



Enemy Inventory, Emotional Awareness, and Practice

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The following three exercises invite you into honest introspection. They help you to see your enemies, to understand what you're feeling toward them, and to imagine and embrace healthy responses to those feelings based on the particular needs and opportunities in your context.

Working through these exercises may be challenging. But it will ultimately center you and strengthen your capacity to cultivate positive, resilient relationships and communities.

1. Enemy Inventory

Who are your enemies? We may quickly assume, "I don't have any enemies." But think about people who make you feel on edge, upset, or afraid – people you dismiss, dislike, avoid, reject, or don't want to pray for. Spend a moment in silent reflection and make a list:

Personal Enemies	Identity-based Enemies:
a. Myself: b. Family: c. Friends: d. Neighbors: e. Colleagues: f. Other contacts:	g. Ethnic/racial: h. Political: i. Religious: j. Ideological or cultural: k. Other identities:

2. Emotional Awareness Spectrum

What do you feel toward these people? Use the lists below to explore the emotions, words, images, and actions that you may associate with them. Circle words that resonate with you; write a “?” next to words that make you pause or ask new questions. These lists are not exhaustive; write in what you find yourself feeling, thinking, seeing, and doing.

Emotions: “I feel...”

- Numbness, indifference, hardhearted
- Annoyance, frustration, dislike
- Blame, betrayal, rejection
- Shock, confusion, lost
- Pain, loss, grief
- Upset, anger, rage
- Fear, threat, under attack
- Humiliation, revulsion, disgust
- Condemnation, contempt, hate

Words: “I think or say...”

- “They’re not part of my life; I feel nothing toward them.”
- “I don’t care about them or want to be around them.”
- “It’s their fault; I can’t think about them or hear their side of the story.”
- “I can’t believe they did that to us; my world is spinning.”
- “The pain they made us suffer is unbearable.”
- “They deserve to be punished; I’m not sad if they suffer.”
- “They’re dangerous and can’t be trusted.”
- “I hate those people; they sicken me.”
- “They’re evil and should be wiped out.”

Images: “I see them as a...”

- joke, cartoon, object
- shadow, mass, mob
- savage, barbarian, invader
- sinner, pervert, freak
- thug, criminal, terrorist
- weed, germ, cancer
- skeleton, death, monster
- animal, reptile, insect
- demon, devil, satan

Actions: “I’m capable of...”

- ignoring them.
- avoiding or excluding them.
- insulting them or affirming negative stereotypes about them.
- defending my perspective and not listening to other possible sides to the story.
- falling into depression or losing hope.
- exploding and saying and doing things I usually wouldn't.
- feeling paranoid and taking positions that I might normally see as extreme.
- desiring for them to suffer and be treated like something less than human.
- fantasizing or actively planning about how I can defeat or harm them.

3. Creative Imagination and Agency

What are healthy responses to these emotions in your immediate and extended relationships?
How do you want to address these conflicts in your life and context in ways that honor your faith and elevate human flourishing? You're more creative and powerful than you think.

Explore 35 practices for loving your enemies in the following section.