



Growing Maturity in Community

Maturity is reaching our God-given potential for our age and stage in life, an increasing ability to maintain a relationally stable, loving, life-giving identity in ever more complex situations, particularly in a community.

Maturity grows best with our community because we need the modeling of those who are further along. Maturity can't be grown in solitude. We are referring to this as a pilgrimage because growth into maturity is a journey toward a sacred place – in this case, the place of living as the people God created us to be, the place of Heaven on Earth, the Kingdom of God. . . .

- Members are able to consider the needs of others as well as their own, looking for mutual satisfaction (or the least harmful solution when mutual satisfaction isn't reached),
- Members see themselves and others from God's perspective, and help each other seek His perspective when it's missing,
- Weaknesses are treated tenderly, but are addressed when they impact the group,
- Members are gentle protectors with each other, learning to move away from predator and possum behaviors¹,
- Members are learning the wisdom and skill to carry their own load and carry each other's burdens, and which is appropriate in a given situation,
- Members help each other navigate difficult emotions and situations, without being pulled into codependency or fixing each other, and
- There is a strong, Christlike group identity, and members encourage each other to grow into this identity,
- When several members in a group have adult maturity, challenges are faced with truth and love, and every member has the best chance of filling their own maturity gaps, and moving into consistent adult maturity.

¹ Learn more about protectors, possums, and predators in Level 1 Journey Group curriculum and in *Joy Starts Here*, by Wilder, Coursey, Khouri, and Sutton.

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Recently, as we interacted with Immanuel in our leadership community about how He sees us with our maturity gaps, I gently lamented with Him about my gaps, even as I'm leading in a fairly public way. What I sensed from Him was that He loved that I was transparently, authentically leading with my maturity, but acknowledging my gaps, being transparent about my growth edges. I sensed something like, "Amy, I want you to *normalize leading with gaps, because every one of you is doing it.*" When leading with maturity gaps is normalized, we can seek mentors who can walk with us and model what it is like to grow in maturity in the midst of life.

This transparency and authenticity, sharing our maturity gaps and stories of our maturity growth through the years, serves our community, and invites others to speak to what they are seeing in us, whether it is helpful or a hindrance, a strength or a weakness. Transparency and authenticity around maturity might have helped prevent some of the great failures and implosions we have seen in churches and families in our lifetimes.

We invite you to join us in the Alive & Well Leadership Community, where we are growing in maturity together. Learn more [HERE](#)