

## Family Strengths Activity

**Parent Questionnaire Directions:** Please read each statement below and decide how often/to what degree each statement is true of your family (1 = Never, 2 = Rarely, 3 = Somewhat, 4 = Often, 5 = Almost Always).

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| _____ <b>1. We enjoy talking to one another.</b>                                     | _____ 14. Family members do not have trouble meeting their responsibilities.                           |
| _____ 2. Our family recognizes when a problem exists.                                | _____ <b>15. We feel a strong connection with one another.</b>   |
| _____ <b>3. Our family handles stress well.</b>                                      | _____ 16. We discuss things before decisions that affect the whole family are made.                    |
| _____ 4. Our family can come up with solutions to easily resolve problems.           | _____ <b>17. We are respectful to each other when someone is expressing a different point of view.</b> |
| _____ <b>5. We feel comfortable sharing our affection with one another.</b>          | _____ 18. We are sensitive to other family member's feelings.  |
| _____ 6. Everyone gets a say in family decisions.                                    | _____ <b>19. We trust each other.</b>  |
| _____ <b>7. It is easy for us to work together to overcome crises in our family.</b> | _____ 20. We support one another even when someone has made a bad decision.                            |
| _____ 8. We can effectively talk to each other even when we are upset.               | _____ <b>21. We are kind to one another.</b>   |
| _____ <b>9. We give praise when someone has done something positive.</b>             | _____ 22. We do not put each other down.   |
| _____ 10. When we ask someone in our family to do something, they do it.             | _____ <b>23. We support family members, even when we disagree with them.</b>                           |
| _____ 11. We have enjoyable memories with one another.                               | _____ 24. Our family has fun together.   |
| _____ 12. We often confide in each other.  |  |
| _____ <b>13. We are committed to supporting our family's well-being.</b>             |  |

## Conversation and Debriefing

Discuss where you are similar or different and why you think this may be the case. Pick out 1-2 areas where you agree on a strength. Pick out 1-2 areas where you agree that you would like to work on some changes. Feel free to give this questionnaire to other family members as well!

### What's Your Mindset?

For the 20 questions below, please rate each on whether you strongly disagree - strong agree. Once you and your child have each taken this quiz, feel free to score them and share your responses with one another.

|  | strongly disagree | slightly disagree | slightly agree | strongly agree |
|--|-------------------|-------------------|----------------|----------------|
| 1. Intelligence is something people are born with that can't be changed.                           |                   |                   |                |                |
| 2. No matter how capable you are, there are always new things to learn.                            |                   |                   |                |                |
| 3. You can substantially change how smart you are.   |                   |                   |                |                |
| 4. You are a certain kind of person, and there is not much that can be done to really change that. |                   |                   |                |                |
| 5. You can always change basic things about the kind of person you are.                            |                   |                   |                |                |
| 6. Talents can be learned by anyone.   |                   |                   |                |                |
| 7. Only a few people will be truly good at a particular talent—you have to be “born with it.”      |                   |                   |                |                |
| 8. Parenting comes more naturally for mothers than for fathers.                                    |                   |                   |                |                |
| 9. The harder you work at something, the better you will be at it.                                 |                   |                   |                |                |
| 10. No matter what kind of person you are, you can always change substantially.                    |                   |                   |                |                |
| 11. Trying new things is stressful for me and I avoid it.  |                   |                   |                |                |
| 12. Some people are good and kind, and some are not—it's not often that people change.             |                   |                   |                |                |

|  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|
| 13. I appreciate when people (such as parents, coaches, teachers) give me feedback about my performance. |  |  |  |  |
| 14. I often get angry when I get negative feedback about my performance.                                 |  |  |  |  |
| 15. All human beings are capable of learning.  |  |  |  |  |
| 16. You can learn new things, but you can't really change how smart you are.                             |  |  |  |  |
| 17. You can do things differently, but the important parts of who you are can't really be changed.       |  |  |  |  |
| 18. Human beings are basically good, but sometimes make terrible decisions.                              |  |  |  |  |
| 19. I like to learn new things.  |  |  |  |  |
| 20. Truly smart people do not need to try hard.  |  |  |  |  |

Adapted from: <http://www.classroom20.com/forum/topics/motivating-students-with>

### What's Your Mindset: Scoring

Growth mindset questions are items #2, 3, 5, 6, 9, 10, 13, 15, 18, 19. Each of these responses is scored in the following way:

Strongly agree = 3 points  
 Agree = 2 points  
 Disagree = 1 point  
 Strongly disagree = 0 points  
 Growth score: \_\_\_\_\_

Fixed mindset questions are items #1, 4, 7, 8, 11, 12, 14, 16, 17, 20. Each of these responses is scored in the following way:

Strongly agree = 0 points  
 Agree = 1 points  
 Disagree = 2 point  
 Strongly disagree = 3 points  
 Fixed score: \_\_\_\_\_

How did you do? Add up your Growth score and your Fixed score for your total score: \_\_\_\_\_.

Here's what it means:

- 45-60 points = Strong Growth Mindset
- 34-44 points = Growth Mindset with some Fixed ideas
- 21-33 points = Fixed Mindset with some Growth ideas
- 0-20 points = Strong Fixed Mindset

### ***Establishing parenting intentions***

***Quick practice exercise:*** Take a few minutes right now to think about your parenting intentions for this period of your and your child's life. They may not be the same as they were when your child was young or before she started struggling with self-injury, and that is okay. Take a moment to answer these four reflection questions:

- What core life principles and values do you want to teach your child? Write down three to five examples.
- Which two of these are most important to you in this period of your and your child's life?
- Take a minute to think about how you model these two principles in your daily life with your child (e.g. if you value respect, how do you demonstrate respect to them?). Write down your thoughts on this.
- Think about what you do that may not be totally in alignment with your core parenting intentions. Write down 1-2 examples here for your own reflection.

As you consider your intentions for parenting, use this time to consider the bigger picture of your life and your family's life together. Setting your intentions will help you with establishing a general course of action that you propose to follow. This allows some flexibility within daily schedules and busy lives and an element of forgiveness for things we may not do as perfectly or as well as we would like.

## Mindful Parenting

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <p>Review the following and rate each mindful communication strategy, <i>considering how your child would rate you:</i></p> | <p><b>0:</b> I never do this<br/> <b>1:</b> I do not do this well<br/> <b>2:</b> I am okay at this<br/> <b>3:</b> I am really good at this</p> |
| 1. Do you typically make eye contact when you are speaking with your child?   | 0   1   2   3  |
| 2. Do you use a calm, respectful voice?   | 0   1   2   3  |
| 3. Do you respect your child’s behavior, waiting to discuss matters with him/her only when they’re not in a group?          | 0   1   2   3  |
| 4. Do you take responsibility for your part in the mistakes your child makes?   | 0   1   2   3  |
| 5. Do you try to see your child’s point of view?  | 0   1   2   3  |
| 6. Do you work to make sure a message of LOVE comes through in your communications?   | 0   1   2   3  |
| 7. Are you a positive thinker, seeing the many positives that your child does?  | 0   1   2   3  |
| 8. Do you set a good example for your child by “owning” your own problems and asking for help?                              | 0   1   2   3  |
| 9. Do you listen to what your child has to say and avoid interrupting?  | 0   1   2   3  |
| 10. Do you find yourself fully listening to your child even though there may be many other demands placed on you?           | 0   1   2   3  |
| 11. Do you offer encouragement and acknowledge their efforts?   | 0   1   2   3  |
| 12. When you are upset with your child, do you notice how you are feeling <i>before</i> you take action?                    | 0   1   2   3  |
| 13. Are you aware of how your moods affect the way you treat your child?  | 0   1   2   3  |
| 14. When engaged in an activity with your child, do you take your time and show that you are attentive to him/her?          | 0   1   2   3  |
| 15. Before you react in a discussion, do you consider your highest intentions?  | 0   1   2   3  |

Notice the items on which you are already strong, those on which you could improve, and those on which you know you do not do so well. Do you see any patterns? We have categorized the above items into four important areas of mindful parenting. Consider which of these four areas you are doing well in, and which you may want to improve:

- Awareness & Present-Centered Attention: items 1, 10, 13, 14
- Acceptance: items 4, 5, 8, 9
- Non-reactivity: items 2, 3, 6, 12
- Positive parenting: items 7, 11, 15

Can you think about specific examples of each area in your own parenting relationship? Although our tendency is to immediately look for the items on which we scored low, take time to also notice what you identified as your strengths—these are important skills that will come in handy in times of stress; since they may come more easily to you, you can rely on them to help you through challenging times.

If you want to take it one step further, you can pick a few areas in which you want to grow. Maybe these are those items on which you rated yourself lowest, but you may find that you want to improve or grow even stronger in those “middle of the road” areas as well. No parent is fully mindful all of the time. The goal here is not to be perfectly mindful, but to enhance self-awareness. Once you have identified areas for focus, you can start practicing immediately with your child (or with other people in your life – mindful interactions are universally applicable and beneficial). You can visit this list as many times as you want for new ideas and areas of improvement (and gratitude!)