

Small Group Discussion Questions

From *Four Patterns of Healthy People* by Matt Norman

Congratulations for having the courage and willingness be open with others and discuss these topics. To make the most of your discussions, review the following guidelines as a group prior to every discussion:

- **Practice contemplative listening.** No matter how tempting it may be, do not attempt to respond to someone's sharing with fixing, saving, advice-giving, or any sort of commentary including "I know exactly how you feel" or "when that happens to me, I do this." When we give advice, try to fix, or save we rarely, if ever, succeed. Instead, practice contemplative listening. When you listen to the person who is sharing, listen with open ears. Listen with curiosity to the stories, the passion, and the facial expressions of the person who is sharing.
- **Ask honest and open questions.** After listening, let your contemplative listening flow into questions that seek out where the person is growing. Asking someone: "have you thought about seeing a therapist?" is not an honest and open question. It's a piece of advice in disguise. Honest and open questions similarly are not questions that we already have an answer for. If you have a preconceived notion for how this person "ought to" answer your question, it isn't an honest and open question. Honest and open questions help the person explore places of truth in their soul and life experiences.
- **Share honestly.** When it's your turn to share, share honestly. Share from a place of authenticity, from the core of who you are. The goal of your sharing is to discover what is true about you and discern where you are growing.
- **Practice confidentiality.** Everything that is shared in discussions is confidential. This is essential if the group is going to maintain safety. Only in the context of confidentiality is a group safe enough for honest sharing -- the kind of sharing that allows people to grow.

Intro & Chapter 1:

1. Where do you feel stuck right now?

2. In what areas of your life do you have a fixed mindset? Why?

3. What might be an example of a “symptom” in your life of a deeper issue?

4. Describe a vision for yourself as a healthier person in one year from now.

Chapter 2 & 3:

1. What trends do you see in your assessment responses on pages 12 and 13?

2. How has unhealthy thinking drawn you inward and made you more self-focused?

3. What draining or constraining thought patterns might need to change for you?

4. What did you realize about yourself when working through the cognitive behavior therapy questions and thought exercises on pages 19 and 20?

Chapter 4 & 5:

1. When considering your resentments, fears and harm of others, what do you realize about yourself?



2. What do you ruminate on, recycling over and over in your mind... or what would you struggle to give up?

3. When have you been emotionally triggered lately? How might that reaction have been an affront to something you hold dear in life?

4. Which idea on pages 24 and 25 would help you shift from "needing" to "appreciating"?

Chapter 6 & 7:

1. Complete the Accomodation/Avoidance worksheet on page 36. What do you realize about yourself?

2. When do you find yourself getting defensive or rationalizing your behavior?

3. Consider the curiosity exercise on page 42 and 43. What are examples where you frustrate others, how could you become more curious, and what outcome might you get?



Chapter 8:

1. How would you characterize your family of origin patterns of relating to one another?
2. How do your personality style or organizational affiliations influence how you relate to others?
3. What specific relationships do you have that tend to have less healthy patterns?
4. Which dysfunctional relationship patterns on pages 50-51 have shown up in your relationships? Why?

Chapter 9 & 10:

1. What roles are you playing that you could document on page 56 that may contribute to unnecessary anxiety, missed opportunity, or relationship tension?
2. How well are you able to be your authentic self in any social environment



3. What patterns on the true self assessment (page 59) would you like to do less often? What would need to change in your thinking to make that happen?

4. How would people at work and home rate your patterns of humility?

Chapter 11:

1. What are recent examples where you've treated your most important relationships as a utility?

2. What influential examples have you had in your life (parents/managers/etc) of I-It and I-Thou relationships?

3. What career or personal sacrifice could you make to set a pattern that truly prioritizes your most important relationships?

4. What obstacles would you have to overcome to sacrifice your own ambitions and desires for a life of greater service to others?



Chapter 12 & 13

1. What schedule or energy patterns listed on pages 73 and 74 would you like to make more consistent in your life and why?

2. Where might you set limits in screen time, social time, work time, or chemicals in order to have more sustainable energy and focus?

3. Which questions on page 79 do you wish you could score higher and why?

4. What groups/relationships could help you live a more transparent life?

Chapter 14 & 15

1. What's your mindset about growth?

2. How could you develop more accountability for yourself to live a life of continuous pattern growth?



3. Who has been a pattern developer for you and how could you be a pattern developer for others?

Conclusion

1. On page 87, Matt writes: "What you believe about the world and why you exist will invariably form your patterns. It will whisper verdicts about your identity and the point of suffering. It will be the filter through which you evaluate mistakes, challenges, and tensions."

How has this statement been true in your life?

2. What commitment(s) will you make to grow into healthier patterns in how you think, relate to others, prioritize your ego, and operate?

3. Why is this important to you and those you live and work with?

Schedule a Keynote or Coaching Sessions.

Visit <http://mattnorman.com/contact>.

