Who Am I?

(1) The questions in this exercise are powerful. Please make sure you have enough time and privacy to answer them. It may be necessary for you to do this questionnaire by breaking it up into smaller parts.

(2) Answer these questions as candidly as you can. You do not have to answer each question. Just respond to those that are relevant to your life.

(3) After both of you have completed this exercise come together to discuss your answers.

**My Triumphs and Strivings.**

1. What has happened in your life that you are particularly proud of? Write about your physiological triumphs, times when things went even better than you expected, periods when you came through trials and tribulations even better off. Include periods of stress and duress that you survived and mastered, small events that may still be of great importance to you, events from your childhood or the recent past, self-created challenges you met, periods when you felt powerful, glories and victories, wonderful friendships you maintained and so on.

2. How have these successes shaped your life? How have they affected the way you think of yourself and your capabilities? How have the affected your goals and the things you strive for?

3. What role has pride (that is, feeling proud, being praised, expressing praise for others) played in your life? Did your parents show you that they were proud of you when you were a child? How? How have other people responded to your accomplishments?

4. Did your parents show you that they loved you? How? Was affection readily expressed in your family? If not, what are the effects and implications of this for your marriage?

5. What role does pride in your accomplishments play in your marriage? What role do your own strivings have in your marriage? What do you want your partner to know and understand about these aspects of your self, your past, present, and plans for the future? How do you show pride in one another?

**My Injuries and Healings.**

1. What difficult event or periods have you gone through? Write about any significant psychological insults and injuries you have sustained, your losses, disappointments, trials, and tribulations. Including periods of stress and duress, as well as any quieter periods of despair, hopelessness, and loneliness. Also include any deep traumas you have undergone as a child or adult. For example, harmful relationships, humiliating events, even molestation, rape, or torture.

2. How have you survived these traumas? What are their lasting effects on you?

3. How did you strengthen and heal yourself? How did you redress your grievances? How did you revive and restore yourself?

4. How did you gird and protect yourself against this ever happening again?

5. How do these injuries and the ways you protect and heal yourself affect your marriage today? What do you want your partner to know and understand about these aspects of your self?

**My Emotional World**

1. How did your family express the following when you were a child:

a) Anger b) sadness c) fear d) affection e) interest in one another

2. During your childhood did your family have to cope with a particular emotional problem, such as aggression between parents, a depressed parent, or a parent who was somewhat emotionally wounded? What implications does this have for your marriage and your other close relationships (friendships, relationships with your parents, your siblings, your children)? 25

3. What is your own philosophy about expressing feelings, particularly sadness, anger, fear, pride, and love? Are any of these difficult for you to express or to see expressed by your partner? What is the basis of your perspective of this?

4. What differences exist between you and your partner in the area of expressing emotions? What is behind these differences? What are the implications of these differences for you?

**My Mission and Legacy**

1. Imagine that you are standing in a graveyard looking at your own tombstone. Now write the epitaph you would like to see there. Begin with the words: “Here lies…”

2. Write your own obituary. (It does not have to be brief.) How do you want people to think of your life, to remember you?

3. Now you’re ready to write a mission statement for your own life. What is the purpose of your life? What is its meaning? What are you trying to accomplish? What is your larger struggle?

4. What legacy would you like to leave when you die?

5. What significant goals have you yet to realize? This can be creating something, or having a particular experience. Minor examples are learning to play the banjo, climbing a mountain, and so on.

**Who I Want to Become**

*Take a moment to reflect on what you have just written. We are all involved in becoming the person we most want to be. In that struggle we all have demons to fight and overcome.*

1. Describe the person you want to become.

2. How can you best help yourself become that person?

3. What struggles have you already faced in trying to become that person?

4. What demons in yourself have you had to fight? Or still have to fight?

5. What would you most like to change about yourself?

6. What dreams have you denied yourself or failed to develop?

7. What do you want your life to be like in five years?

8. What is the story of the kind of person you would like to be?

------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------