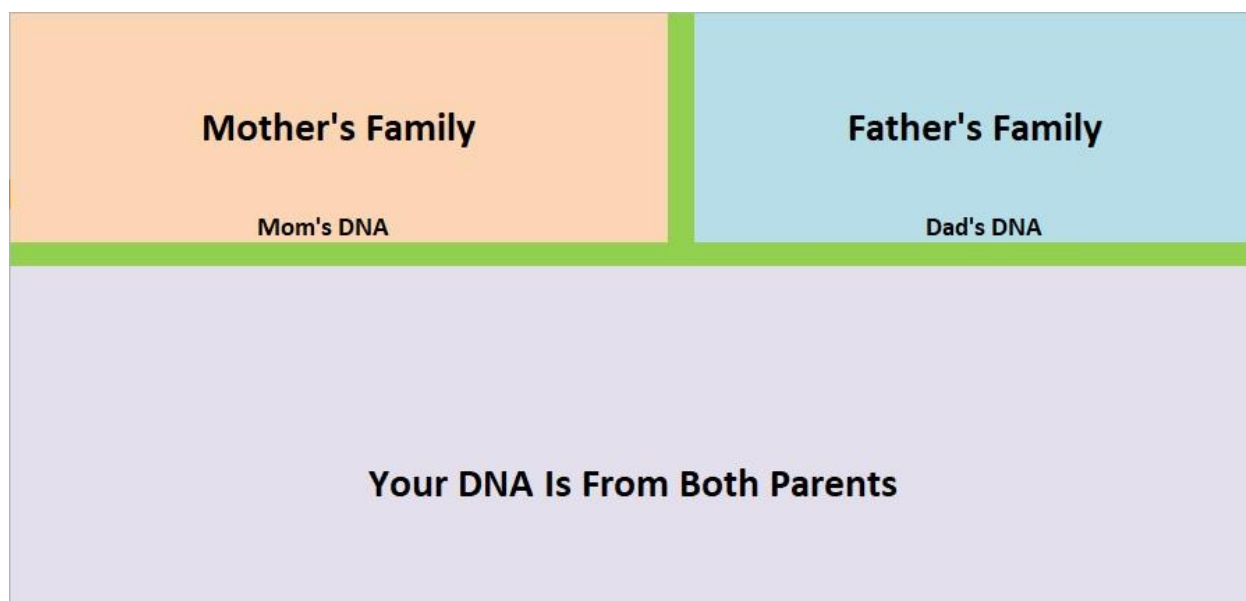


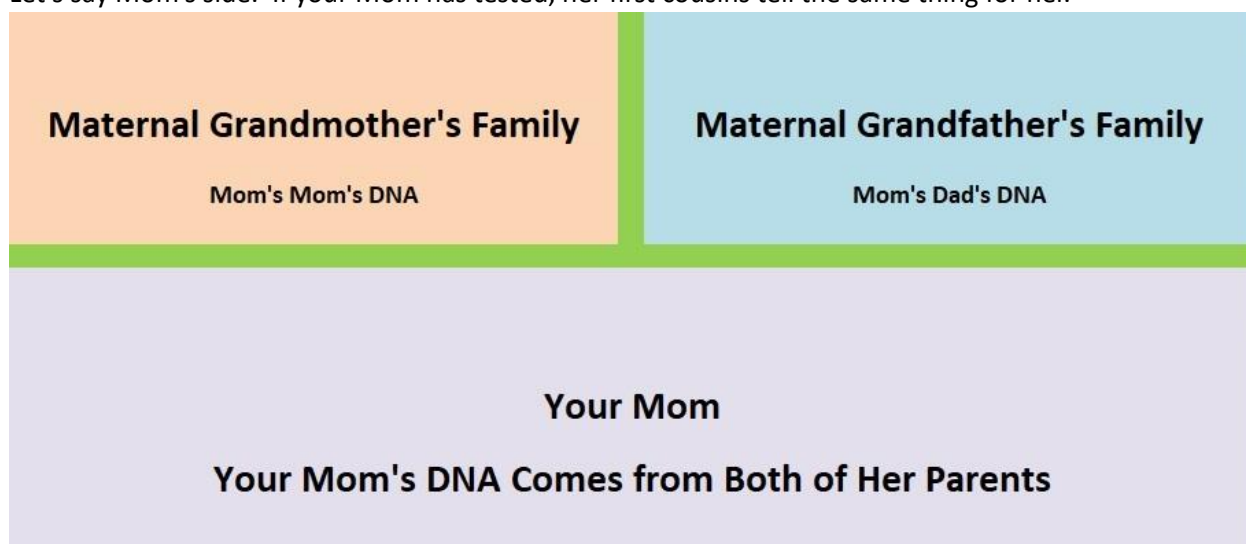
# The 'Cousin Method'.

Your DNA match list can always be divided into three groups: Mom's Family, Dad's Family, Both Mom and Dad.



When you look at the common DNA match list you share with a DNA target, notice if your first cousins on the match list are maternal or paternal. That tells you which side your DNA target is on—Mom's or Dad's.

Let's say Mom's side. If your Mom has tested, her first cousins tell the same thing for her.



Most likely your Mom has not DNA tested. But your 2<sup>nd</sup> cousins on your common DNA match list to your target tell you the same thing. Are your second cousins associated with your Mom's Mom, or with your Mom's Dad? (Your second cousins are the children of your parents' first cousins).

Notice that the “Both Parents” box for your Mom is the same as your “Mom’s Family” box for you. Combining duplicate boxes and adding a couple more generations we get this:

Mom's Mom's Mom Great Grandmother	Mom's Mom's Dad Great Grandfather	Mom's Dad's Mom Great Grandmother	Mom's Dad's Dad Great Grandfather	Dad's Mom's Mom Great Grandmother	Dad's Mom's Dad Great Grandfather	Dad's Dad's Mom Great Grandmother	Dad's Dad's Dad Great Grandfather	Great Grands Three Gens Up
							His Sibs, 2nd Grt Aunt/Un Their kids, your 1C2R's Their grandkids, 2C1R's Third cousins	Three Gens Up Two Gens Up One Gen Up Same Gen
Mother's Mother		Mother's Father		Father's Mother		Father's Father		Grand Parents
Maternal Grandmother		Maternal Grandfather		Paternal Grandmother		Paternal Grandfather		Two Gens Up
Her Sibs, your Great Aunts and Uncles		His Sibs, your Great Aunts and Uncles		Her Sibs, your Great Aunts and Uncles		His Sibs, your Great Aunts and Uncles		Two Gens Up
Their children; your 1C1R's		Their children; your 1C1R's		Their children; your 1C1R's		Their children; your 1C1R's		One Gen Up
Their grandchildren, your 2C's		Their grandchildren, your 2C's		Their grandchildren, your 2C's		Their grandchildren, your 2C's		Same Gen
Mother's Side				Father's Side				Parents
Mother				Father				One Gen Up
Mother's Sibs = Your Maternal Aunts and Uncles				Father's Sibs = Your Paternal Aunts and Uncles				One Gen Up
Maternal First Cousins				Paternal First Cousins				Same Gen
Children of Maternal First Cousins				Children of Paternal First Cousins				One Gen Down
Both Parents								
You and Your Siblings Your Nieces and Nephews Your Grandchildren, Grand Nieces and Nephews								Same Gen One Gen Down Two Gens Down

For each first cousin, nail down their ancestry from you to your shared grandparents and back down to them. Once you are absolutely sure no half cousin relationship, etc. is involved, enter their name in the template’s appropriate box—‘Mother’s Side’ or ‘Father’s Side’.

Repeat for second cousins—entering their names in the appropriate grandparent’s box.

Repeat for third cousins, fourth cousins, as far as you can go with reliability.

Vetting your various cousins will take time. But as you place more and more vetted cousins into your template the more effective the template becomes at indicating where a new target DNA match fits into your family tree. You will work down the DNA common match list you share with a new person and you’ll see the pattern. It’s like shooting fish in a barrel. All your past work is paying off.

So OK, you just looked and you have a new DNA match and you want to see where he fits. What do you do?

- Note which of your first cousins are on the common DNA match list you share with your target. Your target is on your Mom’s side if **all** 1C’s are maternal 1C’s.
- Note which second cousins are on the target’s match list. Your second cousins are children of your Mom’s first cousins. Your target match is on **Mom’s Mom’s side** if all your second cousin matches to your target are children of your mom’s maternal 1C’s.

- Repeat with each level of cousins—3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and so on until the cousins of that level on the match list don't fall cleanly into one group.

Your DNA target match belongs to the highest cousin level where all cousin matches are in one group (the 'Both' group) AND all cousin matches of the next higher level are a mix of Mom's Side and Dad's side.

- All DNA matches in a template group share the same ancestral couple (MRCA). When we built the template, we only put people in each box who shared that MRCA. So when we figure out a new person has to go into that box in the template, he shares that MRCA, too.

Now this system isn't perfect. Here are some pitfalls:

- Endogamy. You have more than one relationship with target.
- "Half" Relationships. Children from multiple marriages.
- Misattributed parentage—children from affairs, rape, incest, 'open' marriage.
- Adoption and other 'official' obfuscation.
- Inadequate or non-existent genealogical and DNA records to connect DNA matches.

And here are strategies to minimize the pitfalls:

- Ethnicity
- Triangulation—work with shared *identical* DNA segments.
- Geographic location/time line info to differentiate
- Tools from multiple DNA sites.

I have an ethnicity template on a different tab. It works the same way as the cousins template if you set it up correctly. You work to figure out which ethnicities are on only one side of your tree so you can use ethnicity as a differentiator. If you have ethnicity information from previous generations, use it. Do keep in mind that ethnicity is very difficult to pin down and the different DNA companies define it differently, so ethnicity info from one company is not portable to another.

I have intentionally left my family's surnames in this template. By all means erase them. But I suggest you put in your own to keep you centered that the people in one box of the template are in the 'both' box at their level—and the surnames indicate their Mom's box and the Dad's box at the next higher level.

Ethnic Descendancy Markers								
Evans = Johnston Mom's Mom's Mom	King = Martin Mom's Mom's Dad	Ross = Sutherland Mom's Dad's Mom	Smith = Siddells Mom's Dad's Dad	Fagerberg = Jonsson Dad's Mom's Mom	Jonsdotter = Nilsson Dad's Mom's Dad	Diringer = Allgeyer Dad's Dad's Mom	Zimmerman = Duncan Dad's Dad's Dad	Couple Surnames Great Grands
Russian/East Europe Welsh	Maori 1/4th			Sweden Norway	Sweden Norway	Germanic Europe	Germanic Europe	
Maternal Grandmother Johnston = Martin Mom's Mom	Maternal Grandfather Sutherland = Siddells Mom's Dad		Paternal Grandmother Pehrsdotter = Lundin Dad's Mom		Paternal Grandfather Allgeyer = Duncan Dad's Dad		Couple Surnames Grand Parents	
Russian/East Europe Welsh Maori 1/8th			Sweden Norway		Germanic Europe			
Mother's Side Martin = Siddells				Father's Side Lundin = Duncan				Surnames
Russian/East Europe				Sweden				
Welsh				Norway				
Maori 1/16th				Germanic Europe				
Both Parents Siddells = Duncan								
Russian/East Europe								
Welsh								
Maori 1/32nd								
Sweden								
Norway								
Germanic Europe								

- Use ethnicities that are on one side of your tree.
- Favor use of ethnicities that are uncommon in population.
- Favor use of ethnicities that have a unique descent path.
- Verify ethnic composition of known cousins—Ancestry's ethnic comparison tool.
- Regard ethnic results with skepticism. A guide, not fact, but better than nothing.

I hope this makes sense. The key takeaway is that if you set up the Cousins MRCA Template and the Ethnicity Template correctly, THE TEMPLATES WORK.

Now if you have halvesies in your tree, prepare two templates. At the generation where the parallel marriages occur, you have more than two possible boxes. And that isn't going to work because at each higher level above that you introduce twice as many boxes. So you do two templates, one for one marriage and one for the other. A lot of the info will be the same.

Best,

Dave

18 Feb 2024

