

Formation Starts With You

A Parent Reflection Worksheet

Companion to *Formation: The Self That Performance Cannot Build*
identityspecialist.net

This worksheet is not about your teenager. Not yet.

Every chapter of this book has been, in some way, a mirror. The framework describes teenagers — but the parent reading it is never a neutral observer. You bring your own formation history into every conversation, every reaction, every moment of connection or disconnection with your child.

This worksheet gives you space to do that work honestly. There are no right answers. There is only what is true.

Formation is always in process. So are you.

Part One: Your Early History

Before we look at your teenager, we look at you — specifically, at the environment that formed you. The patterns you carry were installed early, often without your awareness, and they show up most clearly under pressure.

1. When you were growing up, whose identity were you most shaped by?

A parent, a coach, a community, a religion, a culture? Was that shaping something you chose, or something you absorbed without being asked?

2. Did you have space to explore — to question, to try on different versions of yourself — or was the path mostly set for you?

Think about the messages, spoken or unspoken, about who you were supposed to become.

3. Where would you place yourself on the matrix right now — as a parent?

Floater (low exploration, low commitment), Performer (low exploration, high commitment), Seeker (high exploration, low commitment), or Rooted (high exploration, high commitment)? Be honest.

Part Two: The Early Years With Your Child

The research on identity formation is clear: the emotional environment of the earliest years matters. What a child learns about whether their emotions are welcome — and whether the adults in their life are safe — becomes the foundation they either build on or work around for the rest of their lives.

4. When your child was two and emotionally overwhelmed, what did they typically see in you?

Calm presence? Anxiety? Withdrawal? Frustration? You don't have to have been perfect. Just honest.

5. What did your child learn, in those early years, about whether their emotions were welcome — and whether you were safe to bring them to?

Not what you intended to teach. What they likely absorbed.

6. Is there a pattern you see in your teenager now that may be an echo of something that was modeled or established early?

A way they handle conflict, express emotion, respond to pressure, seek approval — that looks familiar.

Part Three: The Current Season

This section is about now — not about who you were, but about who you are becoming. Formation doesn't end at 18. It doesn't end at 40. The parent who is actively doing their own formation work is the parent most capable of holding space for a teenager in the middle of theirs.

7. What does your own formation need right now — not as a parent, but as a person?

What exploration have you been avoiding? What commitment are you performing but haven't fully owned?

8. Is there something your teenager is doing — questioning, pushing back, pulling away — that threatens you more than it should?

That reaction is worth examining. It usually points to something unresolved in your own story.

9. What would it look like for you to be genuinely Rooted in this season — not performing stability, but actually having it?

What would need to be true for that to be real?

Part Four: The Formation Community Question

No one forms in isolation. Identity requires mirrors — people who reflect back who we are and who we are becoming. This is as true for parents as it is for teenagers.

10. Who in your life tells you the truth about yourself?

Not who agrees with you. Who actually sees you and says what they see.

11. Is your teenager in a formation community — a group of people, beyond you, who know them, speak into their life, and hold them accountable to who they are becoming?

If not, what would it take to create or find that?

Before you close this worksheet

Write one sentence that completes this: "The formation work I most need to do right now — not for my teenager, but for myself — is _____."

Formation is always in process. So are you.

Download the full assessment and additional resources at identityspecialist.net/assessment