



ELBOW TREE COUNSELING

Family of Origin Exercise & Marital Assessment

Name ten negative characteristics of each parent during the growing up years.

Name ten positive characteristics of each parent during the growing up years.

Name any unmet physical, emotional or spiritual needs during the growing up years.

Name some phrases that just went unspoken to you or over you during the growing up years.

Name the 5-10 warm emotions you associate with positive memories during the growing up years.

Name the 3-5 ways you coped with disappointment during the growing up years.

MARITAL ASSESMENT TOOL

In conflict, my partner and I go long periods of time without talking to one another.

1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7 - 8 - 9 - 10

When I feel hurt by my partner, I experience some pleasure in picking a fight with them.

1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7 - 8 - 9 - 10

In conflict, I have a hard time receiving criticism from my partner, even when it's true.

1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7 - 8 - 9 - 10

I don't want bad things to happen to my partner. Right now, I don't really care if they do.

1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7 - 8 - 9 - 10

I pay close attention to my partners face and body language to determine if I am safe.

1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7 - 8 - 9 - 10

When my partner is on their phone I feel suspicious about who they're talking to.

1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7 - 8 - 9 - 10

The sound of my partner's voice triggers intense feelings of anger.

1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7 - 8 - 9 - 10

In conflict with my partner, I feel numb to what they feel or think about something.

1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7 - 8 - 9 - 10

When my partner is speaking, I tune them out and don't remember what they say.

1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7 - 8 - 9 - 10

I do not want to be physically touched by my partner.

1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7 - 8 - 9 - 10

When my partner suggests something critical, I quickly point out the negative in them.

1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7 - 8 - 9 - 10

My partner's money spending habits are out of control.

1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7 - 8 - 9 - 10

When my partner attempts to help me they are critical of me.

1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7 - 8 - 9 - 10

I don't feel as if my partner makes an equal contribution.

1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7 - 8 - 9 - 10

I don't feel like my partner wants to resolve problems.

1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7 - 8 - 9 - 10

Being with my partner is not fun anymore.

1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7 - 8 - 9 - 10

When my partner drinks any alcohol it triggers feelings of anxiety and mistrust.

1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7 - 8 - 9 - 10

We have very different opinions on how to raise and discipline our children.

1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7 - 8 - 9 - 10

I'm tired of hearing about my partner's religious and spiritual beliefs.

1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7 - 8 - 9 - 10

We don't seem to have much in common any more.

1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7 - 8 - 9 - 10

I suspect my partner is having an affair.

1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7 - 8 - 9 - 10

My feelings of loneliness in my relationship are at an all time high right now.

1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7 - 8 - 9 - 10

Divorce was never an option, but it is now an option I am considering.

1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7 - 8 - 9 - 10

USING THE FOO EXERCISE AND MARITAL ASSESSMENT TOOL

Thank you for taking the time to complete the *Foo Exercise and Marital Assessment Tool*. We utilize this as a unique assessment tool to help us get a baseline for where clients are beginning couples therapy with us. From time to time, we will utilize an array of professional assessments to help get some objective feedback for increased insight and perspective. No single tool can fully capture or cure the problem, but it can definitely help.

Please respond to each of the statements with your best guess by rating the level of your own personal agreement in each particular area on a scale of 1-10. This assessment is a self report so it is not intended to be exact. Just select the range you suspect best matches where you believe matches you might be currently. The left side (1) represents high level of disagreement with the statement. The right side (10) represents a high level of agreement with the statement.

This assessment is simply a tool for taking your temperature and should not be interpreted as a formal diagnosis. We recommend making plans to discuss your results with a trained marriage counselor. If you do not currently have access to such an individual, we would love to talk with you about your results.

Add up your total score from the 19 responses you provide. Reference the key below to correlate your particular score with some of our recommendations.

0-120 = Drowning
120-200 = Treading Water
200-230 = Floating

Hopefully, as you spend some time reflecting, you will have some new categories for understanding opportunities for your own growth and future flourishing. These assigned categories are not intended to add additional shame as much as they are designed to simply name key areas where we may be in need of help.

0-120 - DROWNING

We know that life can be very overwhelming. Any given week can shift how we might respond to each of these questions. Sickness, financial strain, relational discord, thin margins, emotional confusion and spiritual exhaustion can leave us in an experience of feeling flooded and overwhelmed -- afraid to make the next move.

When DROWNING, people may exhibit any of these four responses;

1. Fight - Given the right amount of pressure or pain, fighting is one way people might respond in order to protect themselves in an emotionally or physically threatening relationship with a spouse, friend, colleague or employer. Some individuals fight aggressively and find themselves doing even more damage to their situation. Some choose to fight deploying a unique brand of passivity. This, too, results in the wounding of key relationships.
2. Flight - This line of thinking tends toward the irrational belief that "if we can not be found then the problem will magically disappear." In reality, this response most often amplifies painful issues causing more incentive to hide.
3. Faint - In many instances people use sleep to deal with feeling flooded. Climbing under the covers satisfies a need to feel warm, safe and secure. The body can become so afraid that exhaustion overcomes and the body shuts down and attempts to recharge or recover the leaking energy that flooding is causing.
4. Freeze - This response allows a persons body to remain present but their affect and responses appear to be frozen or shut down. Staring off into space, eyes glazing over, shallow breathing, big sighs or gasps, lack of eye contact all are signifying and unintentionally communicating a lack of presence. When you freeze, you are more easily distracted by distressful and intrusive thoughts and may demonstrate disassociative features.

When you are drowning, you need an immediate lifeline. We recommend taking the following actions steps for anyone who scores in this range.

1. Reach out ASAP to make an appointment with a licensed marriage counselor, preferably someone who is equipped to help you navigate the multidimensional aspects of your emotional and spiritual life. Ideally, this individual would be equipped to also treat trauma and distress.
2. Register for a 3-5 Marriage Intensive designed to bring much needed customized care to your situation.
3. Share your situation with another trusted couple. You can not expect to recover intimacy and trust in your marriage alone. Isolation has most likely contributed in some way to where you find yourself currently, and connection

is the way home. You will need some emotional and spiritual support as you take steps to become whole.

4. Order and begin reading Wholeheartedness - Busyness, Exhaustion and Healing the Divided Self by Chuck DeGroat.
5. If you are connected with a local church, consider inviting your pastor into this process with you. If you ARE a pastor, consider inviting a trusted pastoral colleague or two into this process with you.

120-200 : TREADING WATER

Comedian Jim Gaffigan describes his response to the question, "What's it like to have 5 children?" He responds, "Imagine you are drowning . . . and then someone throws you a baby."

Life can be so exhausting, especially if we take on more than we can manage. "Treading water" is what inevitably happens when we take on too much work and accumulate far too much debt. Our work commitments and the growing debt can keep us stuck. For now, your head may be above water but the exhaustion of treading water over time will eventually catch up with you.

Some of us are driven by debt to stay so mindnumbingly busy. Others may be avoiding some unattended areas of hurt or heartache. Your inner work will need to be focused on cultivating better margins and boundaries.

When you are treading water, you need sustainable relief. We highly recommend taking the following action steps for anyone who scores in this range.

1. Examine the pressure points. Take an inventory of following 12 categories:
 - (1) Maritally - Is there an area of my marital life that I am neglecting?
 - (2) Parentally - Are my children a source of tension in my marriage? Why?
 - (3) Professionally - How many hours per day/week am I working? Why?
 - (4) Financially - Do our monthly expenses exceed our current income?
 - (5) Emotionally - Am I unnecessarily emotionally responsible for anyone?
 - (6) Spiritually - How do we relate to the area of sabbath and rest?
 - (7) Ministerially - Why are we serving in this/these current ministry role/s?
 - (8) Relationally - Am I experiencing life giving or life draining friendship?
 - (9) Home - What are the areas of our home life that I most often neglect?
 - (10) Health - Is there an area of our physical health that we are avoiding?
 - (11) Fun - When was the last time we laughed and played together?
 - (12) Grief & Loss - Is there some unattended heartache that is surfacing?
 - (13) Distress and Trauma - Am I having intrusive thoughts or flashbacks?
2. Schedule an appointment with a licensed marriage counselor for further exploration of your relationship to any of the 12 areas listed above. <https://www.elbowtreeflorida.com/our-team.html>

3. Schedule an individual appointment with a trained Spiritual Director and plan on meeting with them monthly for the next year. <https://www.selfandsoul.care/soul-care-providers.html>
4. If you are looking for a proven and helpful resource for managing your money and getting out of debt, subscribe to Dave Ramsey's [Financial Peace University](#).
5. If your marriage is treading water, we recommend registering for a 3-5 Day Marriage Intensive which infuses months of marital work into one week. <https://www.elbowtreeflorida.com/hayne-steen.html>

200-230 : FLOATING

For folks who rate themselves in this "Floating" category, we would invite you to interrogate your life together a little more. This range in a relationship does not come naturally. It is the result of lots of individual and collective inner work.

- (1) We recommend inviting 2-3 other couples who you trust to also take the Marriage Assessment for the purpose of sitting down together to evaluate your responses. Hearing as other couples process this assessment could help you explore any additional blindspots and discover hidden areas where you may need to further develop and grow as a couple. It will also invite those people around you to evaluate their own lives as well. When you find a couple who is thriving like this, you will find a community of other couples nearby who are a vital dimension of each couple's ongoing marital health.
- (2) Receive feedback with a spirit of curiosity and self compassion, not shame. Take some time to sit with the feedback and listen a little more deeply for what God is revealing to you about your marriage and yourself.
- (3) Schedule an appointment with a marriage counselor to explore what it might look like to sustain what you're experiencing in this place and examine other areas of your life where you may experience some inner (or outer) resistance. Is there an area of your life that you avoid exploring? Where do you experience any reactivity or defensiveness in yourself?
- (4) Pour into younger couples and help point them to resources designed to nurture and nourish their relationship. Every young couple needs to benefit from the intentional investment of a seasoned mature couple.
- (5) Stay connected. Don't coast. Couples don't drift together, they drift apart. Continue to schedule opportunities for marital maintenance and repair.

THANK YOU for taking the time to open yourself up to this kind of a vulnerable inventory, Email us at turnhere@elbowtreeflorida.com if we can help in any way!