

## **Family Roles (Posted on the 16<sup>th</sup> of Feb 2022)**

I am posting this article to help families understand that a family works as a unit. **A family does not and cannot function as separate entities / individuals.** When as a family, you have one member with behavioural problems e.g., addiction, you are going to end up with people taking on certain roles within the family to be able to survive.

**Defence Mechanisms** are unconscious psychological strategies brought into play by various entities to cope with reality and to maintain self – image. Defence Mechanisms are used to hide any variety of thoughts or feelings: anger, fear, sadness, depression, greed, envy, competitiveness, love, passion, admiration, criticalness, dependency, selfishness, grandiosity, helplessness. The purpose of defence mechanisms is to protect the mind / ego / self from anxiety, social situations, and other situations where one cannot cope or function.

**LEARNED BEHAVIOUR** IS ACQUIRED BY CONDITIONING IN THE HOME. LEARNED BEHAVIOUR CANNOT BE UNDONE IN A SHORT TIME. IT MUST BE RECOGNISED AND THEN ALTERED. IN OTHER WORDS, AS WE LEARN, WE ALTER THE WAY WE PERCEIVE OUR ENVIRONMENT. WE ALTER THE WAY WE BEHAVE AND THE WAY WE REACT.



**WE PUT ON A MASK / WALL OF DEFENCE**

**The Peacemaker**



Whose main aim is to make everybody feel better and works very hard to do so. Focuses on the needs of others and neglects their own needs. Sensitive. Full of interest and understanding of others so much so that their own needs remain unaddressed. Say they are sorry even if it's not their fault. They cannot form their own opinions, they become people pleasers, they always blame themselves for everything. They always need acknowledgement.

**The Peacemaker's Mask and Wall of Defence is:**

"I am fine, I don't have any problems"

They fear and avoid conflict at all costs

They hide their problems behind the problems of others

When the peacemaker helps other people, that is where they get their satisfaction from. They receive acknowledgement for the good that they are doing, they feel good, and this feeling endorses their behaviour, and they continue.

The Peacemaker is usually co-dependent.

**Negative Emotions the Peacemaker Experiences**

Guilt, Hurt, Frustration and Fear

The peacemaker needs to understand that they **are not** responsible for everyone's happiness, they need to recognise themselves more, their emotional needs must be met and taken seriously. The peacemaker must learn or be given skills to deal with conflict in an appropriate way. The peacemaker must also learn to talk about their negative emotions.

They need to get rid of their false sense of guilt.

**The Over- Achiever**



The Over – Achiever likes to take on the role of others. The over achiever gives status to the family. The over achiever is extremely hard working. The over achiever lives external from him or herself. Money and prestige are the over achiever's primary motivator. **Their value is determined by financial reward, status, or prestige.** They set themselves standards that are almost impossible to achieve. They are always in conflict with themselves internally.

### **The Over-Achiever's Mask and Wall of Defence is as follows:**

Because of the way the over achiever behaves, they give the illusion that everything is ok with them, and that change is not needed. The over achiever sets for him/ herself impossible standards. They are socially isolated. They suffer from pride. The over achiever is extremely responsible. They are always in competition – unhealthy competition with themselves and others.

### **Negative Emotions the Overachiever Experiences**

Pain, Hurt, Anger, Fear, Guilt

The over achiever needs to be challenged to have some fun! They must learn to express negative emotions. The lie needs to be exposed – **they do not have to work so hard to have value.** The over achiever must learn to handle failure and disappointment. The over achiever must be taught problem solving skills.



## **The Quiet Child**

This is usually the second born child. Quiet and withdrawn, isolated, passive and is always inclined to stay in the background. They distance themselves from problems and do not talk about it. They do not believe that they deserve attention. The quiet child experiences intense emotions – loneliness, fear and anger and sometimes feel that they will never be able to achieve anything. He / she does not learn how to handle challenges and problems because they withdraw from them.

### **The Quiet Child's Mask and Wall of Defence**



Withdrawal, Quietness

Preoccupied with own thoughts and dreams

Live in a dream world of their own making, but their dream world can become reality for them

The quiet child does not allow people to get close to him / her.

The quiet child fears intimate relationships

### **Negative Emotions the Quiet Child Experiences**

Loneliness, Inability, Hurt and Anger



The Quiet Child must learn how to establish trust relationships, they should try and get out there more to restore their confidence, therapy will help to restore their body image or the way they think about themselves. The quiet child must work on communication and learn to speak up and speak out.

### **The Problem Child**



The problem child seeks attention with deviant behaviour  
They possess negative and destructive behaviour patterns

The problem child is a troublemaker

Always the “black sheep” of the family

**THIS IS ALL A CRY FOR HELP**

### **The Problem Child’s Mask and Wall of Defence**

Use of stimulants

Withdrawal and Isolation

Impulsiveness

Difficult to Understand

Rebellious

Angry

Moody

Gets into trouble with the law

### **Negative Emotions the Problem Child Experiences**

Loneliness

Anger

Fear

Rejection

Hurt and Emotional Pain



The problem child must be assisted to seek rehabilitation, to learn problem solving skills, to become more disciplined and to take more responsibility. The problem child usually needs to learn how to resolve conflict with others as well as with him/herself. The problem child must make amends and learn how to forgive. He or she must learn to express their emotions in a positive way.

### **The Young Adult**

This is the hero of the family, the child that everybody is proud of. This is the child that takes on the role of the parent/s and takes on all the family responsibilities himself. Highly organised and does not fit in with the group. The young adult becomes resentful towards parents – who are not taking care of him / her. They do not see themselves as part of the family.



### **The Young Adult's Mask and Wall of Defence**

Extremely Responsible

A performer and a perfectionist

Hard working and always in need of approval

They suffer negative emotions under pressure

They believe that they are the only ones who are right

Socially popular

Distrustful

### **Negative Emotions the Young Adult Experiences**

Loneliness, Confusion, Hurt, Inadequacy and Confusion

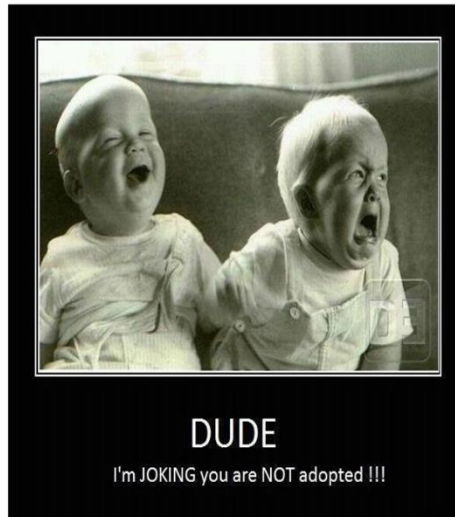


The Young Adult must learn to relax. The Young Adult must learn that negative emotional experiences do not make them weak and that they must develop coping mechanisms so that they can deal with these experiences. They must learn to handle problems as well as failures. The young adult must learn that their inherent value is not determined by other people

### **The Clown**

This is normally the youngest child. The Clown brings relief by clowning around and always has a good sense of humour. There is never a dull moment, and the clown always needs to do more funny stuff. Always well liked. Clowning takes the attention away from this person's problems. People often don't take them seriously.





### **The Clown's Mask and Wall of Defence**

What looks like a could not care less attitude? Humour

Will do anything for attention / Odd behaviour

Hides pain with outrageous behaviour

Does not acknowledge negative emotions

### **Negative Emotions that the Clown Experiences**

Cannot handle failure and pain

Loneliness

Insecurity

Confusion

Fearfulness

The clown must learn that it is not his/her responsibility to relieve household tension. The clown should get back down to reality & get some reality therapy because not everything is funny. Learn that there is a time and a place for humour. Adopt responsible behaviour and learn to manage emotions.





### **The Easy-Going Child or The Chameleon**

Because this child is easy going s/he does not get a lot of attention. Adaptable and lives from day to day. The Easy-Going child believes that each day may just bring a change in circumstances. S/he can handle intense tension and stress and internalise negative emotions.



### **The Easy – Going Child’s Mask and Wall of Defence**

To escape conflict, they agree with everything

Adaptable

Hides disappointment, disillusionment, and negative emotional experiences

Always helps when needed

Does not make waves or cause a scene

### **Negative Emotions the Easy – Going Child Experiences**

Disillusioned

Hurt

Rejected

Confused

Unhappy



The Easy-Going child should learn to restore his/her own identity and focus. The Easy – Going child must learn how to set boundaries. This person must learn positive stress relieving techniques and must recognise stress when it happens.

SHOULD YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS OR QUERIES ON THE ABOVE ~ PLEASE FEEL FREE TO CONTACT ME ON 083 878 0861