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FROM ROOTS

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KRZYSZTOF FISZER

Title: From Roots

Series: Roots and Branches

Volume: 1

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Graphic design: Christopher Nuin

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Second edition, ISBN 978-83-965435-4-7
Gdansk, 3 October 2023

Publisher:

Krzysztof Fiszer

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Author's note

The cover of this publication states: 'I was born as a blank page, ready to learn and ready live, but the environment that became my soil, and the people who became the air I was breathing, shaped me into someone I was never supposed to be'.

My previous personal publication, called 'Life', was focusing on few aspects contained in my present life, which were causing me mental distress. Dealing with them was a necessary step I had to take on my healing journey. Reaching the bottom line of concepts like fear of dying, God phenomenon, meaning of Life, my basic needs etc., gave me the opportunity to put those things in the right slots of my brain, so my mind wouldn't need to obsess over them, at least for now.

This publication, called 'From Roots', focuses entirely on my past, my experiences, acts that I witnessed, how they programmed my brain, and shaped my mind, as well as my behaviour for years that followed. It is a next step, which I take to heal myself, to understand the roots of my current and past mental problems, to unlearn unhealthy patterns that are stuck in my head, to learn anew and to detach myself from corrupted wastelands.

The content of this publication is shaped in one pattern: stating my memories and the facts from my past in sterile way, analysing how they affected and shaped me, and stating pros and cons.

As it was in 'Life', also in this publication I used common language to have the full freedom of describing everything I needed to write about. Even though I constantly learn about childhood traumas, patterns, programming of the human mind, emotional intelligence, etc., I am still no professional in the field of psychiatry, and so, I avoided using psychological and clinical terms to explain my case.

I decided that it would be more accessible for broader audience this way, and it would be easier to spot the dependencies between the experience, the feeling, and the behaviour.

As it comes to You, the Reader, be advised to treat this publication the same way I do. Approach it with curiosity, but don't let the things you are about to read to become your burden. Also remember that though the memories You're about to read will be mostly about negative or depressing things, it doesn't mean that my life was filled only with such.

Christopher Nuin

THE PRIMAL SOIL

ABOUT MY FIRST HOME



Our first apartment was on the first floor, and our second apartment was on the ground floor of this old building. *Photo: 2008, Szropy, Poland.*



Gasthaus Hildebrandt, a tavern that belonged to Herbert Hildebrandt, which years later became our home. *Postcard: 1916, Shroop, Germany.*



Writing in German that most likely says: 'Alles in seiner Zeit' (All in good time).



Overpainted sign with name of the past owner, Herbert Hildebrandt.

Facts about the building and its surroundings.

Main walls of the building were made of red brick and almost everything else inside was constructed with wooden planks and beams. The entrance to the first floor of the building was hidden on the rear side of the house, with old, wooden door with loose, cold, iron handle. Behind it were white walls and two or three small brick steps leading up to the right, the only spot in the building with a tap where fresh water was accessible; and then around eleven wooden steps leading up to the left. On the left of the first floor that looked like an attic was this huge apartment with big, brown wooden two-winged doors occupied by my neighbours, a mother, and her daughter.

Between the two main parts of the building was a corridor right under the roof, with a brick chimney to the right, and big old chipboards laid down on the planks making a path to our side of the house; we referred to this open space as the attic. Our side of the building was mainly the attic, with a very small three-room apartment on the left side. This was my first home.

Our first communal apartment had a main entrance leading to a room that was used mainly as a bedroom for me and my siblings during warmer seasons, and exclusively as a toilet at nights during winter season. The middle room was used as a living room and my parents' bedroom all year long, and as children's bedroom during winter. Behind it was a kitchen with no sink, often used also as a bathroom and a toilet, and a children's bedroom during winter. Windows had wooden frames and were very old; during winters they were often covered with blankets at nights to keep the warmth inside the house.

During the weekdays bathing was done in a big bowl, and on Sundays in an iron bathtub placed behind a furnace in the kitchen.

In the children's bedroom, right above my bed, there was a spot on the ceiling where it partly cracked open and the weight of a wooden beam in it lowered it down a bit.

Right in front of the doorframe between children's bedroom and the living room the wooden planks of the floor were loose and coming down when stepped on, so folded boxes were stacked under the carpet to make the floor look flat.

There was no toilet in the apartment. As a substitute, we used one iron bucket intended for urine which at nights was placed in the kitchen behind the furnace or in the attic during warmer seasons, or placed in the children's bedroom during heavy winters, which was then separated from the living room with a thick blanket, since there were no doors inside the apartment. There was another iron bucket intended for excrements placed outside the apartment at some spot in the attic. Every morning the buckets' content was poured into a sewage well located near the building's entrance. Whenever our neighbours would see one of us emptying those buckets into that well they would yell at us, threatening to call the Police. On our ground plot around one hundred meters from the house was an external toilet made of iron light-blue plates used during the day and some warm nights during summer. I remember that during winters this toilet was frozen cold, and during summers it was overheated, stinky and it was a magnet for fat green dung flies.

Our small ground plot contained over the years vegetables and livestock such as goats, rabbits, chickens, geese, ducks, and pigeons, and almost always one dog.

The second communal apartment where we lived was placed on a ground floor. It comprised of three small rooms and a bathroom. All the internal walls separating rooms were built by my father with red bricks and they ended half a meter below the ceiling, except the bathroom walls which were built all the way up to the ceiling.

There were no doors inside this apartment as well as the previous one. There was a tap with fresh water though, placed in the bathroom next to a bathtub, but the toilet seat itself had no water container, so flushing the toilet was done with a bucket.

The entrance to the apartment was leading right to the middle room used as a kitchen that had a furnace but no sink. To the left was a bedroom for me and my siblings. To the right was a smaller bedroom for our parents. Behind it was the bathroom with a water tap, a bathtub, and a toilet seat.

I lived in the first communal apartment until I was thirteen years old, or so. Then we moved to the second communal apartment where I lived for around one year before I moved out to live with my maternal grandparents.

The feelings that my first home gave me.

1. Lack of any doors between rooms inside of both apartments made me feel that I can't have any privacy or a place where I could lock myself away from danger.

Using iron buckets for urine and excrements was underlining my lack of privacy. It made me feel ashamed and afraid that someone will see my genitals; it also made me feel unsafe and unprotected from any possible external danger at those vulnerable moments.

2. Walking to the external toilet at night made me afraid of being attacked by something or someone on my way there and back.

3. Sleeping next to the entrance door that were locked at night only with a big nail on a thin chain made me feel scared that someone may break in at any time to cause me harm.

4. Broken ceiling, old windows (the one in the kitchen clinging to the frame only thanks to few nails), faulty planks in the apartment's floor, missing wooden planks in two big rectangle-shaped spots in the attic's floor — they all made me feel on full alert, because I was afraid that my home may fall apart without warning.

Using blankets during winter to cover the windows and to separate one room from other rooms because of the cold, made me feel that even my home can't provide me with life sustaining conditions.

Sleeping under cracked ceiling, from which cold stream of air was gently blowing at me at night, made me feel afraid that the ceiling will fall on me during my sleep and kill me.

5. Lack of flowing water and internal bathroom and toilet in the first apartment made me feel extremely poor.

How those feelings influenced my behaviour.

1. I have a strong need to shut the doors and to lock them tight when I use the bathroom/toilet, because otherwise I don't feel safe in there. Even when I am alone at home (locked or not) I can't leave the bathroom/toilet doors wide open while using it without feeling in danger and without feeling that everyone can see me. Sometimes I even lock the doors to the bathroom/toilet when I am alone in the house, just to give myself that feeling of full safety.

I have a huge disgust for using urinals in public restrooms, so I never use them.

2. Walking to a bathroom, which I never used before, makes me feel uneasy, because my mind suspects that there might be some danger waiting ahead.

3. I feel very uneasy and endangered if I'm about to sleep in a room that has no door, or in a room with doors wide opened, even when the house is full of my family members. I need those doors to be closed. If not, I feel like anyone could come in during my sleep to hurt me.

4. My mind is unable to recognise any house or any apartment that I live in as a haven. It only recognises it as a set of walls, doors, and rooms which in theory are meant to protect me from any external danger, but at the same time I am convinced they will fail to do so when when danger will come.

For many years I had a reoccurring dream in which the house that I was in (one of our old apartments or an apartment on high floor in a skyscraper) would start tilting to one side just to collapse entirely in the end of the dream.

5. I recognise the presence of flowing water and a bathroom/toilet in the house as something that shouldn't be there by default. It makes me feel it is not right to have such luxury.

Pros and cons.

1pro: I strive to provide myself with safe environment and situations that potentially can't place me in a harm's way.

1con: It underlines my lack of trust for people.

2pro: I am cautious when it comes to visiting new environments for the first time, which helps me to spot potential health risks sooner.

2con: It underlines my lack of trust for people.

3pro: Sleeping with doors closed helps me to provide myself with a sleep undisturbed by external noises.

3con: It underlines my lack of trust for people, and it alienates me.

4pro: Moving to a new house/apartment/place is easy for me because I am not attached to previous place on an emotional level as much as people who treat their houses/apartments as their homes.

4con: I don't receive full mental comfort from spending time at home. It also prevents me from attaching emotionally to my current abode.

5pro: I consciously appreciate the fact of having flowing water and a bathroom/toilet inside a house. I can cope with poor sanitary conditions more easily than people who were used to high standards of life since their early childhood.

5con: I don't always understand that it is my right to have flowing water, and a bathroom/toilet in my home and that I don't have to feel as if I don't deserve to have them.

THE ALCOHOL

ABOUT ALCOHOL IN MY HOME
AND MY ALCOHOLIC FATHER

Memories about my father.

Alcohol had a place in our home since I can remember, almost always accompanied by arguing, insults, fights, and violence.

My father's parents were both alcoholics.

Heaving guests from neighbourhood at home was always equal to drinking some amount of alcohol.

I remember my drunk father charging to a kitchen (back then placed in children's bedroom) looking for a knife or an axe, because he was enraged with our distant uncle who was sleeping drunk on a bed in the third room (the future kitchen), and my father wanted to kill him. My mother managed to stop him from doing that.

I was few years old when I was given a cheap red wine to try its taste. The smell of it and bitter taste of alcohol in it made me to choke on it, so all the wine came out through my nostrils burning them.

I remember my drunk father half-lying next to the wall on the floor in the attic, few steps from the entrance. He was coming back from some libation, but he didn't have the strength to reach the door. His forehead was cut right above his right eyebrow, blood was streaming from that cut. His eyes were all glassy and not understanding what they see, like he wouldn't be there anymore, like he would be just an empty shell.

I remember my drunk father sleeping on a bed after he came back from a place where he was drinking. Even though he was deep asleep, his eyes were wide open.

I remember our mother telling us that one time during winter our father was found lying drunk on a side of the road in a snowdrift while it was still snowing. Some man who was walking by that place found him and brought him home. My father was almost dead cold.

I remember going on a 'business trip' by foot with my father to a nearby village, to some farmer from whom he was about to buy a male goat. When we got to the farmer's home the drinking began and it lasted for few hours. I remember telling my father I wanted to go back home already. When we finally head back home my father was fully drank, he was swaying, he was unable to force the goat on a chain to follow him. Eventually my father fell into the ditch next to the road, full of broken branches from the trees growing nearby and the goat run away. I remember calling to my father: 'Daddy let's go, I want to go home!', repeatedly. In the end some man who was driving his car on that road took us in and drove us home. I jumped out from the car first and run upstairs to our apartment, just to be far away from my father. I told my mother what happened, she looked through the window with me, so we could see how my father is falling out of the car on the ground.

I remember my father ripping pages from our books to have something to use as a kindling to start a fire in the furnace.

Over the years my mother, out of depression and hopelessness or want, was often drinking with my father.

On my First Communion I received a bicycle from my godfather. Once my father found out the combination for the bicycle lock, he started to use it and broke it eventually. The bike was designed for a small teenager, but my father's weight was over 100 kg.

My father had the tendency to punish me and my siblings for signs of disobedience (e.g., returning home later than we were told to) by spanking our bare buttocks with his hand palm or his belt. He also used to twist my ear or grab the back of my neck and squeeze it tight when he wanted to force me to apologize for something or tell him something he wanted to hear.

I remember my father having a very long phase where he would start drinking on Friday and end it on Tuesday or Wednesday, just to start

drinking again next Friday. This cycle would repeat itself for many weeks. During those times at every Friday, and sometimes even Thursday, I was asking my mother for permission to leave home and spent the rest of the week at my grandparents' place, because I was too scared of staying at home, knowing all too well my father's behaviour when he was drunk.

I remember sitting at the table in the morning, there was my mother, an uncle and my father who was pouring vodka to a glass. Because of the stress I felt during the previous night, when adults were drinking, my hands were shaking uncontrollably. My mother tried to point it out to my father, to make him aware how his drinking is affecting me. 'Look how his hands are shaking', she said. My father's first response was: 'He's a young alcoholic'. After that my mother said to him that I'm shaking because I'm scared of his drinking. For a second, I could see on his face guilt, but he chased it away with some pointless comment.

I remember my father taking one of our dogs, called Maks, to the attic. He tied a rope on one of the wooden beams, placed it around the dog's neck, and then he told me to turn the radio on, and make it as loud as possible, so no one would hear the dog's cries. I remember Maks trying to run away, I remember him squealing and waving his paws in the air as my father pulled him up on the rope. He kept the dog up until it suffocated to death. Afterwards my father said that he did it, because we were too poor to be able to feed Maks.

I remember my father hanging another dog, called Murzyn (Niger) on a branch of a very old pear that grew on our ground lot. He did it because he decided that the dog was too wild and unpredictable after it attacked one of our goats a couple of times.

I remember standing in our ground plot, with my back leaning on a tall wooden cage for rabbits. It was an early spring with first warmth of the sun. I went there because I wanted to mentally rest and have some peace of mind. My father was drinking since the

morning that day, and he was roaming between the village and home, either looking for something to drink or trying to start a fight with my mom. I was hoping he wouldn't be on that ground plot, but he wandered over there and passing me by, he looked at me with the same disgust he was serving my mother when looking at her while he was drunk, and he said to me: 'What now, you Judas? Your mother turned you against me'.

I remember waking up in the middle of the night because I've heard my mother crying. She and my father were both drunk at that time. After listening I understood they were talking about the puppy, which we had for a few days. It turned out that my father grabbed that puppy and threw it against the wall on the attic, killing it this way. He did it because supposedly the puppy bit his hand.

I remember my father insulting my mother on many occasions with names such as whore, bitch, slut, prostitute, etc. My mother was insulting him back at such times to defend herself.

I remember our father explaining to me and my brothers that the only reason he had to have children and start a family was to avoid being enforced in the Army to do the Obligatory Military Service, because back in the time of his youth a husband with a family was treated by the government institutions as the only one who can provide his family with food.

My parents were unemployed for most of the time. Each time my father had a job he would spend some of the money he earned, or most of it, on alcohol.

When my mother got a job in a seaside town, one hundred kilometres from home, my father got a job as well in a village around twenty kilometres from home. He was spending most of his salary on alcohol, and he wasn't taking good care of us, he didn't even try to do his best. When my mother came to visit for one weekend, he demanded from her to quit the job she had, because according to

him taking care of the kids and working at the same time was too much of a job. My mother was seriously considering quitting the job and staying at home, but me and my brothers convinced her to pack and go back to work the next day, because we knew that if she would stay things would only get worse for all of us, her especially.

When my oldest brother turned eighteen years old, and our mother didn't live with us anymore, my father gave him an ultimatum. Either he would give him all his scholarship money that he was getting thanks to his school achievement, or he would be forced to leave the house and live on his own. My brother declined to give the money up, and he was told to leave home. When our mother found out about it, she contacted her parents, and they agreed to take my brother in. This way my brother moved out.

I remember my father always blaming others for his poor lot, and the more control he would lose, the more he would blame us all for everything, especially my mother. On the day I was about to leave home and move to my maternal grandparents (my mother and my oldest brother weren't living with us anymore) my father said to me: 'You all destroyed me at my foundations'. And he meant it.

The feelings that my father gave me.

1. Seeing how my father hangs a dog, the dog that I really loved, made me feel terrified, hopeless, and powerless. It made me feel that I can't protect something that is important to me, because my father is in full control of every aspect of my life, and that he could easily destroy everything in it if he only wanted to.
2. Hearing my father insulting my mother made me feel scared for her well-being. I could never know when insults would turn into a fight, and my mom would end up getting a beating from him. It also made me think that he doesn't love her at all, and that he punishes her for his own weaknesses and issues.
3. Receiving physical punishment made me feel afraid of my father.
4. The determination with which my father was squeezing my neck or twist my ear, made me feel that he enjoys causing me physical pain, and that he truly hates me.
5. Watching how my father spends most of the money on alcohol made me realize that we couldn't count on him when it comes to our survival. It also made me think that he didn't care about us at all.
6. Knowing that my father uses our books as a kindling without our permission, made me feel that nothing in the house belonged to me, and that he could take everything from me.
7. Hearing my father insulting me for taking my mother's side made me feel unworthy and being punished for doing something morally right. It also made me feel hated by him.
8. My father's anger, alcoholism and brutality made me feel fully dependent, awkward, and powerless, terrified of my own home, scared for my wellbeing, scared for my mother's life. It made me truly hate him. It made me to dream about his demise. It made me feel the desire to end his life with my own hands.

How those feelings influenced my behaviour.

1. For many years I tended to act like an irresponsible, co-dependent man-child who was unable to fully take care of himself. I was powerless, hopeless, and detached from the steering wheel of my life. I would let things unravel in my life without my intervention and I let other people to shape my life as they saw it fit.
2. I am always convinced that I will not be able to help people I care about or that I won't be able to save anyone or anything in the face of real danger. It always feels like I would be the one who would freeze or even flee, and thus be completely useless and powerless.
3. I am highly afraid of physical harm, and I don't do things that could potentially seriously injure my body. Quite often my brain projects scenarios of me getting injured in this or that way to inform me what kind of threat current situation and place may contain. I am also afraid of being suddenly assaulted verbally or physically by suspiciously looking strangers passed on the street.
4. I am always afraid that the person I will fall in love with and that's supposed to love me back and take care of me, will turn against me, will hate me, and violate me. That is also one of the main reasons why I avoid entering intimate romantic relationships.
5. For most of my life I felt unworthy of attention and love. I would punish myself mentally for that on many occasions.
6. I am overly protective when it comes to my belongings, my books, and devices. I am not eager to lend them to someone and I don't like letting other people to use them.
7. For the most of my life I would never try to be the defender of anyone. I would also pretend that I didn't see nor hear anything when bad things were happening just to save my own skin.
8. My default behaviour is often passive aggressive.

Pros and cons.

1pro: It gave me perfect chance to observe how people take care of others and thanks to that I have learned to never let others to steer my own life.

1con: I have lost many years of my life on playing idle.

2con: It prevents me from seeking intimate relationships, because I see myself as a person who would not be helpful nor protective. I see myself as a true coward.

3pro: I know that I will never punish myself physically and that I will never take my own life, because the fear of physical pain will keep me away from it. I can scan my environment for possible danger it may contain, and that gives me the chance to avoid it.

3con: I am unable to separate the fear of physical harm from caring about my health, so whenever I need to or want to do something potentially dangerous, I need to turn both off, and that puts me in even greater risk. I have problems with communicating with people who I don't know yet, I just want them to leave me alone.

4pro: When it comes to any kind of relationships and interacting with people, I am highly sensitive to any signs of negative feelings and dysfunctional behaviours. That gives me the chance to avoid toxic and disrespectful people. I only befriend those who over time will turn out to be worthy of my friendship, my trust, my true respect, and my attention.

4con: It prevents me from creating and sustaining low-profile relationships that could be useful in time. I only make room in my life for few members of my family and only few trusted friends. At this point no one else is allowed to sustain a full-time relation with me. I also don't let colleges from work to become more than that.

5pro: It forced me to learn how to accept and love myself. I understood that I need to learn how to be independent, how to feel good when I am on my own and how to give myself the attention I need. I don't see myself through the prism of what other people say or think about me.

5con: I strive to not attach value to what people say about me, even if the things they say are good things. Whenever someone gives me attention, I feel uncomfortable, and I immediately want to get rid of it. I don't want to be helpful; I don't want people to ask me about my private life, my activities, achievements, and future plans. I only want them to leave me alone, so I wouldn't have to give them my focus, because I have the need to focus all my attention and focus on me and the things I do.

6pro: I respect my belongings and I take good care of them, so they would serve me for as long as possible.

6con: I don't trust people when it comes to sharing my belongings and devices with them. I always suspect that they will for sure misuse them, break them or even steal them from me.

7con: If someone would suddenly need my help or protection from physical danger I would most likely flee and pretend that I didn't see anything, or I would freeze and be unable to help them either way.

8con: I punish others with my behaviour, because of my own issues.

I was unable to find any pros for points: 2, 7, 8.

THE TERROR

ABOUT THE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
AND TERROR IN MY HOME

Memories about the domestic violence and terror.

I remember being only few years old, and it was night-time. Me and my siblings were already in our beds when suddenly our parents started to fight in their bedroom, but in no time the fight moved to our bedroom. My father was a lot stronger than my mother, so she was losing in that fight. He was beating her; she was wrestling with him trying to defend herself. At some point he pushed her against the side of a cabinet and a wall, she slid down to the floor and went unconscious out of exhaustion and pain. Our father took the iron bucket in which we kept water, and he splashed all the cold water left in it right in her face to wake her up. When she did regain her consciousness, she was very weak, and she was convinced that she was dying. So, she started to call to me and my siblings by our names, she hugged us one by one and said: 'I am dying now. I love you and I am sorry for everything. Forgive me.' Me and my siblings were crying and calling to her: 'Mommy, please don't die!' Our father stood next to us, and the only thing he said was: 'Don't pay attention to your mother, she is just hysterical.' He was sober.

I remember lying in my bed at late night and listening to my parents fighting in the kitchen. When the fighting stopped, and my father went back to his bed I got up and walked to the kitchen to see what happened to my mother. On my way there my father said: 'Don't go there, mother is lying in there.' I went in anyway, and in the dark I saw my mother half kneeling and half lying on the floor in her purple night dress, with her face to the ground, her hair around her head and arms next to it lying on the floor motionless. She was crying, and I only managed to say: 'Mommy.' But she couldn't hear me, and my father was saying to me: 'Leave her there, let her cry.' So, I went back to my bed.

I remember crying in my bed, which I was sharing with my sister who was visiting us for few days. I was crying because our parents were fighting again in their bedroom, and I was frightened that my

father would seriously hurt my mother. Then my sister said to me: 'Why do you cry? If they want to fight, then let them. It's not our business, it's theirs.'

I remember running back to our apartment, because one of my brothers told me that my father beaten my mom that morning and now the Police is in our home. When I walked in, I saw two Police officers asking my mother questions. My mom was still in her night dress, she was sitting on one of our beds, and she was brushing her hair so they could see how much hair she lost when my father attacked her. Then the officers went into the kitchen, and I went there with them, to see my father who hid in there. He was sitting on a chair, and he was plucking feathers from a chicken, his face was in tears. When the Police asked him about what he did to my mother, he pretended that he doesn't know anything about it, and that he is just preparing a meal for his family. He was sober.

I remember listening to what was happening in my parents' bedroom, because we had a guest, it was late night already, and they were all drinking. At some point my mother turned on TV because she felt sudden want to play her favourite video game. My father didn't like that idea. He started demanding her to turn that 'stupid thing' off, and when she refused few times, I recognised from the noises happening behind the wall and from what our guest was saying, that my father grabbed my mother, slammed her against the wall and started to choke her. Luckily our guest managed to pull him away from her.

I remember me and my brothers trying to defend our mother during some fights, yelling at our father to leave her alone. Or yelling at them both to stop fighting.

I remember me and my brothers running out of the apartment to the attic, because our parents' fight moved to our bedroom. My father was drunk that day, and he was insulting and threatening our mother, which was the reason for that fight. Their fight also moved

out of the apartment, my father run out of it first and when my mother chased after him, he slammed the doors shut, and she got stacked between the door and the door frame. He was pushing hard trying to crush her, and he almost broke her arm with it. Luckily, he was really drunk, so he stumbled, and my mother managed to push the door open, so my father lost his balance and fell on the floor. My brothers were standing on a side, each of them leaning at the wooden beam, scared and silent. I was trying to run away out of fear, and at the same time I didn't want to leave my mother alone, so I turned back, standing far away from them all, and I started to yell at my father: 'Leave her alone, you stupid man!'

I remember coming back home after a weekend that I've spent at my grandparents' house. When I walked in, I've noticed that one of the cabinets on the wall was missing its glass shelves and all the glasses that were standing on them. When I asked about what happened, my brothers told me that our father got drunk and during an argument with our mom about possible divorce he run out of the apartment and came back with a crowbar. He said that he will be making a division of property, and he slammed those glass shelves with the crowbar right in the middle.

I remember coming back home, either from a school or after a weekend. When I walked into my parents' bedroom it turned out that the TV was missing and the glass in the window was broken. When I asked about what happened, it turned out that my father was drunk again, and in the middle of an argument about which channel to watch, he grabbed the TV and throw it through the window, so my mother couldn't watch the channel she liked.

I remember watching TV in the evening with my siblings, our parents were already going to bed, but suddenly they started to fight. My father was insulting my mother. When she was trying to get out of the bed, and she was already siting on the verge of it, my father kicked her back hard, so she fell on the floor. When she sat on in the chair, he took one of the big, heavy pillows that they have in bed and

throw it at her with all the strength he had. He was sober. We offered our mother that she could sleep in one of our beds, but she refused, and after my father calmed down, she went back to their bed.

I remember standing in the door frame between my parent's bedroom and the kitchen, pressing my back against one side of it and holding the opposite side with my hands as firm as I could. My parents were arguing and insulting each other, they wanted to fight, but I managed to get between them and not let them to reach one another. Even when they were trying to reach to each other over my arms, and my mother was threatening my father with the iron furnace poker, and they were both yelling at me to move, I didn't move. I was yelling back at them: 'You will not argue! You will not fight! It's supposed to be normal here!'

The feelings that those events gave me.

1. Watching my unconscious mother telling us that she is dying, gave me the amounts of fear and despair I never had before nor after.
2. Seeing my mother lying in the dark on the kitchen floor, sobbing after my father have beaten her, made me feel clueless and helpless.
3. Hearing my sister acting like me crying out of fear was something weird and hard to understand, made me feel surprised, clueless, and pathetic.
4. Watching the Police in my apartment gave me a little hope, but seeing the lack of effect their visit made on our lives made me feel, that what was happening in our family couldn't be stopped.
5. Hearing my father assaulting my mother because of a video game made me feel helpless, scared and torn between the want to help and the want to hide.
6. The times me and my brothers were trying to defend our mother, with no effect, made me feel powerless, frustrated, and angry.
7. Going back home and finding out that some of the furniture is broken or is missing because of my father, made me feel embarrassed and endangered, it made me feel angry at my father, and it made me hate him.
8. Knowing that my father is a coward who assaults only those who are weaker than him, made me despise him and hate him.

How those feelings influenced my behaviour.

1. I keep my mother at the distance and keep her far away from my private affairs, because on the level of my subconsciousness I already said my goodbyes to her, I often feel like she is supposed to be dead already and I am supposed to continue living without her.
2. I don't know how to offer help. Whenever I see someone in the need of help it made me feel uncomfortable and confused, and I want to leave that person alone as fast as possible.
3. My default mindset says: other people are cruel, thoughtless, and illogical, they will only make you feel pathetic, guilty, and confused, so don't let them in.
4. I don't trust the Police and I don't believe that they exist to help. I see them as helpless, useless institution. In case of an emergency, I would be unwilling to call them for help.
5. Moments like that one made my 'fight or flee' reaction to be set as: freeze, be frighten, clueless and helpless. In times of danger my body weakens.
6. I'm not eager to defend people because I don't see the point of it. My subconsciousness tells me that it would made no difference. Some part of me even wonders if the assaulted person isn't by any chance getting what they deserve.
7. I was never inviting anyone to my home, and I was never talking about what was happening in it.
8. I automatically despise people who are aggressive, abusive, or drunk. My self-defence mechanism is the strongest when it comes to interacting with people who remind me even in the slightest of my father's qualities and behaviour.

Pros and cons.

1c. I feel like an orphan, even though I still have one parent that cares about me.

2c. Helping people in need never makes me feel good, even when I decide to help I still feel like it is the wrong thing to do, like they should be helping themselves without bothering me.

3p. I don't let what people say about me to define what I think about myself. I also learned how to not use trust in everyday interactions with people. It helps me to remain steady.

3c. I have problems with creating new friendships or opening to my current friends and family.

4c. In case of emergency my attitude towards the Police could put myself or someone else at even bigger risk.

5c. In many situations I am helpless and unable to defend myself or someone near me that I care about.

6c. It is very difficult for me to help someone who is being assaulted or punished. I also tend to judge those victims as the ones who did something wrong.

7c. I don't know how to be a host and enjoy a presence of guests in my home. I only want to get rid of them as fast as possible, I only wait for them to leave, because I feel like they shouldn't be there. I am afraid that they will find out that my home is filled with alcohol, domestic violence etc., even though it is not true anymore.

8p. It keeps me away from people who are aggressive, alcoholics, etc. Thanks to it the circle of people who are the closest to me is healthy.

I was unable to find any pros for points: 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7.

I was unable to find any cons for points: 8.

THE DOG'S HUNGER

ABOUT YEARS OF POVERTY, BEGGING
AND LACK OF FOOD IN MY HOME

Memories about the poverty.

I remember that having a toothpaste in our home was a luxury, most of the time we did not have it. We also did not have hot running water, so if I wanted to brush my teeth in the morning before the school and the fire in furnace was not burning, I had to use cold water and salt instead of toothpaste.

I remember my father sending me and my siblings to the stores to ask for food, promising that our parents will pay for it at a later date. I also remember my father sending my siblings to the local priest or to the church organist to borrow money from them when we had nothing to eat.

I remember going to stores alone or with my brothers asking for the cardboard boxes, so we could have something to burn in the furnace, sometimes by a chance of luck we were finding some food in them.

I remember one time our parents went to visit, and drink with, some distant relative of ours in a different village. They left me and my siblings alone, we were only around 6-10 years old. We were hungry but we had nothing to eat. Luckily for us, in one of the boxes brought from the store we found few sausages. They were already after the date of use, so they had distinctive sour taste. Fortunately, we had a strong mustard in our fridge, so we used it to cover the sour taste these sausages had and ate them.

I remember that many times the only thing we had to eat was either dry bread with a glass of goat's milk, or dry slice of bread moist with water and dipped in sugar, or slices of bread dipped in egg fried on a pan, or nothing at all.

I remember that as a kid, when I had access to food, I was able to eat the entire one-kilogram bread loaf sliced horizontally in half and filled with liverwurst and tomatoes in one sitting.

I remember often feeling an urge to steal something from people or a store, either a toy or something that I really liked, because I couldn't afford to have it.

I remember my mother writing to some non-profit institution placed in Germany which was helping people in need, by providing them with second-hand clothing to aid us.

I remember that my teachers at school were always acting weird and were very surprised whenever I said that I didn't go anywhere on holidays, or that I couldn't afford to pay 30zl for a school trip.

The feelings that those events gave me.

1. I felt ashamed of my breath for years, and I am still unsure of it. It also felt unfair to have such lack in personal hygiene, when it was caused by factors I could not influence.
2. Whenever I was sent to stores, to ask for food, I felt used and ashamed. It felt unfair to be sent with such task, it made me think of my father as a coward, who doesn't want to take the responsibility of sustaining his family.
3. Feeding on food left in the boxes from the stores made me feel pathetic and ashamed of myself.
4. I always felt sick and unclean when stealing, because I knew it was not the right thing to do, but the want to have them and the feeling of poverty were so strong on me, they felt like a permission to steal.
5. Every time we received a big sack of clothing from charity organisations, I felt overjoyed, excited, and impatient, because I could not wait to find out what clothes I would get this time.
6. The teacher's response always made me confused, because poverty was my daily bread and I couldn't understand, why they couldn't understand something so basic. It also made feel poor and sad, and explaining my situation to anyone was too hard for me.

How those feelings influenced my behaviour.

1. My breath was one of the reasons for which I was eager to avoid intimate contacts or to not stand very close to someone, because I was always afraid that they would feel the stink coming out of my mouth.
2. I really don't like to shop. Facing the checkout counter always makes me feel poor.
3. I will eat anything I can find in the fridge or in the cupboards that is 'food likely to be soon after the date of use', so it wouldn't go to waste. I don't like to open new packs of food unless the previous one is not finished. Since I can remember I was always categorizing food on my plate as follows: the food I don't like and the food I do like. To be sure that I would eat everything from my plate I would allow myself to eat the things I liked only after I would eat the things I don't like.
4. Every time a shop assistant approaches me, I immediately feel guilty, and I am sure that they will accuse me of trying to steal something from the store.
5. Every piece of clothing I don't want to wear any more, I pass to non-profit organizations specialized in providing poor people with second-hand clothing.
6. In time, I started to lie about the places I visited during summer vacations, even though I didn't go anywhere, and to every idea of a class trip etc., I started to say: 'I don't' want to. I don't feel like it'. It was easier to be antisocial than to talk about poverty.

Pros and cons.

1c. Because of lack of proper oral hygiene and lack of proper education on that subject, I developed an aggressive form of gum disease around age of eighteen, diagnosed five years later.

2p. Thanks to my dislike for shopping I can save a lot of money that I would most likely spend on the products I don't even need.

2c. My mind still doesn't understand that I am not poor anymore. No matter how much money I can have on my bank account, my mind still has problems with seeing that money as wealth, it just doesn't click.

3p. I have very strong respect for food.

3c. Feeling hunger so often in childhood plus my eating tendencies trained my organism to store extra fat basically from everything I eat and as often as possible just in case I wouldn't be able to eat anything in the nearest future. I struggle with excess weight since I was ten years old.

4p. I've learned to respect someone's property more than my own.

4c. I was a potential criminal.

5p. I buy new clothes only when I need them, and I make good use of the clothing I don't want to wear any more.

6c. Over time this pattern did spread to my entire life. Lying about how I am, and how my life is has become a norm to me. It took me few years to replace lies with silence. Now, when I don't want to explain something, I just don't speak, but even that is uncomfortable.

I was unable to find any pros for points: 1, 6.

I was unable to find any cons for points: 5.

THE MARRIAGE

ABOUT THE RELATIONSHIP
OF MY PARENTS

Memories about my parents' marriage.

I remember that my parents were often bringing up the topic of possible divorce during their fights. But for years it was always idle talk, shouted in anger. It was disturbing because I never knew what would happen next. Weather the fighting stop, or would it rage on with more hatred? It was also confusing, because I could not understand why two people who supposedly cannot stand each other are not turning those threats into reality. I was awaiting many times for something to happen. After many fights of this type I said to myself: "This is it. This time it will be over for sure. They will get divorced, and we won't have to live with our father anymore". But time after time nothing was happening, and when my parents finally did end up divorced, I was already a teenager living with my grandparents.

I remember that communication between my parents was often very bad, and my mother was the one who was often trying to reach out as the first one, or tried to make things right with words, or trying to stop the upcoming fight with words before the situation would get worse. My father was the opposite of that, he was often lying and using vulgar words to show his "affection", he was highly reactive and aggressive. The lack of healthy communication and their dysfunctional relationship was a perfect reflection of the relationships their own parents had.

I remember that my father was often using insults against my mother to punish her for the wrongs he was doing himself, like: accusing her of being a whore and sleeping with other men, when he was the one who most likely cheated on her with another woman; accusing her parents for badmouthing him and trying to destroy their marriage, when it was his mother who was brainwashing him against his own wife; insulting her and accusing her of brainwashing us against him when in fact these were his own deeds and words that made us turn our backs on him.

The feelings that those events gave me.

1. Hearing for years about divorce that wasn't happening made me feel very confused. Each time the topic was brought up it made me gain hope about better future and some certainty that it will happen soon. However, the next day when nothing was done about it and those claims turned into empty words, all my hopes for a better future were dying yet again, and again.
2. The quality of communication between my parents, mixed with many other qualities of their relationship, made me feel hopeless and sad, because it made me think that it is not possible for two people who supposedly love/loved each other to reach consensus, to respect each other with words, to be honest, to be responsible, etc.
3. The methods my father used against my mother and against us made me feel victimized most of all, but also confused, because I couldn't understand why he, an adult, would behave this way and be so irresponsible and unfair towards us, his own family.

How those feelings influenced my behaviour.

1. I stopped believing adults. I stopped believing that they can or want to make their lives better.
2. The concept of a relationship my parents' example taught me was wrong, so I never knew how to create healthy romantic relationship.
3. Such treatment made me helpless in situations when I was being treated unfair by other people. It made me convinced that I am always supposed to feel victimized, no matter of the circumstances.

Pros and cons.

1p. It helped me to develop a system in which I don't accept what I hear from other people as true or untrue. I simply accept that someone said something, and then I analyse it to understand the reasoning or motivation behind the words I hear, what effect they are meant to have on me, what reaction they are meant to trigger.

1c. I have a strong tendency to see adults as even more helpless and unreliable than adolescents.

2p. I know too well how poor or bad communication looks like, so at least I know what to avoid, and for what quality of communication I should be aiming.

2c. For many, many years I had severe difficulties with properly communicating my thoughts, which I still have, but not as big as they used to be.

3c. My childhood experiences raised me in belief that I am supposed to be a victim of any kind, and it cost me years of self-loathing and swimming in depressive thoughts. I still struggle with this mindset.

I was unable to find any pros for points: 3.

Final words

Initially I intended to present my entire healing path in this one publication. However, during its creation I came to conclusion that it would be easier for me to spread it across three separate titles.

This title was focusing on my childhood and how it programmed me.

Second title will focus on my teenage years and my early twenties.

The last part will focus on my awakening and creating myself anew.

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ISBN 978-83-965435-4-7



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