

IDENTITY TRAINING II

Chapter Five

Rewriting the Story

There is a wonderful therapeutic technique that one can try to magically transform identity. What you do is rewrite the story of your own childhood as you would have desired it if you, your mom, your dad, and all concerned were perfectly happy. You just create a story and then go around the next week telling pieces of it to others. How dad was a loving guy who wanted you to become the best you could be and trusted you implicitly. How mom was a loving person who always had your best interests at heart. How you chose to do well early on and decided to make something of your life. How your older sister was a truly loving person. How childhood was glorious.

And so a great tale is created. It is a neat experience and is, in a way, what happens during the long course of therapy if one goes for deeper matters of the mental make-up. One discovers that excellent decisions were made in light of what happened.

In doing this solitary piece of re-creation of the story, several things must be monitored.

Do not get off on Wish items that are unnecessary.

Do not exaggerate feelings; normal ones are okay.

Do not make it totally unbelievable.

Do not make yourself an extraordinary hero.

Do not make yourself more than you can become.

DO NOT DO THIS UNTIL YOU HAVE EMPTIED OUT YOUR ANGER.

In other words, it is okay to create a story that is based on what your parents and you would have been if you all had been mentally healthy. Underneath all of the crud in the relationships, what was the positive intention of those main characters?

STEPS:

1. Visualize it in your mind.
2. Make it auditory in your mind.
3. Experience the sensations in your body.

4. Allow yourself to be happy about the new story.
5. Begin to tell others about it in small pieces here and there.
6. Accept it as real and no longer nurture old pains.

This re-creation of story will be pursued in Identity Training II class, so there is no need to make yours specific yet. Here's an example: Frank's father was a relatively poor man in that he never ended a month with more than five dollars. He had to struggle all the time to survive, which left him little time to play, to vacation, to do anything with his son other than work. Part of Frank's options were limited later when he found that he also worked but seldom played. He created this story on the foundation of what his father would have done if he had been in a better position in life:

Once my father decided that it was time to quit working so hard. He wanted some time just for us. We chartered a seaplane and went up to Canada fishing. We were taken to a lake way out in the middle of nowhere and spent an entire week laughing, sharing, and simply being together. He told me of his childhood on the farm in Tennessee, how he used to have a biscuit with blackstrap molasses on it for lunch, how he came to the city during the Depression and began to make his way, how his first wife died due to the lack of penicillin, how he felt, what his philosophy of life was, and what he cherished. It was a wonderful time, and we renewed our covenant of the heart that we had always felt underneath.

What is the point of all of this?

The point is that you can choose what story you want to believe and what story you will serve in life. If you want to keep a tragic alcoholic story alive, then keep playing the movie as you received it and as you perceived it. The word *perceived* is important because no child ever gets to fully understand all of the reasons for the insanity, the irrationality, and the turmoil they may have experienced. If you want to operate on a new story, then there is a way to do that.

Rather than stimulate yourself within as you play old ugly scenes, you can choose what to remember and what to forget. It's important to note, though, that this must be done consciously. This is not a repression solution, one where you do not authentically deal with your feelings from old ego modules. This is a creative adventure to be undertaken after you know how to deal with

old material that arises, once you know the anatomy of a trauma and matters such as that. Are you hearing our words of caution here? Remember that the first thing taught in Identity Training was how to be true to your feelings. That will never be negotiated away or compromised. For you to have your own autonomy and be the real you in life, you must be true to yourself.

But, if you harbor old rages and find yourself ruminating about how poorly you were treated as a child, then it may be time to re-create the story. If you get some free despair, some automatic “poor me” points, or justification in walking around as a Dr. Rage who tells everyone off, then you are not only using the history but also being used by it. It is much better for you to feel the feelings and get them out of you and then go on, create a new story, and live more freely.

I.

Once More with Feelings

You know SASHET, and you know that you do not want to live out of Rackets, Ricochets, and Reflexions. This time around, in your new story, go back over your childhood and remember how each of the real feelings came out at one time or another. **Anchor those in your mind.** They are the foundations of the new story. Learn that you always have a choice in what to remember and what to dwell upon in your mind. Dealing with the ugly is no more being real than dealing with the positive. Of course, you do not, nor shall you, deny the difficulties that were there. You will weep them out, yell them out, and blow them out with anger if you need to. You will be true to your body with no compromise.

Still, there are times to weep and there are times to rejoice. If you have honored your history with the willingness to look under any stone, search out any byway, become free as a human, then there is no shame in building a new story on the basis of the few occasions when people were real.

Was there a time when you saw your dad cry for real? A time when your mother felt the pain of existence and wept? A time when your father was treated wrongly and was angry? A time when mom felt true anger at someone for slighting her? The point is to go through each of the feelings and anchor them for all the significant people of your life, including yourself.

And then from that point on, when occasions come forth to share the past, tell those

stories. Do not go into some old Script that leaves you as a victim. Let the dead bury the dead. Allow the Script to end.

Of course, you must go through a phase of making sure that you have honored the main figures of the past with some kind of mental acknowledgement that only you can devise. In other words, figure out what you must do to let the old images die. How can you honor the past without doing any of the destructive stuff that went with it? How can you choose what was good from your mother and forget the rest? How can you build some aspect of your father that was truly healthy into your system so you can let the ugly stuff go?

Those are the questions to pursue. But they must be done, this time around, with Real Feelings. Say it aloud if you must: “Mom, what I will take with me in my future life is the time you grieved about the loss of your mother. I can still see you there at the casket. I will also take your honest anger when the bully at the playground was picking on me. I will take....” All the way, through tenderness. It is a vital experiment.

Then check to see if any part of you wants to maintain the old Script story. What is its positive intention? What do you need to do to let the past be the past? Be honest with yourself.

II.

Once More with Values

Chapter Seven of Identity Training laid a foundation for values: Beauty, Truth, Justice, Goodness, and Love. It is rather weird how those can become the backdrop of family discussions when your parents are gone and you sit around with your siblings and remember: “Do you remember how Mom used to love Mozart?” “Do you recall how Daddy was a stickler for telling the truth – he was a great teacher.” “Can you recall how he used to get mad if you used a name that put down other people?” “Do you remember how Mom would do the little things for people that made a difference?” “I know that underneath all of their strife, they actually had moments of love. Did I tell you the time I caught them kissing?”

In the re-creation of the story that you are engaged in, you might just imagine that you are eight years of age, and that you have selected the good stories of your parents, siblings, and yourself, and delight in telling them to others. When you stick to the BTJGL stories, you have a

wealth of options that are incredibly freeing to the mind. In your relationships, as you come out of these stories and not the Script ones, you find a sparkling, a kind of effervescence that is very nice. People want to hear. Friends want to hear. Your spouse wants to hear. Your face lights up and a beautiful story comes forth. That is very nice.

Work at it. Think along one value theme and choose individuals and how they exemplified that grand theme, at least for moments. Did your dad decorate a cake with the care of a master chef? Did your mother once paint and develop a fine landscape? Were you captivated by nature as a child?

Build the new story on these grand occasions. They are worth remembering while much of the other only leads to bitterness.

III.

Once More with a Vision

Both of the Identity Training seminars you have attended have dealt with the past. It is time now for you to develop a vision of your future. In other words, one can choose to be guided by the past with its limitations or pulled to the future by its hope. The time for the latter is at hand as you fashion the person you will be.

This is not just a fantasizing exercise. It is one for your workbook. Write down who you will become, how others view you, how your relationships have been deep and permanent and fulfilling, and how you showed your character by overcoming your childhood and not being driven by it. You do not have to make yourself into a hero who is beyond the suffering of this world. Encountering pain and using it as a step in growth is part of the stuff that separates the victorious from the also-rans. The old saw is that “death gives three warnings: loss of teeth, loss of hearing, and loss of eyes.” It actually gives many little warnings along the way in terms of scars, surgeries, emotional pains, and general human hurt. We see our bodies grow old right before our eyes. But, in your workbook, write down how you have lived joyously no matter what.

Gaining this vision is no simple matter. It takes a great deal of work, and your seminar leader will aid you on this matter. What are your goals? Do you have enough stability or identity

that you can give up the Script and risk being real with another, allowing them to love your child within even as you love their child? We are talking about one of the toughest assignments that a human can undertake. It is the risk of being real and being vulnerable.

“But what if the other leaves or dies?”

Then, one would suppose, you join the other millions of heroes of world literature who experienced pain and grieved honestly. Then you choose to go on with your life, not with mere bravery but, finally, with joy. The little epigrammatic sentence “Feel your way through it” seems so simple at times that it can be said almost thoughtlessly. Actually feeling the loss of a spouse that you deeply loved for a quarter of a century or more is incredibly painful. If something tragic happens to one of your children, then the pain goes beyond words. You still have to feel your way through it. Let the rage, terror, and grief flow honestly right on through. Don’t stop if the feeling flow even through happiness, excitement, and tenderness. You become a feeling pipeline. And you call in your friends to be close and give you human comfort. Someone to just sit quietly with you helps many times. Your vision can include even this most painful of human experiences.

A Critique

One thoughtful and scientific student of this material looked at what was involved in Script change and responded in the following manner:

I think that I agree with your major ideas, but there is one that stops me from going any further with the work of it all. Right now I experience freedom in much of what I do. I am a pretty good person all in all. I have moments with my husband that are loving. We seem to avoid some of the major problems you speak of and don't get into Script material except on occasion. To be sure, we sometimes have our weeks, and we have been known to have our months. But then something happens and we find each other again and all seems well. You seem to be talking about the top three percent or so and I am quite willing to live my life with the other ninety-seven percent.

What are we to say to that? First of all, a person who can keep building on the moments

and learn how to avoid the major generalizations of the Script is quite rare. We hope that she is right and that they can live happily ever after. It could be that our perspective, from three decades beyond the woman speaking, is informed by deeper awareness that is not easily found when one is in the early twenties.

Are we jaundiced by our work? Do we only see those who are specially plagued by material from childhood? We think not, because our perspective includes the full range of human possibilities. We do not even believe in the ‘normal family’ anymore. We think everyone developed Script material from childhood in the form of two Ricochets and one Adaptation. We have seen that across the board in everything from priests and nuns and clergy and rabbis to carpenters and lawyers and doctors and truck drivers and welfare recipients. Script just is.

Whether or not a person decides to gain freedom in this area and let old matters fade away is a value choice. If we are right, true intimacy and deep relationships stand or fall at this juncture. If we are wrong, then at least we have a terrific relationship with each other to share. And that is quite a bonus.

You are rapidly getting to the point where the work of this seminar has become yours. You sufficiently understand the ideas now. Now you need to spend time with your workbook and follow the suggestions that will give clues to Script recognition and Script resolution. Also feel free to extemporize and figure out angles to your particular Script that we simply cannot touch because of the incredible creativity of humans. Each life is unique, and each Script formed out of childhood has its typical moves that we cannot conceive of in such a writing as this.

Go for it.

Your life is ahead of you and the past is over.

If any energy remains from the former days, squeeze that out of them and use it for fuel for tomorrow.

SASHET away.