

The Legacy of a Challenging Childhood

The legacy of a challenging childhood can be pervasive. It can colour our world, contaminate how we feel about ourselves, influence the way we think and behave, dominate our inner life and invade our relationships. If this is all we've known, we may blame ourselves for our difficulties rather than connect them to childhood adversity. This adds insult to injury.

As adults, some of the creative ways we coped when small may become the source of ongoing problems. Our constant vigilance can overtax our nervous system. Our ability to read other people can prevent us from tuning into ourselves. Apprehension and excessive caution can create distance in our relationships. People-pleasing can become exhausting. Rebellion can be alienating. What served us then can limit us now.

Recovery is about using our strengths as a positive platform for growth. Taking time to assess how we are doing helps to clarify the changes we want to make, but I know from experience there is nothing more overwhelming than reading long lists of symptoms. For this reason, these checklists focus on healthy coping skills and highlight growth and change. Hopefully this will serve as a reminder of the progress you've already made, as well as helping you identify where you'd like to focus your energy for future self-development.

The Emotional Legacy

Usually Sometimes Rarely

___	___	___	I'm able to tolerate tuning into my feelings.
___	___	___	I'm free of emotional pain.
___	___	___	I can identify my feelings as they occur.
___	___	___	My overall stress levels are manageable.
___	___	___	I feel happy, safe and content.
___	___	___	I'm able to put my feelings into words.
___	___	___	I'm free of feelings of intense shame.
___	___	___	I don't feel guilty for things that are not my fault.
___	___	___	I feel relaxed and safe around people.
___	___	___	I trust myself to cope with my emotions.
___	___	___	I can move in and out of sadness without becoming overwhelmed.
___	___	___	When I'm upset, I handle it well.
___	___	___	I have safe, respectful ways to express my anger.

- Something I'm particularly proud of about my emotional life is:

One goal for healing and growth I'd like to set is:

The Behavioural Legacy

Usually Sometimes Rarely

___	___	___	I don't feel the need to strive to win people's approval.
___	___	___	I go at a gentle pace nowadays.
___	___	___	I'm comfortable asking for any help I need.
___	___	___	I realise I don't need to be a perfectionist.
___	___	___	I'm aware when I'm becoming tired and stop to rest.
___	___	___	I'm able to say 'no' when I want to.
___	___	___	I resist helping others when I'm depleted.
___	___	___	I'm able to create pleasure and fun in my life.
___	___	___	I take responsibility for any destructive actions I do.
___	___	___	I resist the urge to over control people and situations.
___	___	___	I'm able to discipline my children without becoming abusive.
___	___	___	I treat people with respect and kindness.

- Something about my behaviour I'm particularly proud of is:

One goal for healing and growth I'd like to set is:

The Legacy of a Challenging Childhood - continued

The Relationship Legacy

Usually Sometimes Rarely

_____	_____	_____	I have people in my life I can trust.
_____	_____	_____	I'm able to relate in a healthy way.
_____	_____	_____	I can tell those I care about how I feel.
_____	_____	_____	I feel safe to let other trustworthy people see my vulnerabilities.
_____	_____	_____	My relationships are relatively equal in terms of give and take.
_____	_____	_____	I'm sensitive to the feelings of others.
_____	_____	_____	I'm able to respect my own and my partner's need for space.
_____	_____	_____	I have very limited tolerance for control or abuse in relationships.
_____	_____	_____	I'm able to recognise and protect myself from destructive people.
_____	_____	_____	I can resist repeating destructive patterns in my relationships.
_____	_____	_____	If I feel over-dependent or possessive I can calm my fears.
_____	_____	_____	I'm able to say 'no' and stand my ground when I need to.
_____	_____	_____	I have developed a strong support network.
_____	_____	_____	I'm able to enjoy a safe sexual relationship.
_____	_____	_____	I don't behave destructively or abusively toward those I love.
_____	_____	_____	I'm able to resolve conflict honestly in my close relationships.

- Something about my ability to relate I'm particularly proud of is:

One goal for healing and growth I'd like to set is:

Physical and Mental Health

Usually Sometimes Rarely

_____	_____	_____	I know how to take care of myself if I feel down.
_____	_____	_____	My mood is generally optimistic and stable.
_____	_____	_____	I take good care of my physical health.
_____	_____	_____	I have a reasonable body image and healthy relationship with food.
_____	_____	_____	I've developed skills to help me cope with anxiety.
_____	_____	_____	I'm more relaxed and less jumpy than I used to be.
_____	_____	_____	I'm bringing my obsessive or compulsive behaviour into balance.
_____	_____	_____	I sleep soundly through the night.
_____	_____	_____	I'm gentle with myself when I'm unwell.
_____	_____	_____	I do not use excessive alcohol, food or drugs, to cope with stress.
_____	_____	_____	My body feels relaxed and pain free.
_____	_____	_____	If I start to feel spaced out, I have the skills to become grounded.
_____	_____	_____	I attend therapy if I need to.
_____	_____	_____	If I have suicidal thoughts or impulses I seek help.

Something about my ability to care for myself I'm particularly proud of is:

- One goal for healing and growth I'd like to set is:

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