

The Father Wound and the Wounded Son

Men carry wounds that they have long forgotten; yet the wounds impact every man's self-worth and his behaviors. Please read below and consider your wounds:



1. The Father Wound is described as “the emotional wounds that men carry within themselves from boyhood that are a result of the hurts that they received from their fathers.” Failing to have a positive, loving, supportive relationship with a responsible father can leave a boy or man feeling that something is missing.
2. The Wounded Son is the inner boy who still possesses the hurts and wounds and recalls and feels them well into adulthood. Most men act out in harmful and self-sabotaging ways as a result of denying that the wounded inner boy still exists with the memories of past hurts and shame.
3. Men who are detached from their feelings, deny their feelings, or suppress their feelings often experience problems with appropriately expressing their feelings. They often use anger or aggression to express feelings such as shame, helplessness, fear, confusion, etc.
4. Men tend to carry these hurts and shame for a lifetime and often transfer them to their children, especially to their sons.
5. The wounds, buried in the unconscious, keep men stuck with negative self-images and destructive behavioral patterns resulting in low self-esteem and lack of confidence.
6. The wounded son perpetually struggles with anger toward his father that may manifest in other parts of his life. He may have rebelled against his father or resented his father; he may be stuck in a pattern of rebellion that has sabotaged his life.
7. Negative feelings about his father impact a man's choices, self-perspective, and relationships throughout life. He may be stuck in repeating patterns of trying to “prove himself as a man” to his father, to women, or others in his life. He may struggle with authority figures (e.g., bosses, law enforcement, older men, etc.) all throughout his life.
8. Many men who struggle with unresolved past hurts and difficult relationships with their fathers that resulted in rejection, emotional or physical abuse, and/or abandonment may develop anxiety and depression related to their self-image as a man.
9. A third of boys in America are fatherless or lack a positive father-role model. They may have had an alcoholic father, an absentee father, abusive father, passive father, a deceased father, or an uninvolved father; and as a result, they lack healthy male role models and skills in knowing how to be a man. The lack of a father as a role model impacts a man's self-knowledge about how to be a healthy, productive man. They often lack knowledge about how to be fathers to their sons. They also struggle with how to be a healthy, well-balanced man in relationship with women and other men.
10. Many men have “father-hunger” which is a longing for their father's approval. Many men struggle because their fathers may have not given them the validation as a man that they craved in boyhood.
11. Many young men struggle in adulthood because their fathers may not have taught them how to navigate through life's obstacles.
12. Men often suffer silently and alone. They struggle with allowing themselves to be vulnerable because they fear being shamed or blamed for their shortcomings.

Here are some questions to ask yourself and to work through with your therapist:

1. What thoughts, emotions, or memories about your father came up as you read the above? Discuss them with your therapist.
2. What impact did your father have on you as a young boy and/or adolescent?
3. What wounds or hurts did you receive from your father or other men in your life?
4. What good qualities do/did you see in your father? What were the negative qualities?
5. How did your relationship with your father impact your idea of what it means to be a man?
6. How are you like your father? How have you strived to be different from your father?
7. Do you hold any resentment against your father? If so, what do you resent?
8. How did your father struggle with anger, aggression, alcohol/drugs, womanizing, suppressing his feelings, or other problems? How did that impact you as a young boy and now as a man?
9. How did your father mock or make fun of you in ways that demeaned your sense of manhood or masculinity?
10. Did your father try to toughen you up? Did he imply that weakness was for girls?
11. What did you need from your father as a young boy? What is still missing?
12. What do you still need from your father? Are there other men in your life that you connect with in order to get your needs met?