

By

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Relationship Cycles

The exercise is used to identify patterns in relationships and to help determine if any current relationship issues have their origins in earlier relationships.

This tool can also be used to see how, when and where relationships ended or broke down and to help identify any patterns.

Draw up a blank piece of paper with 4 columns:

Name	Relationship	Significant Features	Patterns
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If you wish to examine potential patterns in **Male Relationships**, start with your most significant early male relationship – usually your Father, or Father figure - and proceed from there.

If dealing with **Female Relationships** start with your most significant early female relationship – usually your Mother and proceed from there – to Grandmothers, Aunts, etc.

Under the **Name** column write their name. If a parent or relative use their name and under relationship denote their relationship to you. e.g. Patricia – Mother.

List them in chronological order, from the **earliest** relationship to the **latest** – from your parent to your own child for example.

Under **Relationships** column write their relationship to you.

Under **Significant Features** write your associations about the relationship. You need to *feel* here and try and work from the heart not the head.

- Under **Patterns** - are there any patterns between the relationships – similarities or opposites?
- Does anything stand out?
- Are there any significant associations between relationships and people?

This is an example of what yours could look like (this chart is fictitious and we apologise if there are any similarities to anyone).

Name	Relationship	Significant Features	Clues / Patterns
Patricia	Mother	Honest	
		Emotionally Unavailable ★	
		Distant	
		Very Quiet ✦	
		Generous	
		Big Spender ☀	
Jenny	Partner	Emotionally Unavailable	★ both Mom & Jenny are emotionally unavailable
		Carefree	
		Untidy	
		Loyal	
		Very Loud	✦ Jenny if the opposite of Mum here
Cathryn	Daughter	Big Spender	☀ Cathryn is a spender like Mum, maybe this is why I get so annoyed with her?
		Chatty	
		Considerate	

This **Example** suggests that this person

- has chosen a partner that is **emotionally unavailable** like their mother
- has chosen a partner that is the **opposite** of their mothers very quiet nature, and
- that they may be **reacting** to their daughters free-spending ways as a result of their mothers' similar behaviour.

We learn how to relate when we are young because of the relationships we experience.

We put things in place then in order to manage these relationships depending on how healthy they are. What we then choose in relationships will depend on what we are holding onto from that time and if we have not resolved any issues then our adult relationships can be unhealthy and very painful.