

## Part Two

### PSYCHODRAMA FOR MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPISTS

This is for the benefit of persons already engaged in the practice of Marriage and Family therapy, but who have had only a passing acquaintance with psychodrama. My initial training was in clinical psychology, featuring a psychoanalytic orientation, with the expectation my practice would consist in group and individual psychotherapy. Seven years later I moved to St. Louis to serve as chief of the clinical psychology unit at St. Louis State Hospital, where I simultaneously encountered an active psychodrama program within the hospital, and within the community, under the aegis of the Pastoral Institute, a full program of couples counseling. Engaged in the practice of these two well developed methods at the same time, I naturally borrowed back and forth for the clients' sake. Over the years I've found psychodrama has offered marriage and family therapy a comprehensive method, flexible enough to cope with situations others have referred elsewhere because they don't quite fit what we think we need to do a good job.

The trouble is that those who've come to us have had to overcome enormous inertia to get this far, and are not likely to put forth the additional effort to go elsewhere, out of fear that somehow they may not be quite good enough, or deserving enough, to merit our services. Psychodrama works best as a method of group therapy, but I've never been without its supportive perspective and technique repertoire when working with individuals. When someone comes in alone for marriage counseling, I welcome them. Like any good marriage counselor, I say it works better when both persons come for it is their relationship which is at stake. More often than not, they'll say the spouse is not ready to do this, would I work with them individually? I was originally told to say, "Come back when your spouse agrees to participate," because we believed, more often than not, the spouse would finally give in, however unwillingly, and we'd be on our way. I'd like to see some research on this, but my experience has been that it is better for the relationship in the long run to go ahead, if only with one person.

I set forth the common policy marriage counselors have followed, and say I'll make an exception in your case, with the warning that working with one person of a couple often means that the person in treatment grows while the spouse remains the same, with divorce as the ultimate outcome. I hasten to add, it just as often happens that when the one in treatment grows, the spouse cannot remain the same without putting up considerable resistance. If the relationship has any hope at all, I would

expect the resistance to be overcome at that point. They'll come in as a couple, or one will adapt to the other, or the other will report for individual counseling himself -- elsewhere, probably. My point is that we render a service, rather than a disservice to those who come to us.

Therefore, here is couples minus one, where every example shows how we compensate for the absentee, thanks to the psychodrama method. Ideally I should submit several examples from my regular practice, but doing so requires background information, which threatens to compromise confidentiality. Doctor Moreno's solution was to convince people of the value of complete openness, and obtain written permission to use their real names in his published work. These were psychodrama sessions you can easily access in Psychodrama, Volume III.

I'm not a charismatic Doctor Moreno, and we're working in a different cultural era, so I doubt whether I can do that. Later on, when I've completed enough sessions and have the consent of the 'cured' couple, I may do so, disguising identifying detail to their satisfaction. In the meantime, I shall not attempt to convince you with the long view, but with the short intervention, when done in concert with other professionals. Persons in treatment at private psychiatric hospitals often have only a single psychodrama session. The spouse is never present at the psychodrama, and must be represented by someone else. It makes no difference whether the other is staff or another patient, for the director has the session under control. The only background information required is what comes out in the session itself, which is easy to disguise from persons who were not present.

To have one member of a couple in the hospital and the other out is a strain, under the best of circumstances. Albert Schweitzer did not permit it, so he had that advantage over us. Our reality is that the one outside offers all kind of pressures, including the belief the treatment is unnecessary and the spouse should stay at home and shape up, and the belief that the spouse is obviously sick and needs to be 'fixed.' That's a continuing problem for doctors and social workers. How refreshing it is to have families willing to come in for family therapy. They are a minority, except for our teen patients. But even in the latter case, there are special problems, like the teen who finds the therapist is not quite so supportive in family therapy, or that one cannot speak as freely or as frankly as they have been individually. In the hospital we work well with the family therapists in preparing teens for a full personal presentation there, or in picking up the pieces later when the family therapy session has been a disaster. Doing so in the psychodrama is of enormous help to the patient's peers, who face the very same kind of situations.

Many of the examples included here from the hospital setting show a couple's situation is disarray, which we know we must treat, for even if we stabilize the individual inside, when they get outside we may have to do it all over again unless our therapy takes into account the significant relationships. In a few instances the couples' relationships are intact, and are workable. Again and again I've been impressed with the spousal support some of our patients continue to enjoy. Some very unlikely persons have proved to be the Rock of Gibraltar with the spouse who uses the hospital like a revolving door. I expect this to happen even more with our current unenlightened policies of symptom relief band aids rather than going to the heart of the matter. With their accounting on a yearly basis, they've yet to discover how cost ineffective their assumptions are---to say nothing of a therapeutic disaster.

A couple's problems may or may not have precipitated admission, but one way or another, they are always a factor. The absent spouse offers a therapeutic challenge. Couples here are in transition. They move forward or they dissolve. It is our task to assist.

As any college student who has taken abnormal psychology knows, the difference between normal and abnormal has been greatly exaggerated. The advantage of examples from a hospital population is that what we find has been written large, as if for the benefit of those among us who are still learning. I give you this book with every confidence that, whatever of psychodrama you glean, your practice and effectiveness will be enriched. Who knows, you may decide you want to be a director too; but if not, I'm sure you'll be a better therapist than you were before---maybe even a better person. The more important director input below is in italics, and reinforced in the comments which follow.

**15. GRACE, age 40, The Bitchy Wife and the Silent Husband, (typical male and female complaints):** Inasmuch as every reader has seen this combination close at hand, it provides us with a convenient starting place, more for situations that gradually work themselves out than those that cannot be repaired. Grace described herself as tired and a little anxious. If chosen protagonist she'd work on her low self-esteem, and being rejected, "like not being picked (as auxiliary) in psychodrama." She'd also work on her relationship with her husband. He says she is insensitive and domineering. She says he is a passive-aggressive hypochondriac. "Rather than put his sense of being in control at risk, he withholds sex," she said.

1) She took the role reversed position as her husband. We learned that

he stands 5'8", is 'on the pudgy side,' has brown hair, 'congenital' moustache and beard, wears glasses and is 44 years old. He has a degree in biology and works at a local drug factory. They met at Stanford, where she was an undergraduate junior and he was a graduate student. They've been married 13 years and have children, a girl 7 and a boy 5. Father is a bit upset with his son's having 'failed' the Gesell and remaining in 'developmental' kindergarten. The daughter is especially bright, testing at the fourth grade level already. They don't have 'fun.' They're too busy "with the kids, house, garden and jobs." He is an only child, and comes from Oregon. He wants to go back to graduate school, with a view to becoming a statistician. He said, "My wife has been in school ever since I've known her, but my time is coming." I noted that Grace became sadder and sadder as she took his role. I asked, *Is this a relationship you want to keep?* She said that she did.

Therefore I asked for that moment *when they became special to each other.* They were in Portland and she had attended a meeting. He had walked in and she could have sworn he had a girlfriend, because he kept asking for a ride to Port Angeles for the weekend. He did not get one, but his parents live there, and he's still very tied to them. That Friday, they had gone to the movies on campus. I asked her to tell him why she finds it special being with him and she became quiet, so I asked her to reverse roles with her husband. As her husband, I asked him to tell her why she is special. He said, "Because you are the Mother of my children. You're fun and have a good sense of humor, and you go shopping without spending a lot of money." I reversed her back to herself and she said, "You will always be my cute little Nickie. You appreciate my interests and humor. You are a good Father to our children. And you garden with me and always help me and stay with me and support me no matter what happens." They embraced.

2) I asked her what was uppermost on her mind to bring her to the present difficulty. After some thought, she came up with a scene in the mall parking lot last Saturday. They have a light blue Dodge. They were going to the shopping center with the children to get their haircut. She had asked her husband before she left the hospital to call and find out how late they are open to. When she arrived home, no one had called. She called and found out the barber shop closes earlier than she had expected. When they arrived at the barber shop it had closed. Grace said, "I want to get some things at the hobby shop." Her husband said, "what do you mean? I didn't plan on going there. I came here to have the children get their haircuts. I have my own things to do." Grace replied, "I have some projects at the hospital and they don't have the

ribbon I need; I want to finish the projects." Her husband persisted, "if you wanted to go, why didn't you tell me? You should have told me, so I would know." Grace explained, "I was planning on going to the hobby shop while you were with the kids getting their haircuts. That way it wouldn't have taken extra time." He says with a great sigh, "well alright, hurry up." Grace says to the group, "I don't like hurrying for things and I don't like making appointments for everything." She did go to the hobby shop and when she was finished it was around 4 p.m. Next to the hobby shop was her favorite restaurant. She had told her husband that she was not planning on cooking dinner during this pass. She would pick up chicken wings or something.

Grace reluctantly asks, "Can we go to the Hickory Bar-b-que?" He says, "Absolutely not. We can't afford that. It's gonna cost \$30 dollars or more (he walks back to the car)." Grace in protest, sits on the curb. Their children are playing on the island in the parking lot. Her daughter walks over to her Father and says, "Come on Daddy, Mommy wants to talk to you," as she pulls him by the arm. He finally agrees to have dinner there, but insists they can't afford it.

3) I have them sit down and face each other and her husband says, "you know I can't eat there." She says, "good, it'll cost even less. Go get some food you can eat and bring it in." He went into the restaurant and before he ate anything, he asked the owner and the waitress what everything was made of. During dinner Grace said, "you look like you are enjoying those ribs." He responds, "yeah, they'll probably make me sick." After dinner Grace takes the bill and was relieved that it was less than 25 dollars. He husband yells, "I told you we couldn't afford this!" Grace says, "we have enough here for another 2 meals and the one we just had."

As they go out of the restaurant, her husband says, "see, you always get your way. It's never what I want to do." Grace asks, "why don't you tell me what you want? I'm supposed to read your mind. Besides the kids wanted what I wanted to do. I'm not programming them!" I said, "he won't hear this. He was an only child. His parents probably anticipated his every need and he wants you to do the same. Tell him about that." After telling him, her husband says, "you leave my mother out of this How does my Mom have to do with you being so selfish?" Grace replied, "It has a lot to do with what you expect of me." He says, "you're the one who's sick and in the hospital." Grace says, "you're hopeless." I noted that Grace was smiling when she said that, but I can imagine how hurt she must feel. I said the smiling takes him off the hook, so I asked

her to tell her husband how it hurt her.

Grace says, "this is our problem. You act like you're fine and 'they' need to work on me more to get along with you. Let's take care of both of us. I'm not coming back if this continues. Everything is my fault; none is yours." Her husband admits, "Maybe there could be some small thing that I could change---possibly. You're insensitive to my needs, domineering and controlling."

Grace replies, "no, I'm not. You think you need so much. In what way do I not meet your needs?" He says, "You gave me a Walkman and you took it to the hospital with you." She says, "I'll buy you one." He says, "We can't afford that." Grace says, "What's the real reason?" Her husband finds it difficult to talk and Grace gets more and more frustrated and says, "I can't read your mind. You have to talk and tell me what you're thinking."

Her husband replies, "I'm conditioned by you. I'm preparing for the kill. I'm expecting you to strike, because you always do. It's your fault I keep this guard around me. I wasn't like this before." Grace says, "I wasn't like this either. It's frustrating living with you and trying to communicate when you don't talk. You say I'm trying to pull my will over everything." He agrees saying, "You always take charge."

Grace continues, "You don't risk. You don't put anything out on the table. Talk to me. Tell me how you are feeling. When you are silent, I feel rejected. I feel like you don't care enough; you focus too much on yourself. What would it take to get you to talk?" "I don't know," he responds, much to Grace's frustration.

4) I asked Grace whether they are able to talk about sex. In the role of her husband, she replied, "She wants it every week!" His need is not so great. She holds back because she doesn't want to hurt his feelings. I told her we didn't have to stage anything risqué, only put the matter into words, so as herself she addressed him: "Nickie, we have to have sex more often.." "I'd like to also," he said. "So why don't you?" she asked. "I always have to take the initiative." He requires considerable warm-up, likes things to be planned, and know that they are coming, so that he can work it into his schedule somehow. He said to her: "We always have to do it when you want to. I do it on your schedule. It's another way you control me. Why is sex so important to you?" She laughed, "I like it. I like being close with you, loving and caring. Not all these power struggles." The challenge seemed to be fitting the sex in somehow. I suggested a trade off: "I'll do less if you'll do less" kind of thing. Grace thought of all the things she had to do, but noted that it was less than

before. I suggested that if they took more time out for a social life that could lead to more sexual interest. The husband is willing to go in for couples therapy. They've done it before.

5) I shifted the focus of the psychodrama away from the marriage to the pain of Grace's childhood. As a kid she moved around a lot because of her father's job. This meant she was always going to a different school, and arriving on the scene to find everyone already in cliques, with no room for anybody new. I asked and we learned that she was larger than most of her peers and brighter, which made her stand out from the others in ways they couldn't identify with. I asked whether she ever fought back in the face of the name calling...etc., and she said that she got hurt, not angry. In adulthood this carried over to her relationships with neighbors. She feels different from them, is hesitant to approach, for she is so vulnerable to rejection. I suggested they might think she was aloof and thinks she's better than them. She said, "I'm never invited in and I don't ask to be in." Without reassurance she holds back, and holding back puts her at a greater distance.

6) Our concluding scene was *intrapsychic*. *She began by giving her double-as-herself some advice.* "Don't be so hard on yourself," she began. "It's done now." She flashed upon a medical situation where she felt responsible for not having made the best decision. The patient didn't die, but did suffer a severe reversal. We felt she'd done the best one could do under the circumstances. At some level she must recognize that. Grace went on to say: "I don't feel good enough. No one wants to talk to me." She began to cry. We noted how very young she felt as the child part of Grace. I moved her over to the adult role and said, "If you found your child like this, what would you do?" She embraced the double (as her rejected child self). I acknowledged the tears flowing, saying, "Tell little Grace what the tears are saying to her." The adult Grace said, "You're valuable. There's no one else in the world like you. Who cares if you're not like everybody else! You're special. You mean a lot to me. I'll be there for you." As the embrace came apart I called for a role reversal, and had Grace listen to all the good things she could say to herself, topped off by another hug and tears.

COMMENT: Here we have a more extreme example of a widespread couple phenomenon, the silent husband and the articulate wife. It is a battle for control, leaving the participants feeling rejected and angry. The first three scenes set forth the problem. The fourth scene gives the picture depth and intensity through a frank exploration of differences in sexual appetite. We're struck with how driven they are with so little fun

in their lives. Also the husband's fear of financial hardship, and his strong attachment to parental figures. Grace has formed a bond with the children, who have allied with her in dealing with the difficult dad. We note that the husband is willing to make use of marriage counseling, which bodes well for their future together. In looking at particulars one is inclined to sympathize with the wife, for in her view he presents himself as a spoiled child, but the director wisely avoids reinforcing any such perception, for he has noticed how desperate are her needs. The very fact of her hospitalization is another, often overlooked clue. The closure process begins with the fifth scene, when the director seeks for clues in Grace's childhood which may have contributed to her feelings of isolation. That as a child she was larger and brighter than most of the others leads to their teasing her beyond her ability to absorb the punishment. Her very vulnerability makes her an obvious target. We rely on *surplus reality techniques, that is, encouraging the use of her imagination in stripping away the limits which have impeded solutions.* We give her inner processing structure and focus through having her advise her double. This gives her a vehicle for offering herself support, and allows her to do for herself what she so often does for others, that is, be generous. We uncovered a specific example of the unreasonable demands she has placed up herself, and how she collects evidence contributing to a self-portrait of inadequacy. *Her tears brought out her child self. By setting up an interaction between her responsible adult and her needy child, we were able to get them to work together instead of opposing one another.* Now the necessary help is near instead of in the hands of others. The fact that this reduces the demands on her husband, for example, means that he is freer to meet his own needs and hers. Note that all this has been done in the absence of her husband at the psychodrama. She is learning how to make use of him as a resource even when he's not there, because he is present within her all along and available when not construed as the opposition.

#### 16. HANK, age 35 Moving Toward Marriage Renewal.

Hank described himself as worried and concerned. Even though this was only his second psychodrama, by a process of elimination he emerged as first protagonist today, with the goal of working on his relationship with his wife. He chose the female peer scheduled to be the second protagonist today to play the role of the wife, because she said it sounded a lot like her situation too.

1) She is 31, tall, of medium build. They have been married two years but have no children. He was not previously married but she has been

married twice, with each marriage lasting two years. With only this much information before us, I would anticipate there would be some anxiety on the wife's part that history might repeat itself. The wife's father lives nearby, and has been drinking and acting-out. The protagonist feels that he needs to stop her father from acting-out. *"Show us a scene," I said. He said this one is recurrent:*

No sooner had Hank arrived home from work than the wife asked him what he'd planned for the evening. "Nothing," he replied. He'd hoped to sit around and relax. Whereupon she came forth with a list of activities which would take up the whole evening. "We have to do this, and that, and this," to which Hank replied: "Why?" Immediately his wife becomes defensive: "What do you mean by 'why?'" He responded: "I want to relax sometimes, but you don't accept that. You go stomping around without me." She claimed not to know what he meant. He went on to say he didn't feel relaxed, that he felt they were having an argument. Then he admitted he was not quite so frank with her. *He was saying now what he wished he'd have said then. We were already into surplus reality.*

2) I took him to an imaginary scene with he and his wife facing one another, discussing the relationship as they have never done before. He told her: "We're running away from ourselves. We don't take time out to enjoy life. You fill your life with so much activity, and we end up going our separate ways." I reversed him into her role and asked for the best answer she'd given him: It was "I'm working on it. I guess it's easier to blame you for my problems." I interrupted the scene to ask him-as-her, "How are you working on it?" "I'm trying to deal with the people who annoy me," 'she' said. She admitted that it scared her that he came to the hospital, and she's 'glad and happy' he's coming home this Friday. She was angry that they hadn't gone on vacation, but they could do that later. With the protagonist back in his own role, I directed him to tell her what you want from her. He told her: "I want understanding, patience, tenderness, serenity." I asked him *what can you do to call forth this kind of behavior from her?* He continued: "I do love you. I won't leave you." "How can I be sure?" she asked. (I assume this feeling is based on her two failed marriages). "You can't," Hank granted with a sigh. I asked Hank *What are you prepared to do to reassure her?* He replied, "Almost anything: work, talk, understand, learn, let go of my issues, make new friends on my own." *The auxiliary playing the wife asked, "Can you accept me as I am?"*

Hank admitted he had trouble accepting all the physical activity, for he feels the emotional bond is lacking. He believes she is controlling, rigid

and obsessive. I directed him to say specifically what you want from her: "I want to come home and relax. The house doesn't have to be spotless. You don't have to take care of your parents. We have to learn to live freer." I reversed him into his wife's role, and interpreted to 'her': *"Your father's failing health is very much on your mind. If he were to die, you'd feel deserted."* The protagonist recognized from the role reversed position as his wife that she was scared of losing her dad. Also she was burdened in feeling fully responsible, for she gets no help from her siblings. I asked 'her' what she wants from him. "Have you asked him for his help?" Back as himself Hank explained: "I'm willing to be there for you, but I can't handle the blaming and complaining. I need you to learn to accept your feelings and discuss them in a controlled manner."

*With a curtain temporarily drawn between them,* I suggested to Hank he remind himself not to take it personally when she's upset. He thought she was afraid things wouldn't work out and that he'd leave her. *I lifted the curtain,* and he reassured her: "I won't leave you. I'm still here, but you're pushing me away." "No I'm not," 'she' said, and admitted that it was hard for her to trust. I asked him whether there was something positive he could offer her so she wouldn't feel bored and would feel reassured. *"What specifically might you propose?"* "Let's go take care of the yard, plant shrubs...etc., so we can have good things to look at in the future." "What's there for me to do?" she asked.

3) *I moved them ahead in time.* They had finished planting the trees. Hank said to her: "I enjoyed your working with me today. I liked your company." She said, "But I didn't get any of my work done." "I'll help you tomorrow," he replied. "I have to go to a meeting," she said. He said: "The next day then." "No, you won't," she objected. *"Wait and see. If I forget, remind me," he replied.* Cut scene.

4) I brought up his dealing with her anxiety over the upcoming loss of her father. Hank admitted feeling abandoned by her busy-ness. "When she's asleep," he said, "I feel alone." Hank has three older brothers, but inasmuch as he's a lot younger than the brother nearest to his age, it's almost as if he were an only child. That brother's wife and Hank don't get along, and he's been out of Hank's life since the brother's marriage. I asked *whether there were any earlier experiences of feeling left out.* He said his father left him out, because father was depressed. I put him in the reverse role position as his father, and interviewed him.

*"What was your age when you became aware of Dad's distance?"* I asked. He put his own age at eight, and Dad correspondingly younger than he now is. *"What happened when Hank was eight?"* I asked. We learned

that grandmother died. Dad failed to recognize that this saddened Hank too. With Hank in his eight year old role, I suggested *Avail yourself of your present adult wisdom as the eight year old speaking with his father*: "Tell me what happened," he asked his father. As father, he replied: "I miss her," he said. Back as Hank, he said, "I miss her too." I directed Hank to *tell him what you wanted from him*. "Why didn't you explain what was happening, that I was going to lose her? I didn't understand what death was all about. I was horrified with nightmares. You treated me like a little adult."

I told him to *be your present age speaking with father today*: "What would you like from your father now?" "Respect," he replied. I put him into father's role, saying, "Be your father, *show us how his disrespect comes through to you*." As father he said to Hank: "You never achieve anything. When are you going to accomplish something?" As Hank he said, "When I did do something, you couldn't say anything. I need validation from you." He turned to the director and said, "Sometimes I'm envious of my wife's closeness with her father. They're closer than my father and I are." "What would be the best reply you could get from Dad?" I asked. "A hug," he whispered. The auxiliary as father obliged.

In the sharing one peer said her husband was just like his father, and another peer told him she had exactly the same trouble with her father. She was never good enough to suit him. Probably the connection between the two fathers seen here will, if validated by other therapists as contributory to the patient's stress, require more reinforcement.

COMMENT: This psychodrama shows how Hank's relationship with his father was interfering with his relationship with his wife. The road forward required acknowledging the situation and resolving it within the psychodrama. Clearing the way allows the healing process to take hold. The psychodrama got us into the right ballpark. Once there any therapist can see what needs to be done. Our method kept us in the emotional atmosphere where Hank worked through the old issue causing their difficulty today without his wife's even being there. The portion in italics shows what we do toward getting the job done.

**17. IVES, age 38. Mother's impact on her son's marriage, OR When suicide fails:** Ives described himself as, "tentative and turbulent." He stated he wasn't sure how he felt about working on his issues, but did want to try. He volunteered to be protagonist during the group warm-up.

Ives was ready to work on his relationship with his mother and how that

has affected his relationship with his current girl friend.

1) We began with a *reverse role interview with the protagonist as his mother*. We learned she is 69 years old, widowed at 57 and then remarried four years later. She is 5'2", weighs about 145 lbs., and has three sons of which Ives is the youngest. We enacted a scene which occurred two years ago in mother's living room. She asked Ives if the doctor had told him what was wrong with him. Ives said, "It was how I perceived that I was raised." Mother responded, "Did you ever think that you had a persecution complex?" Ives answered, "No, I didn't think that." The director instructed Ives to *tell your stage mother what you really think, because you were never allowed to do so in the past*. Ives began, "You use verbal tongue lashings. I never had an opinion. I was a non-existent person. I became a parent-clone and not an individual, and that is why I rebelled." The director asked *When did you first arrive at this impression? What happened then?*

2) Ives said he was five at the time. This took place in the bedroom which Ives shared with his older brother. Ives asked his brother what he was reading. The brother violently pushed him away and Ives left the room despondent, comparing his brother's behavior with his mother's verbal abuse. The director *asked for the protagonist's soliloquy*.

"Why can't I look at the book, I understand that he was abused too, but why can't we group together." In the present he said, "Now I know that you went through the same "shit" I did, but you beat the hell out of me. You knew what you were doing. I want you to acknowledge you did it. It wasn't normal. You never imagined how I felt."

His brother replied, "I'm sorry, I was a bad kid, I was angry and I needed to take it out on someone. You were my dog to kick. Ives continued, "I have lived my life without two brothers and a mom. You never listen to me when I speak. Everything is a joke to you. You don't have to laugh with me, you can cry. From now on we can talk like men." I called for a scene showing Ives' interactions with his mother.

3) Ives was a freshman in college and had just received his grades a week prior to this day. He was asleep when his mother came bursting into the room shouting, "My friend's son got a 4.0, what do you make of that?" Ives thought to himself, "Fuck you," but he said to his mother, "You used to say it didn't matter what others did. I went to school to get away from you."

4) The director set up an imaginary scene between Ives and his mother. He began, "I have asked you to try to stop nitpicking. Can't you let me

live, I'm never good enough for you, I don't feel love or support from you. If nothing is done your way you will blow up. When it comes to women, I'm looking for a mother. I never had the fulfillment of having a mother, and that sucks." With Ives in the reverse role as his mother, the director *asked for her best possible response*. Mother said, "I raised you the best way I knew how. I was too stringent and I'm sorry. Can we work on the relationship now?" Ives replied, "The reality is if you don't change, you've lost a son."

5) We started with a reverse role interview with Ives' girlfriend. She is 40 years old, pregnant with her first child, which is due in four months. It was a Saturday afternoon when she and Ives were retrieving a rope from the attic, with which Ives had threatened to hang himself in the past. On the way up they found a ball of string and his girlfriend made a joke about similarities between the rope and the string. Ives did not find this funny at all and accused her of being insensitive about what he was going through. He asked her to take responsibility for what she says. "Doesn't it bother you that I was looking for the rope to hang myself?" As it turned out his girlfriend did not know of his intentions, but she had checked on him before when he'd expressed suicidal ideas. The auxiliary expressed this as if it were her belief, that Ives was removing the rope in resisting temptation, and so she told him it was a positive first step. *This is an example of reframing, turning a negative into a positive by altering the context.*

6) *We referred to a previous suicide attempt when Ives was only 19, long ago. We enacted the fight with his girlfriend back then, and had him express his isolation in a soliloquy.* Then he took a vacuum cleaner hose, which he attached to the tailpipe of his car and inserted the other end into the vehicle's back window. *We followed a mirror technique, whereby a double plays the role of Ives in the car, while Ives stands outside the scene as an observer.* His last thought was "life sucks, I have nobody." *We reconstructed the scene to imagine that the suicide attempt had succeeded.* His parents were called to come to the morgue to identify the body. The double remained in the role of the dead Ives. But Ives, in the reverse role position as his mother who identified his body and cried, "Oh, God, my baby is dead." remarked out of role *as an aside*, "She played a great deceased son's mother's role," implying those would not have been her real feelings. In his anger he discounted her pain, yet at the same time finding satisfaction in imagining her suffering. But the director's goal was to have Ives realize that his suicide was not going to affect his mother as much as he'd imagined it would. It would hardly serve as an

adequate motive for revenge. After a pause, Ives told us he wanted to escape more than anything else.

7) We followed up with *the psychodramatic baby, here as a future projection of the now unborn child of his girlfriend, hopefully one day to be his son, who will be called Jack, age 10.* Ives expects they'll have a great relationship talking about sports. He said, "I'm glad that we talk and I always want you to feel good about yourself. I will always love you." Jack replied, "Thanks dad. That is great."

8) The session ended with an immediate *future scene, to take place the next time Ives speaks with his girl friend, telling her what went on in his psychodrama* and its implication for the kind of person he is coming to be. Ives shows he is aware that her human qualities make up for the deficiencies in his experience with his natural mother, and that she presents an ideal mother figure for the upcoming son with whom he is already identified. He expects to be a responsible father-figure for the boy, and this duty as well as his love and loyalty to her excludes any further consideration of suicide, no matter how great a depression were ever to come his way. He is fully and firmly committed to their relationship with each other. Likewise, she is with him for life.

Sharing followed. Several persons present had made suicide attempts or were close to someone else who had. This part of the session served to underscore the futility of suicidal behavior, and promised to reinforce a barrier against considering the possibility once again. A few had altercations with siblings, which had been worked through, making room for more mature relationships.

COMMENT: This psychodrama had the merit of bringing the protagonist to terms with his nuclear family relationships, and putting that past behind him. Now he is free to enjoy his current and upcoming relationships. With the security they provide, he gains an edge over suicidal tendencies. The protagonist's girl friend is quite a bit older than he is, but that did not emerge as an issue, particularly in that Ives consciously accepts what that difference contributes to their relationship. Is there any reason to assume that an older woman-younger man combination are any more at risk than the older man-younger woman combination? This couple choose not to allow cultural expectations to have an adverse influence on their better judgment?

A word on technique: Using the **mirror** rather than have the protagonist play that part of the scene himself eliminates the danger of practice

effects. Once having done that we gave him the chance to undo what he did before. No danger of practice effect there, except in the positive sense which automatically excludes the negative outcome to be avoided.

The psychodramatic baby is a self figure, and although many protagonists are unaware of the connection at the outset, most spontaneously come to that perception in the course of the scene. If they don't we tell them. If they're not ready for it, the interpretation won't sink in, at least not this time around.

**18. LORI, age 17. Cool it and see:** Lori characterized herself as 'jovial and anxious.' (She told her peers, when they asked, that she likes using words like jovial rather than ordinary words like 'nice.')

She anticipates discharge tomorrow, and she hasn't been protagonist previously, but she doesn't know what she'd work on, she said. *The director asked what brought her to our hospital.* She said that she'd overdosed because of her ex-fiance. She was to have been first of two protagonists, but we stayed with her the whole session.

1) We began with Lori in the role reversed position as her ex-fiance, from which we learned that he is 20, tall, with brown hair and eyes. We'll call him 'Van.' He was dealing drugs, got a car, and drank a lot. He'd dropped out of high school but he passed with a GED. He has a 'cool' attitude, can control himself, and is sensitive. We asked for a typical sentence of his: Van told her "I never want to lose you. I love you." Lori told the director she doesn't know whether she wants to keep the relationship. "I have a wall," she said. "I can't trust him."

The director asked her *when things started to go bad.* At first she didn't remember, and then she selected a precise date: June 6 of this year. He'd taken her home and they were there in the parking lot. He was in the driver's seat and she was beside him on the passenger side. He'd been drinking. It bothers Lori that he drinks and drives. She told him: "I got to go. I won't be seeing you again." He shot back at her: "You got 'Ed.' You can 'screw' him." "Why should I?" she replied. "I'm still a virgin. I want you." "Come on Lori," he came back in (mock?) disbelief. The director asked Lori what bothers her about the ex-fiance, and she replied, "He's going with 'Betty' and she's a whore." She told him directly: "I'm way pissed off because you have. I don't want you with her. She may have AIDS." He replied, "I'm not 'screwing' her. If I did it would be great." Lori came back with "So you're saying that I'm not good enough." She got out of the car, swore at him, slammed the door,

and walked off. She explained to the director: "I felt like he didn't care about me. I wanted to go to a regular hospital, and maybe he'd come back to me. Now I don't want to go back to him, because I'm afraid he'll hurt me."

2) I set up an imaginary scene between Lori and Van, the ex-fiance. She was given the opportunity to say anything at all she wanted to say to him. She told him: "I was hurt. I wanted to see if you cared for me. If I'd taken just one more pill I'd be dead. We treated each other like shit, when we were mad at each other. How would you feel, Van, if someone had treated you the way you treated me? I wish you 'could be on the receiving end of what you do.' How would you feel?" she asked him. Van replied: "I'd be sad. I love you. You're one of a kind." Lori reminded him that there are a lot of guys who want to go out with her, but the implication was that all they wanted was sex, whereas "you, Van, like me for who I am." "I treat you like a piece of gold," he said. She told the director, "When he talks like that to me, I start feeling I love him, but then I hate the SOB. too."

The director set up *two chairs to acknowledge Lori's ambivalence.* One was the love chair and the other the hate chair. When she was feeling hurt she was to sit in the love chair, and when she was angry she was to sit in the hate chair. This helped clarify and separate out the various feelings. From the love chair she said: "I need you," but from the other chair she said: "You're a prick. I hate you. I wish you were in my shoes so you would know how I'm feeling, you low-life SOB." The director called for a role reversal. As him she said: "I've got you wrapped around my finger, and I can do whatever I want behind your back." With the next role reversal she went back to the love chair as herself, and said: "I feel that all you ever wanted was my body." Back as him, she had Van say: "I love you to death. You're different from all the other girls." She told him she was confused. He'd told her she wasn't especially attractive and now he was saying she is.

She explained to the director that they don't share feelings. "He never tells me how he's feeling. When he ignores me, I ignore him. In the past I've always kept things in. I've opened up more here in the hospital. But my friends get after me about this relationship. The director proposed their *alternately playing both scenarios, staying with him vs letting him go.*

3) We began with the possibility of keeping the relationship. I directed her to tell him what she needs from him. She told him: "We need to spend more time with each other. No more mind games. Be there with one another." Next she let him know what she is willing to give to him. "I am

willing to give everything back, including trust and honesty." I reversed her into the Van role for his reply. 'Van' asked: "How am I supposed to believe you?" She replied that she'd gotten help. "I know how to control my behavior," she said. "I can tell you how I really feel. I can say it without getting pissed off." As him she said, "If you love me you'll trust me." 'He' admitted to the director he's scared of her hurting him and leaving him, and being lied to." Lori told him. "I can give. Let's take a chance."

4) Then we played out the other possibility. 'Van' said to her, "No way. I'm leaving you. I've had it." She replied, "Fine!" She told the director how he goes over to her girl friend's house asking whether Lori ever talks about him, and telling her how much he loves her. Lori said that last year she'd told him she changed when she hadn't. She'd been here three months without progress, but this time she is willing to talk. She asked him: "What do I have to do for you to trust me again?" Then we learned that she'd gotten back together with him since she came here, but he broke it off again because of Sonia. "I wish you'd make up your mind," she said to him. "We wouldn't have all this trouble if you'd start talking and trusting me." The director said, "So what do you propose?" Lori said, "I want to tell Van to cool it a bit, but let's stay in the relationship and see how it goes." Those present liked that solution, which they sealed with an embrace. Sharing followed.

COMMENT: We allowed the fact that her insurance had run out and that she was up for discharge influence the conduct of this session more than we should have. Our general policy is not to open up anything we can't close down when a person is about to go home. But on the other hand, how often does a person get to be protagonist? It may be our only opportunity to make a few points that should be made. Of course we are not the only ones treating the protagonist, but that suggests the risk that we might function as bystanders each assuming that another therapist is going to do what we'd rather not get into. Here's what worries me. We have in effect encouraged the relationship with the ex-fiance to deepen, when it may not be in her long term interest. Of course, it may collapse of its own weight, but we can't afford to count on that. Specifically, I feel we didn't take the worst case scenario far enough, in the light of what brought her into the hospital in the first place. We failed to ask what Van had done which drove Lori to overdose, and what would be different now. In particular, we didn't explore his reaction to what she'd done, or how he may have contributed to her desperate behavior. Or why was she so desperate that she was willing to throw away all that life was offering her for the sake of anger, or revenge, or

self-hate? What made her so vulnerable?

Is Van the kind of person she can count on? Of course immaturity is to be expected of the immature, but the time has come for him to constrain himself from the impulses of the moment. He may have her life in his hands. Is he aware of that? Does he care?

Future projections might have helped. What will the situation be a year from now? Ten years from now? Will they marry and have children? What kind of parents will they be? Lori may be a virgin now, but I suspect she won't be for long. We could have extended one of those possible future projection to include an unexpected pregnancy. What then? Or even AIDs, if Van has been having a sexual relationship with someone else, as she suspects. Lori needs to take into account why people who care about her don't approve of the relationship. They may see something she doesn't. For her own sake she should find out rather than to continue taking chances.

#### 19. BRET, age 34, Decision for Couples Counseling.

Bret described himself as tormented and agitated. He wanted to work on his feeling toward his fiance and whether to call her. We learned that Bret is having a meeting with his girlfriend Sally today. He said he hasn't seen her for a year and 3 months. *When we asked whether he wanted to keep the relationship, he said he didn't know, but was afraid to be without her.* Sally and their 3 month old baby resides at Bret's home. She works part time. She has a tendency to be very insecure, easily agitated, getting angry at people and then withdrawing.

1) We go to a time *when the relationship became special.* Last summer they rented a beach house where they spent time alone. They told each other that they loved each other very much.

2) Then comes the crisis, when Sally told Bret she was pregnant. She was excited about the pregnancy. However, Bret's mother was disappointed because Bret was going through a divorce. Sally was not sure what to do or if she was ready for the pregnancy. She wants the relationship to work and Bret's mother wanted them to get married immediately. Bret's ex-wife found out about this and made it harder for him to get the divorce.

3) Bret and Sally are outside the lawyer's office having an argument. Sally is now 4 months pregnant and is asking Bret for \$250 for an abortion. This is what she wanted all along. Sally gets angry and Bret explodes, saying, "I try hard for you, support you, and constantly reassure you. I hate you and can't take this anymore." Bret gives the

money to Sally and says, "Leave, get out of my life. I don't ever want to see you again." Sally responds with, "I have mixed feelings." Bret says, "I have been pushed to my limits, and I can't do any more than I do." Bret leaves the scene and when we ask how he feels he says, "I feel anxious and I get agitated."

4) We asked Bret what happens next. He says he returns home to his mother's house. Sally comes to the door and Bret's mother tells her Bret is not there. He is hiding in the house. Sally leaves and comes back later. She's very persistent. Bret comes to the door and says, "leave me alone. It always has to be your way." Sally says, "you said that you would always be there for me. I am going through a lot right now." Bret responds with, "You made a fool out of me at the lawyer's office and you always want the opposite." Sally tells Bret that she wants it to work out. But Bret said: "I made my decision," and he shut the door in her face.

5) She pounded on the door till finally he opened it again. She proposed that they go for a ride and work it out, which is what they did. Bret decided to give it another try. And things did get better for a while. They bought a house. The baby was born. But when Sally moved into the house, she started getting angry with Bret again and they fought. Bret mentioned in passing his mother had a heart attack and died the day before the baby was born. He said that at the time she was supportive for him (but he failed to mention whether he was supportive to her at the birth of their baby).

6) **A bachelorette party supplied the** critical incident, even though Sally had gone with Bret's blessing. It was when she told him what they had been doing, and that everything had come apart, for after the party she and another girl had gone to a bar and picked up two men who invited them to their place to continue partying. Sally remarked that her friend always made her laugh. Bret told Sally that she would've hit the ceiling if he had done what she did, and she accused him of being possessive. "You betrayed me," he retorted, as he kicked in the wall. It is his pattern to put a fist through the wall and do other destructive things when he is so angry with her. She makes him feel like he is the one with the problem and not her. He said to the director: "Am I wrong to have these feelings and to want to get them out? I have to learn how to vent anger, because she always has to have her way."

7) He remembered how he'd destroyed her car. "Her mother will never forgive me." Right after that he cut his wrists -- and came to us.

8) The director asked, "*What do you want for your future?*" He wasn't sure. "I don't know whether I want this relationship. She's sweet as pie

and at other times she is vicious. Now she wants 15 to 20 days apart after I leave here to determine whether there is hope for us, before she moves back in." We set up an imaginary future scene which included the doctor and the social worker as well as Sally and himself. That was to take place this afternoon.

9) The director asked, "*Is your girl friend like your mother?*" "Yes," he responded, "in a great many ways." The director surmised, "Then you need to let go of mother and hang on to the girl friend?" Rather than go directly to the scene which had been developing here, the director called for *another imaginary scene in which Bret faced mother returned from the dead and asked her advice in this situation*. Of course the real reason for the director's ploy was not the advice she could give, but to bring him face to face with mother again in the hope of ventilating his grief, which is what happened. *While he was in the reverse role position as mother, he began to cry and couldn't continue for a while. Everyone was prepared to give him all the time he needed.* Finally, beginning with mother, the dialogue ran like this; "I love you; I want you to be happy." As himself, Bret replied, "I don't know what makes me happy. Why did you have to die on me?" She replied that it was her time. He continued, "I am all alone. I have no one. How can I survive?"

I have a brother and sister who love me but I can't move in on them. I can't do it on my own. I feel so alone. I can't depend on Sally the way I depended on you. She is inconsistent. It seems like she forgets all the good times and remembers all the bad."

The director told the group that *there was no way Bret could have been fully present with Sally at the birth of their baby the day after his mother died. The auxiliary playing mother went on: "You can't rely on mother's love all the time. You have to deal with the good times and the bad times, and you will come through it fine."* Bret responded, "People do take advantage of me. I give so much and get so little, but I know you people here care for me."

10) The director brought Bret back to the imaginary scene we'd just left, suggesting that he keep his *mother at his side as a kind of invisible double* to help see him through the confrontation this afternoon. Following a suggestion from the director, Bret began: "I admit, Sally, that I was not fully there for you at the birth of our baby. I was too involved in mother's death the day before. I suppose I need to feel your love and support all the time." Sally replied, "I can't do that all the time. There will be ups and downs." Bret said, "I want to talk things out. It scares

me when you get angry. And it scares me when I get angry. I need you to be there for me." He asked, "What causes you to turn on and off? Are you testing me, to see whether I really love you?" Sally replied, "You want too much. I can't reassure you constantly." Bret protested, "I'm not allowed to show anger around you. Don't try to keep me from having feelings. I need to express them."

11) The director placed Bret in the reverse role position as Sally and *suggested that Sally make the best response to Bret he can hope for.* 'She' said: "We will work it out. I love you and care about you." He replied, "You are not totally with me. It is as if you are looking for someone else. You haven't fully committed yourself to our relationship. This makes me angry and upset." *The auxiliary commented for Sally: "I feel smothered and scared." That's when Bret becomes more possessive which makes her even more desperate, and the situation escalates.* They concluded they needed to continue couples counseling to work through. The group was warmly supportive in their sharing.

COMMENT: Bret's deep dependency comes out loud and clear, and threatens his relationship with Sally. We showed how this grew out of the loss of his mother. Through facilitating the grieving process, we hoped to encourage a greater reliance on the living Sally rather than on the dead mother. Inasmuch as he is coming to understand the source of his feeling of desperation, his tendency to cling and smother Sally should diminish. Moreover, our interpreting to Sally the source of his failure at being fully supportive at the birth of the baby should diminish her doubts about his loving her, and give some reassurance that future crises which may emerge later will not have a similar course. Notice that the auxiliary often offers therapeutic comments too, showing the protagonist that he need not be totally dependent on the official therapist, and subtly shifting him toward being a therapist for himself. Despite the rocky beginning I believe this relationship shows potential. We would have done more with the reference to cutting his wrists, but we had addressed that situation previously and did not regard a repetition as imminent. See the psychodrama above for the way we would've handled the matter if we had taken that course in this session.

20. ANN, age 41, **How do I cope with my jealousy?** Ann described herself as hopeful and distressed. She has been thinking of getting a divorce and she feels like a failure. Peers and staff encouraged her to offer herself as protagonist. She said she figured she would "have to," but we pointed out how we had already told another person today that we never force anyone to be protagonist. So she went ahead.

1) Inasmuch as Ann's relationship with her husband was her prime concern, we began with her in the role reversed position as him. He makes a clear separation between work and home life, never takes work home with him, and watches TV at home nearly every night. He describes himself as sensitive, warm and caring. He is vice president of a corporation, does a lot of travelling, and likes to play golf. She gets to go on a trip once a month. She frequently calls him at work, and he dislikes this intensely. Two years ago she decided to stop working, at which point he called to tell her boss she wouldn't be coming back. (Probably we should have inquired further into this). Then the director interviewed Ann as herself, inquiring into when problems began with her husband. Apparently from almost the very beginning. We asked for a scene which illustrated the form that their problems took, but she pulled back from our doing any such scene.

2) Therefore, the director asked for a scene *showing when things were good between them.* She immediately chose her surprise 40th birthday party, which she thought was 'perfect.' She greeted a 'Mr. North.' and suddenly she remembered that the Norths hadn't been at the party.

3) She confronted her husband about this a few days later and he replied that it was simple oversight. He just hadn't thought of them. She considered this very odd, for they had been like parents to them. She attempted to account for this, to herself at least, that they knew him as he really is, and maybe that's why he didn't invite them.

4) Next came a scene convincing her that her husband was indeed carrying on an affair. This took place at the airport when she came by to pick him up after a business trip to San Francisco. Coming off the plane with him was a female business associate, after the husband had led her to believe that he was on this trip alone. Ann promptly confronted him with this discrepancy, and the woman said she'd asked her boss whether he'd told his wife she was coming along. Ann's husband explained he'd lied, for he knew what her reaction would be.

5) When they got into the limo leaving the airport Ann took the back seat, leaving the front seat beside her husband to the other woman. Ann made this choice because, she said, 'I was infringing.' As they arrived at the place where Ann had parked her car, she said to the woman, "I'll drive you home, because I know my husband is tired and wants to relax as soon as possible." Apparently the husband did not protest, even though the woman 'panicked.'

6) When the two women were alone together, Ann told her that she didn't trust her husband. The woman denied that anything other than business had gone on between them. Ann didn't pressure the woman any further, for she had looked frail -- but then she handled the huge suitcase easily. Later Ann called the woman's husband to discover what he knew about the situation, and he confirmed his wife's view.

7) Not long afterwards Ann's husband promoted the woman to second vice-president. She phoned the 'other woman' saying that she could have him. She didn't want him anymore; she couldn't take the pain.

8) We set up an imaginary scene based on Ann's reality, in which she would tell her husband how his affairs have messed up her life. She spoke of her feelings of failure, questioned her sanity, and wondered how she could make it without him.

9) The director cut the previous scene and *had Ann confront her double (an intrapsychic technique)*. Ann accused herself of becoming a 'bitch like mother.' *Ann's mother had accused her father of having affairs throughout their marriage, which ended in divorce after 26 years.* The director proposed a scene dealing with Ann's mother, but Ann indicated she felt closer to her husband's parents than to her own.

10) Therefore the director set up a surplus reality (imaginary) meeting with the mother-in-law. Ann became tearful for letting-down the mother-in-law. "I can't cover it up like you did," Ann said. (This refers to embarrassment over a child's having been born out of wedlock).

11) The director asked where Ann saw the relationship going in the long run by projecting her into the future, with the result that Ann couldn't conceive of herself being with him or without him.

COMMENT: We were out of time, and went to sharing. The sharing emphasized overcoming dependency and building a new life for oneself. We were left with an uncertainty over what the real situation is. She had not convinced us that he was really having all those affairs, because he repeatedly went into marriage counseling, and when asked whether he wanted a divorce he said that he didn't. *I asked Ann what was in the relationship for him if her point of view was correct; why did he persist?* One may imagine reasons, but apparently this was never investigated. Ann could not guess his response. Her peers responded to the evidences of her low self-esteem, reminding her how well she does in hair styling. They are sure she can make it on her own, even if she doesn't think so. None of them challenged her view of her husband's behavior. I recommend that we get a definite answer on this. If she's right, she

needs to get on with her life; but if she's wrong, treatment would necessarily take a different approach.

**21. WENDY.** age 54. **Let the feeling flow.** She described herself as nervous and jerky. She offered to be protagonist to work on her anger toward her husband and the business.

1) We began with interviewing her from the reversed role position as her husband. His name is Fritz, and this is his 2nd marriage. The first lasted a year, and four years passed prior to his marriage of 27 years to Wendy. He is of Swedish stock, 52 years old, is 6' tall, and weighs 200 lbs. He owns a restaurant/motel, is the head cook, and employs 25 workers. Wendy takes care of the books, has major management responsibility, and even tends bar on occasion. He doesn't do the latter, but comes around to the other side to do his drinking (which was not presented as a problem). They have daughters 24 and 27, recently married, and a new grandchild. I inquired into his feelings about Wendy's hospitalization, and 'he' replied: "I don't like her being there, but I want her to get well. I support her." As for what he does for fun, 'he' alluded to their boat in the bay.

2) With Wendy as herself I asked *what she wanted to do with her marriage. She said she wanted to keep it, but not the way it has been.* Her whole life has been business, but her worst mistake was to let him purchase the restaurant...etc. without protesting. *Inasmuch as she'd decided she wanted to keep her marriage I called for the time when he became special to her (which would also help her get used*

*to being on stage under less threatening conditions).* The moment she chose happened when she was twenty years old, seated at her desk at work and saw him through the window in his light blue sport car, as he stopped for the traffic light. He waved at her and she waved back. At the time she hadn't said anything to her co-workers, so I extended the scene to include a confidant who was in the office then. At my prompting she noticed Wendy's reaction and teased her about it, and Wendy acknowledged how 'tall, dark and handsome' he was, "and we were young," she said. She'd made up her mind she'd get to know him.

3) I asked her to take us to the time *when the reality of the business was placed before her.* She showed us her former residence, where she felt more at home. Wendy is seated at a table and the husband comes home and joins her there. Wendy tried reconstructing the conversation, and gave up, saying, "I can't do this." I reversed her into the husband's role, to tell Wendy what he was so excited about, which she (as him) was able

to do. It was a floundering business in a Victorian neighborhood, a "biker's bar, a no-good scum bar, a steal!" Wendy didn't know what to say about this, so she said nothing. I pulled in a double for Wendy, who ventured "I don't know about this, it's overwhelming."

4) I let go of the husband and *went to an intrapsychic scene*, with Wendy and her double facing one another. We began with how Wendy perceives herself in this situation. I said, "*A part of you watches the rest of you; now what do you see? Tell your double.*") *Then I reversed her into the alternate role, and as director asked her what got in the way of her expressiveness.* She didn't know, so I asked her what she was feeling, and when she couldn't tell that, I suggested that I thought she was scared, which she admitted, and I directed her to say it to 'herself' over there across from her, which she did. I suggested to her that this was not her only feeling, and this time she was able to acknowledge her anger. She said, "How stupid of you to go along with what he wants, to take on all that work, in the midst of strangers." At last she said, "I'm mad!" But she could express this only at herself. I indicated she should *say out loud all the things this move would make her give up.* "I feel like I'll give up my family, and something I'd wanted for myself. I had just gotten a job I had been doing for six months. It was one of the happiest times of my life."

5) So we *went back to her old job*, which involved the "settlement business." The day she went in to resign they offered her a promotion with a big raise in pay. What a loss! *I tried to discover whether there were any parallel feelings from childhood, and apparently there were not. I created an imaginary scene out of this, as another way of getting to an earlier parallel, if any.* Instead of turning the promotion down as she did then, I had her accept it, regardless of what her husband might think, and then go home to tell him what she'd done. She did, and he responded "But I need you here." I asked whether he'd holler, or kick up a fuss? She didn't know whether he would or wouldn't, she'd just quit. But did she *fear anything from him, or from whoever her husband reminded her of?* We came up with nothing.

I did ask whether anyone in her family drank and she admitted that her father "drank to get drunk, but it was OK" (!). In role Wendy asked her husband, "*Do you know what you're getting into?*" He admitted he didn't but that he was counting on her to get them through all the paperwork. *I told her to tell him now, what she couldn't say then.*

She said, "I wish we could be a family, and not just a business. I've lost years; I'm mad at myself for what has happened because of the business. We're not together as a family anymore -- just once a year on Thanksgiving." Wendy believes that her daughters are staying with the

business 'just for Mom.'

6) We set up a scene with each of her daughters, where her elder daughter said exactly that. Wendy replied, "I know; it's just until I get better." I directed Wendy to tell your daughters what you want for them. "I want you to get on with your lives. I love you," and they responded with a family embrace.

7) *I invited Wendy to encounter her husband in another imaginary scene.* From the role reversed position Wendy-as-her-husband told the auxiliary-playing-Wendy, "I'm not mad at you Wendy (for your attitude about the business). I realize how guilty you feel and I'm really sorry." Wendy asked, "Where do we go from here?" The husband replied, "The business is for sale, and the house is for sale." I ascertained that neither one of them had any emotional investment in their house, the weight of mortgage payments being what they are.

I directed Wendy to *tell your husband what you want for your future together.* "A little clam shack on the water," she said. The husband assured her all was in process, and Wendy told us, "That's my dream."

8) I sought to *deal more explicitly with the guilt Wendy was feeling. Therefore, we set up an intrapsychic scene, contrasting Wendy at 21 with Wendy today.* At 21 she was not yet married, pregnant, and getting married next week. Wendy-today told her that they shouldn't get married, that they're not meant for each other. Wendy-at-21 (with the help of a double) said, "What do you mean? I'm lucky to have such a tall, dark and handsome husband." Wendy-today reflected, "I never gave myself a chance to think." Wendy-at-21 asked, "Why didn't I open my mouth and tell them I was pregnant?" I observed that she was carrying a lot of guilt, which she acknowledged. I invited her to comment as the Wendy-who-is-coming-to-be, the Wendy who has begun to have feelings. Wendy continued perceiving herself as icy, but her peers told her that they didn't see her that way at all.

Wendy asked the director: "Why can't I let the feelings flow freely? Let the feelings come, and break down the wall in my head." She admitted she didn't like herself as she is right now. I directed her to *give (the double representing) her what she needs right now. Suddenly she saw that what she requires from herself is acceptance, not rejection.* Again I told her that she'd made a beginning today, that she was not at all a failure (as she'd said earlier), and that the people here had seen a lot of feeling. As if to prove me right, the tears flowed. She said she wanted to get in touch with other feelings too, and I promised her she would.