

Why focus on emotions in healing God image?

To discern whether interior movements come from God

A. *Why awareness of thoughts won't work by itself*

Ignatius discovered that ideas by themselves are exciting, engaging – regardless of their spiritual quality. That is why we must turn our attention to the feelings that remain with us in the wake of ideas. Only then can we discern whether we are truly in communication with God.

B. *Why are projections onto God painful—emotionally -- for us? (desolation)*

Why does communication with the real God feel good? (consolation)

“We experience desolating inner movements when a part of ourselves contrasts with God’s life. On the other hand, we experience consoling motions when our desires and inner being are congruent with God.” (Maureen Conroy, The Discerning Heart, p. 19)

We experience a kind of “affective dissonance” when our projections lead us to doubt that we are constantly in loving, intimate relationship with God. The disconnect between our image of God and who God really is – which we sense deep inside -- leads to agitation, dryness in prayer, and dissatisfaction if not outright pain.

C. *Since repressing emotions is counter-productive, how can we best deal with the emotional content of projections?*

Ignatius’s 3 steps for working with emotions / interior movements:

- * Be aware
- * Understand
- * Take action

(Timothy Gallagher, Discernment of Spirits, p. 17-26)

These steps parallel the modern theory of *emotional intelligence*: *

- * Monitor one's own feelings & emotions
- * Discriminate among them
- * Use this information to guide thinking & actions

(as defined by Peter Salovey and John D. Mayer, 1990)