



## Unpacking an Experience

*Purpose: A guided exercise designed to help us sort out our feelings and choose appropriate responses.*

### **how to:**

Emotions contain information—clues to what is going on in us and why we respond the way we do. Taking a look at our emotions helps us become more aware of what is going on in our lives—both the positive, celebratory experiences and ones which cause hurt or frustration. The point here is not to get caught up in feelings, but to let our feelings alert us to where we need to take action and/or engage God. This exercise can be done by writing out our thoughts or verbally by talking the questions through with another person.

### **step 1: review the situation**

Briefly describe or review the situation in question and the events that led up to it.

### **step 2: identify feelings**

What feelings did you experience in this event? See if you can put a name on them. (Fear, anger, fulfillment, joy, frustration, discouragement, peace, sense of destiny, loss of control, etc...)

### **step 3: ask “why?”**

Try to describe why you felt the way you did. Why did this experience stir up emotion in you? (Maybe you felt like you finally succeeded, or that you were being taken advantage of, that you had seen a new piece of what God made you for, etc.)

### **step 4: what is your part?**

If the situation was hurtful or you feel you were treated wrongly, it is easy to put your focus on what the other people involved did wrong. Instead, try thinking about how you can take responsibility for your part and work through that with God instead of people and circumstances in the situation. How does God want to speak to you through this event? What part did you play in the situation? Have you responded in the same way in other, similar situations?

### **step 5: respond**

What do you need to do in response to this experience?

- Do I need to forgive?
- Do I need to let God work with me?
- Do I need to find someone to celebrate with?
- Do I need to write this insight down so I don't forget?
- Do I need encouragement, healing or perspective?
- Do I need to worship and thank God for what he's done?

### **step 6: talk it over**

Talk through what you've written with a friend, peer or a coach for perspective or if you get stuck anywhere in the process. Have them pray with you on any topic you need help with.