EXERCISE: BEFRIENDING PROBLEMS WORKSHEET

Choose one problem you are currently struggling with and use this worksheet to help you develop a new way to interact with it.

Step 1: Identify the Problem

Identify the problem is neutral, behavioral terms (describe what a video camera would record in terms of action and words without value-based interpretations such as "rude," "mean," "thoughtless," etc.):

_____

_____

_____

Step 2: Identify Its Effects

Negative Effects: What are the specific effects of the problem in each area of your life?

Physical:_____

Emotional:_____

Spiritual:_____

Relational:_____

Occupational:_____

Other:_____

Positive Effects: Now identify the positive effects: This may take a little more thinking and time. For example, if you are single and want to be in a relationship, is this prompting you to take good care of your body and excel at work? If you are having problems with your spouse, is this prompting you to seek out spiritual guidance or connection with friends and family?

Physical:_____

Emotional:_____

Spiritual:_____

Relational:_____

Occupational:_____

Other:_____

Step 3: Identify Your Reaction

How do you typically react to this problem? Anger, fear, irritation, ignore it, hide it, dwell on it, become hopeless, feel cheated, emotional, logical, increased action, decreased action. List all the responses you can think of:

How do these reactions affect your life?

Negative Effects:

_____

Positive Effects:

_____

Step 4: Identify Potentials for Friendship

Problem as Teacher: Imagine this problem was put into your life to teach you something. What might that be? _____

_____

Just Is What Is: Imagine this problem "just is" in your life without a specific purpose. What adjustments are you being asked to make? _____

_____

Situation without Your Interpretation: If you were in this exact situation but could not think of it as a problem, how would your thoughts, emotions, and actions be different? ____

_____

Friendship in Action: If you decided to befriend your problem, how might you behave, relate, and/or feel differently? _____

_____

Step 5: Small Steps

Identify three small steps you are willing to take toward befriending this problem:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____