

## *FAMILY OF ORIGIN*

As young children we observe our parents and all that they do or don't do. We observe how they relate to each other, how they communicate, what they communicate about and how they touch or how they keep from touching each other. What we see in our growing up usually is the yard stick that we use for our own marriage.

As we grow older and ready ourselves for marriage we are going to do the same things in our marriage as our family did, even if we did not approve of it.

If we come from a well balanced family this will probably work out real well, but if we come from a family that left something to be desired, we might have troubles. If we make an honest effort at making our relationship better than our parents, we can do it. But if we enter our relationship not thinking about our parents marriage or how much we don't want our marriage to be like theirs, it very probably will be just the same. If we want it to be different we have to work and work hard at making it different which can also mean better.

You both come from different families and if there were major differences in those families there will probably be much tension when you two come together to begin a new family. The following exercise will help you talk about your family or origin, talk about what you would like to keep and what you would like to work on and change in this new relationship. Please be open to the following questions, answer them honestly and it will help you decide how you want your relationship to develop in this NEW FAMILY!

1. Was there one member of your family that was sick a lot? Who?

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2. How were people in my family treated when they became ill?

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3. Who took care of sick parents or children in your family?

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4. How did my parents show affection for one another?

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5. Where did I learn "the facts of life" and how did I feel about learning them?

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6. Could my parents talk to be about sex and the love of husband and wife?

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7. Who took care of paying the bills in my family?  

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8. Who did most of the grocery shopping in my family?  

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9. Did my parents shop together for Christmas presents?  

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10. Who was the thrifty one in my family?  

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11. Which one of my parents was more apt to spend money?  

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12. What differences did my parents have about money?  

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13. How did my parents express their difference about money?  

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14. Did both of my parents work outside of the home?  

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15. Did my parents come home at a regular time or were their schedules irregular? How did I feel about that?  

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16. Who was the main wage earner in my family?  

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17. Did the main wage earner in my family change jobs often.  

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18. Did we as a family move often or did we stay in the same place for most of my growing up?  

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19. Was our home very clean, so-so, or messy?  

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20. Who did most of the house cleaning?  

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21. Did that person have any help from any other member of the family?  

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22. Were our beds made everyday? If so who made them?

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23. What meals did we eat together as a family?

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24. Were meals served on a regular basis?

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25. Who prepared most of the meals?

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26. Did my mother like to cook?

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27. Did my father like to cook?

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28. Were most of our meals home cooked or were they convenience foods?

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29. Did we go to church as a family?

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30. How did I feel about my families participation in church activities?

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31. Did we as a family pray at meal time?

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32. Did we as a family pray at any other time?

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33. Were family prayers recited from memory or spontaneous?

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34. How did my mother show anger?

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35. How did my father show anger?

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36. How did other members living in my house show anger?

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37. How did I cope with anger?

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38. Was I allowed to express anger?

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39. Did I ever see my parents fight and argue?

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40. Did I ever see my parents say "I'm sorry" and kiss and make up?

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41. What were most arguments in my home about?

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42. How did my parents end their arguments?

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43. Was there kissing and hugging among family members?

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44. Who touched me the most?

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45. How did I feel about the amount of kissing and hugging in my family?

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46. Was doing well in school a big deal in my family?

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47. Was there any rewards for doing good, or punishments for doing bad in school?

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48. What did we do as a family for fun?

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49. Did we ever take family vacations?

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50. Did we go to the same place or different places on vacation?

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51. Who did most of the disciplining in my family?

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