

▶ **Sample Personal Blueprint of WE Collaboration Document between a Parent and an Adult Son**

We both agree that staying in a state of grace with one other is more important than keeping our relationship status quo. Sometimes we'll get into rough spots along the way. This list of questions, written by the two of us, is a way of ensuring we'll have the difficult conversations that are sometimes needed, and come through them knowing we only have the best intentions for ourselves and one another other. Sometimes things need to be confronted or transitioned, but what's most important is that our underlying foundation is one of true respect.



1. The Story of Us

Jack's Story

Wow! I was very surprised when you asked me to create a Blueprint of WE Collaboration Document with you. This is very exciting. I've had a wonderful time working on this document and the things that go into it. Thank you so much for wanting to do this with me.

You've always been in my life, and I want to tell you how grateful I am that you chose to love me, even though you didn't need to do that. You've always wanted the best for me, even if I couldn't see it all the time, your love for me has always been there. All I've ever had to do was ask and you would help me as best you could. I'm glad we're transitioning from a mostly parent child relationship to one of peers and friends. You will always be my mom, but it is great to develop other aspects as well. I really look forward to being more than your son – to being a friend too.

I admire your strength and courage to hold to your convictions. I appreciate all the things, time, attention and love you have given to me. Thank you for your generosity. Thank you for sticking in there, even when I haven't always lived up to what you may have expected of me. You didn't drop out of my life even when I was not the most respectful or loving to you and your efforts to be a good parent to me and to love me.

I see this document and going forward with you as a continuation of the better relationship we have begun to have. I wish to continue to be a loving part of your life and want you to be a loving part of mine. I'm so glad to know you as my loving mom.

Mom's Story

I wanted to do a Blueprint of WE Collaboration Document with you because I thought it would give me a better idea of who you are and also that it would probably be a good way for us to better connect with each other. I do love you and want us to have a good relationship.

It's puzzling to me that you are surprised by me "choosing" to love you. I've always believed and had demonstrated for me, that a mother naturally loves her children. It may be expressed in a flawed way or misunderstood but it is genuine. I trust too, that we have transitioned from a relationship in which a child is dependent on his parent to one in which there is an adult relationship between mother and son.

I admire your integrity and faithfulness. Your love for Katherine is demonstrated in your dedication to her. I am impressed by your sensitivity and gentleness. You show care and concern for others. You have always been respectful. I honestly don't remember a time when you were not. I rarely see the fun side of you, but I know it's there. I've seen glimpses of it. The name you have adopted speaks to the light hearted side of you. I'm grateful that you want to stay connected to your birth family to accept and love us for who we are. You are a mature young man and I am proud of you.

Thank you for wanting our relationship to grow in love and understanding. I want that too. Perhaps this document will help to make that happen.



2. Interaction Styles

A note about Love Valves: whenever we interact with others we are either trying to give or receive love. Every action, whether seen as positive or negative, is an attempt to open a love valve. Love valves can get clogged up when we think the other person doesn't love us. When this happens we either try to re-open the love valve, or we try to open up a new love valve somewhere else in our lives to compensate for the closing down of that original love valve. I see this as a good way to talk about how we want to give and receive love from each other.

Jack's Style

- I can be both quiet and can speak from the heart and at length about my passions. When the thoughts are not flowing I tend to pause and you can see me visually searching my brain for the right words. When I am connected to my authenticity and passion there is little if any pause in the string of my thoughts and words.
- I like quiet times, reflection, a run or a walk in nature, any time with Katherine, talking and listening with friends, watching movies, reading books, and playing games.
- I love the work that I do, it is very rewarding providing space and opportunities for others to figure out what is most important for themselves or their organization and then providing space for them to act on it.
- I like good hugs.
- I need to be with Katherine as much as possible. I am at my best and full of joy when I'm with her. We need to travel together. We need to be together, it is the best place I've ever found to be.
- Sometimes I need to retreat and not be in contact with anyone but Katherine. This is usually because she needs rest and recuperation time after doing a bunch of things (or has a lung infection). At these times we shut out the world to recharge our batteries (or hopefully heal). Please know that we shut out *everyone*, not just certain people. Also know that if you have something urgent you need to speak with me right away, call the cell phone and leave a message. We are most responsive to messages on the cell phone.
- I'm more of a writer than a talker. Although it's easier for me to get my thoughts out through writing than talking, I am endeavoring to speak more often and with the gates wide open. Praise me when you notice any unencumbered bursts of sound (I talk more rapidly), and you'll likely get more. Pauses may mean I am forming ideas or trying to edit what I'm saying.
- I like to hear what you're up to before you go and do something or act a certain way. If you're going to go away and be quiet or you need to say your peace, just tell me, and I'll let you be who you are. If you surprise me with your actions I may react with fear and hide or go silent.
- I prefer to concentrate on one thing at a time, so I may need to delay talking to you until I'm done with what I'm working on. Is it OK to let you know when I'm in the middle of something, then call you back later?
- I'm a listener and a deep thinker. I have a great ability to pull information, ideas and details from many different sources and pull them together into a coherent picture. I like to have fun and draw out the abilities of others.
- I have a tendency to mull things over, or take time writing things (reply's to email, other thoughts), so my responses are not always immediate. I usually listen, wait for activity, and then act. Please be aware of other things that affect what I say.
- Sometimes I'm stubborn with my ideas. Once I really get one I tend to hold on (even if it's bad).
- Sometimes I have difficulty spelling out my ideas, or spitting out what's in my head, or the steps of how I got from A to Z. If I am confusing or not making sense, just ask me what I mean or tell me you don't understand what I'm saying, and I'll be happy to try again and keep trying to communicate what I'm thinking or what I mean. I don't have any problem being asked to clarify what is coming out of my mouth.
- I like to give and receive verbal love, as well as giving and receiving hugs.

Mom's Styles

- I don't usually talk a lot (there are exceptions). I would rather hear what someone else has to say. There are times when I'm not interested in what someone else is saying or when I don't "buy" what they're saying. I generally will keep my thoughts to myself in such situations, but I may speak up if rapport with that person is good, or if I feel the need to express my opinions or if I'm feeling argumentative.
- My cousin Eve observed that I often disputed or watered down her statements by presenting an alternative thought with "but" comments. I wasn't really aware of that until she pointed it out to me.
- I guess I would say I often see the possibility of another person's point of view, I automatically put a positive spin on a negative statement. I can imagine a "good" reason for each person's behavior in a given situation.
- I rarely interrupt when someone is talking. If I have something to say I'll wait for an opening.
- In general I'm more comfortable alone than being a social butterfly. I tend to be shy and unsure of myself. Some people make me feel more at ease than others. Laurie is one, and Viv Johnson, my lunch partner and Bible study partner of 18 years.
- When I expect myself to get out of my comfort zone I am often rewarded with a positive response from others. That makes me feel guardedly better about myself.
- I, too, like warm hugs. I miss the affection I got from Dad. I am thankful for the emotional and practical support Laurie gives me. I am confident I would get the same from my other children if I spent as much time with them.
- I prefer organizing my thoughts on paper, but usually have a passable result when speaking.
- I accept people as they are and don't attempt to change them. My philosophy is to "live and let live".
- I am not a multi-task person.
- I tend to put things off. I accomplish more if I have a deadline or a purpose.
- I don't like clutter, but have relaxed my standards.
- I tend to have low self-esteem (Jack, I am using your interaction styles format to write mine. I am so grateful to see your healthy, high self-esteem and positive outlook. You write things like, I have a great ability to..." and , "I'm at my best and full of joy when I'm with Katherine."
- I like to get sincere and valid compliments.
- I need to be loved. Thank you for loving me!



2. Warning Signs

Jack's Warning Signs

- Agreeing to your input and ideas without some pause, or agreeing with everything you say without adding anything or making any comments. Please ask me why I'm not responding.
- If I get too silent or don't seem to be paying attention, I may need a break, or I may need to do something else. Perhaps I'm distracted, and I'm often at my best doing only one thing, so whatever you're asking won't be heard. Simply ask if my mind is on something else, and ask if there is a better time to talk.
- Or if I get silent, it may mean that I'm getting upset. Usually when I'm in that fearful place, I don't like myself, or think I'm no good. There are two ways we can handle this; Mom would rather we stop talking and I take some time to get back to a good place and then we can talk once I'm feeling better.

Mom's Warning Signs

- I may feel backed into a corner by probing questions that I don't know how to answer or that I haven't thought about. If I give an answer that doesn't answer your question you can say in another way what you're looking for. It is unsatisfying for both participants if what is being said makes no sense, I would say, "I don't know what you're getting at." It's a good idea to ask, "Is

this a good time to talk?" before getting into a deep discussion. In most instances I would rather get the subject on to the table and explore it once it comes up.

- I often will try to explain why I'm asking or talking about a subject so you'll know what led up to my asking. I'm hoping this will allow you to see where I'm coming from and what my motives are.
- I think if you preface your remarks by saying, "I'm not feeling good about myself right now, so what I'm about to say won't be what I mean." But then again you may feel more comfortable waiting until you feel at ease. It's probably better to choose your words wisely. However I can remember a times when I was so stressed, i.e. when Dad was in the hospital and not at all wanting to be in the situation he was in, I found myself spilling out my emotions (not in his presence) even not sticking to the subject, but just rambling on from one thought to another, not making a lot of sense. It was just a matter of releasing all my frustrations and sadness and self recrimination. ["This is one of the best times I've ever spent with you, Mom" – Jack] Take your pick of your response 1, or 2 and tell me what you have decided. It's probably better to feel more comfortable so that words flow more freely.



3. Expectations

Jack's Expectations

- I expect you to ask for everything.
- I expect you to tell me the **truth** about how you're feeling about what I might ask for or do.
- I expect you to be where you want to be and do what you want to do.
- I expect that when you see me hiding or not engaged to "call me" on it. I agree to be as honest as possible about where and how I am being and will endeavor to make a change to align myself between where my body is and where my attention is.
- I expect you to encourage me to be the shining beautiful being that I am.
- I expect that there will be more deep learning from knowing you.
- I expect that there will be challenges that we face and that we will live up to our pledge to be in a State of Grace together.
- I expect you to be the shining beautiful being that you are. You are never anything else in my eyes.
- I expect honesty and integrity.
- I expect to be in contact with you when I can and when it feels like a good time to connect.

Mom's Expectations

- I expect you to say what's on your mind.
- I expect honesty.
- I expect you to have all the rights of an adult.
- I expect respect.
- I expect love and acceptance.
- I expect to know you a little better – by email, and through talking on the phone.
- I expect to have differences of opinion, but no hard feelings.



4. Questions to Return to Peace

If at any given moment one of us feels there's something out of place, we commit to coming together within 3 days, to go over these questions. We can cover the questions that make sense at the time – all these questions may not be relevant or needed. First read through the entire document, and then we can arrange a specific time if necessary to go over the questions:

Things to remember if the situation gets tense:

- Be honest
 - Remember our friendship and love
1. Do a general check-in: How are you?
 2. What does it mean to stay in a state of grace?
 3. How comfortable are each of us having this conversation right now? Is it the best time? Should we agree to a later time?
 4. Peel away the layers of fear and ask yourself why there's tension or why we're feeling disconnected.
 5. What is the most important thing right now?
 6. If you had to say you were apprehensive about something right now, what might it be?
 7. What is your biggest fear in this moment?
 8. Is there something challenging any one of us that is outside our relationship, but it's somehow effecting us?
 9. What do you need from me right now?
 10. If I could do something to make the situation better, what would that be?
 11. Set aside blame.
 12. What am I afraid of really saying to you?
 13. Does money play a part in this situation?
 14. Have I let you down?
 15. What do we each have to gain by disconnecting for a little while? If that's what makes sense?
 16. What am I afraid of in losing my connection to you?
 17. What do we have to gain by staying connected versus letting this be?
 18. What is the deep down knowing we have about how this will eventually end up?
 19. What do I need to forgive myself and/or you for?
 20. What do I need to do or have to find peace?
 21. What gifts have we given each other?
 22. Now that we have answered these questions, what are you still afraid of?
 23. Are you getting what you need? Want?
 24. How can I better serve our relationship? How can I better serve myself?
 25. Now that we have answered these questions, what still needs to be said?
 26. Past ,present, future? What have we learned? What do we have left to learn at this point?
 27. Having been through these questions, is there anything we might want to add to our Document through new knowledge we might have gained?
 28. Thank each other.



5. Short and Long-Term Agreements

If at any given moment one of us feels there's something out of place, we commit to coming together within 4 hours to re-read our Document and go over the above Questions. We also agree that if by chance something unimaginable happens and we can't manage to come together to go over the questions to return to a state of grace, **we commit that we will not do anything to outright harm, speak negatively to others about, or create more pain for the other. We also agree on a long range timeframe of 5 years to get back together to find peace if we can't seem to make it happen before then.**