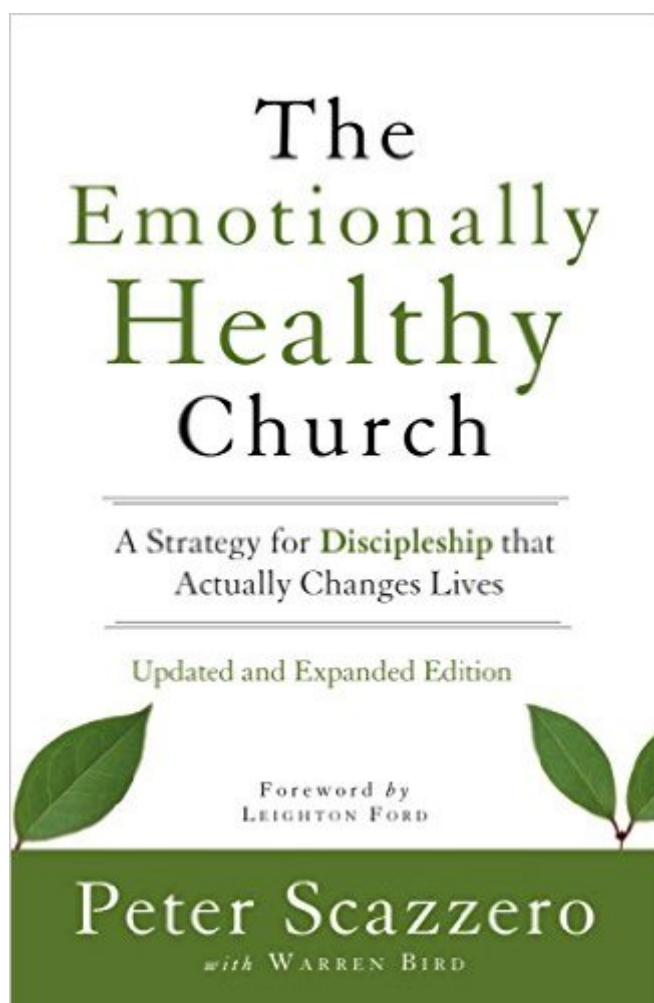


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# The Emotionally Healthy Church, Updated And Expanded Edition: A Strategy For Discipleship That Actually Changes Lives



## Synopsis

The Emotionally Healthy Church, Expanded Edition, the newly updated and expanded edition of the groundbreaking bestseller *The Emotionally Healthy Church*, features a fuller, deeper look at the six principles contained in the original and includes a crucial, additional chapter: *Slow Down to Lead with Integrity*. New Life Fellowship in Queens, New York, had it all: powerful teaching, dynamic ministries, an impressive growth rate, and a vision to do great works for God. Things looked good—but beneath the surface, circumstances were more than just brewing. They were about to boil over, forcing Peter Scazzero to confront needs in his church and himself that went deeper than he'd ever imagined. What he learned about the vital link between emotional health, relational depth, and spiritual maturity can shed new light on painful problems in your own church. In this revised and expanded edition of his Gold Medallion Award-winning book, Scazzero shares refreshing new insights and a different and challenging slant on what it takes to lead your congregation to wholeness and maturity in Christ. Our churches are in trouble, says Scazzero. They are filled with people who are: unsure how to biblically integrate anger, sadness, and other emotions; defensive, incapable of revealing their weaknesses; threatened by or intolerant of different viewpoints; zealous about ministering at church but blind to their spouses' loneliness at home; so involved in "serving" that they fail to take care of themselves; prone to withdraw from conflict rather than resolve it. Sharing from New Life Fellowship's painful but liberating journey, Scazzero reveals exactly how the truth can and does make you free—not just superficially, but deep down. This expanded edition of *The Emotionally Healthy Church* not only takes the original six principles further and deeper, but also adds a seventh crucial principle. You'll acquire knowledge and tools that can help you and others: look beneath the surface of problems; break the power of past wounds, failures, sins, and circumstances; live a life of brokenness and vulnerability; recognize and honor personal limitations and boundaries; embrace grief and loss; make incarnation your model to love others; slow down to lead with integrity. This new edition shares powerful insights on how contemplative spirituality can help you and your church slow down—an integral key to spiritual and emotional health. *The Emotionally Healthy Church, Expanded Edition* includes story after story of people at New Life whose lives have been changed by the concepts in this book. Open these pages and find out how your church can turn a new corner on the road to spiritual maturity.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

**PREMISE:** Too many of our churches are led by people who claim spiritual maturity, but lack the ability to live godly lives because of their emotional immaturity. Now . . . do we know anyone like that?!?  
**PLAN:** We must (starting with the leaders) grow in emotional maturity. Here are the basic steps . . . 1) We must look below the surface of our lives, 2) We must come to grips with the scars from our past, 3) We must learn to be honest about our brokenness and become vulnerable. (I have noticed that those Christians I most admire have the ability to be open and honest about their lives.), 4) We must learn how to say, "No" and follow God rather than be pushed around by others, 5) We must not run from the pain of life, but rather embrace it and learn to grow through pain, 6) We must take the lessons we have learned and step into incarnational ministry as Jesus did.  
**POSITIVES:** The author writes from personal experience. After many years of seemingly successful ministry as a pastor with a rapidly growing church plant and invitations to speak in a growing number of seminars across the country he finds himself with a crumbling marriage and a major church split when one of his staff defects and starts a new rival ministry. The pain of this experience woven through the pages of the book lend an air of credibility to the message.  
**PROBLEMS:** There aren't many. The author's mix of counseling techniques and spiritual formation could cause the reader to raise his or her eyebrows, but I don't consider this much of a problem. I like to be challenged by what I read. The author waxes and wanes hot and cold in a place or two. I liked some chapters better than others, but that's normal for me.

Scazzero's thesis is that the emotional health and spiritual health of a Christian are inseparable. The

discipleship model of the church must nurture emotional growth in order to foster true spiritual maturity. Scazzero suggests six principles in building an emotionally healthy church: (1) Look beneath the iceberg; (2) Break the power of the past; (3) Live in brokenness and vulnerability; (4) Receive the gift of limits; (5) Embrace grieving and loss; and (6) Make incarnation the model of loving well. One benefit of this book is that Scazzero has integrated various topics of emotional health and Christian spirituality into a single volume, providing the backbone for a comprehensive discipleship course on emotional health. Daniel Coleman pioneered emotional intelligence. Edwin Friedman and Ronald Richardson developed family systems theory. Henri Nouwen wrote *The Wounded Healer*. Henry Cloud and John Townsend advocated boundaries. Parker Palmer relates vocational discernment and accepting limits. Jerry Sittster and Nicholas Wolterstorff shared how God may be doing soul work through experiences of grief and loss. Numerous experts have talked about listening skills, self-differentiation, and empathy. Scazzero's contribution is in pulling these resources together; weaving them masterfully into a coherent work; and providing compelling reasons why this work is important for the emotional health of the church. A second benefit is that Scazzero has taken an evangelical approach by making a noble attempt to build his six principles on biblical foundations. For example, Scazzero takes the secular Emotional Intelligence material and slips a theology of grace underneath. The Gospel provides the motivation, power, and security for us to look beneath the surface (principle 1).

The *Emotionally Healthy Church* effectively addresses an overlooked need in the North American Church. Although the premise that emotional health and spiritual health must be wholly integrated is not a new concept, it certainly has been a neglected truth in the past few decades. The result of such neglect has sabotaged our effectiveness in producing healthy disciples, and healthy churches. Since our current approach to discipleship has failed to bear the fruit of genuinely "mature" followers of Christ, perhaps this book has been prophetically written for "such a time as this." Mr. Scazzero's six principles for bringing about an emotionally healthy discipleship are passionately written from the perspective of one who has personally been struggling with these issues, who has now found a way to recognize (and consequently help his readers to recognize) the unaddressed/unmet needs of our emotional/inner life. He can then reveal to us the appropriate steps to be taken in finding the pathway to wholeness. The fact that the author has struggled in such a personal way assures the reader that this is not just another theoretical approach to church health/growth. Although this book is very helpful and insightful, I personally found it lacking in laying out a clear strategy for discipleship. The author did give examples of people who were addressed in specific areas of

weakness, but failed to outline how the disciplinary/recovery plan was implemented with the kind of detail that would help other pastors deal with similar situations. I would like to have seen a detailed outline of the use of leadership and people skills in addressing the issues with the lives of his staff members and parishioners. The Body of Christ is both organic and institutional.

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