

IDENTITY TRAINING II

Chapter One

The Repeating Drama

It is strange. One human being who is totally sure they are living in full emotional personal freedom obsessively repeats a drama over and over with someone close--someone close, mind you! This sequence is so familiar that the boss-friend-child-spouse-loved one looks with rapt fascination at the compulsiveness of it all and is rather speechless, not knowing what to do. Love or high regard is there--you can sense it. Still, the other goes through some ancient ritual in a mindless, mesmerized fashion, and you can do little to awaken them. It is as if something inside has a scratch on it like a phonograph record--“Play it again, Sam.” The same tune, the next month, week, day, or hour even!

The person running the show has no notion whatsoever of the repetitive quality of it all. Rather, he or she thinks that the content is new, that the occasion is the utter cause of the lack of communication, and that if the other person would simply straighten up their act, then all would be well. “Listen to me!” “Touch me!” “Be faithful and don’t flirt!” “Don’t tell lies!” “You don’t really care and this is proof!” “When will someone ever really love me!” “If only you were thoughtful and nurturing!” “I wouldn’t drink if you treated me right!” “I’m inadequate because you pick on me!” “Why do people always reject me !?”

The obsessive movie rolls on, time after mindless time, and the person running the projector has no sense whatsoever of starting the film, dimming the lights of love, and being in charge of the show.

The experience of the person being confronted with their “sin” is at a loss of what to say. First they attempt one thing, then another. They try a bit of humor, but that doesn’t work. Their promise to be better goes nowhere. A gift, an extra dose of listening, a trial of a program in still another self-help book are all to no avail. Each attempt clatters to the floor like a broken vase, and the lover-friend-spouse-partner is baffled. “What can I do?” “How can I get across to him/her that I am (faithful, loving, true, just, good, and worthy)?” Nothing works.

Eventually the person caught on the horns of the Script feels like a bug pinned to the wall with

a giant pin. They wiggle, flap their wings, move their legs, push against the wall, but all they get for their trouble is exhaustion. If this is you, along about here you have several courses to choose from:

- 1) Conclude that the partner/parent/friend or whatever is just plain evil. “He is incorrigible, unredeemable, and I do not want to live with him ever again!” “She never got off her daddy’s knee, and I am not the man to remove her from it—she just won’t grow up!” “My boss is just a jerk!” “Day in and day out, my dad does the same stupid routine. I give up—I’ll talk to him again in ten years or so!” Psychological divorce occurs. They never call their friend again. They leave their job. Parents no longer communicate with their daughter. Et cetera. Nauseating. **Script corrodes relationships like acid.**
- 2) Decide that I am healthy and the other person is sick. I will simply have to gut it out. I become Mr. Mellow or Ms. Endurance. I cool it. As soon as the hassle starts, I just disappear from the room and stop fighting. After all, it never got me anywhere anyway. So, the best thing to do is just disappear until the dust settles. Then half-heartedly start again later. No need to sweat it. Just hang in there and wait for the row to quiet down, the hangover to heal, the indiscretion to be forgotten. This is the endurance solution, the one where the partner avoids the ugliness of the Script, puts up with it somehow, and goes on.
- 3) Confront the Script over and over again with logic, emotion, passion, and values. I will explain, justify, verify, and become the equivalent of a walking-talking computer. I leave no reason for the person to continue the same old Script on my body; I become above reproach. For years I do this. It doesn’t work, but still I do it. I go over it again and again with the relentlessness of a machine: “I do love you; I do care; I am faithful; I do respect you; I do listen; I am on your side; I think you are important,” ad infinitum. I have met the repeating drama with pure reason. It doesn’t work. I do it anyway. It’s all I have. Though my inevitability fades over the years, I still keep trying.
- 4) Enroll in Identity Training. I had hoped that the seminar would do it and we would live happily ever after. While much of the material helped tremendously, there were only a few references to Script and I knew, deeply knew, that I was being tossed on the horns of one but did not have the know-how of what to do. So here I am. I’ve enrolled in Identity Training II. Ready

to learn. Ready to get on with life and love and family tenderness. Ready to stop all the hassle and games. I just want to make it with this person and stop the rigamarole.

I.

SCRIPT SIGNS

Nathan Bedford Forrest was one of the only Confederate generals who outright won a battle. At the Battle of Shiloh in Tennessee, his army was the clear victor over the Union troops. When he was asked to sum up how to win a battle, he said, succinctly and memorably, “You gets there fustest with the mostest men.”

That is not bad advice when it comes to Script. You had best know the battleground, get there faster than the person with whom you skirmish, and have more options. Part of that is being able to recognize exactly when the person is in Script. This section is devoted to being able to recognize exactly when the other turns on the Childhood Tragic/Comedy Drama.

How to recognize Script:

1. Face and skin harden.
2. Breathing becomes shallow.
3. The person is scared but oblivious to it.
4. The process is repetitive; even if the content changes depending on occasion, verbs and adjectives remain the same.
5. The person threatens abandonment of some variation.
6. You are on the carpet for doing something wrong.
7. There is a glassy look in their eyes.
8. The person is attacking and you are to justify. (Sometimes, the person withdraws and gets a free sulk.)
9. The person’s conviction is absolute; it totally feels right to them.
10. Nothing you say will work.
11. The person uses generalizations like “always,” “never,” etc.
12. A prototypical “poor me” or “victorious me” appears.

13. The voice has a whine to it, or some typical sound.

14. During the confrontation. the entire body of the script-bound person becomes unmoving and fixed.

And, boys and girls, when those fourteen sightings occur, school is out! Fold up the books, kids, it's time to go home. Maybe tomorrow you can start all over again, but for today, learning has ceased. The same old movie is on the screen.

As we write this checklist, we are tempted to explain each of those fourteen points. But we trust that if you read them aloud, you will recognize them and know you've seen and felt them before. Take some time here. It will be worth not only hours, but years, to you later. When you observe this set occurring, and you have a new program of reaction, you will save yourself not only time and relationships, but also much suffering. So, go back and reread the list, once more, with feeling, as they say in the movies.

By the way, there is another way to tell when a person is in Script. You, as an unwitting bit actor thrust into the play, feel confused, lost, uncertain, scared, and after a while, just plain angry. Furious even. You explain and explain. You try to understand to the extent of being as patient as Job. Nothing works. After a while you are back to the Big A, anger, and you become sick of the entire movie. But this bit of rage will not help either, though of course it does kind of clear out your system and feel good for a while. For the person playing the movie, though, it is proof of what they were saying all along. How is that for a double bind?

II.

SCRIPT ORIGINS

To understand this obsessive Story/Script that the person keeps thrusting upon anyone venturing to the point of closeness, it is necessary to return to childhood. Ahh, childhood. That place of imagination and painful awakening. Well, anyway, one of the things that a young innocent child is privy to is the Scene. You see, the person you encounter did not originate this horror movie. Instead, the impressionable child watched some form of it over and over again.

That's right. Mom and Dad were once kids themselves and the recurring scene may have its roots

back to the Near East when humans began to communicate. “You always, you never, why don’t you,” may well have been one of the first lines uttered. Or maybe it was some form of nostalgic looking off at the setting sun, while the person wailed about how “nobody really cares.”

But let’s get back to the Scene. (While we will use Mom, Dad and the Observing Child as the three people engaged in the creation of the Script Story line, please understand that it may be a bit more complex than that. Remember that humans are tricky! It could well have been an older sibling involved, or maybe it was totally generated in the mind of the creative child who figured out a rather marvelous interpretation of life.)

In the Scene, Mom has one role. Dad has another. The impressionable Observing Child watches and forms an interpretation. Roll ‘em. Usually there is a hated role, a favored role, and a banal role. (We’ll explain that later.)

The Scene: Roll ‘em. And not just Roll ‘em occasionally, once a week or even on an erratic day. Roll ‘em every day. Morning and evening. Roll ‘em ten times before breakfast and twenty times in the evening. Roll the same movie with one parent doing one thing and the other reacting negatively in some way or another. Roll ‘em! The kid watches and listens and feels within. Makes mental notes. Memorizes each of the Script signs we listed above. Sees Mom do her bit and Dad do his bit. Reacts. Records. Ingests. Imitates. Knows each part perfectly Could do the various roles during their sleep. Views it all over again the next morning. Roll ‘em. Evening is coming.

And how many times does this Scene play? How many times did you see your dad needle your mom? How many times did your mom sigh and reject? How many times did your dad act smart and put your mom down? How many times did your big sister/brother slam-dunk you, or whatever the Scene was? Newcomers to the world of Scripts at first think they saw it maybe once or twice a week. Then, when they visit home and watch it all over again, they realize that they saw it in almost every transaction between the parents! This is incredible! What it means is that the Scene may have been heard/viewed 20 times in the morning and another 30 times in the evening. FIFTY brain-washing times a day. It simply depends on the number of interactions between the parents.

What if it were 50 per day? You were around that show for eighteen years, 365 (and a

fourth) days. Do the arithmetic and you'll be shocked. Add to it the times you played the show with others, and you will be aghast! A Script is no occasional thing; it absorbs energy around others like a vacuum.

It should be clear by now that conditioning along a certain theme was immense. It takes only several viewings of an ordinary movie for your mind to remember every backdrop, spoken line, twitch of face, grimace of mouth, and innuendo. On the sixth viewing or so, you have it all down. You anticipate each move before it happens. You can feel it all within your body. You could do it if you were on the screen! All this after only a half dozen or so viewings. Seventy-five times and you have memorized the lines. Four hundred times and you could play each role yourself. Ahhh...you are beginning to get the picture.

Go back to the number you came up with two paragraphs back. Do you think you would have it all down in your mind and body after experiencing it live and animated that many times?

The bad news is that you do not just have it inside your mind. You probably throw the switch occasionally and play it yourself, unconsciously, of course. Still, when you project your movie onto your partner/spouse/friend/boss, they look at you in shock and ask, or at least think, "Where did that come from!?" You continue with more heat. You are determined. You know that this occasion for discomfort is real, justified, and authentic. They look confused. You continue with greater passion, all the way to the slammed door.

Obviously, at some time or another, the other person throws their movie on your screen. The ante goes up.

III.

SCRIPT LOCK

This unholy alliance occurs when both are "into their things," as the vernacular would have it. She goes on her jealousy trip, which gives him license to practice infidelity, because "if I am going to have the name, I'm going to have the game." He does his please-mommy good-boy

routine; she scorns him and teaches the kids to hate his wimpy ways. She goes super-sanctimonious, and he escalates his reprobate behavior.

Isn't it horrifying? The Script is now being passed on to the kids. Maybe they can pass the unlit torch of intimacy to the next generation.

Signs of Script-Lock

- 1) An automatic feeling of scare when the other person enters the room.
- 2) Body tenses, ready for battle.
- 3) Natural playful spontaneity is on hold.
- 4) Breathing becomes high and regulated.
- 5) No longer trust the person and watch for kicks.
- 6) Sense that your body wants to flee.
- 7) THEN--At the slightest innuendo, you are ready to fight and then flee.

You know you are at Script-Lock when the thought of the other person gives you a bit of a tummy tug and you begin to argue mentally, justify, figure out a new approach, or make your next tactical plan to avoid, ignore, withdraw, fight, or whatever, (Let it be said that all of this is so nauseating. Why can't humans just relax and love one another? We all die. Can we not laugh and play and be friends during the trip?)

That parenthesis is the cry of a child. Mindlessly participating in a movie several hundred thousand times removes mental freedom. Obsession is all.

Please understand, however, that the person is free in hundreds of other ways. There is joy in some occupations, some relationships, and some activities. There are moments of peace when reading a book, experiencing nature, and watching children play. There are thoughtful times and feeling times, moments of creative expression and productive work. There may be times of adoration at church and appreciation of life itself.

The fault comes when deep closeness with another could happen, when love could break through. When intimacy could occur. When the bonus of another person really loving and embracing your life is about to be realized. The old story is threatened, and the person may have to

readjust all the thinking-feeling-believing-acting of what life is really about. If they were to have done that as children, they would have experienced immense disappointment because the Mindless Movie did not stop in their own homes. So, they defended themselves from that pain. Now, when love threatens, there is but one thing to do: “Play it again, Sam. Roll ‘em. Script’s On!”

When you stop to think about it, the person going into Script with you actually has given you a secret compliment: You have threatened them with love and a part of them knows it. That is why the Script must be played immediately. They are threatened with true care and love. You have almost broken through their defenses!

Isn’t that amazing? Unfortunately, it helps little when the white-hot intensity of the Script is underway. The person may be afraid to relax because she/he would really love and accept closeness, but it is small comfort to you who is getting the treatment instead of the treat.