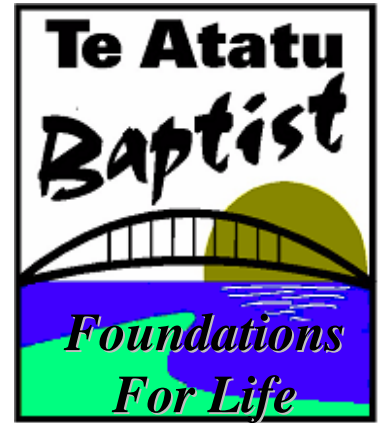


Slide # 1



Into The Blender!



8 weeks of practical, down to earth tools and resources for families, step-families, divorce and remarriage!

Week Five

The Parenting Team

www.TeAtatuBaptist.com

Slide # 2

It's interesting that when travelling by airplane, the instructions given in an emergency, is for the parents to put on the oxygen masks first, and after having ensured their own safety, they are then



in a position to also help their children towards survival and safety.

Along those lines, I guess if there was one 'quote' that describes the philosophy behind this entire series of workshops designed for effective relationships, especially family and blended family,

...it would be this.

Slide # 3

If you are looking for peace, it is better to wear slippers than carpet the entire world.

Like the song goes, if you want to save the world, you need to save yourself.

Just out of interest, do you know the 'driving force' behind a person who is always angry or grumpy?

Basically, it is expectations that are too high!

Simple as that!

We'll get to this a bit later, and see how it affects your relationships, parenting ability and family,

...but for now, we need to reflect back to last week where I took a bit of a survey to get an idea of the amount of time we think married couples – or those within long-term relationships spend *talking together* each day.

The responses *you gave* varied from 10 seconds to four minutes.

Well, after a bit of research, I think you might be surprised at the actual statistics:

It is estimated that the average couple spend around 2 1/2 hours of 'awake' time together per day, *including weekends*.

Of this time -1 1/2 hours are spent watching TV, 30 minutes eating and the remainder doing other activities around the house.

During this time, it is estimated that four minutes are spent talking, and under 30 seconds of this time is spent in intimate or meaningful conversation per day.

Slide # 4

Typically courting couples spend around 30 minutes each day in



any conversation, newly weds 7 minutes, long-term marriages only 2, and retired couples around 8 minutes per day in *any* conversation.

NOTE: Love, affection and trust can be built *without* words!

It has been estimated that the ideal amount of time a couple needs to spend together - in one another's company - actively appreciating and enjoying each other's companionship is a *minimum* of two hours every day.

While that can be difficult, especially with the amount of time we watch the television, with just a small change of focus, the *existing quantity* time we spend together can actually change to quality time!

Just one simple difference, can be to sit *together* on the *sofa* while watching television, and hold hands or cuddle up together!

You see, just small changes can make the world of difference and build your affection and romance considerably!

You don't need to spend *more* time together, just use the time you do spend together – better!

Slide # 5

We also learnt that the amount of time a father spends talking with his children on a daily basis, is 35 seconds, which is a heck of a lot more than the average Christian spends talking with their Heavenly Father, which is only 8 seconds per day!



And of those 8 seconds, the majority of them are something like this:

Dear Jesus, thank you for this meal set before us.

Slide # 6

And the other most common prayer is:

GOD –
HEELLLLP
MEEEEEE! I'm in
trouble
again!!!!!!!

Here's the thing:
What these facts

tells us, is that many, if not most families today are in a state of crisis – to some degree or another.



Having identified something of the problem, today we are going to provide you with key skills and tools to enable you to be the best person or parent you could ever dream of being.

But with this teaching today, I also acknowledge that over 78% of all Christians are single and without children!

So the principles you learn today, are also directly applicable and transferable into your situation and relationships – within your family, with your parents, your relatives, workmates and friends.

And when this comes to parenting, my goal for you, is that you grow to be the absolutely best mother or father *that your son or daughter* could ever dream of having!

Here's the thing – if for whatever reason you are not married or do not have children of your own.

Scripture says that; “God places the lonely in families”.

The essence of this Scripture is that God places people who are not within a family, INTO a new family.

As a solo man or woman, an adult without a spouse or children of your own, God actually wants you to consider being the ‘spiritual’ parent of someone who is lonely. And sometimes the lonely child God wants you to adopt, may even be older than yourself!

God wants to bring the lonely into your ‘spiritual’ family, with you as the mum or dad.

The world is in deep need of men and woman who will act as mentors to the lonely – the abandoned and discarded.

Slide # 7

And maybe that's why he has blessed you with the gift of celibacy, and why you need to also reach for fullness of emotional and spiritual wholeness.



And it doesn't matter whether your children are pre-schoolers, graduated from college and in the working force, married or single, parents themselves or living as a solo parent.

Your children still need a mum and a dad – they still need you!

Even if your children are fully grown with children of their own – they still need you to be their mum or their dad!

Slide # 8

Maybe you need to make that overdue phone call or visit?



This is especially true if your children have lived through the breakdown or divorce of *your* own marriage.



I need to give a word of encouragement to all our fathers who have divorced and have children from that first marriage or relationship who are *not* living with you at the moment.

Your children need you. They need your time, affection and love.

Out of sight *must never* be out of mind!

They don't want your money or gifts as some sort of 'compensation' – kids are smart enough to 'see through' that game.

Slide # 9

As we shall soon see – for all parents – overindulgence (too much of a good thing) is actually as destructive and harmful in the life of a child as is neglect.

They want you – nothing less, nothing more.



And YOU equates to your time and attention.

And if you are a ‘workaholic’ – you need to understand that this IS having a negative impact upon your own life, your marriage and family situation no matter whether you are single or married.

As hard as this might be for me, I want to share two experiences from my own childhood as I had to learn to cope with a workaholic/absent father.

In doing so, I am not wanting to dishonour my father, he did his best.

In fact, every night as I put our youngest children to bed, they ask me to share a ‘happy’ story or event from my own childhood with them.

What I am wanting to do, is share my heart and life with you, and help you learn from the lessons I have had to learn in life.

Scripture encourages us to, ‘comfort others with the same comfort you have received yourself from the Lord’,

...and I want to briefly share something of my journey through childhood, and the keys to healing and freedom the Lord has shown me.

Slide # 10

I also want to give you a 'Biblical' foundation to help you understand this 'different' style of preaching we've had over the last several weeks.



What you have been experiencing is where real-life, modern and practical examples of the *outworking* of Biblical principles have been used – *instead* of direct exposition of the Scriptures themselves.

A lot of my own character and personality have gone into these workshops.

This is different to the 'TV news-reader' approach of the past, where the 'news announcer' simply states the facts as written before them, and leaves their own opinions and personality *out* of the broadcast.

One of the key principles of the New Testament, is that the 'Word became Flesh and lived amongst us' and we saw the Scriptures come 'alive' through the life of the Lord Jesus Christ and the other writers of the New Testament.

I am simply following in this example, and allowing the 'Word to become flesh' in *my own life* and the lives of other people in the examples used.

So, let me share something of my personal journey with family life and parenting.

The first was when I was around 8 years of age, and my father owned a dairy, that took all of his time and attention.



One afternoon I was ‘tinkering’ in my father’s workshop, trying to get a broken old motor-mower to work.

The amazing thing, is that I succeeded!

I was so pleased with my accomplishments, that I wanted to share them with the one person who meant the most in the world to me, my Father.

But as always - he was at work – even on a Sunday afternoon.

So the only way I could share my joy with him, was to phone him up between customers, and hold the phone out so he could hear the mower running.

The second was after I was married.

I was still young, around 19 years of age.

My father had long since sold the dairy, and now had time for his other passion – boating.

To my amazement, he invited me out fishing one day.

We *motored out* to a really good fishing spot, and my father handed me the fishing line, and then turned away and did maintenance on the rigging of the mast – while I sat there in silence, fishing the whole time - by myself.

Can you see the difficulties and potential damage in these situations?

An absent or workaholic father, and then a father who - when he *was* at home, or with his family - wasn't really interested, and his attention was elsewhere?

Can you see what was modelled to me as a child and newly married man – the example and legacy that was taught to me as to how a husband and father should relate to his family.

Cat Stevens summed it well in the song, Cats in the Cradle.

'I'm gonna be like you Dad, you know I'm gonna be like you!'

As I said last week, there is much for us to learn, unlearn, and relearn in life – especially when it comes to our relationships and communication – and the affect this has upon those we love.

And when it comes to friendships, marriage and family life – the first and most important change that needs to take place – is right inside here – within *your own* heart and life.

So, our goal today is to equip you with skills and tools to enable you to be the best person, friend, son, daughter or parent possible.

Remember last week, how I shared about *two different* marriages, relationships or family situations.

One is successful, with loving parents who support and compliment each other, and children who are respectful, obedient, kind and compassionate.

Slide # 12

On the other side of the table, we have a marriage that is hurtful and damaging, with children who are rebelling and disrespectful, self-willed and angry.



We asked ourselves; ‘What makes the difference between these two different relationships? What makes one more successful than the other?’

Because if we could only know what these skills and tools are that make the difference, we can begin applying them to the relationships we struggle within, and see our struggling transformed from

something which causes us sorrow, *to joy*, from pain *to healing*, from sadness *to happiness*!

You see, I believe in the salvation of the Lord Jesus Christ!

But I do not believe it only applies to 'sin'.

The redemption and salvation of Jesus Christ is every bit as much for your life situation, for your relationships, marriage and family, as it is for the salvation of your souls!

And what we are doing, is giving you those skills, insights and practices that make the difference between a *hurting* family and a *healing* family!

Relationships are hard enough in any family situation, but they are especially challenging within a Blended Family.

Let me explain why this is:

God's design for the family is that a man and a woman begin their marriage by emotionally separating from their family of origin.

Slide # 13

As the two "leave their own parents" and "cleave" to each other, a new foundation is laid for their own home and upcoming family.



The marriage relationship is established *before* children are born and continues throughout the child-rearing years.

Scripture even affirms the necessity of a honeymoon period as the couple solidifies their relationship.

Slide # 14 – Scripture below

"If a man has recently married, he must not be sent to war or have any other duty laid on him. For one year he is to be free to stay at home and bring happiness to the wife he has married" (Deuteronomy 24:5).

But stepfamily couples don't have this bonding time.

In fact, because biological parent-child relationships are bonded by blood and have more history, the marital relationship, instead of being the strongest bond in the home, is often the weakest.

Simply understanding this fact will enable you to be more 'flexible' within your blended family relationship.

It can allow you to 'work *with* this knowledge' and not against it.

It can allow you to offer your spouse an enormous amount of grace and security as they are often 'caught in the middle' of an emotional mine field of mixed loyalties.

As a mother or father within a blended family, you actually need more inner security and strength than a parent within a biological family unit.

Like me, you need to make sure you are on a journey of self awareness and self discovery that has at its foundation an understanding of your eternal worth in the Lord Jesus Christ.

You need to understand that, ‘Hurting people – hurt people’ and in order for you to bring freedom and healing to your relationships and family, you need to be a person who is receiving healing from the pain and anguish of your previous broken relationships.

Without going into detail, it is expressed in the Relation Equation from last week:

Slide # 15 – Equations below

In a friendship – the goal is TWO people in a friendship
 $1 \text{ plus } 1 = 2$

In a marriage, the goal is that the two become ONE
 $1 \text{ TIMES } 1 = 1$

But if one person is not ‘whole’, neither will the equation/relationship
 $\frac{1}{2} \times 1 = \frac{1}{2}$

If both people are hurting, the equation is even worse!
 $\frac{1}{2} \times \frac{1}{2} = \frac{1}{4}$

However, if either or both are journeying towards wholeness, so will the relationship
 $1 \times \frac{3}{4} = \frac{3}{4}$

So personal healing and maturity is a big thing for all of us.

Especially important, is to recognize our ‘echoes’ from the past and how unresolved pain causes more pain.

If your spouse or children say things to you like; ‘You’re over-reacting to this’, or ‘Don’t treat me like your ex – I’m not like that!’

Or like I struggled with for years, your emotions are confused, and instead of showing appropriate anger – you smile, or instead of defending yourself appropriately, you run and hide.

Or maybe you find it hard to show love and affection, and instead find yourself withdrawn, angry or impatient much of the time.

Then it might be time to realise you are reacting out of your past hurts, and it might be time for you to become a Ghost Buster!

The thing is, if you also ‘under-react’ to events within your life or family, this too can be a sign that your past is still dictating your reactions to the present in unhelpful ways.

When you can’t break free from your destructive habits or reactions, when your ex still seems to have an emotional hold over your life, when you know you are hurting others whom you love, but you just can’t seem to break free and stop.

At these times you need to examine your *echoes* from the past!

Slide # 16

Here’s the thing about finding healing.



A well known Christian counsellor formulated this insightful phrase when it comes to resolving the echoes of the past:

Slide # 17 Statement below

We need to face, trace and replace the damage in our hearts.

We need to have the courage to look at our challenges ‘head on’ without excuses, we need to trace where they came from in our lives, and we then need to replace them with truth and grace.

Jesus said, you shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free!

For me, as a child and newly married man, I perceived that I was *not* important to my father.

I learnt that he wasn’t really interested in me, that his work and hobbies were more important than spending time with his only son.

To prevent me from outworking these principles within my own life and family, I first had to face them head on!

That’s really hard, and often involves a lot of emotional release.

Next I had to trace where they came from, and then I had to replace them with the truth!

The truth is, that like all Dads, my father had stuff *he* needed to work on, unresolved issues from his own upbringing.

Truth is, that I am a person, a child, a man of immense value and worth.

Even though my own father may have been too busy for me, my Heavenly Father has all the time in the world for me.

He loves me so much that He would rather die than live without me!

He loved me so much that He sacrificed his whole life for me – I am that much valued.

Despite being a sinner, Jesus died to forgive and cleanse me from all my sins!

Having been released and forgiven, I can forgive those who have hurt me!

That might mean being able to forgive your own father or mother, your step father or step mother, your brother or sister, or whoever it was who hurt you in your past.

But remember that insight from last week:

Forgiveness does not equal trust.

Slide # 18

You can forgive someone who hurt you badly, but that does not mean you must, or should – ever trust them again!

Maybe as a child you suffered from neglect.



What about indulgence!

And here's the thing about the effects of neglect.

They are the same as the effects of indulgence or compensation.

We'll look at this next week, but suffice to say, indulgence is the same as neglect.

We need to understand these things, and bring them to the surface, to the Light.

This is an entirely Biblical principle, where whatever is in darkness is brought to the Light, and in doing so – is disarmed and its power is removed.

Partly this is why we have determined to invite each of our children out to dinner when they finally leave home for good, and ask them if there is anything about their upbringing that we need to apologise for, ask forgiveness and correct.

You see, it brings it to the light and removes all the 'motivation' and *fuel* for rebellion, hurt, unforgiveness or bitterness.

We need to ask ourselves the same question!

What is there in our own upbringing, teenage years or previous relationships that is affecting, fuelling or motivating our dysfunctional reactions of the present.

Simply bringing them to the Light, to the Lord – is the straw that will break the back of the proverbial camel!

Isn't it amazing that the first step in becoming a better parent actually begins with the way we were parented ourselves?

But then again, maybe it isn't that amazing.

To help you on the journey towards wholeness and freedom, I have a 'self test' designed to identify areas of your life that require attention.

Slide # 19

Echoes and Cobwebs¹!



Mark yourself 1 to 3

1 = Very Little

2 = Moderately / Sometimes

3 = Very Often / Regularly

1. How much do you blame others – spouse/children/workmates for your anger, mood or predicament?

Your Score = 1=little. 2=sometimes. 3=often.

2. Do you spend much time regretting past mistakes or feeling upset with yourself over decisions you have made, or your personal inadequacies?

¹ Adapted from David riddell – Living Wisdom.co.nz

Your Score = 1=little. 2=sometimes. 3=often.

3. Do you find yourself doing something, or being somewhere and at the same time wishing you were doing something else, or were somewhere else?

Your Score = 1=little. 2=sometimes. 3=often.

4. Do you find yourself getting angry or upset with another person, but you choose to 'keep the peace' and not say anything?

Your Score = 1=little. 2=sometimes. 3=often.

5. Do you feel as if your life is going nowhere or that you don't really know who you are or where you are going?

Your Score = 1=little. 2=sometimes. 3=often.

6. Do you get anxious over money, debt, size of your bills or dissatisfied with your pay-packet?

Your Score = 1=little. 2=sometimes. 3=often.

7. How resentful or angry are you towards others who have hurt you in your past?

Your Score = 1=little. 2=sometimes. 3=often.

8. How often do you resort to pleasurable activities in order to escape a bad mood or feelings? (Spending, eating, indulgences etc.)

Your Score = 1=little. 2=sometimes. 3=often.

9. How careful are you to avoid threatening situations that might draw attention you yourself, where you might be belittled, correct or made to look a fool?

Your Score = 1=little. 2=sometimes. 3=often.

10. How resentful are you about the perceived power or control others have over you – spouse, parent, employer?

Your Score = 1=little. 2=sometimes. 3=often.

11. How often do you let circumstances direct your life – in regards to finding God’s will for you?

Your Score = 1=little. 2=sometimes. 3=often.

12. Do you suffer from a vague sense of guilt, anxiety or inadequacy?

Your Score = 1=little. 2=sometimes. 3=often.

13. When you don’t get your own way, are you still upset about this event hours or days after it happened?

Your Score = 1=little. 2=sometimes. 3=often.

14. How touchy or sensitive are you? Do you interpret comments and suggestions as personal attacks?

Your Score = 1=little. 2=sometimes. 3=often.

15. How often do you feel that ‘life has you on the run’ and you are pushed from behind to do the ‘ought to’s’ and ‘must do’s’?

Your Score = 1=little. 2=sometimes. 3=often.

Your TOTAL Score =

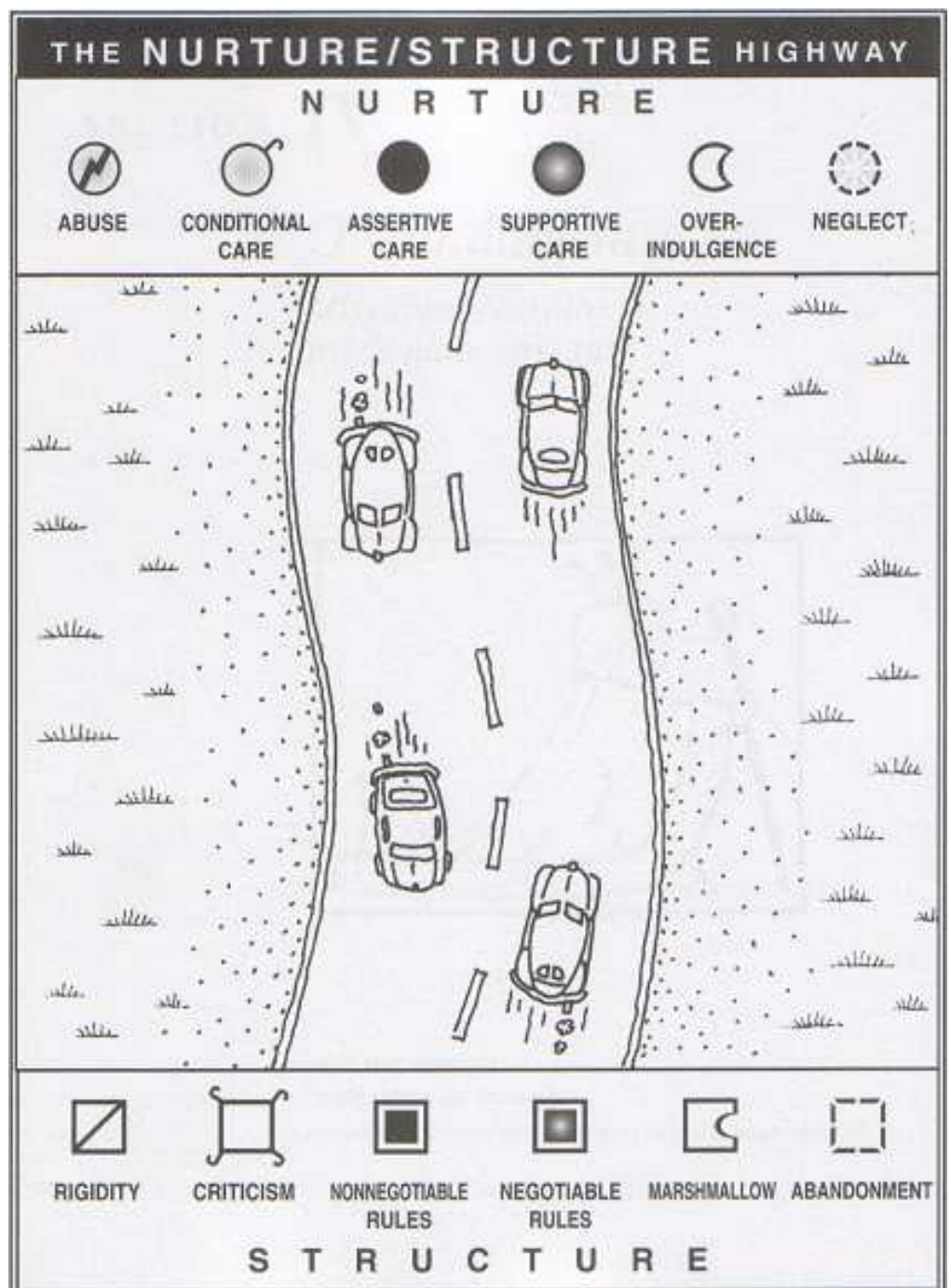
(Results for each question, and a total score result – refer to the end of this booklet. – as are links to a whole host of teaching on these topics.)

Slide # 20 – Chart over page

Having laid a better foundation for effective parenting and relationships, next week we are going to give you this chart, which has possibly been the most effective tool to help me with my parenting skills over the decades.

We will also address the issue of disrespectful teenagers, and how to impart respect and responsibility to anyone who does not have these qualities.

Let's pray together.



Echoes and Cobwebs

Results Sheet

If you scored either a 2 or a 3 for any individual question, that indicates an area in your life that requires *immediate* attention.

15 to 20

As a general rule, a score of between 15 to 20 would indicate emotional and spiritual health – still bearing in mind that any question that scored a 2 or a 3 requires immediate attention.

20 to 30

A score between 20 to 30 indicates some serious areas that are affecting your life and relationships. You need to address each of these issues, preferably with a trained Christian professional.

30 to 45

A score between 30 and 45 indicates you have had a very dysfunctional history and it is drastically affecting your life in several areas. You must get help, professional help from a Christian trained in counselling. Freedom and health are waiting for you. You can do it.

Individual questions and answers:

1. How much do you blame others – spouse/children/workmates for your anger, mood or predicament?
 Indicates whether you are living in reaction constantly. Need to discover that you can change your reaction to the past, and correct the self talk going on within

your head. You are responsible for your mood – no-one else. You can take control of your present by learning to take control of your past and find healing.

2. Do you spend much time regretting past mistakes or feeling upset with yourself over decisions you have made, or your personal inadequacies?
 - You have got stuck in the rut of self-condemnation – with self talk echoes bouncing around inside your spirit. Possibly self hatred that is beating you up constantly. You have unrealistic expectations of others that possibly results in anger. You have little allowance for failure and are driven. Your default mood is probably regret.*

3. Do you find yourself doing something, or being somewhere and at the same time wishing you were doing something else, or were somewhere else?
 - You have a victim mentality and thinking. You lack negotiation skills and self worth, feeling obliged to do things, and powerless over much of life. By allowing your past to be healed, your present will be transformed as well.*

4. Do you find yourself getting angry or upset with another person, but you choose to ‘keep the peace’ and not say anything?
 - You feel peace is important at any price, and keep safe by keeping silent. You are allergic to anger, either expressing or receiving it. You have not learnt negotiation skills.*

5. Do you feel as if your life is going nowhere or that you don’t really know who you are or where you are going?
 - You have no goals, and an undefined purpose in life resulting in a sense of powerlessness. You also have unrecognised gifts and talents!*

6. Do you get anxious over money, debt, size of your bills or dissatisfied with your pay=packet?
 - You have a fear of debt as something bad, coupled with a lack of earning power due to low self esteem and awareness of your skills and talents, possibly resulting in compensation by overspending and impulse buying.*

7. How resentful or angry are you towards others who have hurt you in your past?
- You have developed a victim mindset and possibly have little negotiation skills or sense of the balance of power. You place your self worth in the hands of others.*
8. How often do you resort to pleasurable activities in order to escape a bad mood or feelings? (Spending, eating, indulgences etc.)
- You experienced lack of nurture from your parents which resulted in a lack of self-awareness in yourself. You have a preference for 'quick fixes' and lack of truth.*
9. How careful are you to avoid threatening situations that might draw attention you yourself, where you might be belittled, correct or made to look a fool?
- You have learned to be allergic to attention, even positive attention for your personal growth. By avoiding situations, you are avoiding confronting your unbearable feeling – possibly of humiliation.*
10. How resentful are you about the perceived power or control others have over you – spouse, parent, employer?
- You suffer from an inferiority complex that affects your self worth and negotiation skills, as well as not recognising your strengths and talents.*
11. How often do you let circumstances direct your life – in regards to finding God's will for you?
- You have confused fatalism with faith and have a lack of goals or faith in yourself. You have surrendered to 'fate' (God) what God has imparted into your hands. God is sovereign, and has given you this gift too!*
12. Do you suffer from a vague sense of guilt, anxiety or inadequacy?
- You place unrealistic expectations upon others, and upon yourself. Lighten up! You also place too much importance on believing your emotions and feelings. Your feelings might be real, but that does not make them true!*

13. When you don't get your own way, are you still upset about this hours or days after the event?
- You have become allergic to disappointment or guilt., and learned to live in powerlessness. Remember, correction does not mean rejection, and no does not mean never! Grow from thinking in black and white.*
14. How touchy or sensitive are you? Do you interpret comments and suggestions as personal attacks?
- You have self hatred, possibly with a self destruct button that drives you to perfectionism, with a bruised ego. You have failed to individuate yourself and place your worth in the hands and power of others. You have unresolved guilt.*
15. How often do you feel that 'life has you on the run' and you are pushed from behind to do the 'ought to's' and 'must do's'?
- You have a fear of failure – or success (Same thing!) and a fear of disappoint others, with a low self esteem that possibly makes you too optimistic about your abilities. You have a lack of negotiating skills.*

How to get help!

You have passed the first hurdle, which is to face your issues head on! Well done! The next step is to trace where they came from. You might need some help for this stage, and for the next one which is to replace the false reality you developed – with reality and truth.

Remember, life is a journey not just a destination.

Enjoy the journey, even though the travelling is rough for a while.

Help – practical, Biblical and effective help is available from a variety of sources, some of which are on our website:

www.TeAtatuBaptist.com

Spiritual Gift Discovery Booklet

- Devotional Pathway Discovery
- Conflict Resolution Booklet
- Silencing Your Echoes
- Stopping The Lies Of The Accuser
- Who You Are In Christ
- Understanding Identity Theft
- Removing The Shame Of Divorce
- Removing The Guilt Of Abortion
- Understanding Healing
- A Foretaste Of Heaven
- Understanding Death And Dying
- Living With Chronic Illness
- Toxic Religion
- Life Changing Bible Study

Below, the longest name in the world. Where do you think it is from?

