

Pre-schooler –Ages 3-6

Feeling the feelings

Again, try to find a picture of yourself at this developmental stage. Look at the picture and allow any feelings that you have to emerge. If you have no picture, spend some time with preschool kids. See how wonderful they are. Think of their vitality. You may still have an old doll, toy, or teddy bear from this age. See if it still has any energy for you. Let the energy lead you to whatever feelings come.

Debriefing

Writing your history becomes easier as you progress through the developmental stages, but most people still don't have many memories prior to ages 7 or 8. Before then, you still thought magically, non-logically, and egocentrically. Such thinking is like being in an altered state of consciousness. Nevertheless, try to remember whatever you can. Traumatic events usually stand out. They were the most life-threatening and therefore they left the most powerful imprints. Write out whatever you remember in this period. Be sure to give specific details.

Also write as much as you can about your family system. What was your dad doing? What was your mom doing? What do you know or guess was going on in their marriage? Pay serious attention to your hunches about the family. Pretend that your hunches are true and see if that gives you a better understanding of your family. If it doesn't, let them go. If it does, live with them for a while.

As you write your inner pre-schooler's history, ask yourself who was there for you? Who was the role model you most identified with? Who first taught you how to be a man? A woman? Who taught you about love and intimacy?

Abusive brothers and sisters

I have not talked about abuse from older siblings, but this can have an important —though often ignored—effect on your development. Perhaps you had a brother or sister who tormented you. Or perhaps a neighbour child bullied or molested you. Even teasing can be extremely abusive, and chronic teasing can be a nightmare.

Write out as much of your inner pre-schooler's history as you remember.

LETTER WRITING (3-6 years old)

For this developmental stage, I'll ask you to write three letters. The first one is from the grown-up you to your wounded inner pre-schooler. Again, tell them that you want to be with them and are willing to give them the attention and direction they need. Tell them they can ask you all the questions they want. Above all, tell them you love and value them.

The second and third letters are from your wounded inner pre-schooler.

Remember to write them with your non-dominant hand. The first letter should be addressed to your parents. This letter consists of two paragraphs, one to your mom and one to your dad. Let your wounded inner child tell them what they wanted and needed from them that they never got. This is not a blame letter; it is an expression of loss. One man in a recent workshop wrote:

Dear Mom and Dad,

Dad, I needed you to protect me. I was scared all the time. I needed you to play with me. I wish we could have gone fishing. I wish you would have taught me things. I wish you weren't drinking all the time.

Mom, I needed you to praise me. To tell me you loved me. I wish you hadn't made me take care of you. I needed to be taken care of.

Love,

Robbie

The final letter is from your wounded inner pre-schooler is to the grown-up you. It is a response to the letter written from your adult self. This letter may surprise you as you touch your inner child's longing to have an ally. Remember to use your non-dominant hand.