***The Life Script***

A script is a personal life plan which an individual decides early in life and is based upon his or her interpretation of the external and internal events which affect them.

The script is a decisional model - this is very important - if I chose my own script then at any time given the right circumstances I can choose to make a change in my script. (When this change takes place in therapy the client is said to have made a Redecision.)

A potential script decision is made when a person discounts his own free child needs in order to survive. Only after several discounts does the decision become part of the script unless the situation carried a great deal of significance such as the death of a parent or sibling.

Script Decisions are the best the child can manage in the circumstances. Yesterday's best choice made by the child in a land of giants may now be very limiting to the grown adult. People follow their script because of the pay off, a familiar feeling, attempting to avoid the loss of love and in an attempt to gain love.

**SCRIPT MESSAGES come from:**

**1) MODELLING** by parents, siblings, others demonstrating how to = the Program (accepted Adult messages).

**2) ATTRIBUTIONS,** the big person in Parent defining the little person in some way, e.g. “You're just like .....”.

**3) SUGGESTIONS,** indirectly giving the message from parent, e.g. “Keep at it until it's right”. (Be Perfect).

**4) INJUNCTIONS** from the child ego state making demands on the person, either DO or DON'T.

NB: Messages can frequently contradict each other.

***DRIVERS*** (Described by Taibi Kahler) From the Parent Ego State stating that the child will be OK if he/she follows a message which says:-

**You will be OK if you.....**

Try Hard - Be Strong - Hurry Up - Be Perfect - Please Me –

***TWELVE INJUNCTIONS*** (Described by the Gouldings in the book Changing Lives Through Redecision Therapy).

Injunctions come from the infants parents scared or angry Child ego state:-

Don't be, Don't be you, Don't, Don't be Important, Don't belong, Don't be close, Don't be well / sane, Don't think, Don't feel, Don't be a child, Don't grow, Don't succeed.

1. **"Don’t..."** - Fearful, over-protective parents say don’t climb trees, don’t run, don’t try, don’t go too far, don’t pay rough, don’t go too high on the swings, etc. These parents also tend to do everything for the child. The child gets the message that they must be fragile, or incompetent, and/or every decision they face is critical and, therefore, has trouble making decisions.
2. **"Don’t Be"** - Some verbal examples of how children adopt this Injunction are…
   1. "If it weren’t for you children, I could divorce your father…"
   2. "You were a mistake"
   3. "See what you do, why do you put me through this!"
   4. "I wish you’d never been born!"
   5. The message can be delivered in a multitude of non-verbal ways such as how the parent cares for and holds the child, the facial expressions and tone of voice, frowns, scowls, etc.
3. **"Don’t Be Close"** - Discouraging the child from coming close, a lack of attention and affection, lack of physical touching, and a lack of positive strokes all send signals that may be interpreted as "Don’t Be close". Also, losing several people who have been close may be enough for a child to decide it is not worth getting close because "People I care about always leave me".
4. **"Don’t Be Important"** - This injunction comes from messages like "kids are to be seen, not heard", "Keep your mouth shut at the dinner table", or other discounts about how they may nothing of importance to offer. Children who are made fun of because of how they look, their race, or their social status may experience this injunction… unless they have made other decisions to "show everyone" how good they are.
5. **"Don’t Be a Child"** - Children who have been assigned the role of taking care of the younger children may have lost or given up their own childhood. They continue to function without the childlike qualities they have not yet developed. Other methods of conveying this message include telling a five year-old to "grow up!" or giving a toddler positive strokes for being "little men" or "proper little ladies".
6. **"Don’t Grow"** - The baby of the family often is the recipient of this Injunction, especially when the empty nest is approaching. This is usually the case when there is not a lot of intimacy between the parents or in single parent situations. Fathers may send this message to their daughters when they refuse to allow make-up, dating, wearing certain clothes when it is really an age-appropriate thing to do.
7. **"Don’t Succeed"** - A father may send the message to "not do better than me" by quitting when his son begins to win at the game they are playing. Expecting perfection or frequently saying things like "You can’t do anything right!" or "What the hell is wrong with you?" are other ways this message gets conveyed.
8. **"Don’t Be You"** - Children who get the message they are not the sex that was preferred by their parents adopt this Injunction. A mother with four boys who wanted a girl may subconsciously make the youngest one her "daughter". Or a father with all girls may make one of them a "little buddy" by giving positive strokes for doing son-like activities.
9. **"Don’t Be Sane"** - Children who grow up with a parent or parents who have a mental illness can learn how to do mental illness through role modeling. They may also be negatively stroked for healthy thinking and positively stroked for silly or bizarre behaviors. Most often, double-bind messages from parent to child where the child is "damned if s/he does and damned if s/he doesn’t" can foster this injunction.
10. **"Don’t Be Well"** - Some children only experienced nurturing when they were sick. They grow up to use the sick role to gain attention of others and to self-nurture as well. Usually at a subconscious level, getting well would mean isolation and abandonment to someone with this Injunction.
11. **"Don’t Belong"** - Children who move a lot are most often the ones who have learned not to attach to a social group because as soon as they make attachments they move again and have to start all over. Other circumstances include kids who were frequently put down or made fun of for one reason or another by other kids.
12. **"Don't Feel"** - Kids learn not to feel because…Expressions of fear, sadness, anger, guilt, embarrassment, loneliness are not allowed because they may trigger the same in the parent. The Little Professor in a child builds walls to protect against these feelings (See Survival Roles) Learning to emotionally "Numb Out" creates physical, emotional and psychological safety

It is important to note that the child responds to these injunctions and makes a script decision... It is these negative script decisions which will possibly causing difficulty as a grown up.

Permissions are also given to the child, these will be the opposite to the injunctions, e.g. Do think, etc. The script can be elicited in various ways, the questionnaire being one, and it is drawn out on a script matrix.

The matrix is one of the earliest pieces of work done as a Transactional Analyst. The analyst will then design interventions based upon the information within the matrix. In therapy the injunctions are always to be dealt with first rather than Drivers which may well be the thing that keeps the person going. E.g.

"I will be perfect then I can live."  --  No matter how tempted don't invite this person to stop being perfect, until they have made a decision to live regardless of how imperfect they are!