

JOURNEY TOWARD

hope

# Discussion Group Leader's Guide



A GUIDED  
EXPERIENCE

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# Journey Toward Hope Discussion Group Leader's Guide

## Instructions to the Leader

### Instructions to the Leader

Thank you for your willingness to lead a discussion group through the *Journey Toward Hope: A Guided Experience*. We hope this discussion guide will help you in the process. It might be helpful to have a co-leader so that the responsibility for leading the discussion group is shared.

These are discussion groups—not therapy groups. They are simply a place for people living with mental illness to join together and encourage each other on the journey. Topics covered in the *Journey Toward Hope: A Guided Experience* could be difficult for some individuals to talk about. If you are ever worried about someone being a threat to themselves or others, please call or text the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline at 9-8-8 or call 9-1-1.

Please send any feedback on how this guide worked for you and your discussion group to [kay@kaywarren.com](mailto:kay@kaywarren.com).

For additional mental health-related support:

- Dial 2-1-1 to find local mental health resources available in your area.
- For Christ-centered recovery groups in your area visit [celebraterecovery.com](http://celebraterecovery.com).
- Find an assortment of mental health resources at [kaywarren.com/mentalhealth](http://kaywarren.com/mentalhealth).
- Find a Christian counselor through the Christian Care Network at [aacc.net/resources/find-a-counselor](http://aacc.net/resources/find-a-counselor).
- For online or in-person mental health support groups in your area visit [www.mentalhealthgracealliance.org](http://www.mentalhealthgracealliance.org).

*\*Note: Due to reprints of Journey Toward Hope: A Guided Experience, the page numbers listed in this leader guide may not reflect the page numbers in your copy. The section and session titles are provided to help you follow should your page numbers not match. This leader guide is meant to be used in conjunction with Edition 2.0 of Journey Toward Hope: A Guided Experience. For the most up-to-date version of this guide, please visit [KayWarren.com/JourneyTowardHopeDiscussion](http://KayWarren.com/JourneyTowardHopeDiscussion).*

# **Journey Toward Hope Discussion Group Leader's Guide**

## **Discussion Group Structure**

### **Discussion Group Timelines**

#### **One Year Option**

- Every other week go through one session provided in this guide. On the off weeks have a testimony and time of open share (ex. Feelings Check, highs/lows, opportunities for individuals to share what's on their mind, and prayer).
- Every week go through one session provided in this guide. Repeat the guide twice per year. This could be an opportunity for group members who have completed the guide to lead a new discussion group.

#### **School Year Calendar Option**

- Every week go through one session provided in this guide. Take breaks during school vacation times.

### **Discussion Group Structure**

#### **A 90-minute discussion group is recommended to be structured as follows:**

- Start the discussion group with a 20-30 minute time of connection. The connection time consists of opening prayer, reading the "Group Guidelines," a "Feelings Check," and weekly "Highs/Lows."
- After the connection time, take 60 minutes to go through the remaining sections.
- The ideal discussion group size is between 8-10 people.
- Please note that for time's sake, not every scripture verse, quote, or journal prompt is covered in the Discussion Guide. We encourage participants to read the entire *Journey Toward Hope: A Guided Experience* on their own.

*\*Note: Please be aware of people in your discussion group who struggle with eating disorders. It would be helpful if there are other activities in addition to eating together. This doesn't mean you can't have food in your groups; however, we encourage you to be aware and thoughtful of their healing.*

# Journey Toward Hope Discussion Group Leader's Guide

## Discussion Group Guidelines

### Discussion Group Guidelines

*Please read these guidelines at the beginning of each of your meeting times.*

**Clear Purpose:** This discussion group is for people who are living with mental illness to journey together toward hope.

**Discussion Group Attendance:** We encourage you to attend as many sessions as you can. The more sessions you attend the more you gain from this journey!

**Sharing is Core to this Discussion Group:** We want to hear your thoughts and feelings. In order to allow time and space for everyone to share, we ask that you limit your sharing to 3-5 minutes.

**Offer Support:** We are here to support one another, not “fix” one another. Feel free to offer encouragement to fellow group members if someone has shared something that resonated with you.

**Confidentiality:** Anonymity and confidentiality are basic requirements. What is shared in the group stays in the group. The only exception is when someone threatens to injure themselves or others.

**Safe Environment:** Offensive language has no place in a Christ-centered group.

# Journey Toward Hope Discussion Group Leader's Guide

## Soul Words: Feelings Word List

### ALONE

avoidant, lonely, abandoned, deserted,  
isolated, cut off, detached, disconnected,  
unwanted

### AMAZED

stunned, surprised, shocked,  
jolted, enlightened

### ANGRY

annoyed, controlled, manipulated, furious,  
grouchy, irritated, provoked, frustrated,  
hateful, cold, icy, bitter, cynical

### ANXIOUS

afraid, uneasy, nauseated, nervous,  
restless, preoccupied, worried, scared,  
tense, fearful, terrified, insecure, indecisive,  
hyper-vigilant, cautious

### ASHAMED

guilty, mortified, humiliated, embarrassed,  
exposed, stupid

### BETRAYED

deceived, fooled, duped, tricked,  
misled, skeptical

### CONFIDENT

positive, secure, self-assured, assertive

### CONFUSED

baffled, perplexed, mystified, bewildered,  
misunderstood, disoriented

### DESPISED

ridiculed, dumb, belittled, mocked, scorned,  
shamed, hated, detested

### DISAPPOINTED

let down, disheartened,  
disillusioned, distrustful

### HAPPY

cheerful, delighted, elated, encouraged,  
glad, gratified, joyful, lighthearted,  
overjoyed, pleased, relieved, satisfied,  
thrilled, secure, optimistic

### HIGH ENERGY

energetic, enthusiastic, excited, playful,  
rejuvenated, talkative, pumped, motivated,  
driven, determined, obsessed, jittery

### INVISIBLE

forgotten, overlooked, unimportant,  
disregarded, lost

### LOVING

affectionate, cozy, passionate, romantic,  
sexy, warm, tender, responsive, thankful,  
appreciative, refreshed, pleased,  
comforted, reassured

### LOW ENERGY

beaten down, exhausted, tired, weak,  
listless, depressed, detached, withdrawn,  
indifferent, apathetic, lazy, bored

### OVERWHELMED

apprehensive, boxed in, burdened,  
confused, distressed, guarded, hard-  
pressed, paralyzed, panicky, tense,  
weighted down, edgy

### PEACEFUL

relieved, at ease, calm, comforted, cool,  
relaxed, composed, protected

### SAD

unhappy, crushed, dejected, depressed,  
desperate, hopeless, grieved, heavy,  
despairing, weepy

### TRAUMATIZED

shocked, disturbed, injured, damaged,  
unloved, unlovable, hated

# **Discussion Group Sessions**

# Journey Toward Hope Discussion Group Leader's Guide

## Welcome

### Session 1: Welcome & The Hope Circle

**Pray:** Have someone pray to open the group.

**Read:** Read the Discussion Group Guidelines.

**Feelings check:** Turn to pages 234-235. Go around the group and have each person share their name and a word or words from the Feelings Word List that describes how they are currently feeling.

**High's/Low's:** Go around the group and have each person share a high (a good aspect) and a low (a hard aspect) of their week.

### Begin on page 5

- Ask for volunteers to read the paragraphs on pages 5-6.
- Ask the discussion group if any part of the letter resonated with them and give them time to share with each other.
- Read the verse on page 7.
- Ask for volunteers to read the paragraphs about The Hope Circle on pages 10-12.
- Ask each member of the discussion group to pick a negative statement of the Hope Circle that they currently believe or have believed about themselves. Ask if someone would like to share.
- Ask the discussion group what they hope to get out of the Journey Toward Hope Discussion Group.

**Prayer:** Ask for a volunteer to read the verse on page 13. Go around the discussion group and ask for each person to share a prayer request. Pray together as a group to end your time together.



# Journey Toward Hope Discussion Group Leader's Guide

## Hope Says...**YOU ARE LOVED**

### Session 2: Oh, How He Loves You

**Pray:** Have someone pray to open the discussion group.

**Read:** Read the Discussion Group Guidelines.

**Feelings check:** Turn to pages 234-235. Go around the group and have each person share their name and a word or words from the Soul Words: Feelings Word List that describes how they are currently feeling.

**Highs/Lows:** Go around the discussion group and have each person share a high (a good aspect) and a low (a hard aspect) of their week.

#### Begin on page 17

- Have someone in the discussion group read aloud the quote from Max Lucado on page 17. Allow the discussion group to share what they think about this quote.
- Ask for a volunteer to read the paragraph on page 17.
- As prompted on page 18, take 10-15 minutes to individually read through the verses on pages 19-20. Circle any words or phrases that are most inspiring and help you cultivate self-acceptance. Write about what stands out to you in the spaces provided below each verse. When the discussion group is ready, ask people to discuss their thoughts.
- Have someone read the prayer on page 21 aloud. Ask the discussion group if they have any new or different thoughts about prayer after this session.
- Ask someone to read aloud the quote from Jerry Bridges on page 22.

#### Additional Discussion Questions

1. What do you think or feel when you hear that God loves you?
2. Are there experiences from your life that are impacting your relationship with God—either positively or negatively? Ask if anyone would like to share.
3. Is there a verse or a truth that was shared today that can help you take your next step in relying on God's love for you? Ask if anyone would like to share.

**Challenge:** Write down the verse or truth that you chose in question 3 and place it somewhere you will see it every day. Allow it to remind you of God's love for you.

**Prayer:** Go around the discussion group and ask for each person to share a prayer request. Pray together as a discussion group to end your time together.

# Journey Toward Hope Discussion Group Leader's Guide

## Hope Says...**YOU ARE LOVED**

### Session 3: Your Comforter

**Pray:** Have someone pray to open the discussion group.

**Read:** Read the Discussion Group Guidelines.

**Feelings check:** Turn to pages 234-235. Go around the group and have each person share their name and a word or words from the Soul Words: Feelings Word List that describes how they are currently feeling.

**Highs/Lows:** Go around the discussion group and have each person share a high (a good aspect) and a low (a hard aspect) of their week.

### Begin on page 23

- Ask for volunteers to read the verses and paragraphs on pages 23-24.
- Allow 10-15 minutes for the discussion group to write down their thoughts as directed on page 24. Ask if anyone would like to share something they wrote down.
- Ask a volunteer to read the paragraphs (excluding the prayer) on page 25. Invite discussion group members who have already prayed to receive Christ as their Savior to spend 5 minutes following the prompt at the top of the page.
- There is also a prayer of salvation for anyone who has not yet prayed to receive Christ. Invite them to silently read the prayer at the bottom of page 25 if they are ready to do so. Encourage them to write down their thoughts in the space provided and speak to you after the discussion group time to share their decision to pray this prayer.

### Additional Discussion Questions

1. *"God's love has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us."* Romans 5:5 (GW) on page 23. Which role of the Holy Spirit do you feel the deepest need for: Teacher, Guide, Comforter, or Motivator?
2. Read the Story of Hope from Greg on page 26. Did anything from Greg's story resonate with you? Share with the discussion group what thoughts came to mind.

**Challenge:** This week, whenever you find yourself feeling worried or anxious, ask the Holy Spirit to be your Comforter.

**Prayer:** Go around the discussion group and ask for each person to share a prayer request. Pray together as a group to end your time together.

*\*Note to leader for next session: In the following session there is a creative prompt. You may want to provide crayons, colored pencil, markers, or any other creative supplies.*

# Journey Toward Hope Discussion Group Leader's Guide

## Hope Says...**YOU ARE LOVED**

### Session 4: Releasing Shame

**Pray:** Have someone pray to open the discussion group.

**Read:** Read the Discussion Group Guidelines.

**Feelings check:** Turn to pages 234-235. Go around the group and have each person share their name and a word or words from the Soul Words: Feelings Word List that describes how they are currently feeling.

**Highs/Lows:** Go around the discussion group and have each person share a high (a good aspect) and a low (a hard aspect) of their week.

#### Begin on page 28

- Ask for volunteers to read the verse and paragraphs on pages 28-29.
- Take 10-15 minutes to allow the discussion group to write about a time when they have felt guilt and a time they have felt shame. Please use colored pencils, markers, or crayons to draw your response on pages 30-31 if you'd like. Ask if anyone would like to share something they wrote down or drew.

#### Additional Discussion Questions

1. After reading the quote from Derwin Gray on page 29, what negative “soul-tattoos” are deeply ingrained in your heart? What life-giving labels do you think Jesus wants to give you instead?
2. Which “I am” statement on page 32 is easiest for you to believe? Which is hardest?
3. Ask someone to read aloud the quote from Brennan Manning on page 33.
4. Read the Story of Hope from Amanda on page 34. How does it feel to know that God can handle our anger? What would it look like for you to express your anger to him?

**Challenge:** Read and follow the instructions on page 30.

*\*Optional: Provide crayons, colored pencils, markers, or any other creative supplies.*

**Prayer:** Go around the group and ask for each person to share a prayer request. Pray together as a discussion group to end your time together.

# Journey Toward Hope Discussion Group Leader's Guide

## Hope Says...**YOU ARE LOVED**

### Session 5: God's Promises

**Pray:** Have someone pray to open the discussion group.

**Read:** Read the Discussion Group Guidelines.

**Feelings check:** Turn to pages 234-235. Go around the group and have each person share their name and a word or words from the Soul Words: Feelings Word List that describes how they are currently feeling.

**Highs/Lows:** Go around the discussion group and have each person share a high (a good aspect) and a low (a hard aspect) of their week.

### Begin on page 36

- Ask for volunteers to read the paragraphs on page 36.
- As prompted on page 36, take 10-15 minutes to individually read through the verses on pages 37-40. As you read, circle the words or phrases that encourage you and attract your mind to thoughts that anticipate God's best for your life. Ask discussion group members which part of each verse gives you hope? Ask if anyone would like to share the verse that was the most meaningful to them.

### Additional Discussion Questions

1. Ask for volunteers to read the quote from Priscilla Shirer on page 36, the quote from Antony Campbell on page 41, and the Story of Hope from Rita on page 42. Spend 10 minutes reflecting on these quotes and Rita's story and write your responses on page 43.
2. Ask if anyone would like to share how viewing themselves through the lens of God's love and acceptance helps them in their daily life.

**Challenge:** Every day this week read Lamentations 3:21-24 (found on page 40). Remind yourself that the Lord's unfailing love and mercy continues.

**Prayer:** Go around the discussion group and ask for each person to share a prayer request. Pray together as a group to end your time together.

*\*Note to leader for next session: In Session 6 there will be an activity to create a "HOPE" box. Either ask each discussion group member to bring a shoe box and extra craft supplies or provide a box and supplies for each person. Additionally, ask discussion group members to bring any photos, quotes, or Scriptures that are meaningful to them.*

# Journey Toward Hope Discussion Group Leader's Guide

## Hope Says...**YOU ARE LOVED**

### Session 6: Surrounded by Love

**Pray:** Have someone pray to open the discussion group.

**Read:** Read the Discussion Group Guidelines.

**Feelings check:** Turn to pages 234-235. Go around the group and have each person share their name and a word or words from the Soul Words: Feelings Word List that describes how they are currently feeling.

**Highs/Lows:** Go around the discussion group and have each person share a high (a good aspect) and a low (a hard aspect) of their week.

#### Begin on page 44

- Ask for volunteers to read the verses and paragraphs on pages 44-46.
- Follow the instructions on page 45 for creating a "HOPE" box or board. Allow discussion group members 20-30 minutes to work on their project. Ask if anyone in the discussion group would like to share some things they put in their box.
- Ask someone to read the quote from Saint Francis de Sales on page 44 and the Prayer for Love and Acceptance on page 47. Ask for volunteers to share what it means to be patient with yourself.

**Challenge:** Continue to add to your "HOPE" box or board this week.

**Prayer:** Go around the discussion group and ask for each person to share a prayer request. Pray together as a group to end your time together.

# Journey Toward Hope Discussion Group Leader's Guide

## Hope Says...**YOU HAVE A PURPOSE**

### Session 7: Discovering Your Purpose

**Pray:** Have someone pray to open the discussion group.

**Read:** Read the Discussion Group Guidelines.

**Feelings check:** Turn to pages 234-235. Go around the group and have each person share their name and a word or words from the Soul Words: Feelings Word List that describes how they are currently feeling.

**Highs/Lows:** Go around the discussion group and have each person share a high (a good aspect) and a low (a hard aspect) of their week.

#### Begin on page 51

- Ask for volunteers to read the verse, paragraphs, and quote from Rick Warren on page 51.
- Ask a discussion group member to read the poem by Russell Kelfer on page 52. Take 10-15 minutes to follow the prompt on page 53. Ask if anyone would like to share something they wrote down.

#### Additional Discussion Questions

1. Have you ever felt like you didn't matter? What caused you to feel that way?
2. Do you feel you are made *on purpose for* a purpose? Share if this concept is easy or difficult for you to accept and why.
3. Do you feel like your purpose is tied to your actions or your productivity level? Share reasons why you might feel this way.

**Challenge:** This week do something tangible (i.e., write a Post-It, draw a dot on your arm, put a sticker on your phone) to remind yourself that you are God's son/daughter whom he loves because of who you are not because of what you do. In moments when you feel like you don't matter, remember you were made to love God and to be loved by him.

**Prayer:** Go around the discussion group and ask for each person to share a prayer request. Pray together as a group to end your time together.

# Journey Toward Hope Discussion Group Leader's Guide

## Hope Says...**YOU HAVE A PURPOSE**

### Session 8: Purpose in Pain

**Pray:** Have someone pray to open the discussion group.

**Read:** Read the Discussion Group Guidelines.

**Feelings check:** Turn to pages 234-235. Go around the group and have each person share their name and a word or words from the Soul Words: Feelings Word List that describes how they are currently feeling.

**Highs/Lows:** Go around the discussion group and have each person share a high (a good aspect) and a low (a hard aspect) of their week.

#### Begin on page 54

- Ask a discussion group member to read the quote from Sarah J. Robinson on page 54. Allow 5-10 minutes for the group to write down a time when they particularly felt the presence of Christ in a painful time. Ask if anyone would like to share something they wrote down.
- Ask for a volunteer to read the verse and paragraphs on page 55.

#### Additional Discussion Questions

1. Ask for a volunteer to read the quote by Rick Warren on Page 56.
2. Follow the prompt on page 56 and ask the discussion group, "How does it feel to know that God wants you to use your pain to serve others?"
3. Take 10-15 minutes to allow the discussion group to write down ways they think they could use their life experiences to help those who are going through the same thing. Ask if anyone is willing to share what they've written.
4. Ask a volunteer to read the verse on page 57. Ask, "What would it look like if God did something in your life beyond your wildest "prayers, desires, thoughts, or hopes?"

**Challenge:** This week, look for people going through what you're gone through and share the hope and comfort God has given you.

**Prayer:** Go around the discussion group and ask for each person to share a prayer request. Pray together as a group to end your time together.

# Journey Toward Hope Discussion Group Leader's Guide

## Hope Says...**YOU HAVE A PURPOSE**

### Session 9: Your Story & Purpose and Circumstances

**Pray:** Have someone pray to open the discussion group.

**Read:** Read the Discussion Group Guidelines.

**Feelings check:** Turn to pages 234-235. Go around the group and have each person share their name and a word or words from the Soul Words: Feelings Word List that describes how they are currently feeling.

**Highs/Lows:** Go around the discussion group and have each person share a high (a good aspect) and a low (a hard aspect) of their week.

#### Begin on page 58

- Ask for a volunteer to read the verse on page 58.
- Allow 15-20 minutes for discussion group members to follow the prompt at the bottom of page 59. Ask if anyone would like to share something they wrote down on their timeline.
- Read the verses and paragraphs on page 60. Share with the discussion group something you are having a difficult time accepting as part of God's overall plan.

#### Additional Discussion Questions

1. Recount a time when God used a hurt in your life to help someone else.
2. What is a past and a current hurt you hope God will use in the future to help other people?
3. Ask for a volunteer to read the quote by Sarah J. Robinson on page 61. Ask if anyone would like to share their response to the question that follows.
4. Ask for a volunteer to read the Story of Hope from Mark on page 62. Take 5 minutes and write down any thoughts and feelings you are experiencing. Ask if anyone would like to share.

**Challenge:** Pray for God to give you an opportunity to encourage someone who is going through a difficult time. If you feel comfortable, share about a hurt in your life and how you are finding purpose in the pain.

**Prayer:** Go around the discussion group and ask for each person to share a prayer request. Pray together as a group to end your time together.



# Journey Toward Hope Discussion Group Leader's Guide

## Hope Says...**YOU HAVE A PURPOSE**

### Session 10: The Comparison Trap

**Pray:** Have someone pray to open the discussion group.

**Read:** Read the Discussion Group Guidelines.

**Feelings check:** Turn to pages 234-235. Go around the group and have each person share their name and a word or words from the Soul Words: Feelings Word List that describes how they are currently feeling.

**Highs/Lows:** Go around the discussion group and have each person share a high (a good aspect) and a low (a hard aspect) of their week.

#### Begin on page 64

- Ask for volunteers to read the verses and paragraphs on pages 64-65. Allow discussion group members to share a time when they felt that life/circumstances weren't fair causing them to question God's goodness.
- Ask a volunteer to read the quote by Bob Goff on page 66. Ask if anyone would like to share their thoughts about how knowing their purpose could help them not compare themselves to anyone else.

#### Additional Discussion Questions

1. Allow 10-15 minutes for discussion group members to follow the question prompts on page 66. Ask if anyone would like to share what they are learning about seeing the good things in themselves and in their circumstances.
2. Ask a volunteer read the verse on page 66 and the Prayer of Trust on page 67. Suggest 3-5 minutes of silence from the discussion group members to quietly reflect on the truth that God's hands intentionally formed and shaped them. Allow the words of confession and reaffirmation of trust in God's wisdom from the Prayer of Trust be their personal prayer.

**Challenge:** This week catch yourself comparing your life to someone else's and thank God that his plan for you is one of a kind.

**Prayer:** Go around the discussion group and ask for each person to share a prayer request. Pray together as a group to end your time together.

# Journey Toward Hope Discussion Group Leader's Guide

## Hope Says...**YOU BELONG**

### Session 11: Never Alone

**Pray:** Have someone pray to open the discussion group.

**Read:** Read the Discussion Group Guidelines.

**Feelings check:** Turn to pages 234-235. Go around the group and have each person share their name and a word or words from the Soul Words: Feelings Word List that describes how they are currently feeling.

**Highs/Lows:** Go around the discussion group and have each person share a high (a good aspect) and a low (a hard aspect) of their week.

### Begin on page 71

- Ask for volunteers to read the verses, paragraphs, and quote from Rick Warren on pages 71-72.
- When do you feel most alone and what do you tend to do with those feelings?
- Play the song, "You're Not Alone" by Meredith Andrews.

### Additional Discussion Questions

1. Ask someone to read the quote from Rick Warren again on page 72. How might knowing we were made to be in communication and connection with God affect the amount of time you spend with him every day?
2. Ask someone to read the paragraph and verses on page 74. Ask the discussion group, "What kind of music do you enjoy?" and "Is there a song that has deeply impacted you in the past?"
3. Read the lyrics from the Saddleback Worship song, "Our Hope" on page 75.
4. Ask the discussion group to share what they experienced while listening to the song, "You're Not Alone" and hearing the lyrics of "Our Hope" read to them?

**Challenge:** Create a worship playlist that will point you toward hope.

**Prayer:** Go around the discussion group and ask for each person to share a prayer request. Pray together as a group to end your time together.

# Journey Toward Hope Discussion Group Leader's Guide

## Hope Says...**YOU BELONG**

### Session 12: Radical Friendship & Intentional Connection

**Pray:** Have someone pray to open the discussion group.

**Read:** Read the Discussion Group Guidelines.

**Feelings check:** Turn to pages 234-235. Go around the group and have each person share their name and a word or words from the Soul Words: Feelings Word List that describes how they are currently feeling.

**Highs/Lows:** Go around the discussion group and have each person share a high (a good aspect) and a low (a hard aspect) of their week.

#### Begin on page 76

- Ask for volunteers to read the verses, paragraphs, and quote from Dr. Curt Thompson on pages 76-77.
- Allow 10-15 minutes for discussion group members to follow the prompts on pages 78-79. Ask if anyone would like to share what they wrote down. Also discuss what you thought of Dr. Curt Thompson's quote on page 77, that we can "love ourselves or others only to the degree that we are known by God and known by others."
- It's likely some of the people in the discussion group are also in a support group. Read the verses, paragraphs, and quotes from Annie Rogers and Henri Nouwen on pages 82-83 and ask them what it was like to join a support group.
- Ask someone to read the quote from Alia Joy on page 85. Take 5-10 minutes for discussion group members to write out a prayer in response to the prompt on page 84. Ask if anyone would like to share what they wrote down.

#### Additional Discussion Question

1. Read the Story of Hope from Josh on page 80 and Brooklyn on page 86. Who do you talk to in your pain? Ask if anyone is willing to share about the people in their lives who have helped them hold on in dark times.

**Challenge:** What is one thing you can do this week to move toward developing a deeper friendship with someone? Pray for an opportunity to encourage someone else to join a support group or Celebrate Recovery®.

**Prayer:** Go around the discussion group and ask for each person to share a prayer request. Pray together as a group to end your time together.

# Journey Toward Hope Discussion Group Leader's Guide

## Hope Says...**YOU BELONG**

### Session 13: Boundaries are Biblical & Learning to Say “No”

**Pray:** Have someone pray to open the discussion group.

**Read:** Read the Discussion Group Guidelines.

**Feelings check:** Turn to pages 234-235. Go around the group and have each person share their name and a word or words from the Soul Words: Feelings Word List that describes how they are currently feeling.

**Highs/Lows:** Go around the discussion group and have each person share a high (a good aspect) and a low (a hard aspect) of their week.

#### Begin on page 88

- Ask for volunteers to read the quote by Henry Cloud, paragraphs, and verse on pages 88-89.
- Take 10-15 minutes for discussion group members to respond to the prompt on pages 90-91. Ask if anyone would like to share what they wrote down.
- Ask for a volunteer to read the verse, paragraphs, and quote from Nedra Glover Tawwab on pages 92-93.

#### Additional Discussion Questions

1. Who in your life comes to mind when you read about boundaries? Is there a relationship in your life where you want to (or feel like you need to) put boundaries in place?
2. When you think of saying “no,” what emotions do you experience? Does saying “no” feel like a betrayal of the people in your life? Take 5 minutes and follow the prompt on page 93. Ask if anyone would like to share what they wrote.
3. Read the Story of Hope from Lina on page 94. Are there people you are afraid to lose if you say “no?” Are there people in your life that you feel would respect your boundaries?

**Challenge:** Look for an opportunity to say “no” to begin setting up a boundary that is helpful for you.

**Prayer:** Go around the discussion group and ask for each person to share a prayer request. Pray together as a group to end your time together.

# Journey Toward Hope Discussion Group Leader's Guide

## Hope Says...**YOU BELONG**

### Session 14: Your Best “Yes” & Safe People

**Pray:** Have someone pray to open the discussion group.

**Read:** Read the Discussion Group Guidelines.

**Feelings check:** Turn to pages 234-235. Go around the group and have each person share their name and a word or words from the Soul Words: Feelings Word List that describes how they are currently feeling.

**Highs/Lows:** Go around the discussion group and have each person share a high (a good aspect) and a low (a hard aspect) of their week.

#### Begin on page 96

- Ask for volunteers to read the verse on page 96 and the paragraphs and quote by Lysa Terkeurst on pages 97-98.
- Nedra Glover Tawwab says on page 99 that “the ability to say ‘no’ to yourself is a gift.” What are some things or people you desire to say “yes” to? What does it cost you to say “yes” to them? Take 5-10 minutes to follow the prompt at the top of page 98.
- Ask if anyone would like to share their thoughts about what they’ve written on page 98.
- Ask for volunteers to read the verse, paragraphs, and quote from Heather Thompson Day on pages 100-101.
- Ask the discussion group if anyone has experienced people in their life who they first thought were safe and turned out to be unsafe?

#### Additional Discussion Questions

1. What are some opportunities and people you think could be your best “yes”?
2. Who are people who draw you closer to God and who he wants you to be?

**Challenge:** Use the prompt on page 102 to record what you hear from God.

**Prayer:** Ask for a volunteer to read the Prayer for Wisdom and Guidance on page 103. Go around the discussion group and ask for each person to share a prayer request. Prayer together as a group to end your time together.

# Journey Toward Hope Discussion Group Leader's Guide

## Hope Says...**YOU HAVE A CHOICE**

### Session 15: Move Toward Hope

**Pray:** Have someone pray to open the discussion group.

**Read:** Read the Discussion Group Guidelines.

**Feelings check:** Turn to pages 234-235. Go around the group and have each person share their name and a word or words from the Soul Words: Feelings Word List that describes how they are currently feeling.

**Highs/Lows:** Go around the discussion group and have each person share a high (a good aspect) and a low (a hard aspect) of their week.

#### Begin on page 107

- Ask for volunteers to read the verse, quotes, and paragraphs on pages 107-108.
- Allow 10-15 minutes for discussion group members to follow the prompts on pages 109-110. Ask if anyone would like to share something they wrote.
- Read the quote from Jamie Tworkowski on page 111.

#### Additional Discussion Questions

1. How do you feel when you hear the statement, "You did not choose to have a mental illness, but you do have the ability to make choices that will move you toward hope?"
2. What choices do you feel are the hardest to make as you move toward hope? What choices do you want to make but feel overwhelmed by the effort?
3. Did anything from Jamie's words on page 111 resonate with you? Share with the discussion group what thoughts came to mind.

**Challenge:** Think of one choice you can make this week that can lead you toward hope.

**Prayer:** Go around the discussion group and ask for each person to share a prayer request. Pray together as a group to end your time together.

# Journey Toward Hope Discussion Group Leader's Guide

## Hope Says...**YOU HAVE A CHOICE**

### Session 16: Investigating Your Thoughts

**Pray:** Have someone pray to open the discussion group.

**Read:** Read the Discussion Group Guidelines.

**Feelings check:** Turn to pages 234-235. Go around the group and have each person share their name and a word or words from the Soul Words: Feelings Word List that describes how they are currently feeling.

**Highs/Lows:** Go around the discussion group and have each person share a high (a good aspect) and a low (a hard aspect) of their week.

#### Begin on page 112

- Ask for volunteers to read the verses and paragraphs on page 112 and the quote from Priscilla Shirer on page 113.
- Take 10-15 minutes to allow discussion group members to write on the bottom of page 113 some things they were told in the past that they believe but in reality may not be true. Ask if anyone would like to share what they wrote down.
- Read the quote from Kay Warren on page 113. What do you think can help move people from the first outlook Kay talks about to the second outlook?
- Take 10-15 minutes to allow discussion group members write down a prayer on page 113 expressing to God a difficult area in their life and asking God to help them trust him no matter what. Ask if anyone would like to share what they wrote down.

#### Additional Discussion Questions

1. What thoughts are robbing you of joy?
2. In what areas are you tempted to walk away from God? What would it look like to commit to not walking away from him?

**Challenge:** Memorize Romans 8:39b as found on page 112.

**Prayer:** Go around the discussion group and ask for each person to share a prayer request. Pray together as a group to end your time together.

# Journey Toward Hope Discussion Group Leader's Guide

## Hope Says...**YOU HAVE A CHOICE**

### Session 17: Catch It, Challenge It, Change It & Transformative Power

**Pray:** Have someone pray to open the discussion group.

**Read:** Read the Discussion Group Guidelines.

**Feelings check:** Turn to pages 234-235. Go around the group and have each person share their name and a word or words from the Soul Words: Feelings Word List that describes how they are currently feeling.

**Highs/Lows:** Go around the discussion group and have each person share a high (a good aspect) and a low (a hard aspect) of their week.

#### Begin on page 114

- Ask for a volunteer to read the verse and paragraphs on page 114.
- In the last session we talked about recognizing untrue negative thoughts that impact your life. Using pages 115-117 have each discussion group member take 15-20 minutes to investigate their thoughts and practice challenging them so they can create healthy change. Ask if anyone would like to share what they wrote down.
- Read the Story of Hope from Lauren on page 118.
- Ask for a volunteer to read the verse and the paragraphs on page 120. Ask people if they think they have a fixed mindset or a growth mindset and why?
- Allow 5-10 minutes for each discussion group member to individually follow the prompt on page 122.

#### Additional Discussion Questions

1. What are the easier destructive thoughts or behaviors for you to catch, challenge and change? What are the hardest?
2. Did anything from Lauren's story resonate with you?
3. What are practical things you can do to catch, challenge, and change your thoughts?

**Challenge:** Practice catching, challenging, and changing your negative thoughts and memorize Philippians 4:8b (GNT) this week.

**Prayer:** Go around the discussion group and ask for each person to share a prayer request. Pray together as a group to end your time together.



# Journey Toward Hope Discussion Group Leader's Guide

## Hope Says...**YOU HAVE A CHOICE**

### Session 18: Self-Care

**Pray:** Have someone pray to open the discussion group.

**Read:** Read the Discussion Group Guidelines.

**Feelings check:** Turn to pages 234-235. Go around the group and have each person share their name and a word or words from the Soul Words: Feelings Word List that describes how they are currently feeling.

**Highs/Lows:** Go around the discussion group and have each person share a high (a good aspect) and a low (a hard aspect) of their week.

### Begin on page 124

- Ask for volunteers to read the verses and paragraphs on pages 124-126.
- As a discussion group, practice having a quiet time with God. Complete steps 1-6 on pages 125-126 together. Choose any Psalm you would like. If you need suggestions try Psalm 23, 42, 91, or 103.
- Read the Prayer for Refreshment and Restoration on page 127.

### Additional Discussion Questions

1. What do you find is the biggest challenge in taking intentional time to care for yourself?
2. Do you currently have a daily quiet time with God? What do you find is most difficult about practicing this habit every day?
3. As you completed steps 1-6 was there anything that surprised or impacted you?

**Challenge:** This week practice a daily quiet time. Report back to your discussion group the next week on how it went. What was challenging? Did you find anything surprising? What did you enjoy?

**Prayer:** Go around the discussion group and ask for each person to share a prayer request. Pray together as a group to end your time together.

# Journey Toward Hope Discussion Group Leader's Guide

## Hope Says...**YOU HAVE A CHOICE**

### Session 19: Personal Replenishment

**Pray:** Have someone pray to open the discussion group.

**Read:** Read the Discussion Group Guidelines.

**Feelings check:** Turn to pages 234-235. Go around the group and have each person share their name and a word or words from the Soul Words: Feelings Word List that describes how they are currently feeling.

**Highs/Lows:** Go around the discussion group and have each person share a high (a good aspect) and a low (a hard aspect) of their week.

*\*Note to leader: Ask if anyone would like to share about their daily quiet time challenge from the previous session.*

#### Begin on page 128

- Ask for volunteers to read the verse, paragraph, and quote from Kay Warren on page 128.
- Take 5-10 minutes to individually fill out the checklist on page 129. Ask if anyone would like to share some of things that replenish them.
- Read the Story of Hope from Niam on page 130.

#### Additional Discussion Questions

1. When you feel worn down, tired or overwhelmed what do you used to cope? What things would you like to replace with something that is more restorative and nourishing to your soul?
2. Did anything from Niam's story resonate with you?
3. What proactive decisions can you make now that will help you cope in a healthy way in the future? Take 10-15 minutes to write down your ideas on page 131. Ask if anyone would like to share what they wrote down.

**Challenge:** This week be aware of things that nourish your soul and add to your list. When you feel stressed and overwhelmed practice using one of the techniques from your list.

**Prayer:** Go around the discussion group and ask for each person to share a prayer request. Pray together as a group to end your time together.

# Journey Toward Hope Discussion Group Leader's Guide

## Hope Says...**YOU HAVE A CHOICE**

### Session 20: Just Breathe & My Hope Network

**Pray:** Have someone pray to open the discussion group.

**Read:** Read the Discussion Group Guidelines.

**Feelings check:** Turn to pages 234-235. Go around the group and have each person share their name and a word or words from the Soul Words: Feelings Word List that describes how they are currently feeling.

**Highs/Lows:** Go around the discussion group and have each person share a high (a good aspect) and a low (a hard aspect) of their week.

#### Begin on page 132

- Ask for volunteers to read the verse and paragraphs on pages 132-133.
- Play the song, "Great Are You Lord" by All Sons and Daughters. Have each discussion group member practice the breathing exercise on page 133 as they listen to the song.
- Read the Story of Hope from Lindsey on page 134.
- Ask for volunteers to read the verse, paragraphs, and quote from Jamie Tworkowski on pages 136-137.
- Take 10-15 minutes and have discussion group members follow the prompt at the top of page 137.

Session 20 is continued on the next page...

# Journey Toward Hope Discussion Group Leader's Guide

## Hope Says...**YOU HAVE A CHOICE**

### Session 20: Just Breathe & My Hope Network continued

#### Additional Discussion Questions

1. What could help you remember to breathe during stressful situations?
2. Is there anything from Lindsey's story on page 134 that resonates with you?
3. Are there other breathing exercises or other deescalating tools you have found useful? Share these with your group. Use the space on page 135 to write down any new ideas you hear from other discussion group members.
4. How does it feel to think about asking for support? In the past has that been easy or difficult?
5. Without mentioning names, what types of people did you list on your Hope Hotline and why?

*\*Note to leader: Some people in your discussion group may have trouble listing supportive people for their Hope Hotline. Living with mental illness can sometimes result in lost relationships. They may have been deeply hurt in the past and may have a hard time knowing who to trust. Consider meeting with them and another discussion group member to work together to think through some options of people who could be valuable on their Hope Hotline.*

**Challenge:** Have a conversation with the people on your Hope Hotline. Share with them their impact on your life and ask if they would be open to you connecting with them at times when you need extra support.

**Prayer:** Go around the discussion group and ask for each person to share a prayer request. Pray together as a group to end your time together.

# Journey Toward Hope Discussion Group Leader's Guide

## Hope Says...**YOU HAVE A CHOICE**

### Session 21: Understanding Grief & Learning to Grieve

**Pray:** Have someone pray to open the discussion group.

**Read:** Read the Discussion Group Guidelines.

**Feelings check:** Turn to pages 234-235. Go around the group and have each person share their name and a word or words from the Soul Words: Feelings Word List that describes how they are currently feeling.

**Highs/Lows:** Go around the discussion group and have each person share a high (a good aspect) and a low (a hard aspect) of their week.

**CAUTION:** This session might bring up very painful emotions for the discussion group members. If possible, ask a trusted counselor to be present to help discussion group members process their emotions. It is alright to skip this session entirely and move to Session 24: The Gift of Forgiveness & Letting Go.

#### Begin on page 139

- Ask for volunteers to read the quote from Ann Voskamp on page 138 and the verse and paragraphs on pages 139-140.
- Take 10 minutes and have the discussion group members write their losses in the space provided on page 140, using the examples on page 139 as a starting point.
- Ask someone to read the quote from Jerry Sittser on page 141. Ask the discussion group members to share if grief has “taken up permanent residence in their souls”? Has that grief diminished or in some ways “enlarged it”?
- Ask someone to read the verse and paragraph on page 142.
- Ask for volunteers to read pages 143-145 a section at a time. Then ask if anyone would like to share where they are currently on the grief pathway (i.e., Shock, Slow Acceptance, etc.)

Session 21 is continued on the next page...

# Journey Toward Hope Discussion Group Leader's Guide

## Hope Says...**YOU HAVE A CHOICE**

### Session 21: Understanding Grief & Learning to Grieve continued

#### Additional Discussion Questions

1. What was most comforting to you in the sorrow experience of grief?
2. Have you ever asked God, "Why did this happen?" Describe that time.
3. Have you found any peace in the midst of a loss? Describe that time.
4. Describe any treasure in darkness you've experienced through your loss.
5. How do you hope that God uses your pain to help others?

**Challenge:** This week, read the Story of Hope from Nancy, and ask God to give you the confidence that he still has a plan for you, even as you mourn your losses.

**Prayer:** Go around the discussion group and ask for each person to share a prayer request. Pray together as a group to end your time together.

# Journey Toward Hope Discussion Group Leader's Guide

## Hope Says...**YOU HAVE A CHOICE**

### Session 22: Four Choices to Help You Get Unstuck

**Pray:** Have someone pray to open the discussion group.

**Read:** Read the Discussion Group Guidelines.

**Feelings check:** Turn to pages 234-235. Go around the group and have each person share their name and a word or words from the Soul Words: Feelings Word List that describes how they are currently feeling.

**Highs/Lows:** Go around the discussion group and have each person share a high (a good aspect) and a low (a hard aspect) of their week.

*\*Note to leader: This part of grieving can be very difficult. It might be wise to process this section in the presence of a loving friend or therapist so your discussion group members can receive immediate comfort and counsel in their pain. It's alright to skip this section and come back to it at another time when they feel ready to tackle the stuck places.*

#### Begin on page 148

- Ask for volunteers to read the verse and quote from Dr. Bruce Perry on pages 148-149.
- Ask someone to read the section "List the Losses," the verse, and the quote from H. Norman Wright on page 149. Give the discussion group 5-8 minutes to list their ungrieved losses.
- Ask someone to read the prompt "Identify" at the top of page 150. Give the discussion group 5-8 minutes to identify possible reasons they have not yet been able to fully grieve their losses.
- Ask someone to read the prompt, "Express your sorrow," the definition of lament, and the verse on page 150. Give the discussion group 5-8 minutes to write out some words of lament to God.
- Ask someone to read to prompt, "Ask Jesus" and the two verses on page 151. Give the discussion group members 5-8 minutes to write a prayer to Jesus for the healing of their broken hearts.
- Ask someone to read the Story of Hope from Johnny on page 152. Ask if anyone is willing to share their process through the "Four Choices to Help You Get Unstuck."

**Challenge:** This week, encourage discussion group members to talk to their counselor, therapist, spiritual leader, or trusted friend about this exploration of their grief.

**Prayer:** Go around the discussion group and ask for each person to share a prayer request. Pray together as a group to end your time together.

# Journey Toward Hope Discussion Group Leader's Guide

## Hope Says...**YOU HAVE A CHOICE**

### Session 23: The Gift of Forgiveness & Letting Go

**Pray:** Have someone pray to open the discussion group.

**Read:** Read the Discussion Group Guidelines.

**Feelings check:** Turn to pages 234-235. Go around the group and have each person share their name and a word or words from the Soul Words: Feelings Word List that describes how they are currently feeling.

**Highs/Lows:** Go around the discussion group and have each person share a high (a good aspect) and a low (a hard aspect) of their week.

#### Begin on page 154

- Ask for volunteers to read the verses, paragraphs, and quote from Rick Warren on pages 154-156.
- Allow 10-15 minutes for discussion group members to respond to the prompt on page 155. Ask if anyone would like to share what they wrote down.
- Ask for volunteers to read the verse, paragraphs, and quotes on pages 157-158. Allow 10-15 minutes for discussion group members to respond to the prompt at the top of page 158. Ask if anyone would like to share what they wrote down.

#### Additional Discussion Questions

1. What is challenging about allowing God to “settle the score?”
2. Have you experienced unforgiveness affecting your life? If so, in what way?
3. Which of the quotes in this session stood out to you and why?

**Challenge:** This week practice repeating to yourself, “I forgive myself” or “I forgive you” whenever you feel guilt, shame, disappointment, anger, etc. towards yourself and/or others.

**Prayer:** Ask for a volunteer to read the Prayer of Forgiveness on page 159. Spend 2 minutes in silent prayer reflecting on the words of the prayer. Take prayer requests from discussion group members and pray together as a group.



# Journey Toward Hope Discussion Group Leader's Guide

## Hope Says...**YOU ARE NEEDED**

### Session 24: God Has Written Your Life Story & How Can I Give Back?

**Pray:** Have someone pray to open the discussion group.

**Read:** Read the Discussion Group Guidelines.

**Feelings check:** Turn to pages 234-235. Go around the group and have each person share their name and a word or words from the Soul Words: Feelings Word List that describes how they are currently feeling.

**Highs/Lows:** Go around the discussion group and have each person share a high (a good aspect) and a low (a hard aspect) of their week.

#### Begin on page 163

- Ask for volunteers to read the verse, paragraphs, and quotes on pages 163-165.
- Take 10-15 minutes to follow the prompt on page 164. Ask if anyone would like to share what they wrote down.
- Go around in a circle and focus on one individual at a time. Ask each discussion group member to share what they admire about the individual you are focusing on and ways they see the person could give back. Repeat for each discussion group member.

#### Additional Discussion Questions

1. Ask for a volunteer to read the verse, paragraphs, and quotes on pages 166-167.
2. Using the prompt "Start Small. Start Today" on page 167, make a list of two or three small ways you can begin to give back.
3. Read the Story of Hope from Josh on page 168. Does your mental illness ever overwhelm you and make you feel like you can't help other people?

**Challenge:** Pick one person in your life and do something to brighten their day this week.

**Prayer:** Go around the discussion group and ask for each person to share a prayer request. Pray together as a group to end your time together.

# Journey Toward Hope Discussion Group Leader's Guide

## Hope Says...**YOU ARE NEEDED**

### Session 25: Affirmations According to God & Resilience

**Pray:** Have someone pray to open the discussion group.

**Read:** Read the Discussion Group Guidelines.

**Feelings check:** Turn to pages 234-235. Go around the group and have each person share their name and a word or words from the Soul Words: Feelings Word List that describes how they are currently feeling.

**Highs/Lows:** Go around the discussion group and have each person share a high (a good aspect) and a low (a hard aspect) of their week.

#### Begin on page 170

- Ask for a volunteer to read the verse and paragraph on page 170, then instruct discussion group members to follow the prompt on pages 171-173. Allow 10-15 minutes to share.
- Read the paragraphs on page 175 and the Story of Hope from Ashley on page 178.
- Ask for a volunteer to read the quote by Dan Allender on page 174. What do you think God could do with your life if you choose to stay alive? What would your life look like if you believed you were needed in this world?

#### Additional Discussion Question

1. On page 175, resilience is described as the ability to keep trying. What are some ways you could keep trying when you feel like giving up?

**Challenge:** Write down the dreams of how God could use your life to your “Hope Box” to help remind you that you are needed.

**Prayer:** Go around the discussion group and ask for each person to share a prayer request. Pray together as a group to end your time together.

*\*Note to leader for next session: There will be a time for your discussion group to celebrate communion together. Please bring grape juice, plain crackers, small plastic cups, and napkins. For Session 27, either ask each discussion group member to bring craft supplies or provide supplies for each person.*

# Journey Toward Hope Discussion Group Leader's Guide

## Hope Says...**YOU ARE NEEDED**

### Session 26: Pass It On & A Time of Communion

**Pray:** Have someone pray to open the discussion group.

**Read:** Read the Discussion Group Guidelines.

**Feelings check:** Turn to pages 234-235. Go around the group and have each person share their name and a word or words from the Soul Words: Feelings Word List that describes how they are currently feeling.

**Highs/Lows:** Go around the discussion group and have each person share a high (a good aspect) and a low (a hard aspect) of their week.

#### Begin on page 180

- Ask for volunteers to read the verse and paragraphs on page 180.
- Allow 10-15 minutes for discussion group members to respond to the question, "What do you think about hope now?" on page 176. Ask if anyone would like to share what they wrote down or drew.

#### Additional Discussion Questions

1. How have you changed since the beginning of this Journey Toward Hope? What have you learned, experienced, thought, felt, etc.?
2. What are some ways you can pass on this journey to others?
3. Read the Hope Statements on pages 182-183. Which statement do you feel you have grown the most in? Which statement is still the hardest for you to believe?

**Session 26 is continued on the next page...**

# Journey Toward Hope Discussion Group Leader's Guide

## Hope Says...**YOU ARE NEEDED**

### Session 26: Pass It On & A Time of Communion continued

#### A Time of Communion

- Ask for volunteers to read the verses, paragraphs, and quote from Brennan Manning on page 218.
- Ask for someone to read the lyrics to the song, "Carried to the Table" by Leeland on page 219. Invite the discussion group members to share what these lyrics mean to them as they think about God's love for them, Jesus' sacrifice of his life on their behalf, and the incredible privilege of being in relationship with him, no matter how unworthy or underserving they might feel.
- Pass out small cups of grape juice and a small cracker or piece of a cracker to each person.
- As the group leader, follow the prompts on page 220 and encourage the discussion group members to eat the cracker and then drink the juice together.
- Ask someone to read the Prayer of Community on page 221.
- Ask someone to read the closing verse, Isaiah 46: 3-4, on page 184. Ask the discussion group members, "How have you experienced God 'carrying you' during this journey?"

**Challenge:** This week use the 7-Day Journal starting on page 186.

**Prayer:** Have someone in your discussion group read aloud the Prayer for God's Grace on Page 181 as you close out this Journey Toward Hope. Go around the discussion group and ask for each person to share a prayer request. Pray together as a group to end your time together.

Journey Toward Hope: A Guided Experience **Discussion Group Leader's Guide**  
Edition 2.0

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