

## Questionnaires

<u>Topic</u>	<u>Page</u>
Being a Man.....	2
Turning points in your life.....	5
Key questions.....	6
You and Your Father.....	7
You and Your Mother.....	8
Work and Overwork.....	9
Men and Money.....	11
Men and Sex.....	12
You and your Partner(s).....	13
Men and their Children.....	14
You and Children.....	16
Helping Children.....	17
Time-line/Road-map.....	18
One Year to Live Exercise.....	19
City Slickers.....	20
Field of Dreams.....	21
The Great Santini.....	22
Lion King.....	23
The Blueprint of My Life.....	24
Berg-Smith Bubble Sheet.....	25

## **Being a Man**

What have you learned about men?

1. How would you complete these sentences:

- Men are...
- Men usually...
- Men never...
- Boys are different than girls because they...
- Boys lack...
- Boys should be able to...
- Boys won't want to...
- Compared to girls, boys are more...
- Compared to boys, girls are more...
- Most of the men in my life have been...

2. Think of a time in your life when a man came through for you, supported you. Who was that person? What did he provide? What do you take from that experience?

3. What are some of your expectations of women? (Examples- Put their needs aside in favor of men's, act less smart than men, hide their intelligence, look to men to care for financial or physical tasks, be

dependent on men, acquiesce to men's demands, take care of children, cook, clean house, defer to male authority, manage the feelings in a family/relationship?)

4. Which (if any) of the above expectations were present in your family? What were you taught? What occurred in your family? Which of these expectations do you see your son or his friends adopting? Which do you find it hard to let go of as expectations for yourself?
5. How did you cope with the pressure to act like a man? When you were young did you feel you were tough enough? Did you try to act tougher? How were you treated by adults for not acting like a man? What names were you called? Were you hit by others? Parents? What do you carry from these experiences?
6. What cultural, racial or religious traditions do you identify with? What traditions do you value? What parts have lacked meaning for you? What traditions would you like to pass on to your sons? How would you describe your spiritual life?
7. How would you describe your physical life? Do you feel tired, warm, do you get enough sleep, do you eat properly, exercise adequately? What feelings of loss and grief do you have?
8. When you were a child, did your family use physical discipline? What was the effect on you? Were you verbally mistreated, put down, teased, told you were stupid, negative comments? What were the effects of verbal abuse?

9. What do you value about sports? What do you consider questionable about sports? What sports did you participate in as a youth? Now? What sports do you watch now? What would you like to pass on to boys about sports? How important is it for you to win?
10. What messages were you given about women's bodies? Comments made about their bodies? How did you learn about sexuality? From whom? What were you told about men's bodies?

**Turning points in your life:**

Write your earliest memories of:

- Your first day of school, first love, first kiss
- Most recent illness
- Your school years, especially high school
- First job, first significant achievement, first sense of failure
- Career changes
- Marriage(s), children, births, weddings, life changes
- First and most recent experience with death

**Key questions:**

- Where do you want to be in five years, living, working?
- Describe the qualities of your relationships
- What activities give you meaning?
- What are some of your painful memories or experiences?
- If someone were to give you a testimonial dinner what would you want said about you?
- How would you describe your purpose in living? Your place in the universe?
- What gift would you give to your family today if all things were possible to give?

## **You and Your Father:**

- Describe your father, what do you remember about him? What kind of person is/was he? What did he talk with you about? What didn't he talk about? How did he express his feelings? What feelings did he express? How did he relate to women, children, other men?
- Complete this sentence: "What my father passed on to me was...."
- If your father was standing in front of you today, how would you complete this sentence: "Dad, I needed you to...."
- For what have you blamed your father? Your mother?
- What other "father figures" were in your life growing up? Who were your heroes? What did you learn from them?
- What qualities do you think are important in a father?

## **You and Your Mother:**

- Describe your mother, what do you remember about her? What kind of person is/was she? What did she talk with you about? What didn't she talk about? How did she express her feelings? What feelings did she express? How did she relate to men, children, other women?
- Complete this sentence: "What my mother passed on to me was...."
- If your mother was standing in front of you today, how would you complete this sentence: "Mom, I needed you to...."
- For what have you blamed your mother?
- How have the women in your life been different from or similar to your mother?



## **Work and Overwork:**

Check all that apply

- My family complains about my absence at evening meals because I am working late.
- I bring work home often.
- I have uncomfortable feelings about my strong work focus.
- At work I experience frustration about not seeming to ever get caught up.
- I often feel best when I am very busy, whether at work or home.
- I call into work at least twice while on vacation.
- I postponed or changed my vacation dates at least once during the past five years.
- I have been quietly harboring a desire to work less and get off the work treadmill.
- I feel angry about all that my employer expects of me.
- Those close to me often express displeasure about my being away so much on business trips.
- I feel guilty when I leave work on time.

Answer the following questions.

1. What bothers me most about my current job and/or work climate?
2. If I imagine myself at the age of 65 reflecting on my life, what would have been important to me and what would not?
3. Have I shared my dissatisfaction about my current job situation with those I care about? If not, why not?
4. If I had more personal time available, what is one way I would spend it?
5. Can I downshift at work? What is stopping me from doing so?
6. What is most important in my life right now? What is my greatest concern or fear about work?
7. If I created space for myself with work, what would I do instead?
8. On average, how much time per week would I like to carve away from my work?

## **Men and Money**

1. Describe your current attitude about money. How important is it to you? Do you derive security from it? Do you use it to measure your self-worth? Success? What does money mean to you?
2. Do you have a sense that you have enough money, assets? If not, how much more do you think you need to feel comfortable? Secure?
3. What would it mean to you to lose your assets? Your life savings? What would it mean to be poorer than you are?
4. What is your current practice with money, saving, spending, hoarding, self-indulgence?
5. Do you believe your current practice and attitude toward money enhances or detracts from your spiritual life, your recovery?
6. How do you think you need to change your current practice and attitude about money?
7. List your material possessions, cars, houses, stereos, computers, clothing, leisure, sporting equipment....
8. How do you feeling about these assets, possessions? How important are they to you? What would it like if you lost them? What would you least like to lose?

## **Men and Sex:**

1. Describe your current sex life. How do you feel about your sex life?
2. On a scale of 1-10, 1 being the worst sex life on the world and 10 the best ever, how would you rate your current sex life? Why? Your past sex life? Why?
3. What is your current attitude about sexuality?
4. In what way do you believe your current sexual practices help/hurt your emotional, physical and spiritual well-being?
5. In what way do you think you need to change your practice and attitudes about sex?
6. Who taught you about sex?
7. What was your first sexual experience like? With whom? Where? What feelings surface as you look back upon it?

## **You and your Partner(s)**

1. Give a brief history of your personal, intimate relationships. Describe issues and concerns in these relationships.
2. What patterns have you noticed in your relationship? Were your relationships short or long duration? Intense? Passionless? Passionate? Were you happy? What would you do differently now?
3. Do men around you avoid intimacy? How could you be more intimate? With whom? What ways do you use to avoid intimacy?
4. What would you gain by being closer to other men in your life?
5. List 3 things you'd like to tell another man? Things you don't know how to say, things about which you're embarrassed, ashamed?
6. Do you find it embarrassing to talk with men about personal information? What do you find embarrassing to talk about with other men?
7. Write the name of one man you'd like to be closer to. How can you make that happen?
8. Write the name of one man you love? Have loved? Care about? Cares for you?

## **Men and their Children**

What kind of boys do you want to see raised?

- To be connected to the environment?
- To express a variety of feelings?
- To take care of themselves physically and emotionally so they do not expect others to take care of them?
- To understand the social, political, and economic systems they live and work in?
- To treat men and women as equals?
- To treat others with respect, fairness?
- To help others, the sick, poor, needy?

2. What kind of world do you want to create?

3. What do men stand for?

4. How different are boys and girls?

5. Make a list of what you consider to be male and female qualities

6. Is there an age beyond which you find it hard to hug or hold boys? Why?

7. How do you withhold affection from older boys? Men?

8. Describe a time when you worried your son or another boy wasn't tough enough?

9. How do you encourage boys to toughen up, suck up the pain, act like a man?

10. What kind of men do we need today?

11. Who are your "sons?" Boys to whom you act like a parent?

12. Which boys are hardest to see as your “sons?” Suburban, urban, rural, poor, well-off, disabled, gay, bisexual, African American, Asian, Latino, Jewish, Native American, White, immigrant, gang members?
13. Are you uncomfortable when your son comes home defeated, scared, having run from a fight? If he cries? Are you fully present to him then, or do you panic, withdraw from him.
14. Do you talk to your sons about personal matters, listening to him?
15. In what ways have you assumed your son or other boys you interact with are heterosexual? How would you respond if they were gay, bisexual?
16. Growing up what were the messages given you about homosexuality? How old were you then? Where do you notice homophobia in the boys around you?
17. Appreciating boys: What do you love about your sons? What is unique about him? Positive qualities? Challenges he faces?
18. Are there situations when you think it is OK to hit a child? To punish a child? To threaten a child? What do you gain/lose from threats, hitting a child?

### **You and Children:**

- ❑ Who are you a father figure to (biologically, socially, psychologically)?
- ❑ Who are other youth you might be a father figure to?
- ❑ If you have daughters, how can you support them? Sons?
- ❑ How can you teach your sons to respect women, to treat women as equals?
- ❑ What are ways you can teach children to be proud of their race, culture, religion, heritage, and to know about and respect the heritages of others?
- ❑ How can you be a good model of tolerance and respect to youth?
- ❑ What was the last time you told others/children you loved them?



## **Helping Children:**

Answer yes or no to the following questions:

- Do I love, acknowledge, and respect the young in my life?
- Do I tell them at least once a day that I love them?
- Do I avoid blaming them for their mistakes?
- Do I take my anger, frustrations, past hurts, and disappointments out on them?
- Do I challenge them inappropriately? Do I talk straight-forwardly to them?
- Do I help them heal their hurts?
- Do I share power with them in an appropriate manner?
- Do I help them work together and support each other?

## **Timeline**

Draw a timeline of your life. This could be in the form of a road-map. Include all the significant changes, gains (marriages, children, jobs) and losses (deaths, divorces, geographic changes) you have experienced on your journey. Date both the gains and the losses. Write a sentence about what the impact these gains and losses have had on your life. What beliefs have you gained from them?

Review the road-map or time-line, and add the progression of your drug or alcohol use. When did you start to use more? How were events in your life effected by that use? What losses correlate with increased use?

Continue the map into the future. As you look ahead for five years, what are the mileposts that you want to achieve? Who will be in your life? What will you be doing? What will you achieve?

## **One Year to Live Exercise**

Here's the bad news, you have been given one year to live.

Here's the good news, you have unlimited resources to do whatever you wish to do.

Question: What would you do?

Write a personal creed, what you personally believe in.

## **City Slickers:**

Healing themes: trying to find yourself, being stuck in a relationship, taking risks, father-son issues, commitment, effects of the past, parenting, friends and support.

Main lessons:

1. Good friends are an asset in dealing with the ups and downs of life.
2. Lasting relationships require a heavy dose of commitment.
3. The remedy for burnout is to do one's job well and have varied interests.
4. Fathering is about doing positive activities together as well as having long talks.
5. Life is a series of "do-overs"—chances to try something once again and this time do it better.

Questions:

1. What is the key message from the three friends regarding their fathers, and how would you relate these statements to your own father?
2. What was the role of Curly in the lives of the three leading men?
3. How did each of the men resolve their life changes and new approaches to life?

## **Field of Dreams:**

Healing themes: father-son relationship, reconciliation with the past, following one's dreams, hearing the voices within.

Main lessons:

1. Never stop dreaming, the spice of life.
2. Support for a partner means taking his or her visions seriously even when they are not one's own.
3. Set goals and stick with them. Don't give up.
4. To forgive a parent, it is necessary to walk in his or her shoes.
5. Burnout may be a symptom of dwelling on mistakes.
6. Sometimes one has to act on information that is less than complete.
7. To reach one's goals, help others reach their own.

Questions:

1. What is the place where dreams come true for each of the characters?
2. What reconciliation comes after the field is built? How will this give Ray greater peace?
3. Why will people come to the field of dreams?

## **The Great Santini:**

Healing themes: father-son relationship, alcohol abuse and its effects on the family, dominating personalities, masculine behavior, domestic violence, adolescent drinking.

Main lessons:

1. Parents must protect their children from physical and emotional abuse.
2. A spouse who is isolated needs a support system for reality testing.
3. Fierceness and compassion can exist in a healthy mix.
4. Assertiveness should be employed to break free from overbearing parents.
5. Real men are strong enough to cry.

Questions:

1. When you saw the basketball scene, what feelings and emotions were generated? Could you relate the scene to your experience with your father? Other men?
2. What are your reflections on the role of alcohol abuse in the family?
3. How have you dealt with dominating men like Bull Meachum in the movie?

## **The Lion King**

Healing themes: father-son relationship, power and control and its effects on the family and community, dominating personalities, shame and guilt, blame and

Main lessons:

1. Parents must protect their children from physical and emotional abuse.
2. Abuse of power can destroy a family and a community
3. Guilt and shame can alienate you from family and community
4. Fellowship and support can help rebuild self-esteem

Questions:

1. When you saw the stampede scene and the casting out of the pride by the uncle, what feelings and emotions were generated? Could you relate the scene to any experience with your relatives? Other men?
2. What are your reflections on the role of emotional abuse in the family?
3. How have you dealt with manipulating and bullying men like Simba's uncle in the movie?

## **The Blueprint of My Life**

Take a blank sheet of paper and a pencil, pen, or crayon.

Think back to the first house you remember living in.

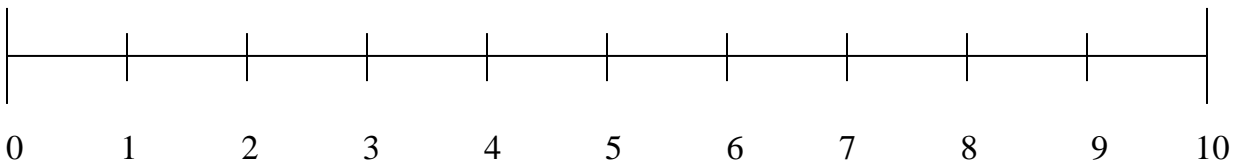
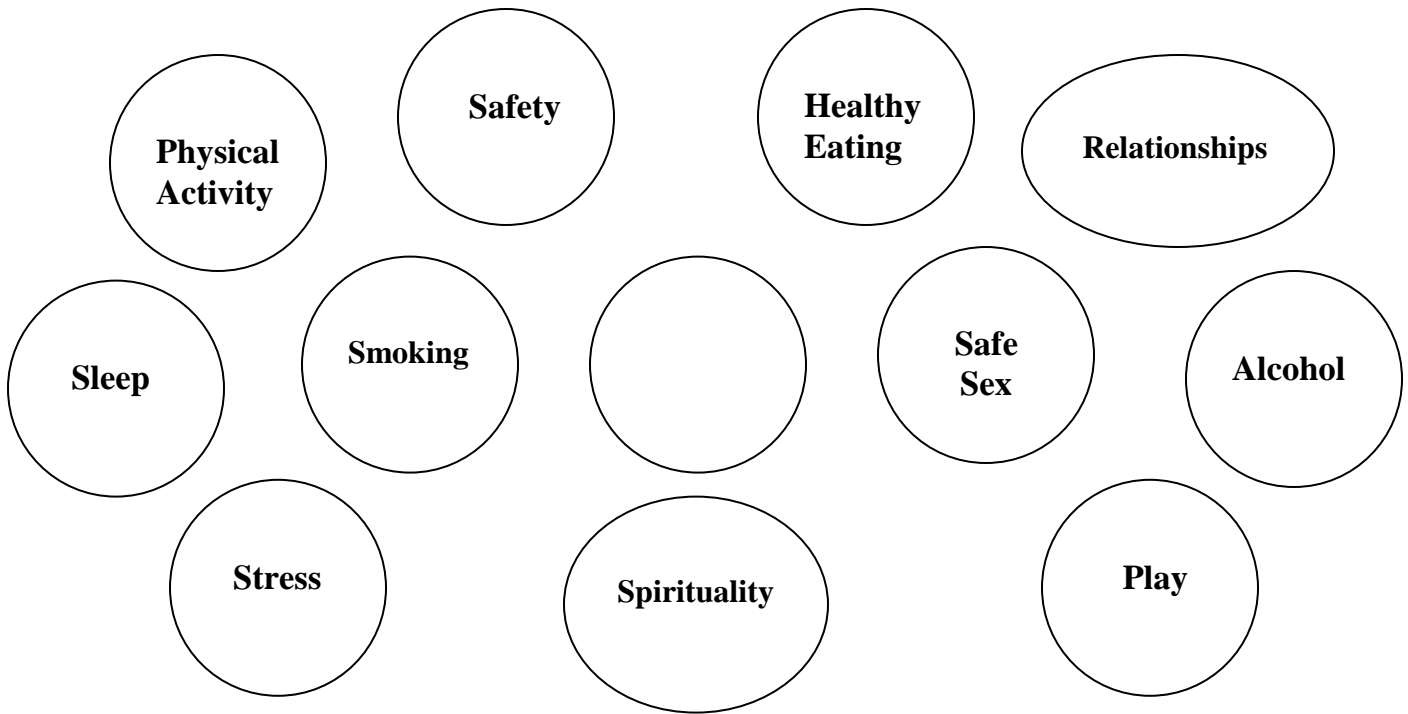
Draw a blueprint of that house, with as much detail as you can remember. Draw in the rooms, furniture, any significant toys, pets, etc. Maybe include the garden, if it feels right to do so.

Draw the members of your family, whoever comes to mind when you think of that home. Put them wherever feels right to you. Now draw yourself, again placing yourself in whatever spot has the most energy.

### **Questions.**

1. Why did you put yourself where you did?
2. What was that little boy thinking or feeling?
3. Who protected him?
4. Who was he afraid of?
5. What did he enjoy doing the most?
6. What was his hardest challenge?
7. What did he need the most that he didn't get?
8. If you could speak to him, what would you like to tell him?





Good

Not-so-good

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*Next Step:*

Adapted from Steve Berg-Smith Consulting