



COJOURNERS—A NEW WAY OF THINKING ABOUT EVANGELISM

COJOURNERS TRANSFERABLE CONCEPT

A 16-page, full-color, article that explains and teaches the CoJourney approach to evangelism. CoJourners is not an evangelism strategy. It is an equipping paradigm, which provides a way of thinking about and teaching conversational evangelism. This equipping paradigm consists of learning the four roles we play in relating to others in their spiritual journeys.

The Explorer: engages in significant conversations to discover and understand the spiritual journeys of others. Being an explorer involves active listening and asking questions.

The Guide: shows the way to faith in Christ. Being a guide involves sharing your life-story and articulating the gospel in conversationally appropriate ways.

The Builder: builds bridges over and beyond the issues and obstacles that hinder others in their journey to Christ. Being a bridge building involves prayer and gentle persuasion.

The Mentor: encourages others to follow Christ. Being a mentor involves helping others make relational connections to other believers and imparting foundational concepts for Christian living.



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Encourage others to follow Christ. Being a mentor involves helping others make relational connections to other believers and imparting foundational concepts for Christian living. *See page 6.*

CoJourners

CoJourners

Everyone is on a spiritual journey. We can't help it. God created us that way. Granted, some are moving toward God and others are moving away from Him. Some pursue gods who aren't God at all. Others are stuck in a spiritual quagmire and are not going anywhere. There are those who are spiritually open, while others are closed. Some are spiritually involved; some are not. But in each and every case, they are on a spiritual journey.

Here is a second fact you can count on—God is already at work in people's lives, whether they ever glance heavenward or not. He is not a passive observer or a shut-in desperately hoping for visitors. No, he is an active and almighty participant: the Lord of the Harvest who sends workers into his harvest field

(Matthew 9:37-38); the God who created all people and nations determining "the times set for them and the exact places where they should live... that men would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him" (Acts 17:26-27). His Spirit is at work in the lives of people today (John 16:7-11) and he's given us the privilege of being his "fellow workers" (1 Corinthians 3:9) by entering the spiritual journeys of others and helping them come to Jesus.

There is one more foundational insight—people like to travel together. It's true on road trips and on cross-country flights. Even climbing Mt. Everest, you want to take a Sherpa or two along. And I'm convinced it's true on spiritual journeys as well. Now, obviously most people don't think of spiritual journeys as a social endeavor. We've been raised to obey the eleventh commandment, "Keep thy religious views to thyself—thank you very much." But here's the key—while spiritual journeys are personal, they're not private. We are designed as spiritual and relational beings. That means even a spiritual journey will be enhanced in relationship. Always has been, always will be—ducks quack, dogs bark, people talk. The inescapable correlative of all this is rather simple: people need people in their spiritual journeys. There is also a surprise in this. Listen carefully—despite public



Keith Davy is the National Director of Research and Development for Campus Crusade for Christ. His Orlando-based ministry keeps him writing, speaking, and consulting with ministry leaders, especially in the area of evangelism. When given the opportunity, he loves to go camping with his family, especially in the mountains of Colorado.

opinion, relationships can often be enhanced by spiritual conversation. But more on that later.

Let's put it all together: Everyone is on a spiritual journey and God is already at work. We are given the privilege of entering into those journeys and becoming a part of what God is doing. People not only need

us, many will want us to join them—if we do so appropriately. And that, my friends, is why it is important that we become CoJourners. "Hey, wait," you say, "that's not a word." Right you are. But it is a compound expressing what no single English word adequately conveys. The prefix "co" means "with" and "journer"—well, that's obvious. Put them together and you get the idea that we are joining others in their spiritual journeys, CoJourners. It could be with someone you've known for a long time or someone you've just met. The context may be students on a campus or adults in a community. Or it may involve moving from one culture to another. It doesn't matter. The principles of being a CoJourneyer always remain the same—anybody, anytime, anywhere.

Four Roles

There are four primary roles that you can play in another person's spiritual journey. They are not a formula: do this first, then that. Rather, they are roles that depend upon your relationship and the other person's spiritual journey. The roles are explorer, guide, builder, and mentor.



The Explorer Discovering Spiritual Journeys

Think of explorers throughout history. They entered unknown territory to discover, learn, and understand. (For historical accuracy we might also mention “plunder,” but that’s not the connection we’re looking for here.) Whatever their motivation, they embarked on journeys of discovery. In a similar way, we become spiritual explorers on journeys of discovery in the lives of others. Love compels us to engage conversationally, seeking to discover, learn and understand who they are and where they are going spiritually.

What’s Their Story?

The Steven Spielberg film *Amistad* chronicles the true story of a group of enslaved Africans, who in the spring of 1839, revolted aboard the Spanish slave ship *La Amistad*. Having overtaken their captors, they attempted to return to their beloved homeland. Given their absence of sailing experience, they fail miserably, and the ship was seized off the eastern seaboard of the United States. The captives were brought into the U.S. where they were charged with murder and awaited their fate in prison. An enthralling court battle ensued that captured the attention

of the entire nation, confronting the very foundation of the American legal system. But for the men and women on trial, it was a fight for the basic right of all mankind . . . freedom. (By the way, this summary was adapted from promotional materials for *Amistad* and the book. Let’s give credit where credit is due.)

A turning point in the movie occurs during a conversation between the elderly and eccentric ex-president, John Quincy Adams, and Mr. Theodore Joadson, a former African slave, now working for the abolition of slavery in America. Joadson seeks advice from Adams on how to try the case.

Adams responds, “*When I was an attorney a long time ago, I learned by trial and error, that whoever tells the best story wins. I offer that scrap of wisdom free of charge.*”

Joadson appears disappointed with the counsel and turns to leave, when Adams speaks again. “*What is their story?*”

The dialogue continues:

“*Why, they are from West Africa.*”

“*No, what is their story? Mr. Joadson, you are from where originally?*”

“*Why, Georgia, sir.*”

“*Georgia?*”

“*Yes, sir.*”

“Is that pretty much what you are, your story? No. You’re an ex-slave who has devoted his life to the abolition of slavery and overcoming great obstacles and hardships along the way, I imagine. That’s your story. Isn’t it? Hah. You and this young, so-called lawyer have proven you know what they are. They are Africans. Congratulations! What you don’t know, and as far as I can tell, haven’t bothered in the least to discover, is who they are. Right?”

Did you hear those words? “. . . you know what they are. . . What you don’t know, and as far as I can tell, haven’t bothered in the least to discover, is who they are.”

How often do we get to the end of an evangelistic presentation and discover “what they are,” unbelievers. But we don’t know “who they are.” We don’t know their story.

That’s the role of the explorer—to discover who they are and what their story is. This discovery will determine how we help them on their journey.

Here is an example: I sat next to Robert on a flight. What do you know about Robert spiritually? Unless you are speed reading this section without thinking, you probably answered, “Nothing.” But there is one thing you do know, right? Fact number 1: He is on a spiritual journey.

So let me give you another clue. He’s French—a French dentist, as a matter of fact. Now what do you think? Is he spiritually near or spiritually far? More clues: he considers himself a French humanist. Hmm. . . Humanism is a man-centered worldview and not the path you normally think of as leading to Christ. So probably spiritually far, right?

As I continued to explore Robert’s experiences and opinions, I discovered that he considered the church in his own country as irrelevant to the needs of society—not a good sign. Here we have a French humanist disillusioned by the church. It’s sounding more and more distant.

But when Robert discovered my interest in spiritual matters, he revealed that he had tried to buy a Bible in a U.S. bookstore. (Whoa, that changes our view, doesn’t it?) After showing him a brief explanation of the gospel, he responded that he didn’t know if it was true or not, but (catch this, now) he hoped his children would decide it was. Why? Because if they believed it was true, he knew that they would experience a better life than if they didn’t. Robert was spiritually open, after all.

Notice how your view of Robert changed with each new piece of information—initially assuming him to be spiritually distant, perhaps resistant because of his worldview, only to discover his genuine openness. This is what happens when we explore the lives of others—our assumptions are overturned as we gain insights into their story. You can’t guess where people are spiritually. You have to discover it.

The Art of Exploring

So, how do you explore? Like with Robert, it is a matter of *asking questions* and *listening carefully*. There are no magical questions that always work, but there are good questions. Here are a few.

Try “How are you?” I’m serious—it is a good question. Ask people how they are, only really mean it. It’s common in our culture to ask the question; it’s rare to find anyone really wants to know the answer. “Fine” (or some other one-word response) is generally expected. But if you mean it, and explore a bit, you will find that many (and perhaps the majority) will genuinely appreciate someone who cares enough to find out how they are doing. The conversations that follow often provide revealing *windows of the soul*.

But if you mean it, and explore a bit, you will find that many will genuinely appreciate someone who cares enough to find out how they are really doing. The conversations that follow often provide revealing windows of the soul.

I was visiting with Mike, a neighbor who had recently moved onto our block. We discussed our houses and the common structural problem they had (a leaky window above the garage.) After comparing notes, I asked Mike, “Besides the home, how is the rest of life going?”

“It’s getting better,” Mike responded.

Did you hear that? That is a *window of the soul*—a comment that provides a view of what is true on the inside. All I needed to do was to invite him to “tell me more” and I began discovering what was going on in his life—the work issues that were leading to financial problems, which were the root of marital tensions which were negatively affecting the kids. All of these insights came in on our first real conversation together. Are you beginning to see why I said earlier that relationships can often be enhanced by spiritual conversations? Exploring is a way to get to know people better.

Listening with genuine interest, you will often discover areas of *common ground* (like leaky windows) and *unmet needs* (with Mike: occupational, financial, marital, parental issues—ooh, life can be hard.) But the most valuable (and exciting) discoveries you will make are the *traces of the Spirit*—those places where God is at work in the lives of others. What do you suspect happened when Nanci, my wife, and I discovered that another of our neighbors had made a New Year’s resolution to get closer to God? Yep, an opportunity to “cojourn”!

Charting Spiritual Journeys

One last perspective to help you explore: Remember journeys always have a past, present and future. You can talk about where you've been, figure out where you are and determine where you're going. In the same way, spiritual journeys also have a past, present and future. That means you can explore their past experiences, their present attitudes and their future direction. There are no right questions for every situation. But here are some starters for you:

Exploring the Past: *What was your religious background as a child? What have you tried in your spiritual journey since?*

Exploring the Present: *How has your search left you feeling? Where are you now in your spiritual journey?*

Exploring the Future: *What do you desire most spiritually? Do you think you are moving toward God, away from God, or staying about the same?*

I could go on and list more questions. But if you know a few, the rest will arise naturally within the situation if you have a genuine interest in discovering who they are and what their story is.

Think of the power and relational appropriateness of exploring. Can you ask questions of neighbors? Absolutely! Will coworkers appreciate your attempts to understand who they are and where they are coming from? Most will. Even strangers generally respond to someone who takes a genuine interest in them. Of course, you will need to be sensitive to their openness, not prying if they are uncomfortable sharing. But most people will respond positively and the discoveries you make will influence the other roles you will play in their lives.

The Guide Showing the Way to Jesus

What happens when you discover someone who is spiritually open? Lights flash, sirens sound and you make a public announcement, right? No, you assume another role—you become a guide. A guide, of course, is simply someone who shows the way, whether on trails or tours. Good guides help you understand what you are seeing or experiencing along the way. I was on a tour this week in St. Petersburg (Florida, not Russia. The guide even explained the architecture of a public restroom! Honestly. But ultimately the guide's role is to lead you to the desired destination (though in St. Pete we just went around in a big circle.)

When we are guides as CoJourners, we don't lead people somewhere but to someone—that is, to Jesus—helping them understand their experiences along the way. There are three power tools that are basic equipment for you as a guide.

Christian Community: Invite Them into It

A healthy Christian community can have a profound influence in a person's journey to Christ. A Christ-filled church service or a special fellowship activity allows them to experience an environment filled with love and truth and that's what most people are looking for—unconditional love and truth. Even if the gospel is not explained (i.e., it's not an evangelistic service), it will be experienced! Listen to the stories of those who have come to Christ and you will discover a significant number who first came into contact with a Christian community. As a high school athlete, I attended a Christian fellowship for a year and a half. I was either slow to learn or slow to turn. Either way, after processing the truth for months, a mini-crisis brought me to my turning point when I placed my faith in Christ. So invite others with spiritual interest to come with you into fellowship. It's as easy as, "Hey, I'm going to _____. I really enjoy it because of _____. Would you like to come along?" (But don't forget to fill in the blanks.)

Your Story: Share It Briefly

What is the prerequisite for being a guide? It's first-hand experience of the route, right? You are not going to choose a guide who has never been where you want to go. No, a good guide has personal knowledge of the journey ahead. Think of the implication of this. If you know Christ as your personal Savior and Lord, if you have come to him in faith, you qualify as a guide. Even the immoral Samaritan woman could serve as a guide for her village just moments after encountering Jesus. Read the account in John 4. If God can use her one-sentence, seven-word story ("He told me everything I ever did") to lead many villagers to faith (as seen in John 4:39), then he can use yours!

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Here is what is exciting about being a CoJourneyer. After you have explored the lives and experiences of others, they will naturally be interested in your story. Often they will turn the conversation and ask about you. After exploring the life and work of an Muslim nephrologist (that means I was learning a lot about kidneys and medicine), he asked about my work and ministry. After listening to an account of the religious education of a twenty-something on a plane, he asked, "So what's your story?" While exploring the experiences of a college student I just met on a

beach, he asked, “So, how did you get into all this?” This kind of response is common. But if a person doesn’t inquire about you, simply ask, “Can I share a little bit of my story?” Just remember, it is a little bit of your story. Few will want the full two-hour, cinematic version of your whole life experience (no matter how exciting you think it has been.) In fact, they probably won’t want the ten-minute version. Try the Samaritan woman’s model. She said it all with a sentence and an intriguing question (John 4:29). You may need to share a little more. But the point is, don’t get carried away.

The Gospel: Explain It Clearly

The most powerful tool is the gospel. It is “the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes...” (Romans 1:16). Being able to communicate it clearly and simply is essential. I’ve often used the three phrases of Romans 6:23 to conversationally communicate the gospel’s essence: 1. “For the wages of sin is death”; 2. “but the gift of God is eternal life”; 3. “in Christ Jesus our Lord.” I’ve also found a simple outline, like the one in the booklet *Would You Like to Know God Personally?* can be very helpful. It has everything you need to help many come to Christ. It guides the conversation, exposes our need, includes a clear explanation of why Jesus died for us, and provides an invitation to receive him as Savior and Lord through faith.

But how do you get started talking about the gospel? Easy—you ask permission.

But how do you get started talking about the gospel? Easy—you ask permission. Once you’ve explored and discovered some spiritual openness and have shared a bit of your own experience, simply ask, “Can I show you something that has really helped me understand this?” (Of course, you will modify that according to the situation.) If you are not in a setting where it’s appropriate to talk right then, add the key word “sometime.” It takes all the pressure off the moment. “Sometime I would love to show you something that has really helped me understand this. Would you be up for that?” Then you can get together for lunch, coffee, or some other preferred beverage and have a great conversation!

By the way, do you remember the fellow on the beach who asked me how I “got into all this?” After telling him a little of my story and exploring more of his, I asked if I could show him a simple outline that explains how we can have a personal relationship with Christ. He was interested; so I did. When I explained the prayer in the booklet, I asked, “What do you think would happen if you sincerely prayed this today?” He replied, “Well, let’s find out.” And so we did. What a privilege to be a guide, showing the way to Jesus!

The Builder Providing Bridges Over Spiritual Obstacles

Not every conversation will be so open. In fact, many people are stuck on their spiritual journey. To help these you have to be a builder before you can become a guide. Suppose you are on a journey and you encounter an obstacle, let’s say a river. What do you need to continue on in your travels? You need a bridge, of course. The same thing is true for people who have encountered obstacles on their spiritual journeys. They need help getting over and beyond the issues that hold them back. The builder’s role is to provide bridges over the obstacles that keep people from coming to Jesus.

There are many obstacles that keep people from coming to Christ or, for that matter, even considering him. Some are intellectual questions—“How can a good God allow evil?” Others involve emotional baggage and bad experiences—“I had religion crammed down my throat as a child.” On the surface they may sound quite different. But underneath all are spiritual issues; the enemy of our souls uses them to blind, bind and battle over the lives of the unbelieving. They must be dealt with using spiritual means. The two most important tools are *prayer* and *gentle persuasion*.

Never underestimate the power of prayer in the lives of those who are not yet believers. Tennyson said, “More things are wrought in prayer than this world ever dreams of.” You may offer a quick prayer on the spot asking God to give you wisdom to respond to their issue (Colossians 4:6). Or you may spend extended periods of time laboring in prayer for a gospel breakthrough to bring light and salvation to a loved one (Romans 10:1). A student prayer chain consistently prayed for my father’s salvation for three years before he came to faith in Christ.

Through prayer we speak to God about a person who is spiritually stuck. But then we speak to the person about God with gentle persuasion, as “Christ’s ambassador, as though God were making his appeal through us” (2 Corinthians 5:20). We don’t come against her trying to win a debate or prove her wrong; we come beside her to help her get over and beyond the issue. Gentle persuasion involves a careful mix of grace and truth. It is an appealing tone with which we share *God’s word* in a safe and loving manner, often using *personal experiences*, *insightful questions*, and *meaningful stories* to help a person think differently about the issues they are stuck on.

The Problem of Evil

Here are a few examples. Remember Robert, the French humanist who wanted his children to believe the gospel? I asked him, “So, what is it that keeps you from knowing this is true?” He revealed his obstacle—the same obstacle that has plagued

countless individuals who have grappled with life's pain and suffering. Robert expressed it this way, "Oh that is easy. It is suffering, but not suffering in general. It is the suffering of the children in the world. How can there be a good and loving God, who is powerful and in control, when children suffer so much in this world?"

In silence I prayed to the Lord, "How do I best answer Robert on this?" Then it came to me. It's our sin. Here is the essence of the conversation that followed.

"Robert, I don't want to minimize this issue. It is a significant question that many have wrestled with throughout the centuries. But I would say it is one of the reasons I believe this is true."

"Why is that?" he asked surprised.

I responded, "Think about it. Why do children suffer in the world today? Children starve. But is that because there is not enough food in the world? Or is there enough food but people don't distribute it to those who need it most?"

"Oh, there's enough food in the world," he replied.

"And children suffer as the result of wars. But who fights these wars? It's people, right? And children suffer abuse in families, but who makes up those families? People. The list could go on. But whatever the truth is, it must adequately explain how people, who can at times be so good to one another, can also be evil and cause children to suffer. Robert, as I have considered religions and philosophy, the only explanation I have ever found that adequately explains how you and I can be so good and yet at times so evil is this message."

His response? "Can we talk more about this?" The obstacle was bridged and the conversation moved beyond to other matters.

Religions: Many Paths to God

Another common obstacle is the view that all religions are basically the same. That was Jason's view. As we discussed life, belief and religion, Jason expressed it this way, "Though I don't know if there is a god or not, if there is, I am sure all religions would ultimately lead to him. They are all basically the same. So it doesn't matter which you would believe."

Here is how I responded, "Jason, you're saying that since all religions are basically the same, choosing one is a matter of personal preference. Ultimately it doesn't matter. In the end they all lead to the same place. Right?"

"Yes," he confirmed.

Trying to help Jason think through the implications of this, I said, "I'm not sure you really believe that. Can I show you why?"

"Okay."

"Take Christianity, for instance. I'm a Christian, but I don't think that all forms of Christianity are equally good. Think about it. Wouldn't you say there are forms of Christianity that

are positive, leading to good works and benefiting others? But there are also some forms that are abusive and actually do more harm than good? There are extremists and even cults, right?"

"Oh yes," Jason replied. He went on, "And you don't have to limit it to Christianity. The same is true with Islam. Look at what is happening in the Middle East, with the violence and bombings."

"So," I continued, "You really do believe that it makes a difference which religion you choose, because what you believe can lead to good or bad results. The question is how do you sort out the good from the bad? Or even more to the point, how do you determine the true from the false?"

Jason responded, "I hadn't thought of it like that." Of course, this didn't convince Jason that there was a God. But it did enable the conversation to continue on without the "obstacle" that it doesn't matter what you believe, it is just a matter of personal preference.

As a CoJourneyer, helping them along the way, a positive step in the process is to help them think differently about the issue.

What I have suggested in these examples is this: Many are unable (or unwilling) to consider the claims of Christ because of obstacles in their spiritual journey. As a CoJourneyer, helping them along the way, a positive step in the process is to help them think differently about the issue. This isn't to imply that we have everything figured out and are able to handle any objection. Rather, it suggests that we can have healthy conversations and discuss matters reasonably (as with Robert or Jason.) And, at times, through prayer and gentle persuasion this obstacle can be removed so the conversation can continue to other matters—more importantly, to who Jesus is and what has he done for us. As you develop your skills as a bridge builder, you will want to learn simple ways of helping people deal with other issues, like: the reliability of the Bible; the hypocrisy of the church; how good is good enough; etc.

The Mentor Encouraging Spiritual Growth

Spiritual journeys do not end when people come to Jesus. In fact, in the most important sense, they are just beginning. What do people need after they have come to Christ? Two of their greatest needs are: (1) to connect with a community of believers who will help them grow; (2) to learn the foundational truths of following Christ. You can think of these as relational connections and life concepts.

Relational Connections

There are three primary relational connections that new believers need. The first is *one-on-one*. They need a personal relationship with you or another believer who will encourage and guide them through the early stages of growth. That is, of course, the role of the mentor. But wise mentors don't do it alone. They know the importance for the new believer of developing a *small group* of believing friends with whom they can grow and experience their new life in Christ. And new believers need a *community* of faith to become a part of—to worship, learn, fellowship and pray with. These three body connections provide a relationally rich environment for spiritual growth filled with grace and truth. It's not hard to be a mentor for a younger believer. Spend time with them sharing what has helped you follow Christ. Introduce them to the friends with whom you fellowship and invite them to join you as you attend your community of faith.

Life Concepts

There are also life concepts that provide a solid foundation for the growth of the new believer. These include biblical concepts like:

1. How can I be sure of my salvation?
2. How can I experience God's love and forgiveness?
3. How can I be filled with the Spirit, walking in him moment by moment?
4. How do I pray?
5. How do I read God's Word?
6. What is the importance of fellowship?
7. How can I be an effective witness?

Life Concept discussion guides are available from CruPress and can provide the tracks for your mentoring of new believers.

But there is another group of believers you will discover through your exploring. These are the struggling believers. They have already come to Christ, but for a variety of different reasons, have become stuck and need help getting over the obstacles in their journey. The most helpful tool I use for helping these people is the *Satisfied?* booklet.

On a flight home, I had a conversation with a college student named Sean. As I explored Sean's life, I discovered that he had grown up in a Christian home and church and had accepted Christ as his Savior as a child. But when I asked about it, Sean admitted that he wasn't satisfied with his Christian life at this stage. As we talked through the contents of the *Satisfied?* booklet, he was at a turning point in his journey. We prayed together as Sean surrendered his life to the Lord, asking God to fill him with His Spirit. A few months later, a friend of mine asked if I had shared the *Satisfied?* booklet with a student from Rollins College on a plane. I knew he must be referring to Sean, so I asked him

how he knew about it. Sean had returned to school on fire for the Lord, gotten involved in the Campus Crusade ministry and was now being disciplined by my friend's son. How many "Seans" do you know—believers who are struggling or stuck in their spiritual journey?

Making the Most of Every Opportunity

Now that we have unpacked the principles, it is important to consider the opportunities you will have to be a CoJourneyer with others. The apostle Paul exhorts us in Colossians 4:5, "Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity." So what opportunities can you expect? Let me suggest three overlapping spheres of possibilities.

First, there will be individuals you know (or will get to know) for whom God gives you a special burden, normally a growing sense of spiritual responsibility. Keep an active and growing prayer list of these individuals. It takes nothing more than a special page in your quiet-time notebook or a three-by-five card in your Bible. My current list has a mixture of neighbors and relatives on it. Yours will no doubt include classmates or coworkers (unless, like me, you work for a Christian organization and are surrounded by believers). With these individuals you will be able to initiate appropriate conversations and extend an invitation to walk on spiritual paths together. Also, because of your relationship, you will have the benefits of time and repeated contact. So if you do "cojourn" together, you can traverse great distances spiritually.

A second set of opportunities will arise as divine appointments. These occur when God orchestrates circumstances so that you have an open door into the lives and spiritual journeys of individuals.

A second set of opportunities will arise as divine appointments. These occur when God orchestrates circumstances so that you have an open door into the lives and spiritual journeys of others. These may be people you have met casually (a doctor, barber, neighbor or coworker) or people you meet in your travels. At times you will even experience divine appointments among long-term relationships (friends and relatives). They are not people on your prayer list for whom you are expecting an opportunity to talk spiritually; rather they come about by God's planning.

Divine appointments can often be dramatic and exciting, as you see God clearly at work in lives and circumstances. They can occur anytime and anywhere, even when you least expect them. My wife and I had such an experience. It was the end of an ideal

day as Nanci and I were enjoying a hike in the Rocky Mountain National Park. We had planned to be in Colorado Springs to visit three families that day, but when all three engagements canceled, we headed to the mountains instead. Hiking as far as we could safely go on our day trip, Nanci and I were among the last on the trails as dusk approached. Suddenly a backpacker, hurrying down, overtook us.

A brief exchange on the trailside revealed that he had camped the night before, had climbed Longs Peak alone, and had intended to camp near some lakes above. But because of exhaustion, he had decided to come down our side of the mountain and head home for the night. (Do you see God's hand at work? Not only had our plans changed but so had his.) His car was parked on the other side of the mountains (about a forty-minute drive away). He went on ahead, and as we reached the bottom of the trailhead, he was sleeping on the side of the road. After offering to give him a ride to his car, we began a fascinating discussion. In it we discovered that he was not just backpacking; he, too, was on a spiritual journey.

Our questions revealed a great deal of common ground (note: I was being an explorer.) He was originally from Nebraska, our home state. Though he at first said he had no religious background, it came out that in college he had some exposure to the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, the very group through which I had come to know Christ. For the summer, he was living with his brother and sister-in-law. She was battling a cancerous brain tumor and it caused him to begin thinking deeply about life. A month earlier, I had been diagnosed with cancer. (Don't worry. My treatment was successful. I had a check-up yesterday and my doc says I'm still cancer-free.)

As our conversation progressed, I had the opportunity to share my story, including how my relationship with God was influencing my cancer journey. (Note: I was now a guide.) We discovered that he had tried reading the Bible but was stuck in the Old Testament (of course.) As Nanci and I shared the gospel conversationally, he commented that it had never been explained so clearly to him before. It made sense and was what he desired. But he wasn't ready to receive Christ. This was a big decision and he needed time to think about it. A week later he sent the following e-mail:

I have thought a lot about accepting Christ in my life, and I decided that life is too tough not to have someone in my corner. So I have accepted him in my life and have been walking around with a sense of "quiet confidence." I want to thank you for the ride and opening up to me and letting me open up to you. It wasn't just a coincidence we met on that trail.

Indeed it wasn't a coincidence. It was a divine appointment. A final group of opportunities will come through intentional

outreach. As you are involved with your local church or campus ministry, you may identify a group of people to help reach for Christ. This could be students at your school or young professionals. It may be with your local church's outreach to the needy. The opportunities are endless for those who seek them.

The Adventure Continues

Well, there you have it—an overview of the CoJourney roles and principles. There are plenty of other resources available to help equip and encourage you as you move ahead. As you do, you will discover that nothing is as rewarding as seeing God use you to help another person come to Christ. At Thanksgiving a couple of years ago, I received an e-mail from a software engineer from Boston. In it he wrote,

"I can't believe that it is almost Thanksgiving, and as the day approaches I look back on all the things I have to be thankful for this year. Tops on my list is the not so "chance meeting" we had on the airplane. I believe that God seated you next to me to let me know that the door was open to come back to Him, and that Jesus' hand was always there to welcome me... I just want to say THANKS for helping to lead me back to Jesus."

Remember: Everyone is on a spiritual journey. God is already at work and he wants to use you. That is what it means to be a CoJourneyer!

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CoJourners Outline

Introduction

- A. Everyone is on a spiritual journey.
- B. God is at work. (Matt. 9:37-38; Acts 17:26-27; John 16:7-11)
- C. He wants to use you. (1 Corinthians 3:9)
- D. There are four roles: Explorer, Guide, Builder and Mentor.

I. An Explorer – Discovering Spiritual Journeys

- A. Listening Carefully
 - 1. For windows of the soul.
 - 2. For common ground.
 - 3. For unmet needs
 - 4. For traces of the Spirit

B. Asking Questions

- 1. Exploring past experiences
- 2. Exploring present attitudes
- 3. Exploring future desires

II. A Guide – Showing the Way to Jesus

A. Inviting into Christian community

B. Sharing your life story

C. Explaining the gospel

- 1. With a verse – Romans 6:23
- 2. With outline (*Would You Like to Know God Personally?*)

III. A Builder – Helping Over and Beyond Obstacles

A. Prayer

B. Gentle Persuasion

- 1. Word of God
- 2. Personal Experiences
- 3. Insightful Questions
- 4. Meaningful Stories

IV. A Mentor – Encouraging Spiritual Growth

A. Relational Connections

- 1. One-on-one
- 2. A small group of believing friends
- 3. A community of faith

B. Life Concepts

- 1. Assurance
- 2. God's Love and Forgiveness
- 3. The Filling of the Spirit
- 4. Walking in the Spirit
- 5. Prayer
- 6. God's Word
- 7. Fellowship
- 8. Witness

Conclusion – Making the Most of Every Opportunity

- A. With priority people on your prayer list
- B. With divine appointments
- C. In strategic outreach

CoJourney Questions for Discussion or Reflection

1. What difference does the truth that “everyone is on a spiritual journey” make to your view of witnessing?
2. Why do we so easily forget that every person is on a spiritual journey?
3. How does each of the following verses affect your confidence in witnessing? Matthews 9:37-38; Acts 17:26-27; John 16:7-11.
4. What do you fear most in witnessing? How does having a relationally appropriate style for witness ease your fears?
5. What is a window of the soul? How do you explore deeper when you recognize one in conversation?
6. What are common unmet needs in lives of those who do not yet believe? How does Christ relate to each of these?
7. What questions have you found most helpful in exploring the spiritual journeys of others?
8. Why are healthy Christian communities attractive and helpful to spiritual seekers?
9. Share the essence of your encounter or experience with Christ in two or three sentences. Would this be an attractive or intriguing statement to someone who is spiritually open?
10. What is your most effective way of communicating the essence of the gospel to someone who is spiritually open? Do you feel the need for additional help or training?
11. Brainstorm a list of obstacles that keep people from coming to or even considering Christ.
12. What do you think are the three or four most common obstacles? How would you help someone who is stuck think differently about each of these?
13. Who is on your prayer list as individuals yet to come to Christ? What obstacles appear to keep them from Christ? Pray about each.
14. How did other believers (individually or as a group) play a significant role in your early days of following Jesus?
15. Identify a key Bible passage for each of the seven life concepts listed in this CoJourney article. What other life concepts and key verses would you add to the list?

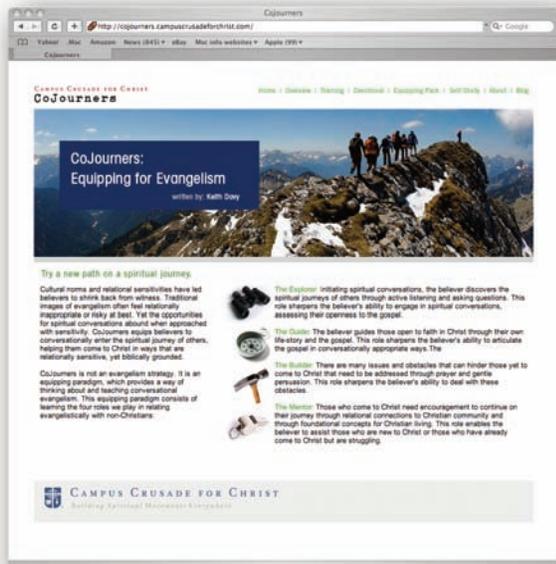
CoJourney Resource Options

The growing family of CoJourney resources exists for two purposes:

1. To encourage and equip you to be more effective for conversational witness in an approach appropriate to today's culture.
2. To enable you to encourage and equip others through readily available, economical (that means, cheap or free) and easily transferable concepts and resources.

CoJourney Website

Your first stop in exploring additional CoJourners resources is the website: www.cojourners.org. There you will find additional perspectives and principles, training resources, access to a devotional and small group discussions, a Bible study on developing a biblical philosophy of evangelism and, of course, a blog. All resources on the site are free for use and download. Just go to: www.cojourners.org



The CoJourney Training Sessions

Group training in CoJourney concepts can be adapted to a variety of settings. Many use a one-session overview to introduce CoJourney concepts. It is essentially the content found in this introduction. A more complete five-session training is the primary training format. While the sessions can be delivered in a weekend conference, the five-week format makes an ideal outreach emphasis month. Teaching notes, note-taking outlines and an adaptable PowerPoint are all free and available at www.cojourners.org. The sessions include:

The sessions include:

1. The Overview
2. The Explorer
3. The Guide
4. The Builder
5. The Mentor

CoJourney Passages: A Devotional Journey

For personal use, the 28-day CoJourney Passages: A Devotional Journey is an ideal quiet time supplement to help foster a heart for evangelism while taking small, biblically based steps of application. For groups, the devotional can introduce the CoJourney concepts as a stand-alone tool or reinforce the concepts when used in conjunction with the training sessions. In a five-week session, the devotionals are designed to prepare for the following week's content. They are also an ideal discipleship tool to reinforce training in evangelism. Each week provides motivation, prayer and devotional thoughts related to a CoJourney role:

- Week 1 – The Explorer
- Week 2 – The Guide
- Week 3 – The Builder
- Week 4 – The Mentor

The CoJourney Devotional is published by CruPress and can be purchased at: www.crupress.com



CoJourney Equipment Pack

The CoJourney Equipment Pack provides twenty 8-12 minute discussions for small groups, encouraging an outward-focused lifestyle and reinforcing (or introducing) the CoJourney concepts. Each discussion includes personal applications with small steps of witness, primarily focused on acquaintances. The equipment pack is composed of five sets of cards that address:

- 1.1-1.4 – Heart Motivation
 - 2.1-2.4 – The Role of the Explorer
 - 3.1-3.4 – The Role of the Guide
 - 4.1-4.4 – The Role of the Builder
 - 5.1-5.4 – The Role of the Mentor
- (Coming soon: the Equipment Pack is being reprinted in an economical booklet format.)

The CoJourney Equipment Pack is published by CruPress and can be purchased at: www.crupress.com



CoJourners: A Transferable Concept

If you found this article helpful you can use it to equip and train your Bible study, church or ministry for more effective personal witness. This article, the CoJourners Prospectus, is available in packs of 50 and can be ordered at www.crupress.com



Additional Resources

Visit: www.cojourners.org or www.cojourner.blogspot.com. An “encyclopedia of CoJourneyer thought” for Campus Crusade staff members is growing at wiki.uscm.org. (In the search function, enter: CoJourners.) Also, a “CoJourners User Group” has been launched on Facebook. Search for CoJourners User Group.

All resources can be purchased by going to www.crupress.com