

My Family of Origin

Except in rare instances, our family is the most powerful, influential group that has affected who we are today. Consider the following questions to get "beneath the surface" at how the past might be impacting your present.¹

1. Describe each family member with three adjectives and their relationship.
2. Describe your parent's relationship.
3. How was conflict handled in your family? Anger? Tension?
4. How were gender roles and authority worked out in your family?
5. How well did your family do in talking about feelings?
6. How would your family describe you? What do you think your family thinks about you?
7. How was sexuality talked or not talked about? What were the implied messages?
8. Were there any family "secrets" (such as pregnancy out of wedlock, incest, or major financial scandal)?
9. What was considered "success" in your family?
10. How was money handled? Spirituality? Holidays? Relationship with extended family?
11. How did your family's ethnicity shape you?
12. Were there any heroes or heroines in the family? Scapegoats? Losers? Why?
13. What kinds of addictions, if any, existed in the family?
14. Were there traumatic losses in the past or present, such as sudden death, prolonged illnesses, stillbirths/miscarriages, bankruptcy, or divorce?
15. How was spirituality expressed?

¹ Scazzero, Peter, *The Emotionally Healthy Church*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI, 2003