

## Family Job Description

*Everyone has a role in their family that develops as a result of dynamics within the family. This exercise is designed to help you look at the patterns that existed in your family that have influenced how you are in relationships today.*

1. Pretend we have a magic wand that can expand and bring into the room all of the people on your genogram who knew you when you were growing up. If we had all those people in the room, and asked them to "describe you" when you were growing up, what would they say? How would they describe you? On a second piece of paper, list at least 4 of the descriptions or characteristics representing the description of you (i.e. smart, good kid, cute, trouble maker, shy, mean, tomboy, athlete, stupid, independent, wild, etc.) that they would make.
2. For every characteristic, there is a payoff and a cost for having it. For each characteristic you listed, think about what the payoff was for having it and what it cost you to have it. For example, if someone said "cute" as a characteristic, they might say the payoff for being cute was that they got a lot of attention; teachers thought they were smarter because of their good looks and they had lots of dates. However, the cost might be that they attracted lots of unhealthy or shallow people who only wanted them for their looks or they never learned good social skills because it was so easy to attract people. Under the characteristics list, on left side, list the positive part or **payoff** for having that characteristic. On the right side under the **cost** list, note the cost or negative part of having that characteristic (see sample). List the payoff and cost for each characteristic listed. What has changed about the payoff and costs for you as an adult?
3. Everyone ends up with a "job" of sorts in the family. Think about life with your family and consider these characteristics. What was your "job" or role in your family? Give yourself a "job title." We don't mean a job like a mowing the lawn or baby sitting. We are talking about a job like "emotional caretaker of everyone," "trouble maker," "family clown," etc. Write out your job description for that job, identifying all the things you had to do everyday to complete that job with your Mom and Dad (or primary caregivers). Now think about how that "job" and your characteristics are present in your current or past primary relationships (marriage or with significant other, work relationship). How is your family job related to the events that got you here? What about that "job" do you want to change? What of your characteristics do you want to keep or change? What "job" do you want with your family? With your partner/spouse? In your work environment? What do you want to "resign" from in the old job?
4. Write a letter of resignation for your old "job."

## Family Job Description (Sample)

### Characteristics

1. Smart
2. Good kid, followed the rules
3. Had lots of friends
4. Helped Others

### Positive/Payoff

### Negative/Cost

Got praise from parents, helped me with career goals	Expectations were high and I often took on more than I could manage, overly tired.
Got praise, felt good about self, good foundation for value system	When I did break rules, felt very guilty; got tired of always being good.
Felt important, increased self-esteem	Thought it would always be easy and when it was difficult, I became self-conscious.
Felt important, got praise	Expectations were high and I got tired. It was never enough.

**Job Title:** Mr. Do Good

**Job Description:** Do well no matter what. Don't get tired and don't complain. Do more and look good. Don't let the others see that you can be weak.

### Responsibilities with Family Member Mom:

1. Be nice everyday and compliment her even when I am want and need support.
2. Never think outside the box or do anything that would bring shame onto the family. If you do, then something bad will happen.
3. Workout in free time so will look "right."
4. Make good grades, never anything lower than an A and don't expect any compliments.
5. Be available to hear her complaints about Dad and her own illnesses. Fix the problem.

### Areas of Change:

Determine what I want and need in relationships for myself.

Try to do my best but if I can't get it all done, then let it go for the day.

Set boundary – not my job to listen to how rotten your marriage is, that is between you and your spouse.

## Common Family Roles

(Adapted from the original work of Virginia Satir and Claudia Black)

### Family Hero

Strengths	Challenges
Successful	Perfectionist/Fear of making mistakes
Organized	Difficulty listening
Leader	Inability to follow
Decision maker	Inability to play or relax
Initiator	Lack of spontaneity
Self-disciplined	Inflexible/High need to control
Goal oriented	Unwilling to ask for help
	Fear of making mistakes

### Caretaker/People Pleaser

Strengths	Challenges
Caring/compassionate	Inability to receive
Empathetic	Denies own personal needs
Good listener	High tolerance for poor boundaries in others
Sensitive to others	Fear/avoidance of anger or conflict
Gives to others	Martyr resentment
Always smiling	Anxious/Hypervigilant

### Scapegoat

Strengths	Challenges
Creative	Inappropriate expressions of anger
Less denial, greater honesty	Inability to follow directions/rules
Sense of humor	Self-destructive
Shows feelings	Intrusive
Ability to lead	Irresponsible
	Underachiever
	Rebel

### Lost Child

Strengths	Challenges
Independent	Confused/lack of direction
Flexible	Inability to initiate
Ability to follow	Isolates/withdraws
Easy going attitude	Difficulty seeing choices
Quiet	Ignored

### Mascot/Clown

Strengths	Challenges
Sense of humor	Attention seeker
Flexible	Distracting/hyperactive
Ability to relieve stress and pain	Annoying
Family pet	Immature/overprotected
	Poor decision maker

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

## Family Job Description

### Characteristics

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

### Positive/Payoff

### Negative/Cost

Positive/Payoff	Negative/Cost

**Job Title:**

**Job Description:**

**Responsibilities with Family Member \_\_\_\_\_:**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

**Areas of Change:**

**CHOOSE THE ROLES THAT APPLY TO YOU AND WHERE THEY APPLY**

<b>Adult Roles</b>	<b>Home</b>	<b>Work</b>	<b>Both</b>
Superman/woman, parent spouse/partner (workaholic)			
Controller			
Victim/Martyr			
Addict			
Mediator/placatory			
Rager			
People pleaser			
Pseudo-fragile			
Hypochondriac			
Caretaker			
Rescue/fixer/savior			
Lost adult			

