

# FACILITATOR

a soul renovation workbook facilitator manual

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soul renovation: facilitator manual

**Soul Renovation Workbook Series**  
*Soul Renovation | Facilitator Manual*  
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## Soul Renovation

This material was created by a family.

As a young man, I [Ron] had to deal with the painful reality of a failed marriage. By all accounts I should have had the right tools to succeed. I had been a believer since early childhood, active in my church and trained as an eye physician and surgeon. Sadly, I was unable to experience emotional intimacy in my marriage, resulting in divorce. At this crossroads in my life, I questioned my faith and the church. Later, I married Alexa who was a follower of Christ and also a physician. But I soon found myself in the middle of yet another conflict-filled marriage.

Determined to save our marriage, we sought help through all kinds of therapy. Although this helped us deal with our individual issues and provided us with a few practical relationship tools, secular therapy did not heal our marriage. In spite of being blessed with the births of our two daughters, Gina and Rachelle, and being professionally and financially successful, Alexa and I continued to struggle in our relationship. While we remained committed to our family and experienced some satisfaction in our marriage, the conflict and much painful disconnection continued for twenty years.

As a result of a friend's invitation to church, our daughter Gina gave her life to Christ when she was sixteen years old. Soon thereafter, Alexa and I recommitted our lives to Christ and began discovering some practical ways to apply God's principles to our lives. As we learned and used these principles, we found that God began healing our marriage, our family, and our individual lives. Our own growth opened up doors for us, and as we began to share what we were learning with others, we saw their lives change too.

Over time, our program grew into a lay-led, small group ministry, using the curriculum developed by our family, including Gina and her husband Keith, Alexa and myself. Urged to consolidate and systematize the material, I, along with Gina, authored *The Spiritual Growth Workbook*. After ten years of leading Spiritual Growth groups and refining that material, *Soul Renovation*, the revised edition of *Spiritual Growth*, was written as the latest offering in the ongoing development of the program. Today many people are experiencing healing, freedom and positive life change as a result of working the processes included in this material.

Ron Jensen and family

Founding members of Soul Renovation Resources, LLC

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## Getting Started

**Soul Renovation** workbooks are designed for both personal study and for group work. We've seen great results from individuals working through each lesson first on their own, and then sharing together in a group.

Based on our experience using this material, we recommend that groups should:

- Be led by a facilitator, preferably with a co-facilitator.
- Be formed according to gender. This provides a safe environment for depth in sharing.
- Consist of at least 6 members and probably no more than 12.
- Meet weekly, in two-hour sessions.
- Pick a place to meet that's comfortable and free of distractions (turn off mobile phones).
- Work through the material, beginning with the facilitator sharing, and then moving around the circle.
- Ask for a high commitment from each of the members: to show up every week on time, with their homework completed.

## Why A Group?

The *Soul Renovation* workbook series is designed for both personal study and group interaction. We feel strongly that the most effective use of this material happens in a group setting.

**Seven reasons why a group setting is the best arena for learning these principles:**

### 1. Much learning comes from participating in the group itself.

Hebrews 10:24-25

*And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another — and all the more as you see the Day approaching.*

A group consists of six to twelve people, each of whom brings their own experiences, learnings and insights. As each person shares, he or she may give different perspectives on certain issues. Someone may share a personal struggle which may bring to your mind a similar struggle of your own which you didn't consider when you were completing your workbook. The group brings each member a bigger picture and more rounded perspective.

### 2. Group members can encourage one another as they experience and learn God's truths and apply them to their lives.

1 Thessalonians 5:11

*Therefore encourage one another and build each other up just as in fact you are doing.*

We have seen tremendous healing occur in the context of a safe, growing, grace-filled group of people. A group setting allows members to encourage each other as they grow and learn together. It also creates a place where those feeling down can be encouraged by those who are feeling strong. Also, we believe most people are more successful at whatever they do when encouraged by others. The group will provide a place for you to cheer each other on as you work on your relationships with God and others.

### 3. The group provides a safe place where you can practice confessing your sins, struggles and strengths to your peers.

James 5:16a

*Therefore, confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed*

This verse tells us to confess our sins to other people, a principle many of us don't practice in our daily lives. Because God promises to heal us as we confess our sins and pray for one another, we believe much healing and freedom comes from simple confession shared in the group. The group provides a safe place where you can practice this principle from God's word.

### 4. The groups help model healthy, godly forms of communication.

Proverbs 15:4

*The tongue that brings healing is a tree of life, but a deceitful tongue crushes the spirit.*

Colossians 3:12 -13

*Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another.*

## Why A Group? (ctd)

Healthy communication does not come naturally to human beings. Our negative attitudes and behaviors create all kinds of communication-breakers such as: criticism, gossip, inappropriate anger, blame, isolation, suppression, lying and exaggerating. This Workbook contains exercises and guidelines to help you learn and practice godly, loving ways to communicate. As you learn the communication principles, the group becomes an environment where you can practice, learn and grow.

### 5. You will learn we are all dealing with similar issues.

1 Corinthians 10:13

*No temptation has seized you except what is common to man...*

Ecclesiastes 1:9

*What has been will be again, what has been done will be done again; there is nothing new under the sun.*

Before you begin a group, you may be tempted to believe your issues are unique. Often, we think we're the only ones who have struggled with our specific issues and problems. But when we join a group and hear others share, we begin to realize how similar everyone's struggles are. We begin to experience a community of connection with everyone in the group and with humanity in general. It is comforting to know you are not alone in your pain or struggles.

### 6. Life change and growth are contagious and inspiring.

Romans 14:19

*Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification.*

As part of a group of people who share the common goal of growing to love God and others more each day, you will be encouraged and supported, and you will find it easier to aim toward that goal.

Also, when you see others growing and overcoming struggles it can give you inspiration to push through tough challenges to deal with your own struggles. As you see God working in other's lives, you will be encouraged to let Him work in you, and to do your part to grow as well.

Nothing is more exciting than being around people who are growing. You will begin to see life-change in your fellow group members, and life-change is contagious. We have seen many people become more fully the person God created them to be. Nothing is more beautiful to behold.

### 7. You will learn what it looks and feels like to practice the loving behavior mentioned by Jesus.

Matthew 22:37-40

*'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'*

## The Facilitator's Role

Each group needs a facilitator. This person's job is to facilitate sharing in an orderly fashion, and help remind members to follow the Group Guidelines. As group members share, they learn healthy ways of expressing thoughts, emotions and experiences as they apply the *Soul Renovation* principles to their lives.

We have included the facilitator's job description because the facilitator's role is vital to the group experience. He or she keeps the group communicating in a loving way by modeling, practicing, and keeping the group accountable to the Group Guidelines. This ensures the group's safety for its members.

Ideally a facilitator is a lay person who has been through the *Soul Renovation* process at least once as a member or has attended "*Soul Renovation...the Experience.*"

### The facilitator's job is to:

- Uphold the Group Guidelines.
- Facilitate sharing.
- Share first to model authenticity.
- Keep sharing to the subject at hand.
- Share and lead out of his or her own experience.

### The facilitator is not:

- A trained counselor.
- Someone who knows it all and has attained perfection.
- Responsible for the personal growth of everyone in the group.

## Introduction And How To Use This Manual

Once you have experienced positive life change and embraced your “true identity” through loving and being loved by God, the next part of “*building [your] house on the rock*” is to share what you’ve learned with others.

The Facilitator Manual for the *Soul Renovation* workbooks was developed to give you:

- The Key Points for each Lesson;
- Extra Insights;
- Hints for the Material which we have found helpful in leading the groups;
- And additional background information on some of the concepts.

We strongly recommend each group be facilitated by someone who has already gone through *Soul Renovation*, and desires to share the insights and growth they’ve experienced with others. Alternatively, attending the Renovation Conference may equip facilitators with a basic understanding of the *10 Principles of Soul Renovation* which are incorporated in the curriculum.

We know that sometimes when initiating the *Soul Renovation* program, it is not always possible for leaders to have completed the Workbook series before they begin as facilitators for *Soul Renovation* groups. For that reason, we have endeavored to write the Workbooks with clear directives and have provided the Facilitator Manual as a supplemental resource to assist those who wish to start a group without having previously completed the material.

Finally, people sometimes ask us if they can just get a *Soul Renovation* workbook and work through the principles on their own, as a personal study. Our response is always this: while a person working individually could benefit to a degree from the material, we strongly recommend this only as a last resort as we believe so much growth happens within the group context.

The *Soul Renovation* workbook series is designed for both personal study and group interaction. For best results, we recommend groups be composed of six to twelve people of the same sex. The beauty of learning these principles in a group setting is that as we examine the concepts behind the principles, we also practice them as we participate in our groups. Thus we can learn and experience the process at the same time.

The Workbooks (FOUNDATIONS, FRAMEWORK and FINISHES) are each divided into nine lessons per workbook. Based on a two-hour meeting schedule, most lessons can be completed in one week, although some may require additional time depending on the size of your group.

After the first meeting, each lesson begins with prayer, a review (ref. REVIEW IN GROUP) as well as a scripture verse (ref. READ IN GROUP). The Facilitator Manual assumes you will discuss these components each time you begin a new lesson. The Manual also assumes you will take time after you finish the material each week to share prayer requests and pray for one another at the end of your group time (ref. Close in prayer).

The Workbooks are designed for individual participants to read the assigned text and answer the questions within each assignment at home each week. In group time, have each group member share from every question covered that week, unless otherwise noted. For the sections headed DISCUSS IN GROUP, we recommend you discuss the key concepts from the reading, being sure to highlight the Key Points.

We’re confident your continuing journey as a *Soul Renovation* facilitator will bring you even more healing and growth as you share your own experience with others.

## Group Guidelines Explained

The Group Guidelines are for all group members including the facilitator, who should strive to uphold these guidelines and encourage his or her group to do the same. Some of the guidelines are based on Biblical principles. Others are simple, practical ways to communicate that will help your group practice loving behavior. They will help eliminate some of the unhealthy communication habits all of us have used from time to time.

The Guidelines also teach facets of healthy communication and ensure safety within each group. It is vital to the group experience that people feel safe. When group members feel safe they will bond together, trust each other and be more honest and open with their struggles and feelings

Group Guidelines

1. Open and close each group meeting with prayer.
2. Everything shared in the group **MUST** be kept confidential.\* This is crucial for creating a safe group environment.

We can't emphasize the importance of this guideline enough. It is vital to the success of the group. We have met very few people who have not experienced the pain of telling a friend or loved one something personal and later learning their trust was betrayed when personal information was shared. This then can lead to difficulty trusting people individually and in a group. Another term for breaking confidentiality is gossip.

Proverbs contains several insightful verses on gossip, including:

Proverbs 11:13

*A gossip betrays a confidence, but a trustworthy man keeps a secret.*

Proverbs 20:19

*A gossip betrays a confidence; so avoid a man who talks too much.*

Proverbs 16:28

*A perverse man stirs up dissension, and a gossip separates close friends.*

Trust is built when group members understand and agree that all sharing stays within the group. In general, people are more willing to share and be vulnerable with others if there is trust in the relationship. The deeper and more honest the sharing in the group can be, the more growth will occur.

On the other hand, it is always appropriate to share your personal learnings with anyone.

3. Use "I" statements when you share. Keep your sharing to what you are learning about yourself.

The importance of using "I" statements:

- It allows us to begin taking responsibility for our own ideas, attitudes, behaviors and feelings.
- As we begin to share some of our hurt or anger over the actions of others, we will be tempted to move into the more accusative or "finger pointing" language.

## Group Guidelines Explained (ctd)

We all will deal with some form of anger and/or hurt that has occurred in a relationship. All sharing about these feelings must be done using “I statements.” For example, if a woman was frustrated in her relationship with her husband, the accusatory way to share this would be:

*“My husband is distant from me, he makes me feel insecure, he gets angry if I try to talk to him, and that makes me afraid.”*

Using “I” statements she would share:

*“I feel disconnected from my husband, I feel very insecure around him, and I am fearful of his anger.”*

We all must begin this process ready to look at our own lives. One of the first principles we learn in the “soul renovation” process is we cannot control or change others’ behavior, and we cannot blame or condemn others for our personal unhappiness and disappointments.

### 4. Allow others to freely express their thoughts and emotions.

The self-examination exercises in this Workbook can stir strong emotions in people. When a group member cries or gets angry, it is important that we resist the need to fix, help, or cheer up that person. In a society where emotions are often either repressed or inappropriately expressed, being allowed to simply experience and share one’s feelings can be very freeing. Several people in the Bible modeled expressing their emotions strongly. The Bible does not condemn this. Some examples include:

- *Jesus wept.* (John 11:35)
- In Genesis, between 43:30, and 50:17, it says Joseph “wept” seven times, including “for a long time” (46:29) and “so loudly that the Egyptians heard him” (45:2).
- Paul also tells us in Romans 12:15 to “*Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn,*”

### 5. Keep your answers brief and to the point so everyone has a chance to share.

While this guideline is somewhat self-explanatory, it is very important. It can be easy to get off-track while sharing. You may be tempted to give several examples and go into more detail than necessary. The most growth results if you keep your sharing focused on the question being answered. We value that everyone gets time to share; if your answer is extremely long it will limit others’ ability to speak.

### 6. Do not give advice to other members of the group.

There are two reasons for this guideline:

- Group members are in the group to work on their lives and their lives only. To give someone advice is to focus on their life rather than our own, and may even indicate we think we are better or know more than the person to whom we are giving advice, which can be arrogance or pride.

Proverbs 11:2

*When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with humility comes wisdom.*

## Group Guidelines Explained (ctd)

- We need to allow group members time to feel and share their feelings. Giving advice often jumps into the practical rather than the emotional, and that is not what the group is for. Giving advice is not empathetic; rather, we need to listen and encourage each other in our sharing.

### 7. Do not criticize members of the group.

Criticizing others' weaknesses and struggles is passing judgment on them. God is judge, not us. Although our struggles may be different, we all have them. When we are tempted to judge or criticize, even if not verbally but in our minds, we are distracted from working our own process as well as interfering with the work of the person we criticize.

Here are a few of the verses in the Bible on judging others:

Matthew 7:1-2

*Do not judge or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.*

Luke 6:37

*Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive and you will be forgiven.*

Romans 14:10

*You, then, why do you judge your brother? Or why do you look down on your brother? For we will all stand before God's judgment seat.*

**8. Do not defend or rescue members of the group. Often this is done with the intention of "saving" someone, but usually amounts to just making them feel better. This insulation from pain ends up doing more harm than good because it can keep a person from dealing directly with an issue.**

We need to let others express feelings as they feel them, and to remember that feelings, especially negative ones, are rarely logical. However strong the urge may be to show this to them, we must let everyone live his or her own process.

**9. Avoid inappropriate laughing and humor. These can be distracting. Also, rather than dealing with important issues and feelings, it is common to hide behind humor.**

In the correct context, humor is one of God's greatest gifts to humanity. It can bond people and make life more fun and exciting. But in the wrong context, humor can be hurtful and callous. Some people may use humor to cover up hurt or anger. Others may make hurtful remarks and then cover them with a "just kidding." Others may find humorous an incident or thought shared by another member. In an arena where people are sharing vulnerabilities, fears and struggles, inappropriate humor can quickly lead to hurt feelings and lack of trust. Also, for those who cover up insecurities by making jokes, humor can be a mechanism to avoid being honest and vulnerable, which in turn decreases the safety for everyone else.

Ephesians: 5:4

*Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving.*

## Group Guidelines Explained (ctd)

### 10. Make your group a priority.

Show up on time, do your homework, and fully participate. Remember: your contribution in the group is not only valuable to your growth, but also to the growth of the others in your group.

Ecclesiastes 9:10

*Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might.*

The old cliché is true here: the more you put into this process, the more you will get out of it. Everyone will grow simply by showing up and sharing, but this growth will be much more significant if the principles have really been worked on. Doing small parts of each Lesson over a few days can be helpful. Pray and ask God to bring growth and change to your life through his Holy Spirit.

Because of the importance of the group experience, it is vital that you make your meeting time a priority, not missing unless absolutely necessary. While you will grow from filling in the questions and reading the material, you will gain much more insight from the combination of personal study, sharing aloud and hearing others' answers. When we were in school, it was amazing how much more understanding and learning took place if we had completed the required reading before attending the lecture. The same is true for these groups. As you gain from others' sharing, they will also gain from you; if you miss a meeting, not only do you miss out, but they do, too.

If you don't do your homework, don't refrain from coming to the group. We have seen very few people come through these groups with their homework done on time for every meeting. Things come up; we understand. Just try to stay on top of the work, and don't miss meetings unless you have to.

### 11. Listen attentively to the person sharing without interrupting or disrupting him or her. Please remember to turn off cell phones.

Everyone in the group should have a chance to share. We recommend groups share in order around their table or group, to ensure everyone has a turn. When this structure is not used, the more outgoing people tend to talk most of the time, while those who are more shy talk hardly at all. As group members share, all other members should listen attentively.

After a person shares, there is no need to comment on, identify with or defend what they've said. A simple "thank you" or smile is plenty.

### 12. No Crosstalk. Crosstalk occurs when two people in the group engage in conversation that does not include anyone else. This type of behavior disrupts the flow of sharing and often creates a feeling of "cliquishness" within the group.