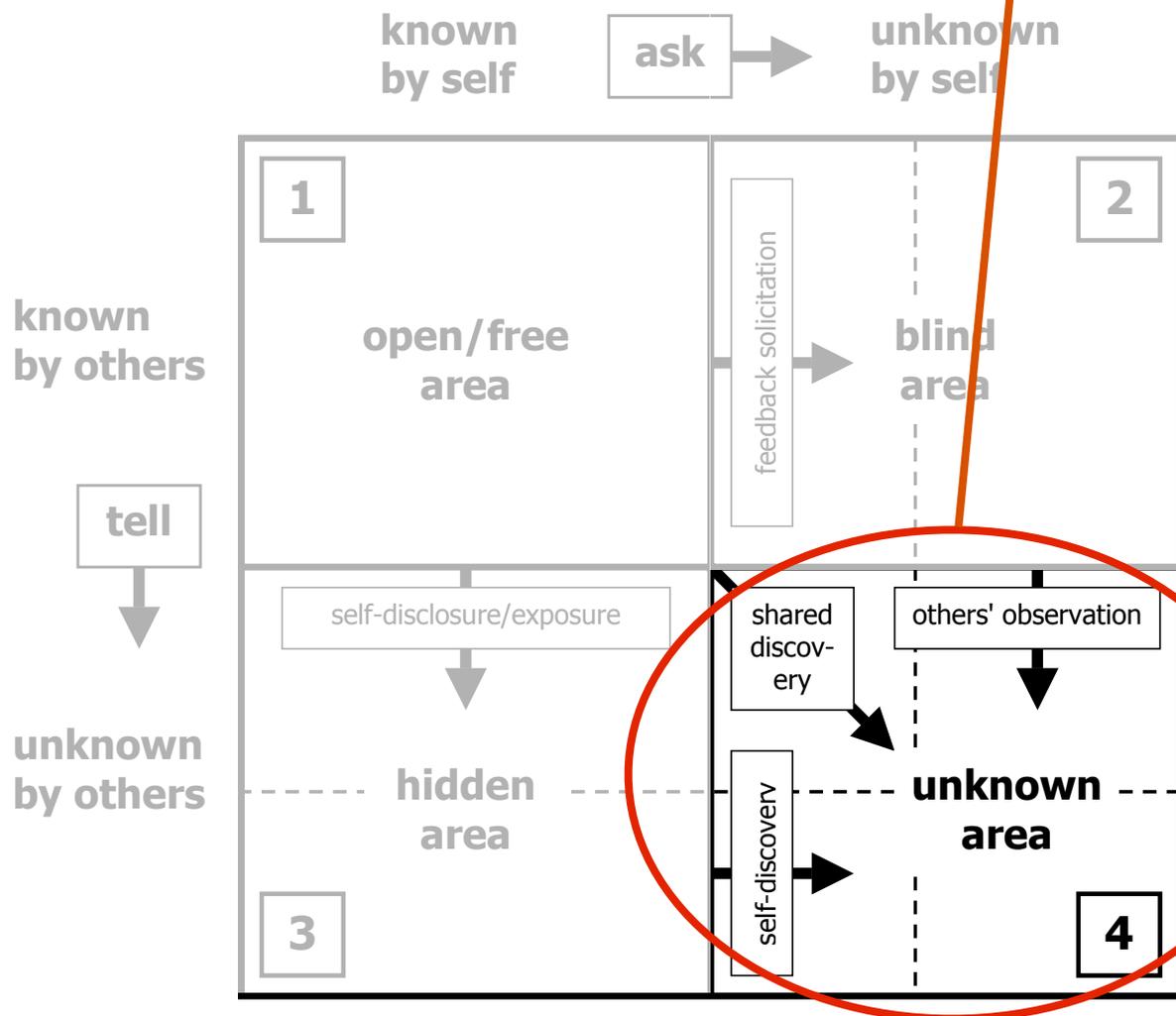
Martin Luther King, Jr. *Strength to Love*.
pp.36-37 (reflecting on the parable of the Good Samaritan)



Trusting v. Being Trustworthy

Johari Window model

What are you willing to hear in order to know your true self? What are you willing to tell in order to be a true mirror for someone? How much trust is required for Area 4 to work?



© design alan chapman 2001-4 based on [Ingham and Luft's Johari Window concept](#)

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What does it mean to trust what's heard?

WRITE:

Are you a trustworthy listener?



DISCUSS:

In pairs or groups of three to four, discuss the question above as well as this: "What does it take for you trust what you hear?"

“Whoever has ears to hear should pay attention.”

Jesus, Luke 14:35

Homework:

Take time to journal or talk to someone about how you listen. What do you choose to listen to? To push further, try exploring this question: How loudly does someone or something have to speak in order to be heard over the voice of your experience?



Can you trust the media coverage of this trial?
Can you trust the judge in this case?
Can you trust the jury in this case?
Can you trust the defendant's oath?
Can you trust the witnesses?
Can you trust your own assessment of any of this?

Practice Makes Perfect

CONCEPT:

OUR SENSES are among the principle ways we experience the world. We attempt several exercises to explore our senses and our use of them, especially in partnership with our belief.



PRACTICE:

These are all activities we can do in class or that can be done at home or other contexts. The idea of these activities is to highlight the role we play as individuals in interpreting our world. We will perform the Lego™ activity in class.

Trust Fall

A person deliberately allows themselves to fall, relying on the other members of the group (spotters) to catch the person. There are many variants of the trust fall. For instance, in one type, the group stands in a circle, with one person in the middle with arms folded against his chest and falls in various directions, being pushed by the group back to a standing position before falling again. In another variant, a person stands on an elevated position (such as a stage, stepping stool or tree stump) and relying on multiple people to catch the person. This variant is potentially more dangerous and therefore it is all the more crucial to have the rest of the group in position and ready to catch him before he steps onto the platform. (from Wikipedia)

Lego™ Build

Take a set of Legos® and gather identical pairs of various pieces, splitting them into two identical groupings of pieces. Build an object with the first grouping. Take the blindfold and place it on one member of your class: they are the “builder”. Another person is the “caller”: they take the object that was made and call out to your group what they see. The rest of the group takes turns providing direction to the “builder” to duplicate the object.

Blind Obstacle Course

Partners decide who will be blindfolded and who will be the “Caller.” The blindfolded person is to walk about the room while guided only by the voice of the Caller. After a minute or two, switch roles. Reflect together on the experience. Pay particular attention to how the experience relates to navigating a topic or faith or a relationship.

Group Drawing

Take a swimming noodle (that has a small hole that runs the long axis of the noodle) and cut it into 2 to 4 inch tall slices. Take sturdy string and tie 4-5 strings to the slice, looping each string through the hole. Place a marker through the hole. On a large sheet of newsprint or poster paper, have the group try to duplicate a simple line drawing TOGETHER using the strings to control the marker. What has to happen to have success?

Notes



Notes



Build. Grow. Share.



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