



## Session 3: Understanding Your Self

ACTIVITY 3.1 Welcome and Warm-up

TIME 15 Minutes

MATERIALS Flip chart, magic markers

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**GOAL:** To welcome the dads to Session 3 and to initiate discussion on understanding Self.

### PROCEDURES:

1. Welcome the dads to Session 3. Mention that today's session will provide them an opportunity to better understand themselves as men.
2. Ask each dad to respond to the following statement:

**When I think about myself, three characteristics that come to mind are \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.**



## Session 3: Understanding Your Self

ACTIVITY 3.2 About Me

TIME 45 Minutes

MATERIALS Fathering Handbook, flip chart, magic markers

**GOAL:** To encourage the dads to increase their awareness of Self.

### PROCEDURES:

1. Mention that an important characteristic of the 24/7 Dad is being aware of personal qualities and traits. The more a man knows his qualities, both positive and negative, and his traits, both good and bad, the more control he has over his behavior.
2. Ask the dads to locate the inventory “About Me” in Session 3 of their Fathering Handbook. Ask each dad to complete the statements.

#### About Me Inventory

- 1) One of my earliest childhood memories of being a little boy is \_\_\_\_\_.
- 2) The influence my dad had on me was (circle one):  
Positive  
Negative  
About 50-50
- 3) The influence my mother had on me was (circle one):  
Positive  
Negative  
About 50-50
- 4) What I learned about relationships watching my mom and dad was:
  - a) Relationships between a husband and wife can be loving.
  - b) Relationships between a husband and wife can be unsupportive and hurting.
  - c) Children are a positive, not a negative part of the husband-wife relationship.
  - d) Husbands are controlling and forceful.
  - e) Wives are controlling and forceful.
  - f) Other \_\_\_\_\_
- 5) Review each question one at a time, allowing the dads to share their responses.

----- Take a 10-Minute Break -----



## Session 3: Understanding Your Self

ACTIVITY 3.3 Building Self-Worth

TIME 40 Minutes

MATERIALS Flip chart, magic markers

**GOAL:** To increase the dads' understanding of ways to build self-worth.

### PROCEDURES:

1. Mention to the dads that for the next 40 minutes, the discussion will focus on understanding and building self-worth.
2. Write the term "SELF-WORTH" on the flip chart. Ask dads to brainstorm the meaning of the term. Write their comments on the flip chart.

Definition: Self-worth is a term used to describe the overall value a person has for himself.

Self-Worth is made up of two components:

- a. **Self-Concept:** (the brain) The thoughts a person has about himself. A self-concept can be positive or negative thoughts related to different aspects of a person's life. A person might have a positive self-concept of himself as a gardener, but a negative overall self-concept of himself as a cook. The self-concept of a person varies as widely as his roles and responsibilities. The person with an overall positive self-concept generally thinks of himself in a positive way.
  - b. **Self-Esteem:** (the gut) A person's self-esteem is generally regarded as the feelings he has about himself. Overall, does a person hold himself in high esteem, or low esteem? Messages we get from others contribute substantially to our self-esteem.
3. Ask each member to respond to the following statements:

**One aspect of my life about which I have a positive self-concept is**

\_\_\_\_\_.

**One aspect of my life about which I have a negative self-concept is**

\_\_\_\_\_.

4. Mention that the 24/7 Dad is interested in improving his own self-worth, as well as the self-worth of his family. To improve self-worth, try the following:
  - a. Put yourself and your family members in positions of success. Nothing improves a low self-concept as quickly and assuredly as success. Instead of pointing out how many wrong things you or your children do, point out how many right things happen.

- b. Use praise to compliment yourself on who you are as a person and on what you accomplish or try to accomplish (your behavior). Have each dad practice by offering a self-praise statement:  
**My best quality is \_\_\_\_\_.**
- c. Praise your children and other family members for just being the people they are; and praise them also on their accomplishments and efforts. Make sure to keep the two praise statements separate.

### STEPS FOR PRAISING PRACTICE WITH DADS

- Step 1: Have each member find a partner. Partners will role-play a father-son/daughter relationship.
- Step 2: Ask each pair to choose who will be Person A and who will be Person B.
- Step 3: Person A (the parent) is to offer Person B (the child) one praise statement for being a wonderful child, and one praise statement for an accomplishment or effort towards an accomplishment (their behavior). Some examples:

#### **Praise for “Being”**

“You are a wonderful son and I feel proud being your father.”

#### **Praise for “Behavior”**

“You did a great job cleaning your room.”

- Step 4: Reverse roles and have Person B act as the parent and Person A act as the child. Have the parent offer the child both a “praise for being” statement and a “praise for behavior” statement.

Step 5: Review with the dads how it felt giving and receiving praise.

4. Mention that keeping the Praise for Being and Praise for Behavior separate eliminates the “conditional” praise of “If you do this, then you are a good person.” Example: You did a great job cleaning your room. Daddy really loves you.” tells children that to receive praise they have to do something.
5. Praising a child for the wonderful person he or she is (Praise for Being), or for the good job he or she did (Praise for Behavior), helps children know that even when they mess up, Dad still loves them. This helps the child develop a good self concept and good self esteem because of the positive messages they are receiving.
6. Review the *Steps to Using Praise* located in Session 3 in the Fathering Handbook.



## Session 3: Understanding Your Self

ACTIVITY 3.4 Closing and Comments

TIME 5 Minutes

MATERIALS Fathering Handbook (Weekly Log)

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**GOAL:** To allow the dads to comment and end the session.

### PROCEDURES:

1. Ask each member to take five minutes and fill in the blanks in the following statements in his Weekly Log in the Fathering Handbook.

One thing new I learned today is \_\_\_\_\_.

This information will help me...

- better know myself because \_\_\_\_\_.
- be a better dad because \_\_\_\_\_.
- have a better relationship with my spouse and/or mother of my children because \_\_\_\_\_.
- in my relationship with God because \_\_\_\_\_.

The “Action Steps” that I need to take are \_\_\_\_\_.

2. Spend the remaining time asking each dad if he has any comments on today’s session.
3. Thank the dads for attending the group and remind them of the time and date of the next meeting.



## Session 4: Handling and Expressing Emotions

ACTIVITY 4.1 Welcome and Warm-up

TIME 15 Minutes

MATERIALS Flip Chart, magic markers

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**GOAL:** To welcome the dads to Session 4 and to initiate discussion on handling and expressing feelings.

### PROCEDURES:

1. Welcome the dads to Session 4 and mention that the focus of today's session is on handling and expressing feelings.
2. Write the following statement on the flip chart and ask each dad to respond:

**The message I received when I was a young boy about expressing feelings or showing emotions was \_\_\_\_\_.**

3. Review the responses with the group. Find commonalities.

## Session 4: Handling and Expressing Emotions

ACTIVITY 4.2 Holding Feelings Inside

TIME 45 Minutes

MATERIALS Flip chart, magic markers, 10 sheets of plain paper

**GOAL:** To increase the ability of the dads to recognize and express their feelings appropriately.

### PROCEDURES:

1. Ask each dad to respond to the following statements:

**One feeling I have trouble handling is** \_\_\_\_\_.

**When I feel** \_\_\_\_\_, **I usually behave** \_\_\_\_\_.

2. Explain that feelings as well as thoughts have energy, and it is the energy associated with each feeling and thought that wants expression.
3. Mention that every experience we have also has accompanying thoughts and feelings. The thoughts of experiences in our past we call memories. Depending on the experience, these memories can be positive or negative. Good times provide us with good memories; bad or painful times provide us with unpleasant memories.
4. For every memory, there is an accompanying feeling. Feelings can be classified as either feelings of comfort or feelings of discomfort. Referring to feelings in this manner takes away the negative and positive connotation of some feelings being “bad” and some being “good.” All feelings tell us something about an experience.
5. Men are socialized very early as boys not to express feelings and to keep them inside, especially feelings of discomfort. The result is the increase in physical and emotional problems men struggle with throughout their lives.
6. Have each dad take one piece of paper and tear it into thirds.
  - a. Have the dads write three feelings (one feeling on each piece of paper) that they have difficulty handling.
  - b. Instruct each dad to fold each piece of paper into a small square.
  - c. Ask the dads to stand up and walk around, taking their pieces of paper with them. As the men are walking around, have them notice their freedom of movement.
  - d. Have each dad drop one of their pieces of paper on the floor and cover it with their shoe. Mention that when we choose to hide our feelings, we are essentially covering them up.

- e. Have them begin walking again, this time dragging their piece of paper with them under their shoe. Mention that freedom is restricted when we choose to cover how we feel or stuff our feelings inside.
  - f. Next, have them drop the second piece of paper on the floor and cover it with their other shoe. Have them walk, shuffling both feet as they are covering the pieces of paper.
  - g. Instruct them to drop the third piece of paper on the ground. Keeping both their feet on the ground, have them cover the third piece of paper with their hand, assuming a three-point position. Ask them to move. Listen to the moans and groans.
  - h. Have the dads stop in their position and look around. What do they notice? Instruct everyone to pick up their pieces of paper and return to their chairs. Note that when we are able to express our thoughts and feelings, we can move again and get on with life.
  - i. Ask the dads to share the feelings they wrote on their paper. Have them notice the range of feelings.
7. Mention that each piece of paper represents an emotion, a thought or an experience that people do not want to deal with or accept. The more we try to cover up our feelings, the less freedom we have. The more experiences (pieces of paper) that a person tries to cover up, the more energy it takes and the less movement a person can make. Feelings of depression, stress or anger happen when there are so many experiences that the person uses most of their energy to cover up their feelings of discomfort.
  8. Mention that it is okay in some cases to suppress your emotions. For example, suppressing fear in the face of imminent danger when fear might paralyze you from taking action. Research suggests that men tend to be better at controlling their emotions than are women. This has distinct advantages in some circumstances. Research also shows that men and women process emotions differently. Fathers do not deal with emotions in exactly the same way as mothers do. (This is a very important statement to make with men who are more traditional in their views on masculinity and gender roles.) An example of how men process emotions differently than women is: if your child gets seriously injured, the father typically gets a serious look on his face while the mother typically might cry.
  9. Mention that children and adults receive messages all their lives that only certain feelings are acceptable (or good) and the majority of feelings are unacceptable (or bad). Ask the dads to share their experiences in keeping their feelings and thoughts hidden.
  10. Mention that all feelings are okay. It is the way that feelings are expressed that can be the cause of trouble.
  11. The same is true with the thoughts we have. All thoughts are okay. It is the way we act on our thoughts that counts.
  12. All thoughts and feelings have energy. It is the energy that wants expression. There are two ways of expressing the energy of thoughts and feelings: appropriate and inappropriate.



13. Brainstorm with the dads ways they can express their thoughts and feelings respectfully. What behaviors do they want their children to use when expressing their thoughts and feelings? Write the dads' responses on the flip chart. Then tell the dads that the 24/7 Dad follows the principles of Respect:

**Respect Yourself: Don't behave in disrespectful ways to yourself.**

**Respect Others: Don't behave in disrespectful ways towards others.**

**Respect Your Environment: Don't behave in disrespectful ways towards the environment.**

## Session 4: Handling and Expressing Emotions

ACTIVITY 4.3 Recognizing Feelings of Grief and Loss

TIME 45 Minutes

MATERIALS Fathering Handbook, flip chart, magic markers, masking tape

**GOAL:** To increase the ability of the dads to learn how to recognize their feelings of grief and loss.

### PROCEDURES:

1. Mention that feelings of grief and loss are two dominant feelings men have difficulty handling and expressing. Other feelings men have difficulty expressing appropriately are anger and stress. Those feelings will be dealt with in later sessions.
2. Write the word “LOSS” on the flip chart. Ask the dads to brainstorm other words that define the feeling of “loss.” Write their responses on the flip chart. Tear off the sheet and tape it to a wall.
3. Ask the dads to respond to the following questions. Have everyone to respond to a, then to b, then to c.
  - a. What color best represents the feeling of “loss’ for you?
  - b. What sound best represents the feeling of “loss” for you?
  - c. If loss were a physical shape, what would it look like?
4. Next, write the word “GRIEF” on the flip chart. Ask the dads to brainstorm other words that define the feeling of “grief.” Write their responses on the flip chart.
5. Repeat the questions that were asked in #3. Have the dads describe the:
  - a. Color of “grief.”
  - b. Sound of “grief.”
  - c. Physical shape of “grief.”
6. More than likely, it will be a challenge for the dads to differentiate between loss and grief. Explain the relationship between loss and grief:

**Loss means to not have something any longer; to have something taken away by accident, carelessness, parting or death.**

**Loss can refer to tangible items such as money, home, a person or a business, or to intangible items such as love, health, status or a game.**

7. **Grief is the reaction people have to loss in their lives.** It includes a wide variety of responses that vary with each person, the type of loss and its meaning to them and their particular circumstances and experiences. Ask the Dads to locate the information on *Grieving* in Session 4 of the Fathering Handbook.
8. Mention the following: Grieving is the process of coming to terms with loss.
  - Grieving also allows people to find new ways of coping with loss.
  - Grieving takes varying periods of time, sometimes years.
9. Research suggests that men and women tend to grieve differently. Based on responses from the dads in previous sessions, give some examples of this difference that you may have already heard from them. Keep in mind that cultural traditions come in to play here as well.

See the Fathering Handbook for the following examples. Mention one or two.

- Men tend not to be as self-caring emotionally.
  - Men tend to not want to be seen to care too much about their emotional pain. Statements like, ‘It doesn’t hurt that bad’ or ‘I’m okay’ are common.
  - Men tend to be more reliant on women for a sense of emotional stability.
  - Men tend to need privacy, may take time away or want to be alone to think things through.
  - Men might exhibit and express more anger.
  - Men might not display their grief in public.
  - Men grieve through ritual activities such as doing or making something.
10. Grieving men can best help themselves by: (Give a few examples here.)
    - Showing courage in allowing themselves to experience grief rather than covering up their feelings.
    - Communicating their need to be alone.
    - Not shutting others out.
    - Keeping communication open.
    - Tuning into their bodies and becoming aware of how their body is responding.
    - Using rituals and activity to work through their grief.
    - Slowing down and being reflective.
    - Staying close to reliable friends.
    - Making time to be outdoors.
    - Staying in good health and exercising.

11. Mention that an experience of loss is expressed as grief (sadness). Ask each member to describe an early experience of loss and how he did or did not grieve. What did the dads learn as a boy about ways to grieve? Are there “proper” and “improper” ways of grieving?
12. Crying is the body’s way of releasing the energy associated with grief. Tears of sadness are different than tears of joy. When we do not cry when our body is telling us to do so, the energy associated with the grieving will come out in other ways, or stay inside and begin to manifest itself in health problems.
13. Ask each dad to respond to the following statements:

**One message I received about crying was \_\_\_\_\_.**

**The message I send to my children about crying is \_\_\_\_\_.**

## Session 4: Handling and Expressing Emotions

ACTIVITY 4.4 Closing and Comments

TIME 5 Minutes

MATERIALS Fathering Handbook (Weekly Log)

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**GOAL:** To allow the dads to comment and end the session.

### PROCEDURES:

1. Ask each dad to take five minutes and fill in the blanks in the following statements in his Weekly Log in the Fathering Handbook.

One thing new I learned today is \_\_\_\_\_.

This information will help me...

- better know myself because \_\_\_\_\_.
- be a better dad because \_\_\_\_\_.
- have a better relationship with my spouse and/or mother of my children because \_\_\_\_\_.
- in my relationship with God because \_\_\_\_\_.

The “Action Steps” that I need to take are \_\_\_\_\_.

2. Spend the remaining time asking each dad if he has any comments on today’s session.
3. Thank the dads for attending the group and remind them of the time and date of the next meeting.



## Session 5: Spirituality

ACTIVITY 5.1 Welcome and Warm-up

TIME 15 Minutes

MATERIALS Flip chart, magic markers

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**GOAL:** To welcome the dads to Session 5 and to initiate discussion on the importance of spirituality in our lives.

### PROCEDURES:

1. Welcome the dads to Session 5. Mention that today's lesson will provide them an opportunity to better understand the role of spirituality in the life of a 24/7 Dad.
2. Ask each dad to respond to the following statements:

**To me, spirituality means**

\_\_\_\_\_.

**To me, a sense of spirituality is (or is not) important because**

\_\_\_\_\_.

## Session 5: Spirituality

ACTIVITY 5.2 Understanding Spirituality and Family

TIME 45 Minutes

MATERIALS Fathering Handbook, flip chart, magic markers

**GOAL:** To increase the dads' awareness of the ways spirituality is expressed in life.

### PROCEDURES:

1. Ralph Waldo Emerson, the great American Philosopher of the 18th century once wrote: *"Great men are they who see that spiritual is stronger than any material force."*  
What does Emerson mean by his statement?
2. The word "spirituality" pertains to or has to do with the spirit of the human soul:
  - It is our moral, religious or emotional nature as humans.
  - It is the part of each person that feels a great attachment to or part of someone or something else.
  - It is a feeling of membership or belonging to a cause or organization.
  - It is the force of life that attempts to find meaning and purpose.

Spirituality is love, it is kindness, it is caring and it is faith.

3. Write the word "RELIGION" on the flip chart. Ask the men to discuss the differences between spirituality and religion by asking them to respond to the following statement:

**To me, spirituality means \_\_\_\_\_ and religion means \_\_\_\_\_.**

Can people be spiritual and not religious? Religious and not spiritual? Religious and spiritual at the same time?

4. Explain that Spirituality is a part of who we are – just like our arms, legs, heads, etc. Religion is a set of rituals, traditions and dogma that reflect certain beliefs about the universe, our place in it and how we are linked to a higher power. Many men use religion to express their spirituality. Both can exist together and separate from one another.
5. Get examples from the group of expressions of spirituality. Write them on the flip chart.
6. Have each man respond to the following statements:

**Two ways I express my spirituality as a man are \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.**

**Two ways I express my spirituality as a father are \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.**

7. Many philosophers have noted over the years that spirituality is an important quality for a family to feel together. A “spiritual family” is one that feels membership for all its members, and in turn, members feel a sense of belonging. When “family spirituality” is present, cooperation, love, respect and communication are natural outcomes.
8. Ask each dad to respond to the *Family Spirituality Checklist* located in their Fathering Handbook. Explain they are to rate their family spirituality in the categories presented “as they are today,” and the degree to which the family “needs to be.” After everyone has completed the checklist, ask them to share their responses.
9. After members have had a chance to share their ratings, ask each dad to share what he can do immediately to build his family’s spirituality.

----- Take a 10-Minute Break -----

## Family Spirituality Checklist

Please use the following rating scale to respond to the statements.

- 1 Very Weak
- 2 Somewhat
- 3 Average
- 4 Above Average
- 5 Very Strong

	<b>We Are Today</b>	<b>We Need to Become</b>
1. Family members communicate with each other.		
2. Compliments are given freely.		
3. We touch each other in affection.		
4. We do things together as a family.		
5. Family members feel free to negotiate and compromise.		
6. Our family has traditions.		
7. Holidays are spent together.		
8. We eat dinner as a family.		
9. Vacations are fun times as a family.		
10. Members are respectful to one another.		

**One thing I can begin to do right away to build our family spirituality is \_\_\_\_\_**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.



## Session 5: Spirituality

ACTIVITY 5.3 Spirituality and Change

TIME 45 Minutes

MATERIALS Flip chart, magic markers

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**GOAL:** To increase dads' awareness of the relationships between spirituality and change.

### PROCEDURES:

1. Mention that a hallmark of the 24/7 Dad is his willingness to examine his thoughts, feelings and actions on a daily basis to ensure that his actions are respectful to himself, to others, and to his environment. When the 24/7 Dad discovers his actions might have been disrespectful the proper course of action to take is to apologize for acting disrespectfully and to be mindful of his future behavior. The element necessary for this to occur is “openness to change.” The 24/7 Dad is spiritually involved in the lives of his children and does this through these actions of respect and willingness to change.

2. Ask three men to volunteer to demonstrate the postures of acceptance to change.

- a. **Fight or Flight Posture.** Ask the first dad to stand, fists up ready to box. This posture is the defensive/attacking posture. When someone offers a suggestion for change or an observation, the person immediately gets into a “fight or flight” mindset.

Brainstorm with the group the techniques that are used in the “Fight or Flight” posture. Some examples are:

Blaming—Anger—Dismissing—Criticizing—Arguments—Leaving the Scene

Give the volunteer a “suggestion for change” and have the volunteer respond back with one of the techniques listed.

Example: “You know Fred, you’re never around at night to help put the kids to sleep. I really need your help.”

“Well, if you were more organized, you wouldn’t need my help. The problem with you is ...”

- b. **Defensive/Closed Posture.** Ask the dad to stand with his arms folded in an “X” over his chest. The right hand touches the left shoulder; the left hand touches the right shoulder. This is the defensive/closed posture. When someone offers a suggestion for change or observation, the person immediately closes up.

Brainstorm with the group the techniques that are used in the “Defensive/Closed” posture. Some examples are:

Withdrawing—Obstinance—Silence—Denial—Looks of Disregard—Excuses

Give the volunteer the same request for bedtime assistance, and have him role play the posture using the aforementioned examples.

Example: *“You know Fred, you’re never around at night to help put the kids to sleep. I really need your help.”*

*“I don’t remember you ever asking me for help. Am I a mind reader?”*

- c. **Open for Change Posture.** Ask the volunteer to stand arms extended and open, palms up. This posture best represents the “Open for Change” posture. Brainstorm with the group the techniques that are used in the “Open for Change” posture. Some examples are:

Eye Contact—Look of Interest—Pleasant Tone—Asks Questions—Desire to Help—Seeks Clarification

Role play the same scenario for bedtime help using the “Open for Change” posture.

Example: *“You know Fred, you’re never around at night to help put the kids to sleep. I really need your help.”*

*I’m sorry. I haven’t been available to help you. Let’s make a plan. What can we do to work together?”*

3. Have the dads form pairs. Ask each dad to identify a situation at home that he is often “Defensive Attacking” or “Defensive Closed.” Have him act out the scene with his partner. Switch roles and have the partner role play his situation.
4. Ask the pairs to discuss the issues that feed the defensive postures that prohibit them from being open.
5. Next, role play the individual situations with an “Open for Change” posture. What is needed to stay open?
6. Mention that the most critical factors to being “Open for Change” are:
  - a. Valuing the need to change. The changes need to have worth before sincere efforts can be made.
  - b. Valuing the other person. If suggestions or observations come from a person who holds little value, the comments will seem more like nagging.
  - c. Using mindful awareness. To be aware of your thoughts and feelings, how you come across to the other person, the mood of the person you are talking with, the situation, etc. are all necessary for using the best judgment in responding.
  - d. Having the appropriate skills or the “know how” to change is an art and a science. Knowing how to change will facilitate the change itself.

## Session 5: Spirituality

ACTIVITY 5.4 Closing and Comments

TIME 5 Minutes

MATERIALS Fathering Handbook (Weekly Log)

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**GOAL:** To allow the dads to comment and end the session.

### PROCEDURES:

1. Ask each dad to take five minutes and fill in the blanks in the following statements in his Weekly Log in the Fathering Handbook.

One thing new I learned today is \_\_\_\_\_.

This information will help me...

- better know myself because \_\_\_\_\_.
- be a better dad because \_\_\_\_\_.
- have a better relationship with my spouse and/or mother of my children because \_\_\_\_\_.
- in my relationship with God because \_\_\_\_\_.

The “Action Steps” that I need to take are \_\_\_\_\_.

2. Spend the remaining time asking each dad if he has any comments on today’s session.
3. Thank the dads for attending the group and remind them of the time and date of the next meeting.