

WEEK 11: SERVICE AND SELF-FORGETFULNESS

Detailed Facilitator Guide with Notes and Questions

Decreasing So Others May Increase

OVERVIEW FOR FACILITATORS

Week 11 Goal: Help participants discover joy and freedom in service—making themselves "nothing" for the sake of others, finding their identity in self-forgetfulness rather than self-promotion.

The Penultimate Week: This is the second-to-last week of the program.

Participants have journeyed through:

- Weeks 1-3: Awakening (seeing, grieving, dying)
- Weeks 4-6: Emptying (facing void, releasing control, listening)
- Weeks 7-9: Rebuilding (humility, empathy, authentic relationships)
- Week 10: Gratitude (from entitlement to thankfulness)
- **Week 11:** Service (from being served to serving)

Why This Week Is Critical: Service is where everything converges. You can't truly serve if you:

- Haven't humbled yourself (Week 7)
- Can't empathize (Week 8)
- Aren't authentic (Week 9)
- Remain entitled (Week 10)

Service is the **embodiment** of recovery. It's humility in action, empathy with hands and feet, gratitude expressed through giving.

The Core Challenge: The narcissist's relationship to service is corrupted:

- They serve to be seen as servant (performance)

- They serve to be needed (codependence)
- They serve from superiority ("helping the less fortunate")
- They serve with scorekeeping (expecting return)
- They avoid service entirely (beneath them)

True service is:

- Anonymous when possible (no recognition)
- From equality (we're both human)
- Without scorekeeping (freely given)
- For the other's good (not your ego)
- Joyful (self-forgetfulness brings freedom)

UNDERSTANDING NARCISSISTIC "SERVICE"

How Narcissists Corrupt Service

Strategic Service (serving to be seen):

- Posting about volunteer work on social media
- Ensuring others know about their good deeds
- Choosing visible service over hidden service
- Service as image management

Codependent Service (serving to be needed):

- Over-functioning to make themselves indispensable
- Creating dependence in others
- Resentment when service isn't acknowledged
- Identity built on being needed

Hierarchical Service (serving from superiority):

- "Helping those less fortunate" (condescension)
- Savior complex—"they need me"
- No mutuality—"I give, you receive"
- Maintains power differential

Transactional Service (serving with strings attached):

- Keeping score of what they've done
- Expecting reciprocation
- Conditional generosity
- Resentment when return doesn't come

Selective Service (only serving when it benefits them):

- Only serving impressive causes
- Only when it adds to resume/reputation
- Only when convenient
- Avoiding menial, hidden service

Why Narcissists Struggle With True Service

Identity Threatened:

- If they're "just" a servant, who are they?
- Service feels like becoming nothing
- Can't maintain specialness while serving

Need for Recognition:

- Anonymous service provides no supply
- If no one sees it, did it happen?

- Value comes from being seen serving

Can't Forget Self:

- Even while serving, mind is on: "How do I look? Am I appreciated?"
- Can't lose self in the work
- Constant self-monitoring

Resentment Builds:

- Service without recognition feels like loss
- "Why am I doing this and getting nothing?"
- Keeping unconscious ledger

WHAT TRUE SERVICE REQUIRES

The Heart of a Servant

1. Self-Forgetfulness:

- Not thinking about how you appear
- Not tracking whether you're appreciated
- Lost in the work, not monitoring yourself
- Free from self-consciousness

2. Anonymity (when possible):

- Serving without being known
- No credit, no recognition
- Just doing what needs doing
- Hidden service is purest service

3. Joy in Decrease:

- Happy to be in background
- Glad when others shine
- Content to be unknown
- Finding satisfaction in service itself

4. Equality with Those Served:

- Not from above ("I'm helping you")
- But alongside ("We're both human")
- Receiving from those you serve
- Mutuality even in service

5. No Scorekeeping:

- Freely given
- No expectation of return
- No resentment when unnoticed
- Released the moment it's given

WHAT MAKES THIS WEEK DANGEROUS

Resistance Patterns to Expect

Performing Service:

- Strategic volunteering (visible, impressive causes)
- Ensuring service is seen/documentated
- "Look how humble I am in serving"
- Service as new form of grandiosity

Resentment:

- "I'm serving and no one appreciates it"
- "Why should I serve when others don't?"
- "This is beneath me"
- Bitterness when service is unnoticed

Savior Complex:

- "They need me"
- Serving from superiority
- Creating dependence
- Can't receive from those they serve

Burnout:

- Serving to prove worth (unsustainable)
- Over-functioning without boundaries
- Saying yes to everything (to be needed)
- Exhaustion leading to resentment

Avoidance:

- "Service isn't my calling"
- "I serve in other ways" (non-menial ways)
- "I don't have time"
- Resistance to hidden, humble service

OPENING SESSION (Day 1)

Transition from Week 10 (15 minutes)

Facilitator Script:

"Last week, you practiced gratitude—moving from entitlement to thankfulness, from scarcity to abundance. You acknowledged: Everything I have is gift. I've been given more than I could repay.

This week, that gratitude becomes action: Service.

Gratitude that doesn't lead to generosity is still self-focused. 'I'm grateful' can become another form of taking—emotional warmth you receive—without giving back.

True gratitude overflows into service: 'I've been given so much, I want to give.'

This week: Service and self-forgetfulness. Learning to make yourself nothing for the sake of another—and discovering that's where joy lives.

For ten weeks, you've been focused inward (necessarily):

- Examining your patterns
- Facing your harm
- Releasing your control
- Building your humility
- Developing your empathy

This week, you turn outward: From self to service. From focus on "I" to focus on "you."

Matthew 20:26: 'Whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant.'

Jesus reverses everything:

- Greatness = Service
- First = Last
- Leading = Serving

This is the opposite of narcissism, which says:

- Greatness = Being served
- First = Being above others
- Leading = Being the center

This week, you're learning:

- To serve anonymously (no recognition)
- To find joy in making others' lives easier
- To forget yourself in service
- To decrease so others can increase

John the Baptist said (John 3:30): 'He must increase, but I must decrease.'

That's the heart of service—being content, even joyful, to become less so others can become more."

Opening Check-In (Go Around Circle)

Question: *"What's your relationship to service? Do you serve willingly, resentfully, strategically, or avoid it? Be honest."*

Facilitator Note: Listen for honesty about resistance, resentment, or performative service. Validate all responses—this week is about learning, not proving they're already servants.

SCRIPTURE FOUNDATION EXPLORATION (40 minutes)

Matthew 20:20-28 - "Whoever Wishes to Become Great Shall Be Your Servant"

Read aloud: Matthew 20:20-28

Focus on verses 26-28: "It is not this way among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first

among you shall be your slave; just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

Facilitator Teaching (15 minutes):

"Context: James and John's mother asks Jesus to give her sons the best seats in the Kingdom—one on His right, one on His left. The other disciples are indignant (because they wanted those seats too).

Everyone wants greatness. The question is: How do you become great?

The world's way (v.25): 'You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them.'

Greatness = Domination. Power over others. Being served.

Jesus's way (v.26): 'It is not this way among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant.'

Revolutionary reversal: Greatness = Service. Power under others. Serving.

Verse 27: 'And whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave.'

Not just servant (*diakonos*—one who serves), but **slave** (*doulos*—lowest social position, no rights, complete availability).

Verse 28: 'Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life.'

Jesus is the model: God Himself came as servant-slave. If He served, how much more should we?

'Give His life a ransom for many': Ultimate service—self-sacrifice for others.

For the narcissist: You've been seeking greatness the world's way—dominance, recognition, being above others, being served.

Jesus says: That's not the way. Service is the way. Decrease is the way. Giving yourself away is the way.

And here's the paradox: When you seek greatness through service, you find it. When you seek it through domination, you lose it."

Discussion Questions:

1. **"James and John wanted the best seats. Where do you want 'the best seat'—recognition, position, status?"**
2. **"Jesus says 'whoever wishes to become great shall be your servant.' How is this different from the world's path to greatness?"**
3. **"Jesus didn't come to be served but to serve. What does it mean that God Himself took the form of a servant?"**
4. **"If the greatest (Jesus) served, what does that mean for you?"**
5. **"Where have you been seeking to be served rather than to serve?"**

Mark 10:45 - "To Serve, and to Give His Life"

Read aloud: Mark 10:35-45 (parallel passage to Matthew 20)

Focus on verse 45: "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

Facilitator Teaching (12 minutes):

"Mark's version emphasizes the same truth: **Jesus came to serve, not to be served.**

'Did not come to be served':

Think about this. Jesus is:

- God incarnate
- Creator of the universe
- Deserving of all worship

- Rightfully entitled to service

If anyone could claim entitlement, it's Jesus. Yet He says: I didn't come to be served.

'But to serve':

His entire mission was service:

- Healing the sick (service)
- Teaching the ignorant (service)
- Feeding the hungry (service)
- Washing disciples' feet (service)
- Dying for humanity (ultimate service)

'And to give His life a ransom for many':

Service culminates in self-sacrifice. Not just doing nice things, but **giving Himself completely.**

For recovery:

If Jesus—who deserved to be served—came to serve, how much more should we?

If Jesus—God Himself—took the lowest position, how can we grasp at the highest?

If Jesus found His purpose in service, where will we find ours?"

Discussion Questions:

1. **"Jesus 'did not come to be served.' What did He come for? What do you live for?"**
2. **"Jesus gave His life as a ransom—ultimate service. What are you willing to give for others?"**

3. "If Jesus, who deserved everything, claimed nothing—what does that mean for your entitlement?"
4. "Where are you expecting to be served rather than serving?"

John 13:1-17 - The Towel and Basin

Read aloud: John 13:1-17

Focus on verses 12-17: Jesus washing disciples' feet, then commanding them to do likewise.

Facilitator Teaching (12 minutes):

"This is one of the most profound passages in Scripture—Jesus washing feet.

Context: Last Supper. Hours before crucifixion. This is Jesus's final lesson to His disciples before His death.

What does He choose to teach? Service.

Verses 3-5: 'Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come forth from God and was going back to God, got up from supper, and laid aside His garments; and taking a towel, He girded Himself. Then He poured water into the basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet.'

Notice what John emphasizes: Jesus knew who He was (God), knew His authority (all things in His hands), knew His origin and destiny (from God, to God).

And precisely because He knew who He was, He could serve.

Secure identity → Servant posture.

Jesus washes feet (slave's job, lowest task) **because** He knows He's God, not despite it.

Verses 12-15: 'Do you know what I have done to you? You call Me Teacher and Lord; and you are right, for so I am. If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, washed

your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I gave you an example.'

Command: Do what I did. Serve as I served. Take the lowest position.

Verse 17: 'If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them.'

Knowing isn't enough. Doing is required.

For the narcissist:

You've been trying to establish identity through status, achievement, recognition. And you're exhausted.

Jesus shows: Identity is secure in God. **Therefore** you can serve. You can take the lowest position without losing yourself.

Service doesn't diminish you. It expresses your truest self."

Discussion Questions:

1. **"Jesus washed feet BECAUSE He knew who He was (God). How does secure identity enable service?"**
2. **"Why do you think Jesus chose THIS act—foot washing—as His final lesson before death?"**
3. **"Jesus says 'I gave you an example.' What does servant leadership look like in your actual life?"**
4. **"Verse 17 says you're blessed if you DO this, not just know it. Where are you stuck in knowing without doing?"**
5. **"What's the 'foot washing' equivalent in your life—the lowly service you're resisting?"**

DAILY PRACTICES INSTRUCTION

Morning Intention: "How Can I Make Someone Else's Life Easier Today?" (Days 1-7)

Detailed Instructions for Participants:

"Each morning, after silence and gratitude practices, set this intention:

'How can I make someone else's life easier today?'

Not:

- 'How can I be impressive?'
- 'How can I be appreciated?'
- 'How can I be needed?'

But: 'How can I make THEIR life easier?'

Spend 5 minutes brainstorming (write down):

At home:

- What task can I do that usually falls to someone else?
- What can I notice and handle before they have to ask?
- How can I reduce their burden?

At work:

- Who is overwhelmed? How can I help?
- What task can I take on to lighten someone's load?
- Who needs encouragement?

In public:

- Who can I let go first (line, traffic, door)?
- Who can I serve without them knowing?
- Where can I be generous?

With strangers:

- Who is often invisible (janitors, servers)? How can I acknowledge them?
- Who is struggling? Can I help?

Choose 2-3 specific acts of service for the day:

- This must be concrete, not vague
- Ideally something they won't know you did
- Preferably menial, not impressive

Throughout the day: Look for additional opportunities. Service becomes a posture, not just a task.

Evening: Reflect—Where did I make someone's life easier? Where did I miss opportunities?"

Daily Practice: Anonymous Service (Days 1-7)

Instructions:

"Each day, do at least ONE act of service that no one will know you did.

Why anonymous? Because service with recognition isn't pure. Your ego gets fed. Anonymous service is for THEM, not for you.

Examples of anonymous service:

At home:

- Do someone's chore without mentioning it
- Fill gas tank in car they drive
- Pay a bill they usually pay
- Organize something they've been meaning to do
- Leave an encouraging note anonymously

At work:

- Clean the break room before leaving
- Restock supplies
- Fix something broken
- Help with a project without taking credit
- Do a task that isn't your responsibility

In public:

- Pay for person behind you in drive-thru (leave before they know)
- Leave generous tip for server with no note
- Pick up litter in park when no one's watching
- Let someone into traffic
- Give to someone in need without them seeing you

In community:

- Donate anonymously
- Volunteer in behind-scenes capacity
- Mow neighbor's lawn when they're gone
- Shovel sidewalk, rake leaves for elderly neighbor

The key: They shouldn't know it was you. If they find out, that's fine—but you didn't tell them.

Notice:

- What do you feel when you serve anonymously? Relief? Resentment?
- Do you want credit? Notice the urge, don't obey it
- Is there joy in serving without recognition?

Journal each evening: What anonymous service did I do today? How did it feel?"

Evening Reflection: "When Did I Forget Myself Today?" (Days 1-7)

Instructions:

"Each evening, review your day and identify moments you forgot yourself in service to another.

What does 'forgetting yourself' mean?

Not:

- Dissociating or losing identity
- Erasing your needs

But:

- Not monitoring how you appear
- Not keeping score
- Not thinking about what you're getting
- Lost in the work of serving
- Genuinely focused on them, not you

Review your day:

Where did I forget myself?

- When was I so focused on helping that I wasn't thinking about me?
- When did I serve without noticing if I was appreciated?
- When was I fully present to someone else's need?
- When did I lose self-consciousness in service?

Where did I NOT forget myself?

- When was I serving but monitoring if I was being seen?
- When was I helping but keeping score?
- When did I serve but resent lack of acknowledgment?
- When did I serve to be needed/seen/appreciated?

Write:

- 'Today I forgot myself when: _____. It felt: _____. '
- 'Today I failed to forget myself when: _____. I was focused on: _____. '

The goal: Increasing self-forgetfulness. Over time, service becomes less about you and more about them. That's freedom."

COMMITTING TO REGULAR SERVICE (Days 2-7)

Finding Your Service Context (Day 2)

Instructions for Participants:

"This week, you're committing to ongoing, regular service in a context where you're NOT the expert/hero.

Why 'not the expert/hero'?

Because serving from expertise can feed ego:

- 'I'm helping because I'm so skilled'
- 'They need my special abilities'
- 'I'm the answer to their problems'

Service that shapes humility: Doing ordinary work alongside others, not above them.

Types of service to consider:

Soup Kitchen/Food Bank:

- Serving meals, sorting food, washing dishes
- Direct service to people in need
- Humbling, repetitive, unglamorous

Homeless Shelter/Hospitality:

- Providing meals, beds, dignity
- Seeing people society ignores
- Learning from their stories

Hospital/Hospice Volunteering:

- Sitting with patients, reading to them
- Presence ministry (not fixing)
- Confronting suffering, mortality

Tutoring/Mentoring:

- Helping kids with homework
- Being present in their lives
- Serving education without being teacher

Prison Ministry:

- Letter writing, visitation
- Seeing humanity in everyone
- Confronting judgment in yourself

Nursing Home Visits:

- Spending time with elderly
- Hearing their stories
- Combating loneliness

Community Cleanup/Service Projects:

- Picking up trash, painting, building
- Physical labor that serves common good
- Tangible results, anonymous impact

Disability Services:

- Working with individuals with disabilities
- Receiving as much as giving
- Learning from those often dismissed

This week: Research 3 options. Visit one. Commit to one. Sign up for regular (weekly or bi-weekly) service."

The Commitment (Days 3-7)

Instructions:

"By end of week, make a concrete commitment:

Where will I serve? [Specific organization]

How often? [Weekly? Bi-weekly? Monthly?]

What will I do? [Specific tasks]

For how long? [Commit to at least 3 months initially]

Write it down. Tell your accountability partner. Put it in your calendar.

Service must be:

- Regular (not one-time)
- Humble (menial tasks welcome)
- With others (not solo)

- Where you're ordinary (not the star)

Why regular service matters:

One-time service can feed ego: 'Look what I did!' Then you go back to normal.

Regular service shapes character: Week after week, unglamorous, unnoticed, you serve. It becomes who you are, not what you did once.

Service isn't a project. It's a lifestyle."

Group Processing (Day 5-6)

Discussion Questions:

1. **"Where have you committed to serve regularly? What drew you to that?"**
2. **"What makes regular, humble service harder than one-time impressive service?"**
3. **"What are you afraid you'll feel/discover in ongoing service?"**
4. **"How is this different from service you may have done before?"**

THE INVISIBILITY EXERCISE (Days 3-5)

Instructions for Participants

Facilitator Introduction (Day 3):

"This week's challenge exercise: Help someone without them knowing it was you.

This is the purest form of service—benefit someone without any possibility of recognition.

Why? Because it exposes your motives. If you NEED them to know, you're serving for you, not them."

Planning the Invisibility Exercise (Day 3)

Instructions:

"Choose someone and something concrete you can do for them anonymously.

Who to help:

- Someone who's struggling
- Someone who's served you
- Someone who wouldn't expect it
- Someone you don't usually help

What to do (must be substantial, not token):

- Pay a bill for them (anonymously)
- Complete a project they're overwhelmed by
- Give a substantial gift they need (no name attached)
- Do ongoing service (mow their lawn weekly, they never know who)
- Meet a need they mentioned (but anonymously)

Examples:

'My single-mom neighbor is overwhelmed. I mowed her lawn every Saturday for a month before she even noticed, and she never knew it was me.'

'My colleague was stressed about a project. I stayed late and did part of it. They thought they'd done it and forgotten.'

'I knew my friend needed car repairs but couldn't afford them. I anonymously paid the mechanic.'

'My elderly neighbor's gutters were clogged. I cleaned them while they were at church. They never knew who.'

Requirements:

- They can't know it's you (no hints, no telling others who might tell them)
- Must cost you something (time, money, effort)
- Must meet real need, not be self-serving
- Must be done with joy, not resentment

The hardest part: Not telling anyone. The urge to share will be strong. Resist it."

Doing the Invisibility Exercise (Days 3-5)

Instructions:

"Execute your plan. Serve invisibly.

During the service:

- Notice your thoughts: Do you want credit?
- Notice your feelings: Joy? Resentment? Peace?
- Practice self-forgetfulness: Focus on THEM
- If discovered, deflect gently—don't claim credit

After the service:

- Notice the urge to tell someone
- Notice if you feel empty without recognition
- Notice if there's quiet satisfaction
- Journal extensively about the experience

Don't tell:

- Not your spouse (unless necessary for logistics)

- Not your friends
- Not the group (until after, if asked)
- Not social media (obviously)

The only exception: Your journal, your private prayer, your accountability partner (if needed for processing).

What this reveals:

- How much you need recognition
- Whether service itself is satisfying
- Whether you can be generous without return
- Whether you're serving them or serving your ego"

Group Processing (Day 6-7)

Discussion Questions:

1. **"Who wants to share (now that it's over) what you did invisibly?"**
(Voluntary)
2. **"What was hardest about not being known?"**
3. **"Did you want to tell someone? What stopped you (or didn't stop you)?"**
4. **"Was there joy in invisible service? Or did you feel cheated?"**
5. **"What did this exercise teach you about your motives for service?"**
6. **"Could you do ongoing invisible service? What would that require?"**

STUDYING BIBLICAL SERVANTS

Jesus as Servant (Entire Gospel Pattern)

Assignment (Throughout week): Read through one Gospel (Mark is shortest) specifically noticing Jesus's service.

Group Discussion (Day 4 or 5):

Facilitator Teaching (10 minutes):

"Jesus's entire earthly ministry was service. Notice the pattern:

He heals (Mark 1-2): Constantly healing sick, demon-possessed, disabled—service to suffering

He teaches (Mark 4): Giving wisdom freely—service to ignorant

He feeds (Mark 6, 8): Feeding 5,000, then 4,000—service to hungry

He touches untouchables (Mark 1:40-42): Leper, bleeding woman—service to outcasts

He rebukes disciples' status-seeking (Mark 9:35, 10:43-44): Teaching servant leadership

He washes feet (John 13): Slave's job—service in humility

He dies (Mark 15): Ultimate service—giving His life

Jesus's service was:

- Constant (not occasional)
- Humble (not impressive)
- For outsiders (not just insiders)
- Without recognition (often told people not to tell)
- Costly (ultimately His life)

And He did it joyfully: 'For the joy set before Him' (Hebrews 12:2)

For us: This is the model. Not occasional impressive service, but constant humble service, joyfully given."

Discussion Questions:

- 1. "What strikes you about Jesus's service when you read the Gospels?"**
- 2. "Jesus served constantly—sick, crowds, disciples, everyone. Where do you serve constantly?"**
- 3. "Jesus served outsiders and outcasts. Who do you avoid serving?"**
- 4. "Jesus's service was costly. What is service costing you?"**

The Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37)

Assignment (Day 4): Read and meditate on Luke 10:25-37

Group Discussion (Day 5):

Facilitator Teaching (10 minutes):

"The Good Samaritan is Jesus's answer to 'Who is my neighbor?'

Context: Lawyer asks Jesus 'What must I do to inherit eternal life?' Jesus says 'Love God, love neighbor.' Lawyer asks 'Who is my neighbor?'

The Story:

- Man beaten, robbed, left for dead
- Priest passes by (religious, 'important'—doesn't help)
- Levite passes by (religious, 'important'—doesn't help)
- Samaritan (despised, 'unimportant') stops, helps, pays for recovery

Jesus asks: 'Which was a neighbor to the man?'

Answer: The one who showed mercy—the Samaritan.

Lessons:

Service isn't about status: Priest and Levite had status, didn't serve. Samaritan had no status, served freely.

Service is inconvenient: Samaritan had somewhere to be. He stopped anyway.

Service is costly: He paid for the man's recovery—time, money, risk.

Service is compassionate: He 'felt compassion' (splagchnizomai—gut-level empathy)

Service defines neighborliness: Your neighbor is whoever needs mercy—and you become neighbor by showing mercy.

For us:

Who do you pass by?

Who do you deem 'not your problem'?

Who do you avoid serving because it's inconvenient?

Jesus says: Stop. Help. That's what love looks like."

Discussion Questions:

1. "Why do you think the religious leaders passed by?"
2. "The Samaritan stopped when it was inconvenient. Where do you avoid inconvenient service?"
3. "Service cost the Samaritan money and risk. What is service costing you?"
4. "Who are you passing by—people you see in need but avoid?"

THEOLOGICAL AND CLINICAL DEEPENING

Henri Nouwen Quote Discussion

"True service is not a technique or a program. It's an orientation of the heart that says, 'I am here for you, not you for me.'" — Henri Nouwen, *In the Name of Jesus*

Facilitator Teaching (15 minutes):

"Nouwen, who left prestigious academic positions to serve people with disabilities at L'Arche, understood service deeply.

'True service is not a technique or a program':

You can't service your way into being a servant. Doing the right actions with the wrong heart doesn't work.

Service is 'an orientation of the heart': A fundamental posture toward others.

The narcissist's heart orientation: 'You are here for me.'

- People exist to meet my needs
- Relationships are transactional
- What can you do for me?

The servant's heart orientation: 'I am here for you.'

- I exist to serve your flourishing
- Relationships are generous
- What can I give you?

This isn't technique—you can't fake it. It's deep transformation of how you see yourself and others.

Nouwen's journey: Left Harvard (impressive) to serve people with profound disabilities at L'Arche (hidden). There, he learned: Service isn't doing impressive things for needy people. It's being with people, learning from them, receiving from them.

He served them. They served him. Mutuality.

For recovery: Are you oriented toward 'you for me' or 'me for you'? That's the question."

Discussion Questions:

1. **"Nouwen says service is 'an orientation of the heart.' What's your heart orientation—'you for me' or 'me for you'?"**
2. **"Why can't service be just a technique or program? What's missing if it is?"**
3. **"Nouwen left prestigious positions to serve people with disabilities. What would you have to leave to serve?"**
4. **"At L'Arche, Nouwen received from those he served. Can you receive from people you serve?"**

Gordon Allport Quote Discussion

"The measure of mental health is the ability to lose yourself in something larger than yourself." — Gordon Allport

Facilitator Teaching (15 minutes):

"Allport, a psychologist, identifies mental health with self-transcendence—losing yourself in something beyond yourself."

'The ability to lose yourself':

Not:

- Losing your identity (unhealthy)
- Losing your boundaries (codependence)
- Losing your mind (dissociation)

But:

- Forgetting yourself temporarily
- Being absorbed in meaningful work
- Focusing outward instead of inward
- Self-forgetfulness in service

'In something larger than yourself':

Could be:

- Service to others
- Creative work
- A cause
- God
- Community

The narcissist can't do this: Always focused on self, never lost in anything else. Constantly self-monitoring, self-referencing, self-promoting.

Result: Mental unhealth. Anxiety, depression, emptiness, isolation.

The healthy person CAN lose themselves: Absorbed in meaningful work, forgot about self for hours, emerged refreshed.

Allport says: That's health. The capacity to transcend self.

For recovery: When was the last time you lost yourself in service, in work, in anything? If you can't remember, that's the problem.

This week: Practice losing yourself in service. Hours where you're not thinking about you. Notice what happens."

Discussion Questions:

1. **"Allport says mental health is 'losing yourself in something larger'! When have you done this?"**

2. "Why can't narcissists lose themselves? What prevents it?"
3. "What's the difference between healthy 'losing yourself' and unhealthy loss of identity?"
4. "This week, when you serve, can you lose yourself in it? Or are you constantly self-aware?"

RICHARD FOSTER: THE DISCIPLINE OF SERVICE

Reading Assignment Processing (Throughout Week)

Assign: Read chapter on Service from Richard Foster's *Celebration of Discipline*

Key Foster Insights:

- Hidden service (no recognition)
- Small service (menial tasks)
- Guard against 'religious' service (for show)
- Service with equality (not from superiority)
- Receive service (let others serve you)

Group Discussion (Day 6):

1. "Foster distinguishes 'self-righteous service' from 'true service.' What's the difference?"
2. "Foster says hidden service purifies motives. Why?"
3. "He talks about 'small services'—holding doors, listening, small courtesies. Where do you avoid these?"
4. "Foster says we must receive service as well as give it. Can you receive? Or must you always be the giver?"

CREATING A SERVICE LIFESTYLE

Ongoing Practices (Days 6-7)

Instructions:

"Service can't be a 12-week project. It must become a lifestyle.

Design your ongoing service life:

Daily:

- Morning intention: 'How can I make someone's life easier?'
- One act of anonymous service
- Evening reflection: 'When did I forget myself today?'

Weekly:

- Regular committed service (soup kitchen, tutoring, etc.)
- Invisible service to family/friends/neighbors
- Thank people who serve you

Monthly:

- Substantial anonymous giving (financial or time)
- Service outside your comfort zone
- Assess: Am I serving for recognition or from love?

Quarterly:

- Review service commitments—sustainable?
- Am I serving with joy or resentment?
- Am I letting others serve me?
- Where do I need to adjust?

Lifelong:

- Service is not a phase—it's your life
- Keep serving anonymously (keeps motives pure)
- Increase service as you're able
- Die serving (literally—serve til you die)

The goal: Becoming a servant—not doing servant activities, but BEING a servant. Identity shift."

FACILITATOR SELF-CARE

This week can be inspiring but also exhausting.

Watch for:

- Participants who serve performatively
- Service competition ('I served more/better')
- Burnout (over-committing without boundaries)
- Savior complexes emerging
- Your own need for recognition in facilitating

Remember:

- Model joyful service
- Don't martyr yourself
- Service with boundaries is healthy service
- You're a fellow servant, not the hero

Self-care:

- Serve in your own life joyfully
- Notice when you need recognition for facilitating

- Let others serve you
- Rest—service shouldn't destroy you

CLOSING THE WEEK (Day 7)

Final Reflection Questions

1. **"Complete this sentence: This week, I learned that service..."**
2. **"What was hardest about anonymous service? About regular commitment?"**
3. **"Where did you experience joy in self-forgetfulness?"**
4. **"What service commitment are you making going forward?"**
5. **"How has service changed how you see yourself, others, or God?"**

Facilitator Closing Words

"You've done beautiful work this week—learning to serve, to forget yourself, to make yourself nothing for the sake of others.

What you've practiced:

- Daily intention to make others' lives easier
- Anonymous service
- Invisible service exercise
- Commitment to regular service
- Studying servant hearts

What you've learned:

- Greatness is found in service, not domination
- Joy comes from self-forgetfulness

- Service with recognition feeds ego; anonymous service purifies
- You can lose yourself and find yourself
- Decrease isn't loss—it's freedom

Next week—Week 12: The Long Obedience. How do you sustain recovery for life? How do you keep growing? How do you maintain these changes decades from now?

This is the final week. You've come so far. Eleven weeks of profound transformation. One more week to solidify practices for a lifetime.

Let's close:

'God, You came not to be served but to serve. You washed feet, healed sick, fed hungry, gave Your life. Teach us to serve like You—joyfully, humbly, anonymously, constantly. Free us from the prison of self-focus. Give us the joy of self-forgetfulness. Make us servants—not because we must, but because we get to. Transform our hearts from "you for me" to "me for you." Amen."

END WEEK 11

RESOURCES FOR DEEPER STUDY

On Service:

- Richard Foster, *Celebration of Discipline* (Service chapter)
- Henri Nouwen, *In the Name of Jesus*
- Mother Teresa, *No Greater Love*

L'Arche Communities:

- Jean Vanier, *Community and Growth*
- Research L'Arche model of mutual service

Practical:

- Find local service opportunities
- Join serving communities
- Make service rhythmic, not sporadic