

Mentoring Mothers

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Parenting Self-Assessment Tool (Marlo, 2005; 2000)

Below are categories that encourage self-awareness and reflection upon our outer and inner worlds. The “outer world” is a more public part of ourselves, that we are more conscious of, and involves daily life, responsibilities, and demands. The “inner world” generally involves more private, “invisible” aspects of ourselves, which we may be less conscious or unconscious of, and involves our memories, imagination, internal messages, and inner musings. Consider how these categories impact you and your parenting. The first seven categories pertain to a parent’s outer life while the rest are tailored to a parent’s inner life.

- **Current Lifestyle** includes marital/partner status; number of children; employment or profession; work-life-family rhythms and demands; socioeconomic status.
- **Current Marital/Partner Relationship** includes degree of harmony, conflict, intimacy, communication and stressors in relationship. May include influence from previous relationships.
- **Current Family Life** includes degree of harmony, conflict, intimacy, communication, and stressors in the family’s life. May include influence from previous relationships.
- **Current Personal Concerns** pertains to personal, psychological, physical, social, cultural, and socioeconomic stressors, struggles, and issues.
- **Physical Health** includes physical problems, diseases, limitations, disabilities, strengths, genetic predispositions. Overall influence of health on functioning.
- **Hobbies and Interests** include activities that provide recreation, relaxation or fulfill interests.
- **Social Relationships** pertains to the quality and type of social groups, supports, and friendships

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- **Inner Life:** Involves familiarity, comfort, and relationship with inner world. Includes imagination, memories, inner messages, daydreams, fantasies, images, memories, needs, desires, fears, anxieties, wishes, hopes, and dreams.
- **Emotional World:** Involves degree of development and maturation of emotions. Includes emotional tendencies; chronicity and intensity of pleasant/unpleasant emotions; ability to recognize and experience conflicting emotional states; capacity to name, tolerate, modulate, and experience different feelings; and management of complex emotions including love, aggression, grief, anger, competition, envy and hatred.
- **Self-Protection/Defenses** includes characteristic ways of defending one's self and others emotionally; ways of dealing with stress, anxiety, and emotional conflicts.
- **Personal History** includes early childhood relations, family environment, relationship history, representations of others, mentors, heroes, traumas, losses, successes, vulnerabilities and strengths.
- **Cultural and Gender Identity** includes beliefs regarding gender, culture, sex roles, masculinity, femininity, and cultural beliefs/norms and messages regarding parenting.
- **Body Image/Identity** includes relationship to your body, bodily concerns, reactions to bodily experiences including past and present developmental events, illness, injury, touch, physical, emotional, or sexual abuse, pregnancy, infertility, bodily changes, and developmental changes.
- **Sexual Identity** includes feelings about sexuality and your sexual self, sexual experiences, fantasies, problems, discomfort, conflicts, and traumas.
- **Personal Identity** includes self-image and self-representations, social roles, internal voices, identifications, counteridentifications, temperament, personality style, and typical relationship roles.
- **Maternal Identity** includes experiences of being mothered, relationship with your mother, internalized representations of mother, experiences with maternal figures, your style of attaching and relating; beliefs about parenting and parenting style.
- **Paternal Identity** includes experiences of being fathered, relationship with your father, internalized representations of father, experiences with paternal figures, your style of attaching and relating; beliefs about parenting and parenting style.
- **Spiritual Life** including belief system, spiritual practices, guiding philosophies, spiritual crises, values, transformative experiences, sense of meaning and purpose.

For more information contact: <http://www.helenmarlophd.com>