



CORE ROLES

Core Roles help support a sense of consistent belonging and safety. "If I'm a good helper, I make mom happy" or "If I'm quiet and compliant, my teacher won't get mad at me."

- Roles are shame-based. We will feel shame if we behave or step-out of our assigned subconscious 'role'
- Roles uphold expectations and rules (spoken and unspoken) and can serve us well in childhood.
- Yet, in adulthood they can be limiting and destructive to our thoughts, behaviors, relationships and self-worth.
- Roles can also make it hard to receive love, make it difficult to trust others, and when we do 'give' to others, we may not feel the joy in it as we are doing it out of the subconscious 'expected role' we have for ourselves.

CORE ROLES

WITHOUT AWARENESS

Without awareness, roles imprison us and keep us stuck in maladaptive behavioral patterns, obsessions, addictions, reactions, and Codependency/Drama Triangle cycles, as deviating from our core roles triggers painful shame, inner criticism and emotional flashback.




WITH AWARENESS

Awareness is essential to break-free from roles and beliefs that block you from your authentic Self (genuine values, real desires, interests, emotions, wants, dislikes, needs, goals, etc.).

- With awareness we learn how to leverage and ‘enlighten’ the gifts each role (Part) brings.
- Shame binds us to these roles, so breaking-free feels ‘bad’ at first, triggering shame, doubts and fear, but with time you’ll experience more clarity, self-leadership and self-trust.





**You can't escape
from a prison until
you recognize you're
in one. People who
live within the limits
of their old beliefs
and roles continue to
have the same
experiences. It takes
effort and
commitment to
break old patterns.**

—
Bob Proctor

CORE ROLES FROM CHILDHOOD

Identify Your Core Roles from Childhood | You Likely Have More than One

CORE ROLES FROM CHILDHOOD

POSSIBLE GIFTS

LIMITATIONS / MALADAPTIVE ASPECTS

PEACEMAKER

Responsible for keeping the peace as an intermediary, a go-between, and a mediator to prevent or pacify other family members' conflict, irritability, anger or other emotions. Felt responsible for others' emotions and well-being (emotional enmeshment).

- Skilled mediators, leaders, mentors, attorneys, counselors
- Outstanding listeners and problem-solvers
- Usually highly empathic and attuned to others

- Anger-phobic, walks on eggshells
- Suppresses, unaware of, or fails to communicate needs, wants and boundaries
- Attempts to smooth conflict before a healthy interchange can take place - results in disconnected, resentful, 'empty' relationships and unmet needs, codependency and low self-worth

PARENTAL CHILD

Drafted into the practical aspects of running a household, or assumes responsibility caring for younger siblings and/or under-functioning parents (loving, well-intentioned parents can go through difficulties, illnesses, heartbreak, and other stressors). Acutely aware of others' wants and needs, instead of their own.

- Responsible, predictable, reliable, team-players, leaders, loyal, caring, nurturing and protective
- Prioritizes and values family and friends
- Tend to be proactive planners and highly organized

- Blurry boundaries and poor self-awareness
- Feel obligated to take over-responsibility for others, which can result in distrust and controlling behaviors
- Results in being judgmental, critical and resentful
- Suppresses, unaware of, or fails to communicate own needs, wants and boundaries
- Propensity for codependent relationships, taking over-responsibility for other adults

CORE ROLES FROM CHILDHOOD

POSSIBLE GIFTS

LIMITATIONS / MALADAPTIVE ASPECTS

HERO / THE ROCK

Family points to as solid example of family doing well. Gets good grades, star athlete or other shining accomplishments. There are many gifts to this role! Yet there are serious downsides that often go unnoticed until adulthood, involving lifelong insecurities due to underlying beliefs that self-worth is attached to achievements or rescuing.

- Strong drive to win and succeed
- Entrepreneurial, dedicated, high quality work and performance
- Perseverance, highly focused on accomplishments, hardworking
- Leaders, coaches, goal-oriented, protective and determined
- Unconscious belief that you can never do enough to be truly loved for yourself
- Sense of purpose can tie to perfectionism and/or incessant need to 'fix,' 'save,' help, self-improve, or improve others (achievement-addict)
- Feel never being 'enough,' empty, lonely, shame/guilt, insecurities, underlying obligation to rescue others (especially partner) from their own feelings, pitfalls or imperfections and issues

CRITICIZED CHILD / SCAPEGOAT

Can't seem to do anything right. Highly critical parent or a parent that is stuck in their own Hero Role. Another cause stems from a parent who has repressed anger, unmet needs, or resentment at the other parent. This anger is misdirected at the child, or arises from jealousy of other parent's parental love for you as the child.

- Hardworking, achievement focused, tough and tenacious
- Perfectionism has it's downside, but balanced with Self Leadership and awareness, it provides high attention to detail and excellence
- Thrives on constructive criticism
- Internalized critical parent turns into a berating Inner Critic that interferes with your quality of life, relationships, education, and work
- Without awareness and self-connection, Inner Critic results low self-worth due to rarely feeling "good enough"
- Studies show perfectionism does not lead to better performance. Instead, it leads to depression, shame, anxiety, eating and substance use disorders, and even self-harm

CORE ROLES FROM CHILDHOOD

POSSIBLE GIFTS

LIMITATIONS / MALADAPTIVE ASPECTS

ABANDONED / INVISIBLE

Physically abandoned by one or both parents; or they may be physically present but not able to emotionally connect to the child in a way that allows the child to feel seen, heard, valued, and respected (which would create the trusting, secure bond children need).

- Gets by without much
- High emotional pain threshold due to suppressing emotions (however depressing emotions causes depression)
- With therapy you can heal and persevere, making you a warrior and a way-shower for others to break-through the shame and pain of experiencing childhood emotional neglect
- Insecure Attachment Style, Childhood
- Emotional Neglect (CEN) and complex-PTSD.
- Self-abandonment, self-neglect, 'connection-starvation'
- The shame-based core beliefs (such as I am unlovable, I am unworthy, I am broken) that were adaptive and perhaps even necessary in a childhood where you were essentially 'starving for connection'

COMEDIAN / CLASS CLOWN

Keeps things light and funny by making jokes and distracting others (usually one or both parents) from feelings of sadness, depression, grief or angry outbursts. Feels over responsible for parents' emotions. Ties in with other roles, such as the Hero, Peacemaker, and Helper.

- Fun to be around! Having a great sense of humor is an amazing gift
- A sense of humor can also be an adaptive, healthy way to navigate stress and painful aspects of life!
- Making light of serious aspects in life can be an avoidance tactic and a form of self-abandoning.
- Loved-ones may feel dismissed, avoided, neglected and unloved if you are unable to turn-off the comedy at the right times.
- May be unable to dive deep into serious concerns that require sitting in reality, processing and grieving in order to heal and allow for calm rather than chronic stress

CORE ROLES FROM CHILDHOOD

POSSIBLE GIFTS

LIMITATIONS / MALADAPTIVE ASPECTS

BETRAYED CHILD

Parent may favor a sibling (or it appears that way to the child), or confidentiality was violated when they confided something personal to a parent only to have their private conversation revealed to other family members. Frequently experiences difficulty trusting that others are dependable or trustworthy.

- Realize the value of trust and tend to abide by a strong trustworthy, code of ethics in adulthood.
- With therapy you can heal and persevere, making you a warrior and a way-shower for others who experienced betrayal or a sense of abandonment in childhood
- Can result in Insecure Attachment Style
- Childhood Emotional Neglect (CEN) and complex-PTSD; self-abandonment, self-neglect
- Shame-based core beliefs (such as I am unlovable, I am unworthy, I am unwanted)

REBEL / BLACK SHEEP

Defiant, uncooperative, or rule breaker. Won't clean her room, and won't do her homework may skip school, be promiscuous and drive too fast. She sacrifices her own happiness in order to take the heat off the parents' troubled relationship. May be an unconscious way to rail against the shame/pressure of a

- It is natural for teens (and adults if they didn't have an opportunity as a teen) to go through rebellion to 'find themselves' and their sense of purpose. Allows you to break free from other roles, such as the Dependent, Hero or Caretaker.
- Passionate, fight for their values, creative and courageous
- Resentful, defiant, unpredictable, impulsive, addictions, and reactivity in relationships
- If you find yourself in this role, it may mean that you need to go through therapeutic 'angering' phase to process through and break-free from shame-based roles, core beliefs and emotional enmeshment. With boundaries and a renewed sense of Self, you can break-free from the shame-based roles and find your own purpose

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POSSIBLE GIFTS

LIMITATIONS / MALADAPTIVE ASPECTS

MARITAL CHILD

Fills the vacancy left by the physically or emotionally absent parent. They become a surrogate spouse attempting to fill their parent's needs for friendship, companionship, and emotional support. Similar to Parental Child, yet blends with other Roles in order to 'fill in' the blanks of absent

- Typically blends with other Roles, such as Caretaker and Parental.
- Therefore, you have even more strength and perseverance that can result in high levels of responsibility, organization, reliability, and empathy. Can shine and succeed in many career paths
- Can result in Insecure Attachment Styles or CEN
- Fierce independence, distrust in others to be there in a supportive, functional way.
- Tend to take on more than 100% responsibility for others at the expense of themselves.
- Self-abandonment and emotional self-neglect are serious downsides. Learn to connect with your Inner Child, emotions, needs and wants

UNWANTED CHILD

Believes, perhaps correctly, that they are the result of unplanned/unwanted pregnancy or parents' behaviors and lifestyle show they are not interested in being a responsible, loving, connected parent.

- With therapy they can heal and persevere, making them a warrior and a way-shower for others who experienced feeling unwanted, childhood abandonment and emotional neglect
- Can result in Insecure Attachment Styles,
- Childhood Emotional Neglect (CEN) and complex-PTSD; self-abandonment, self-neglect, and 'connection-starvation.'
- Shame-based core beliefs (such as I am unlovable, I am unworthy, I am unwanted) are catastrophic to your self-worth, self-esteem, and self-love. Impacts your relationships, resulting in disconnected, 'empty' relationships, and unmet needs.

CORE ROLES FROM CHILDHOOD

POSSIBLE GIFTS

LIMITATIONS / MALADAPTIVE ASPECTS

CARETAKER/RESCUER

Becomes the enabler or martyr. May act as an assistant to a parent who may be physically or emotionally overwhelmed. As a result, they miss out on many playful aspects of childhood. Similar to the Hero, Peacemaker and Parental Child, they often feel they can never do enough to be truly loved for oneself.

- Caring, giving, reliable, responsible, nurturing
- Tend to gravitate and excel in caretaking professions, such as medical and mental health care, and education
- Prioritizes and values family, friends and relationships

- Lack a 'self,' selfless, low self-worth, poor boundaries
- Take over-responsibility for others, especially for wife/husband (enabling and/or controlling)
- Feelings of loneliness, shame/guilt, or insecurity due to underlying obligation to take care of others while having propensity to deny own needs (addicted to being needed)
- Feel unappreciated, anxious, exhausted and resentful

DEPENDENT CHILD

Held in an extended or exaggerated child-like position, over-protected, enabled or taught to feel helpless/powerless. May occur due to parents' guilt over circumstances (working overtime, divorce, or over-adaptation to their own difficult or emotional neglected childhood). May turn into Identified Patient (next pages).

- Adaptable, go with the flow, get along well with others
- Tend to be very open to receiving gifts, help and caretaking from others
- Calm demeanor, easy-going
- Good listeners and observers

- Tend to take less than 100% power/responsibility for their own emotions, and overall wants, needs, goals and limits - because the enabled/victim consciousness is all they know
- Underlying beliefs that they need others to take care of them to feel a sense of love and belonging (results in codependency)
- Fear, shame and limiting beliefs can feel like 'walls of shame' surrounding their ability to succeed and flourish on their own

CORE ROLES FROM CHILDHOOD

POSSIBLE GIFTS

LIMITATIONS / MALADAPTIVE ASPECTS

CHAMALEON

Builds ability to manipulate, and people-please in order to adapt to ever changing environments and social situations to 'fit in' and ensure connection needs are being met to avoid feeling anxiety, shame, painful loneliness or like an outsider. Social situations include with parents, siblings, teachers and with friends.

- Ability to adapt, fit in, impress and connect with others
- Tends to be well-liked and accepted in many social groups
- People-pleasing provides gifts and strengths including in the workplace for business development, sales and leadership roles

- Lack a 'self,' selfless, low self-worth, poor boundaries
- Hypervigilant of others wants and needs and what they need to be impressed
- Feelings of loneliness, shame/guilt, or insecurity due to underlying obligation to impress others while having propensity to deny own needs (addicted to being validated)
- Feel unseen, not valued for who they really are, anxious, exhausted and resentful

EMOTIONAL / DEPRESSED / ANXIOUS ONE

Viewed and labeled as 'overly emotional' or 'too anxious' due to parents lack of emotional health skills and inability to model and teach emotional health skills. Although well-intentioned parents unfortunately teach child to 'depress' their emotions resulting in depression and feeling helpless/powerless. May turn into Identified Patient (next page).

- Not many gifts to this one but may develop high empathy for others

- Tend to take less than 100% power/responsibility for their own emotions, and overall wants, needs, goals and limits - because they are stuck in a depressive/powerless/victim consciousness
- Beliefs that emotions are bad and signs of weakness
- Fear, shame and limiting beliefs can feel like 'walls of shame' surrounding their ability to feel feelings and emotions, resulting in depression dissociation and various severe addictions and mental health disorders

CORE ROLES FROM CHILDHOOD

POSSIBLE GIFTS

LIMITATIONS / MALADAPTIVE ASPECTS

IDENTIFIED PATIENT

The 'disordered,' 'patient' or 'addict' represents the culmination of the family's issues. As a child this role is internalized as a core belief. As an adult, this family member continues to serve as a distraction (sacrificial) from the family's issues, as the family rallies to get 'help' for this 'hurt' or 'disordered' family member. The perpetual 'victim consciousness' and 'rescuing' complex between child and parent is catastrophic.

- None, as sacrificing one's own well-being does not bring any gifts


- Too many to list here
- Although open to treatment, it typically fails (self-sabotaging relapses) as their addictions, failures or issues, 'protects' the family and themselves from dealing with deeper, core issues and pain
- Sacrifices self to unite the family in crisis to help parents and siblings feel like Rescuers
- Being 'troubled' 'addicted' or 'disordered' may be only 'tool' to get connection needs met
- Disorganized Attachment, volatile relationships, cPTSD, many misdiagnosed 'disorders'

LOST/INVISIBLE CHILD

Attempts to blend into the background to feel safe and avoid rocking the (sinking) boat. Feel ignored, neglected, and scared to draw attention to themselves, especially in abusive households. Parents may use them, like the hero role, to exemplify how great the family is doing, since they are quiet, 'harmless' and not causing any trouble.

- Seems easy-going
- Quiet and usually harmless
- Doesn't rock the boat

- Difficulty developing social skills and self-esteem
- Feels too selfish or scared to communicate wants, needs and boundaries
- Anxiety, shame and limiting beliefs block ability to connect with their authentic Self (genuine needs, wants and limits)
- CEN, c-PTSD, and Insecure Attachment, typically Fearful/disorganized or Avoidant Style

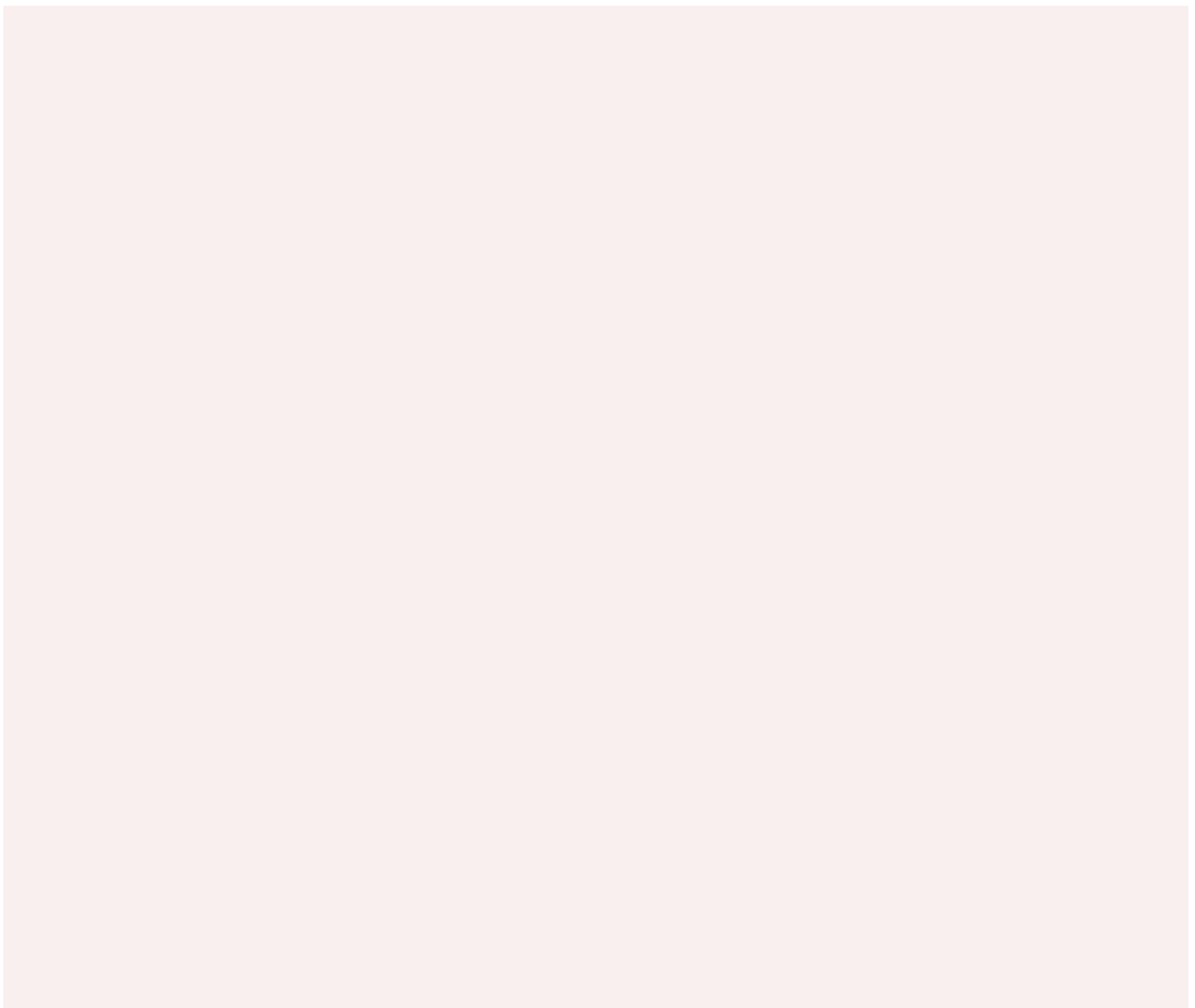



We heal ourselves on the mental level as we become aware of our core beliefs, release those that limit us, and open to more supportive ideas and greater understanding.

Shakti Gawain

REFLECTION ART THERAPY

Use the roles you've already identified and see if you can realize more. Write about or, even better, draw a picture of what your roles looked like. Use pencil, pen, crayons, markers, chalk... whatever you want! You may want to use a specific memory or it could be an overall picture on what things were like for you in your family with parents, siblings, etc. in your role(s).





Many people believe that feelings of shame indicate that their worst fears, like not being good enough, are true. But if it hurts, its not your truth.

Brene Brown, PhD

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

HOW YOUR ROLES MAY PLAY OUT IN NEGATIVE OR LIMITING WAY IN YOUR ADULTHOOD

How do your roles from childhood show up in adulthood? Are you adhering to a certain role at work, in family or in relationships? What do your roles look like now? What negative aspects are you noticing that are showing up or have shown up in adulthood?

Review the examples listed in the chart above. Here are a couple examples of roles can negatively impact our relationships: CARETAKER/HERO may feel resentment because their over-arching 'rescuing' isn't being recognized like it was in childhood. REBEL can bring a contrary stance into relationship, incessantly proving that "no one will control me," battling trivial issues.

HOW YOU CAN YOU BALANCE YOUR ROLES TO BE HEALTHY AND EMPOWERING INSTEAD OF TOXIC OR LIMITING?

Describe gifts and strengths you can find in your roles from childhood? Review the examples listed in the chart above. How can you empower and leverage these gifts, while releasing the negative aspects and limitations of certain roles?