

# HELPER SYNDROME

MY NEED IS YOUR NEED



# HELPING AND SOCIETY

- Social conduct and altruism as normal behaviour
- Cultural, religious attribution of helping
- Social promotion of helping syndrome  
i.e. nurse (literal: „Sister of the Sick“) > intermixture profession/privacy
- ‘Currency‘ appreciation > capitalistic exploitation
- Focus on helper syndrome and the ‘I‘ (IOPT)

# HELPER SYNDROME (DEFINITION)

- Wolfgang Schmidbauer 1977

„The Helpless Helpers‘ („Die hilflosen Helfer“)

*„... the incarnated incapacity to express own feelings and needs, combined with seemingly omnipotent, unassailable facade in the sector of social services sector (...)*

*‘... neglected, hungry baby behind a strong, splendid facade.’*

- Selfless helping > without an own I, the helper disappears in the You

## CAUSES: THE NEGLECTED BABY

- Missing satisfaction of baby's/toddler's basic needs
- Parents themselves are helpless and/or bound to perfectionistic I-ideal
- Child-parent-reversal: Child becomes an object instead of being subject
- 'If you are present for me, I love you, then I help you.'
- Identification with will of the parents
- Formation with cultural, ecclesiastical-religious, social norms
- Formation of an I-ideal in terms of the parents

# CAUSES – THE CHILD ... THE ADULT

- .. Identifies himself with will of the others, split-off/elimination? of own will
  - .. Cannot differentiate between I and YOU
  - .. Perceives others' needs better than own needs
  - .. Feels others' needs as own needs
  - .. Parries own, experienced dependencies
  - .. Parries autonomy of others
- => Helper Syndrome as an ever failing attempt of Self-Rescue

# THE POWER-FACADE: SURVIVAL-STRATEGIES

- Being responsible for all and everyone
- Selfless Rescuer-Competence-Ideal
- Feeling morally superior
- Development of competence: Feeling the other
- Acting-Illusion: I can act, you cannot
- Control-Illusion: You depend on me
- Power-Illusion: You are weaker than I
- Focus on deficits
- Perfectionism



# PSEUDO-PROFIT VIA SURVIVAL-STRATEGIES

- Permanent production of 'Self-Esteem' through helping
- Reward of self-sacrifice: gratefulness, love, appreciation...
- Restaging of a solution, the helper would have needed in childhood
- Denying of own wishes, needs, dependencies
- Projection of own needs on the You
- Parrying of weakness through narcissistic reversal:  
'I need nothing, you need everything.'

= > Displacement of own helplessness to others

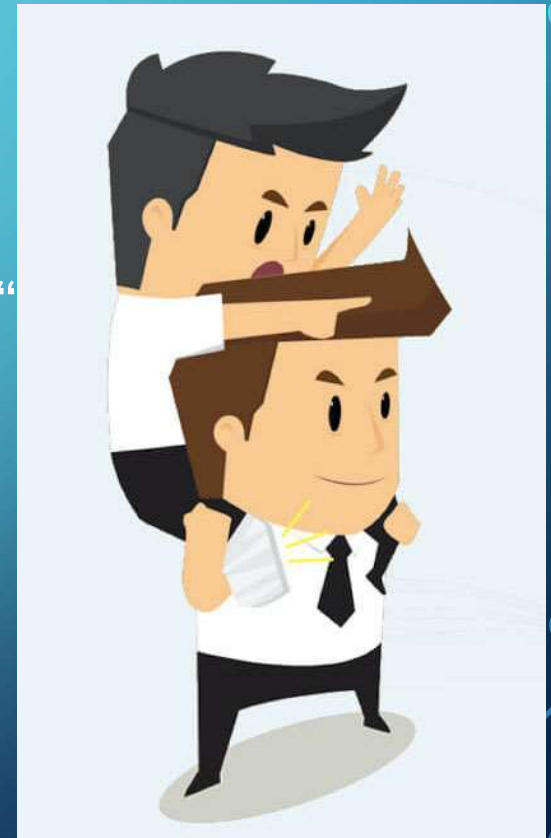
# ATTITUDES OF VICTIM AND PERPETRATORS

- **Own dependency**

- ‚I would have expected a bit more gratefulness!‘
- ‚Nobody sees the real worth in my help!‘
- ‚I do everything for you, because you’re so important to me!‘

- **Dependency of the other**

- ‚Without me, you’re not able to do anything!‘
- ‚You are indebted to me!‘
- ‚I know better than you, what’s good for you!‘
- ‚I’ll give you what for!‘





# SYMPTOMS OF THE HELPER SYNDROME

- Seeks appreciation and gratefulness, praise für self-abandonment
- Expects gratefulness, where there is no to find (victim)
- Avoids relationships to not needy persons
- Doesn't realize and ignores own neediness
- Others' needs above own needs
- Compulsive helping up ton Burnout through self-exploitation
- Loss of reality/no connection to reality: Wrong oder inadequate help
- High, rigid I-ideal (Introject of perpetrator)

# HEALTHY HELPING >< TRAUMATIC HELPING



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- Does the other really need help?
- Do I offer appropriate help?
- Am I able to accept help?
- Am I able to accept a „No“?
- Am I able to say „No“? Without a bad conscience?
- Am I able to circumvent to the other?
- Is it a case of emergency or do I declare it as such a case?

# HEALTHY HELPING

- Do I have the will to help or do I oblige myself to help?

**Freedom ist the span between stimulus and reaction**

**I am able to decide: in favor or against it.**