

## Some Family Dynamics of Burnout

The way in which you burn out can usually be traced to the family dynamics from your particular past. Answer the following questions to determine how family dynamics might contribute to burnout for you.

1. Did your parents make it difficult for you to think for yourself?
2. Were your parents overcritical and over demanding?
3. If you are a woman, did your mother behave as though she was less important than your father?
4. Was your mother or father an alcoholic, on drugs, or highly disturbed?
5. Was either parent distant, noncommunicative, or lacking in affection?
6. Were you ashamed of either or both of your parents?
7. Were you in competition with any of your siblings?
8. Were you a child who was thrust into an adult role prematurely?
9. Did you feel compelled to keep your aspirations a secret?
10. Were you rarely allowed any privacy?
11. Were you reluctant to expose any feelings of hurt, disappointment, or sadness in front of your parents?
12. Were you left alone to care for yourself and, as a result, did you impose your own strict set of criticisms on yourself?
13. Were you ever talked about as being awkward, lazy, stupid, or inept?
14. When you wanted something for yourself, were you accused of being selfish and self-centered?
15. Did you feel guilty over being brighter than other members of your family, and did you hide your intelligence?
16. Were you never seen as “good enough”?
17. Did you develop a false front to cover your true feelings?
18. Did either parent insist you do everything his/her way?

If you answered “yes” to more than six or eight of these questions, there’s a good chance that much of your energy is siphoned off today by internal scuffles with the past. Understanding how your family interacted with each other, how that interaction affected you, and how it impacts on your individual world view today can be critical to identifying and halting much of the unseen burnout activity in your present life – take it to therapy and/or supervision.

(Adapted from materials provided by Bonnie J. Collins, EdM, LCSW-R)