

# Free essay on my genogram

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- My Genogram (Patrick Bines)

- Narrative

In my genogram, I, Patrick Bines (Pat) am the index person, whose issues are the purpose for the family analysis. In my family, members tend to have fairly long lives. My paternal grandparents (John and Emily), died at the age of 82 and 89 respectively; the rest are still alive in their 70s, 80s and 90s. In the last hundred years, only three deaths happened in the family. Death in a genogram is indicated by an ' X' through a person's name and square or circle. Next to the persons in the genogram, the year and cause of death is indicated. My uncle Phil died in Vietnam, during the war, in 1969 at the age of 27. He wanted to have a career in the army; but he met with an accident during patrolling in Vietnam. His life was too short. My paternal grandfather died a natural death in the year 1989. I do not know much about my ancestors prior to my grandfather, but I have heard from my grandmother (Emily) that the family shifted from Chicago and was running some iron smith workshop there. My grandparents were hardworking, were strict disciplinarians and with family values.

My both maternal grandparents are alive. The darkened lower half of the square and circle (of their names Tom and Margaret) indicates that both had some problem with alcohol. In the case of Tom, it is heard that he was admitted to the hospital as an alcoholic and later he committed to Christ (protestant beliefs) and sought help through Alcoholics Anonymous. My maternal grandmother Margaret always drank a little during social occasions and with her husband, but she never felt that she has a problem with alcohol. In her later years, it is said that she consumed alcohol more and

more, and it was a source of distress in the family. I also know that Agatha, my mother's younger sister, drank a lot because she has been drinking with her parents for years. My maternal grandparents are following permissive style of parenting and they live for the moment. For granting personal freedom to Agatha, my grandparents spoiled her. Both my grandparents had the fortune to see two familial generations blossoming and reaching maturity i. e. marriage, birth of young children, children getting settled in career and living a retired life.

Clara, my mother, married Franklin, after he had stopped drinking in his college days, again with the help of Alcoholic Anonymous. Franklin's alcohol consumption at very young age was surprising to my grandparents, it is attributed to the peer pressure he had in the college. One good thing is that, he still goes to AA meetings. Determination is a common quality that you might find in our family, many of have it. My mother is suspicious of all men around alcohol; she sometimes displays exorbitant aversion to people who drinks. She is especially upset with me and with Jane's husband, Richard, who "also drinks too much." I am surprised that, the genogram makes it obvious the pattern of alcohol problems in my family. Though she disapproves most of the people, many times I heard her praying for the good of all.

In the genogram, solid lines that connect people indicate a proper and direct relationship. The lines between John and Emily, Tom and Margaret, Franklin and Clara, Richard and Jane, and Anita and I, all indicate a marriage; and above the line, year of the marriage is shown. The dotted lines between Kevin and Matilda indicate a relationship that is not formalized. They are

engaged, living together but not yet married legally and culturally. Kevin works as a researcher in local geology department and has good grasp of math and science, though not so smart in income generation. Matilda likes Kevin's brainy works, in fact he once solved some of her professional issues and she fell for him. The uneven lines, with slanting stroke, between Franklin (my father) and Clara indicate inconsistency in the relationship. They sometime live together, but in apathy and most often my mother lives alone in her apartment. The three solid lines between Clara and Kevin denote a very close or even fused relationship. The double lines between Kevin and me are an emotional relationship as you will see later. Kevin actually looks up to me for everything. The dotted lines between father and me and between Felix and me indicate a distant or even disengaged relationship. We have not talked or perhaps met for very long time; at least five years. My father a middle child who took orders and was criticized often by my grandmother; she was a disciplined woman. My grandparents were educated, disciplined and had conventional values. My father married Clara, who is the eldest child, and is an uncompromising, critical woman. She is good at painting and wanted to go to an art school for advanced course, but family situation made her to go for a job, which she did not enjoy. Although my mother never had problem due to alcohol, it can be observed in the genogram that her family has alcoholic cases for three generations. She feels miserable, as her close relatives have problems with drinking. My elder sister Jane and my elder brother Felix are stable and lead a normal life. Me a middle child (like my father), who never lived up to my parents' expectations, and Kevin is still a baby, who was spoiled by pampering when

he was young, and now struggling to do things in his own way. I have a strong feeling that birth order has solid effect on one's personality. Also I feel that discordant relationship of the parents can lead the children to maladjustments such as alcoholism, drug addiction or any kind of delinquency. I very much remember that I used to visit bars to escape the sulk I often had due to my parents' fighting. If at all, I didn't have the misfortune of witnessing the disharmonious relationship of my parents, I would have been a normal child educated in top schools. Both my paternal and maternal families had good jobs and the financial conditions were good enough to lead comfortable lives, but my younger brother has problem with incomes. I also discovered that, though generations above me were disciplined and stable, there was little communication, self disclosure and sensitivity to each other in the family. Lack of communication among family members is the major reasons for collapse in relationships.

I recently realized that my affinity for alcohol, might have come from my maternal side and I have decided to quit the nasty habit and do my best to wipe out from my family lineage. The quality of determination probably I gained from paternal side. Most men in my family are determined in their pursuits. Thank God, my drinking habits did not shake the relationship with Anita, who has lots of patience and faith that is the real mark of womanhood. I, somehow, managed to be a responsible parent with Rita, and she recently started disapproving my habits and started moving away from me emotionally. I feel a huge burden when my daughter alienates me. I want to quit drinking and wish not to touch it again in my life. I am spiritually inclined person, not particularly committed to any religion, but have a tendency to

take good things from everywhere. I am determined to do yoga, do Baptist meditation and attend Sunday mass in the nearby church. I am aware that I am adventurous and innovative, I sometimes try unfamiliar stuff. I have already approached a therapist who specializes in alcoholism and family interventions. I hope this genogram will help me, my therapist and my wife / child to help me quit the liquid monster.

### **A recent conversation with the therapist (after generating a genogram for me) is as follows**

Therapist: What if you can involve your parents, your brothers, and your sister into therapy with you? It might help you in better bonding and re-establishing communication channels.

Me: It will be very difficult. I cannot influence them and I do not think that they have faith in this process.

### **Therapist: As per the genogram, who in your family can really support or come along with you?**

Me: I think my wife Anita, Sister Jane, and my brother Kevin. Other than my wife, I am not close to many of them to ask for this cooperation, but I think they would surely help me. I am going to ask for help from all, whether they come or not, seeking help gives me confidence.

- Some Realizations

- Certain genes are dominant in passing on traits and medical conditions to the next generation. I strongly feel that alcoholism and the trait of 'determination' are inherited. Family cultures die hard and it requires extreme efforts to amend the culture.

- The childhood experiences in the family affects the self concepts in many

ways such as sex role orientations, beliefs for tackling life problems, expressions of emotions, parental roles. I have realized that one has strong tendency to parent as one is parented.

- & D. By looking at genogram and recalling my experiences with the elderly generation, I feel that my family had typical middle class mindset. Our parents had children, gave us mediocre education, were happy on we getting a job and did not bother to do something more. Because of this style of parenting, I also tend to interact with my daughter Rita infusing middle class values. But now I intend to shift the gear and be an inspiring parent to my daughter.

F. The primary thing to do in a family is to keep all channels of communication open, express the emotions assertively and develop sensitivity to others i. e. listen actively. I do not know how much I can do this, but definitely I have started practicing it.

- Conclusion

The genogram is valuable in grasping the nature of relationships. It gives a holistic picture and prevents the dealing with an individual in isolation. This brief Sample of dialogue illustrates both therapist and the client sees the family as a system rather than just unrelated individuals. Genogram gives a big picture perspective and helps to see not only the current issues but also the familial patterns across generations.

## **REFERENCES**

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