

Uncovering Unconscious Beliefs Using The Trauma Egg

The Trauma Egg was developed by Marilyn Murray as part of her theoretical treatment model for treating emotional trauma called, The Murray Method, and later adapted by Patrick Carnes in his work with sexual addiction. It is a useful tool for processing various levels of trauma, from hurtful childhood experiences to big traumas, to help anyone understand the impact of their experiences on their lives. Traditionally, this exercise works best in a group format, with the support of others, but individual therapy works well too.

As homework, ask your client or congregant to spend about two hours drawing the trauma egg using the following directions and referring to the picture provided as a template on the last page. Pace your next session so that you can cover the whole Trauma Egg together in one session.

Drawing the Trauma Egg

- Use a blank sheet of paper (ideally 11x14 or larger), but if not available, a regular letter size is fine.
- Use colored pens or pencils.
- Draw a large oval that takes up most of the sheet.
- About three-quarters of the way up, draw a dotted line across the oval.
- Select 8 – 10 events in your life that were most painful or difficult. Usually these are events in which there was profound disappointment, betrayal, anxiety or abuse. Think of times when you were embarrassed or let down, or when you were involved in some crisis.
- Start with the earliest events you can remember from early childhood. For each event, draw a small, simple picture or symbol and separate it by a small curve. Do not use words—only drawings or symbols.
- As you record events, the oval will start looking like a honeycomb. Keep adding events through the various phases of your life—preschool, elementary school, early teenage years, young adulthood to the present. Fill the oval up to the dotted line. The most recent should be near the top and the earliest at the bottom.

Discussing the Trauma Egg

The goal is to go through all of the Trauma Egg, identify key feelings and mission statement.

Ask your clients to describe each drawing briefly. Have them elaborate on feelings and have them make statements about the self.

- Ex. “What do you think you were saying to yourself about yourself at that moment/time?” and “What were you feeling then?”

After the client goes over all the drawings, encourage the client to reflect on the whole picture and ask him/her to fill in the blanks (without thinking too much) as you read the four elements of the mission statement:

- Life is _____
- People are _____
- I am _____
- Therefore, I will _____

The key is identifying your client’s mission statement that has been unconsciously shaped by his or her negative experiences. Keeping that mission statement in mind throughout your client’s treatment will help clarify what you are trying to transform as you help clients heal and learn new ways of trusting God and responding to life.

Family Rules (at least four. Focus primarily on unspoken rules/messages).

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Family Boundaries

Loose?Rigid?
Mixed?

Family Roles

List the primary roles (mascot, princess, etc.) you played. If you played a different role at different times then list the role and the approximate age. State how many siblings; divorces; single parent home, etc.

Trauma Egg

Leave this area blank

Draw ONLY PICTURES inside egg.

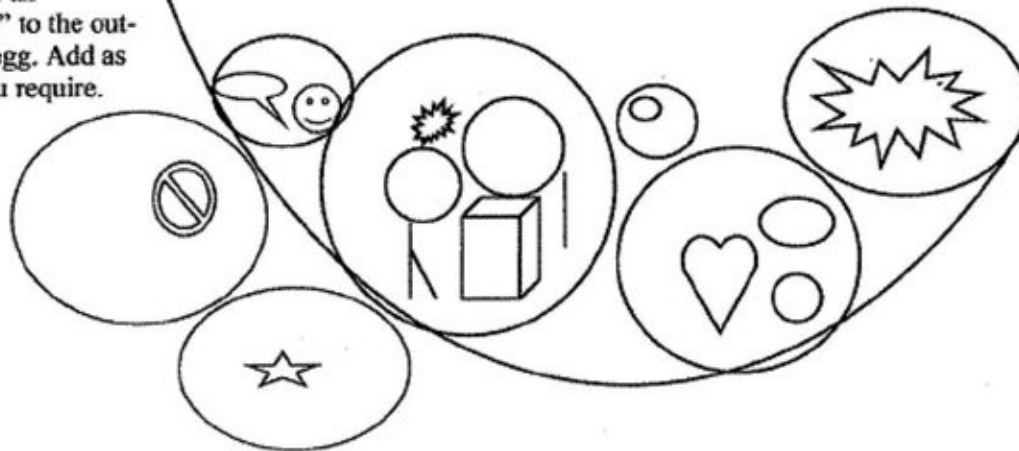
Start at bottom with your earliest memories.

Then "grow yourself up" to the present. Include;

- any "event" that was traumatic, abusive, involved abandonment or where you felt or were powerless (alcohol/drug use in family etc.). Include any relationship that was traumatic, abusive, involved abandonment (real or perceived by you) or where you felt or were powerless (divorce, domestic violence, death, loss, sexual molestation, incest, etc.)
- Include all sexual acting out behaviors and their consequences (masturbation, S&M, abortions/miscarriages/pregnancies, disease, loss of relationships, etc.) or acting in behaviors (withdrawing from sex).
- Anything on the trauma wounds chart should be in the egg. Use separate "cheat sheet" to keep track of what is inside each circle.
- Include all over-functioning/codependent behaviors including the ways in which you are overly responsible for others, cross the boundaries of others, try to control your environment or others, as well as how you manage fear and anxiety.

If a behavior that you experienced or practiced takes place frequently over a long period, note it by drawing a symbol next to the picture of the behavior (e.g. ***** used to depict that the behavior happened frequently).

If you forget something, you can add an "appendage" to the outside of the egg. Add as many as you require.



Dad

List words to describe his character and personality. Include both positive and negative attributes.

Mom

List words to describe her character and personality. Include both positive and negative attributes.



**SAGE HILL
COUNSELING**

TRAUMA EGG

Exercise for understanding your story.

Complete this exercise on a piece of poster board.

FAMILY RULES

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

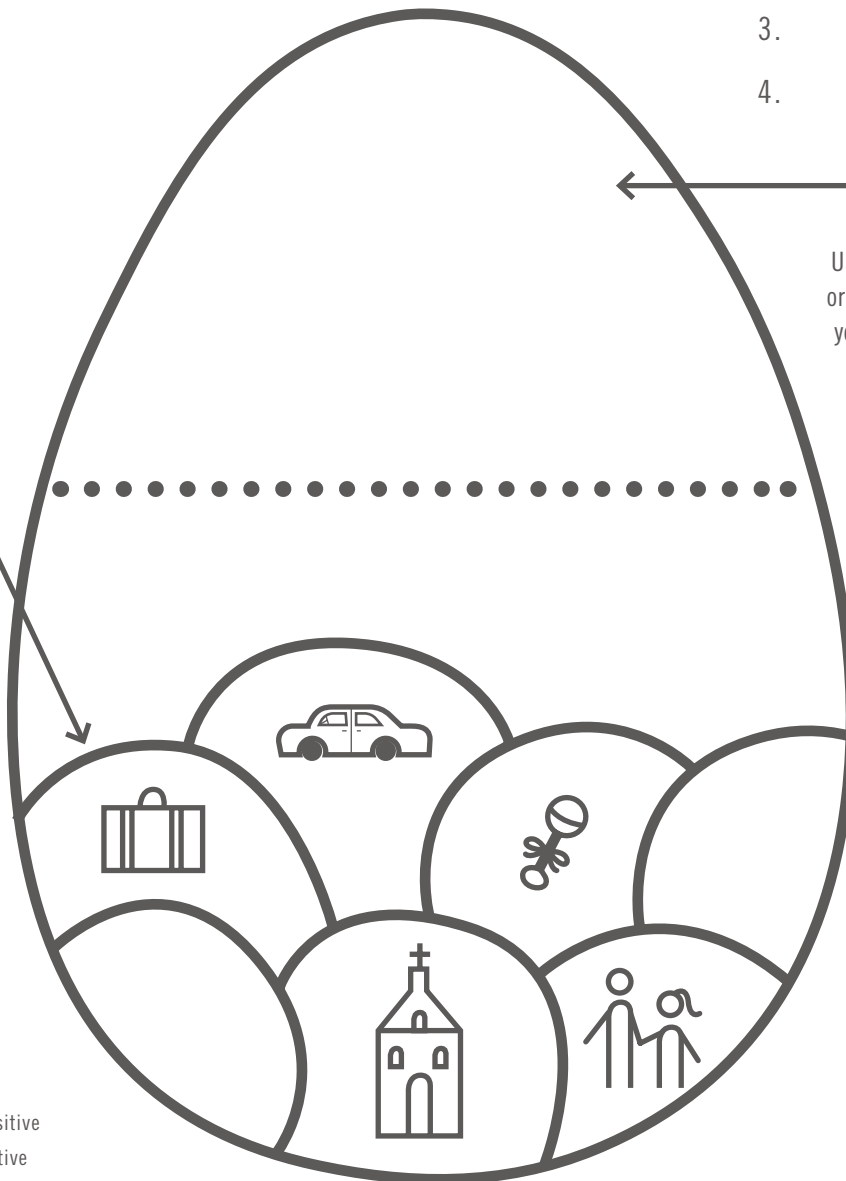
FAMILY ROLES

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

**DRAW ONLY PICTURES
INSIDE OF THE EGG.**

Start at the bottom
with your earliest
memory.

Then "grow yourself up"
using pictures to describe
significant events in
your life. Especially
ones of abuse or
abandonment. Be sure
to include all sexual
experiences and all
romantic relationships.



MISSION

Use words to describe the Mission
or "Marching Orders" you got from
your family & trauma experiences.

Example: I must be "perfect" or
"No one will meet my needs."

FATHER

Use descriptive words, both positive
& negative. Also describe adoptive
fathers or step fathers.

MOTHER

Use descriptive words, both positive
& negative. Also describe adoptive
mothers or step mothers.

Trauma Egg

MISSION STATEMENT:
Life is...
People are...
I am...
Therefore, I will...

The bottom half of the oval contains several curved lines, suggesting a drawing of a landscape or a scene.

Adapted from Marilyn Murray: from *The Betrayal Bond*, Patrick Carnes, Ph.D.