

Part 3 – The Healing

The path that the goose girl takes in the fairy tale is the guideline for her healing. The therapy of the dependent personality disorder is reflected in the images that become the guideline for liberation from destructive dependencies.

The old king

Where is someone who recognizes the king's daughter or son in people who live in the role of the goose girl, as the old king did - one might ask: someone who understands the deep suffering and recognizes that it cannot be resolved so easily? Shouldn't the goose girl look at herself through the eyes of the old king? Shouldn't every person look at themselves with these understanding eyes?

If the goose girl did this, she would realise that she really is a princess and not an inferior goose girl. Therein lies the secret: people are much more likely and more certain to **believe in their inferiority than in their royal dignity**. Healing occurs precisely when this is understood - and this leads to a new reality of life.

"I have fought against my feelings of inferiority all my life. I often chose those who were particularly strong and powerful, who brought me down the most, who caused me the greatest fear. I often lost, I often won, but ultimately my feeling of inferiority remained. I haven't really changed!"

Mrs. S., who said this, was desperate because she believed so strongly in her inferiority. Her therapist made it clear that she was not inferior. **It was precisely the attempt to fight against her inferiority that made it all the stronger.**

People feel their feelings of inferiority when they lose and, curiously enough, they also feel them when they win. **When they win, they feel them indirectly, namely because they cannot enjoy success.** They cannot enjoy it, for example, because they fear that others will begrudge them their success - and they feel that the feeling of inferiority does not disappear - as they long for. It remains and drives them to even greater deeds. Someone who does not know feelings of inferiority has nothing to fight against. **Inhibitions, insecurity, and self-doubt cannot be resolved with fighting.** Everything we fight against is reinforced without us wanting it.

The old king embodies the divine principle. **God loves you, you are valuable, not inferior**, that was the central message of Jesus, which was understood above all by the poor, the weak and the supposedly inferior.

This is how the fairy tale is meant to be understood: Every person is a king's daughter or a king's son. Anyone who believes that they are just a goose girl can never lose their feelings of inferiority, no matter how hard they try. This is the basis of all change. Faith is the strongest force in people!

The path to the castle at the side of the king's son describes the path to independence. The king is the only independent personality in his kingdom. All others are dependent and reliant on his favor. The king and queen thus symbolize independence and freedom. Of course, **there will never be external independence, since even the most powerful are dependent on others.** It is about **inner independence, about inner kingship**. Only here can a person feel completely free and sovereign. Much of this inner freedom will radiate outward and become visible. **Only a person who lives and loves himself can be happy.**

The roots of feelings of inferiority and weakness are to be found in the "twisted" personality, in the inability to be authentic and to be oneself. Erich Fromm, the well-known psychoanalyst, said: "Whether we are aware of it or not, there is nothing we are more ashamed of than not being ourselves, and there is nothing that makes us prouder and happier than thinking, feeling and saying what is really our own." [4]

The central task is to resolve feelings of inferiority. How does a goose girl become a king's daughter? It will be about reversing what had to develop so disastrously.

What it means to have to go into the iron furnace

When I discuss this fairy tale with patients, I ask about the iron stove and what it symbolizes. Usually the answer comes quickly: the iron stove is the specialist clinic. During therapy you are in a place that protects, provides security and where you can say anything. A transformation process is supposed to take place in the iron stove that frees you from the role of the goose girl.

We see that the king's daughter suffers far too much from a speech block. She is not allowed to say who and what she is. She remains silent and endures her fate. She misses the innocence of a little Conrad, who is free and does what he wants. She herself feels like she is in prison, and one would like to ask why she does not finally say how things really are. She obviously has all the prerequisites to be accepted as a princess. The old king has long since recognized the true connections. She, however, is paralyzed in her own affairs, the development of her personality. She is called upon to finally say and be who she really is - that would be the cure!

We already recognized her silence as a result of emotional abuse. Dependence, which has existed for as long as the princess can remember, is part of her worldview. That's just how it is! She is and remains fixated on her mother and cannot see how she could break free. Worse: she cannot believe that it is her duty to break free and become herself.

Early influences have lasting consequences: We saw that the goose girl had to swear a terrible oath. She was told that she would be killed if she resisted and said something. We realized that the chambermaid embodies the negative sides of the mother. It was the chambermaid's crime that robbed the king's daughter of her happiness. This crime must not be exposed.

Small children are actually fundamentally dependent on their parents. Losing parents is a primal fear. Basic trust develops when parents can give their child the security that it is wanted and safe. If this basic trust cannot be conveyed, a form of dependency develops. **People who lack basic trust spend their whole lives searching for inner support, but cannot find it within themselves. A lack of basic trust often leads to inner chaos.** If the symbiosis between mother and infant has not taken place sufficiently, borderline personality disorder can develop.

Children need their parents to survive. They will do anything to help them. Even many adults fear losing their parents. People with addiction problems in particular suffer from the feeling that they cannot live without their parents, as this has been permanently ingrained in them. This only changes when someone else takes the place of the parents and takes responsibility for the addict - when a new dependency has arisen.

"When my mother died, I thought the world was falling apart."

Mrs. I., who uttered this sentence, was initially unaware of the dependency she had on her mother. Even after her mother's death, she constantly thought about how her mother's death could have been prevented, which hospital would have been the right one, which specialist could have saved her

life. Her inability to come to terms with her mother's death was the reason for examining the dependency dynamics in therapy.

Many people adopt their parents' value systems and opinions without ever questioning them. People with a dependent personality structure represent their parents' opinions in almost all areas of life. This applies to moral ideas, such as sexuality, political convictions and many other attitudes. One has the feeling that such people are not speaking for themselves, but that their dominant mother is speaking through their mouths. Those affected themselves believe that they are expressing their own convictions without realizing that they are still far too caught up in the opinions they have adopted from their parents and that they live and feel them.

Dependence on the opinion of the mother is particularly disadvantageous if the mother devalues, humiliates, defames or shames the daughter (son). The mother can influence the mood as she pleases. Sometimes the influence is so extreme that those affected have no ability to set boundaries. The image of the iron stove is helpful here, insofar as those affected imagine going into this iron stove with the intention of withdrawing from any influence. The steel walls of the stove repel all external influences. In reality, it is necessary for these people to stop contact with the dominant parents. With the help of a therapeutic community, for example, it is important to **acquire all the skills that have remained underdeveloped up to that point**. Sometimes the dependent mother does not accept not being allowed to have contact and complains about the institution that is brainwashing her "child".

From what has been described so far, it is clear that the iron furnace is a process that enables new life. Liberation from destructive dependencies is extremely difficult for people who have had to live in this prison up to that point. Above all, it is associated with fear, and the greatest problem is the great fear of independence. The alternative is the comfortable misery of the goose girl, who can do nothing but complain and only sees salvation in clinging to her mother or to other people on whom she is emotionally dependent.

The iron stove serves to set boundaries against unjustified demands and injuries. It is the symbol of an independence that has remained underdeveloped up to now and that must be acquired. If people's personal boundaries are violated early and repeatedly, this results in them feeling far too at the mercy of others. They neither dare to defend themselves nor to assert their own viewpoints.

The ability to become independent of the opinions of others is also underdeveloped. Criticism is therefore experienced strongly and as devastating. It can take on existential significance for such people. Sometimes it hits me to the core, says a patient in a therapy session in which she talks about her difficult relationship. If he has hurt me, sometimes it takes me a long time to recover. Sometimes it takes several days. The fear of being devalued is particularly evident when the other person is considered superior, when one feels that one is not a match for him/her, for example when the other person is perceived as more eloquent or more skilled in argumentation.

The iron furnace into which one can retreat, which enables one to bring the vulnerable inner core to safety, must become a part of one's personality. Unjustified demands must bounce off the hard iron plates. Every person needs instruments with which to defend themselves appropriately. He will only be valued when he can defend himself and assert his legitimate interests.

When a person with a dependent personality structure begins to change, he will encounter typical resistance. **His fellow people are used to him sacrificing, adapting, harmonizing and giving in.** Therefore, he will initially need the iron stove in particular. Only when everyone has understood that this person can no longer be manipulated can the iron stove be left more often.

It should be emphasized again and again **that small steps in the right direction are the safer path. If you want too much at once, you will overwhelm yourself and easily fall back into old, familiar behavior patterns.** It is therefore also necessary to stay in the iron furnace long enough.

A comparison with inpatient therapy is appropriate here. Within the therapeutic community, the **new behavior patterns and the new self-esteem must be sufficiently consolidated so that it is possible to install them later in the familiar real environment.** A real danger lies in falling back into the destructive role of the goose girl. Time and again, it is seen that patients who showed positive development within the clinic gave up the newly learned behavior patterns in the old environment.

Recognizing your own drama

To be freed from dependence and feelings of inferiority, it is necessary to remove all mental barriers and to be able to see things as they are. It is important to recognize the emotional abuse as the cause of the inner lack of freedom.

The new truth, which is basically the old one but can only now be seen with complete clarity, needs to be worked out and consolidated better and better. One therapeutic tool is writing letters, which should not necessarily be sent. The aim is to represent one's own position in a way that is initially harmless. A patient wrote the following letter:

"Hello mother!

The salutation is deliberate because I don't know what I'm going to write or how. Without a prompt from therapy, I certainly wouldn't have written, although many things have been "stuck in my heart like rusty nails" for years/decades. I'm not going to send this letter. After a few conversations that we had, which I got the impression were more reluctant and uncomprehending on your part, it's pointless.

It will help me to get to the bottom of the reasons for my drinking, my current existence, to recognize them and (perhaps) to be able to continue living differently with them. For years I've had the feeling that I'm not normal, at least in your sense. I still felt and still feel "off-center", not at peace with myself, I experience anxiety (of conflicts, decisions, the new, the unfamiliar - and isn't that life?). I think that's why I ended up drinking, and I can assure you of that, not too little. I'd like to spare you the details - but why?

And again and again the nagging, gnawing, destructive (and disturbing) question: Why? During the day, in countless sleep-disturbed nights, for years! I needed two therapies, detoxifications, the loss of Barbara, the fear of work to understand that the causes lie far back in time, that I lived according to rules of behavior that were taught (forced) to me and that still stick with me today (and make me withdraw to a place where I no longer want to be).

I have only experienced you as very dominant, towards all family members (including father). Everything always had to be done according to your "tip-to-the-tails" (how trivializing!), other (value) ideas are simply not allowed, condemned, negated - and you are proud of it. In doing so, you have ultimately disempowered everyone (even "hospitalized" father) and smothered them: "I only

mean well!" You have pulled out all the stops: accusations, manipulation with guilt and... That alone could be a novel - can you actually understand that I am sick of this, must be sick of it? Destroyed family relationships, isolation, incomprehension (as soon as all of this is addressed) and above all: don't question anything!

What happened to me is called emotional abuse here (I can literally see you wincing). I know that it was done to you too and that you "couldn't do anything else". That doesn't make it any better or worse, it's not an accusation, but a statement (you will see it differently). I have to live my life, lead it, learn to make my own decisions and not follow an inner (your) voice (to obey: Listen here...- how I hate that speech bubble!) or to resist and paralyze myself against it. There are various addictions and they are physically damaging to me, that is over now. I hope that I will then see opportunities for myself and be able to live them, but any beginning is better than the present! If you can, try to understand me - if not, is that good, or bad, or does it not matter? In any case, I can't go on like this, so things must and will be different."

Recognizing the compulsion to repeat

It is a fact that people tend to repeat their childhood drama. Without wanting to and without being aware of it, we repeat this drama as adults on a different stage, just with different actors, but with the same theme. The drama usually intensifies and the emotional suffering increases. Psychosomatic illnesses or addictions often point to problems that we do not want to see. Overcoming difficulties involves everyone learning to understand their own personal drama. It can be worked through and mourned in therapy.

If we look at our lives from a distance, we can see that a love story was staged early on. It is the love story between mother and child as well as between father and child. The fact that this love story does not always end happily is described in the fairy tale The Goose Girl. Many parents are not able to accept their child, love it and finally let it go. They abuse it for their own selfish purposes.

As we have seen, abuse leads to dependency. To receive the unconditional love of one's parents is a deep need of every human being and is essential for healthy development. Unresolved problems and conflicts need to be dealt with, emotional wounds need to be healed.

If this is not possible in the relationship with the parents, those affected unconsciously look for partners with whom they can make a new attempt. Because they could not save their addicted father, they now want to save their addicted partner. Because the parents could not give love and recognition, they find with dreamlike certainty a partner who cannot give love and recognition either. Anyone who was kept small and dependent by their parents looks for a partner who dominates them, controls them, etc.

Many patients remain standing in front of the iron stove during therapy and do not want to go in.

For many years, Mrs. G. suffered from psychosomatic disorders such as migraines and disc problems. These indicated psychological overload.

Mrs. G. numbed her chronic pain with analgesics (painkillers). She became dependent on medication. Various hospital stays did not lead to any real change, but only to short-term relief. As soon as she returned to her home environment, the symptoms quickly worsened.

Mrs. G. had learned very early on to adapt, to obey and to live up to the expectations of others. She was still working in the company where she had started as an apprentice twenty-seven years ago. She had never allowed herself to change jobs, although she had received a number of attractive offers. Her ability to work was often exploited because she never fought back or said "no" when she actually wanted to.

During therapy, Ms. G. became aware of her dependence on her mother. The many therapy sessions made it clear to her that she had lived her life only according to her mother's rules, wishes and needs.

She was also unable to find happiness in a relationship. A brief affair ended with her mother forbidding her from having contact with the partner she considered unsuitable.

Mrs. G. had unrealistic fears of her dominant mother that seemed insurmountable to her. She was unable to find a way to break free from the dependent relationship with her mother.

During therapy, Ms. G. realized that she could only significantly improve her situation by radically changing her entire life situation. She would actually have to break away from her dominant mother in order to be able to lead an independent life. At first, this was unimaginable for her. Her entire life plan was far too tied to her mother's existence. Above all, feelings of guilt would arise if she openly decided for her own needs and against those of her mother.

Grief

In the iron stove, grief literally bursts out of the princess. Healing is unthinkable without grief. Anyone who has recognized their own drama knows how much they were at the mercy of overwhelming forces, how much they had to hurt themselves and others.

After numerous therapies, Mr. T. had not found his true self. He had studied psychological and therapeutic literature, completed courses and further training, and was ultimately a successful telephone counselor.

However, he could not shake off his deep despair. He felt hopeless and saw no point in continuing to live - he was actually suicidal. His energy had been used up in all the futile attempts to be a valuable person. The therapist confirmed that he had indeed had a difficult life, that he had been oppressed and abused from an early age, that he had hurt and abused others and himself. Mr. T. could not hold back his tears, he cried uncontrollably. At the same time, he felt how liberating his tears and his genuine grief were. They were the basis for healing and new hope.

There are tears of anger that are often confused with sadness. Anyone who cries out of anger will not feel relieved afterwards, but rather worse. Real grief work can be recognized by the fact that the tears bring relief.

They say that time heals all wounds - but this is doubtful. Wounds only heal when grief leads to a "yes" to one's own fate. In grief, a person learns to come to terms with his fate.

The therapeutic community

Every day is precious - a moment can be everything.

We become guilty of our task

when we become absorbed in the past or future

- Karl Jaspers

The process that must take place in the iron furnace requires great effort and, above all, courage. The dependent personality traits vary in intensity. In severe cases in which physical illnesses have also occurred, such as addiction, inpatient psychotherapy is often necessary.

The Goose Girl's problems are best addressed in a therapeutic community.

People with a wide range of difficulties come together in a community and learn to understand and deal with their problems better through living together. The therapy group has the task of holding up a mirror and confronting destructive behavior. This is done in a »caring manner«. Criticism is not meant to destroy, but to »wake people up«. Another task of the therapeutic community is **»encouragement«**. The **»new«** behavior is accompanied by fear, which is why it has been avoided up to now. Social learning is necessary in the sense of maturation. Everyone who comes to the therapeutic community develops their problems in a way that is typical for them. This is necessary at first because it is the only way to find out and experience what needs to be worked on.

Therapy for dependent personality disorder is difficult and, in severe cases, takes many years. At first, these patients tend not to attract attention in the therapeutic community. They try to adapt, are always friendly and willingly take on all tasks.

They show "no teeth" and there are rarely arguments with them. They try to be "good" patients and always have the right intentions. From a distance, we have to recognize that they "install" the dependent behavior patterns in the clinic as well. This is to be expected at first. If they are not offended or criticized, they believe they are making progress. This view must be thoroughly shaken and questioned. If a patient with the goose girl syndrome remains "easy to care for" for others, the therapy will fail.

However, it must be emphasized that every patient who comes into the therapeutic community must **first develop the destructive patterns. He/she should get to know these, and only then can a personality change be worked on.** People with the Goose Girl Syndrome do not really feel like adults, and so it is normal for them to submit to more dominant patients and try to please them in every way.

They take on the work in the community that is unpleasant and that others don't want to do. They make themselves available as emotional garbage cans when others want to relieve themselves. They comfort, sympathize and share in the suffering when someone is in trouble. They organize and work as best they can for the community and generally neglect their own needs and concerns. They try to stabilize their self-esteem by being there for others. **They are happy when they can help, they feel empty, worthless and lonely when they can't.** In fact, therapeutic treatment only becomes effective when this behavior is recognized as self-destructive and a turnaround is made.

As already mentioned, they try to stabilize their self-esteem by doing a lot for others. When it comes to taking their own problems seriously in therapy, it is usually more difficult. This is because they fear hurtful criticism. They also find it difficult to stand up for their own interests and to make room for their issues in group therapy. Progress in therapy can be recognized by the fact that their own drama is taken seriously and the typical difficulties are dealt with.

Visions

With the help of Kirlian photography, the energy field that surrounds living beings can be made visible. Even before the leaf of a plant unfolds, for example, the corresponding energy field into which it develops is already present.

The same applies to mental energy, which inspires and drives people. Everyone has more or less useful conscious and unconscious ideas about their life. Everyone follows their own personal myth, or so it is assumed in depth psychology theory.

This refers to a person's life script. Parents work on a script for their child's future life from the very beginning, consciously and unconsciously. The life script is basically the idea for a person's life. Just as a film's idea develops into a script, the script that significantly shapes the child's life develops from the parental instructions.

This process is beautifully reflected in the fairy tale Sleeping Beauty. Twelve fairies come to the child's cradle and wish it something good, the thirteenth wishes it something terrible. These fairies illustrate the different aspects of the parents that contribute to personality development. There are positive and beneficial aspects as well as negative, blocking and harmful aspects.

If we look at the life script of the goose girl, the mother's negative instructions and wishes quickly become clear, which found their way into the daughter's personality and became the determining factor in her life. The life script of people with a dependent personality structure is always strongly influenced by doing a lot for others, having to sacrifice themselves and not being able to exist alone. They do not live their own lives, but are always "related to someone else". As partners, they live each other's lives; they lack their own meaning, their own task, their own initiative.

Let us remember the horse Falada, which symbolized the life energies. Its torso was cut off, so that only the talking head remained. The development and liberation of the life energy is therefore an urgent task that can only succeed if the life script is rewritten. To stay with the image of the film, **it is now a matter of writing the script yourself and taking over the direction of your own life**. This is a huge change, a 180 degree turn, so to speak.

This requires visions - only strong inner images have the tendency to become reality. Everyone needs visions, because only through them is change possible.

An exercise can help to set the necessary processes in motion:

Close your eyes and try to look at yourself from a distance. First of all, be clear about where you are in your life here and now. Look at your age and realize that the average life expectancy for Central Europeans is 75 to 80 years.

How many years do you have left to live? What do you want to do with it?

- First, imagine yourself lying on your own deathbed.

Let your life pass by: first the years that you already know. - Take your time!

- Then imagine the remaining years - those you don't yet know.
 - How will your life continue if you don't change anything and just let everything go as before? Imagine this as intensely as possible. Picture your life as realistically as possible. After you have practiced this for at least five minutes, devote yourself to the next task:
- Now imagine that you are becoming independent, that you want to change something. First, break the shackles of dependency in your inner images.
 - Where do you want to start defending yourself?
 - Who would you like to tell your opinion to?
 - Which relationships should you end because they are »>toxic«?
 - What would you like to do, something that you have not dared to do so far?
- Now return to your current reality. Only when you have decided to give your life a decisive turn can you break the shackles of the past.
 - It may be that you no longer let people do whatever they want with you;
 - you may learn to communicate your needs;
 - you may realize that it is wrong to satisfy the selfish needs of others (even if it concerns your own son or daughter);
 - you may learn to argue constructively;
 - you may not give in for the sake of peace;
 - you may become unrecognizable because you no longer have to please everyone;
 - you may no longer avoid conflict because you see it as a challenge;
 - you may improve your social skills;
 - you may get a vision of your life that is entirely in line with your ideas.

First of all, you have managed to live independently and autonomously, at least in your imagination. The vision must not be a daydream that lives on the hope that everything will change by itself. Make a list of the behaviors that are part of a "new life".

Celebrate a party

If we follow the redemption of the goose girl in the fairy tale, then it is possible to recognize the true identity as a king's daughter in the iron stove. It is possible to understand one's own drama and thus find access to the grief, a grief over the emotional abuse and the deformation of the personality and all the resulting limitations and inner shackles that made the path to an independent and free life impossible from an early age.

Clarification and demarcation were possible in the iron stove. The first step in therapy is always clarification. One's own drama, the emotional abuse, needs to be understood. By becoming aware of the connections between their difficulties, patients can also get to know their deficits better. The new perspective requires a reorientation of one's entire life. In the parable of the Prodigal Son, it is the father who throws a big party when he gets his son back healthy. The party is an expression of

joy, but even more of a sign of a new beginning. In fairy tales, too, a party is celebrated - and that is right.

The most important celebrations in a person's life take place at the transition to a new phase of life. The first celebration is the baptism shortly after birth; the next celebration would actually be, as already mentioned, a transition ritual, as is regularly celebrated by indigenous peoples when a child becomes an adult.

Young people wander alone through the countryside for a long time, hoping for a dream or a vision for their life as adults. If they believe they have had this dream, they tell it to the tribe's medicine man or shaman, who decides whether it is authentic. Everyone needs this vision for their life. People with a dependent personality structure have great difficulty developing a vision for their independent life.

The celebration that the princess must celebrate is the new perspective, the new hope and prospect of breaking free from the old shackles for the first time, becoming a different person and starting life anew. Becoming more independent also means becoming more grown up, more self-responsible and more mature.

At the end of the inpatient therapy, Mr. P. describes his development:

Up until now, I only lived for others. My mother abused me by constantly telling me that I should be there for her. She always had some kind of demand on me. Whatever I did, it was never enough, which meant that I felt guilty because I ultimately didn't care enough for her.

The same pattern soon emerged in my marriage. At the beginning we were content and happy. As time went on I noticed that my wife was becoming increasingly dissatisfied and at the same time more demanding of me. I tried to avoid every argument and soon felt taken advantage of.

I always tried to avoid conflicts. Even in the clinic, I initially wanted to please everyone. But that was soon no longer possible in the therapy group. I learned to defend myself and to say "no" more and more often. Although it was difficult, I separated from my wife. "She will never change, I don't need anyone to make up my mind anymore."

During the short time in the clinic, Mr. P. was not able to make any comprehensive changes in his behavior; nevertheless, he made a decisive turn in his life. He recognized himself and understood the roots of his problems. He was determined to break free from destructive dependencies. This is the beginning of a new life that is worth celebrating. For the soul, the celebration is the "starting signal" on the path to independence. But this has to be worked for, a lifelong task.

The Death of the Chambermaid or The Fraud is Undone

With the certainty of a dream, the fairy tale also becomes a mirror of reality in the final scenes. The fact that the chambermaid is to die and deserves death because of her deceit is a typical solution for a fairy tale. Villains, witches and wizards often die at the end of a fairy tale. In depth psychology, this always means that the person succeeds in freeing themselves from harmful and negative influences.

How is it that the chambermaid can pass judgment herself? Why is she so blind that she cannot see herself in the descriptions of the old king, who tells nothing but her story? Let us remember that the chambermaid's personality reflects the narcissistic personality disorder! It is a characteristic of narcissistically disturbed people that, far from self-criticism, **they can never believe that they are the ones being referred to when it comes to misconduct. They feel that their role is above everything else, and that what should not be must not be.** They are blinded when it comes to themselves and their effect on others. Since they perceive themselves in an exaggeratedly positive way and place their own needs above those of others as a matter of course, it is difficult for them to perceive and accept reality. But this is precisely what could help a chambermaid.

People with narcissistic personality disorder can only experience change if they **learn to deal with hurt.**

In the fairy tale, the false bride is told that her clothes are taken off before she is put in a barrel that is lined with sharp nails. The fact that she has to take off her clothes means nothing other than that she can no longer pretend and hide behind beautiful clothes, a perfect facade with which she tried to impress others and ultimately deceive herself and others. The clothes are therefore components of the false self that must be overcome. All symptoms, all self-harming behavior, ultimately serve as a survival strategy. Giving up these old strategies and methods creates feelings of insecurity and fear. **The cure lies in becoming authentic. Truly and honestly admitting your own weaknesses does not make you smaller and more dependent, but freer and more self-confident.** The "sharp nails" stand for the insults that one would have to voluntarily expose oneself to. Only the truth helps: however, this requires the willingness to allow the mirror to be held up to oneself and to endure the insults.

Everything we get from our parents becomes more or less part of our personality. This is especially true for relationship patterns; they are formative! How relationships work, how to love, is learned in contact with our parents. We adopt many behaviors from our parents, even if we don't want to.

It is astonishing what contradictory, mutually fighting energies are at work in a person's soul. It is precisely these necessary contradictions that create tensions which, on the one hand, serve development, but, if they cannot be resolved, also lead to suffering and misery.

The chambermaid represents the other side of the king's daughter, the side that she does not show or live, but would often like to live.

Mrs. Z. is angry with a colleague who always knows how to assert her needs. She complains about her inconsiderateness and selfishness. If Mrs. Z. were honest with herself, she would realize that she also envies the colleague in question because of her behavior. She herself does not dare to behave like her colleague, and it annoys her.

We interpreted the chambermaid as the "shadow personality". Every person has such a shadow personality that accompanies them, just like a shadow. It is the dark side of us that we do not want to or cannot see. It is there, but is usually not perceived clearly enough. We create an image of ourselves that corresponds to our ideals and in which certain less pleasant characteristics are not (or

are not allowed to) appear. The goose girl will always see herself in the role of victim. She will not be able to see at first where she is the perpetrator and contributes to her own misfortune. Therefore, dealing with the shadow personality will be important. It wants to be discovered because we can find parts in it that are helpful for healing.

If the goose girl is honest with herself, she can realize that she dreams of being like the false bride, who knows how to take what she wants without any consideration. In a way, she is envious and jealous of so much dominance and aggressiveness that she does not dare to live out herself.

Let us change our perspective once again and remember that the chambermaid was one of the things that the queen gave her daughter to take with her on her journey through life. We recognized that in the form of the chambermaid it was the king's own mother who abused the king's daughter, made her dependent and still dominates her. This makes it clear that the aim now is to break the chains and become independent. Everything that was restrictive and degrading must be »killed« or »made to disappear«. We see an aggressive process with a radical outcome.

The escape from the shackles of dependency cannot be achieved with half measures and false considerations. The fairy tale chooses a radical image and therefore also proposes an uncompromising solution.

Mrs. C. had decided to separate from her dominant mother. She had hesitated for a long time before making this decision. During therapy she had realized that her addicted mother was tyrannizing and exploiting her.

Mrs. G.'s childhood was shaped by a dominant mother who often abused her. During therapy she became aware of her dependent personality structure. She realized that the hell of her marriage was a continuation of the hell of her childhood. The decision to separate from her husband was the first step into a new life. She also realized that she had to emotionally detach herself from her mother, whom she was fixated on with hatred.

It is important to eliminate speechlessness and helplessness. Above all, it will be a matter of releasing buried aggression. The anger that those affected direct against themselves needs a new direction. The death of the chambermaid means nothing other than finding access to blocked anger. This is necessary for true redemption. In the following we will learn some steps and therapeutic techniques that make this process possible.

Trust your own perception!

Emotionally abused people suffer from a typical problem: they do not find enough security within themselves. They were exposed to manipulation from an early age by overpowering parents or other caregivers. They were seduced, **cheated out of their feelings, and often were not allowed to trust their own perception because only the opinion of others counted.** The influence was sometimes so strong that the person's own personality could not develop. In severe cases, it can be assumed that the soul was "murdered". This process, which also occurs through sexual abuse, is called "soul murder".

We saw that the ego has been significantly weakened - and so it is often difficult to **trust one's own perception, one's own point of view, one's own decisions.** In severe cases, the inner insecurity will not be so easy to overcome. The path to independence will take a long time. In practice, it is therefore necessary to accept help over a longer period of time. However, it is important now to carefully select the people from whom support is sought. As has become clear from what has been

described so far, people with a dependent personality structure repeatedly seek and find appropriate advisors and "guardians" who abuse and exploit them again. Support from a good self-help group, in which the opinions of many can be heard, or from professional helpers reduces the risk of further exploitation.

Clarifying the question of guilt

People with a dependent personality structure are not only easily manipulated from the outside through feelings of guilt, but also tend to talk themselves into feeling guilty. These feelings are usually unfounded, but they maintain the dependent dynamic. The goose girl develops typical and frequent feelings of guilt when she does not live up to the expectations of others. The early experience of having to be there for the needs of others led to this trap, which largely determines and maintains the dependency in the long term.

According to this definition, someone who, despite driving carefully, slides into another car on a slippery road and damages **it is not guilty because he did not cause the accident intentionally. However, he is responsible!** This means that he must pay for the damage. Someone who deals with his dependent personality structure will have to deal with the question of guilt. In doing so, he will discover that it was always easier for him to feel guilty than to insist on his own independence and innocence.

When I discuss the problem of dependency with my patients, it becomes clear to many of them how much they themselves burdened others against the background of their own difficulties: for example, because their own children became a substitute partner. At this point, it is important to clearly perceive the difference. The answer must not be guilt, but responsibility. Being guilty would mean having brought about all the harmful conditions on purpose. However, this does not correspond to reality. Only taking responsibility can dissolve the destructive structures.

Emotional dependence is caused and maintained in particular by feelings of guilt. Anyone who repeatedly gives in to feelings of guilt ends up in an unfortunate vicious circle. In particular, dealing with feelings of guilt should therefore progress. In the past, feelings of guilt have repeatedly led to adaptation. At first it is difficult not to give in to feelings of guilt. The comparison with withdrawal from an addictive substance is not unrealistic. **Someone who gives in to feelings of guilt thereby obtains immediate relief.** Someone who consumes alcohol to lift their mood when they are feeling unpleasant tries something similar. Personality development cannot take place in this way.

The feelings of guilt are usually unrealistic. This can be clarified by talking to friends, members of a support group or in therapy. If it is not right to give in, then you should insist on doing so.

For people with the goose girl syndrome, it is extremely difficult to remain consistent because they believe they have to meet the expectations of others. "Relapsing" means losing self-esteem, self-strength and self-confidence again. This terrible mechanism can be clearly observed in all women's shelters: despite brutal abuse, most women return to their old circumstances. Against all reason, they adapt to the expectations if they have previously succeeded in generating pity and feelings of guilt.

Feelings of guilt are typical side effects of victims of terror and violence. The broken personality cannot defend itself against nagging feelings of guilt and gives up again. For people with a dependent personality structure, bearing feelings of guilt is often painful and associated with anxiety.

It is often right to seek therapeutic help here.

During therapy, Ms. I. became aware of how much she had allowed herself to be exploited in her last relationship. She had repeatedly found partners who led a comfortable, pasha-like existence. When she talked about it, she suddenly felt strong anger. These very appropriate and healthy feelings of anger had replaced harmful feelings of guilt.

It is often necessary to discover the feelings of anger that lie behind the feelings of guilt. This is often not easy to achieve and requires courage to confront them.

During therapy, Ms. L. understood the connections that had kept her "small" and dependent. The dependent personality structure was the background to her addiction. She dealt with the emotional abuse she had experienced at the hands of her mother. She was irritated and upset. "Although I now know what my mother did to me, I cannot feel anger towards her," was her first reaction.

This reflex is common and often encountered. However, the entire image of the parent will have to be rearranged. This usually requires a long period of work. A new perspective only changes feelings in the long term. During therapy, patients learn that the fear of independence is unfounded. This can only happen in small steps. Until then, it seemed impossible for Mrs. L. to criticize her mother. She was always dependent on her mother's help and as a result she felt indebted to her mother.

In her childish dependency, she believed her mother was above criticism; and besides, "She won't understand what she did to me anyway," said Mrs. L. An independent, personal assessment seemed impossible to her. But that would be the first step! By discussing the life story again and again, the veil gradually lifts. The clearer and more distinct Mrs. L. was able to recognize her development into addiction, the more she found access to her anger.

Anyone who begins to free themselves from their role as goose girl will have **new experiences and thus create the basis for believing in their own possibilities**. Belief in one's own abilities must be strengthened. Research results confirm again and again that the so-called self-efficacy belief is a decisive factor in long-term success. The patient becomes an expert in their own problem-solving.

Which buttons are pressed?

Self-awareness - especially for people with a dependent personality structure - includes identifying and seeing through how they are manipulated by others and made to do things they don't actually want to do. Unconsciously, they contribute to their own exploitation by providing the appropriate "buttons" that others just have to press. Some patients have written down their "buttons":

The >>guilt button<<:

My conscience is appealed to – for example:

- what haven't I done for you? You never have time for me; you don't care about me anyway; you know I can't do that;
- I'm so lonely...;
- I'm so sick...;
- after what I've done for you, you really should...;
- you're always willing to help everyone, so why don't you help me now?

The >>helper button<<:

I am asked to help –

- for example when someone says: I can't do that, would you... for me?
- I help others without asking too many questions and sacrifice my time. I don't expect a thank you;
- the well-being of others is more important to me than my own; friends and acquaintances know this and take advantage of the fact that I cannot say no;
- if someone asks me for help, I cannot say no.

The >>recognition button<<:

They appeal to my vanity and my ambition –

- for example: You can do it so well, would you do it again this time...
- or: I trust you to be able to do it; you do it so quickly;
- I am easily persuaded by compliments...
- I always have to be the best, I seek admiration;
- If I see that others are working slowly or laboriously, I cannot stand it, I prefer to do the job myself.

The >>fear button<<:

I am afraid or I am scared –

- if I say "no", then I am afraid of being rejected;
- I am afraid that others will be angry with me, and then I am afraid of the next encounter;
- I cannot bear it when I am not good enough for someone;
- sometimes I am too cowardly to show weaknesses. If I can't do something, I still say yes.

The "persuasion button":

I say yes, even though I don't want to –

- you just have to talk to me long enough and I'll say yes;

- I'd rather agree than debate with more eloquent people (feeling of inferiority)
- someone says: you've always done that, why not this time too...

The list could be continued, with the most important "buttons" being named. Mrs. A. discovered the following variant when creating her own list:

I often let someone take responsibility from me, for example when I feel like I can't do it. Then I feel like I have to give something in return, which is usually completely exaggerated and bears no relation to what the other person has done for me.

Excessive gratitude is often an expression of the goose girl syndrome. If gratitude is not shown, those affected suffer from feelings of guilt.

Once the "buttons" are known, the affected person is more likely to take responsibility for themselves. In the therapeutic community, everyone finds support in learning to "say no." In doing so, relapses into old behavior patterns can occur again and again - this is normal and not a reason for self-deprecation, but rather calls for turning the relapse into an "incident." By an incident we mean constructive new behavior that is difficult but makes the patient independent and self-confident. Many patients have a great fear of rejection, and they in particular have to experience that they are ultimately more valued when they express their true opinions, can defend themselves and express their true personality.

Say Yes

During group therapy, Ms. T. addresses a problem: I hate being in a bad mood or being stressed. When I enter a room, the first thing I notice is the atmosphere. If there is tension or I sense that there has been an argument, I would like to run away. I don't want to stay in a room like that.

People with a dependent personality structure are highly sensitive in a certain way. When they enter a room where others are present, they immediately sense the vibrations that are present in the interpersonal area. In a certain way, they make themselves dependent on the mood. They feel good when the atmosphere is positive; they feel bad if this is not the case. They feel at the mercy of others. In order to feel good, they depend on their environment being positive. **The fear of bad moods among friends, at work, in the family is unrealistically exaggerated and has a phobic character.**

During her childhood, Mrs. T. was confronted with her mother's mood swings. It was terrible for her when her mother did not speak to her for several days. Her mother could blackmail and manipulate her with emotions at will. This is where the roots of Mrs. T.'s extreme sensitivity and vulnerability lie.

As an adult woman, she had to learn to stop allowing herself to be terrorized by the moods and whims of others. Such a task is difficult, but solvable. Above all, Mrs. T. had to learn to say "yes": yes - to her feelings and to the feelings of others.

What particularly determines her dependence on the moods of others is that she flees from any bad mood, at least internally. **Her flight reaction repeatedly intensified her fears.**

Sometimes she reacted to bad moods in the family with a fit of rage. These were so violent that she blamed herself afterwards for breaking far too much "china". This only made her fear of bad moods even stronger.

What she had to learn was to see every bad mood in her environment as a challenge: as a task that she needs to achieve emotional independence. It is important to react appropriately to a bad mood. Changing her perspective was the key to her emotional freedom.

A new perspective

- It is not pleasant when XY is in a bad mood; but I want to stick to my opinion, I am independent and have a right to my opinion and my feelings, just as XY has a right to be in a bad mood.
- I feel like I'm being blackmailed with emotions again, but I take this as a challenge for personal growth.
- It would be more pleasant if XY wasn't in a bad mood; this way, however, I can practice staying in my (pleasant) mood.
- I cannot change the mood of others, but I can become independent of it.

Let us remember that Mrs. T. tried to avoid unpleasant situations: I don't want XY to be in a bad mood; when XY is in a bad mood, it always gets me down, etc. The urge for harmony at all costs will only subside when you learn to argue constructively. The inner no to arguments and bad moods causes a series of behaviors that are damaging to self-esteem.

It is not about provoking arguments for the sake of arguing (although this can certainly be a therapeutic task for patients who fear arguments), but about being able to argue when necessary. In some situations, one should argue, for example, so that a better solution is implemented; so that injustice is avoided; so that one's own legitimate needs are not neglected, etc. Being peaceful and yet having to argue at certain points is not a contradiction. Only those who can argue can decide not to argue.

People with a dependent personality structure can often stand up for the interests of others and argue, for example for their children or for others, if they feel responsible. They lack the energy for themselves. Falada, the symbol for the drives, had his head cut off. Energy is needed to develop the personality. Energy that must be used right now to leave the victim role. Know thyself is the key phrase that can bring strength and happiness when knowledge leads to consequences.

The motto of Gestalt therapy is a useful guideline in this context. It says:

I am me and you are you;

if we meet somewhere, then that is great;

if not, then I can't change anything.

Body therapy

As already described, people with a dependent personality structure had to suppress their anger early on. The emotional energy is blocked and cannot flow freely. Releasing this energy is difficult and associated with fear. It is not uncommon for it to be blocked unconsciously because those affected are unconsciously afraid of the enormous anger that is hidden within them.

Although they know that nothing can happen, they sometimes fear the aggression exercises that can release the blocked energy. If the fears are strong, they often feel fear of death, sometimes the desire to die can arise, and suicidal thoughts appear. Here we can see the goose girl again, who must not reveal anything about her true personality.

Wilhelm Reich discovered that emotional stress always has an impact on the body. Alexander Lowen developed bioenergetic psychotherapy from these findings. Bioenergetics methods can be helpful here. Alexander Lowen suggests giving physical expression to anger by hitting a bed or a foam cube. Hit the soft surface with all your might in a wide arc with both arms and hands to loosen the emotional blockages. Afterwards, energy can be felt, flowing through the body like new strength.

Kicking a pillow with all your might also mobilizes the frozen energy in the lower part of the body. Many patients are surprised when they feel how much anger is hidden inside them. They may be afraid of going crazy because they fear they will "go crazy" if they give up their strong control over their aggression. They must experience that these fears are unfounded. The exercises should therefore initially be carried out in a clinic or psychotherapy practice. Later they can also be carried out independently at home.

The psychological straitjacket that has been put on many people with a dependent personality structure must be removed. The energy that has been released through physical exercises must be used sensibly in everyday life. For example, you can continue the aggression exercises on a bed or work on the punching ball in the gym.

Holotropic Breathwork

Holotropic breathing according to Stanislav Grof is a therapeutic technique that works on emotional blockages. Patients with a dependent personality structure often experience extreme tension in the jaw when using this breathing technique. The jaw muscle is the strongest in the body. From an evolutionary perspective, it is an aggressive defense instrument. It is therefore understandable that suppressed anger leads to the typical "jaw blockage". The dissolution of emotional blockages, which can also be found in other areas of the body, such as the hands and wrists, loosens the old structures. They can help to build up new skills. Even if it was possible to work on the anger on a deeper level, the need to represent one's own positions more clearly and "show one's teeth" in everyday life remains.

Where there is fear, there is the way

The many fears of people with a dependent personality structure are the real problem. They are afraid of inferiority, of criticism, of guilt, of aggression, of independence and of being alone. Overall, they are often accompanied by fears. It is necessary to deal with these. This can only be done by "approaching" the fears. The fears will only disappear if the frightening situations are dealt with. [10]

This means initially accepting a little more fear, only to then experience that the fear was unfounded and disappears. The motto is: Where there is fear, there is the way. A new self-confidence must be developed. Fears can be dealt with effectively with anti-fear training. Frightening situations are systematically analyzed and dealt with with therapeutic help. For example, special programs have been developed for victims of mobbing that free them from the role of victim. Overall, the training helps to increase self-confidence and assertiveness.

Fears often determine our lives:

At the end of the therapy, Ms. H. describes her development: When I came to the clinic, I was as if tied up, in a state of deep despair. Everything was black and hopeless. Here I gradually learned to cry again, yes, I cried a lot. I also learned to defend myself, to speak my mind. When I was angry, I always swallowed the feeling, and I paid little attention to my feelings in general. Today I take my feelings seriously and consider them important. I realized that in the past there was never anything else for me other than satisfying the needs of others. I

basically put my needs aside: the main thing was that I could be there for others. A few times I dared to express my wishes in the therapy group. My heart almost beat out of my throat, but I know that I have to keep working on it. I will face my fears.

Relationship patterns are >>transferred< to other people

After I had discussed the fairy tale of the goose girl with a group of patients, a patient contacted me who had identified with the explanations to a great extent. She was extremely upset by what she had heard and asked what she could do now, as both her parents had died and it was therefore no longer possible to deal with them.

Basically, dependency continues beyond death. Many patients hope that after the death of their mother or father - depending on who they feel restricted and dependent on - they will "automatically" enter a new, free life. This hope is usually destroyed by the reality of everyday life. It is often not understood that dependency has become a part of the soul and often manifests itself in different areas of life. In psychology, this is referred to as transference.

This means that conflicts that one had with one's mother, for example, reappear in one's relationship with other people. There is a colleague or superior who appears to behave in a similar way to one's own mother. Sometimes a certain external similarity or similar trait is enough to develop a more or less strong transference reaction. Anger, fear, hate, love, etc. are elementary feelings that people with this disorder were not initially able to deal with satisfactorily in their relationship with their mother.

They will find themselves in a "suitable" relationship with a great deal of similarity. Those affected usually do not understand that they are transferring their unresolved conflicts with their mother or father onto other people. They look for the "blame" in their counterpart. They fight with the same unsuitable means as they did with their parents and are initially unable to become more independent.

Mrs. S. is very dependent on her boss's mood. If he is in a bad mood, she is unhappy and full of anxiety. She often has stomach pains and anxiety on the way to work, which only disappear when she realizes that her fears are unfounded today.

During therapy, Ms. S. realized that her fears were a "transference reaction." Just as she was dependent on the moods of her boss, she also reacted to the moods of her mother, whom she often experienced as unpredictable.

As unpleasant as transference reactions are, they show the way to real change. They want to be understood as such and then show what needs to be worked on. The solution to Ms. S.'s problems can be seen in her becoming more independent of her boss's moods. She must learn to do her work unaffected and, if necessary, to defend herself appropriately. Guiding principles such as:

I am not responsible for my boss's mood;

I am independent and only responsible for my mood;

can be helpful here. (Such sentences had helped her in the past to become more emotionally independent of her mother.)

Since these fears were usually learned early and intensely as a result of repressed anger, they are not so easy to erase. First, Ms. S. learned in her imagination to approach her bad-tempered boss and ask a question without being impressed, to point out a mistake or to admit a mistake of her own. It was important that she first dared in her imagination to confront her boss without fear and to allow her anger.

Following the motto, "where there is fear, there is the way," Ms. S. learned to become increasingly brave and to meet her boss even in situations in which she would have previously anxiously avoided contact. A major problem was that Ms. S. had reacted fearfully and submissively to her boss's moods in the past and that the boss still expected this behavior.

Only persistent work on changing her behavior brought success. Eventually, Ms. S. became less anxious. It was also helpful that she practiced a relaxation technique, which she used whenever fears or anxieties arose again.

People with a dependent personality structure will always have more or less serious problems asserting themselves and becoming and remaining independent. It is therefore a lifelong task for them to face their fears and work on developing their personality. A quick solution should therefore not be expected. However, many things become easier with practice and perseverance. The right attitude to one's own life tasks is important. Only those who develop joy and pleasure in developing their personality will be able to take the sometimes steeper path in the long term. A relapse into comfortable misery is to be feared, because it is tempting to avoid conflicts and not deal with fears.

Let us remember the question of the patient whose parents had died. She wanted to know what to do because a direct confrontation was no longer possible. The first answer is that she should become aware of the existing transferences and work on resolving them. Anyone who suffers from a more or less pronounced goose girl syndrome will find a rich field of activity here.

All relationships in which unrealistic fears arise should be examined. Where is it important to leave the victim role and work on one's own independence? How dependent is someone in their relationship with their partner, for example? Sometimes the victim mentality can be seen in almost all relationships. Or we find the typical »>helper syndrome««. If the parents are no longer alive, confrontation with them is still possible and necessary:

In the role play, Mrs. S. dared for the first time to tell her mother all the things she had never dared to say before. She imagined that her mother was sitting on the chair opposite her.

At first, her fears were as great as if it were actually the case. With the support of her therapy group and the therapists, she became more courageous and her voice became firmer. She felt a deep anger gradually rising within her, which immediately triggered strong feelings of guilt. This made her feel blocked - she wanted to stop the role play.

Role plays are often helpful when dealing with a mother or father problem. The resistance that arises also shows Mrs. S. the way. Patients often express the opinion that they must not say or think anything bad about their deceased mother. However, we are of the opinion that it is important to create a realistic picture of the parents and to reduce unrealistic fears. The inner shackles can only be released if the buried feelings of anger and resentment are uncovered. It was therefore important that Mrs. S. continued the role play after a clarifying conversation. She carried out this exercise

several times during therapy. It helped her to gain a more realistic distance from her mother. Overall, she became braver and more self-confident.

Overcoming destructive relationships

Saying goodbye is something that has to be learned. People with a dependent personality structure can hardly say goodbye and end relationships for various reasons. Life naturally confronts us with saying goodbye: from childhood, from school, from parents, etc. If we look at the goose girl, then the farewell and separation from childhood and from her mother has not taken place sufficiently.

This means that she lacks the basic ability to act independently: to make and carry out her own decisions. If she separates from her partner, it is usually because the partner separates or because a third party wants it that way, for example: the mother does not agree with her daughter's partner and forces the separation. Such an ordered departure is neither self-determined nor an independent achievement, but an expression of dependency, which is deepened by this process.

Once again, the mother's pressure was given in and the mother's boundaries were violated at a crucial point without the goose girl resisting.

Another reason why people with Goose Girl Syndrome cannot end relationships is that the relationship has a function. The partner is supposed to provide support and stability, or, as in the following case study, heal old wounds. The Goose Girl is far too anxious, dependent and insecure to have the confidence to cope with life alone. She is basically not fit for life! Her fear of being alone and her deep self-doubt make her cling to her partner. She is therefore dependent on him, and even if she is not treated well, she would rather endure her fate, submit herself and remain dependent as a precaution, than dare to take the step towards independence.

If she leaves the relationship despite all the dependency, then she will only do so if she can move from one dependency to the next without hesitation. This way, too, pain and especially the fear of leaving (in the sense of being left alone) are avoided.

Ms. S., a patient with a dependent personality disorder, is looking for partners with whom she can build a submissive relationship. Even in her current relationship, her thoughts and actions revolve only around satisfying her partner's needs. She is submissive and cannot develop her own initiatives. She tries to cling tightly to her partner. She takes away his air to breathe, so to speak. Naturally, she found a partner with a great need for freedom, using the key-lock principle. There were always violent arguments, which also became physical.

Any positive feelings had long since disappeared from the relationship. Instead, her partner hated her. Despite this, Ms. S. idealized the relationship: he was the best partner she had ever had. She lived on the hope that things could go back to how they had been at the beginning. She drew all her hope from this fantasy, but it was completely unrealistic. Unconsciously, she had repeated the drama of her childhood. Although she did everything to win her mother's love, she was disappointed again and again. Ultimately, her egocentric mother abused her for her selfish needs.

The solution to the dependent relationship with her partner only became possible after she had dealt with the deep anger she felt towards her mother. She realised that she herself had unintentionally contributed to her own exploitation. By transferring the destructive relationship pattern with her mother to other "love

relationships", these could only fail. Because she had learned to always run after love, self-esteem and self-love could not develop.

Love cannot be earned, bought, requested or begged for. Love is always a gift that demands nothing in return.

Mrs. S. had repressed her anger because her dominant mother would have become angrier and more implacable at any contradiction. Her personality was broken, she was conformist, unable to defend herself and to pursue her own goals. Repressed anger always leads to fear, and so it was inevitable that Mrs. S. was plagued by many fears and felt insecure overall. During therapy, Mrs. S. had to develop the ability to break free from the destructive relationship. In particular, it was important to release the blocked anger, which made her less anxious and dependent. From what has been described so far, it is clear that breaking free from destructive dependencies requires an intensive process. The entire personality must be changed for the better, as if one were starting a new life.

Many people stay in destructive relationships because it is easier to remain in comfortable misery than to develop further. Often suffering calls for change, but this is not recognized or is repressed. Logically, the following pattern is found again and again in dependent relationships:

At the beginning, both partners consciously or unconsciously expect that their emotional problems will be solved through the relationship. During the first phase of falling in love, both partners actually feel that their longings are being fulfilled. When the rush of falling in love has worn off, the emotional problems come to the fore again: be it a feeling of inferiority, the inability to be alone, the emotional dependence on the parents, etc.

However, the disillusionment does not lead them to end the relationship or to develop personally. They cling to their "problem solver" like an addictive substance that only pretends to provide relief. They remain passive and live in the expectation that the other person will provide the solution. Because both are dependent on each other, the dominant partner also remains in this destructive relationship.

It is simple: anyone who uses work to solve their emotional problems runs the risk of becoming addicted to work; anyone who uses religion or esotericism to solve their emotional problems will become dependent on these systems; anyone who uses sport to solve their emotional problems will do more and more sport; anyone who uses computer games to solve their emotional problems will soon experience a compulsion that leads them to spend many hours in front of the screen doing nothing; anyone who uses addictive substances to solve their emotional problems will become addicted to drugs; anyone who uses slot machines to solve their emotional problems will become addicted to gambling; anyone who uses relationships to solve problems will soon find themselves in a dependent relationship.

Instead of a real solution to the problem, a remedy is used that only numbs the difficulties, covers them up, or makes them seem to disappear. The result is a compulsion to use this remedy again and again, a loss of control over one's own will. This causes suffering and illness.

Sometimes it is difficult to recognize the underlying emotional problems, such as emotional abuse. Dealing with them often requires a great deal of effort:

Mr. G. was emotionally neglected as a child and spoiled materially. The result was emotional neglect, which repeatedly led him to exploit his partners. He numbed

his inner emptiness with addictive substances. He never learned to take responsibility for his life.

During therapy, Mr. G. recognized the reasons behind his difficulties. At first he tried to exercise self-discipline and showed his intention to sort out his chaos. However, he soon found a partner who he became fixated on. He exploited her both emotionally and materially. By entering into another dependent relationship, the therapy was doomed to failure; he broke off treatment.

Love or dependence?

Sometimes it is difficult to decide whether the feeling for another person is love or dependence.

The affair that Ms. E. had with a man was several years ago. However, she still felt a strong attraction to him, even though he had hurt and abused her.

During therapy, she realized that her partner only satisfied a deep longing at the beginning of the relationship. He had given her the feeling that she was completely OK. For the first time in her life, she felt accepted just as she was. He took away her self-doubt and gave her the feeling that she was absolutely lovable. As an unwanted child, Ms. E. found it difficult to develop self-love from within herself. Ms. E. realized that her partner had become a "problem solver".

She learned to differentiate between the longing to feel accepted and loved and the question of whether someone is really lovable. She realized that her deficit can also be satisfied by someone who is not really lovable. What she then loves is the (apparent) disappearance of her problem. This is usually experienced in a euphoric way and is addictive. More and more people are becoming addicted to love because they believe that they can solve their emotional problems by finding a partner who will redeem them. However, ever new relationships only increase the inner emptiness.

Loving another person is something different. You love a rose because it is beautiful and because it smells good. You love a person because he has qualities that are lovable.

Strengthening basic trust

Inner stability is poorly developed in people with Goose Girl Syndrome. As already mentioned, fear and insecurity play a major role in their lives.

An effective method of strengthening basic trust is Alpha Relaxing. The term Alpha Relaxing refers to a relaxation and attention training that is easy to learn and carry out. As a rule, effects are achieved after just a few minutes. With Alpha Relaxing, deep, positive changes in all aspects of life can be achieved. The processing of feelings, stress and conflicts is changed in a beneficial way. Psychological problems and physical pain can be resolved, and general well-being improves. Deep spiritual experiences are often reported. With regular training, Alpha Relaxing is naturally and pleasantly integrated into everyday life. Alpha waves are the name given to the healing vibrations that our brain generates when it is deeply relaxed.

An electroencephalogram (EEG) can be used to measure the fine electrical waves that the brain constantly produces. When we enter a deep meditative state of mind, our mind is in the alpha state. With alpha relaxation, this state can be reached easily and repeatedly. Both halves of the brain are brought into balance.

How does Alpha Relaxing work?

Children learn from an early age to pay attention, concentrate, be careful and be careful. Through these instructions we learn to direct our attention to one point, in other words to concentrate. With

Alpha Relaxing, attention is directed to new areas or spaces in the body. This brings thoughts to a standstill - calm and a meditative state arise automatically.

By focusing attention on areas of your own body and thus on a spatial image, the opposite of tension arises automatically: warmth, relaxation, reduced anxiety, etc. occur. Through the targeted use of Alpha Relaxing, even those who are unable to do so without support can achieve a state of relaxation.

In an initial practice phase, Alpha Relaxing is »installed«. This is done with the help of an exercise CD. After just a few days, you will be able to use Alpha Relaxing by bringing your brain into the Alpha state even when this was not possible before. You can use Alpha Relaxing on every everyday occasion, especially in stressful situations, to reduce your tension and react more calmly.

Healthy people are more or less able to return to a relaxed state and experience recovery after mental exertion or concentrated work. People suffering from stress are usually unable to do this or only do so to an unsatisfactory extent. Even if they could relax, they remain in a tense state.

Insomnia, obsessive thoughts, nervousness, cramps, irritability, tension headaches, inner restlessness, anxiety, etc. prevent relaxation.

A vicious circle has developed which allows stress symptoms to grow. The real problem is the inability to reach a relaxed state when this is desirable. A chronic state is reached when mental exertion becomes increasingly difficult because relaxation is no longer possible. Even if all "stress triggers" are eliminated, satisfactory relaxation does not occur because even normally harmless stimuli lead to stress.

Alpha-relaxing also helps those who cannot do this without help to relax. During the Alpha-relaxing exercise we feel comfortable, relaxed and completely safe, a bit like a small child lying contentedly and full in its mother's arms. The more deeply we relax, the more we get into this pleasant state of relaxation. The entire personality is affected: fear, worries and negative thoughts disappear.

Positive feelings such as love, being loved and affection are experienced automatically in the Alpha Relaxing state because they are present in the state of deep contemplation. This feeling lasts for a while after the exercise and thus strengthens basic trust. The calm and strength experienced during and after the exercise reduce the tendency to react to stress. Instead, we experience more balance and inner security.

Alpha-Relaxing is a gentle method of changing and strengthening your personality. Inner forces are activated indirectly, improving your well-being and relieving emotional stress. Alpha-Relaxing, provided you practice it regularly, makes you braver and less afraid. Those who regularly meditate with Alpha-Relaxing, for example, express the true core of their own personality more strongly and their basic trust is strengthened.

The desire for freedom and independence is particularly great among people with a dependent personality structure. The development of the personality, as described here, can significantly expand the options for action and strengthen self-esteem. Ultimately, however, **complete freedom will not exist. Many people try to solve the problem of inner lack of freedom by chasing external freedom.** They should understand that they will not achieve their goal this way. The problem can only be dealt with using methods that fill the »hole« from within. Meditation is one such method that can lead to satisfaction and fullness. However, meditation alone will not provide a solution, because meditation makes you more sensitive and the problems become clearer. Psychotherapy and meditation are the most effective way to work on personality change.

What could help the old queen

The change in the goose girl began with her understanding her drama. She was allowed to open her eyes and see things as they are. She had to recognize that she was abused and that she lived in a destructive dependency. By approaching her drama and being prepared to go into the iron furnace, a fundamental personality change became possible. It was difficult for her to face her various fears and to work through her feelings of guilt.

The old queen should also begin to understand her drama. As mentioned above, she was abused herself and was not capable of leading an independent life. Even though she appeared strong and independent on the outside, she was only hiding her inner loneliness. Many of these mothers and fathers will find it impossible to recognize their dependence and change their own lives. Their perspective is just as limited as we initially found with the goose girl. In addition, they believe that they can no longer change because of their age.

They cling to destructive relationship patterns and are not prepared to work on their own problems. Instead, they will cling to the belief that their son or daughter should do more for them.

The queen's problem is basically very similar to that of her daughter. She has also remained far too dependent. Her inability to let go of her daughter is only covered up by the fact that she claims that her daughter needs her. The queen has an important task, and she feels value and meaning in her life through it. Only when her daughter leaves her does she fall into a "hole". If her "parenting" was thorough, she can usually trust that her daughter is suffering from feelings of guilt and is seeking contact. Ultimately, however, the mother will feel that she is a burden to her daughter - and this will make her angry. She needs considerable ignorance not to acknowledge how her daughter really feels. This is where we need to start: Only when she can begin to accept her daughter as an equal in her needs will change be possible for her too. This means that she must become "abstinent" from abusing her daughter. However, she usually lacks the prerequisites for this.

After Mrs. K., an alcoholic patient, had repeatedly relapsed, her daughter had completely broken off contact with her. During inpatient therapy it became clear that she saw the only purpose in life in reestablishing contact with her daughter. She finally wanted to see her grandchild, who had been born in the meantime. During further investigation it became clear that her relationship with her daughter was extremely dependent and destructive. She experienced the separation from her daughter as extremely painful. She said that this "withdrawal" was worse for her than withdrawal from alcohol.

The emotional abuse that Mrs. K. had to endure was typically transferred to her relationship with her daughter. During therapy, the patient became aware that her parents were exploiting her work. It was only through her work that she was able to gain her parents' attention for a time, but not real affection. Mrs. K. continued the pattern of trying to gain affection through extreme performance throughout her life. Tragically, she always found people who could not or would not recognize her with a somnambulistic certainty. Unconsciously, she caused others to exploit her. She became addicted to work and eventually an alcoholic.

She saw the satisfaction of her great longing for love and affection in restoring the relationship with her daughter. Because she believed that her daughter was obliged to love her from birth, she wanted nothing more than to "repair" the relationship.

She was very hesitant to recognize the destructive, dependent nature of the relationship. At first she did not want to accept how much she had hurt her daughter with her relapses and terrorized her with her drinking excesses.

During therapy, she realized that she had to break away from her daughter. Above all, she had to recognize that the claim that she only wanted the best for her daughter was an excuse to bind her to her.

Mrs. K. realized that her entire life needed radical change. She was given the task of first drawing up a plan for her new, better life. This plan stipulated that she wanted to work on finding new friends, solving the question of meaning in life and working on her self-love.

In my therapeutic work, I always meet people who have recognized their destructive dependency on their son or daughter and are working hard to change that. Therapeutic support - for example in counseling centers and working in good self-help groups - makes success more likely.

The multi-generational perspective

Dependent relationship patterns are passed on to the next generation through social inheritance. If someone wants to know why the mother cannot let go, then they should examine the mother's process of letting go of her mother. They will see that she was never allowed to become independent. Another critical look should be directed at the relationship with one's own children and clarify whether they are or were raised in a dependent manner. Dependent mothers (fathers) usually have dependent children!

Forgiveness - how does it work?

People with a dependent personality structure often say very easily: "I forgive you!" However, this is often an act of adjustment and does not have a mature quality. Serious injuries caused by emotional abuse that have led to personality deformation cannot, in reality, be forgiven so easily.

In order for forgiveness to be possible, the conditions must first be created. **Forgiveness is only possible at the end of a long journey. Only someone who has understood why all this had to happen can forgive. He must have found access to his deep anger and he must have found ways to use it in his life. Hate is also an essential elemental feeling and must be experienced. Healing often begins with those affected finding access to their repressed feelings of anger and hate and learning to defend themselves and set boundaries appropriately. Only those who can hate can forgive. If the blocked anger is not released or is only released inadequately, forgiveness always has a stale aftertaste.**

Everything that has been said so far about getting out of the Goose Girl Syndrome should have started as a process. Someone who still allows themselves to be manipulated and oppressed cannot forgive because they lack maturity.

Working on developing your own personality, opening up new living spaces and life possibilities makes you happy: meaning becomes tangible. Only from this new perspective is it possible to understand the dependent relationship patterns in the family and to comprehend everyone's needs.

Forgiveness is then a mature human achievement that ultimately serves one's own inner peace. Forgiveness is only possible if it is an act of (gained) freedom.

At the end of a successful psychotherapeutic process there should always be forgiveness. Above all, forgive yourself. If you look at the development from a distance, it becomes clear that **everyone who**

was abused had to become not only a victim, but also a perpetrator. Their own suffering also became the suffering of everyone in the family. This becomes particularly clear when someone develops an addiction.

Find the middle or ... both ruled their kingdom in peace and bliss

Every person has a need for harmony, perfection, redemption, unity, etc. The union of prince and princess in fairy tales should never be understood as a result of finding ideally complementary partners. The goose girl will not find her "dream type", no matter how much she longs for it and believes that redemption will come from it.

Fairy tales are far too serious and realistic to be misunderstood in this way. The union of the king's daughter with her son is to be interpreted symbolically here too, as usual. Again, we must remember that this is a single person who continues to develop. The goose girl lacked the male side, which stands for **goal orientation, energy, will and assertiveness.**

These must be developed and integrated. Just as the mature personality harmoniously combines male and female aspects according to the Chinese Yin and Yang, a person can leave the role of the goose girl and actually attain his or her own royal dignity if these aspects are present and developed within a person.

Now it becomes clear that there must of course be dependent personality traits in every healthy personality, e.g. the soft parts that make up the ability to love: the ability to feel deep compassion, the desire to care for others and the ability to get involved and let go are indispensable for emotional maturity and a happy life.

Everyone who lives in a relationship is also dependent, as stated in the foreword. They make themselves vulnerable and are dependent on the positive interaction of all the people involved in a community.

The art of becoming dependent

Fear of dependency is a widespread phenomenon that is currently spreading rapidly. For example, statistically, the time for marriage is shifting further and further into mid-life. Character traits such as reliability, constancy, loyalty and trustworthiness are increasingly standing in the way of self-realization at any price and therefore no longer seem necessarily desirable.

As paradoxical as it may seem at first glance: people with a dependent personality structure must **learn to become dependent voluntarily.** The goose girl's anxious clinging to her partner is born out of necessity. She must become dependent, this is not a voluntary act. Autonomy and authentic living are part of a mature partnership. Only those who have found their self can get involved with another without losing themselves.

For people with a dependent personality structure, this will be a permanent challenge. The negative dependent patterns that became part of the personality at such an early age are deeply rooted.

Ultimately, it's not about eradicating all dependent personality traits, but about **finding your own center. Above all, it's about becoming authentically yourself,** and that's what we should celebrate at the end of the fairy tale.

For Erich Fromm, an authentic life requires courage and faith. Leaving the dependent state requires courage. Every new step in development means leaving the previous circumstances with their false security, and this is frightening. Every day will be about being born anew, telling the truth, your own

truth, and accepting that you are similar to other people in many ways, but also different in some. You can rely on your own thoughts and feelings.

Become who you are!

Children should get two things from their parents:

Roots and wings

(Johann Wolfgang von Goethe)

Clarification

Based on the Bible saying that a son or daughter will leave their parents and go out into the world, i.e. into their own life, it should be pointed out at this point that it is not a question of abandoning parents in need of help. Old people are neglected far too much in our society. The situation in many old people's and nursing homes is depressing and often scandalous. Generations depend on each other, and so it is natural that younger people help older people and contribute to making their later years as pleasant as possible. We realized that it is destructive dependencies that stand in the way of personality development.

To be able to help older people, you need to be independent, especially the ability to set boundaries: to be able to say "yes" and "no". Only someone who is able to do this can take on this task.

People with a dependent personality structure will, for example, sacrifice themselves when caring for someone, and ultimately become ill as a result of the demands placed on them. In such cases, it is not advisable to take on the care. It is also not possible to work as a geriatric nurse in the long term if dependent personality traits predominate.