

SPARK 173

(Matrix Code: **SPARK173.00** for StartOver.xyz game.)

DISTINCTION: It could be that your adult ego-state is contaminated by your child ego-state.

NOTES: What does this mean, that “your adult ego-state is contaminated by your child ego-state”? (or contaminated by your parent ego-state, or your Gremlin ego-state...?)

Eric Berne explained the original distinctions on his *Ego States* thoughtmap in the 1960s for Transactional Analysis. What he detected is that we have parts. By now you have probably noticed that human beings have multiple psychological facets each with different attitudes, mannerisms, needs, etc. These are our ego-state identities. Having an assortment of identities that you can shift into in a flash is a handy survival tool for adapting to various circumstances, but can also entertain your friends, and help you win at the game of Charades! In Possibility Management the invitation is to make your identity-shifts conscious and volitional.

The first problem when trying to get conscious about shifting identities comes from the condition of being *identified*. When you are identified no other reality is perceivable other than the reality formatted by the identity you currently wear. This makes the concept of consciously shifting identity inconceivable.

The solution to this first problem is to maintain a split identity on purpose at all times – day and night, personally and professionally – by using a portion of your attention to pay attention to your attention. Then you can notice what you are noticing, the key to neutral self-observation. By now in your Possibility Management initiatory journey you have probably learned to observe yourself without judgment. Since the observer is located outside of your Box it is not affected by your Box’s identity shifts and easily notices when a shift happens. Self-observation helps you avoid being 100% identified with any particular identity you shift into, which is valuable because it establishes a basis for you to deal with the second problem...

The second problem with taking responsibility for shifting identities occurs when your parent, child, or Gremlin identity contaminates your adult identity. There are 3 common ways you might have mixed identities together at an early age as a survival tactic.

1. The strategy to contaminate your adult identity with your *child identity* might have occurred when, as a child, you noticed that the examples of adulthood you were shown – parents, teachers, neighbors, politicians, relatives – looked repulsive to you because these people were not having a very good time in comparison to the experiences you were having as a child. You saw adults having to work all the time, worry about money, cook the meals and wash up, take care of the house and kids, shout at each other, be scared or sad without anyone to console them, etc. As a result you might have made a vow to protect yourself from adulthood that goes something like this: “*Becoming adult looks horrible. I will never grow up.*”

To accomplish your vow you blended your *child identity* into your adult identity so you need never become purely adult. This way you maintained a backdoor through which you can escape into being childish. The result now is that when problems, conflicts, opportunities, or challenges arise your automatic response is to complain, blame, resent, pout, be a victim, manipulate, sulk, or “take your ball and go home,” naturally outing yourself from joining a team and creating effective results. Has this ever happened to you?

2. In comparison, if you mix your *parent identity* with your adult identity you get to avoid becoming an authority and remain unattackable. By deferring to an external authority you duplicate your parents’ neurosis, espousing strong opinions about what is right or wrong, how things have to be, what should and should not happen, etc.. These foreign opinions and beliefs strangle your free attention so you have no liberty to explore or evolve. Your payoff for mixing your parent identity into your adult identity is that you get to be inarguably right. However, the rules you hold also hold you. You can escape that prison through sneaking, lying, cheating, self-deception, or numbing yourself with alcohol or other sleep-inducing agents to the pain of failing to fulfill your self-assigned life mission. Does this remind you of anyone?

3. It could also be that you mixed your *Gremlin identity* into your adult identity. That easily happens if as a child you felt protected when you used your Gremlin’s ability to be tougher, nastier, ruder, cruder, less respectful, or more aggressive than the other kids or grown-ups. The idea of entering adulthood with your Gremlin sitting at your side rather than in front shielding you feels stupidly unprotected. The result is that whenever stressful situations threaten or an opportunity for vulnerability arises, a Gremlin-contaminated adult responds by stomping the bastards to smithereens without remorse, cussing, spitting, scratching, fighting, stealing, threatening to destroy everything, and plotting revenge. Know anyone like this?

The solution to the second problem that arises when trying to make shifting identities conscious – namely, unmixing your ego-state identities – is an experiment.

EXPERIMENTS:

SPARK173.01 And the experiment is a tough one... Distinguishing your adult identity from whatever combination of other identities it might be mixed with cannot be done by anyone but you. Your main tool will be to remain acutely aware of what it costs you to forfeit your access to adulthood and its doorway to the archetypal domains. If your adult identity is contaminated you cannot be adult so you cannot enjoy the archetypal qualities and experiences of your Being. By keeping that pain as a friend at your side it can alert you to not trusting any reaction you might be moved to deliver. Yes, just stop. Say nothing. Wait. Do not react. Stopping will cause a recoil that you can follow back to its source – which in every case will be the contamination element: the parental opinions and rules, the childhood neediness and fears, or the Gremlin shadow purposes. By delaying your reaction you see the contaminant, and then with slow and careful effort you can extract the contaminating elements and respond in pure adulthood, without criticism, without panic, and without Gremlin’s “*Ha-ha! I got you!*” grin. For a year you might be in relationship with people but remain in near silence. (It took me longer that that... but I’m slow...)

You can make it (if you try). Adulthood is worth it.