



### INTERMEDIATE LEVEL EXERCISE: LINEAGE

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When talking about lineage and community, it's important to look at this line of inquiry from multiple vantage points. It's not straightforward. First, think about friends, family, community members, ancestors, co-workers, and the like.

#### **Answer these questions for yourself:**

Write a list of people who are part of your family line, as far back as you can remember, particularly the people who've had a direct impact on your life.

Add to this list the people from your community who you interact with on a regular or semi-regular basis. Who are the people you know and love, but with whom you don't speak very often? There may be people on the list with whom you want to form a stronger connection. Put a mark next to those names. Write out some ideas for deepening those connections:

For some people, making a list like this can be difficult. Issues such as estrangement or abandonment are more common in families than people realize. Or a person may be adopted and have little or no information about their biological family; in this case, list your chosen family. And, for others, communities of people have lost their cultural origins altogether.

For example, there are millions of people of color in the United States whose ancestors were enslaved; there are indigenous people across the globe who've lost their traditions after centuries of destruction and annihilation. They live with the reality that they may never know all the names of their direct ancestors.

The examples of marginalized people are endless. For many they still can feel intergenerational pain on a deeply personal level. These are conundrums that regularly arise when we talk about the importance of lineage. So, it's important to be sensitive to the fact some of us don't know basic information about our ancestral line.

If any of these or other examples apply to you or someone you love, I want to further clarify what I mean when I refer to the notion of lineage. In these instances, I have people begin this exercise by invoking their lineage as *people, those who are named and unnamed, known and unknown, who are part of your ancestral line. Even when you cannot specifically identify them, they are still part of you. They are in your DNA. They're in every cellular structure of your body. You are the result of the love of thousands of people who've walked this earth before you.*

Their power, wisdom, intelligence, strength, and beauty live inside you, whether you've experienced a personal connection to them or not. When you look in the mirror and you see your stunning face looking back at you, that's your lineage. You are, in fact, millions of years old! Lineage can be more about how you feel than what you know. This is the place to begin exploring all of that.

**Answer these questions for yourself:**

What aspects of your lineage delight you and give you a sense of pride?

What do you know about the people who came before you?

What things have left you wondering, perhaps for many years?

What do you already embody from your lineage?

Are you powerful? Are you kind? Are you confident? Are you beautiful? Here's a chance to explore how all of that history gets expressed every day, through you and around you.

**Answer these questions for yourself:**

What parts of your lineage are most alive in you and around you in your everyday life?

Who are the people in your community who you trust the most?

Who's the honest person in your life who gives you genuine feedback?

Who do you trust to give you insight when you feel afraid or confused?

Who will listen to you talk about your revelations and stumbling blocks?

Who do you lean on, who supports you and has your back no matter what troubles you face?  
Is it one person or do you have more than one?

If you can't think of specific individuals in your life who serve these functions, list some people that you'd like to get closer to. With whom would you like to develop a deeper bond? How could you initiate that connection?

Let's now look at the things that may be frightening or scary about your lineage. I invite you to be radically honest with yourself about the parts of your lineage that maybe aren't so flattering. Every lineage has a history of atrocious actions and it's important to acknowledge and forgive ourselves—*and each other*—for it. Shame holds no place in our Original Blueprint®. We are working to create a holistic and realistic view of who we are—not a fantastical version of ourselves that denies the ugliness and hardship that sometimes happens in life.

**Answer these questions for yourself:**

What parts of my family's lineage have I tried to deny or overlook?

What aspects of my lineage are painful or evoke shame?

Are there things about my family (or specific people in the family) that I feel afraid to face?

Now that I've looked at it, how can I take action in the world to pay it forward in some way—and release the fear, shame, denial and pain or the bypassing that I often do in an attempt to rid myself of that pain? (If this is a big one for you, flag this one so you can continue to work on it in the later chapter, *Mobilizing Your Original Blueprint*<sup>®</sup>, when you explore your legacy).