



# INNER CHILD

## MODULE 1

# EXERCISE #1

## EXERCISE: IDENTIFYING YOUR PARENT'S TYPE

To get a sense of which type your parent might fit into, review the lists below and check off the traits that resonate with your experience of them. Keep in mind that any type of parent can display characteristics from other types when they are under significant stress.

### **Common Traits of Emotionally Immature Parents:**

- Self-centeredness
- Limited empathy
- Difficulty respecting boundaries
- Avoidance of emotional closeness
- Poor communication skills
- Lack of self-awareness or reflection
- Unwillingness to resolve relationship conflicts
- Prone to emotional outbursts or reactivity
- Impulsivity
- Struggles to maintain emotional connections

### **Steps:**

1. Read each list and reflect on your parent's behavior.
2. Mark the characteristics that align with your parent.
3. After completing the exercise, use the summary table to better understand the overall pattern of emotional immaturity.

This exercise will help you identify the dominant patterns in your parent's behavior, giving you insight into how their emotional immaturity might have influenced your relationship.

# EXERCISE #1

## **Emotional Parent**

- ☐ Is preoccupied with his or her own needs
- ☐ Has low empathy
- ☐ Is enmeshed and not respectful of boundaries
- ☐ Is defensively non-intimate
- ☐ Doesn't engage in reciprocal communication; just talks about himself or herself
- ☐ Isn't self-reflective
- ☐ Has poor relationship repair skills
- ☐ Is reactive, not thoughtful
- ☐ Is either too close or too distant
- ☐ Blows up or cuts others off
- ☐ Has frightening or intimidating emotional intensity
- ☐ Expects his or her child to provide soothing and doesn't think about the child's needs
- ☐ Likes to pretend he or she doesn't run the show
- ☐ Sees himself or herself as a victim

## **Driven Parent**

- ☐ Is preoccupied with his or her own needs
- ☐ Has low empathy
- ☐ Is enmeshed and not respectful of boundaries
- ☐ Is defensively non-intimate
- ☐ Doesn't engage in reciprocal communication; just talks about himself or herself Isn't self-reflective
- ☐ Has poor relationship repair skills
- ☐ Is reactive, not thoughtful
- ☐ Is either too close or too distant
- ☐ Has rigid values and perfectionistic expectations
- ☐ Is goal-obsessed and busy, with machinelike tunnel vision
- ☐ Sees his or her child as a reflection, without considering what the child wants Likes to run the show
- ☐ Sees himself or herself as a fixer

# EXERCISE #1

## **Passive Parent**

- ☐ Is preoccupied with his or her own needs
- ☐ Has limited empathy
- ☐ Is enmeshed and not respectful of boundaries
- ☐ Can be sporadically emotionally intimate
- ☐ Engages only minimally in reciprocal communication; mostly talks about himself or herself Isn't self-reflective
- ☐ Has limited relationship repair skills
- ☐ Can be thoughtful on occasion
- ☐ Is either too close or too distant
- ☐ Can be kindly and fun but not protective
- ☐ Has a laissez-faire attitude that all is well
- ☐ Is affectionate toward the child but doesn't stand up for him or her Likes someone else to run the show or be the bad guy
- ☐ Sees himself or herself as mellow and good-natured

## **Rejecting Parent**

- ☐ Is preoccupied with his or her own needs
- ☐ Shows no empathy
- ☐ Has impenetrable boundaries
- ☐ Seems disconnected and hostile
- ☐ Seldom engages in communication Isn't self-reflective
- ☐ Has no relationship repair skills
- ☐ Is reactive, attacking, and demeaning Is too distant
- ☐ Ignores his or her child or can be rageful toward the child
- ☐ Is often rejecting and angry
- ☐ Sees his or her child as a bother and doesn't want to get near the child Likes to mock and dismiss
- ☐ Sees himself or herself as independent from others

# EXERCISE #1: SUMMARY OF TRAITS

| Emotional                                                            | Driven                                                                  | Passive                                                        | Rejecting                                     |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| Preoccupied with his or her own needs                                | Preoccupied with his or her own needs                                   | Preoccupied with his or her own needs                          | Preoccupied with his or her own needs         |
| Low empathy                                                          | Low empathy                                                             | Limited empathy                                                | No empathy                                    |
| Enmeshed, not respectful of boundaries                               | Enmeshed, not respectful of boundaries                                  | Enmeshed, not respectful of boundaries                         | Impenetrable boundaries                       |
| Defensive nonintimacy                                                | Defensive nonintimacy                                                   | Sporadic emotional intimacy                                    | Disconnected, hostile                         |
| Nonreciprocal communication                                          | Nonreciprocal communication                                             | Minimal reciprocal communication                               | Rarely communicates                           |
| Not self-reflective                                                  | Not self-reflective                                                     | Not self-reflective                                            | Not self-reflective                           |
| Poor relationship repair                                             | Poor relationship repair                                                | Poor relationship repair                                       | No relationship repair                        |
| Reactive not thoughtful                                              | Reactive not thoughtful                                                 | Thoughtful on occasion                                         | Reactive, attacking, demeaning                |
| Too close or too distant                                             | Too close or too distant                                                | Too close or too distant                                       | Too distant                                   |
| Blowing up or cutting you off                                        | Rigid values, perfectionistic                                           | Kindly and fun but not protective                              | Ignoring or rageful                           |
| Frightening, intimidating emotional intensity                        | Goal-obsessed and busy, with machinelike tunnel vision                  | Laissez-faire; "All is well."                                  | Rejecting, angry                              |
| "You are my soother."<br>("Don't ask me to think about your needs.") | "You are my reflection."<br>("Don't ask me to consider what you want.") | "You are my sweetie."<br>("Don't ask me to stand up for you.") | "You are a bother."<br>("Don't get near me.") |
| Likes to pretend he or she doesn't run the show                      | Likes to run the show                                                   | Likes someone else to run the show and be the bad guy          | Likes to mock and dismiss                     |
| Sees himself or herself as victim                                    | Sees himself or herself as fixer                                        | Sees himself or herself as mellow                              | Sees himself or herself as independent        |

# EXERCISE #2

## EXERCISE: EVALUATING YOUR CHILDHOOD CHALLENGES WITH AN EMOTIONALLY IMMATURE PARENT

Emotional immaturity tends to become most apparent in relationships, particularly between a parent and child. The effects of having an emotionally immature parent can be deeply impactful. Review the following statements that describe common challenges children face with emotionally immature parents, and mark any that resonate with your own childhood experience.

- ☐ I didn't feel listened to; I rarely received my parent's full attention.
- ☐ My parent's moods affected the whole household.
- ☐ My parent wasn't sensitive to my feelings.
- ☐ I felt like I should have known what my parent wanted without being told. I felt like I could never do enough to make my parent happy.
- ☐ I was trying harder to understand my parent than my parent was trying to understand me. Open, honest communication with my parent was difficult or impossible.
- ☐ My parent thought people should play their roles and not deviate from them.
- ☐ My parent was often intrusive or disrespectful of my privacy.
- ☐ I always felt that my parent thought I was too sensitive and emotional.
- ☐ My parent played favorites in terms of who got the most attention.
- ☐ My parent stopped listening when he or she didn't like what was being said.
- ☐ I often felt guilty, stupid, bad, or ashamed around my parent.
- ☐ My parent rarely apologized or tried to improve the situation when there was a problem between us.
- ☐ I often felt pent-up anger toward my parent that I couldn't express.

Your parent may not have all, but checking off more than one of the items suggests some level of emotional immaturity.

## NOTES

DATE .....

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

## BIGGEST TAKEAWAY

## ACTION ITEMS

