

The purpose of this folder is to offer the hope of forgiveness and love when feelings of being unworthy and a failure are holding the man back from trying to walk the talk of the new “Way”.

Pointers for Folder 2

The key to the facilitator’s effectiveness with this program is active listening. This involves more than hearing the words the man uses. It involves emptying one’s mind of judgments about what the person may be describing. It means being totally present to the person and not being even partially off on our own track.

Active listening enables us to tune in to the mindset of the speaker. Each of us has our own way of seeing reality, of thinking about life. This way of seeing life, this mindset, determines the choices we consciously make as well as the instinctive actions or reaction we have to a situation. It also gives rise to the feelings we have. It is true that we all see the values and factors in a situation somewhat the same way. But at the same time we all see them differently.

Another way of saying this, “each person sees life through his or her own frame.” A frame focuses attention on a situation. It includes some things, but it also excludes many other things. For example, our frame for examining life may have God in the center of the picture. Another person’s frame may leave God out of the picture entirely or, at best, off in on e little corner. For example, we both will see a situation, such as being in jail and walking the talk, as the same but at the same time very different. We cannot make a person see life the way we do, but we can try to understand how he or she sees it. The facilitator’s task is to try to communicate to the man the he is not judging what the man has done or how he feels or thinks, but that he is present as a friend and a companion. Most men will be suspicious of this approach. Some will welcome it. Others will reject it. That is their decision.

Many of the fears and the worries the men have, center on what is occurring at the present moment of their incarceration. Often we can do little about these fears and worries. It is not these fears that we are concerned with. It is the fears and worries about the future, about whether they will be able to walk the talk when they go home. They will also be concerned with the past, the feeling of guilt and a worry that God cannot or will not forgive them. This is where we offer hope, not of a magical kind, but of a practical type. We can suggest that they read the folders, look at their lives and talk with the chaplain or a volunteer.