

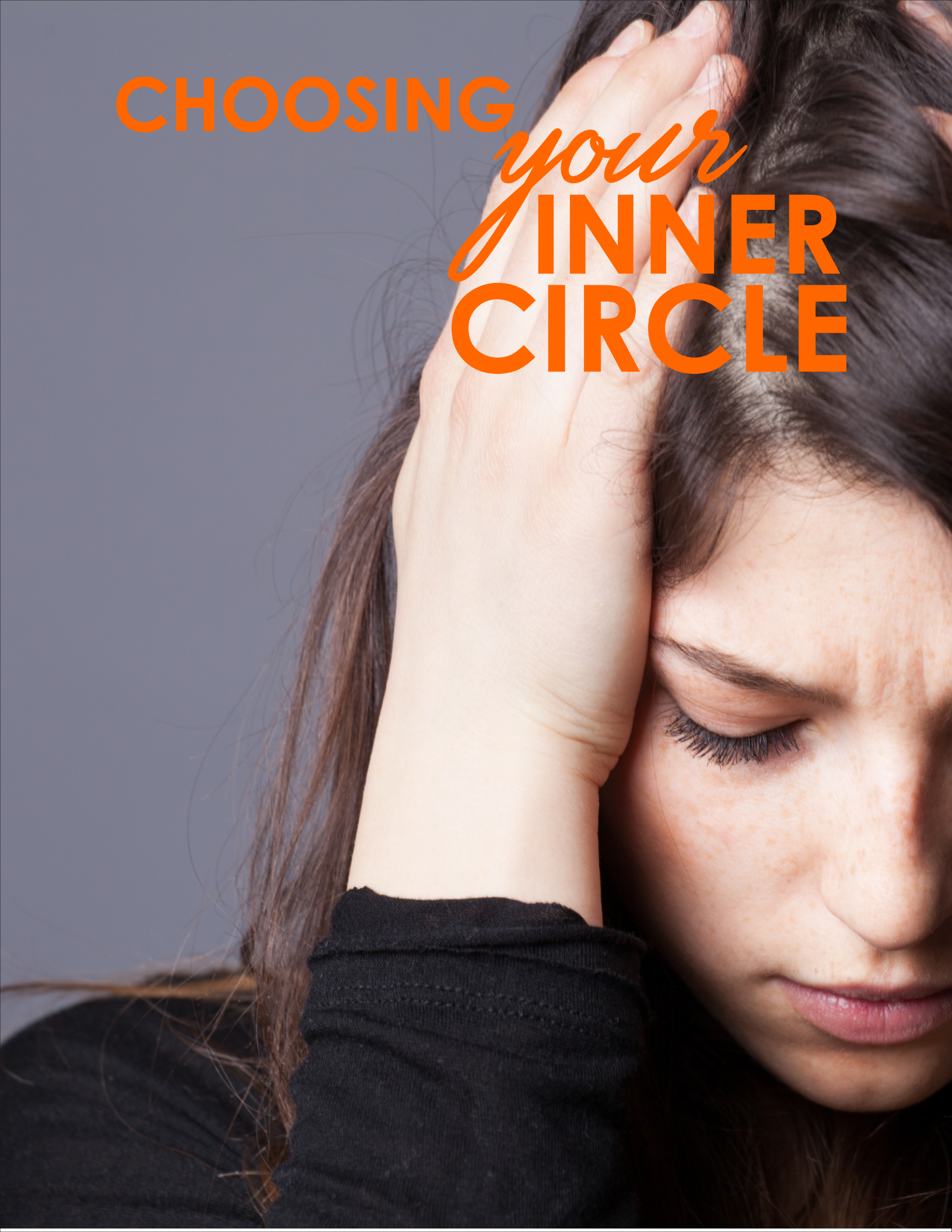
# CHOOSING YOUR INNER CIRCLE



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DIVORCEE

CHOOSING

*your*  
INNER  
CIRCLE





## Introduction

When you go through a divorce, your relationships with family, friends and acquaintances change.

It's unfortunate but people choose sides. Some don't want to be caught in the drama or are fearful it might contaminate their own marriage. There are many reasons the relationships change, but it's an opportunity for you to evaluate who loves you, who's trustworthy and who creates too much drama.

This exercise is designed to eliminate as much drama from your life as possible, giving you more time with people who feed your life with positive energy, people you trust and want to be with.

It also allows you to look into your future with a fresh perspective and hope.

It can be a difficult process for some as there are decisions to be made that nobody really wants to make but often are long overdue. It could involve family members moving out of your inner circle, guilt, sadness, resentment and many other emotions that have you tied up in relationships that no longer work for you.

You will use 3 techniques to make this exercise easier and more effective.

- The Stage Conversation
- Writing a Letter Method
- Tapping Out

There are 3 categories you will be putting people in. These spots may not be permanent but they serve to create a place you can feel safe and confident in as you move forward building your new life.

**1st Family** – People you love and who love you back, not necessarily blood or biological, but you trust them and they trust you. They take care of you and you take care of them.

**2nd Friends** – A friend is someone who you know will not let you down in a pinch. They are someone you can trust and rely on and they can trust and rely on you.

**3rd Acquaintances** – An acquaintance is everyone else, friends who are not quite there for you or someone you know but you only have a minor level of relationship with. You probably do not have any intimacy with them aside from sharing some very shallow facts about your life.

These people can be “friends” you’re not in close proximity to but whenever you see them or get together it’s like you saw them yesterday. You see them, enjoy them but don’t make plans further than that because of circumstances. Acquaintances can seem like friends, i.e. you see them all the time because of kids, sports, church, neighborhood associations or mutual friends but are not “friends” on their own for one reason or another. Being a friend is a 2 way street and if you have to work to keep in contact, they are acquaintances!

Most people will have VERY FEW family members, a few more close friends and a lot of acquaintances! That’s ok, that’s life and people can and do move up and down as life goes on.

## How to do the exercise –

1) First of all take your time, put aside a few minutes to start with. This is an important process to go through and it does take time to sort through these relationships.

- Do two rounds of PowerTapping to clear your mind and focus your thoughts.
- Go through the process with pen and paper – not on your computer. Print out the chart below.

2) Start with Family members; write all the names of your family members on the Family page.

3) Write all of your friends on the Friends page; include old friends you stay in contact with as well.

4) Acquaintances and coworkers; write down as many as possible. Include people you interact with on a regular basis. This group will be more of an exercise putting people in an order of likability and desire to be around.

5) Go back to the Family page and start looking at each person and determine if they are Family/Friends/Acquaintances. Look at the questions below to help determine where they fit. If you feel uncomfortable or guilty about what you have decided, use the Stage Conversation Exercise to eliminate your unsettling feelings (see how to do the “Stage Conversation” in the main program).

6) Transfer the names onto the chart after you decide. The order for family and friends is not important. It does have significance for the acquaintances. This is where it can be hard for some. To make it easier I have some questions I use to evaluate these relationships by. It’s not an exact or all-inclusive list but it gives you a place to launch from.



## Ask yourself any or all of these questions when evaluating someone.

How much drama do they generate in my life? Any drama is too much drama to be family. Friends have a little wiggle room but not much!

### CONSIDER HOW INTIMATE THE RELATIONSHIP FEELS.

Can I trust them?

Do they trust me?

Do I feel close to them?

How open are they with me about their life's details?

How much do I like being around them?

Do they initiate conversations with me or is there always a need dangling on the end of any conversation?

### THINK ABOUT WHO MAKES THE PLANS.

Am I included in their plans and lives?

Is it always me making all the plans?

Does the other person always come to things I invite them to?

Do they take the friendship as seriously as I do? Consider how they are when you need help.

When I have a problem are they supportive and caring or judgmental?

If I'm having a problem, is it their problem too and they would be right there to help?

Does this person only want to hang out when I have something they want?

Let's get specific on how to breakdown each group.

1) Let's start with Blood Family; many feel these people are automatically "family" no matter how toxic they are. This is an old notion based on family tradition, religion or societal norms.

NOT SO!!!! Blood family gets a slight edge to start with but not much. Here's the thing, as kids we have to live within the constructs and norms of our parents and the family structure they have set up. When we step into being an adult we get to choose who is where in our lives based on what we desire and how we feel about each person.

Many have "family" members who are toxic or have done you wrong or who you've never gotten along with and have no business in your daily life. This is where it gets sticky and guilt comes into play.

Being able to choose who will be in your life without feeling guilty is one of the best things about finally crossing over and becoming an adult. Before you do that, you're really an adult child and there are millions of them all around you. Adult children are people who are run by other peoples' agenda or their wants and desires from you. Parents who you still let guilt you into doing things you really don't want to do, or friends who you let do that too, or society through media who shame you into behaving a certain way. Political Correctness is a great example. As an adult child it takes no independent thought of how to behave. Its group-think or being controlled by beliefs you have had since you were 8 years old.

To begin, make a list of all your immediate family members and relatives you come in contact with. Include people you see during the holidays. Many of these people you might already suspect are friends or acquaintances. It's important you do this so when you do see them and if something negative is said, you can keep it in context. This will make it far easier

to stand up for yourself and do what's right for you and not succumb to being guilted into doing something you don't want to do.

Once you have made the Family list, examine each member based on the questions below.

- 1) Are they close now?
- 2) Have they ever been close?
- 3) Can I trust them to have my back no questions asked?
- 4) Would I want them with me in times of distress?
- 5) Have they ever wronged me?
- 6) When they are around do they generate drama, gossip and spread lies?
- 7) Do they deserve my respect (that's earned not gifted)?
- 8) Do I trust their advice?
- 9) Do they bring positive energy to my life?

Go through these and answer yes or no to each one. It's important to go with your first thought and what your gut is telling you and not use a logical deductive process. If you look at someone and realize they do not fit in the family circle and you feel guilty even admitting it use the Stage Conversation to let them know where you stand and why they fit where they fit in your life. Use it to address guilt, shame, embarrassment, anger, resentment, disappointment, or sadness. Once done, write their name in the appropriate category and move on. This could mean a parent, sibling, grandparent, aunt, uncle, etc. will not be in your family category. Evaluate each person, place them and move on to the next one.

The family group is the smallest, sometimes with only one person in it. No, that's not sad, – it's a reality for some. All too often we keep people close for all the wrong reasons, including a desire to be liked or thought of as having many friends or a big family. This process does not change those perceptions by others; this is for you so you can keep the drama in your life low.

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2) Go through the Friends list with the same level of detail as the Family list. The people who make it into this category will have access to you and a significant effect on your life.

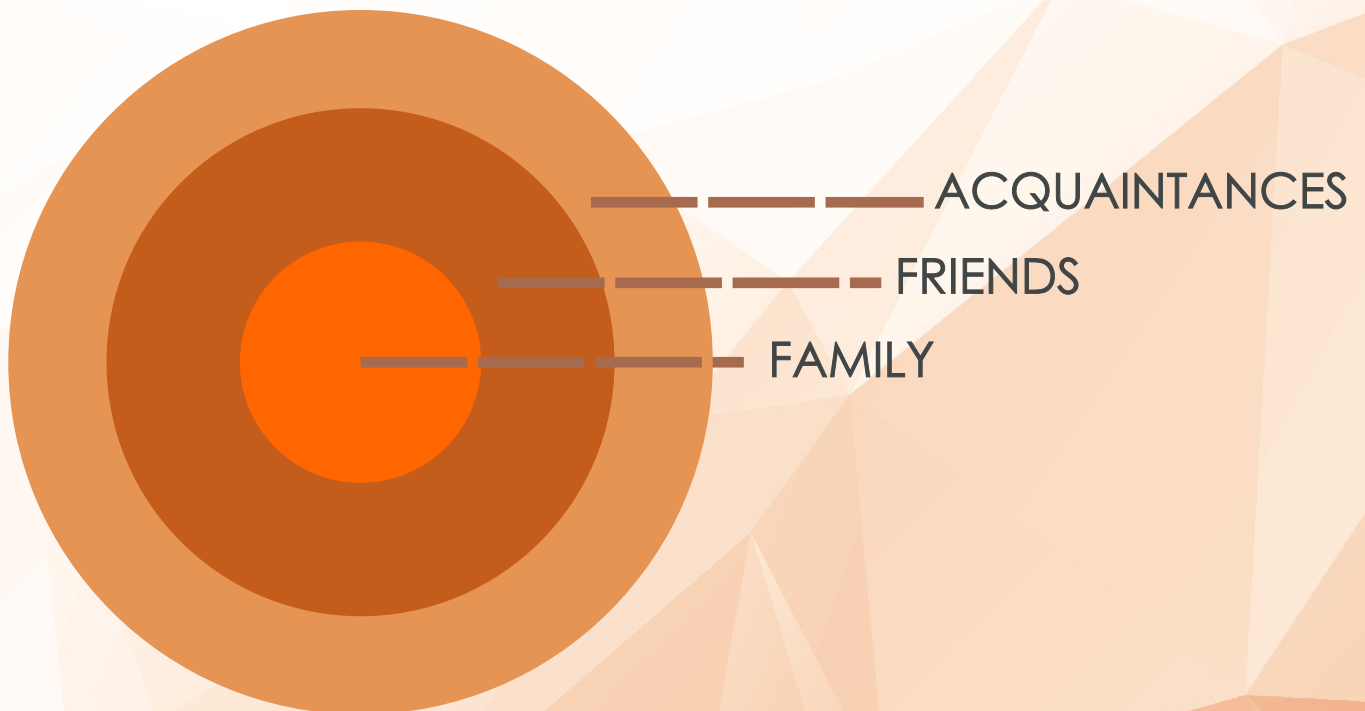
3) The Acquaintances list is the easiest to evaluate. After evaluating the members on the list put them in a loose order of importance. Most of these people will be a quick decision. One or two may be considered as a friend. Remember go with your first thought.

I sometimes use the exaggerated example of: for family I'll take a bullet, for friends I'll push them out of the way and acquaintances I'll yell "get out of the way"!

Once this is finished you'll feel more control over your life, calmer and less stressed around people in general. Holidays will be far less stressful and if someone who you don't particularly like engages you, you'll be able to keep what they say in perspective, rise above the drama and do so with composure and a clear conscious.

Same goes for social circles. Just think how nice it will be when you're in the presence of a mixed company of friends and acquaintances and the drama people are proliferating tension and it does not affect you. Your friends will notice and some may even be envious. You walk away feeling self-assured and unaffected by it.

Now – let's get started.



FAMILY

FRIENDS

ACQUAINTANCES

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