



LEADER GUIDE: EPISODE #9 HOW TO INVEST IN THE EMOTIONAL HEALTH OF YOUR STAFF

AN INTRODUCTION TO CHURCH CHANGER:

It's time to rip the lid off your leadership and push past organizational pain points holding you and your church back. **Church Changer** is designed to equip church leaders with practical tools, proven strategies, and best practices to help you reach more people for Christ and shatter growth barriers in your ministry. Listen today, and put key takeaways into practice tomorrow! We're here to collaborate with you and cheerlead for you. Join Co-hosts Pastor Tim Lucas and Lauren Berçarich, along with special guests, as they outline a clear path forward so you can increase your impact, and let's have some fun in the process! New episodes drop the first Tuesday of each month.

EPISODE NOTES:

Overview

Those of us working in ministry too often feel we are just getting by with no capacity for extra: surviving not thriving. We want to encourage you to start investing in your staff in life-changing ways! Let 2023 be the year you improve the emotional health and spirituality of your staff. This is powerful enough to shift your staff culture. And it's powerful enough to truly impact the lives of your people and their families. We want to introduce you to coursework from [Emotionally Healthy](#) that offers a pathway to cultivate healthy spirituality and relationships at your church. Liquid Church's Discipleship Pastor Mike Lee offers us a roadmap!

An Opportunity

Before we recap our episode, Mike wanted to share with you an opportunity to join a MasterClass with Pete Scazzero. If you're interested in applying this Emotionally Healthy framework to your ministry context, this could be a great opportunity for you. [Link to learn more and register!](#)

MASTERCLASS with Pete Scazzero and Drew Hyun - January 25th

EMOTIONALLY HEALTHY DISCIPLESHIP
MASTERCLASS
with Pete Scazzero & Drew Hyun

A 4-HOUR ONLINE CLASS, EXPANDING ON THE ROBUST THEOLOGY OF EMOTIONALLY HEALTHY DISCIPLESHIP.

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PETE SCAZZERO
DREW HYUN



Why Did Liquid Launch Its Emotionally Healthy Journey? Why Should We?

We realized that our staff was languishing, which means they were experiencing stagnation or a sense of emptiness. Almost like they were going through life in a fog. This was typical post-pandemic, but still needed to be addressed. As John Eldredge put it in his book *Resilient*, "We've all been through 30 years of trauma in 3 years." As people, we were disconnected, missing community, lonely, apathetic, and dealing with uncertain futures. That definitely takes a toll on your mental health, spiritual health, and emotional health.

I think Emotionally Healthy Spirituality and Relationships was really a blessing from God that allowed us one way to start deepening the discipleship and care of our staff. Sometimes you hear people say "hurt people hurt people" and I think the opposite is also true - "healed people heal people." The pandemic may be over, but its impact is still very real today. But, even putting the pandemic aside, the Emotional Healthy coursework equips people with tools they can use daily at work and home and we believe truly improves their lives and relationships.

The Course Emotionally Healthy Spirituality Uses Imagery Of An Iceberg. What Is The Meaning Behind This?

The book and coursework for Emotionally Healthy Spirituality uses an incredible visual of an iceberg. With an iceberg, you only see what's on the surface, but that represents only about 20% of its mass. The rest is below the surface, which is an accurate image of life. That 20% is what people see and that you're consciously aware of, but the 80% that's below the surface is really who you are and how you experience and respond to situations and people. EHS is a journey of self-discovery and unearthing that other 80% of who we are.

It wasn't the visible part of the iceberg that sank the Titanic, it was what was below the surface and unseen. We need to explore what's beneath the surface with God to find true freedom. EHS helps us discover who we truly are and helps us improve our vertical relationship with God. Part of that is exploring our feelings. Feelings are a part of who God made us to be, we just have to learn what to do with them and how to deal with them. What we learn is that there are no such things as good or bad feelings, but there are pleasurable feelings and challenging feelings, and knowing how to process the challenging feelings are the key to living an emotionally healthy life. We can't live in the fullness that God has for us unless we let Him transform every part of me - heart, mind, and soul and that includes my feelings.

One other really life changing realization for many going through the EHS coursework is that you can be a Christian for decades, but still have the spiritual maturity of a teenager! Here's the thing... you can't be spiritually mature if you're not emotionally mature.

EHS is a journey. Some of us have uncovered a little more of what's beneath the surface of our iceberg than others, but the key is understanding that it's not about perfection, it's about progress.



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One Of The Biggest Benefits Of Emotionally Healthy Is Having Common Language For Staff. What Does This Mean?

The EHR and EHR (Emotionally Healthy Relationships) courses teach individuals very specific skills and language to use when engaging with others. That common language has been incredibly helpful in the office. We see it being used casually in conversations around the office, in meetings, and in tough conversations. Here are a few examples of the language we learn to use:

One of the guidelines for the course is to only speak in “I” statements. It’s easy to sometimes hide behind a collective “we” - “we’re so busy”- but speaking for yourself - “I’m busy right now with XYZ” - is more powerful and vulnerable. You’re sharing how YOU are feeling.

Another one is FOO, which stands for Family of Origin. This is recognizing how our past impacts our present. A lot of who we are today was really shaped by our experiences when we were 8-12 years old. That’s when we learned how to do conflict and how to do relationships, but on a macro level, we have these patterns in our families that go back 3-4 generations that tend to repeat themselves. Unless we are aware of them, we can’t start to change them. So, during the course, there’s a process of discovery when it comes to our FOO and now our people are equipped to talk about that.

Another great one that we all use a lot is “I’m puzzled.” Too often we jump to conclusions about why someone did something or we assume someone’s intent. So, instead of telling yourself a story... we’ve learned to use “I’m puzzled” to clear the air. For example, “I’m puzzled why you arrived 20 minutes late to our meeting, when we agreed upon the time yesterday.” Because this is common language, the person on the other end knows you’re just looking for clarification rather than confrontation. It makes it easier to address some stickier conversations and clear the air among colleagues.

This common language is great for the speaker because it gives them ways to have a voice where they might not have felt comfortable before, but as a listener it’s even more helpful because if someone approaches you with the common language, you don’t have to get defensive. You know that it’s coming from a place of care.

What’s also helpful is that this common language equips managers to handle conversations with direct reports AND it equips junior members of the staff to speak up even with those above them on the org chart. It levels the playing field. This has been a huge win for us!



What Are Some Best Practices For Offering EHS To Your Staff?

Consider both the schedule and spouses!

The Schedule: EHS and EHR are courses. Each requires class time of 2 hours for 8 weeks, plus individual reading, devotional, and study time in between. You don't want this to just feel like an extra assignment for your staff. You want them to feel cared for. So, consider what schedule would work well for them. For example, is offering the class in the evenings best? Or does that create childcare issues for young families. One thing we did was offer the class during work hours. We wanted to signal to staff that we think this is so important, that we want you to take 2 hours during the workday for 2 months to be poured into, developed, and cared for.

Spouses: We provided the course and all books / materials at no cost to our staff. Then, we went a step further and offered the same benefit to all spouses of our staff. One thing that's really part of our DNA is that the first ministry that God calls us to is our families. So we take every opportunity to honor that calling. If we want our staff to be emotionally healthy and spiritually mature, then our home life has to be intentionally included. Again, this signals the intentional care you are taking with your staff and is received as a gift!

The First Course To Take Is Emotionally Healthy Spirituality. The Next Course Is Emotionally Healthy Relationships. What Do You Learn In EHR?

The umbrella term for this coursework is Emotionally Healthy Discipleship, and this is the work of Pete and Geri Scazzaro. They've designed a pathway that can deeply change lives. So, there's a clear order to this coursework.

You start with EHS, which is focused on our vertical relationship with God. And, then you progress to Emotionally Healthy Relationships or EHR. This is about our horizontal relationship with others. Jesus gave us these commandments: Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength and Love your neighbor as yourself. **Another way to say this is that the amount that you love others is the amount that you actually love God.** This was really convicting!

So EHR is all about how to love others well and teaches you 8 practical skills that help you do just that. If I could just share a little secret, building better relationships is not ever going to be about the other person. It's about you. It's about taking the plank out of your own eye before reaching for the speck in your neighbor's eye. It's about asking yourself what's God doing inside of me? How's he speaking to me through my feelings, how do I honor the other person as someone created in God's image? How do I respond for the sake of the relationship?

And you do that through a variety of skills - clarifying expectations, looking for patterns in your family of origin by mapping out a genogram, exploring your feelings, and each skill builds towards the final skill which I know everyone wants to learn - clean fighting!



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A Fun Tool You Learn In EHR Is The Community Temperature Reading. Tell Us About That.

A really fun tool that you learn about in week one of the Emotionally Healthy Relationships course is the community temperature reading. It's an exercise where we get to express ourselves to others to build healthy relationships. It's a brief sharing that leverages some specific language. There are 5 steps... I'll walk you through the first 3 and you can learn all 5 in detail when you take the course!

Each step in the CTR has a theological and biblical principle behind it, which you learn via the course materials. But, just to get a sense of what this is, I'll give a quick overview of the first 3 steps: Appreciations, Puzzles, Notice / Prefer – each step has a sentence stem to use.

Appreciations: How often do you think you give appreciations to people? A lot of times, we don't bother with it or things we appreciate about others go unsaid. But EHR teaches to give genuine appreciations liberally and frequently. They're like brain food for people. And you just simply say or text or email - I appreciate _____. For example: "Jane, I really appreciate how you always come so prepared to the meetings you lead. It makes the time we spend together really engaging and valuable." Appreciations aren't reserved for when someone goes "above and beyond," it's appreciating what someone does daily and who they are - recognizing it and acknowledging it.

Puzzles: Puzzles help us from crossing over the line into assumptions which is like telling a lie or making up a story about someone else's motives or intent. For instance, you send a text or email and the person doesn't write back. What do you tell yourself? So before you let yourself make up a false narrative, you stay in a posture of curiosity and begin a dialogue using the "I'm puzzled" sentence stem. Here's an example: "Joe, I'm puzzled why you were on Zoom for yesterday's meeting when everyone else was in person?"

Notice and Prefer: Not many of us were ever taught how to share our preferences in a healthy way. In fact, we're usually taught the opposite. If you don't have something nice to say, then don't say anything at all. But notice and prefer gives you as the speaker the ability to share a minor complaint, but also give a solution or preference without using sarcasm or being passive aggressive. Here's an example: "I notice that you're always 10 minutes late to our 1:1 meeting, I'd prefer that we start on time." or think about how you'd use this at home: "Honey, I notice that your socks are always on the floor, I'd prefer if you put them in the hamper."

Each step of the CTR builds better relationships through healthy sharing.



As Part Of EHR, You Learn The Skills Of Healthy Conflict. What Does That Mean?

The big thing to remember about conflict is that we all do conflict a different way based on our family of origin and experiences. Now think about how every person on your staff in your organization has their own way of doing conflict. And most of us are really good at avoiding conflict and sweeping it under the rug. But I promise that does not resolve anything.

“Healthy conflict actually becomes an internal reflection rather than external finger pointing.”

- Mike Lee

What EHR teaches you to do is first recognize how YOU do conflict. You need to reflect on what it is that is causing the difficult feeling - anger, sadness, fear, disappointment, etc, and then decide what to do with it. And here's the key - our decision should be for the sake of the relationship. We're all learning how to do life in the new family of Jesus when we become a follower of Christ, but we bring all our old baggage with us. Pete likes to say “you may have Jesus in your heart, but you got grandpa in your bones.” So we have to find ways to remind ourselves that the relationship is more important than being right and that in general, the responsibility for the conflict lies with me: my values, my preferences, my expectations and somehow one of those was violated. Conflict actually becomes a negotiation for the sake of the relationship.

What Are Some Positive Outcomes Of Doing EHS & EHR As A Staff?

The first is that there is a genuine excitement around the skills learned through EHS & EHR, especially with our newest and youngest staff members. If I had these skills 20 years ago, I would have avoided so much unnecessary and unhealthy conflict! I love that we're equipping our youngest staff well.

I also love when people recognize that they implemented a skill like appreciations in their meetings and it encourages everyone on the team. As a staff, that awareness is the first step in their growth.

And another positive outcome is that we've decided to make this part of the fabric of our organization. It's become part of our leadership pipeline, offered annually to our new staff and high capacity volunteers.

And finally - this has been transformational in my life and the lives of so many of my colleagues!

Any Best Practice Recommendations For Implementing This?

If this appeals to you, I'd say as a church leader, go ahead and take EHS and EHR for yourself first. If you want to get a little teaser into EHS, check out Pete Scazzaro's Emotionally Healthy Podcast. In January 2021, he spent 8 weeks of his podcast sharing EHS. It's only 30 minutes an episode, and



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it gives you a really good taste of what the content is about. If you decide it's for you and your church, have your leadership go through it together, and you'll quickly see who on your team is the EH champion. You need that person who will bring emotional health into every meeting, every sermon series, every conflict. It's so important to have that person because discipleship is slow.

Jesus spent 3 years 24/7 with the same 12 guys who didn't have TikTok or Twitter to distract them and they still didn't "get it." It might take a long time for it to take root, but trust the process. There's a Japanese philosopher named Kosuke Koyama who wrote a book called the 3 mile an hour God in 1979. His point is that Jesus moved at a 3 MPH pace because he walked everywhere, and sometimes to catch up to Him and where He's going, you have to actually slow down.

And for most churches this does require a mindset shift - that our **doing** for Jesus can't outpace our **being** with Jesus. We need to make room for silence and solitude and Sabbath rhythms. But I want to be really clear - this has nothing to do with doing more or less, but it does mean that we are doing out of the overflowing of being with Jesus and doing what Jesus calls us to do.

The other piece of really practical advice I can share is that as a leader you have to be at least 2 or 3 times as vulnerable as you want your staff or team to be. We have to be willing to show how much we need Jesus as leaders so others feel permission and safety in doing the same.

EHS is a little more flexible, so if you have a tech-savvy group, both virtual and in person options work. EHR teaches more practical skills with 1:1 practicing and coaching, so in-person classes are really the way to go. Definitely buy the books for your staff, invite spouses, and then after you have a core group who have experienced it, drip it in where you can to your congregation. For our small group leaders, our training this year was on not making assumptions and clarifying expectations. For our church-wide volunteer training, I shared Appreciations and Puzzles and asked everyone who attended my session to text someone an appreciation. You want to try and weave it in everywhere you can so that it becomes a part of your DNA.

Your next step is to go to EmotionallyHealthy.org, where you can sign up for the courses, purchase the materials, and subscribe to the podcast. There's a wealth of information there for you to dig into on what it means to be an emotionally healthy leader

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Continue the conversation! Here are questions to ask yourself and your team to help your church thrive. We hope Church Changer will inspire you to put into practice what we discuss each month!

1. **Does the EH coursework sound like something that could be beneficial for your staff team?**

2. **If you're not the decision maker, who could you share this podcast with and encourage them to learn more about EHS & EHR?**

3. **We learned about "appreciations" in this episode. Are you good at sharing appreciations with your co-workers, boss, and direct reports? What about at home?**

4. **Think about the "I'm puzzled" sentence stem. How could you use this to move beyond an assumption you have about someone right now?**



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5. **Think about your Family Of Origin (FOO). How were you taught to handle conflict growing up? Do you see this playing out as an adult?**

We are rooting for you! May this be the year you shatter growth barriers in your ministry!

