I did not expect *The Road Home* to get a five-star rating on Amazon.com, but even more unexpected is the response the book is getting from individuals. I wrote it for pastors, church leaders, mediators, counselors, and anyone else who works with church conflict. I know that the process can be adapted for families and other groups struggling with forgiveness issues, but it is the response of several individuals that surprises me most.

It started with an email from a woman who wrote that my book was costing her sleep because she could not put it down at night and fell asleep reading it. Another said that her issues with anger and unforgiveness finally made sense after reading the book and that she was finally learning to leave the past in the past where it belongs.

Then I was contacted by a woman who asked if I would meet with her about the book and how it applied to her. I agreed, and we met on a sunny afternoon. She told me one of the most horrific stories of childhood sexual and psychological abuse that I have ever heard. She told me of her anxiety, hatred for her father who abused her and for her mother who did not protect her. She told me of her alcoholism, suicide attempts, and how her rage was destroying her health and relationships.

And then she told me how, in reading *The Road Home*, she finally understood that none of it was her fault. We laughed, cried, and prayed together. As she left she said, “I think I’m finally on the road home myself. Thank you.”

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**Welcome to Ekklesia, the newsletter of Peacebridge Ministries!**

EKKLESIA is an ancient Greek term meaning, “those called out,” also known as the Christian Church. Our calling is to strengthen the Ekklesia in all of its forms.

**The Road Home – An Unexpected Response**

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**Our Mission:** Peacebridge Ministries exists to prevent destructive conflict and to help conflicted churches, communities of faith and Christian organizations resolve conflicts in a positive and healing manner through consulting, coaching, training, and on-site interventions using proven, biblically-sound practices.
Are you covering up anxiety by faking confidence? Are you trying so hard to please others that you neglect your own needs and those of your family? Are you always in a hurry but usually late? Are you convinced that you would have succeeded had you just tried a little harder? Do you demand more of yourself but are rarely completely satisfied with what you have done? Do you always have to be strong for others? If you are honest, you will have answered “yes” without hesitation to two or three of these questions, and those “yes” answers identify where you have most strongly bought into the lie of conditional love.

Let’s just call them “drivers”: be perfect, try harder, please others, hurry up, and be strong. Each of these drivers causes us to work hard but with diminishing results. Why? All five are impossible to achieve, end in feelings of failure and inadequacy, and are based on the lie of conditional love: I am worthy of love if I can just (fill in the blank). Though each of these drivers is self-defeating, we believe them without a second thought because we learned them as toddlers. It was what we did to earn the love of our parents and others.

What drives you in ministry or business? What are your innermost fears about what you do? How do you deal with the emotional demands that conflict with how you want others to see and understand you? We are all insecure in some respects, but research indicates that clergy tend to be more insecure than the people they serve, with one denominational leader claiming that clergy insecurity is “widespread.” If insecurity is so common, the question must be asked: at what point does insecurity become dysfunctional?

Every pastor or layperson has these drivers in varying intensities, and they are compounded by our churches. Somehow we in the congregations and leadership expect our pastors to be something that we know we can never be. That’s one side of the issue, but the other side is that so many pastors have bought into and believe the same lies that in constantly failing to meet their expectations of

**Take the Test — Identify Your Drivers**

Instructions: This list contains 30 behaviors and beliefs commonly held by most people. Check the 15 that you most agree with. **You must end with 15.**

1. Try hard
2. Important to be liked
3. Strive for perfection
4. Do things fast
5. Show little excitement
6. Don’t answer questions directly
7. Need approval of others
8. Use big words to explain things
9. Talk rapidly
10. Showing feelings shows weaknesses
11. Repeat questions before answering
12. Nod head and say “uh-huh”
13. Tell in more detail than is necessary
14. Interrupt others
15. Talk in a low, controlled, monotone way
16. Go off on tangents when answering
17. Ask “OK?” or “You know?” frequently
18. Cover all the bases in discussions
19. Watch the clock, check your watch frequently
20. Hold in emotions, don’t let them show
21. Say “I don’t know” frequently
22. Feel responsible for how others feel
23. Balance out the positives with the negatives
24. Tap fingers, pencil, play with paper clips...
25. Be strong, aloof, observe others having fun
26. Pause, clear throat, cough, etc. before answering
27. Glance away prior to responding to questions
28. Need things to be perfectly clear
29. There never seems to be enough time
30. Keep self in tight control

Mark your answers and score them on the next page.

The highest frequency indicates your predominant drivers, meaning that these beliefs are what drive you to succeed. They tend to become much stronger — and more self-defeating—as stress increases.

**Continue on page 3**
The Please Others Pastor – Continued from Page 2

themselves and of those they serve that they constantly feel like a failure. The result is
burnout and massive numbers of pastors leaving their call.

My primary drivers, which I first identified some 30 years ago, are being perfect and
pleasing others. It means that I have a tendency to believe that I am worthy of love
only as long as I can please everyone and be perfect in everyone’s eyes (including my
own). Both are complete impossibilities, of course, but that does not keep us from
believing them. Until we confront these lies and learn to discard the charades that
cover them, we will always find ministry to be unfulfilling and unsatisfying. Try as we
will, we cannot fulfill these drivers.

So what about in Matthew where Jesus says “Be perfect, even as my heavenly Father
is perfect”? That seems to be a contradiction, doesn’t it? The simple fact is that we as
sinners do not have the capacity to be perfect. Jesus was driving home that exact point –
we are incapable of it on our own, meaning that we must rely on God and not
ourselves. Each of the drivers relies upon our own powers to achieve the impossible,
directly contradicting faith in God. That’s why they are lies.

Technically it is called “maladaptive perfectionism”, a constant striving against the
impossible in order to be loved and accepted. The various drivers are different facets
of the same problem. Maladaptive perfectionism is both neurotic and dysfunctional,
carrying with it anxiety, avoidance, depression, high self-criticism, negative self-view,
and emotional withdrawal from relationships.

The good news is that, with patience, and by releasing our drivers for God to deal with,
we can change to “adaptive perfectionism,” which really is not perfectionism at all but
a new fundamental belief system that releases us from the demands of the impossible
to achieve our goals within healthy boundaries, beliefs, and practices. One clinician
puts it this way: “Overcoming maladaptive perfectionism requires developing a new
set of beliefs about oneself [that allow for failure and fragility] and developing new
relationships with more affirming others.”

Scores:

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<th>Try Harder</th>
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<th>Be Perfect</th>
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<th>Be Strong</th>
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</table>

Scoring three or more in any grouping indicates an operational driver. Most
people will have two strong drivers (4 or
more) that operate automatically when
under stress.

A Few Interesting Quotes:

- In order to go on living one must try to escape the death that is perfectionism. ~ Hannah Arendt
- The hurrier I go the behinder I get. ~ Unknown
- Have no fear of perfectionism – you’ll never reach it. ~ Salvador Dali
- When you never measure up it’s time to check your yardstick. ~ Unknown.
- Striving for excellence motivates you. Striving for perfection defeats you. ~ Unknown.
- Realize deeply that the present moment is all that you will ever have. ~ Eckhart Tolle.
- Perfectionism is the voice of the oppressor. ~ Unknown.
**Dysfunctional Insecurity Indicators**

What are the indicators of dysfunctional insecurity? This checklist can help you in self-evaluation or as you assist others who struggle with insecurity. The more points you observe can help you gauge the depth of a person’s battle with insecurity.

- Profound sense of self-doubt.
- Deep feelings of uncertainty about one’s basic worth and place in the world.
- Chronic self-consciousness, feeling as though all eyes are on you.
- Chronic lack of self-confidence.
- Anxiety about relationships.
- Fear of rejection, and misinterpreting the words and actions of others as such.
- Uncertainty about the legitimacy of one’s feelings and desires.
- Defensiveness and the inability to receive and process criticism.
- Cannot enjoy silence — unable to be alone with oneself.
- Excessive and inappropriate use of humor as a mask.
- Self-promotion from an unhealthy need to be needed.
- Bullying in relationships — overly authoritative.
- Materialistic — an effort to prove one’s value to others.
- Irrational jealousy over the accomplishments and abilities of others.
- A tendency to be hypercritical of yourself and others.
- Abusive behaviors — physical, verbal, emotional.
- Unhealthy sexual expression.

Leadership expert John Maxwell made this blunt observation in his book, *21 Indispensable Qualities of a Leader*: “Insecure leaders are dangerous to themselves, their followers, and the organizations they lead because their leadership position amplifies their personal flaws. Whatever negative baggage you have in life only gets more difficult to bear when you are trying to lead others.” (Thomas Nelson, 1999)

“People who answer the call to pastoral ministry usually do so out of a heart of love, compassion, and desire to help others. Words like *empathetic, transparent,* and *emotionally sensitive* become synonyms for pastoral care. Church members applaud these traits as those they love most about their pastor. This only encourages greater emphasis and expression of these traits in the minister’s behavior. *What other people think* becomes the pastor’s filter for decision making, and a minister often becomes someone he vowed he would never become — a man-pleaser instead of a God-pleaser. Danger can lurk behind strength, and interpersonal sensitivity is no exception. Left unchecked, hypersensitivity can lead to dysfunctional insecurity.” (Leslie Welk, “The Plague of Minister Insecurity,” Assemblies of God (2013) http://wim.ag.org/1007/1007_the_minister.cfm