

What Really Happened?

So there I was sitting in group therapy pouring out my heart regarding the pain of a future without the choice of having children because of my wife's medical issues and our age. Somewhere in the middle of the story the co-facilitator launches into a description of the beauty of parenting and a parents undeniable compulsion to protect said children. I am stunned by the apparent lack of sensitivity. My comment that I can not wait to spend the rest of my life being told that I will miss the best part of life is lost amid the murmurs of universal agreement from the secret order of those who have been parents. I secretly pray that since she is clearly wrong about a parent's undeniable compulsion to protect one's children, that my parents so easily ignored, perhaps she is also mistaken when she imparts that life is not complete without children.

Moving on, Steven I amid a life of feeling like freaks bond in the rare companionship that comes from sharing the results of surviving severe abuse and oppression from an early age. In an atypically unrehearsed fashion I am deeply honest about how those early experiences strongly affect my way of approaching life today. I find myself spurred on by the close connection with another whom has endured the same and go into some detail of the pain and fear that run my life. Suddenly, from the co-facilitator in what seems to be a moment of frustration comes a laugh. Not so unlike a cackle saying "well, it's no wonder you cannot sleep" as if my lack of ability to sleep is the punishment for some crime I have knowingly committed. I am again stunned but hopeful that soon to follow will be the somehow obvious explanation for my sleeplessness, but nothing of the sort followed. I am only left with questions. Has she overcome adversity great enough to understand mine?

Is she aware?

Are we like schoolchildren to her foolishly bouncing off the walls as she watches?

Does she care?

You may ask, did it really happen that way? Ask anyone in that room how it happened and you will get as many different versions. Have them write it out in a story and like me, they may change, even their own version of the facts to create a more comfortable story. In the past I would have been inclined to put all of the versions together weighing their accuracy by my perception of the story tellers' personal bias and decide what I believe really happened. I would then compare "what really happened" to my recollection and attempt to learn something about myself in the differences. I would of course also decide on a suitable punishment for the villain in the story and do my best to convince others to help me punish them.

This method, not only uses enough assumptions to be wholly inaccurate, it also allows me to subconsciously highlight those things that I am comfortable confronting while giving the illusion that I am attempting to dive deeply into myself for answers. The real question that I need to ask is why am I comfortable with my version of the story? What does it say about me? Why am I compelled to tell the story the way I do?

In the first perceived slight:

I am doing what I am supposed to be doing.

Good Boy

An authority figure is either unaware of or is being consciously insensitive to my needs.

Bad Parent

Their actions increase my pain and confusion.

Who Is on My Side?

My objections go unheard, as I am in the minority.

I Am Alone

They are wrong, they don't understand what I went through.

They Are Wrong

Circumstances out of my control are such that I am unable to experience the joy of life that others do.

This Is As Good As It Gets for Someone like Me

In the second perceived slight:

I find a friend that understands.

I Am No Longer Alone

I allow myself to become vulnerable.

I will Fix It

I am laughed at and feel stupid.

I Cannot Trust Anyone

I accept the abuse, because it contains a promise a relief from my suffering.

If I Suffer Enough, I Will Find a Way out

The abuser withholds the answers that will relieve my suffering.

I Am Not Good Enough

I vow to become worthy of those answers in the eyes of my abuser.

I Will Become What You Want

I re-create this drama in countless ways every day. The characters change, but the message remains the same.

The basic beliefs are these:

Within me is a fatal flaw.

If I am perfect in every way I can hide the fatal flaw from others.

I must triumph quickly and completely in all battles or my adversary will discover the fatal flaw in strike me down.

I must tirelessly analyze all possible attacks in order to be prepared for battle.

No one will love or except me, if they discover the fatal flaw.

If I let people get close to me, I risk discovery and the death of my soul.

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