

Family-System Roles

Identify and write down the roles your inner child chose in order to matter in your family. Mine were Star, Superachiever, Caretaker, and Nice Guy. Your roles make up your part in the family drama. Here are some examples:

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| Star | Family Sacrifice | Offender |
| Superachiever | Scapegoat | Mom's Little Man |
| Caretaker | Problem Child | Mom's Surrogate Spouse |
| Nice Guy | Lost Child | Mom's Best Friend |
| Hero | Victim | Mom's Mom |
| Mom's or Dad's Enabler or Caretaker | Superresponsible One | Dad's Little Princess |
| Mom's Mom | Overachiever | Dad's Surrogate Spouse |
| Dad's Dad | Rebel | Dad's Best Buddy |
| Peacemaker | Underachiever | Dad's Dad |
| Mediator | People Pleaser (nice guy/sweetheart) | |

It's important to realize that Surrogate Spouse and Parent's Parent roles are not limited to opposite sex bonding. A girl can be Mom's Surrogate Spouse; a boy can be Dad's Surrogate Spouse. In all cases, *the child is taking care of the parent*. This is a reversal of the order of nature.

1. Ask yourself what you had to repress in order to play your roles.

Scripts demand that you play your roles in certain ways. Some feelings go with the script and others are prohibited by it. My roles called for me to be up, to smile, and to look happy, and prohibited me from being scared, sad, and angry. I mattered only as long as I was a Star and was achieving. I couldn't be mediocre or need help myself. I had to be strong. If I didn't perform, I felt stripped of the power of doing. Of course, I became addicted to doing.

It's important to feel the life-damaging consequences of your roles. They cost you the loss of your authentic self. As long as you continue to play your roles, you stay in the spiritual wound; you may go to your death never knowing who you are.

In order to reclaim your Authentic Self, you must give up your rigid family-system roles. Those roles never *really* made you feel that you mattered anyway. Just close your eyes and imagine that you couldn't play your major role anymore! How does it *feel* to give up that role?

2. Try to think of three new behaviours you could use to stop a Role.

For example, for a Caretaking Role you could:

- i. Say *no* when someone asks for your help
- ii. You could ask someone to help you do something just for the hell of it
- iii. Or you could think of a problem you're having right now and ask someone who has expertise in that area to help you

This helps you to change your adapted co-dependent role and get in touch with your Authentic Self. Your Authentic Self may like to help others. Once you give up the rigid role, you can start helping others because you find it enjoyable rather than because you *have* to in order to feel lovable and valuable.