

LESSON 1

"In the beginning..."

1. I chose to join this ten session program because:

2. Other recovery programs I have attended include:

3. What I hope to accomplish in this group is:

4. As I see it now, my attachments are:



5. As we read the first chapter in the booklet, the point that caught my attention was:

The way I relate to it is:

6. At this time, what I know about my mother's pregnancy for me is:

7. On a scale of 0 to 10, I have felt included and a vital part of my birth family at:

Not at all - 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 - Very much

8. Today my connection with members of my birth family as a whole is:

Not at all - 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 - Very much

9. I am closest to _____ in my birth family because:

10. What I know about my grandparents and my parents is: (Include birthplace, nationality, religion, relationships, numbers of children, careers, attitudes, their beginnings, etc)

Mother:



Father:

Mother's mother:

Mother's father:

Father's mother:

Father's father:

11. Based on my attitudes and behaviors, I feel that I am most like _____

Because:

12. As I look back, I wish that I had been more attached to _____

and would like to be more like this person in my family because:



HOMEWORK

Bring a picture(s) of your parents and grandparents to class with you.

In class, tell who is who in the pictures and what you know about their attachments. You can make a few notes about them on this sheet of paper so that you are well prepared in class.

LESSON 2

Self-Survival

1. According to the video and Chapter Two, the need for survival is a drive in the brain of every human. Looking back to my early childhood, the way I survived (got my basic needs met) was by (ex. Crying, temper tantrums, whining, etc.):

2. When I was injured or hurting, the person I went to for comfort was:

3. If no one was available for comfort, I comforted myself by:

4. In most cases, the use of a technique for survival comes at a price. My childhood technique for feeling comforted came with a price I had to pay for its use. The price was:



5. Once I became a teenager, the technique(s) I used to feel comforted or to ease the emotional discomfort I felt was:

6. One survival technique was more costly than the others. The more expensive technique and the price I paid for using it was:

7. The technique(s) I currently use to ease emotional pain is:

8. The method of **covering** my emotions that causes me the greatest difficulty is:

9. Being honest, I would have to say that my current specific addictions (survival techniques) are:



10. As a child, when emotional turmoil occurred in my family, I handled it by:

11. When things become stressful in my life today, I handle them by:

12. The people who suffer the most from my technique(s) for handling stress are (be specific):

13. In my opinion, a more acceptable/beneficial way of dealing with stress would be to:

14. What prevents me from using this more acceptable/beneficial method is:



LESSON 3

Bonding

The process of Mother and father bonding with their child begins at conception, while the child is just beginning to form and is still in the embryo stage. In his wonderful; book, "Pre-Parenting", Dr. Thomas Verney, a well-known author and the world's leading expert on the effects of the prenatal and early postnatal environment on personality development, states:

"Starting from the moment of conception, a child's brain is wired by his or her environment. Interaction with the environment is not merely a requirement built in to the process from our earliest days in the womb."

"The brain is sensitive to experience throughout life, but experience during the critical periods of prenatal life and early postnatal life organizes the brain."

"Every biological process leaves a psychological imprint, and every psychological event changes the architecture of the brain. In short, early experience largely determines the architecture of the brain and the nature and extent of adult capacities. A secure relationship with one or two primary caretakers leads to more rapid acquisition of emotional and cognitive skills."

Granted, you cannot remember what took place while you were in your mother's womb. You may not even know your mother, having been given out for adoption or into foster care from birth onward. But if that is the case, you can safely assume that the bonding between your mother and yourself was absent. It would be extremely difficult for a woman to bond with her unborn child and then give him or her away!

So you may have some work to do! If you know your birth mother and she is still alive, spend some quiet time with her asking what her life was like at the time of your conception, and what her relationship was like with your birth father while she was pregnant. Answers to that question provide major information about the atmosphere in which you began to develop. If mother is not available, ask an older sibling, another relative or a good friend of the family while Mom was carrying you.

Let's take a look at your beginnings:

1. I was born on _____ (date)
2. In the line-up of children in my family, I am # _____ out of _____ children.
3. There are _____ boys older than me and _____ girls older than me.

4. There are _____ boys younger than me and _____ girls younger than me.
5. The favored child by my mother was _____.
6. The favored child by my father was _____.
7. In terms of socio-economics, my family would be:

Poor - 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 - wealthy

8. The age difference between the child above me and myself is _____ yrs.
9. The age difference between the child beneath me and myself is _____ yrs.
10. Of all the siblings, I recall that _____ got the most attention.
11. The circumstances surrounding my conception, as reported to me, are:

12. I feel that in childhood I was most attached to: _____.

I chose this person because:

13. **Elements of Bonding** – Check which items you know apply to your beginnings

_____ **Touch** – skin to skin contact and carrying

_____ **Warmth** – generated by holding and touching

_____ **Eye to eye contact**

_____ **Odor** – through his sense of smell, baby learns to identify Mother by her distinct aroma

_____ **High pitched voice** – Soothing laughter and smiles

_____ **Hugging and kissing** – this helps transfer bacterial flora from mother to child and protects the baby from common infections.

_____ **Breast-feeding** – nursing at the breast builds up antibodies in the child

_____ **Entrainment** – the parent responds to the baby's cues through body movements, facial expressions, and speech

_____ **Rhythmicity** – the parents re-create the life rhythms experienced by the baby in utero, while at the same time helping the baby to adapt to new rhythms

14. **Elements of Poor Bonding** – Check those which apply to your feelings, thoughts or behaviors today.

- Insecure
- Locked into hindsight
- Vigilantly try to control, predict and anticipate
- Feel powerless and afraid of the unknown
- Do not want to be questioned, yet I always have an answer
- Know how to do things
- Consider myself always to be right
- Both dominate and cling
- Use and abuse to meet my own needs
- Live my life on alert
- Trust only in my own defenses
- Find that love and intimacy are fearful to me
- Find excuses to distance when someone else moves close
- “Not too close but not too far”

15. Write about the item on the above list that you find is hardest to deal with in your life today.

16. As I look back on my childhood, I would say that my mother did or did not (circle one) bond to me. The evidence of this that I feel is:

17. As I look back on my childhood, I would say that my father did or did not (circle one) bond to me. The evidence of this that I feel is:



18. The person I feel most attached to today is _____.

What makes me feel most attached to this person is:



LESSON 4

Attachment

"I don't know what's wrong with me! Why don't I ever fit in? Why, even in a crowd of friends or at a church or club function, do I feel like a stranger, an outsider? I can honestly say that there's not a person alive to whom I feel totally connected."

Sound familiar? Are these your thoughts or your feelings? Where do they come from? How can you get rid of them?

These lessons address these questions and will also answer them for you, so long as you are totally engaged in the process and are honest about your beginnings as well as your current feelings and behaviors.

The need to belong (to be bound by birth, allegiance or dependency) to at least one other person is God-given. It was placed in your computer-like brain and hard-wired to your heart at conception. This built-in software is required for your healthy survival as an infant and fundamental to human existence. It is in place so that you will connect with your source of life, both in the womb and at birth. That source is your mother. That process of connecting is called **attachment**.

As you grow from infancy to childhood, so should your supply of safe and nurturing people to whom you will belong. In those early months, including the time in the womb, your ability to attach is established and so is your method of attachment. Both your ability and your method of attachment are based on your relationships with your earliest attachment figures; the way that they **bonded** with you.

Much of the information you will receive in this henceforth is based on the work of Dr. John Bowlby, a British researcher and psychologist and his colleagues, Dr. Mary Ainsworth and Dr. John Robertson. Dr. Bowlby is considered to be the "Father of Attachment Theory". His work, discoveries and writings have stood the test of time and are in wide-spread use today in modern psychology. It dovetails beautifully with the Bible and writing of many experts, and so it should be considered valid and helpful.

According to Bowlby, there are four basic questions that each person asks of themselves. The answers to these questions strongly influence how you will attach – what feelings of belonging you will develop. These questions, which you heard on the video, are the basis for the first lesson. They will be foundational to your understanding of your emotional connections with others.

1. Am I worthy of being loved?

a.) Do you feel that you are loved? _____

b.) Going back to your earliest childhood memories, list the people in your life who communicated to you that you are worthy of being loved. Alongside their name, list how they gave you the message that you were worthy of being loved.

c.) Go back in your memory bank again and now list those who gave you the message that you were NOT worthy of being loved.

2. Am I competent to get the love I need?

a.) a.) Do you think that you have what it takes to get the love you need? _____

b.) Going back as far as you can in your memory, recall the methods you used to endeavor to get love and a feeling of connection or belonging. Beside the method, check if your chosen method was successful (yes) or not successful (no).

c.) When your attempts at seeking and receiving love were unsuccessful, what was your response?

It is out of your successes or failures in getting the love you needed, that you determine if you're OK or if you're inadequate, unable, deficient or inept.

3. Are others reliable and trustworthy in meeting my needs?

- a.) As a child, were you often disappointed by a parent or primary care-giver?

- b. Write about a specific incident from childhood that you recall, which was a major disappointment to you.

- c.) In your current relationships, who are the people who can be counted on to

MEET MY NEEDS

NOT MEET MY NEEDS

4. Are others accessible and willing to respond to me when I need them to do so?

- a.) In your childhood, did you feel that those close to you were accessible and willing to meet your needs? _____

- b.) Recall a specific childhood incident when you had a need and someone responded positively.
Add how you felt about their response to you.



- c.) Recall a specific childhood incident when you had a need and someone close to you refused to or did not respond positively. Add how you felt about their response and how you reacted.

5. To whom (be specific) did you feel most connected as a child? WHY?

6. To whom (be specific) did you feel least connected as a child? WHY?

7. To whom do you feel most connected today?

8. What about that relationship makes you feel connected?



HOMEWORK

Bring a picture of yourself as a child (ages 2-10) and a paragraph you have written or a picture you have drawn about your feelings of connection or belonging at the age this picture was taken.

