A FREE GUIDE FROM LIVE-CONNECTED

Living-Connected

Six Steps to Helping Hurting People Heal



You do not have to do something extraordinary to make an extraordinary difference in someone's life.

Tim & Susan Taylor | Live-Connected

WELCOME

An invitation to make a difference

Thank you for joining the Live-Connected community. We are glad you are here. Perhaps you signed up because someone you love is hurting. Perhaps you know what it is like to suffer and wish someone had known how to come alongside you. Or perhaps you simply want to become more loving and available to the people God places in your path.

This handbook begins with a simple conviction: people who are hurting often need more than solutions offered. They need someone who notices, listens, cares, and stays connected. Our words and actions matter, but so does our willingness to be present with another person's pain.

We call this living connected—connecting soul to soul in a way that communicates, "You matter. Your story matters. You do not have to carry this alone."

It's about being, not just doing. Both are important.

This guide introduces six practical steps anyone can learn. You do not need a title, a platform, or formal training to begin. You need a willing heart, a little courage, and the humility to let another person's needs guide you. This concept is simple, but it's not easy for most of us.

Our faith anchors everything we teach. Jesus summarized the greatest commandments as loving God and loving our neighbor (Matthew 22:37–40). Living-Connected seeks to make that love tangible in everyday encounters.



A teeny tiny life with a lasting impact



Timothy Lee Taylor Jr. (“Leeboy”)

Our son Lee lived with severe chronic back pain. Some days his suffering consumed his energy and limited what he could do. He carried disappointments and questions of his own. Yet, even while struggling, he made a remarkable effort to see and care for other hurting people.

After his death in 2021, we found a line in one of his journals that he had highlighted:

> ***“I want my teeny tiny life to make as big an impact as possible in this world for the sake of Christ.”***

Lee feared his pain had kept him from accomplishing something significant. What he could not fully see was the impact already unfolding through his ordinary conversations, his compassion, and the ways he made people feel valued.

What Lee gave other people

Lee knew what it felt like to be misunderstood, overlooked, or lonely in suffering. He often gave people precisely what he longed to receive: attention, time, understanding, and genuine care.

One friend later remembered that “Lee never hung up first.” Lee did not make you feel as though your story was an interruption. He was curious about what was happening beneath the surface, and he asked a question that invited honesty: “How’s your head and your heart?”

Lee was not a perfect person, nor did he possess a magical ability to take suffering away. His gift was that he moved toward people rather than away from them. He believed the person in front of him was worth his time.



Lee with his daughter, Raylin

Lee’s life taught us something we want everyone to understand: you do not have to become a pastor, missionary, author, or public figure to make a lasting impact. Loving one person well matters. And small moments of connection can ripple farther than we imagine.

We write about our time of grieving and what the Holy Spirit taught us about Lee’s life and his writings in our book ***Love Connects: How Our Son’s Life Taught Us About The Healing Power of Living-Connected***. This book birthed Live-Connected Ministries (www.Live-Connected.org).

Why meaningful connection matters

When people face loss, chronic pain, financial strain, a broken relationship, frightening news, or disappointment with God, the suffering can become isolating. They may withdraw because they lack words, fear judgment, or worry that others will rush to fix what cannot be quickly fixed.

People around them may also pull away—not because they do not care, but because they do not know what to say. Good intentions can become silence, awkward advice, premature reassurance, or a change of subject.

Of course, practical help matters. Meals, transportation, money, medical care, and problem-solving can be acts of love. But another form of help reaches deeper: a connection that communicates that a hurting person is seen, known, and not abandoned.



> ***We cannot always change someone's circumstances. We can change what it feels like to face those circumstances alone.***

This is not a promise that every conversation heals a deep wound. It is an invitation to become a steady, caring presence through which comfort and hope can grow.

Created for connection

Scripture begins with a relational God: “Let us make mankind in our image” (Genesis 1:26). Christians understand the full revelation of God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—one God in three persons. We were made in God’s image, not as equals to Him, but as people designed for relationship with Him and one another.

Jesus’ command to love God and love our neighbor is not simply a call to perform acts of service. It is a call to pay attention to people, honor their dignity, and respond in ways that reflect God’s love.

In 2 Corinthians 1:3–4, Paul describes the God of all comfort, who comforts us in our troubles so that we can comfort others. Our own pain does not automatically make us compassionate. But when we receive comfort and grow in humility, our experiences may give us new tenderness toward someone else.

The posture comes before the steps

The Six Steps are not a technique for making someone open up, and they are not a checklist to complete in one conversation. They describe a posture of love: notice, move toward, listen, seek understanding, share the weight of sorrow, encourage appropriately, and remain open to God’s presence.

> ***Respond according to the need—not according to your urge to do or say something.***

A simple pathway for loving people well

1 Others-Focused & Available

Notice the person. Do not ignore or turn away—move toward.

2 Present & Listen

Give your attention. Restrain the impulse to react, fix, or redirect.

3 Curious & Interested

Ask thoughtful questions. Follow their story rather than leading it.

4 Empathetic & Compassionate

Allow their pain to matter to you. Validate without assuming or judging.

5 Encouraging & Hopeful

Offer honest, timely words of courage—not slogans or promises.

6 Connected to God

Pray, offer spiritual companionship, and invite faith gently when welcomed.

> ***Sometimes love looks like listening through an entire visit. That can be enough for today.***

STEP ONE

Others-Focused & Available



We live in a world where many of our interactions are transactional. We move through our days focused on what we need or want to accomplish, often overlooking the person behind the transaction. Busy, distracted, and preoccupied with our own lives, we seldom consider the stories or burdens others may be carrying.

Living-Connected begins with a change in how we see people and how we choose to live. It means looking beyond the transaction to see the person—recognizing that everyone has a story, and many are carrying burdens we cannot see. Rather than remaining self-focused, we intentionally become others-focused, noticing people and making ourselves available to them.

When we recognize someone who may be hurting, we choose to move toward them rather than away. Sometimes that means sending a thoughtful message, making a phone call, sitting beside them, or simply asking, “Would you like to talk?” Being available doesn't require unlimited time. It requires a willingness to make room for someone else through genuine attention and thoughtful follow-through.

Try this

Think of one person you have noticed struggling. Reach out without putting them under pressure. You might say, “I have been thinking about you. I care about how you’re doing. Would it help to talk or spend a little time together?”

Don’t ignore or turn away—move toward.

Present & Listen

When a hurting person begins to speak, the most loving thing we can often do is remain present. Put the phone aside. Listen to their words and notice their expression, their pauses, and what seems difficult to say. Do not assume you already understand.

Listening becomes harder when we hear something we disagree with, feel blamed, are reminded of our own pain, or think we know the solution. Our internal reactions can become louder than the person's story. Self-control makes room for listening: we pause before responding and choose understanding over defending ourselves.

Watch for story hijacking

Story hijacking happens when someone shares something painful and we quickly turn the conversation toward our own similar experience. We may intend to connect, but the spotlight shifts away from the person who needs us to stay with their story.

Instead of "That happened to me too—let me tell you...," consider "That sounds incredibly hard. What has this been like for you?" Our experiences may help later, but first we need to hear theirs.



Listen to understand, not to prepare your answer.

Curious & Interested

A person's problem is never their whole story. There is often fear, disappointment, confusion, loneliness, or a loss beneath the facts. Curiosity communicates, "I am interested in you, not merely in finding an answer."

Ask open, gentle questions and then give space for the response. Follow their lead. Avoid pressing for details they are not ready to share, interrogating them, or treating silence as something you must fill.

Questions that open doors

- "What has been the hardest part of this for you?"
- "What do you wish people understood about what you're going through?"
- "How has this affected your head and your heart?"
- "What has helped, even a little?"
- "Would you like to tell me more, or would you rather just sit together?"

Be interested in feelings as well as events. And remember that listening to someone's perspective does not require agreeing with every interpretation or conclusion.

Follow their story. Do not take over the conversation.

STEP FOUR

Empathetic & Compassionate

Empathy goes beyond collecting facts. Another person's heartbreak begins to matter to our own heart. Their tears may bring tears to our eyes. Their fear or loneliness carries weight for us. We are not making their suffering our own; we are mourning with those who mourn (Romans 12:15).

Compassion responds to that understanding with tenderness and appropriate care. We can acknowledge what someone is experiencing without claiming we know exactly how they feel or agreeing with everything they say.

Consider Jesus when Mary and others mourned Lazarus (John 11:32–36). Jesus knew the story would not end at the tomb, yet He was deeply moved and wept with them. Hope did not keep Him from entering their sorrow.



Words that validate

"I can hear how much this has hurt." "It makes sense that you feel overwhelmed." "I'm so sorry you are carrying this." Avoid "At least…" or "Everything happens for a reason" as shortcuts past grief.

Encouraging & Hopeful

Encouragement is not the moment when we finally get to deliver a speech. It is a careful response to what we have heard and to what the person may be ready to receive. Hope should never require someone to deny pain, move on quickly, or pretend the outcome is certain.

Often the first encouragement is simply, “I’m here. You do not have to go through this by yourself.” Later, it may be reminding someone of the courage they have already shown, offering to help with one next step, or pointing toward support they can draw on.

We cannot promise that the illness will end, the relationship will recover, or a particular prayer will be answered as we wish. Christian hope is deeper than a guarantee of improved circumstances. It is rooted in God’s character and His promise not to abandon His people, even in suffering.

Ask before offering a perspective

“Would you like me just to listen, or would it be helpful to think together about a next step?”



Encourage without minimizing. Offer hope without making promises you cannot keep.

Connected to God

Living-Connected flows from loving God and loving others. We believe God is not indifferent to suffering. Jesus repeatedly noticed people whom others overlooked, drew near to them, and responded with compassion.

This sixth step does not mean every conversation must become a sermon. A hurting person may need to be heard for a long time before they welcome spiritual conversation. Some may be angry with God, uncertain what they believe, or too exhausted to pray. We can respect that without withdrawing our love.

When appropriate, ask permission: “Would it be okay if I prayed for you?” “Would you like to talk about where God feels present—or absent—in this?” If the answer is no, honor it. Continue to care.

Scripture offers words of comfort, including Psalm 23:4, 2 Corinthians 1:3–4, and Romans 8:38–39. Use Scripture to accompany people, not to silence their questions or hurry their grief.



Our goal is not to win a spiritual conversation. It is to love the person before us and remain faithful to God.

A moment that could change a day

Imagine you are leaving a grocery store and notice an employee collecting carts. He looks weary and keeps his eyes down. You could walk past, assuming he is simply having a bad day. Or you could slow down and offer a friendly greeting.

“Hey, how’s your day going?” He shrugs. You do not demand an answer. You smile and say, “Looks like you’ve had a long shift.” He says, “Yeah. A lot going on at home.”

Now you have a choice. You could tell him what he ought to do, offer a story of your own, or rush toward an upbeat ending. Instead, you ask, “I’m sorry to hear that. Do you want to tell me about it?”

If he wants to talk, you listen, ask one gentle question, and acknowledge the weight of his situation. If he does not, you honor that too: “I hope things get a little easier. I’m rooting for you.”

Perhaps you never learn his name. Perhaps you speak for only thirty seconds. Or perhaps he opens up and a friendship begins. You cannot manufacture connection. You can offer it.



The success of an encounter is not how much someone reveals. It is whether you responded with dignity, care, and respect.

Begin with one person

The Six Steps become part of our lives through practice. You do not need to master all six before taking the first step. Start small, notice what happens in you during a conversation, and return to the person when appropriate.

A simple reflection after your next encounter

- Who did I notice—and did I make myself available?
- Did I truly listen, or did I react, interrupt, or redirect the story?
- What did I learn about this person's experience?
- Did my words communicate empathy rather than judgment?
- Was encouragement helpful now, or would more listening have been better?
- Was there an appropriate, welcomed opportunity to connect with God?

Some encounters only make room for one or two steps. That is not failure. If you keep in touch, later conversations may create space for deeper understanding, comfort, encouragement, or prayer.

When more help is needed

Loving someone well may also mean helping them reach qualified support. Serious safety concerns, abuse, suicidal thoughts, or complex medical and mental-health needs require appropriate professional or emergency help. We can accompany people without pretending to be their only source of care.

Your life can make a difference

Lee's dream was for his "teeny tiny life" to make an impact for Christ. He did not need a larger stage to accomplish that. He paid attention to the people God placed in his path. That is a legacy we want to share—and one you can take part in.

Choose people over positions. Listen more than you speak. Remain curious. Let another person's pain matter. Encourage gently. Stay connected to God. Above all, allow the person's needs and readiness to set the pace.

> ***Anyone can learn to help hurting people heal, one meaningful connection at a time.***

Continue the journey

This handbook is only an introduction. Our Living-Connected course and companion workbook explore each step in greater depth, with stories, Scripture, exercises, and practical tools for applying what you learn. Our book Love-Connects shares more of Lee's life and legacy.

Explore resources, articles, courses, and opportunities to learn together at www.live-connected.com.

With love and gratitude,
Tim & Susan Taylor

© 2026 Live-Connected. Adapted and expanded from the original 2021 ***Love-Connects: How our son's life taught us about the healing power of living-connected***. Scripture references included for personal study.