

Family System, Family Values

The family of origin is the environment that initially shapes our understanding of what “normal” is for us. Sometimes normal isn’t all that healthy. It is important to stop and examine what we have learned. The following information will help us look at our backgrounds, and to some extent, the “baggage” we bring into our relationships.

Check-mark the words and phrases below that are most descriptive of the way your family of origin operated.

Permissive	Open	Closed
rules un-enforced	reasonable rules	strict rules
spoils	nurtures	punishes
unstructured	structured	over-structured
unsupervised	supervision	over-supervised
disorganized	flexible	rigid
ungrounded thinking	ok to think for self	thinking is done for you
choices are ignored	choices are allowed	choices are strictly limited
lack of direction	guidance	dictatorial
overly-tolerant	tolerant	intolerant
verbal abuse ignored	verbally respectful	verbally abusive
tirades ignored	emotions are allowed	emotions are punished
abandoning	healthy	abusive
lost	freeing	enslaving

Christian values are:

inconsistent	consistent	rule-bound
off balance	balanced	extreme
ignored	taught	demanded
God is a softy	God is caring	God is angry

Write out your answers to the following questions:

Which description(s) above best fits your family-of-origin experience?
What role(s) best helped you live in your family-of-origin. Hero? Over Achiever? Rebel? Scapegoat? Lost Child? Target Child? Clown? Other? Example:
Describe a typical scene or two that illustrates your family-of-origin childhood:
Which category above best describes your own family now (with your partner and kids).