



Learning from the past provides us with wisdom to build the future

In Schema Therapy we aim to make the link between the present and the past as we are trying to make sense of current reactions, interpersonal patterns, thought processes and ways of coping, in the context of what happened and what was learned during childhood. This resource could be helpful to gain a deeper understanding of one's early maladaptive schemas and the link between current difficulties and childhood origins.

Disconnection and Rejection

1. Abandonment/Instability

You feel like the important people in your life will leave you or won't be there for you (to give support, advice etc) because either they are:

- unpredictable e.g. sometimes get angry all of a sudden;
- can't be relied on or are only sometimes around;
- they may die soon;
- they will leave you/abandon you for someone better

Example from your childhood	Example from a recent situation

2. Mistrust/Abuse

You expect that others will hurt you, embarrass you, cheat and lie, take advantage of you or abuse you in some way. You may feel used by others or feel like you always get the bad outcome.

Example from your childhood	Example from a recent situation



3. Emotional Deprivation

You may feel as though your need for love and emotional support will never be met adequately by other people. You may feel like you don't matter, you're not important and you may feel alone and empty at times. It may be difficult to know what love is. 3 types:

- no attention, affection, warmth or companionship
- no-one truly cares or understands how you feel, listens or shares their feelings
- no-one to give you strength or advice

<i>Example from your childhood</i>	<i>Example from a recent situation</i>

4. Defectiveness/Shame

You may experience deep feelings of defectiveness and shame. You may feel like you are bad, unimportant and that people won't love you as there is something wrong with you.

<i>Example from your childhood</i>	<i>Example from a recent situation</i>

5. Social Isolation/Alienation

You may experience a sense of profound isolation and loneliness. You may feel like you are separate from everyone else, different to others and not part of anything. You may feel socially undesirable.

<i>Example from your childhood</i>	<i>Example from a recent situation</i>



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Impaired Autonomy and Performance

6. Dependence/Incompetence

You may feel like you can't do everyday things without lots of help from people, e.g. solving daily problems; caring for yourself; making decisions). You may feel helpless.

<i>Example from your childhood</i>	<i>Example from a recent situation</i>

7. Vulnerability to Harm or Illness

You may feel very scared that some kind of catastrophe could happen at any time and there is nothing you can do about it, e.g. major illness, earthquakes etc.

<i>Example from your childhood</i>	<i>Example from a recent situation</i>

8. Enmeshment/Undeveloped Self

You could experience being so involved or close to a carer that you feel you have to give one another constant support. Because of this you don't feel like you have your own identity. You may feel empty or like you have no direction.

<i>Example from your childhood</i>	<i>Example from a recent situation</i>



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9. Failure

You may feel like you have failed, will fail or generally you are no good at achieving things compared to your friends. You may feel stupid, lower than others or less successful.

<i>Example from your childhood</i>	<i>Example from a recent situation</i>

Impaired Limits

10. Entitlement/Grandiosity

You feel as though you are better than others, or have the right to get special privileges. You may also feel that certain rules or laws don't apply to you. You may do things for yourself without thinking about how that affects others, i.e. force your point of view or try control others.

<i>Example from your childhood</i>	<i>Example from a recent situation</i>

11. Insufficient Self-Control/Self-Discipline

You may find it difficult to regulate your emotions, manage your frustration or not act on your impulses. You may also try hard to avoid experiencing discomfort, e.g. avoiding pain, conflict, confrontation or responsibility. You may try too hard at the expense of your personal values and goals.

<i>Example from your childhood</i>	<i>Example from a recent situation</i>



Other-Directedness

12. Subjugation

You surrender control to others because you feel pressured to, as a way to stop people from being angry at you or abandoning you. You may allow others to control you out of guilt or fear. You think your feelings and needs aren't important to other people and so you will do what they say all the time (overly compliant). You will keep your needs and emotions in. As a result, these will need to come out some way, and may through sudden temper tantrums, feeling ill with no specific cause, e.g. a sore stomach, ignoring the person you angry at rather than saying something, taking drugs or alcohol or 'acting out.'

<i>Example from your childhood</i>	<i>Example from a recent situation</i>

13. Self-Sacrifice

You may willingly meet the needs of others but to such an extent that your needs are ignored and treated as unimportant. You may have a tendency to sacrifice your own needs for those of other people. You might do this because you are sensitive to others' needs, or to avoid feeling guilty about things. You may feel bitter to those you are caring for.

<i>Example from your childhood</i>	<i>Example from a recent situation</i>



14. Approval-Seeking/Recognition Seeking

You put too much importance in getting approval, attention or acceptance from other people. As a result you may make decisions about your life simply to impress or please others rather than yourself.

<i>Example from your childhood</i>	<i>Example from a recent situation</i>

Over vigilance and Inhibition

15. Negativity/Pessimism

You always look at the negative parts of life, and ignore the positive parts. You are always expecting things to go wrong. You might be really scared of making a mistake. Because of this you may often worry, be undecided about things, always on the watch or complaining a lot.

<i>Example from your childhood</i>	<i>Example from a recent situation</i>

16. Emotional Inhibition

You may keep your feelings, actions and thoughts or opinions in because you don't want others to get upset with you, don't want to feel shame or don't want to lose control. You may be too rational and so ignore your emotions.

<i>Example from your childhood</i>	<i>Example from a recent situation</i>



17. Unrelenting Standards/Hypercriticalness

You may feel you have to meet very high standards to make sure no-one criticises you. As a result, you may be very critical of yourself. Some of the behaviours you may display include perfectionism, following rigid rules, i.e. I should be religious. You may have unrealistically high morals or focus on time and efficiency (you may feel like you always need to do more).

<i>Example from your childhood</i>	<i>Example from a recent situation</i>

5. Social Isolation/Alienation

You may experience a sense of profound isolation and loneliness. You may feel like you are separate from everyone else, different to others and not part of anything. You may feel socially undesirable.

<i>Example from your childhood</i>	<i>Example from a recent situation</i>

18. Punitiveness

You may believe that people should be harshly punished for mistakes. When you or others don't meet your expectations you may get angry, intolerant or impatient. You may also find it difficult to forgive people or yourself when a mistake is made.

<i>Example from your childhood</i>	<i>Example from a recent situation</i>



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Additional Notes: