

Week 20 Practice

Over the years, I have come to recognize a specific kind of client that comes to me for therapy. This person has good self-esteem, is aware of their worthiness, and has a relatively clear and well-recognized sense of identity. However, they are struggling with taking the next step: *revealing* their identity. They are having difficulty taking down their walls.

Last week, we identified people you are most likely to “limp” around and those you would feel most comfortable “walking normally” around—for instance, people with whom you could take down your walls slowly, carefully, and wisely. These are the people that may provide a kind of therapeutic space for you—a space where you can practice being a little more vulnerable, perhaps even clumsy, as you try to do new things with your walls. It will probably still feel difficult or scary to practice something new with this person, but at least it will feel *possible*.

This week, choose one person from the “Heal” column in last week’s exercise. Reach out to that person and ask if you can get together. Let them know you have something important to talk to them about. When you get together, let them know you trust them and you are working on being more authentic in your relationships and you want to be especially intentional about that in your relationship with them. Tell them this means you are going to try to reveal yourself more often, as well as be open about the times when you don’t feel comfortable being vulnerable. Ask them if they’d like to do the same with you. It is very likely they will be relieved to be talking so candidly about walls.

If they agree, then begin by sharing something with them that you have never told anyone else. Again, go slow, start small. For example, when I was a kid, I’d pick my boogers and wipe them under the seat of the car. You see? Small stuff. We’ll get to the bigger stuff later in these months of loving. For now, just let your walls down a little bit.

Of course, it is also possible there are no names in your “Heal” column. Your relationships may feel too complicated for the cumbersome process of renovating your walls and learning when to drop them and when to raise them. In this case, a therapist is someone who gives you the safe space to practice this, and then helps you decide which healing people in your life you will begin to take down your walls with. This week, identify the person who is your therapeutic space, even if you have to call in a professional.

After all, that’s what they’re there for.