

The Scripting of a Therapist

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Abstract

Dr. Karpman recalls the childhood scripting messages that led him to be a Teaching Member in the ITAA.

This journal's theme, "The Person Who is the Therapist," asks that the authors reflect on life events that have shaped their approach to therapy and education. TA asks, do life events shape destiny, or does destiny shape life events? A scripted person will (1) seek, (2) provoke, (3) interpret, or (4) capitalize on later life events according to the calling of the earlier script. As I reflect on my script matrices, they seem to follow the theory.

My Russian father, Ben, was a psychoanalyst who traveled around the world to conferences teaching new theory he had written, as do I. He lived by "A job worth doing is worth doing right" and "The difficult we do immediately, the impossible takes a little longer." As do I. A cultural message was, "Work with your brains, not with your hands." My Spanish mother, Manuela, said, "Don't be in a hurry to grow up," so I haven't grown up and written the 20 books and 200 articles my father did. Additionally, her other message kept me too busy: "Don't be caught without a hobby like your father." But it was the hobbies (art, magic, acting, sports) that taught me the principles of observation, overview, creativity, and thoroughness to carry out the script. My family with two older sisters was

close, and the "Family Coat of Arms" said "Do Your Own Thing." My mother, a psychiatric social worker, was socially active, and my middle sister, Betty, modeled togetherness and group loyalty, so I became a group therapist in the TA family instead of a psychoanalyst. My older sister Kay's lifestyle was to work on a new project every year, so I work on a new theory every year. As an actress and adventurer she taught "The show must go on."

My script decision at age eight was to be an inventor. So I adventured all the way from my home in Washington, D.C., to California in the 1960s because I heard the newest things were being invented there. My father had taught at Howard University Medical School in D.C., so I taught at the University of California Medical Center in San Francisco. That is how I met Eric Berne. My father studied with Freud; I studied with Berne. My mother had a strict mother, so she scripted me to be a rebel. Berne's TA was rebellious. My work as a therapist and my marriage and family with two sons taught me nurturing, a practice not always available to a youngest sibling. Other gaps in the script benefited from another of father's teachings: "If you work real hard, good things will happen," and a childhood nurse: "You can do anything you want to if you set your mind to it. You could walk through that wall if you really want to."

So, scripting questions arise. Does the opportunity create the person, or does

the person create the opportunity? Where does script end and free will begin? Is free will scripted? Is imprinting scripted? Is biology scripted? Is karma scripted? Can these be redecided? Is your answer scripted?

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