

WFWP Georgia: Finding Unconditional Love Through Healing and Understanding

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"What is the Path to True Freedom? Finding Unconditional Love and Fulfilling Relationships" is the focus of an educational series that members of the WFWP Georgia chapter began in early 2020. Four topics that the series covered are:

- Family as the School of Love
- Real Love and Imitation Love
- Dysfunction and our Family of Origin
- Reclaiming Health and Wholeness

This series was developed based on the work of Hilde Wiemann, a certified family and relationship coach and the founder of [Generational Healing](#). Three of us are coaches trained by Hilde -- Celeste Koshida, Loretta Anderson and myself, Myrna Lapres. We also are all members of WFWP and belong to the education team. We wanted to use our training as coaches to delve deeper into how to find unconditional love and more fulfilling relationships.



Initially, we held in-person meetings with two presentations each month in February and March (read report [here](#)). When the coronavirus resulted in everyone sheltering in place, we decided to move our events online. In April and May, we held three online webinars on the above topics. Since we were able to offer it online, the webinars were opened to WFWP members and friends across the US.

The first webinar looked at the difference between Real Love and Imitation Love. All people want real, unconditional love freely given. The reality is that none of us have fully experienced it in our lives. When we look at the situation in our world, it is obvious that something is out of balance. Individuals are struggling to feel their value and worth and families often have conflicts and challenges. The result is that we grow up wounded. Dysfunction develops because we don't experience unconditional love, especially in the early formative years when our self-concept is being formed.

The good news is that learning to give and receive love is a choice that we all have. Using insight found

in the series of books on Real Love by Dr. Greg Baer, we explored how we attempt to fill our emptiness with Imitation Love in order to numb our pain. We do this by seeking approval, respect, and success in unhealthy ways or by developing addictions to work, sex, drugs, food, shopping, etc. Although we receive some temporary happiness, it doesn't last.

Through meditation, journaling, and sharing in breakout rooms, the webinar focused on recognizing our own behaviors that keep us from experiencing love and joy in our relationships. We practiced four steps that help us to get real love:

Have a desire to change

Exercise faith that we can do it

Tell the truth about ourselves

Recognize and begin to give up getting and protecting behaviors



The second webinar in April was presented by guest speaker Nancy Bulow, a certified facilitator for Safe Conversations. Safe Conversations is a relationship tool that gives people better ways to communicate with each other. Designed by Dr. Harville Hendrix and Dr. Helen LaKelly Hunt, it is a research-based relational methodology rooted in the belief that we are meant to be connecting as couples, families, friends, social institutions, and communities. It is through connecting with others that we feel truly alive and we experience joy.

When we feel ourselves as separate from others, it is really an illusion. Nancy led us to realize that the science of relationship can be taught. We can learn how to talk to and really listen to each other without getting upset or overreacting. She told us, "Connecting is our deepest desire; losing connection is our deepest fear. Safe Conversations create connection beyond our perceived differences."

Nancy guided two volunteers through a demonstration of a Safe Conversation. The process introduced us to sentence stems that are used to share with each other. One person was the sender (speaker) and the other was the receiver (listener). Each time, the receiver summarized what the sender had said and then asked, "Is there more about that?"

After sharing with a partner in a breakout room, participants exclaimed that the time had just flown by. One person said, "I realized that I have never felt listened to so genuinely before." Nancy explained that we usually focus on what we are going to say next instead of listening to what the other person is telling us.

The third webinar, entitled "Reclaiming Health and Wholeness -- Healing of the Inner Child", began by exploring the parts of our inner selves. We are born as a baby, innocent and pure, but also having inherited from our parents and ancestors any unresolved issues. As we grow, we have loving experiences but also things that hurt or wound us. Because of the wounds, we learn to hide our pain behind various masks or personas for our protection.

In order to heal and reclaim our true selves, we have to recognize the masks we wear. As we studied in the previous webinar, we can practice telling the truth about ourselves in order to be heard, seen, loved and accepted. As we do this, the walls of the ego begin to fall away and we relax, feeling comfortable enough to show our true self even though we are wounded.

Participants were asked to think about the various ways that they have been wounded in their life and write down several painful memories as a child. Then everyone had an opportunity to share in a breakout

room. Following the sharing, we explored the various masks that we wear in order to hide our pain and everyone had a second chance to share.

Recognizing the wounds and the pain is an important step but our presentation continued to the next part of our healing model. Our wounded child needs our loving adult or higher self to be present, unconditional, and supportive in the healing process. This is how we reparent our inner child.



Using activities from "Recovery of Your Inner Child" by Dr. Lucia Capacchione, everyone was guided through a drawing activity of their inner child. Using the non-dominant hand to draw helps us connect with the creativity of the left brain. Dr. Capacchione says, "Recovery of your Inner Child is the way to begin anew and to heal your life. It's never too late to have a happy childhood."

An inner child meditation gave everyone the opportunity to connect more deeply and to begin to process the many memories and emotions that were accessed during the webinar. Everyone had the chance to share their inner child picture or a highlight of the experience before the webinar concluded.

Our original intention was to hold a weekend healing retreat in Georgia following the webinar series. Instead, we offered a healing webinar on Saturday, June 13 led by Hilde Wiemann. Stay tuned for the report in an upcoming issue of the Logic of Love.