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LIFE SCRIPTS

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Life scripts can be defined as 'unconscious life plans': 'made in childhood, reinforced by the parents, justified by subsequent events, and culminating in a chosen alternative' (Stewart & Joines, 1987, p. 100). For instance, with Logan, a client, we might hypothesise that his life script is, 'I'm always going to fail at what I do, and people are going to push me further and further away. I'll end up in the gutter.' Such a life script, from a TA perspective, is conceptualised as a 'decision' that Logan would have made for intelligible reasons: for instance, to protect himself from the disappointment of constant rejection. And they are also seen as being directed towards a long term *payoff*: the person's implicit, ulterior 'reward' (for instance, 'And then everyone will realise how badly they treated me').

As with Logan, however, TA hypothesises that such life-script '*cannot* be attained without misery, self-limitation or even physical harm' (Stewart & Joines, 1987, p. 108, emphasis in original). Furthermore, the replaying of life-scripts in the here-and-now, when they are no longer 'fitting' or helpful to a situation, is considered a 'source of most life-problems' (p. 110). Logan's friends and family, for instance, genuinely want him to succeed. They are willing to support him. But Logan directs himself towards his life-script rather than the external reality; and he discounts any evidence that does not fit in with his unconscious trajectory: for instance, 'They are just trying to trick me into thinking that they really care.' However, as with all adults, from a TA perspective, Logan also has the possibility of *redecision*: the 'replacement of a self-limiting early decision by a new decision that takes account of the individual's full adult resources' (p. 333). That is, he can direct himself along a different path.

Transactional analysis also describes five script-like 'drivers' that are played out over shorter time periods: 'be perfect', 'please (others)', 'try hard', 'be strong', and 'hurry up' (Stewart & Joines, 1987). It is suggested that each of us has a dominant driver type, and these can be seen as mid-level directions.

REFERENCES

Stewart, I., & Joines, V. (1987). *TA today: A new introduction to transactional analysis*. Nottingham: Life Space.