

# The People Who Shape Us

Advanced (C1-C2)



**Part 1. Read the four quotes. Choose the one that resonates most with you – or the one you instinctively push back on. Explain why.**

***“You are the average of the five people you spend the most time with.”***

– Jim Rohn

***“In everyone’s life, at some time, our inner fire goes out. It is then burst into flame by an encounter with another human being.”***

– Albert Schweitzer

***“Other people are mirrors in which we see our own reflection, for better or worse.”***

– attributed to various sources

***“Not all of us can do great things. But we can do small things with great love – and that changes people.”***

– attributed to Mother Teresa



**Part 2. Choose one option in each pair. Give a reason or example.**

Someone who believed in you before you believed in yourself	or	someone who challenged you so hard you had to prove them wrong?
A person whose way of living quietly inspired you	or	someone whose words you still hear in your head years later?
Being shaped mostly by one or two pivotal people	or	being shaped gradually by many different people over time?
A person you chose – a friend, a mentor, a partner	or	a person you didn't choose – a parent, a teacher, a stranger?
Someone who shaped you by being present	or	someone who shaped you by leaving?

**Part 3. Discuss the following questions.**

- Who is the person who has had the single greatest influence on who you've become? What did they do or say that made the difference?
- Is there someone whose influence on you was largely negative – and who you've learned from in spite of that, or perhaps because of it?
- Have you ever told someone what they meant to you? If not – what stops you?
- Do you think you fully understand yet who has shaped you, or is that something that only becomes clear with time?



**Part 4. Look at the people below. Choose three who have shaped you in some way – they don't have to be people you know personally. Tell your partner who you chose and why.**

<b>A parent</b>	<b>A grandparent</b>	<b>A sibling</b>
<b>A teacher</b>	<b>A childhood friend</b>	<b>A rival</b>
<b>A mentor</b>	<b>A partner</b>	<b>A stranger</b>
<b>A therapist</b>	<b>A public figure</b>	<b>Someone you've lost</b>
<b>A colleague</b>	<b>A difficult person</b>	<b>Someone you've never met</b>

**Part 5. Match the terms to their meanings. Then use three of these expressions to describe someone who has shaped you. Try to use them as naturally as you can.**

<b>To leave a mark on someone</b>	<b>To bring out the best in someone</b>	<b>To look up to someone</b>
<b>To hold someone to a higher standard</b>	<b>To see something in someone</b>	<b>To carry someone with you</b>

1. \_\_\_\_\_ to have a lasting impact on a person's character, outlook, or life
2. \_\_\_\_\_ to expect more of someone than you might of others, because you believe they're capable of it
3. \_\_\_\_\_ to help someone show their finest qualities, often simply by being around them
4. \_\_\_\_\_ to recognise a quality or potential in a person that perhaps they can't yet see themselves
5. \_\_\_\_\_ to keep a person's presence, values, or voice with you long after they are gone or absent
6. \_\_\_\_\_ to admire and respect someone, often seeing them as a model to aspire to

**Part 6. Think of one person who has genuinely shaped who you are. Build a portrait of them using the prompts below, then share it with your partner.**

**Person A — Someone from your past**

- Who are they, and what was your relationship with them?
- What did they do or say that stayed with you?
- What did they see in you that perhaps you couldn't see in yourself at the time?
- How different do you think you'd be if they hadn't been in your life?

**Person B — Someone in your life now**

- Who are they, and what role do they play in your life?
- In what ways do they bring out a better version of you?
- Have you ever told them what they mean to you? Why or why not?
- What do you think you've given them in return?

**Part 7. Read the statements. Say whether you agree, disagree, or partly agree.**

- You sit down to work on a creative project. Twenty minutes in, you hit a wall. Do you push through, step away, or something else?
- A close friend says they've always wanted to write / paint / make music, but they're not talented enough to bother. How do you respond?
- You have a completely free Saturday with no obligations. How likely are you to do something creative? What would it be?
- Someone offers you a creative project that genuinely excites you, but it's well outside your comfort zone. What do you do?



**Part 8. Sometimes a brief encounter with someone – a stranger on a train, someone at a difficult moment, a chance conversation – stays with us far longer than we'd expect. Discuss the questions below.**

- Has a stranger or someone you barely knew ever said or done something that genuinely stayed with you? What happened?
- Why do you think brief encounters can sometimes have such a disproportionate effect?
- Is there something you've said to someone in passing that you hope has stayed with them?

**Part 9. Before you ask, take a guess at your partner's answers. Then check – how well do you know them?**

- Who was their most influential teacher – and was the influence positive or something more complicated?
- Is there a person in their life they find it difficult to talk about, even now?
- Who do they think they've shaped, perhaps without realising it?
- Is there someone they wish they'd said something to, but never did?
- Who in their life currently brings out the best in them?

**Part 10. We don't only receive influence – we pass it on. Discuss the questions below.**

- Who do you think you've shaped, even in a small way? What did you give them that perhaps no one else could?
- Is there a version of yourself – a way of speaking, a habit, a value – that you can trace directly back to someone else?
- If someone were to describe your influence on them, what would you hope they'd say?
- Do you think it's possible to consciously decide what kind of influence you want to have on the people around you?

**Part 11. Think of someone who has shaped you – someone you've never properly thanked, or someone you can no longer reach. Describe what you'd say to them if you could.**

**Think about:**

- What you would want them to know about their impact on you
- A specific moment or thing they said that you've never forgotten
- How you are different because of them
- What you've passed on from them to others

## **REFLECTION**

**Complete the sentences in your own words.**

- The person who has shaped me most is... because...
- Something I carry with me from someone else is...
- A quality I hope I've passed on to others is...
- Someone I'd like to thank, or thank more fully, is...