

# Connexus FAQ's

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## *For the newbie*

### **Q. Where do I start?**

A. Connexus begins with a simple but paradigm shifting book study of the book Joy Starts Here: the transformation zone.

### **Q. Why does Connexus emphasize joy so much?**

A. Recent advances in neuroscience emphasize the importance of joy for a brain that is healthy. Joy helps the brain develop in ways that are life giving, and joyful relationships help the brain learn to regulate important neurotransmitters such as dopamine. Joyful relationships are also necessary to help the brain learn to handle negative emotions, and develop a secure, healthy identity. Joy gives us the strength we need!

### **Q. Do I need training to run a Joy Starts Here study?**

A. No! The book is laid out to make it easy for you and your small group to go through it together without any former knowledge of our theories or products!

### **Q. I'm reading Joy Starts Here and now I want to get my church interested in embracing the rest of Connexus. How do I do that?**

A. Share this video (insert link) with your pastor and/or consider purchasing a Student License of Restarting and Forming. You can also attend a Pastor's Weekly Symposium and invite your pastor or other "purchasing agent" to join you to this FREE resource that will help you see how to get started with the REST of Connexus.

### **Q. What comes after Joy Starts Here? Restarting or Forming?**

A. Both! In an ideal Connexus program, a church would be hosting both Restarting and Forming groups simultaneously. The assessments in Joy Starts Here should help each participant recognize which group they fit best in. Connexus was built to bring together the "weak and the strong", but at this phase, they will be ministered to in different manners. After a 12 week semester of running both Restarting and Forming, then all the participants from both groups will join together in Belonging for an additional 12 week semester.

### **Q. I just want to watch the videos for myself at home, is that okay?**

A. Yes, that's okay. You can also buy a Quick Start student license and go through it at home. Like I answered in the question above, you don't have to complete the training if you don't want to. Only people who are completing the training will be listed as a group leader on our website and be able to receive discounts on the workbooks. If you choose to invite people into your home to watch the videos,

that is your prerogative, but please don't consider yourself a facilitator or advertise your time as a "group". In order to maintain the integrity of our program, we will only list groups with trained facilitators on our website.

**Q. What about "Thriving: Recover Your Life"? Is that the same thing?**

A. Our program was initially called Thriving: Recover Your Life, but as we grew and matured, we realized that we needed a starting point for the program that would "introduce" us more effectively to the entire church community. When we wrote the book Joy Starts Here, we changed the name to "Connexus for a thriving community" to better encompass what we truly want to accomplish. Our goal is not just about "recovery" but about growing in joy in community- so that joy becomes a self-propagating transformational route of maturity.

**Q. Why does Connexus talk so much about Brain Science and Brain Training?**

A. Trauma and addictions both impair the brain's structure and function, and make it much harder for us to cooperate with the direction of God for our lives – and to live out the desires that God places in our hearts. New advances in brain science are helping us better understand how the brain develops and works, so that we can cooperate with God's healing process more fully. Trying to cooperate with the spirit of God when our brain's structure and function is impaired is a lot like trying to wave at a friend when the muscles in your arm are damaged, torn or atrophied. You may strongly desire to wave – but if your muscles are damaged and unable to cooperate, you won't be able to follow through! Likewise, the brain is the physical organ in our body that is needed to cooperate with the flow of God's spirit in our lives. Following the direction of the Spirit in our lives, and living from the Heart that Jesus gave us requires a brain that is healthy enough to cooperate with His leadership. In Connexus, brain training does not replace the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives. Connexus teaches brain training exercises that help our brain heal, and learn important relational skills that can help us develop more joyful relationships with God and others. Prayer exercises help us learn to experience the presence of Jesus and learn to hear His voice in the Scriptures. Both brain training and prayer exercises help us cooperate more fully with His work in our lives, and develop relationships with Him and others that are rooted in joy!

**Q. I still get confused about Life Model, THRIVE, Thriving, Connexus, Joy Starts Here, etc.... are they all the same?**

A. This is a very popular question, and honestly it was this question that prompted us to write Joy Starts Here. If joy means relationship (one of our core beliefs) then you need to understand that much of what we do is built in relationship as well. Dr. Jim Wilder and Chris Coursey developed THRIVE training which helps people in bonded pairs build their joy skills over the course of 3 years of week-long retreats and daily practice at home. Dr. Jim Wilder and Ed Khouri developed Thriving (now called Connexus) to help bring training of these same joy skills to a church and community where people may or may not have bonded partners to work with on a daily basis. These groups are done locally on a weekly basis with daily at home practice as well. All 3 of these men, along with Shelia Sutton came together to write the book Joy Starts Here: the transformation zone to help inform, inspire, and spur individuals to join

together and become aware of joy skills that they may not have understood their need for in the past. We aren't kidding when we say Joy Starts Here! This revolutionary book is where all of it begins..... Even though it was the most recently written item! All of these come together under the parent umbrella of Life Model Works (previously named Shepherd's House)

**Q. I heard that Restarting was for addicts and Forming was for discipleship. Is this accurate?**

A. This statement is very misleading. Restarting might have language that addicts understand easily, but it's not intended just for addicts. Restarting is meant for people who have grown up in, or live in low joy environments. It's for people who feel that life is not as joyful as they want it to be. Restarting will help you build joy skills and gentle protector skills more intentionally than any other place! It will help you jump start joy based relationships with God and others that we need to change. Restarting will address issues that stem from low joy environments such as: addictions, trauma, abuse, and painful relationships. Forming is meant for people who have high joy levels and many of the 19 joy skills. Forming is all about how grace changes you as you connect with Jesus from the inside out. Even high joy people aren't perfect and they can still continue in the transformation zone with Forming. We need people in BOTH in order to come together in the Transformation Zone in Belonging.

**Q. How does Connexus address the Biblical concepts of “renewing the mind” and “taking every thought captive to Christ?”**

A. The phrase “Renewal of the Mind” is found in Romans 12:2 which reads, “Do not be conformed any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will” (NIV). Likewise, II Cor 10:4-5 states, “The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ” (NIV). Both of these scriptures contain powerful truths that are foundational for the Christian life. We are transformed as our minds are renewed, and as we learn to take every thought captive and obedient to Christ.

One of the most exciting aspects of Connexus are the innovative approaches to learning to “renew our minds” and “take our thoughts captive” that are contained in the inner healing and joy/relationship building exercises in each weekly lesson. Connexus teaches simple, foundational exercises that help build brain skills that are essential for participants to build more joyful, secure relationships with God and others. Connexus also provides participants the opportunity to learn and practice simple prayer exercises that help them learn to listen to God directly, and through the scriptures.

Connexus exercises that help train the brain for joy and relationship are included in each weekly lesson. One series of Restarting exercises teaches participants to share stories about moments in which they feel genuine appreciation for God and others. Another series of exercises teach a participant to tell stories about a moment in which they felt connections with God or others that were joyful – and helps them learn to return to joy from negative emotions by staying connected to God and others. Still other exercises help participants learn to quiet themselves and rest – even when they are upset. These simple, relational brain training exercises actually help train regions of the brain that help govern our emotions, motivations and perceptions – areas that are typically not trained through didactic learning or instruction. Experience has demonstrated that these exercises are extremely helpful in preparing hurting people – or those who are beginning/re-starting a relationship with Jesus, to begin to hear Him.

Teaching participants to learn to listen to God is another foundational aspect of “renewing the mind” and “taking thoughts captive” that is at the heart of Restarting. In the “Immanuel Process” participants discover that Jesus is truly always with them – in the joyful and in the painful moments of life. They learn that Jesus desires to have a moment-by-moment, intimate relationship with them that affects every area of life. They experience the love of God when Jesus helps bear burdens that are too heavy to bear alone – and discover the joy of His transforming presence. Participants also learn to encounter Jesus in the pages of scripture, as they dialogue with Jesus about His word, and learn to journal their impressions. This type of brain training helps transform participants at the deepest level of their being.

Through the entire Connexus program, participants learn to “renew the mind” and “take thoughts captive” in the context of dynamic and interactive relationships with Jesus and others. Through their interactions, they are able to learn and practice the joy, relationship and inner healing exercises that transform them at the deepest level possible – a level that traditional methods and techniques fail to reach. In the context of joyful relationships with God and others, participants are able to build the brain and maturity skills that are radically transformational! Their lives and relationships with God and others truly are thriving!

**Q. What is the transformation zone and how does Connexus accomplish getting us there?**

A. The Transformation zone has 3 main elements. The weak and strong are together and interacting, tender regard for weakness is the rule, and Immanuel Shalom maintains peace. Connexus is specifically designed to create this environment. While in Restarting and in Forming, participants will learn to have tender responses to their own weaknesses as well as the weaknesses of others and they will begin to experience Immanuel, God with Us, and learn what His shalom looks and feels like. Then, both groups will come together to interact in Belonging, completing the Transformation Zone! Connexus is the only program designed with all 3 of these transforming elements in mind!

**Q. I just found out about this and my church is already in the middle of running groups. Can I join at any time?**

A. It depends. If your church is a few weeks into reading Joy Starts Here and you’re a quick reader, you might be fine with jumping right in and catching up.

If your church finished Joy Starts Here and is running Restarting and Forming, they are open groups that is designed for new members to join at any time. Even if you miss the first few sessions, you are welcome to become part of a Restarting or Forming group. The weekly notes and chapter overviews will help you catch up on the lessons you've missed, and each weekly DVD lesson reviews important concepts from earlier lessons. Please be aware, however, that some of the exercises in later sessions can be a bit more challenging if you have missed the earlier training. If you find that to be the case, be sure to take Restarting or Forming when it is offered again so that you can benefit from all that they has to offer.

We do put one limitation on "joining at any time".... If you haven't been through Restarting or Forming, you shouldn't move on to Belonging. Belonging is designed as a sequential course and you will need the joy skills taught in Restarting and Forming in order to be successful in Belonging.

**Q. Can I practice the joy and relationship building exercises that I learn at Connexus at home with my spouse even if he/she doesn't join me at the groups?**

A. Yes! The joy and relationship building exercises you learn at Connexus are an excellent way to build bonds with your spouse. The Joy Starts Here book has exercises for you to do "at home". The Restarting workbook has detailed instructions for each exercise that you will do in class, and can help you and your partner practice the exercises together outside of class.

**Q. What if my spouse is not a church goer, or is stuck in addictions and not wanting to change. Can I still benefit from Connexus?**

A. Even if your spouse doesn't attend – or is still active in their addiction – your life can begin to change as you build joy and learn new relationship building skills at Connexus. If your spouse or family member is active in their addiction, it is especially important for you to begin your own recovery by building joyful relationships with God and others at Connexus who are glad to be with you. Weekly Connexus groups offer the opportunity to learn and practice new joy and relationship building skills in small groups of 3-5 people, and this allows you to begin building joy with others – even if your spouse is not with you.

**Q. Why does Restarting have 12 Step questions in it?**

A. Each weekly Restarting DVD lesson and each workbook chapter contain specific application of the 12 Steps to weekly Restarting material. While Restarting is not a 12 Step group, Restarting recognizes the unique value of 12 Step principles as they apply to recovery from a variety of life controlling problems and addictions. Restarting is a solution-centered recovering community that is centered in joy – and joyful relationships. Joy adds a dimension to recovery – and recovery communities – that empowers a dynamic recovery. We included the 12 Step references for the benefit of people who are attending Connexus as part of their recovery journey.

**Q. What is the Immanuel Process?**

A. The Immanuel Process is an important part of Connexus. The Immanuel Process is an exercise in which participants learn to experience the presence of Jesus at deeper levels of life. Learning to

perceive the presence of Jesus – who is always with us – helps us build joy and helps us develop a stronger attachment to Jesus. In Connexus, participants will learn simple exercises that help them perceive the presence of Jesus in prayer and the scriptures. Participants will also have the opportunity to learn exercises that help them experience the presence of Jesus in areas of life that have not felt peaceful. This helps us begin to heal from attachment pain and traumas that have fueled unhealthy attachments to BEEPS.

The Immanuel Process was developed by Dr. Karl and Charlotte Lehman and applied to groups by Dr. Jim Wilder. Examples of the Immanuel process are available in numerous videos from Dr. Lehman and you can see short examples on YouTube.

**Q. What are BEEPS?**

A. BEEPS are attachments to Behaviors, Events, Experiences, People or Substances (BEEPS) that are used to regulate emotions, increase pleasure or decrease pain. BEEPS are important, because they mimic the neurochemical processes associated with genuine joy. When the brain learns to rely on BEEPS – and not the genuine joy that is produced by authentic relationships with God and others – the brain is hijacked by BEEPS. This means that BEEPS gradually assume increasing levels of control in our lives, and take us places that we never wanted to go. You will learn much more about BEEPS in Restarting.

**Q. Does everyone in Connexus need a book/workbook?**

A. Yes, it is best if each member has a book/workbook. This will make it much easier for everyone to learn the joy and relationship building exercises and the teaching notes in the workbook will make it much easier to follow the weekly DVD lesson once you are in Restarting, Forming or Belonging. Couples are welcome to share a workbook, but may find that they want the privacy gained from having their own individual workbook when it comes time to answer questions.

**Q. All the videos and stuff still say Thriving: Recover Your Life? Is my group still affiliated with you?**

A. Yes, we are still in the process of changing all of our videos, covers, books and products to showcase the new name. This will take some time to complete. For now, when you buy a Connexus item, or attend a Connexus group, it may still have the old logos featured. Rest assured, you are in the right place, it just has the old name on it! 😊

*For the “new leader”*

**Q. I want to be a group facilitator; can you explain how to do that?**

A. Sure, for any given Connexus module, you will need to obtain a Student License. There are 2 different payment options for our student license, but they both will accomplish the same thing for you and your church. We want our facilitators to be well trained and to have the support they need. We have redesigned our training system to be more ongoing and interactive with the creators of the program.

With our Student License, you will be able to start your groups quickly and get your training week by week. We require that at least 1 person (*the Quick Start requires 2 people*) attend 2 Connexus Overview Trainings online. The purpose of these trainings is to help YOU understand Connexus better than anyone! Here you will meet in a webinar (we call them JOYStreams) with Ed Khouri, author and co-creator of Connexus; and Jim Martini, CEO Life Model Works and get tips for starting your group and making it successful. After that, you will be required to attend the 12 WEEKLY trainings specific to your module. You might view some of these in recorded format, and you might catch LIVE sessions along the way as well. (We ask that you only lead sessions that you have attended trainings for). We will also have frequent LIVE Q&A sessions just for those of you who watched them in recorded format. We will also ask that you attend a THRIVE training. The reason for this is that we believe strongly that as a facilitator, you should be building your own maturity and joy skills in a more advanced way than those you are leading.

**Q. That sounds like a lot of training! How much is this all going to cost me and my church?**

A. Because we want you to succeed we've made our licensing system much more affordable AND we encourage you to charge your participants in order to recover your costs! The PREPAID option includes all the necessary training fees and costs \$899. The Quick Start option is only \$99 and then you purchase your weekly trainings as you go along. You can spread out the training fees over time and run your groups at a fee the whole time! (All we ask is that you take the weeks training prior to running that week in your group. ie: Attend Week 1 Restarting prior to running Week 1 Restarting etc...)

**Q. How do I find out about the weekly trainings?**

A. When we have your license paperwork back in hand, we will send you an email invitation to purchase (or attend) your required training. Make sure you keep your email information up to date with us!

**Q. What happens if I don't do all the training?**

A. We aren't going to be the "Connexus Police" and hunt you down for not completing the training. However only those who complete the training are eligible for BOOK STORE discounts! Once you complete your training, you can order workbooks for your groups at a reduced price. You will also be listed on our website and map as a trained facilitator. This will drive more participants to your location and increase your profits using the program. Building community with Connexus is much easier when you're following through with all the training.

**Q. Why do I need all this training? Can't I just run the videos and lead my group that way?**

A. We want your participants to grow in joy and become a part of a thriving community. In order to ensure that everyone who uses Connexus is getting optimal results, we need to make sure that you, the facilitator, fully understands the concepts we are teaching, and the techniques we are using in the exercises. Since we have such a heavy focus on exercises and activities, not just "information", it's important for you to be trained in how to lead those exercises and activities properly. We want the groups around the world to be run the same way, so that when "Sally" from Florida recommends

Connexus to her friend in Oregon, she can be confident that she is sending her friend to a group that will produce the same thriving community.

**Q. I think my church only wants to do Forming, (or Restarting, or Belonging) is that allowed?**

A. Connexus is meant to create the Transformation Zone for your community. If you only participate in one phase of it, then you will not be in the transformation zone. Running only one module of Connexus may leave your participants feeling like they are missing something and will probably not deliver the “thriving community” they are looking for. Please read the answer to the question about the Transformation Zone above.

**Q. All my videos and stuff still say Thriving: Recover Your Life? Do I have the right product?**

A. Yes, we are still in the process of changing all of our videos, covers, books and products to showcase the new name. This will take some time to complete. For now, when you buy a Connexus item, it may still have the old logos featured. Rest assured, you are getting the right thing, it just has the old name on it! 😊

*For the “existing leader”*

**Q. I bought an Open Group License under the Thriving: Recover Your Life agreements. What does this new system mean to me?**

A. Under the old licensing agreement, you are free to maintain those parameters. Keep in mind that the Open Group License prohibits you from charging participants. If you would like to transfer into the new licensing agreement please email [deni@lifemodelworks.com](mailto:deni@lifemodelworks.com) for information on how to do that. You may need to complete some (if not all) of the online training, which is determined on a case by case basis. We highly recommend that you attend at least the new “Connexus Overview Training” to help you better understand the complete format.

**Q. I bought an IT license for Restarting. How does this impact me?**

A. Because the IT license was a renewable 2 year license, if you are ready to renew your license you may do so within the agreed upon standards. However, if you would like to switch over to our new licensing system that still allows you to charge participants and does NOT require you to renew it every two years, please contact [deni@lifemodelworks.com](mailto:deni@lifemodelworks.com) for information on how to do that. We will be encouraging you to buy into the other modules with all their trainings and then your Restarting license will be grandfathered in. We highly recommend that you attend at least the new “Connexus Overview Training” to help you better understand the complete format.

**Q. I only want to stick with Forming (or Restarting, or Belonging) is that allowed?**

A. Connexus is meant to create the Transformation Zone for your community. If you only participate in one phase of it, then you will not be in the transformation zone. Running only one module of Connexus may leave your participants feeling like they are missing something and will probably not deliver the

“thriving community” they are looking for. Please read the answer to the question about the Transformation Zone and consider attending the Connexus Overview Training so you can get a better understanding of why Connexus as a whole is better than just one part of it.