

The LIFE Model of Redemption and Maturity

So hurt people wouldn't spend their lives simply recovering and "getting by," a small but dedicated group of pastors, counselors, prayer ministers, deliverance workers, abuse survivors, support people and parents looked, studied and prayed their way to a model that would guide us from birth to death—a LIFE model.

A growing number of books, tapes, videos, conferences and training seminars use aspects of the life model but its essentials are found in a small book called [The Life Model: Living From The Heart Jesus Gave You](#). This book has been translated in several languages. The LIFE Model is used around the world for trauma treatment, addiction recovery, community development, church design, child rearing and Christian missions.

The LIFE Model is, as its name implies, a model for life from conception to death. It is an idealized model, that is to say, it proposes what life should be like rather than describing what life on earth generally produces. The LIFE model suggests that people need five things in order to thrive:

1. A place to belong
2. To receive and give life
3. The capacity to recover from things that go wrong (desynchronizations)
4. Maturation
5. To live from their identities (hearts)

These elements develop when we share joy and sorrows together as natural and spiritual families in peaceful homes. The LIFE Model covers both our growth and recovery. These five elements apply whether we consider physical growth, emotional growth, family growth, community growth or spiritual growth. Taken in order from one to five, these elements are needed for strong and healthy human growth. Taken in reverse order, starting with living from our true identities, these same elements form an excellent diagnostic grid for a failure to thrive.

By understanding the causes for failures to thrive we can design a restoration process. The LIFE Model explains how to restore our identities as individuals, families and communities so that we live from a completely synchronized and authentic identity we call "the heart that Jesus gives us." This authentic identity is as much communal as it is individual.

Deep in the right hemisphere of every human brain is a control center that develops during the first two years after conception. This center will run our lives and bodies and, provided we develop a strong one, will see us through the tempests of life. We seek to train and restore this control center. With it we can regulate our emotions, act like ourselves and stay synchronized inside and out.

We become traumatized when the emotional intensity of life exceeds our capacity to maintain synchronization between the four levels of our control center. Thriving means building a strong control center through joyful attachment bonds that bring peace and return us to joy when we become upset.

We develop our identities by responding and resonating when the characteristics we possess as we watch them expressed by an older and more experienced person. Identity is propagated like cuttings from live plants and not grown from seeds. This way of growing an identity by receiving the life passed on from one who went before is true for us at a physical level just as it is at an emotional and spiritual level.

What makes the LIFE Model a Christian model is a division between redemption and maturity. While most people will agree that not everyone matures correctly, some would say that all human beings could reach their full maturity by purely human means. Christians would say, “not without help.” Some believe that everything needed for full human maturity is already contained within each person. Christians would say, “Something is still missing.”

It takes a mutual effort between people and their God to fully live and experience life as it was meant to be lived. God clearly separates divine areas of responsibility from human areas of responsibility. Humans are responsible for maturity. God is responsible for redemption.

The LIFE Model is a profoundly Christian blueprint for wholeness for individuals, families, churches and communities across the lifespan.

The LIFE Model is a unifying approach to ministries of counseling, recovery, pastoral care, prayer ministry, deliverance, inner healing, child rearing, body life and health.

The LIFE Model is used internationally for substance abuse recovery programs. It has been widely used as a church model. Missions have adopted the model for the restoration of missionary children. Almost every major ministry that deals with trauma and abuse victims in the USA uses and distributes the LIFE Model as part of their teaching.

The theory behind this book was developed at Shepherd's House Inc. in California. Pastors, counselors, prayer team members, lay leaders, people in recovery and an international advisory panel from many traditions and theoretical perspectives worked together to formulate this profoundly Christian view of life.