

Nuclear Family Emotional Process
Adult Formation: In Relationship
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Journaling and Self Reflection: Nuclear Family Emotional Process

1. Growing up, did your parents yell at each other when they were mad? Or in other words, did you ever hear your parents yell?

2. Do you and your partner/spouse yell at each other when you are mad? Or in other words, have your children ever heard you yell?

3. How did you know if one of your parents was mad/sad/glad/afraid/disgusted? How do you show if you are mad/sad/glad/afraid/disgusted? How does your partner/spouse show if he/she is mad/sad/glad/afraid/disgusted?

Journaling and Self Reflection: Over & Under Functioning

1. What role do you play when you get anxious: over-function or under-function? Of course this may change depending on which relationship you are considering. Specifically, how do you function when you get anxious with a coworker, a spouse, a child, and/or a sibling?

2. When you over/under function, are you aware of it in the moment? What do you do to get out of your over/under functioning role?

3. Think about the ways you are involved in ministry at the church or other small group activities that you do. What role do you usually play there? Are you a leader or a follower? Do you manage the calendar or bank account? What would it look like to over-function or under-function in that role? What would be the worse thing that could happen if you did?

Over functioning and under functioning usually happen when we are stressed or anxious. Think of all the things that make you anxious (or nervous or stressed—what ever word works best for you). Write them all out here. Examples include broken relationships; being criticized or rejected; being envied for your success; financial concerns; coping with disease or illness; caring for children or parents (especially adult children and aging parents); being alone or lonely; not knowing or not being in control.

Next, indicate who in your life is also involved in that area or topic. For example, if caring for aging parents causes anxiety, who else is (or could be) involved in caring for your parents (i.e., siblings, medical professionals, etc.) List the people next to each “trigger” above.

Think of your prayer life. What types of praying work best for you? What are you doing when you are closest to God? How would you classify that as over or under functioning in your relationship with God and also in your own life? Challenge yourself to explore what it would be to do a different, perhaps less “natural” form of prayer. For example, if you find God when you are out running, try doing centering prayer or meditation and see how that feels or works for you.
