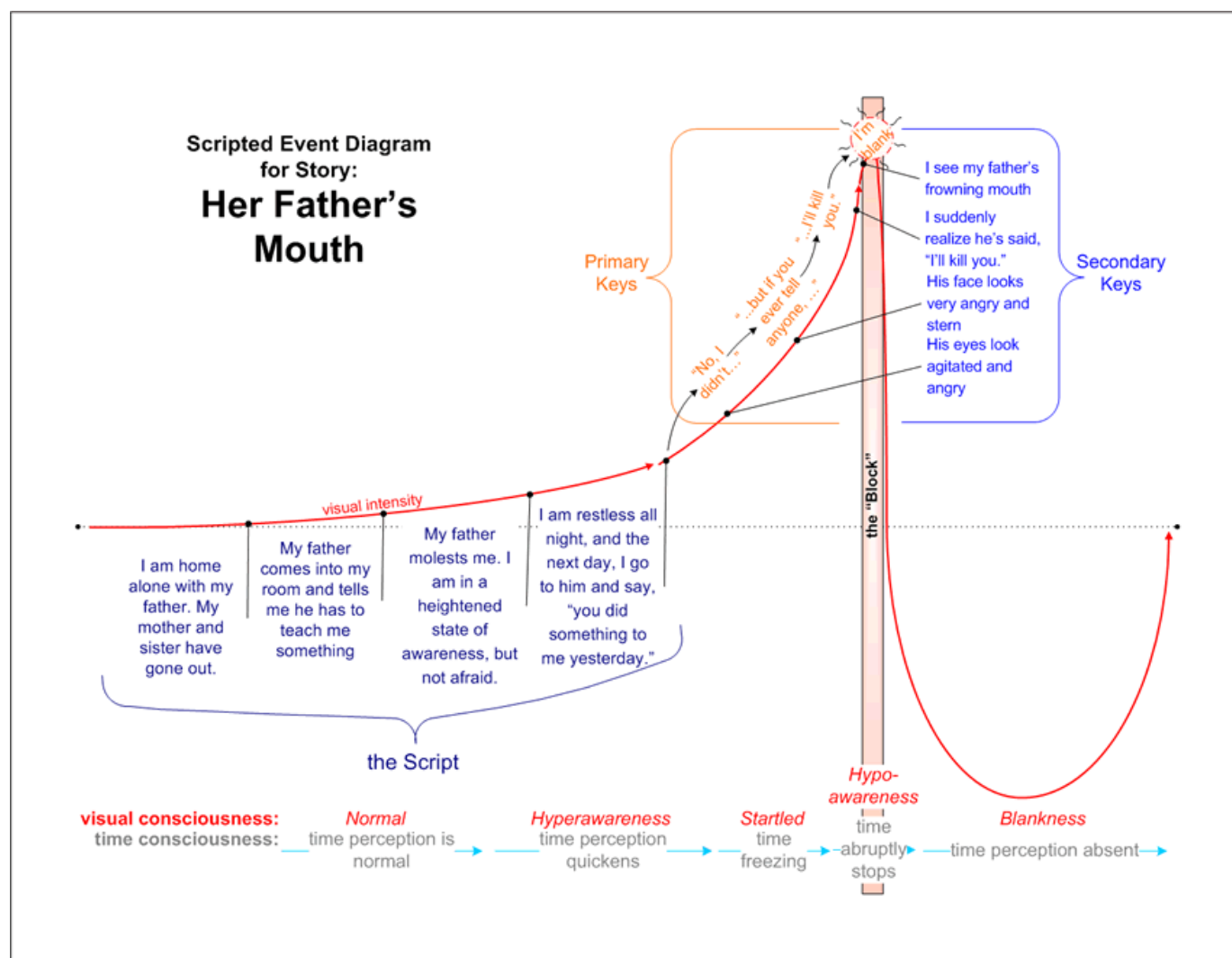


Emergence Home	Therapy - Healing	Learning - Teaching	Healthy Relationships	Weight Loss - Fitness	Addictions - Recovery	Love - Forgiveness	Human Nature
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Her Father's Mouth: Sexually Molested at 6 Wounded After the Assault



My story starts with me doing couple's therapy with two middle aged professionals. They had come to me because they fought a lot and had been fighting like this for the twenty plus years they had been married.

Previous therapy? Lots. Result? Mostly improved skills at doing damage control. Which was fine for the times they could keep it together enough to do what they'd learned. Which obviously wasn't often enough, hence, them being at my door asking for help.

Months into my work with them, on an evening wherein I was seeing only the wife, I decided to explore an area which had been confusing me. The wife, Carol, had told me she had been repeatedly molested by her father from age six through about age twelve. Yet both she and her husband denied having problems with their sex life. No complaints whatsoever. In fact, their sex life seemed to be one of the better areas in their marriage.

Back then I assumed, since the wife had been molested, that she must have been having problems but was simply unaware of them. However, like Debbie in the previous story, Carol was indeed reporting accurately. She did not have problems liking sex and in fact, really enjoyed it.

Can you imagine my confusion? I simply found this hard to believe, that a woman who had been repeatedly molested at a very young age could have emerged from having been molested unscathed in and around sex.

The truth: she had emerged unscathed. In and around sex, that is. How? Her wounds had occurred *after* the sex and therefore, were non-sexual in nature. More important, these non-sexual wounds turned out to be the root cause, at least for Carol, of her frequent fights with her husband.

One more thing before I tell you the story.

Please know that at the time of this story, I was in my first year of discoveries in and around Emergence. In truth, then, I was just beginning to understand the true nature of wounds and healing. My point?

At the time this story takes place, I still believed peoples' wounds were their symptoms and painful events (e.g., their rage or depression OR their incest or beatings). This belief, then, is what I was basing my misjudgments on, on the assumption that Carol had to have been wounded sexually but was just unaware of her wounds. Logical. But grossly untrue.

What was the truth then? That her wound or "BLock" as I now prefer to call it was "what is missing"; what she can not see in the event.

Please try to remember this concept in mind as we go forward. And at least allow for the possibility it might be true.

Now the story.

Part One: the Individual Session - Exploring Carol's Incest

I remember being uncomfortable as I asked Carol if we could explore the first time she her father had molested her. More than she was in fact. My assumption, again, was that she was out of touch with her injury. Again, this turned out to be untrue.

I remember Carol sitting in the chair closest to me, something many people who have been molested as children do not do. In fact, many do the very opposite. They sit in the chair farthest from me. Understandable.

Carol sat in seat closest to me. And was comfortable AND conscious. I know. I watch eyes very closely. And I watched hers throughout this session.

I remember as Carol began her story that I thought to myself how similar her story was to so many others I'd heard. She began by telling me she had been six at the time. Her mother had gone out leaving her home alone with her father.

Ugh. I hate picturing scenes like this, scenes in which children get hurt. Doing Emergence requires it, though, and so, as Carol went on, I did my best to picture everything Carol described.

Obviously emotional but within a normal range, she then continued by saying her father came into her room that day and told her, he needed to teach her something. He then proceeded to attempt to have intercourse with her.

At the time, Carol was six and small for her age. Her father was three hundred pounds. Even now, this is hard to write.

Afterwards, he simply left, leaving Carol very confused to be sure, this being her description not mine. She then told me about tossing and turning that night, unable to make sense out of what had happened.

She told me that the next day, still very confused, she went to her father and said to him, "You did something to me yesterday," to which, he responded with, "No I didn't. You must have imagined it."

It was in the next minute that Carol sustained her injury, the one which had been tormenting her in her marriage and the one which had been a pivotal piece of their having been unable to resolve their fights. But I was not to know the significance of what came next in this session. What happened next?

In the next moment, Carol's father told her, "... But if you ever tell anyone, I'll kill you!"

Was it this sentence which had injured her? Not quite. However, it certainly was what set her up to be injured, that's for sure.

So what was it? What injured Carol?

It was what happened next, the thing Carol could not witness and the thing which had happened in the instant immediately following this horrible sentence. Unfortunately, this session ended with neither of us realizing this and with me more confused than ever.

What had happened?

Part Two: the Couple's Session - the Actual BLock Emerges

I'm not sure exactly how many weeks later the couple's session I am about to tell you about took place. In reality, it does not matter. I had no way to predict what took place. Nor to even suspect this session would be in any way special at all.

I remember beginning. Both Carol and her husband had seated themselves across from me, and as usual, Carol had sat nearer to me. The session had then opened as many previous sessions had with what seemed to be a quite ordinary and innocuous discussion, something about sharing household duties in and around caring for the kids.

I remember first speaking with Carol that night, then a few minutes later, switching over to her husband. Still nothing of note. Suddenly, though, as Carol's husband and I continued to talk, we both noticed that Carol had at some point curled tightly up into her chair, feet off the ground, arms pulled to her chest, and eyes tightly shut.

What the heck! Nothing had happened, at least that's what we both thought at the time. Of course, something had happened. But neither of us had seen anything at all. Nor had Carol's husband said anything particularly provocative. Definitely, not.

We both moved our focus to Carol, of course, and I asked her, "What happened?" At first, she couldn't even speak at all, so I began to address her obvious terror by trying to make her feel safe.

I asked her if it was OK if her husband moved his chair directly in front of hers. OK. Then I asked her if it was OK if he held her hands. OK.

I then asked if it was OK for me to move to the seat directly next to her left side. OK. Still, Carol could not open her eyes nor tell us what had frightened her.

Fifteen long minutes passed during which I did everything I could imagine, all to no avail. Carol was still completely frozen in fear. I then tried focusing on simply having her try to open her eyes. Finally, after what seemed like a terribly long time, she blinked her eyes open and immediately shut them as she blurted out, "Oh my God, it's my father's mouth."

In that instant, I understood why Carol's having been incested had not wounded her ability to enjoy sex. Her injury had come after the incest, in the terrible instant at the end of her father's words; " ... But if you ever tell, I'll kill you." You see, at the end of this sentence, Carol's father made a mouth. And this facial expression had terrified her so horribly that it had literally frozen this instant inside her in such a way as to cause her to permanently associate the terror she felt with seeing this expression.

Why had this connection never surfaced before? Because she was so young and vulnerable at the time that she had literally and instantly gone into shock the instant her father's facial expression had appeared. This meant Carol experienced her father's expression the same way we experience an instant in which someone suddenly pushes us from behind: we experience a startling moment of blankness.

This, then is exactly what Carol had experienced in that instant. Afterwards, then, whenever she witnessed someone make a similar expression, she would again go into shock and experience nothing but the

blankness of shock for a moment.

An instant later, Carol would experience terrible rage. But because she had been blank for that first instant, she was never able to see the true nature of her rage and so, would logically attach her feelings to whomever and whatever was in front of her at the time, literally her husband for most of the previous twenty or so years.

Let me state this idea again.

Carol's BLock was her inability to consciously witness the expression her father had made at the end of that terrible sentence. Suddenly going into shock had prevented her from ever seeing this expression, something like a sudden shove from behind obscures the source of the shove.

Most important, though, Carol had married a man who frequently made the same expression, often in the middle of innocuous conversations. The result? They would fight and never realize what had provoked these fights. Why? Because nothing had happened to provoke these fights, nothing, that is, other than the charged for Carol facial expression.

Was this the whole story regarding their fights? Of course not. No couple has but one difficulty. But in the weeks and months which followed, I witnessed an incredible opening in Carol's ability to stay conscious during arguments, even during some pretty angry ones. In fact, I witnessed something even more remarkable in Carol: she somehow seemed to be able to find joy in the fact that she could now fight consciously.

This joy is the only proof of healing in which I believe, the joy which emerges in previously painful scenes.

And the incest?

No doubt, it was terribly wrong and never should have happened. Her father had been a deeply sick and disturbed man. Amazingly, though, Carol's incest had caused her little permanent *sexually* related damage and in fact, I subsequently found no significant wounds in her sexually at all, a fact I still find hard to believe even years later.

What makes me so certain then that what I have just told you is accurate? Many years of evidence as to what the actual nature of injury is: the actual nature of injury is, *the wound is what is missing, what you can not see, and not what you can see*. Thus, in Carol's case, I am certain her injury had been what had been BLocked in her, her ability to consciously witness her father's mouth, and the terrible pain she had associated to this expression so many years prior.

This page last updated on
January 2, 2005

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