



Things to try ... Time

Understanding: In the flow of time

Context

Like it or not our families are important to us. They help to shape who we are, not just genetically, but also socially. The interactions with our parents, siblings and grandparents (or perhaps lack of interaction) help shape our identities, for better or worse. And similarly with our own children – they learn from us as parents or teachers some of the most fundamental aspects of how to live life.

By focusing on your family roots and history, you can begin to gain a sense of the importance of particular people and use that knowledge to strengthen you by evoking a feeling of support.

Purpose

This activity is designed to open up your awareness of your place in the flow of time and its affect on your personal and collective life experiences.

You will need

A place where you can be comfortable and quiet

30 minutes of undisturbed time

A3 paper or a roll of wallpaper (use the reverse side)

Coloured pens

Small post-it notes

Notice

... how the activities affect you, emotionally and physically. Where are the physical feelings located in your body? How does your intuition 'kick in' and contribute to your responses?

What to do

- Lay out the paper, pens and post-its in front of you and mark out a timeline in generations. So mark the first thirty or so years of your life and then before that space for you parents, grandparents and great grandparents' generations. Also include new generations – your children's if you have them and future ones too – so there might be four or five (or maybe six or seven) generations on your timeline. Mark in key events that relate to your family's history – World Wars, major relocations, family businesses, etc
- With the outline 'map' of your family history laid out before you, take a few moments to relax. Sit firmly and comfortably on your chair or the floor and breathe deeply. On each out breath, feel yourself letting go of any concerns or tensions you may be carrying

- Allow yourself to 'drift' through this family history outline capturing events, stories, people: the memories, joys, loss, secrets and humour. Do not force your memories. Just allow them to float past you like a video tape being played in your mind
- Note down some of the key events, people and significant experiences that stand out in each generation and jot each one down on a small post-it note.
- Place these on the time line to people it with your memories and the stories you have been told. Some might be pleasing. Some poignant. Some might be painful. Try to hold all the emotions with respect.
- As you illustrate the line of family history with incidents and events – become aware of how all of these things have had an influence on. Notice how world and social events have directly affected the way your parents were and the way their parents were with them.
- Delve a little deeper. How are you now feeling in relation to these events? How does this view of your antecedents and ancestry affect how you view your life and perhaps the lives of your children?
- Finally, undertake a scan across the generations again – beginning in the past and slowly moving through the present to the future. Try holding a sense of respect and honouring for those who have gone before. I am here because of all of you. Close your eyes and allow this acknowledgement to infuse you, breathe your gratitude into your bloodstream and then open your eyes and notice how you feel