

Introduction, Jerri Ann Jensen

Hi. I'm Jerri Jensen, with the collegiate Navigators, and I feel so honored to have the opportunity to share some space with you via videos these coming weeks. I've communicated with Deb & Ben and want to share our hopes for this video series... We want to provide some help for us to collectively strengthen ourselves and our abilities to stay relational and connected to God and each other as we navigate COVID 19. Throughout this series I'm going to share some very pass-on-able, holistic discipleship skills. These skills hold some of the keys to help unlock us, students, our friends and loved ones... so we can show up more fully as the best versions of ourselves now and into the future.

I'm mindful that each of us may be experiencing current realities in a spectrum of ways. I have one friend who... you know, just seems to be having the time of her life in her ocean-side condo We've heard from some of you that you have felt legitimate relief to have a different pace of life and ministry ... others though, are experiencing significant loss or various levels of anxiety and disappointment.... I know I've hit anger a couple times and once to the point where I was literally clinching my fists and choking down my desire to scream ... another time, pulling on my hair and pacing the room because I was so frustrated. Not my proudest moments.

My husband, Todd & I were in the middle of relocating from West Lafayette, Indiana to Austin, Texas when our pandemic hit the U.S. . Now, even prior to it, this move was a.... huge.... step of faith for me as our kids were born in Indiana AND they spent most of their growing up years there. We had a 7-year stint where we pioneered a Nav work at the at the Univ. of Wyoming, but other than that, our 25 years of marriage had been lived in Indiana. We have treasured friends there and our youngest son is a freshman at Purdue. He lived only 10 minutes away from home. Although we were excited for a new adventure in Austin, leaving felt risky even before the virus hit.

More than once I've felt jaw-dropping disbelief when we or others we love have experienced yet another ripple effect of COVID 19. At times, I have felt overwhelmed to the point where My head and shoulders felt heavy and my chest tight. In some of those moments, I would just take a slow, deep breath ... sometimes many slow, deep breaths This would create a sense of calmness. The weight in my shoulders would dissipate ... the tension in my neck would fade. My face muscles would relax. Slow breathing would help me transition from a problem-focused person to a relational-me ... which enabled me to could come present to the experience of Jesus being right there with me I was able to move forward to think more clarity and relate with concern for those around me.

There were other times I didn't slow up to take a breath and then didn't think so clearly or relate so well to those around me...like when I paced around the room, pulling my hair.... And HEY, I'm a counselor & I've heard stories ... and I know I'm not alone. Many of us are being pushed to our limits as we collectively face realities we have never faced before.

In coming weeks, I'm going to share holistic discipleship skills that have helped me Navigate current waters so much better than I would have been able to do 5 years ago. Back then, I probably would have had clumps of my hair missing by now. No matter how YOU are experiencing the ripple effects of COVID-19, these skills can bless and strengthen you, those in your ministry, and the family and friends who you care about...

I've witnessed counseling clients and Navigator staff embrace these tools and I've watched them walk more fully into God's created and redeemed purposes for their lives:

These next weeks we will unfold skills that will enable us to...

1. bring calm and quiet to our souls,
2. grow our awareness of God, self, and others,
3. offer authentic appreciation and build joy,
4. live a more consistently abiding lifestyles.

Five years ago, I revisited a book called Living From the Heart Jesus gave you. This book was written by a group of Christ-centered professionals associated with Life Model Works. Like Navigators, these people highly value relationships. Today professionals associated with this group consist of brain scientists, theologians, mental health workers and more. They link brain science to the bible to provide practical ways to transform lives. Most of what I will share with you in this series of 4 videos was birthed from people associated with the Life Model, including trainings I've attended called THRIVE. Two couples whose teachings I've gleaned a lot from are Dr. Jim & Kitty Wilder and Chris & Jen Coursey. I'm grateful for their impact on my life, my family, ministry... and now as I Pass on these discipleship materials to you, I'm grateful for the impact they will have on your lives, our Navigator work, and the advance of the gospel through us.

Each week I'm going to lead from a scripture and incorporate aspects of brain science that validate biblical truths. I will share and/or lead you in a holistic discipleship skill and then provide at least one handout.

Alright... Let's take a breath.