

Narrative

Worksheet

Concepts

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I highly recommend reading *How to Find Your Healthy and Productive Life Narrative* ebook before reading this ebook and completing the corresponding worksheet.

Your Benefits to Resolving Your Narrative

This worksheet is a companion to our Ebook *How to Find Your Healthy and Productive Life Narrative*.

Working out your life narrative is the crucial component to walking in Emotionally Intelligent Leadership and experiencing wonderful forward movement in your spiritual life.

Completing the corresponding worksheet will help you in 3 core ways:

- You will find the areas of your life where you need to make peace with your past.
- You will identify missing life skills.
- You will purify your heart's understanding of who God really is.

Understanding narrative results in realizing you are not a victim in this world. There are clear steps you can take to resolve the wounded areas of your life regardless of whether other people ever change or even acknowledge the pain they've caused you.

This is your key in knowing how to cooperate with God through productive devotions to see all your hurtful events through His healing eyes.

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How Your Heart Interprets Life

Dr. Daniel Siegel explains that it is not so important what happened to us as it is how we *interpreted* what happened to us.

The interpretation of your life story is known as your life narrative. When a painful event occurred in your past, your heart will often interpret that event in painful ways - ways that are contrary to how God views the event.

This interpretation is what has to be worked out for you to get out of your pain, out of hurtful patterns that recur in your life, and into forward movement.

For example: for many years a part of my narrative was that male authority figures are dangerous (this was a hurtful recurring pattern).

- First of all I had to identify that this interpretation of life was dominant in my thinking.
- Then I had to come to terms with the events where I developed that outlook.

Ultimately this opened the way to see the experiences in my life from God's perspective and find freedom.

Here's another way to think of how this works. You may know the truth (in your mind, cognitively) that God has always loved you and has never left you or forsaken you. But this moves from mere head knowledge to integrated truth in your heart as you work out your narrative.

The questions in the narrative examination will help you identify areas where you still have unresolved lies of shame. To better understand what [lies of shame](#) are, our [Discovery Prayer Ministry audio series](#) explains in depth what these are, how they affect you, and how to resolve them.

How We See God

John and Paula Sanford, in their book *The Transformation of the Inner Man*, have a good teaching on "How We See God." Matthew 5:8 says the pure in heart shall see God. Therefore, the opposite "impure" or wounded areas of the heart must cloud the view of who God really is.

Your concept of God is filtered through the lens of your life experiences that are not peaceful. This will also determine:

- How you feel God sees you.
- What you think God expects from you.
- How you see other people and what you expect from them

Take, for example, a person who is angry at the very idea of God. They say, "If there's a loving God, how could He allow all the evil that is in the world?" There are very good answers to this question. However, the person with this attitude generally doesn't even want to consider those answers.

This type of person doesn't typically see God as loving and redeeming. This person likely has experienced injustice that has never been resolved in their heart.

Even in a Christian's life, who loves God, there are ways their unresolved pain colors their sense of who God is. Consider the following story from my life.

Muttley, My Pain, and Life-Skill Breakdown

In my book, *The Sonship Empowered Life*, I share a story of being 5 years old and having a cute shaggy dog named Muttley. My dad came home drunk one evening and beat him severely.

I was terrified by this experience.

This episode contributed to unreasonable fears I would experience around male authority figures throughout much of my life.

God is With Me

As I faced and resolved my pain in this memory, the remembrance became peaceful. God spoke to my heart that He *did* protect me and my dog. Muttley survived the beating and retained his playful fun nature.

Once I resolved my pain, I embraced at a heart level in this memory that God never *does* leave me or forsake me.

The truth of God never abandoning me resolved the intense fear I felt whenever I thought about this piece of my past.

From Anger to Compassion

I also came to realize how much my dad was hurting. I saw that he carried years of pain from an extremely hurtful childhood, and he had never found a way to resolve this. He lived out of his pain everyday.

I went from anger towards my dad, to compassion for him.

The memory was no longer about me being abandoned, powerless, and unprotected. I now knew God was with me and even felt His love in my heart toward my dad.

The resolution of this memory purified my heart to see God as He really is - always loving and available. This increased my faith and awareness of God being with me in my present adult life too.

Life Skills Gained

Finally, resolving this memory helped me to relate in a healthier way with male authority figures.

In Ephesians 6 the Bible says to honor your parents and then life will go well with you.

Throughout my life I had struggled with every male school teacher, employer, and pastor. Now suddenly, life went well for me in these areas.

A Family is to Exemplify the Nature of God

The Family Model

Family is God's idea. Ephesians 3:14-15, 14 says the idea of fathering was named after God our Heavenly Father. Verse 15 - (Amplified Bible) "the Father from which all fatherhood and family derives its name."

The Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown commentary says, "Father is the great prototype of the paternal relation wherever found."

God shows us what family is supposed to be like. This gives us a healthy pattern in the family to learn about God, His nature, and how to relate to Him. But Mankind has free will and, unfortunately, this divine pattern is often corrupted. Wounding in family relationships distorts children's concepts of who God is and can wound the child's ability to see God as a loving heavenly Father.

The marriage relationship is to model for the children the manner in which believers are to respond to Christ.

1 Peter 3:7 says, "Husband, dwell with your wife with understanding, giving honor to her, as to the weaker vessel (physically), and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered."

This verse is loaded with truth. It says a physically stronger husband is to show understanding toward his wife. A husband receives grace for life when he's in partnership with his wife. If the husband acts independently and does not relate to his wife with covering love, his prayers will be hindered. In other words, their hearts need to be open to each other and working together; otherwise, a break down of the love bond serves to block forward movement in life. Grace is cut off and prayers are hindered.

Here's an example of how this principle operates in a business situation. Think of an employer who is constantly critical of his employees. The employees complete their work - out of fear - but they inwardly despise their boss. Creativity does not flow in this environment. New ideas and answers are few and far between; there is too much anxiety and stress for productive thinking to occur.

As a couple follow God's pattern for marriage, as in 1 Peter 3:7, they are a representation of who God is for the children. They demonstrate life skills in how to

relate to Him and for all relationships. God is stronger than we are yet He relates to us with much understanding.

Many do not see God as being understanding towards them and their faults.

In Ephesians 5:22-33 we see more of God's pattern for family. It says wives should submit to their husbands. Then it says husbands are to love their wives as Christ loved the church, **laying His life down for her**. The husband should protect and cherish his wife.

God gives a pattern of what submission is supposed to be about. A wife should support her husband, not a tyrant, but a man who lays his life down for her and lives with her in an understanding way.

This again paints a picture for the children raised by a family that operates with God's model of healthy submission.

The child gains an intuitive understanding of **life skills** for marriage, relating to employers, and being on a team when there is a good example in his home life.

To whatever degree a parent's relationship was dysfunctional will typically be the degree to which the child will grow up without the intuitive life skills of how healthy relationships work. This will then need to be recognized and resolved.

Fathers and Mothers

The idea of what a father is like comes from our first contact, or lack thereof, with our birth father. A baby's first words are typically "da-da" and "ma-ma."

We have established how we see and relate to Father God is modeled for us by our earthly fathers. But our mothers *also* teach us many things about relationships.

Our mother's demonstrated emotional and spiritual health in how she related to us when we were children impacts all areas of our lives. When things are healthy, we become comfortable with intimate relationships, empathy, and compassion toward others. **These provide the foundation for EQ** (emotional intelligence).

These core foundations in our relationships determine our future success in marriage, raising children, and doing well in the work place.

Resolving your narrative involves unpacking how you were mothered and then how you responded to that mothering.

Our moms teach us to bond, to feel connected, to feel carried in the heart of another.

“Yet you brought me out of the womb; you made me trust in you, even at my mother's breast,” reads Psalms 22:9.

Was there bonding with your mom? Did you learn to trust? If not, we may feel drawn to [counterfeit affections](#).

Resolving past hurts from our moms brings healing to how we see ourselves and how we see God.

- It determines whether we live a fear-based life or a love-based life.
- It determines whether we enter God's rest or live by duty and stress.
- It determines whether we feel secure socially or fear rejection.
- And finally, it determines how we treat our own families.

Whatever we feel God expects from us to be acceptable in His sight, is what we will demand from others.

Honoring Your Father and Mother

The goal of this worksheet is not to be critical of our parents but to discover how our hearts interpreted events. Looking at hurtful, unresolved memories is not dishonoring.

In fact, just the opposite is true. Unresolved memories are themselves dishonoring. Remember how I viewed my dad in the Muttley story? I used to be full of resentment and judgements toward him. But after receiving God's truth, forgiveness and grace came. Resolving memories to where we have compassion and understanding toward our parents is one of the most honoring things we can do.

Pain goes away as we face and resolve these events by working through our shame lies, forgiving when we find anger, and letting go of any sorrow and loss we encounter. This frees us to walk in honoring attitudes toward our parents.

Honoring simply means walking in love, acceptance, empathy, compassion, and understanding toward your parents. This is lived out in the present by regularly communicating, making phone calls, speaking in positive terms about them, and doing loving things for them. This is the true indicator of how much you have worked out your narrative.

However, **let me clearly state**, this does not mean that [boundaries](#) are not sometimes necessary.

How we interact in a group, how we problem solve (whether with overwhelm, anger or practical steps and productive dialogue), comes from what was modeled for us in our family system of interaction growing up.

Whether we value higher education or have good money management skills come from what was modeled for us. If we can set boundaries rather than allow bad behavior is learned there as well.

The more we identify and work out our narrative, the more we can integrate the truths of God's Word into the depths of our heart and see forward movement in our life.

Now that you have finished reading this ebook, your next step is to use the worksheet questions. You may want to refer back or reread portions of this as you answer the questions.. Take your time. Working out your narrative is a journey. Each of us are on a path towards emotional health.

Feel free to [contact us](#) with any questions you may have.

