

MAP YOUR FAMILY

FOUR GENERATIONS: THE LOSSES, THE REPETITIONS, THE SILENCES, AND THE STRENGTHS

Families are not really collections of individuals. They behave far more like a single body, with grief, tension and the things nobody says travelling through the whole system and surfacing, sooner or later, in someone who never knew where they came from.

Roles get handed out: the scapegoat, the hero, the lost child, the one who looks after everybody. They pass down the line, often for generations, without anyone ever choosing them. Some patterns only become visible when you see several generations side by side. Within one lifetime they simply feel like "how things are".

This worksheet helps you draw a simple map of your family across four generations, from your great-grandparents down to you, your partner and your children. Family therapists call this kind of map a *genogram*. You don't need to be good at drawing, and you don't need to know everything. Gaps and question marks are part of the picture too.

And look for what held your family up, not only what weighed it down. You are here because your ancestors survived. Every line on the map carries strengths as well as burdens.

BEFORE YOU START: GO GENTLY

- **Small bites.** Do a little at a time. You can come back to it over several days or weeks.
- **It is your view.** The map shows your family as you know and feel it. It is for you, and nobody else needs to see it or agree with it.
- **If something stirs strongly,** stop, put your feet on the ground, take a few slow breaths and come back another day. Talk to someone you trust, or a therapist, if you need to.

Turn the page for how to draw it.

HOW TO DRAW IT

Use the chart on the next page, or a large sheet of paper if your family doesn't fit. Start with yourself and work outwards: your brothers and sisters, your parents and their brothers and sisters, your grandparents, then as many great-grandparents as you can. Then add your partner or partners, and your children if you have them.

For each person, write their name and, if you know them, their years of birth and death. Then add a few words beside them: where they lived, what they did, an illness, a move, a word that sums them up, something nobody talks about.

PEOPLE

- | | |
|--|--|
|  Square: a man |  Circle: a woman |
|  Any shape you like for anyone else, or if you don't know |  A cross inside: someone who has died |
|  Small dot: a pregnancy lost, a stillbirth, a baby who died |  Dotted outline: adopted, fostered or step-family |

COUPLES AND CHILDREN

- | | |
|---|---|
|  Line between two people: a couple |  Two slashes: separated or divorced |
|  Line down from a couple: their children, oldest on the left |  Write years on the line: when they met, married, parted |

HOW PEOPLE GET ON (DRAW BETWEEN ANY TWO PEOPLE)

- | | |
|---|--|
|  Two lines: very close |  Three lines: too close, hard to tell apart |
|  Zigzag: conflict |  Broken line: distant, or cut off |

TIP

Draw in pencil first. Families rarely fit neatly. Step-parents, half-siblings, second marriages, the grandmother who raised you: put in everyone who mattered, in whatever way shows it truly.

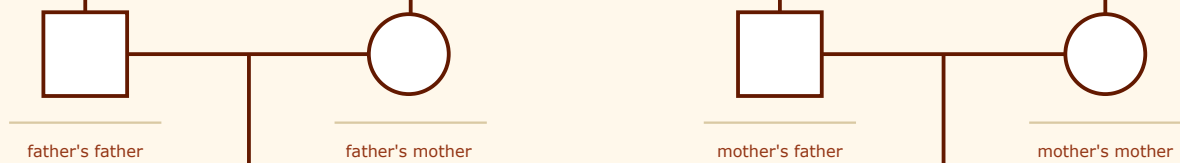
YOUR FAMILY MAP

Dotted shapes are for the people only some of us have. Leave out what doesn't apply, and add anyone who isn't here.

GREAT-GRANDPARENTS



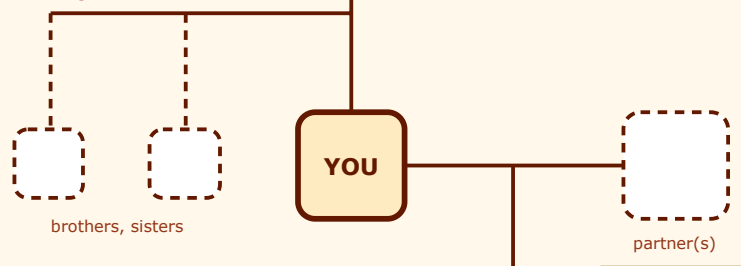
GRANDPARENTS



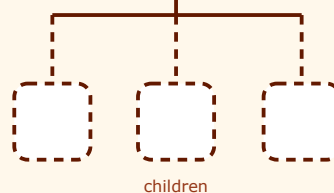
PARENTS, AUNTS AND UNCLES



YOU AND YOUR GENERATION



YOUR CHILDREN



LOOK AGAIN: WHAT DOES THE MAP SHOW?

Once the people are on the page, take these questions one at a time. Write short notes beside the people on your map. There is no need to answer them all.

The losses

- Who died early, suddenly or in hard circumstances?
- Pregnancies lost, stillbirths, babies who died.
- Homes, land, countries or languages left behind.
- War, illness, poverty, prison, a business that failed.
- Who was allowed to grieve, and which losses were never grieved at all?

The repetitions

- What happens again and again down the line?
- Similar events at similar ages, or at the same time of year.
- Drinking, leaving, illness, separations, the same kind of partner.
- Who was the scapegoat, the hero, the lost child, the carer? Did those roles pass down?
- Which children had to look after their parents?

The silences

- Who is never mentioned?
- What does nobody talk about?
- Where are the gaps, the people you know nothing about?
- Who is cut off, and why? Who is too close?
- What did you sense as a child that was never said?

The stories

- What was said about you, and by whom?
- What is your family known for? ("We're the strong ones." "We don't make a fuss.")
- What were you told about money, work, men, women, feelings, the world?
- Which of these stories still runs in your head today?

The strengths

- What did your ancestors survive, and how?
- Which skills, gifts and kindnesses run in the family?
- Who loved you, or stood by you? A grandparent, an aunt, a neighbour, a teacher.
- What gave people hope: faith, music, humour, nature, animals, the land?

The wider world

- Where did each line live, and what was happening there in their time?
- Wars, migrations, hunger, persecution, changes of country or class.
- Which places, landscapes, animals or gardens mattered to your family?
- Which rituals held you together: meals, holidays, gatherings, prayers?

WHO COULD YOU ASK?

Family history is often not hidden so much as never asked about. Is there an older relative, a cousin, an old photo album or a family friend who might know more? Only ask if it feels safe and kind to do so.

LOOKING AT THE WHOLE

Step back and look at the map as one picture. Notice what you feel as well as what you think.

- What stands out? What surprises you?
- Where on the map does your body react: a tight chest, a heaviness, a wish to skip someone?
- Which patterns stop with you, and which do you see starting again?
- What feels like yours, and what feels like something you have been carrying for someone else?
- What strength from your line would you like to have more of?

AFTERWARDS

Put the map away somewhere safe and do something ordinary and kind for yourself: a walk, a cup of tea, time with an animal or a tree. Notice what comes up over the next few days, in dreams or in passing thoughts, and add it to the map. It is a living document, and it will keep growing.

TIME TRAVEL: HEALING THE PAST

Your map holds the facts: who, when, what happened. That matters, because a journey can't tell you the facts of things. Journeys work with feelings, stories and images. On the course we take what your map shows and work with it shamanically, down the line to where a burden began.

MODULE 1

The Foundation

Your own timeline, from conception to now, and why journeying back can genuinely change something.

MODULE 2

The Family as a System

We build the full map together: the roles, family secrets, the drama triangle, and how patterns travel down the line.

MODULE 3

Stories as Spells

Naming your family's spells, what was said about you and by whom, and how to change a story without pretending.

MODULE 4

Ancestral Burdens

Journeying down an ancestral line safely, with permission and protection, to where a burden began.

MODULE 5

Collective Trauma

What is carried by a people, a class or a place, and the Healing Grief Bowl for the losses on your map.

MODULE 6

Putting It Down

A journey or ritual to set the burden down, and boundaries with the family members who are still alive.

What it gives you

- **Clarity.** You see the pattern instead of only feeling it, and you can tell what is yours from what you have been carrying for others.
- **Safe, ethical ways to work.** We work with our own parts and with ancestors who agree to it, never by trying to change the people in our lives.
- **A lighter present.** Less of the past running the show, and more room for conscious choices now.
- **Company on the way.** A Signal group for questions and support, and the option of six live journeying sessions.

JOIN US

Six weekly modules on Sundays, 15 November to 20 December 2026. Ongoing access to the recordings.

£150 for the course · or £165 with six live journeying sessions

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