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CRAZY MAKERS

Living with insensitive,
tactless, careless, inattentive, difficult, self-absorbed,
neglectful, damaging, condemning, harsh, hard, treach-
erous, deceiving, prejudiced, and paralyzing people.

A PDF COMPANION TO THE AUDIOBOOK

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chapterTWO

The Battle Begins

CRAZYSMAKER QUESTIONNAIRE

Think about the person you are struggling with and check the statements that apply to him or her.

IMAGE-KEEPING

This person . . .

- ☐ always promotes his or her own self-image.
- ☐ uses people as extensions of himself or herself.
- ☐ does not seem to sense that he or she should be more tactful.

- is willing to distort reality to maintain his or her own fantasies about who he or she is.
- treats disagreement or disobedience as disloyalty.
- responds with vengefulness or vindictiveness when he or she thinks you are being disloyal.
- sees himself or herself as special or unique.
- is willing to be destructive in order to be seen in a light of his or her own choosing.
- is deeply bothered if his or her image is diminished by other people.

ENTITLEMENT

This person . . .

- expects special treatment.
- thrives on the adoration and admiration of others and will seek it out regardless of the cost.
- rolls over people without noticing that he or she may be stepping on another person's toes.
- often feels that the world owes him or her glory or respect.
- seeks out people who don't know him or her personally to maintain this adoration and feeling of self-importance.
- seems to be insensitive to how he or she affects others.
- does not appear to care about others.

EXPLOITATION

This person . . .

- is manipulative and controlling.
- often abuses his or her position of influence and power while maintaining that this is for the other person's good.
- alternates between the extremes of idealizing himself or herself and devaluing himself or herself.
- sometimes exaggerates your positive characteristics or ideals.
- sometimes makes a radical change from caring about someone to being completely indifferent to this person.
- will resort to put-downs or highly critical judgments.
- becomes somewhat paranoid or may see opposition as part of a conspiracy.
- seems to think he or she has a right to ignore others.
- rarely admits personal failure and is adept at blame-shifting.
- does not care how his or her behavior affects others.
- uses other people's weaknesses to maintain a power position.
- has no hesitation or shame in conning others.
- isn't bothered when he or she makes people uncomfortable.

- develops relationships that tend to be superficial and shallow.
- makes you feel off-balance or “crazy” at times.

DEPERSONALIZATION

This person . . .

- lacks genuine empathy.
- does not seem to have significant feelings for others.
- will not compromise or negotiate fairly.
- sometimes treats other people like things or objects.
- has used denial, arrogance, haughtiness, charm, and exaggeration or persuasion to maintain a “superior” position.
- is good at convincing you of his or her goodness—and of your badness.
- expects automatic compliance with his or her expectations.
- seems to retreat from genuine human need and ignores the pain of others.
- sees solutions and success as more important than personal relationships.
- does not seem to feel the struggle when others are involved in personal pain.

chapterTEN

1

Step One: Identify the History of the Problem

Meet the Inner You!

Describe where you live and whether you are married, single, or divorced.

Describe your mate and his or her job. What are your feelings about your spouse at this time?

Describe yourself. Where were you born and when?

Describe your father and his profession.

Describe how your father treated you during the first six years of your life.

Describe any time your father became emotionally, physically, or sexually abusive toward you. Toward your siblings. Toward your mom. Toward anyone.

Describe what you like about your dad.

Describe anything you wish you could change about the way your father treated you.

Look at yourself through your dad's eyes. What do you see?

Describe how the real you differs from the "you" your father perceives.

Describe the emotions you usually felt toward your father while growing up.

Is your father still alive? If not, when and how did he die?

Describe any fantasies about his future relationship with you that ended when he died.

When you picked male friends throughout your life, did you tend to pick guys who were like your father? Why do you think you made those choices?

Is it possible that these choices were a way to fill a hole in your soul because you were never as emotionally close to your dad as you wish you could have been? Or is it possible that these choices in your relationships with males were an attempt to “fix” your father? Describe any ways you tried to “fix” these male friends.

Did you ever unconsciously attempt to get vengeance on your father by getting into vengeful relationships with these “father substitutes”? How so?

Describe negative things you say to yourself when you make mistakes.

Would you say those same negative things to your best friends? Why or why not?

Why do you say these things to yourself? Did any of these messages come from statements your father made to or about you?

After you have thought about these last two questions long enough to fully answer, we want you to consider taking another step. Could you take your Bible and write inside the cover a statement that today you decide to become your *own* best friend, recording today's date? You will attempt to never again say negative things to yourself that you wouldn't say to your very best friend. If you are willing to make this decision, put this book down. Get your Bible and write this inside the cover and date it and sign it.

Now that you have considered this step, let's explore those negative messages you carry with you a little further.

Did your father imply any of these negative messages to you without actually saying them? Maybe he gave you nonverbal messages, such as implying you should not bother him when he is busy. Was he reading the sports page, but you felt he was really trying to avoid the emotional crisis you were in at that moment? What do you remember?

What other "don't exist" messages did he give you verbally or nonverbally?

When you think about these issues from the past, do you feel like dying? If your answer is yes, take a deep breath and let yourself relax as you think about this very difficult question. Do not push yourself beyond what you can deal with.

Is it possible that any death wish you might have today is the result of how you felt during childhood? Describe any childhood events during which you felt like a nuisance or that people would be better off if you were not around?"

Did you feel unconditionally loved by your father or did you feel that you had to earn his love? Describe this.

Do you still base your self-worth on what your father thought of you in the past or thinks of you now?

Since six billion people live on planet Earth and your father is only one of them, can you see how fruitless it is to base your opinion of yourself on one person's opinion?

If Jesus had been your father's child instead of you, would your father still have been abusive and critical? (Sound obvious? Maybe, it's not. Give it some careful analysis.)

By this time, you've probably begun to sense that your father had his own set of problems that had nothing to do with you. Some of your pain may have grown out of your father's inner contradictions and inconsistencies. The truth is that it wasn't your fault that your father wasn't closer to you than he was. You can count on that fact!

As you've been answering these prompts and questions, it may have occurred to you that the issue wasn't really with your father as much as it was with your mother. (Or maybe

you had problems with both of your parents.) Possibly your mother was the source of many of your struggles. Please go back now and do this section over again, using *her* name instead of your father's.

In counseling sessions, as clients attempt to answer some of the above prompts and questions, many will cry. Please don't feel strange or out of order if you find yourself weeping as you deal with some issues. Many of the ways we struggle with difficult people are conditioned by how we related to our parents. Eighty-five percent of your adult personality was formed during the first six years of your life. Therefore, as adults, our expectations of how other people will respond to us is related to conditioning in our childhoods. You many find yourself making important discoveries about your life today.

What About the Other Kids?

Now, that we've looked at your parents, let's turn our attention to the rest of your family. How many brothers and sisters or stepsiblings were in your family?

Describe your role in your family of origin. Are you the first-born, middle child, or the youngest? In this role how did you interact with the rest of the family?

Is it possible you were the substitute parent and ended up being robbed of some of your childhood? (Think back to the interaction in your family and consider your answer carefully.)

Were you ever a scapegoat?

Were you ever treated like a substitute mate for the parent of the opposite sex . . . ?

Did it ever occur to you that being a substitute parent is called “emotional incest” and can have terrible effects on you (see page 106)?

Many people are as strongly affected by their brothers and sisters as they are by their parents. You may have formed many of your expectations from one of these people and are still acting and reacting out of those original encounters. Spend plenty of time recalling how those relationships worked for you, and if one seems particularly troublesome, go back and repeat the prompts and questions for this sibling.

After you have considered the foregoing assignment, let's turn our attention to a different direction.

What About God?

Do you have a personal relationship with God?

Describe how this experience began and how it is occurring today.

What do you think God is like?

What might He be thinking *about you* right now?

How close is your description of God to what you said about your father or mother or sibling? (Possibly your answer feels a little astonishing.)

Is it possible you could be confusing the loving God of the Bible with your own projections of your father or mother? (Ponder that for a while.)

As you were saying your bedtime prayers as a child, could you have been thinking, *Dear heavenly version of my earthly father (or mother or sibling)?* If so, before you record your answer, you need to stop right now and pray a different prayer. Would you be willing to say, “Dear God, whoever You really are, will You make Yourself known to me and help me during this time in my life?”

Ask yourself if this is exactly what you need to pray right now. If so, please put this book down and ask God to make Himself known to you as He truly is. Spend a few minutes asking God to become an important part of your life.

We hope these past few minutes have been a productive time for you. Developing a personal relationship with the real God who designed you will help you find new strength and guidance in your struggles with the difficult people in your life.

Now let's turn your attention in a different direction and consider some of the destructive ways in which your life may have been affected in the past. Consider the negative events that have happened to you.

What About the Negative Situations in Your Past?

Were you ever emotionally, physically, or sexually abused by anyone in your life?

If yes, please give a brief history of everyone who ever abused you in any way. (Describe this out loud, right now if possible. Let yourself hear your own words detailing what happened to you in the past.)

If you've had one or more of these terrible experiences, did you feel unprotected by a parent or God or by anyone else during those times?

Do you realize that the parent who knowingly allows you to be abused is just as abusive as the person who hurt you? How does that make you feel right now? (Describe your feelings out loud if possible.)

You do not have to believe those negative messages about your worth. This is the moment to accept the real truth about yourself. You are not a “human doing,” but a “human being.” You are of *infinite worth and deserve to be loved. You deserve to be loved by people who know all of your secrets.*

At this moment you might want to open your Bible and read Psalm 139. You will discover that God was thinking about you last night as you fell asleep as well as this morning as you woke up. He is thinking about you so many times today, you can't even count them. From the moment you were conceived in your mother's womb, the loving hand of

God has been upon you. You may find these facts to be hard to believe, but they are true!

Maybe, you've been mad at God for not protecting you better. Even as counselors, we can become angry with God when we hear stories like yours. We don't really know why He allows so much abuse to happen in this fallen world, but we have faith that someday in heaven, He will give us a reasonable explanation. We do know that harboring vengeful motives only makes us more depressed, and no difficult person or narcissist is worth being depressed over. All we can do is to turn our own vengeful feelings over to God and protect ourselves from further abuse. Possibly you would like to do that right now. Let's change direction and look in another area. Let's look at your emotional history.

A Look at Your Emotional History

When you were growing up, did you often feel more depressed than your friends?

Did depression ever exist in your immediate family? (If so, mention the person or persons in the space below and describe their type or types of depression.)

Do you have other relatives who struggled with depression, anxiety, or other mental problems? If so, describe this in the space below.

Could your depression be genetic? Due to circumstances? Or both?

Have you ever felt so depressed you wished you could die?

Have you ever attempted suicide or come close to it? When?

What strengths did you draw on to keep from doing this?

Stop for a moment and recognize an important fact. Maybe you're one of those people who have seriously thought about suicide. You may feel that you are alive today only because you were too "chicken" to carry it out. Well, that's simply not true. You are alive today because you possess strengths such as bravery and hope. You were courageous enough to keep yourself alive in the middle of your horrible pain. You can rejoice in who you are! Why not do so right now? Give yourself a big pat on the back!

Let's take a more intense look at depression. You could be struggling with another type of problem.

How many times in your life have you experienced a major depression lasting a month or longer when you felt bad enough that you wanted to die?

Did these depressions come out of nowhere and exist in a regular pattern? Or did they occur after a rejection or during a crisis period? Describe the circumstances.

On the other hand, is it possible you could have had a physical problem, like inheriting a low serotonin level or a low thyroid hormone level, both of which can cause suicidal depression?

When was the last time you felt happy and peaceful for several months in a row?

Do you ever feel too happy for two or more days in a row, talking faster and dominating conversations? During these times do you sleep less, have racing thoughts, and blow money on credit-card spending? Do you flirt more, get creative ideas, become grandiose, or have to keep moving because you can't sit still?

Many people have inherited bipolar disorders that will create these symptoms described in the questions above. If your answers fit such a possibility, you will want to talk with a psychiatrist who can put a halt to these mood swings with a mood-stabilizing medication *and* an antidepressant. (An antidepressant all by itself can make bipolar *worse*. Both medications are needed together in people with *bipolar* mood swings.)

Have you ever felt for no good reason that your telephones were bugged or someone might poison you? Have you ever had a tendency to become paranoid, thinking strangers are saying negative things about you?

The fears indicated in the questions above are also signs that a psychiatrist is necessary to give you a dopamine-correcting medication that will make the paranoia disappear, usually within a few days. The longer a person stays paranoid and off medications, the harder it becomes to have total recovery.

Have you ever developed lifelong patterns of counting things when you enter a room? Checking the doors three times a night instead of once? Washing your hands thirty times a day? Do you starve yourself to an unsafe weight or vomit compulsively for weight control?

It's possible that repetitious activities are a clue that you are dealing with obsessive-compulsive patterns to avoid getting in touch with feelings. These are certainly treatable traits. Again, you should consult a counselor or psychiatrist. Serotonin medications make these habits disappear within a month or two. Some people with Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD) can recover with therapy alone, but many will never recover without higher doses of serotonin medications.

chapterELEVEN

2

Step Two: Set Boundaries That Bring Change

Fear

Think back to your psychological assessment in Chapter 10. Is there an incident there or a person there who elicited the same kind of fear? If so, how did you respond then?

Is that an adequate response now? If not, how would you change it?

Anger

Again think back to your assessment in Chapter 10. Did you uncover anger in your past? What caused it? Write your answer in the space below.

How did you respond then?

Is that an adequate response you could use now? If not, how would you change it?

Inadequacy

While doing your assessment in Chapter 10 did you discover moments when you felt inadequate? If so, how did you respond then?

Is this feeling of inadequacy contributing to your feelings now? If so, how might you change this?

Guilt

In your assessment in Chapter 10 did you discover people who made you feel guilty? Who are they?

How did you respond then?

Are your present feelings of guilt because of selfish acts you have done that hurt others, or are your present feelings of guilt influenced by these past occurrences? If so, how?

Many suffer from false guilt, which means feeling guilty for things that were actually *not* your fault, such as being molested, date raped, abused, or even simply existing when you received various “don’t exist” messages from a parent, mate, or others. Try to think of examples.

How can you change that so you will not be hooked by a crazymaker in the future?

Frustration

Again think back to your assessment. Did you uncover some moments when you felt frustrated? Describe these moments in the space below.

How did you respond at that time?

Could your response in the past be influencing how you respond to the crazymaker in your life today? If so, how can you change this response in the future?

Hurt

Again think back to your assessment. Did you uncover people who hurt you or moments when you were hurt? If so, list the people and/or the moments in the space below:

Could people or situations from your past be influencing the way you are responding to the crazymaker in your life today? If so, how can you change this response in the future?
