

Family Patterns of Behavior

Chapter 2: Understanding Your Family Roots Worksheet for Reflection & Dialogue

Instructions:

For each topic below, describe how your family handled this area when you were growing up. Then mark whether you judge that pattern was Healthy (H) or Unhealthy (U).

Complete this worksheet on your own first. Then share everything with your partner. Since you will marry not just a person but also a family, your partner has a right to know what is important about your family. Make special note of things that are different between your families.

Daily Life & Routines

1. Getting my homework done [H] [U]

2. Being 'on time' [H] [U]

3. Eating healthy meals [H] [U]

4. Regular exercise [H] [U]

5. Reading as a form of recreation [H] [U]

6. Holiday traditions [H] [U]

7. Vacations [H] [U]

Relationships & Communication

8. Physical affection [H] [U]

9. Emotional support [H] [U]

10. Being punished by my parents [H] [U]

11. Abusive language/frequent yelling [H] [U]

12. Spending time with friends [H] [U]

13. Spending time with relatives [H] [U]

14. Dealing with pets/animals [H] [U]

Money & Work

15. Sufficient income for the family [H] [U]

16. Control of the family's money [H] [U]

17. Parental unemployment [H] [U]

18. A college education [H] [U]

Faith & Values

19. Family prayer [H] [U]

20. Sunday worship [H] [U]

21. Political debates [H] [U]

22. The role of my mother [H] [U]

23. The role of my father [H] [U]

Health & Wellness

24. Regular medical/dental check-ups [H] [U]

25. Frequent/serious illness [H] [U]

26. Mental illness [H] [U]

27. Death [H] [U]

Sexuality & Dating

28. Sex education [H] [U]

29. Rules for dating [H] [U]

30. Sexual intercourse before marriage [H] [U]

Difficult Topics

These topics may be painful to consider. If any of these were present in your family, it is important to acknowledge them honestly - not to blame, but to understand how they have affected you.

31. Smoking [H] [U]

32. Use of alcohol/Alcoholism [H] [U]

33. Use of drugs [H] [U]

34. Physical/emotional abuse [H] [U]

35. Psychological abuse [H] [U]

36. Sexual abuse [H] [U]

37. Divorce [H] [U]

Reflection

What have I learned about my family through this examination of our patterns of behavior?

What patterns do I most want to continue in my own marriage and family?

What patterns do I want to change or leave behind?

Comparing Your Families

After you and your partner have each completed this worksheet, sit down together and share your answers. Use this space to note the most significant differences between your families.

Key differences between our families:

How might these differences affect our marriage?

Remember:

The goal is not to blame, but to understand. If you don't understand the history of your family, you are likely to repeat it - whether it makes sense or not!