

# Coaching Tips:

## Tip #6 The Art of Welcoming



### Why Welcome?

Welcoming is an act of love.

We left off in our journey through the 9 Arts of Spiritual Conversations at loving. One aspect of loving is through our welcoming. Now, why do we welcome? Welcoming someone helps bridge them from being a vulnerable outsider to someone that is connected in relationship. Henri Nouwen, author, writes, “hospitality is not to change people, but to offer them space where change can take place.” Mary Schaller writes, “welcoming is simply the act of showing unconditional acceptance to people without any expectations of reciprocation. When you welcome people into your life and activities, you are physically reflecting Christ’s love and acceptance.”

### Luke 15:1-2

Now the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear him.  
2 And the Pharisees and the scribes grumbled, saying, “This man receives sinners and eats with them.”

Welcoming requires practice and intentionality. You can be welcoming through your face (facial expression that welcomes), your space (body language of openness), and your place (creating a comfortable environment). If you think about it, welcoming takes place everywhere. Now, just take a moment and think which of these is easiest for you? The hardest?

Welcoming is not easy though, is it? Mary Schaller writes that sometimes we do flight, fight or freeze. We flee from welcoming or we go on the offensive if someone is different from us. We also freeze, where we don’t say or do anything. These are responses of fear. However, we are to move toward the other person in loving engagement.

Some barriers that prevent us from being welcoming is busyness, shallowness, competitiveness, defensiveness, and selfishness. Now, how would your understanding of the gospel help with each of these barriers? Perhaps we need to address our understanding of who Jesus is and what He calls us to – we are to love by going deeper, to care for the other, to not let others define who we are but live out our identity in Christ.

We extend ourselves to create a safe place for the other. Sometimes that means inviting people to you... and sometimes it means to go to the other person, where they feel comfortable. Creating space also can mean that we make the time to not judge, but to listen. One simple phrase, “tell me more about that”, can create a space for someone to feel welcomed and accepted.

Last but not least, you are not responsible for results, God is. 1 Corinthians 3:7 states, “So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth.” Your responsibility is to create a safe place where the other person can “honestly explore matters of faith with you as a true friend. Where it goes from there is ultimately between them and God.”

## **Practice: Developing Healthy Spiritual Rhythms**

1. Think through your typical pattern when someone brings up a difficult conversation? Do you flee from it? Fight them about it? Or do you freeze?

How does the gospel help you to engage in conversation?

2. What pattern could you establish where you can regularly welcome someone in your life and share God’s love with them. Over the next month, welcome 1-2 people.