

Chapter Four

The ACE Research On The Long-Term Effects of Untamed Inner Demons

Self-Assessment Tools:

ACE's QUESTIONNAIRE

Prior to your 18th birthday:

- Did a parent or other adult in the household often or very often... Swear at you, insult you, put you down, or humiliate you? or Act in a way that made you afraid that you might be physically hurt? No ___ If Yes, enter 1 ___
- Did a parent or other adult in the household often or very often... Push, grab, slap, or throw something at you? or Ever hit you so hard that you had marks or were injured? No ___ If Yes, enter 1 ___
- Did an adult or person at least 5 years older than you ever... Touch or fondle you or have you touch their body in a sexual way? or Attempt or actually have oral, anal, or vaginal intercourse with you? No ___ If Yes, enter 1 ___
- Did you often or very often feel that ... No one in your family loved you or thought you were important or special? or Your family didn't look out for each other, feel close to each other, or support each other? No ___ If Yes, enter 1 ___
- Did you often or very often feel that ... You didn't have enough to eat, had to wear dirty clothes, and had no one to protect you? or Your parents were too drunk or high to take care of you or take you to the doctor if you needed it? No ___ If Yes, enter 1 ___
- Were your parents ever separated or divorced? No ___ If Yes, enter 1 ___
- Was your mother or stepmother: Often or very often pushed, grabbed, slapped, or had something thrown at her? or Sometimes, often, or very often kicked, bitten, hit with a fist, or hit with something hard? or Ever repeatedly hit over at least a few minutes or threatened with a gun or knife? No ___ If Yes, enter 1 ___
- Did you live with anyone who was a problem drinker or alcoholic, or who used street drugs? No ___ If Yes, enter 1 ___
- Was a household member depressed or mentally ill, or did a household member attempt suicide? No ___ If Yes, enter 1 ___
- Did a household member go to prison? No ___ If Yes, enter 1 ___

Now add up your "Yes" answers: _ This is your ACE Score

Adverse Childhood Neglect Inventory

Barry K. Weinhold, PhD

Name: _____ Date: _____

In the first year of your life specifically and generally prior to your 18th birthday:

1. **Were you placed in childcare or with someone other than a primary caregiver before you were one month old?** Not Applicable__ If Yes, enter 1 __
2. **Did you spend less than 20 hours a week being cared for by your mother during your first year of life?** Not Applicable__ If Yes, enter 1 __
3. **As an infant, were you allowed to cry yourself asleep at night without your parent(s) attempting to comfort you?** Not Applicable__ If Yes, enter 1 __
4. **Did you feel afraid of your mother or other adult caregivers?** Not Applicable__ If Yes, enter 1 __
5. **Was your mother or another primary caregiver chronically depressed?** Not Applicable__ If Yes, enter 1 __
6. **Did your mother or any other primary adult caregiver suffer from substance abuse of any kind?** Not Applicable__ If Yes, enter 1 __
7. **Did your mother or any other primary caregiver fail to tell you that they loved you?** Not Applicable__ If Yes, enter 1 __
8. **Did your mother or any other primary adult caregiver avoid hugging you, picking you up or making eye contact with you?** Not Applicable__ If Yes, enter 1 __
9. **Were you separated from your mother for more than a week for any reason in your first year of life?** Not Applicable__ If Yes, enter 1 __
10. **Did your primary caregivers leave you with strangers or other non-bonded caregivers for more than one week before your first birthday?** Not Applicable__ If Yes, enter 1 __
11. **Were you told directly or indirectly that your parents were too overwhelmed to care for you?** Not Applicable__ If Yes, enter 1 __
12. **Did your parents fail to make your home environment safe leading to accidents?** Not Applicable__ If Yes, enter 1 __
13. **Were you told or treated by either of your parents to "be seen and not heard?"** Not Applicable__ If Yes, enter 1 __
14. **Did your family move frequently when you were very young?** Not Applicable__ If Yes, enter 1 __
15. **Was your mother cold toward you when you were a child?** Not Applicable__ If Yes, enter 1 __
16. **As a child, did you feel your parents didn't understand your needs?** Not Applicable__ If Yes, enter 1 __
17. **Did you feel unwanted in any way by your parents?** Not Applicable__ If Yes, enter 1 __
18. **Do you think you unplanned by your parents?** Not Applicable__ If Yes, enter 1 __
19. **Did you have frequent illnesses when you were under a year of age (colic, ear infections, etc.)?** Not Applicable__ If Yes, enter 1 __
20. **Even though you weren't adopted, did you feel you were "adopted" when you were growing up in your family?** Not Applicable__ If Yes, enter 1 __
21. **Was your mother under 19 years of age when you were born?** Not

Applicable__ If Yes, enter 1 __

22. **Were you a "play-pen" baby?** Not Applicable__ If Yes, enter 1 __

23. **Did you believe that there was something fundamentally wrong with you because of the way you thought or behaved?** Not Applicable__ If Yes, enter 1 __

24. **Were you "parentized" or put in an inappropriate parenting role when you were very young?** Not Applicable__ If Yes, enter 1 __

25. **Did your parents fail to provide proper medical care for you?** Not Applicable__ If Yes, enter 1 __

26. **Did your parents fail to teach you or require you to develop proper personal hygiene habits?** Not Applicable__ If Yes, enter 1 __

27. **Were you left unsupervised for long periods of time as a child under 12 years old?** Not Applicable__ If Yes, enter 1 __

28. **Were you left in the care of someone who was significantly impaired or of questionable character?** Not Applicable__ If Yes, enter 1 __

29. **Were you placed in dangerous situations or with dangerous people?** Not Applicable__ If Yes, enter 1 __

30. **Were you verbally abused by a parent and your other parent did nothing to protect you?** Not Applicable__ If Yes, enter 1 __

31. **Were you sexually abused by a family member or other adult and your parent(s) did anything to protect you?** Not Applicable__ If Yes, enter 1 __

32. **Were you physically abused by a family member and no adult did anything to protect you?** Not Applicable__ If Yes, enter 1 __

33. **Were you emotionally abused by a family member and no adult did anything to protect you?** Not Applicable__ If Yes, enter 1 __

34. **Did your parents fail to make sure you got to school on time?** Not Applicable__ If Yes, enter 1 __

35. **Did your parents fail to make sure you completed your homework?** Not Applicable__ If Yes, enter 1 __

36. **Did your parents fail to provide proper nutrition for you?** Not Applicable__ If Yes, enter 1 __

37. **Did your parents fail to provide proper or clean clothing for you?** Not Applicable__ If Yes, enter 1 __

38. **Did you have siblings who were less than one year older than you?** Not Applicable__ If Yes, enter 1 __

39. **Were you a "latch key" child who had no one there when you came home from school?** Not Applicable__ If Yes, enter 1 __

40. **Did your parents compare you unfavorably to your siblings?** Not Applicable__ If Yes, enter 1 __

Scoring: Simply count the number of items where you answered, "Yes."

Interpretation:

If you had *five or more* "yeses," you likely had developmental traumas in your childhood caused by neglect. The higher number of "yeses," the more severe the developmental traumas were in your childhood and the likelihood they could cause mental and physical health problems in your adult years. *If you answered "yes" to 20 or more of the questions, we would define that as "severe neglect."*

There are no national norms when it comes to incidences of childhood neglect. Almost all research into adverse childhood experiences lumps abuse and neglect together. Some leading researchers say, however, that neglect contributes more to long-term health effects than does abuse. Since abuse is easily identified and neglect is not, the symptoms of neglect are rarely treated unless there is obvious severe neglect.

ACE RESILIENCE Questionnaire **Barry K. Weinhold, PhD**

Please place the number that best represents your experience in the blank in front of each item below. Key: 1=Definitely Not True, 2= Probably Not True, Not Sure = 3, Probably True= 4, and Definitely True= 5.

- __1. I believe that my mother loved me when I was little.
- __2. I believe that my father loved me when I was little.
- __3. When I was little, other people helped my mother and father take care of me and they seemed to love me.
- __4. I've heard that when I was an infant someone in my family enjoyed playing with me, and I enjoyed it, too.
- __5. When I was a child, there were relatives in my family who made me feel better if I was sad or worried.
- __6. When I was a child, neighbors or my friends' parents seemed to like me.
- __7. When I was a child, teachers, coaches, youth leaders or ministers were there to help me.
- __8. Someone in my family cared about how I was doing in school.
- __9. My family, neighbors and friends talked often about making our lives better.
- __10. We had rules in our house and were expected to keep them.
- __11. When I felt really bad, I could almost always find someone I trusted to talk to.
- __12. As a youth, people noticed that I was capable and could get things done.
- __13. I was independent and a go-getter.
- __14. I believed that life is what you make it.

___ **Total Score**

Interpretation of Results:

How many of these 14 protective factors did I have as a child and youth? (How many of the 14 items did you mark "Definitely True" or "Probably True"?) _____

Of these marked, how many are still true for me? _____

Results of the ACE Research **Barry K. Weinhold, PhD**

The ACE Research offers a new perspective on the long-term effects of adverse childhood experiences or childhood abuse and neglect on your physical and mental health. While there are some flaws and limitations to this research, it is a breakthrough that offers a better understanding of why people get sick.

For too long, the psychological and medical professions have ignored the obvious fact that whatever happened or didn't happen to you as a child can have some long-term effects. Later in this book, I discuss how you might approach this

subject and learn effective ways to connect the dots between what happened or didn't happen to you as a child and how that likely will have long-term effects on your health and longevity.

In the Workbook for this chapter you will find three self-assessment tools that will help you identify your ACEs and even further any Adverse Childhood Neglect you might have experienced. Finally, do you know how resilient you are? There is also a self-quiz in the Workbook to help you determine your level of resiliency.

Do You Have an Addiction to Adrenaline?

In addition, addictions do seem to be very common way to self-medicate and avoid your inner demons. This is particularly true with an addiction to our own adrenaline. Below I explore the effects of this little-known information on addictions.

A little-known fact is that our own adrenaline is the most addictive substance in the human body. It is in the same chemical family as cocaine. In this country, many people live an adrenalized lifestyle and don't know it. The process of becoming adrenalized often starts early. Did you ever notice how often you go to a restaurant or shop at a supermarket and you hear a child having a melt-down? This is often an early sign of adrenal overload.

My strong clinical hunch on this is that it reflects an attempt of many people to cope with reoccurring unfinished experiences from the past. Many people when they get triggered by a memory, look for a way to avoid something from their past that is trying to get their attention. One way to distract yourself when this happens is by getting busy. If our adrenaline is so addictive, we begin to create an adrenalized lifestyle.

I suggest that you go to this chapter in the online Workbook and take and score the Addiction to Adrenaline Inventory. Use the link at the front of the book to the Workbook where you can download it and fill it out.

Once you know the results you will know if this is something you might need to change. This addiction, like most others, is not easy to change. The workbook also contains suggestions on how to reduce your addiction to adrenaline and the signs that you are reducing your addiction to adrenaline. If your score was in the high-risk category, fill out the Adrena Fatigue self-inventory and if your score on that inventory is high, seek medical treatment for adrenal fatigue.

Case Example:

I got a new client living in Germany. John, 32, (not real name) was an American in the Air Force stationed at an air base in Germany. His presenting problem was that he is lonely and depressed. He also mentioned that he has a drinking problem. By asking him a few questions, I found out that he had a very serious drinking problem. He downed six to ten shots of vodka or tequila every night along with the beer he drinks and on weekends, he get so drunk that he passes out.

My policy is that I will not work with a client who has that severe a drinking problem unless they can prove to me they can control it or that they get in a recovery program where they might get some help in controlling their drinking problem.

If they insist they can control their drinking, I put them to the test. I tell them is they can stay away from any alcohol for seven straight days, I will believe them that they can control their drinking problem and I will then agree to meet with them.

However, if they fail this test, I insist that they enter a recovery program where

they go to regular meetings and get a sponsor. John failed his seven-day test, so I insisted he sign up for an AA group either on the base or in the town where he lived. I also suggested that the base likely had a program through the Air Force that he could join. I asked him to look into his options and report back to me at our next session.

He immediately objected. He said, "If they find out I have a drinking problem, it will definitely hurt my career." My reply to him was, "If you don't get your drinking problem under control you won't have a life not just a career." I finally talked him into inquiring what programs the Air Force provided on base.

The next time I met with him he excitedly told me that the Air Force did have a program for troops who had drinking problems and that he is going to sign up for. He told me they keep everything confidential and his superiors would never know that he is in the program. I then agreed to work with him to find out what inner demons he was running away from by getting buzzed and drunk most of the time.

We didn't get too far into this work when one day he showed up for a session and told me that the Air Force had approved him to attend a 45-day recovery program at The Meadows in Arizona. The Meadows is one of the top and maybe the top in-patient treatment center in the World.

It is very expensive and many of the famous people with drinking or drug use problems go there. They drill down on the reasons why people turn to drinking or drugs. You get intensive psychotherapy there and help him find out the reasons he turns to alcohol, I so he can get on the road to recovery. I knew my job was over.