

Family of Origin Genogram

Note: The following books and tools were used to develop these questions: *The Leader's Journey*, *Focused Genograms*, *The Emotionally Healthy Church*, *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality*, and the *Right Path 360 Manual*. For more information on these books, see page 140.

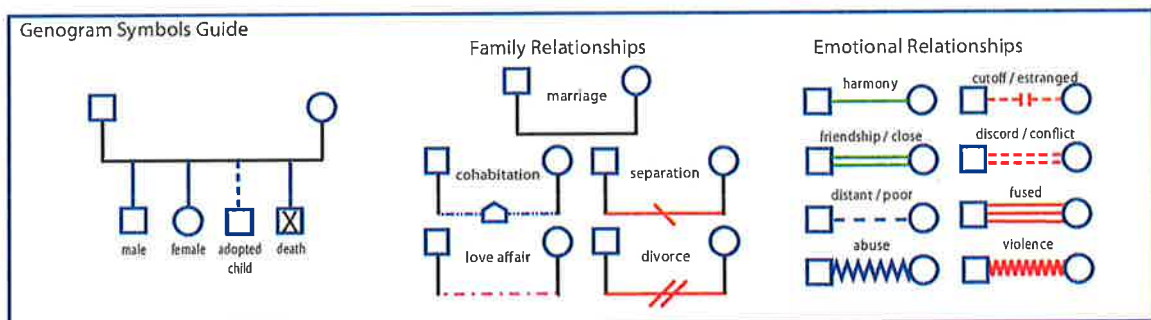
Families don't ultimately determine us. God's grace, gifting, and sovereign purposes can shape and even override the influence of our family. At the same time, God ordained our family of origin as one means of His divine design for our lives. Therefore, one way for us to "number our days to present a heart of wisdom" (Psalm 90:12) is to review our Family of Origin.

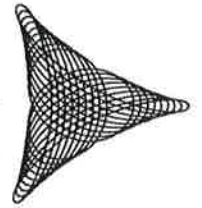
The following steps will help you create your own genogram:

Step One: Draw a family tree with three generations: you and your family, your family of origin (parents and siblings) and your parents' families of origin (your grandparents, aunts and uncles). Use a circle to represent females and a square to represent males. To the best of your ability, place the year of birth and, if applicable, the year of death, for each person.

Step Two: Use the Symbols Guide (below) to illustrate the types of relationships that existed between key persons in the genogram.

Step Three: Read through the Reflection Questions that follow and write out key observations that you discover. Transfer re-occurring themes and significant findings onto your genogram.





Additional Genogram Questions

Families don't ultimately determine us. God's grace, gifting, and sovereign purposes can shape and even override the influence of our family. At the same time, God ordained our family of origin as one means of His divine design for our lives. Therefore, one way for us to "number our days to present a heart of wisdom" (Psalm 90:12) is to review our Family of Origin.

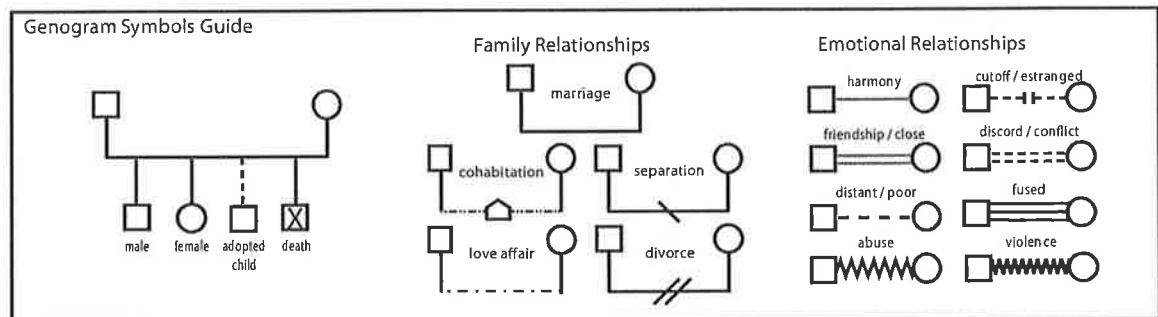
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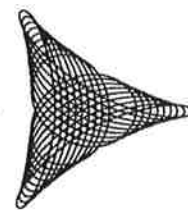
Step One: Draw a family tree with three generations: you and your family now, your family of origin (parents and siblings), and your parent's family of origin (grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins)

Step Two: Using the Symbols Guide (below), illustrate the types of relationships that existed between key persons in the genogram.

Step Three: Read through the Reflection Questions that follow and write out key observations that you discover. When you are finished, read over your observations and summarize your observations in a few key words. Write out these key findings or themes on your genogram.

Step Four: Read through the Application Questions and write out important reflections and insights.





eventually return to a normal state of mind and body. However, **CHRONIC ANXIETY** is threat that is imagined or distorted rather than real. It is not time-limited and does not simply go away. Every emotional system sustains some level of chronic anxiety.

- How would you describe the family system you emerged from, in regard to the level of chronic anxiety? Were you led to think of the world as basically secure or basically threatening? What did people in your family fret over? What difference has growing up in this environment had on the way you lead? Consider an anxious time in your current family. How has your “training” in your family of origin impacted the way you handled that situation?
- How would you describe the congregational or business system you are engaged in, in regard to the level of chronic anxiety? Do leaders in the system see the world about them as threatening? How does this manifest itself? Are there frequent emergencies and crises? When a crisis occurs, does the leadership take it in stride and solve the problem, or are they likely to develop symptoms? Review a difficult or crisis situation you have faced as a church or business in the light of these questions.
- How do you think your three key leaders would describe the chronic anxiety of the congregation or business? How do they respond when a crisis occurs?

Relational Connectivity

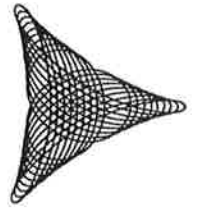
1. What is your place in the constellation of your family of origin: oldest, youngest, middle? Were you a brother with younger sisters? Younger brothers? Older sisters? Older brothers?

- How did the unique spot in the family that you occupied shape you in learning to relate to others?
- How did it shape you in the way you lead and the way you respond to others' leadership?

2. Describe the kind of community and social involvement reflected in the members of your family system. What roles did your family members play in this involvement?

3. In *The Leader's Journey* four symptoms of chronic anxiety are presented that identify an anxious system:

- Conflict—often identified with “all or nothing” thinking)



plan these together, were they imposed “from on high,” or did everyone make up their own goals when they wanted? How were goals accomplished (individually? in partnerships? as a group?).

5. Who were the heroes and heroines in your family? Why or for what were they honored?
6. What was “applauded” in your family?
 - How and for what were you applauded in your family?

Failure/Loss/ Pain

1. Who were the unrecognized or disregarded members of your family? Why were they treated this way?
2. How was failure viewed in the family?
 - How have you superimposed these standards on God?
 - How have you reflected these in your leadership of others?
3. What was criticized in your family?
 - How and for what were you criticized in your family?
4. What “secrets” are in your family tree? What are you not allowed or supposed to talk about?

Spiritual Influences and Experiences

1. What were the views of God in your family of origin? What did it mean to be religious? What did it mean to be a Christian?
2. What events formed your view of God and humanity?
3. What events informed your understanding of Jesus?
4. What spiritual understandings were formed in your childhood that you now consider very helpful and significant?
5. What spiritual understandings or beliefs were formed in your childhood that you now consider dangerous or destructive?

Application Questions

1. How would you relate your sense of call into ministry or business to your family