

This is a brief role play regarding a relational situation trying to balance career and relation used in a graduate seminar. First a male role played the husband; then a woman role played the wife. (The scripts are below). At the end is feedback .

SCRIPT GIVEN TO THE "HUSBAND" pp 2-3
(note last line on p. 2 should be "hear" not here.

SCRIPT GIVEN TO THE "WIFE"PP3-4

FEEDBACK RECEIVED AND SELF-EVALUATIONPP.5-7

"HUSBAND" SCRIPT

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Notes: In ^{the} ^{document} ^{clap} ^{she} ^{is} ^{holding} ^{an} ^{object} ^{she}

WARM UP

Can any of you imagine what it's like to be a young struggling graduate student trying to get a PhD? How many of you are trying to get your degree? - (show of hands) Have any of you ever had the feeling of working so hard that you feel you are leaving out some of the most important things in life?
I have a situation involving one of your struggling comrades but I'm not going to let you in on everything that's happening and you as an audience are going to have to try to figure it out.

OK, lets imagine our struggling ^{student} student. What do you think he's like: name, age, field... etc.
[call up first person to respond]

John, you're in the field of _____; let me tell you some more things about yourself: you are on the last leg of the dissertation. ~~the~~ All through winter quarter you've been having a tremendous uphill struggle: not only trying to pull together a mammoth impossible thesis, but you've been flying back & forth to the University of Miami - at least 4 times - for interviews, discussion with potential colleagues, etc; they have the best possible department of _____ and you've been really trying to impress them.

You're married, and your wife of 4 years (right after you both graduated) has been a doll. She began working to support you through graduate school, and has been really understanding ^{and supportive} especially during the last few months when you haven't really had much chance to be with each other. ^{because of} your thesis demands & trips to Miami. Each time you've flown to Miami, you've put a good word in for her in the appropriate department, for you know she's been thinking - at least fantasizing - about the possibility of her going back to graduate school.

OK, today is April 1. The Day you here from Miami. You leave the house very anxious and nervous and go to

Commented [JS1]: 2023 the line about "your wife's been a doll." So sexist! How about your wife has been very supportive?!
DEANE COMMENT. oops; good catch (53 years later:!) Post hoc rationalization: could I have done it purposefully to see if anyone caught it?!? omm..
J COMMENT Mmm, a stretch?! Overall, the role-play is quite well-conceived -- other kind of stereotypical behaviors -- woman cooking, male bringing flowers get a pass, product of their times),

your office to work on your thesis

Now, John, would you please go to the office. [He leaves room completely, facilitator gives him the following note:]

At Miami:
lots of
research money
good colleagues
nice climate
you want to leave this area.

At Foothill:
no money
several hours
of teaching
only.

You have been accepted by the U of Miami in department of _____ ^{as assistant professor} (You also were accepted by Foothill college but that job doesn't appeal to you very much at all). Your wife also was accepted at Miami. You are jubilant. Miami has the best department, best colleagues, salary, etc. You're fantastically excited. You are going to come home with a bottle of champagne ^{flowers} to celebrate and spend the night with your wife -- the first time in months you haven't worked late or had a committee meeting; -- Tonight, you say to yourself, we make up for lost time. You are ecstatic as you enter the house to tell your wife the good news, and give her a big hug, flowers, ? champagne.

"WIFE" SCRIPT

To Class:

What's his wife like: we know she's a "doll." How old do you think she is -- what kind of work is she doing -- how does she like it. [Call first person up]

OK, let me tell you some more things about. —, ~~the~~
As you can imagine, this has been a particularly tough time for her. First, the nature of her work, and secondly, it has been very lonely for her many evenings sitting home ~~at~~.

Last September, she began to seriously look into possibility of graduate school. She felt that she was, in a very real sense, wasting herself at her menial job, and had felt a sense of panic at how fast four years of her life had slipped away.

She had decided to ~~quit being~~ ~~dependent on John,~~ and ~~take~~ personal initiative to check into offerings of Stanford in the — department. When she and John had married, he had said that as soon as he was through, it

Commented [JS2]: the line "we know she's a doll." Awfully sexist, but I guess a product of the times. Deane comment; again, oopps Though here I think there is a bit of effort to "tee up" discussion...but none occurred.

would be her turn. She had particularly liked that quality in him: recognizing her as an equal in the marriage. She hurt for him and how hard he was being pushed by the University (or how hard he was pushing himself). She also hurt for herself and how lonely & difficult it had been to be ^{just} a secretary putting my husband through college."

Today is April 1. You have ~~just~~ ^{just} a day off ~~from your job with John's~~ ~~pe~~ and are lounging around the house when the phone rings. It's Prof. Merryworthy of Dept of ~~Steno~~ ^{Steno} ~~Computations~~ ^{Computations} Mary, ~~John~~. We really feel you have something to offer our department, and we'd very much like if you would consider entering graduate school here in the fall.

Mary says nothing. She is feeling a type of frozen joy. The Professor continues. "We also will be able to give you a full four-year fellowship." 24 hours -

Mary thanks him saying very quietly. "Thank you. That makes me really happy."

She hangs up, almost in tears with excitement. She starts to call John, then decides not to, but rather to surprise him with a big roast beef dinner, candlelight, etc. She spends the rest of the day cooking, singing, thinking of the classes she will be taking in the fall. She knows John applied to Foothill College ^{which} has a good program for him, and she's certain from all the things he has said that now it's her turn. She is sure he will be supportive of her.

Dinner time, now, John is returning home. Mary rushes to the door to give him a big hug and tell him the news.

[Prepare audience: to watch John
to watch Mary.) See what's happening

what's happening
Could it happen
How John feel
How Mary feel

got into
Milano
& doesn't
want it

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SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

An excellent session & analysis!

- 1. ROLE PLAYING SITUATION: the struggling Phd student, just accepted at Miami, rushing home to tell his wife, just accepted at Stanford. Scene: dinner, evening of acceptance, both jubilant and waiting anxiously to tell the other the "good news."

Group: undergraduate special # 32: VALUES IN HUMAN BEHAVIOR

- 2. Yes, I believe the warm-up involved the students. First, I began by discussion of the value of communication as expressed by Martin Buber in I-Thou, the book that was their assignment for this week.

Then I asked: have any of you ever had an experience where you've been working so hard that you forget or leave out things that are important to you?

"School, studying is like that," one student responded. I asked an open-ended question in reply, "what sort of things get left out?" Several students joined the initial discussion (half the class), and they seemed to be able to identify well with the initial probing questions. Further, they responded well to forming the character; and finally, when I told them I wasn't going to let them in on everything that was happening, this seemed to arouse their curiosity and I noticed a couple of them lean forward.

Nice

- B. At first, I had no choice in selecting role players: no one wanted to volunteer. SHY STANFORD STUDENTS, afraid to make mistakes. I continued to ask for more characteristics to see if I couldn't get them to loosen up. They were very reluctant, it was like pulling teeth. After the first person volunteered, however, it was like a snow ball effect: we eventually went through three role-playing situations and by the third, the actors were really putting themselves into it, and they had several different ideas and alternatives they were ready to express.

Good tactics

- C. I spent a long time thinking out the situation (as I made up the role script originally) and I was very careful to set the mood: the flowers and champagne the husband was bringing home; the wife cooking roast beef; I had her show us where the stove was, and asked her what she was doing (cooking) just as the role-play situation opened. (The husband, meanwhile, had been given a piece of paper to read while he was at the office telling of his acceptance at Miami, his feeling of finally having the time to come home and celebrate with his wife "to make up for lost time.")

good

D. Lines of action:

*role play one: husband was very rational: talked about balancing advantages of Miami and Stanford; the wife gave in pretty easily. FIRST DECISION POINT: I decided not to discuss this situation, but to immediately go on and enact another performance. I asked if someone thought there might have been another way the wife could have acted. (open-ended question). Someone responded, gave their idea, and said they were willing to play it out.

*role play two: wife (played by man) was going to be tougher this time (so she said), to demand that he listen to her side of the story, and give her a chance; at the end she gave in to him. SECOND DECISION POINT. I decided

Commented [JS3]: This debrief is fascinating: how you prepared the class, how you overcame their reluctance to participate, the way the different role-plays went, your use of Rogerian reflection and great open-ended questions, students' engagement with deep moral and value questions. Your honest critique of your own strengths and weaknesses was extremely insightful. -- It shows your great ability to self-examine nondefensively but also without false modesty. Your ideas about how to stimulate different scenarios and how to probe what was going on in each encounter were really superb. I liked that, at one point, a male played the wife's part -- and he still gave in! The way you answered the skeptical student/dissenter was open and a constructive dialogue.. A really masterful dissection of this teaching experience.

- 2. D. to explore some of the consequences, because she seemed ambivalent about her decision to give in. (See below for some of the open-ended and probing questions I used to facilitate this discussion)

*Role play three: the husband decided he was going to be very hard nosed; the wife was going to act like she deserved at least a compromise. At the end, she left the dinner table and there were very bad feelings between them; DECISION POINT THREE: decided to stop and explore some of the feelings and consequences of what was happening. (see below for some of the discussion and questions asked and raised)

E. I felt my Rogerian training was very helpful here: both in use of reflecting back individual feelings and ideas for clarification, and for summarizing discussion by reflecting back how I heard them. Some examples include the following:

Hand!

- so you're saying.....
- I hear you saying.....
- are you suggesting...
- so you feel that....

I also felt that I made good use of open-ended questions (this was an improvement from the first time I led a role-playing group); I asked such questions as follows:

- What's the real question here?
- How are you feeling, Oscar?
- How do you think Barabara is feeling?
- Do you think there might have been another way to play her role?
- Do you think a situation like this could really happen?
- What do you think is going to happen now? (Response: he: you mean the fact that I'm going to have to sleep on the couch?!!!)

- 3. My goals in this session were the following: a) to discuss interpersonal values as they may conflict with personal values (upward mobility, prestige and status in society; b) discussion of communication patterns in interpersonal relationships; c) discussion of interpersonal decision making processes. d) discussion of what is important in one's life.

The students were very aware of these value questions, and picked up on them almost immediately: "it's a question of their relationship versus the individual; "she has been subservient to him." Concept of team in relationship expressed; give and take; discussion of lack of past communication.

in third session of role play, the male said, "If I really loved her, I'd give in. I felt like a bastard."

wife said, "I hurt inside, but it came out as antagonism"

One student said: the important thing is how the decision gets made, not the decision. If it's not joint, I wouldn't want to have to live with her in Miami

One male student said: but the male could provide for you so much better; The women (almost in chorus) responded: that's not the point. (This pointed out very well the different perspectives from which we often operate)

The male then said, "Oh, so it's the principle of the matter," To which a woman replied, "No, its a question, of learning, of fulfillment"

How you put your feelings!

4. My strengths were my use of probing questions, open-ended questions; I also think that the role-playing script was in my favor, for it seemed to be a situation that the students could identify with very easily.

My main weakness was that I don't think I was objective enough: I had a certain point of view that I wanted to get across: the value of human relations. Often I reinforced with "good," "uh huh", "right" people who said things that agreed with my belief. I think if I would work on becoming more impartial and objective (at least through the role-playing and initial part of the discussion) then I feel I would improve my efficacy as a facilitator.

At the end of the session, the students said they thought it had been a worthwhile learning experience. One student, however, said he didn't think it had been worthwhile because it wasn't true to life. I told him that he was making a good point, but that the purpose of role-playing was to make "successive approximations" to real life; and in these "approximate situations" to generate alternative methods of acting, so that we could see that there are several different possible ways of acting in the same situation, that the individual has choices (as evidenced by the three different ways the role was played.) I told him that the hope was that when we got into the "real situation" we would be able to generate alternatives and therefore not be trapped into one way of acting.