

Meet the Parents

(And the Rest of Your Family)

This short version of the Genogram is intended to get you started on exploring who you are because of your family experience. Do this separately from your partner, and then compare your Family of Origin (FOO) stories. Question one another using the material above. Then set it aside for a while. Come back and revisit the questions. Consider doing a family with a sibling or parent or grandparent and get their perspective on their experience in their FOO. Keep at it. For more work consider the book The Family Tie that Binds by Ron Richardson on the Self-Counsel Press. Also you can read the story of a family coming to terms with their “unfinished business” in the Family Crucible by Whitaker and Napier on HarperCollins Canada Press (reissue edition); or The Fragile Bond: in Search of on Equal, Intimate, and Enduring Marriage by Augustus Napier on HarperCollins Canada Press.

Your Name _____

Genogram

1. List the names, ages, and nicknames of three generations of your family of origin (exclude details of your parents siblings but do list them); also note the dates of deaths (and one-word description of cause of death if known) dates and one word description of any family crisis, and dates of marriages, separations, or divorces.
2. Who are you closest to and most distant from in each generation?
3. List five adjectives that would describe your family of origin.
4. Among your siblings who played what “roles”, if you were to name the family roles?
5. Circle the best descriptors of your family experience: strict-- democratic-- lenient – inconsistent
6. Who did what in times of family conflict
 - Win - Lose: All for me, nothing for you!
 - Withdraw: I won't talk about it!
 - Give-in: I'll yield to your power, expertise, intimidation
 - Compromise: I'll bargain with you so that neither of us will get what we really want.
 - Resolve I'll work on the way we relate so that a new solution is possible.
7. Describe the impact of one early experience on your life. This could be a positive or difficult experience. How did your family members respond? What changed for you? For the family?
8. If you were to say, “what unfinished business” or “things you still have to work out” from your family of origin, what would that be?
9. What was the best aspect of your family experience—something that you believe equips you for a positive marriage and family life?