

## Permission to Speak Freely: Creating Space for Love to Grow

By Nancy Wilson, Jan 20-21, 2007

**We receive permission to speak freely in the secret chambers of prayer; there we learn to grant others the same permission; thus we are to become a community that together learns to “speak the truth in love” and brings that freedom into the world.**

*“The spiritual journey moves us from solitude to community and to ministry as we follow Jesus.”* (Henri Nouwen “Spiritual Direction”)

“Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the head, that is, Christ. From him the **whole body**, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, **grows and builds itself up in love**, as each part does its work.” (Eph. 4: 11-16)

Paul's view of growing in Christ is primarily corporate.

Learning to "speak the truth in love" is a key to our growth.

In the gospels, most of the "discipling" that Jesus did of the disciples was in the context of a small, traveling group. If we allow it, he will do the same for us, using the dynamics of a small group.

See Mark 9: 30-34.

If love is what heals and changes us, we need to make room for that to happen. Safe resting and growing spaces are what small groups can be for us.

We have established some ground rules in Vineyard for how to create space for love to grow in our small groups. To give permission to speak freely and creating space for love to grow we respect that:

1. **What's shared here stays here**- your information is yours to share, wherever you choose.
2. **No unsolicited advice giving in our group settings.**  
We restrain our tendency to “fix” others with our great wisdom!
3. **We pray for each other.** Both in our groups and away from group- thereby inviting love to grow as we hold each other before the One who loves.
4. **Take your fair share of the time pie.** We “grow and build up in love” by both talking and listening to each other.

Some practical applications for a disciple of Jesus to grant permission to speak freely by creating space for love to grow:

**1. Be willing to adapt your speech and listening patterns.**

See Ephesians 4:15. Permission to speak freely in a safe place that makes room for love to grow, comes about by paying attention to our speech.

**2. Participate in a small group.** See Ephesians 4:16. Be open to Jesus using the group to work in your life. Make time for connecting.

**3. Come to your small group anticipating that Jesus will be there.** See Matthew 19:20. Ask him to work both through you and through others.

**4. Carry the growing love and freedom you are experiencing to the wider world you live in.** John Wimber described ministry as “giving away, however much or little of God we have received”. The more we have received, the more we can freely give away.