

## Assessing Your Parent's Emotional Immaturity

Growing up in a family with emotionally immature parents can be a lonely experience. These parents may look and act perfectly normal, caring for their child's physical health and providing meals and safety. However, if they don't make a solid emotional connection with their child, the child could feel an absence where true security might have been, and it can lead to emotional loneliness.

Children have no way of identifying a lack of emotional intimacy in their relationship with their parents. It isn't a concept they have. It's even less likely that they can understand that their parents are emotionally immature. The below prompts are potential signs of emotional immaturity. Having a greater understanding of emotionally immature parents can lead to a greater self-awareness about your experience and how it has impacted your life.

Read through the following statements and check any that describe your parent.

- My parent often overreacted to relatively minor things.
- My parent didn't express much empathy or emotional awareness.
- When it came to emotional closeness and feelings, my parent seemed uncomfortable and didn't go there.
- My parent was often irritated by individual differences or different points of view.
- When I was growing up, my parent used me as a confidant but wasn't a confidant for me.
- My parent often said and did things without thinking about people's feelings.
- I didn't get much attention or sympathy from my parent, except maybe when I was really sick.
- My parent was inconsistent—sometimes wise, sometimes unreasonable.
- If I became upset, my parent either said something superficial and unhelpful or got angry and sarcastic.
- Conversations mostly centered on my parent's interests.

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- \_\_\_\_\_ Even polite disagreement could make my parent very defensive.
- \_\_\_\_\_ It was deflating to tell my parent about my successes because it didn't seem to matter.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Facts and logic were no match for my parent's opinions.
- \_\_\_\_\_ My parent wasn't self-reflective and rarely looked at his or her role in a problem.
- \_\_\_\_\_ My parent tended to be a black-and-white thinker and unreceptive to new ideas.

How many of these statements describe your parent?

Since all these items are potential signs of emotional immaturity, checking more than one suggests you very well may have been dealing with an emotionally immature parent.

Adapted from: Lindsay C. Gibson. *Adult Children of Emotionally Immature Parents: Assessing Your Parent's Emotional Immaturity*, 2015.