

The Core Story Process

What a person believes will override what they know. Controlling beliefs often lie beyond conscious awareness and must be sought out. – Terry S. Smith

Testimonials

“Dr. Terry Smith’s Core Story technique provides a kind and caring way to give people a revealing and valuable look at themselves. The Core Story also creates a unique opportunity for a person to discover and acknowledge their Core Beliefs and the powerful role these beliefs have in shaping a person’s life.”

– Joseph McLoughlin, Ph.D., Associate Professor of the Practice of Psychology and Human Development at Vanderbilt University

“As someone who went through the process of recounting my Core Story with Dr. Terry Smith almost two decades ago, I know personally that it can be a powerful experience. In this booklet, he goes step by step through his approach to drawing out the Core Story which highlights special relationships and controlling beliefs. It instructs the reader on how to replicate the process he has developed to transform lives over his many years as a counselor.”

– Trina R. Shanks, Ph.D., Associate Professor, University of Michigan, School of Social Work

“The Core Story provides insight into broken attachments and the meaning we place on those family attachments we experienced as children. Through the tool, we learn what we had to do to get our needs met! I think this should be an excellent accompaniment to addiction treatment.”

– Leslie S.C. Cole, M.D., Author of Quit Pain Pills Without the Withdrawal: How to Break Free from Your Dependence and Finally Wake Up Feeling Normal

“The Core Story process gives a person the sacred space to tell the truth about themselves. When I experienced the process, it was both profound and humbling. For those seeking greater understanding about human relationships, the Core Story coaching tool is a tremendous gift that offers endless possibilities to experience

understanding, healing, and draw us to a deeper readiness to give and receive love.”

– *Karen Casey, M.Ed., Educator, Metro Nashville Public Schools*

“Every man, woman, and child has a Core Story. Unlocking that story, understanding the unconscious drivers, and discovering the true self has freed thousands from addictive and obsessive behaviors. On the job and in countless marriages, those behaviors sabotage success. The Core Story manual speeds the process of discovery and is an important tool for recovery.”

– *Russell Bloodworth, Jr., Executive Vice-President of Boyle Investment, Inc.*

The Core Story is an enhanced approach to using the genogram. This insightful and spiritually grounded process allows individuals to see themselves through a hopeful and true lens. Working with the Core Story is a great beginning and provides a solid foundation for continued emotional and spiritual healing and growth.

– *Lezlie R. Owsley, MMFT, LMFT, Intentional Life Counseling, LLC*

“If you have experienced the genogram as a resource for understanding one’s family system, what Dr. Terry Smith has developed with the Core Story tool is more life giving and transformative than the genogram by itself! I’ve been personally transformed by the Core Story and have also witnessed the sacred space created with others each time a colleague, client, or friend experiences their Core Story. The Core Story helps people better understand the heart of human relationships.”

– *John O. York, Ph.D., Director, Doctor of Ministry Program, Associate Dean, Hozelip School of Theology, Lipscomb University*

“Core Story is a powerful instrument for discovery and healing of deep trauma. It is particularly valuable for those suffering PTSD from military or first responder experiences.”

– *Larry Malone, Retired Captain, USN Aviator, Vietnam War Veteran*

“Several years ago, I had the pleasure of Terry Smith facilitating my Core Story

amongst two friends. I was blown away by the things that I learned about myself. The Core Story tool shined a light on my Core Beliefs, Core Wounds, and Core Lies. I have since been able to confront my inadequacies and draw closer to the One who loves me and also help others process their life journey by facilitating their Core Story. The tool is powerful and illuminating as it allows individuals to look in the rearview mirror of their life and understand “great and unsearchable things they did not know.”

– *William Roberts, Story Archeologists, Retired Business Executive*

The Approach to the Core Story Process

You are now ready to begin the Core Story process. It is possible to complete the process alone, but it is preferable if you involve your spouse, a friend, or a member of your family to help. Involving your spouse as your partner in the exercise will not only give them a deeper insight into the elements that make up your personality; their involvement will also stimulate discussion and feedback that will result in deeper understanding that will in turn enrich being married.

Organizing your thoughts to respond to the questions in the following chapter may cause you to consider things you have never considered before, or at least not in a long time. The structure of the process may reveal information to your spouse that is important to their understanding of you and be information they have never heard before.

Even if your Core Story process is part of a session with a minister, counselor, or life coach, you will benefit. If your spouse is present with you, he or she will benefit from your storytelling in this setting as well.

When referring to the Core Story, we are referring to the process of mapping your relational history over the first eighteen years of life (with a particular emphasis on your early childhood beliefs about security, esteem, and power). During the process, you (or the person you are helping) will recount a relational history covering three generations. Also to be recounted will be the experiences and perceptions of a wide range of relationships, including how you feel you were perceived by your parents.

Keep in mind that the completion of the Core Story process will not always result in the discovery of some hidden flaw. Some people will complete this process in order to see if there are things about them that, if known, might make being married even better. Sometimes the Core Story effort will only result in a confirmation that there is little about your actions and personality that are detrimental to being married.

COMPLETING THE CORE STORY PROCESS ALONE OR IN PARTNERSHIP WITH A SPOUSE OR FRIEND

Before jumping to the Core Story questions, carefully read Chapter 10 to see all that will be involved and learn more about what is to be accomplished. You need to become familiar with the various questions, forms, and formats you will encounter. The Core Story process builds upon itself

as you go through the steps, so following the process in the sequence prescribed is necessary for you to properly build upon your personal story and get the most out of your storytelling experience.

Both you and your spouse going through the Core Story regimen together, usually on two different occasions, can be very useful in developing the mutual understanding that is so important to being married. Taking this approach allows each of you to facilitate the other through the various stages of the exercise. You can then hear one other's story while benefiting from a second perspective on what is being shared and interpreted.

COMPLETING THE CORE STORY PROCESS IN A PROFESSIONAL SETTING

You may encounter the Core Story process as part of a help session with a trained professional. Your minister, counselor, or life coach will have chosen this interview tool to assist in gathering the information that they need to better help you and to provide a tool that will help you gain valuable insight about yourself.

The Core Story process as refined by Terry Smith is conceptually and educationally sound. That is why this tool was chosen. It employs the widely used think-pair-share learning strategy. It supports multi-sensory learning techniques where what is heard and what is recorded on the Core Story diagram become companion learning tools.

The Core Story process is also consistent with Visual Learning Strategies (VLS). This is where images are used to help a person reflect on their own thinking. This approach facilitates learning through reasoning with evidence, making connections, wondering and asking questions, uncovering complexity and going below the surface of things, identifying patterns and making generalizations, and evaluating evidence, arguments, and actions.

By employing the Visual Learning Strategies inherent to the Core Story process, critical thinking is enhanced through a discussion about the visual representation captured on the Core Story diagram. This learning method has proven to be a good way for tapping into a person's background knowledge and aiding in memory recall.

Many people have experienced some degree of hurt and trauma as a child. Misinformation has been internalized as truth. Unfortunately, children vividly record what happens to them, but are ill-equipped to properly interpret what has happened. A child's unconscious solutions to grappling with misfortune and misinformation often prove counterproductive once reaching adulthood.

The Steps in the Core Story Process

A. Tools

Prepare to visually capture the results of the Core Story process. A whiteboard, chalkboard, flipchart, or just a piece of paper can be used to diagrammatically depict the answers to the series of questions detailed throughout this chapter. Use the templates and charts below only as suggestions as to how you might map out a Core Story. Feel free to customize any of the templates or charts to fit your particular story. Some Core Stories will be more complex than others and some

stories will have more family members and conflicts than others. Some Core Story maps can end up very congested with information. But the purpose of the Core Story Template is to capture the story, not to complete a neat chart.

You will find it useful to have writing instruments of different colors to use in recording different categories of response. For example, you might use the color black to record names, green to depict any troubling relationships, red for the stars in the story, and blue for the list of Core Wounds, Core Lies, and Core Truths.

The first illustration below is a template to use in organizing the story board. This template is to be used to capture the answers to the questions in Part B of this chapter. The second illustration is related to the first in that it is a chart illustrating various symbols that can be used to denote the responses to the questions in Part C of this chapter.

The third illustration below is to be used to capture the responses to the questions appearing in Parts F and G of this chapter. The fourth illustration below is to serve as a prompter to help with the answers to the questions in Parts F and G. There is no right answer to these questions, and the list of possible answers is not intended to be all inclusive. The most appropriate answer to a question may not even appear on the list in the illustration. The best answer is the answer given by the one being interviewed.

The fifth and sixth illustrations below are to show what a completed Core Story map might look like. This example is very neat for the purposes of illustration, but don't expect the one you construct as you conduct the Core Story exercise to be so neat. No matter how busy or complicated a Core Story map becomes, it will be a meaningful representation to the one being interviewed of the generational layers of relationships that have helped to create the system of beliefs that are being identified.

CORE STORY FRAMEWORK

Sample

PATERNAL

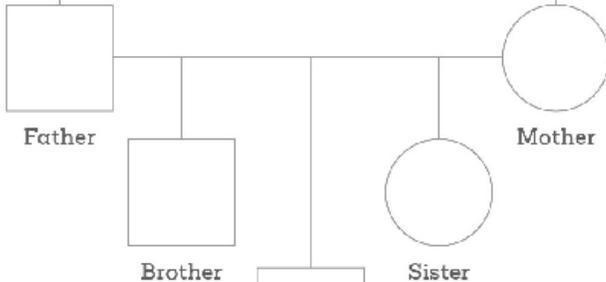
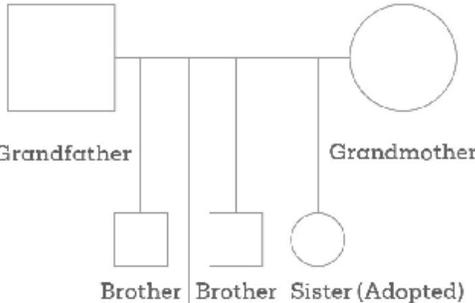
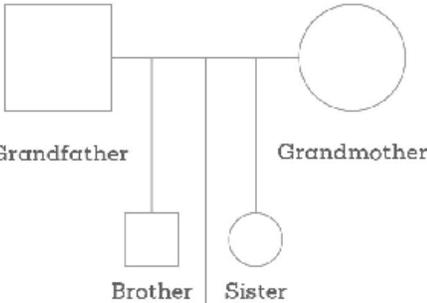
MATERNAL

Grandfather

Grandmother

Grandfather

Grandmother



FATHER

MOTHER

YOU

SCHOOL

RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY
 Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Jewish: (Orthodox, Reformed, Conservative), Christian

6-12 12-15 16-18

12-15 16-18

CORE STORY

Symbol Chart



DIVORCE



CONFLICT



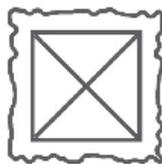
AFFAIR



ADOPTION



MALE



TRAGEDY



CUT OFF



SEPARATION



DISTANCE



ABUSE



CLOSENESS



FEMALE



DEATH



**AWARENESS OF
THOSE WHO
LOVED &
AFFIRMED YOU**

CORE STORY FRAMEWORK

Sample

PROCESS OUTCOME

OBJECTIVE

CORE BELIEFS

DISCOVER

Safety and Security

Affection and Esteem

Power and Control

CORE WOUND

EXPOSE

CORE LIE

RENOUNCE

CORE TRUTH

REPLACE

CORE STORY

Examples of Core Beliefs

SECURITY/SURVIVAL

- Be good
- Obey
- Be perfect
- Work hard
- Be invisible
- Be silent
- Other

CORE WOUND

- Abandoned
- Rejected
- Outcast
- Invisible/Not seen
- Other

AFFECTION/ESTEEM

- Perform to please
- Achieve to please
- Be the best
- Be attractive
- Be helpful
- Other

CORE LIE

- I am worthless.
- I am not good enough.
- I am less than.
- I am a failure.
- Other

POWER/CONTROL

- Be funny/humorous
- Be nice/complicit
- Be cute
- Be strong/Show no weakness
- Be smart
- Other

CORE TRUTH

- I am of immeasurable value.
- I am loved.
- I am forgiven.
- I am not alone.
- I am a gift.
- Other

CORE STORY FRAMEWORK

Sample

PATERNAL

MATERNAL

Grandfather

Grandmother

Grandfather

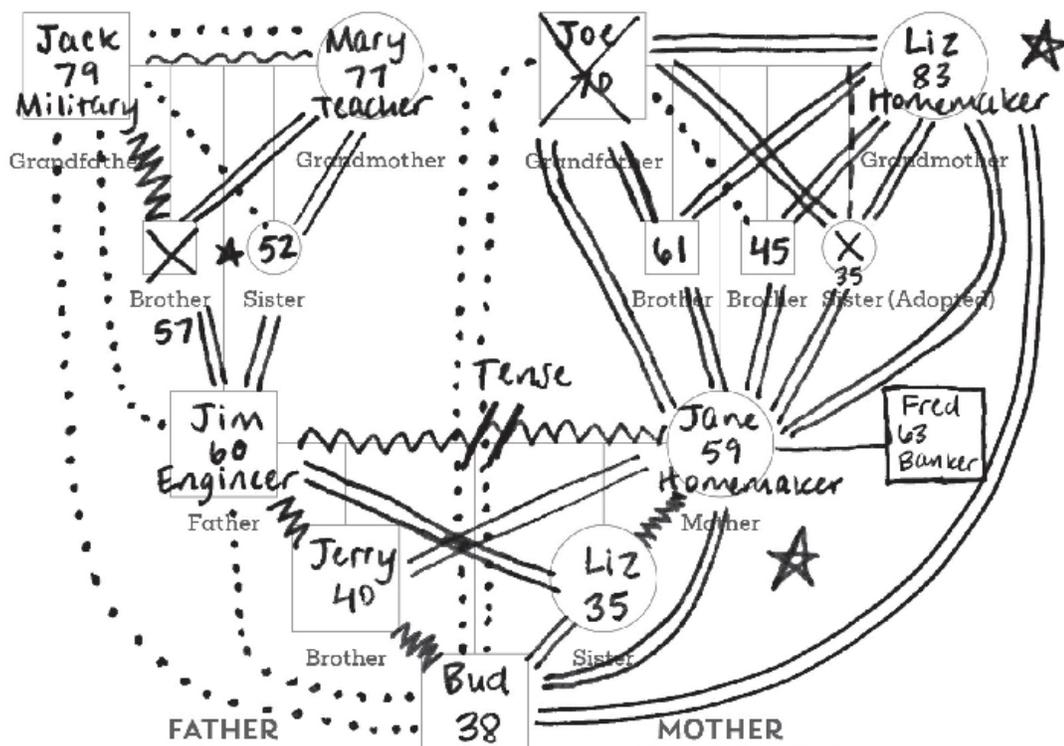
Grandmother

Absent
Alcoholic
Non-Religious

Smart
Tough
Non-Religious

Kind
Absent
Religious/Christian

Independent
Artistic
Religious/Christian



FATHER
Busy
Strict
Alcoholic
Non-religious

MOTHER
Kind / Available
Quiet
Religious / Christian

SCHOOL

RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY
Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Jewish: (Orthodox, Reformed, Conservative), Christian

6-12 Positive Teachers Friends
12-15 Negative Bullied Good Grades
16-18 Positive Sports Friends Good Grades

12-15 Good Teachers Camp Friends
16-18 Too Strict Unwelcome Judged

CORE STORY FRAMEWORK

Sample

PROCESS OUTCOME

OBJECTIVE

CORE BELIEFS

DISCOVER

Safety and Security

Obey

Affection and Esteem

Be helpful

Power and Control

Be strong / show no weakness

CORE WOUND

EXPOSE

Rejected

CORE LIE

RENOUNCE

Not good enough

CORE TRUTH

REPLACE

I am forgiven

B. Family of Origin Questions

These questions are given in a sequence that will support an orderly unfolding of a person's Core Story. Working through these questions and visually recording the responses makes this a visual, cognitive, and experiential endeavor.

The answers to these simple questions can create strong emotions. It is important, should you be helping another person work through the Core Story process, to listen closely and be present in these moments. You should begin by stating this is a very personal and confidential meeting and you do not intend to share this story with anyone. Let it be known that you will give them a copy of their story when completed.

You will begin with questions about the father and the immediate nuclear family with whom you or the one being interviewed grew up during their first eighteen years. Use the Core Story Framework as well as the Symbols Chart just shown above to capture all the characters in the Core Story before asking the relational questions listed in Part C. Sometimes the person you are assisting will be traumatized just by naming people in their family of origin. When this happens, let them know you will come back to these significant people in a moment.

It is all right if some of the questions are not answered as this lack of response can be revelatory in the storytelling process.

1. What is your father's name?
2. What did he do for a living when you were growing up?
3. How old is your father?
4. What is your mother's name?
5. Did your mother work outside of the home when you were growing up? If so, what did she do for a living?
6. How old is your mother?
7. How many brothers and sisters do you have? Where do you fit in? List the ages of the siblings from oldest to youngest. (This question is intended to put the storyteller on the Core Story diagram in the appropriate birth order as soon as possible.)
8. Did your parents stay married? If the answer is "no," who did they marry?
9. If your parents divorced, how old were you when this occurred?
10. How many brothers and sisters did your father have?
11. What are the ages of your father's siblings? Living or dead? Ages at death?
12. How many brothers and sisters does your mother have?
13. What are the ages of your mother's siblings? Living or dead? Ages at death?
14. What is the name of your father's father?
15. What is his age, if living? What was his age when he died?
16. What did your father's father do for a living?
17. What is the name of your father's mother?
18. What is her age, if living? What was her age when she died?
19. Did your father's mother work outside of the home? If so, what did she do for a living?
20. What is the name of your mother's father?
21. What is his age, if living? What was his age when he died?
22. What did your mother's father do for a living?
23. What is the name of your mother's mother?
24. What is her age, if living? What was her age when she died?
25. Did your mother's mother work outside of the home? If so, what did she do for a living?

C. Questions to Identify How Relationships Were Experienced

In asking these questions you will enter into your experiential world or that of the person being interviewed as it was understood to be. You will need the symbols for closeness, distance, conflict, and abuse listed under item A in the Symbols Chart at the beginning of this chapter. Use of these symbols will help create a visual, cognitive and experiential awareness of the story as it develops.

When helping another person work through the Core Story process, observe the body language very closely. Their mood or reactions to the questions may indicate the need to either move on or pursue additional questions. When asking these questions, allow the person time to answer. Do not be afraid of silence as it can produce some of the best responses.

1. How did you relate to your father growing up? Was he close or distant? Was he kind, mean, abusive, alcoholic, absent, religious, or non-religious? What spiritual tribe did your father subscribe to (e.g., Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Atheist, Buddhist, etc.)?
2. How did you relate to your mother growing up? Was she close or distant? Was she kind, mean, abusive, alcoholic, absent, religious, or non-religious? What spiritual tribe did your mother subscribe to (e.g., Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Atheist, Buddhist, etc.)?
3. If you have siblings, how did you experience them relating to your father (e.g., close, distant, combative, loving, etc.)?
4. How did you experience each of your siblings relating to your mother (e.g., close, distant, combative, loving, etc.)?
5. What was your relationship to each of your siblings growing up (e.g., close, distant, combative, loving, etc.)?
6. What was the atmosphere of your home (e.g., safe, loving, chaotic, hostile, unpredictable, welcoming, warm, combative, etc.)?
7. What are the descriptive adjectives your father would use to describe how he experienced his father when he was growing up? Was he close or distant? Was he kind, mean, abusive, alcoholic, absent, religious, or non-religious? What spiritual tribe did your father subscribe to (e.g., Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Atheist, Buddhist, etc.)?
8. What are the descriptive adjectives your father would use to describe how he experienced his mother growing up? Was she close or distant? Was she kind, mean, abusive, alcoholic, absent, religious, or non-religious? What spiritual tribe did his mother subscribe to (e.g., Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Atheist, Buddhist, etc.)?
9. What are the descriptive adjectives your mother would use to describe how she experienced her father when she was growing up? Was he close or distant? Was he kind, mean, abusive, alcoholic, absent, religious, or non-religious? What spiritual tribe did her father subscribe to (e.g., Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Atheist, Buddhist, etc.)?
10. What are the descriptive adjectives your mother would use to describe how she experienced her mother growing up? Was she close or distant? Was she kind, mean, abusive, alcoholic, absent, religious, or non-religious? What spiritual tribe did her mother subscribe to (e.g., Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Atheist, Buddhist, etc.)?
11. How did your father relate to each of his siblings (e.g., close, distant, combative, loving, etc.)?
12. How did your mother relate to each of her siblings (e.g., close, distant, combative, loving, etc.)?
13. How did your father's father relate to each of your father's siblings (e.g., close, distant, combative, loving, etc.)?

14. How did your father's mother relate to each of your father's siblings (e.g., close, distant, combative, loving, etc.)?
15. How did your mother's father relate to each of your mother's siblings (e.g., close, distant, combative, loving, etc.)?
16. How did your mother's mother relate to each of your mother's siblings (e.g., close, distant, combative, loving, etc.)?
17. How did your father's parents relate to you (e.g., close, distant, combative, loving, etc.)? How did they relate to your siblings?
18. How did your mother's parents relate to you (e.g., close, distant, combative, loving, etc.)? How did they relate to your siblings?

D. Questions to Identify Life Experiences Outside the Home

Many times significant experiences and influences occur for young and middle age children outside of their household. School, religious groups, sports participation, and adults other than their parents can make impressions that are formative and may last for a lifetime.

1. What was elementary, middle, and high school like for you? Were they a positive or negative experience? What were the reasons it was positive or negative for each? List those reasons. NOTE: The responses may be different for each different grade level.
2. What about your involvement in religious assemblies such as church, synagogue, or mosque? Was this involvement a positive or negative experience? List the reasons you feel as you do.
3. Were there any activities outside of school that were special to you growing up, such as a sports team, scouting, 4-H Club, playing in a band, etc.?
4. Were there adults other than any of your relatives who were very special to you growing up?

E. Questions to Identify Significant Caring People

It is now time to explore and reflect upon the special people growing up. This is the point in the Core Story process where you or the one being interviewed are to identify the people experienced as especially caring. These are the people who were always glad to see you.

1. Who were the people during your childhood who were special to you, who you experienced as valuing you, encouraging you, or who seemed delighted when you came into the room? Give each of these people a *big, red star* on the Core Story diagram.
2. Make a list of these significant caring people on a piece of paper. Take time to give thanks for each one of these people. It could be a mother, father, second grade teacher, neighbor, or best friend. It might be this special affirmation came from a pet or a character in a book or movie. If the names are not already on the Core Story diagram, add them somewhere.

F. Questions to Identify Controlling Beliefs

At this point in the Core Story process, reflect on all that has been shared so far, ponder what is displayed on the Core Story diagram, and decide what are believed to be the controlling beliefs that provided the most controlling influence while growing up. In order to facilitate the identification of these Core Beliefs, answer the questions below. To assist in responding to these questions, refer to the Examples of Core Beliefs illustration in Part A. This illustration presents only possible responses to be considered, and the most appropriate response to the questions may not appear on the list of examples.

1. Picturing yourself in your early teens, what did you think you needed to be safe? You may want to look at the Examples of Core Beliefs to prime your thinking for a possible response.
2. Picturing yourself in your early teens, what did you think you needed to gain affection and esteem? What did you decide that you needed to do to be loved? You may want to look at the Examples of Core Beliefs to prime your thinking for a possible response.
3. Picturing yourself in your early teens, what did you think you need to attain and hold power and control? What did you feel you needed to do in order to assert yourself? What did you decide that you needed to do in order to have control over how others perceived you? You may want to look at the Examples of Core Beliefs to prime your thinking for a possible response.
4. How do you prevent your thirteen year-old self from wrecking your life as an adult?

G. Questions to Identify the Core Wounds, Core Lies, and Core Truths

It is now time to apply the information gained through the Core Story process to identify how Core Beliefs may be reinforcing misconceptions about personal identity. A person's Core Beliefs are established early in life and represent how a person was able to navigate the world as a child. These early formed beliefs were counted on to provide a way to flourish or survive. Following these beliefs was a way to gain recognition and affirmation. These beliefs provided a way to gain some control of or power over individual circumstances.

However, the Core Beliefs that worked for the child may actually be toxic to the adult. These early-formed beliefs create a "false self" that may not serve an individual well when experiencing the stresses of adulthood. If you are helping another person work through the Core Story process, you might consider sharing some of your own experience with the "false self" in order to create a context for the next series of questions.

To facilitate this process of self-discovery, proceed as follows:

1. What might you consider to be your Core Wound? The Core Wound is a deep hurt, fear, or anger that results from childhood experience. Many people have a Core Wound by the time they are twelve years old. Even if an individual had what could be called a perfect loving home, the Core Wound many times surfaces when they imagine putting their arm around the 12-year-old self and asking the child within how they might have been wounded. Some people will say, "I have no wound." Allow them time to reflect. The wound may be deep and hard to recognize. Examples of some answers: abandoned, rejected, invisible, alone, etc. NOTE: If you are working with another person, never press them to give any more of the details of their Core Wound than they are willing to share comfortably.
2. What might you consider to be your Core Lie? The Core Lie centers on the deep feelings and perceptions a person has about him or herself, and these feelings will often persist into adulthood. The Core Lie is founded on misinterpretations, misconceptions, and reactions that a person has about their capabilities and potential. These misperceptions arise from their Core Wound. The Core Lie is at the end of a cascade of unconscious thought that tries to make meaning of and adapt to a Core Wound that creates the basis for Core Beliefs that support Core Lies. Naming these Core Lies is a key step in an individual understanding what is fundamental in life and what is controlling their life. It is possible that up to 95 percent of a person's behavior is driven by their Core Lie. Examples could include: *I'm not good enough. I don't count. I'm less than. I'm responsible. It's my fault.*
3. Can you accept the premise of the existence of Core Truths? Core Truth is information that people must accept in faith believing that it is better than the information they have developed for themselves. A Core Truth, if it is accepted, will challenge but mitigate the faulty and dysfunctional Core Beliefs that have developed around Core Wounds and Core Lies.

H. Making the Decision

It is now time to realize that you get to decide how to respond to life. The awareness, mindfulness, and understanding that is represented in the following points will help you or the person you are helping get unstuck and begin moving toward hope and joy. Reflect on the personal empowerment expressed in these statements:

1. I get to *decide* to renounce and revoke my Core Lie.
2. I get to *choose* to replace my Core Lies with Core Truths.
3. I have the *ability* to change because I am larger than my pain, trauma, and circumstances. I will break free and not make friends with my pain.

Deciding to accept Core Truth is an internal spiritual matter for each person. Renouncing Core Lies on a daily basis is a spiritual process that will renew the mind and is supported through spiritual disciplines such as contemplation, meditation, listening, reading, journaling, etc. These constructive steps will help in healing, not forgetting.

The step to make life-changing decisions is often slow. Life is a marathon and not a sprint, as healing and personal transformation are lifelong processes.

I. Final Thoughts and Reflections

If you have been assisting another person work through the Core Story process, review and emphasize the following points:

1. Ask the person: What is the one thing you will take away from your own story today? Then, ask if they have any questions for you.
2. Ask the storyteller to look at the Core Story visual that has been created and share any interesting reflections or observations they might have.
3. If a friend, mate, or a small group is present, ask each person to share briefly how their story is similar or different. Then you, as the facilitator, can share with the person being interviewed how your story is similar or different. This need not be a long recitation but a brief connecting point of how your story may be connected to that of the person being interviewed.
4. Set up another meeting, with the only assignment being for the individual to reflect on their own story.

Remarks on Healing Through Hearing and Understanding

Over my career I have continued to refine the genogram tool into what is now the Core Story. I want to provide here some first-hand testimony about the universal usefulness of this process for personal story development, Core Belief identification, and the discovery of Core Truths.

What the Core Story process reveals is that our belief system is a composite of what we have learned and experienced on our own and what beliefs and impressions have been handed down generationally from our parents and relatives. The Core Story process is one way to discover that our system of personal beliefs may not be big enough or hardy enough to handle real life. The Core Story process is a tool to aid in looking for and reframing faulty beliefs.

We all have unmet emotional needs and expectations. We may look to being married, our work, or friends to meet these needs, and when these needs and expectations are not met we feel let down. We find that the personality traits we depended upon to get us through youth, the early-formed Core Beliefs, won't always serve us well as adults. When the beliefs we are depending upon begin to fail us, especially in being married, we will be judgmental of our own shortcomings and as equally judgmental of the shortcomings of others, even our spouse.

Physical and psychological trauma is a particularly tragic path for the formation of Core Beliefs. My experience has been that even the Core Wounds and Core Lies resulting from such trauma can be exposed, placed into a proper context, and thus lessened in their impact as a result of the Core Story process. I have worked my entire professional life with people throughout the United States who have experienced trauma. I have worked with combat veterans suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), male and female prison inmates, and children traumatized by parents who have abused their children physically, sexually, and mentally.

I have also worked with people who have suffered emotional trauma due to failed relationships and harsh self-judgment.

I have also worked in India with victims of sex trafficking and alcoholics in rehabilitation clinics. In Nicaragua I worked with 12-year-old children who survived by carrying an AK-47 rifle. In Israel I met with the adult children of Holocaust survivors who had been beaten and abused by parents who survived the concentration camps but carried brutality and abuse into their homes. In El Salvador, Guyana, and Italy I worked with those who were also traumatized as children. In every case I found that the Core Story process helps people understand their story and provides a way for them to access and remodel their innermost world.

I was first introduced to the predecessor to the Core Story process, the genogram, in 1983 by a friend, Tim Lowry, who was a licensed Marriage and Family Therapist. This multi-generational diagram of family behavior patterns was developed in the 1940's by a psychiatrist, Murray Bowen and was documented in a book he co-authored with Michael Kerr titled *Family*

Evaluation. Since then physicians and therapists have used the genogram tool to identify generational behavioral pathology.

As I developed and improved the Core Story process, the publications by several other behavioral professionals have helped me along the way. Dr. Merle R. Jordan, a professor at Boston University where I completed my doctorate degree, is the author of *Reclaiming your Story: Family History and Spiritual Growth*. I was also influenced a great deal by the thinking of Edwin Friedman, author of the book titled *Generation to Generation: Family Process in Church and Synagogue*, where he identifies and explains the power of the psychodynamic pressure that is present in familial relations. Thomas Keating's books titled *Invitation to Love* and *Open Mind-Open Heart* helped me to develop my concepts of Core Beliefs, Core Wounds, and Core Lies. The book titled *Refocusing Your Passions: A Christ-Centered Approach to Overcoming Addictive Behavior* by Don Crossland also proved to be useful.

The Core Story process has been a journey in the making and it is my hope that this tool provides a trustworthy method for helping people get unstuck and for helping individuals to identify and differentiate from the emotional lies that have ruled their life and influenced their decision-making. Under the pressure of real life, I have found a way through the use of the Core Story to open the door to a person's spiritual dimension. People need insight, understanding, knowledge, and a safe place to process their life's journey. I have experienced that when people are given good information, time, and safety, they can work through any life issue and trauma.

It has become evident to me that when people get serious about personal transformation, they benefit from committing to a regimen that reinforces their attempt to incorporate Core Truths to replace their Core Lies. This transformation process, as outlined by Don Crossland in the book cited previously, will need to center on the regular practice of these five steps:

1. REFRAME your faulty system of beliefs: recall all that you learned as a result of completing the Core Story process.
2. REBOND with the love that can heal: be willing to forgive yourself and move forward.
3. REANCHOR around Core Truths: make truth the target of your transformation journey.
4. REBUILD around appropriate boundaries: take respectful action and reconcile with others.
5. REPLACE Core Lies and refocus on Core Truths: reject the intrusion of your old ways of thinking as Core Lies will not be forgotten but can be overcome.

As my lifelong mentor and founder of Heartbeat, Inc., and current moderator of the website *On Being Human*, Landon Saunders, says, "There is nothing in the world more important than a human being." I stand amazed at the greatness of a person. This greatness is revealed as they learn to think and to believe in and to love themselves. I believe there is an invisible power in each person, and the Core Story awakens that dimension and a passion for life.