

Engaging the Disengaged

One of the challenges of Rescue Ministry is how to keep working with disengaged clients. These clients seem to have no purpose, no sense of capability or personal responsibility, no energy and no ambition. Day after day, their behavior indicates no initiative, no drive, and little to no interest in what is going on or in their own future. They are just making it from week to week, always playing catch-up. There seems to be a genuine effort to avoid. Overall, it seems they have checked out of life. They are disengaged.



We could perhaps define disengagement as a loss of function. There are potential medical, mental, and emotional reasons for what we may be observing in the disengaged client and we would need to address those appropriately. In this chapter we will talk about the client who does not have a medical or mental diagnosis and has caught our attention as the person who shows no desire to connect.

What causes disengagement? Here are at least three causes, all ones we can and must address:

1. Truth shortage

- Option blindness
- Believing lies
- Disconnected from the Power Source

2. Belief damage

- Mindset
- Training
- Impaired sense of worth

3. Shame buildup

- Inherited
- Unforgiven, unforgotten past
- Misplaced blame

How do we intervene? We must first discern the cause in order to determine the intervention. Each of the above causes would require different intervention. See chapters 3, 13, and 23 for ideas.

We have been given specific instruction in Scripture of how to respond to the variety of people God sends our way:

*“And we urge you, brothers and sisters,
warn those who are idle and disruptive,
encourage the disheartened,
help the weak, be patient with everyone.”*
1 Thessalonians 5:14 (NIV)

There is no room for shame-talk as we connect with clients. That means their internal talk, the conversation allowed around them, and especially words from your mouth. Shame-talk multiplies the negative thinking. There is great need for grace and truth talk. I make no assumptions and I do not judge. Perhaps the best plan is to review these Scriptures for your own encouragement and how you would exhort the client. Remember, truth sets people free.

A scriptural discussion with a discouraged client:

Do you know where we get hope according to the Bible? Romans 5:3-4

What is special about this kind of hope? Romans 5:5

What are some things you could be hoping for right now? Ephesians 1:18; Psalm 33:18-19

Real hope means we are eagerly doing what? Romans 8:25

What does God promise? Jeremiah 29:11

What should we be fixing our hope on? 1 Peter 1:13