

# A FATHERHOOD PLAYBOOK FOR HEALING RELATIONSHIPS AND CONNECTING WITH YOUR KIDS

## SELF-ASSESSMENT: INNER CHILD

Directions: Take a moment to reflect on your childhood experiences with a father or father figure and complete the self-assessment. Focus on one father or father figure at a time, as you may have had multiple influential men in your life. Think about those closest to you, regardless of the nature of your relationship. You can learn valuable lessons from each of them, especially regarding how they have shaped your parenting style of yourself and others in your life.

### NAMES

Name the father or father figure you will be using to reflect on during your self-assessment.

---

### PART 1

Reflecting on your childhood memories, how frequently did your father or father figure exhibit any of the following behaviors?

1. Spent time with you:

- 0 — Never
- 1 — Rarely
- 2 — Sometimes
- 3 — Often
- 4 — Very Often

2. Hugged you:

- 0 — Never
- 1 — Rarely
- 2 — Sometimes
- 3 — Often
- 4 — Very Often

Total so far: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Said, "I love you" or "I care about you":

- 0 — Never
- 1 — Rarely
- 2 — Sometimes
- 3 — Often
- 4 — Very Often

4. Taught you lessons about what it meant to be a man:

- 0 — Never
- 1 — Rarely
- 2 — Sometimes
- 3 — Often
- 4 — Very Often

5. Taught you lessons about what it meant to be a father:

- 0 — Never
- 1 — Rarely
- 2 — Sometimes
- 3 — Often
- 4 — Very Often

6. Displayed affection toward the other parent or parent figure:

- 0 — Never
- 1 — Rarely
- 2 — Sometimes
- 3 — Often
- 4 — Very Often

7. Participated in activities with you:

- 0 — Never
- 1 — Rarely
- 2 — Sometimes
- 3 — Often
- 4 — Very Often

Total so far: \_\_\_\_\_

8. Spent holidays with you:

- 0 — Never
- 1 — Rarely
- 2 — Sometimes
- 3 — Often
- 4 — Very Often

9. Taught you how to treat a life partner:

- 0 — Never
- 1 — Rarely
- 2 — Sometimes
- 3 — Often
- 4 — Very Often

## PART 2

10. Did you feel comfortable sharing your thoughts and feelings with the father or father figure?

- 0 — Never
- 1 — Rarely
- 2 — Sometimes
- 3 — Often
- 4 — Very Often

11. Did you feel proud to have the father or father figure in your life?

- 0 — Never
- 1 — Rarely
- 2 — Sometimes
- 3 — Often
- 4 — Very Often

12. Did you want to be just like them (father or father figure) when you grew up?

- 0 — Never
- 1 — Rarely
- 2 — Sometimes
- 3 — Often
- 4 — Very Often

Total: \_\_\_\_\_

## SELF-ASSESSMENT SCORE SUMMARY: INNER CHILD

This summary outlines possible scores from the self-assessment, providing explanations for each score range regarding your inner child's (childhood) experiences with a father or father figure.

### SCORE RANGE: 0 – 12 (LOW ENGAGEMENT)

#### 0 – 4:

This score suggests that you had very limited interaction with your father or father figure during your childhood. It may indicate a lack of presence, emotional connection, or involvement in your life. As a result, this could impact your current views on parenting and relationships, possibly leading to challenges in emotional expression or establishing trust with others.

#### 5 – 12:

This score indicates that while you may have had some moments of connection with your father or father figure, these experiences were not frequent. You may have learned a few important lessons about relationships and parenting but might still feel a gap in emotional support or guidance. Reflecting on these experiences can help you identify areas for growth in your own parenting style.

### SCORE RANGE: 13 – 24 (MODERATE ENGAGEMENT)

#### 13 – 18:

A score in this range shows that you had a moderate level of interaction with your father or father figure. You likely spent enough time together to form some meaningful memories, allowing you to observe parenting styles and behaviors. However, inconsistencies in your interactions may have left you with a mix of positive and negative influences on your relationship with them.

#### 19 – 24:

This higher score suggests that your father or father figure played a consistently present role in your childhood. You were able to learn valuable lessons from him and incorporate some of those teachings into your own parenting philosophy. However, there's still room to explore and address any unresolved feelings from your past that could impact your present.

### SCORE RANGE: 25 – 36 (HIGH ENGAGEMENT)

#### 25 – 30:

A score in this range indicates that you had a strong relationship with your father or father figure, significantly shaping your values and parenting style. You likely drew on numerous cherished memories and lessons learned throughout your childhood, which now positively influence

your interactions with others, especially in your own parenting approach.

31 – 36:

This highest score reflects exceptionally frequent and meaningful engagement with your father or father figure during your formative years. You may have experienced a supportive, nurturing environment that directly impacted your ability to create strong relationships in your adult life. Your positive recollections and experiences could serve as a strong foundation for healthy interactions and parenting practices.

Reflecting on your score and the memories associated with your father or father figure can lead to deeper insights into your own parenting style and relationships. Understanding your past is key to recognizing how it informs your present, allowing you room to grow and improve.

## LISTENING TO YOUR INNER CHILD

Pay attention to how you answered each question, the stumbles, and the urge to change your answers once you've completed the question. This is a sign of your inner child's attempt to communicate with you. Don't judge the feeling; lean into it.

In the following section, you will find a series of plays and reflection activities to guide you in your contemplation of the practice of being "Present."

## PLAYBOOK

### PLAY 1: NAME YOUR INNER CHILD

When you name them, you'll never forget about them. If you had a nickname or other name that was used for you when you were a child, use this name as you reflect on the journey and experience of your inner child. Enter the name in the blank space below.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### PLAY 2: CHARACTERISTICS OF THE INNER CHILD: YOUR JOYS

Reflect on the image of the child within, which is now more emotional than physical and is imprinted in the memories you've had all along. I find reflecting on the joys of the child will always keep you close to them. Some reflection questions for you to consider:

What were some of your favorite places to visit? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What were some of the foods you enjoyed? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Who were some of the people you enjoyed being around? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### PLAY 3: SPEND TIME WITH YOUR INNER CHILD

When was the last time you spent time with your inner child? Looking at the list you wrote in "Play 2," how often do you engage in the activities you enjoy? What are some of the barriers that prevent you from spending time with your inner child? Find the time to be with your inner child as much as possible.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

#### PLAY 4: YOU DEFINE "MASCULINITY"

What lessons did your inner child learn about being a man? How have they defined your life positively? And how have these lessons contributed negatively to your life? Once you have examined both sides, list the lesson(s) you want to teach your children. When we keep these lessons in front of us, we are less likely to pass the ones that did not work for us to those we love. Alternatively, we can focus more on the ones that were helpful to us.

---

---

---

---

---

---

#### PLAY 5: THE FATHER YOU ENVISION

What characteristics of a father do you want your children to remember the most? There is no perfect father, but if there are characteristics you view as important, nine times out of ten they are essential because you found them valuable from someone in your life or someone you observed from afar. They will be necessary to your children if they are critical to you. Write them down so you can remember to embody them.

Here are a few characteristics to get you started. Feel free to circle the ones that resonate with you the most, or simply write your own.

- |                   |                  |                         |
|-------------------|------------------|-------------------------|
| — Neglectful      | — Demanding      | — Adventurous           |
| — Encouraging     | — Involved       | — Reliable              |
| — Authoritarian   | — Unapproachable | — Grounded              |
| — Patient         | — Empathetic     | — Fair                  |
| — Self-centered   | — Nurturing      | — Humorous              |
| — Trustworthy     | — Respectful     | — Compassionate         |
| — Inconsistent    | — Flexible       | — Disciplinary          |
| — Loving          | — Honest         | (when appropriate)      |
| — Overly critical | — Resilient      | — Emotionally available |
| — Open-minded     | — Attentive      | — Motivated             |
| — Manipulative    | — Understanding  | — Wise                  |
| — Communicative   | — Creative       | — Open to feedback      |

---

## PLAY 6: YOUR ANGELS

What characteristics of the father or father figure in your life does your inner child remember (the men in your life that made a difference in your life when you were younger)?:

List a memory or two of when they made you feel special:

---

---

Where were you? \_\_\_\_\_

---

What were you all doing? \_\_\_\_\_

---

What did they do? \_\_\_\_\_

---

What did they say? \_\_\_\_\_

---

Do you remember the emotion you felt? \_\_\_\_\_

---

What lesson did you learn? \_\_\_\_\_

---

What phrase or item can you pull on to remind yourself of this moment? \_\_\_\_\_

---

## PLAY 7: REMEMBER THOSE SHOULDERS

Every inner child has a set of shoulders they have stood on. Even when life becomes overwhelming, those shoulders remain. We just have to remember them.

Whose shoulders have you stood on to reach where you are today? Write down their names.

---

---

As you enter every room, remember those shoulders. Carry them with you. They will be grateful that you never forgot about them.



## PLAY 8: SAY IT ALOUD

Make it a consistent practice to tell your inner child that you are loved. If what you say to yourself brings pain, refrain from speaking that way and ask yourself where this behavior comes from. Once you identify the source, replace the negative thoughts with positive affirmations that uplift you. Remember, how you speak to your inner child can impact others as well. While perfection doesn't exist, strive to maintain a positive mindset more often than a negative one.

**Positive Example:** "I deserve love."

**Negative Example:** "I am unworthy of love."

Questions to consider:

**How** can you create a moment to nurture yourself at the start of your day? \_\_\_\_\_

**What** will remind you to practice this? \_\_\_\_\_

**When** you feel negativity, what strategies do you use to redirect your thoughts? \_\_\_\_\_

## PLAY 9: DON'T COMPARE YOURSELF TO OTHERS

Having someone to look up to is not the same as comparing yourself to others. Keep your loved ones close. Remember, those who truly care about you appreciate you for who you are. Keep this in mind when you find yourself comparing yourself to others.

You are beautifully made just the way you are.

## PLAY 10: ALWAYS TRY AGAIN

No one is perfect. When you fall, give yourself permission to get back up. It is okay to try again.

## CLOSING

In conclusion, being "Present" means showing up as your imperfect and authentic self. When we do this, we set a positive example for our children, encouraging them to live their lives without being constrained by our darkest moments or the challenges of the world around us.

