



# A Funny Thing Happened on the way to my Life

## Intro

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Claude Steiner, in his book, *Scripts People Live*, quotes his mentor, Eric Berne, saying that everyone is born a “prince or princess” - a whole human being capable of the full range of human potentials. Then the world conspires to turn most of us into one form or another of “frog.” *A Funny Thing Happened on the way to my Life* is a book about how we get to be “frogs,” and about what kinds of “frogs” there are.

There are those who hold that our particular form of “frogdom” is the “lesson” we have given ourselves as a soul, so as to expand our capabilities in the long run in this life, and to evolve our soul as well. Others feel that life is or can be a journey back to “princedom.” I rather like these notions, and they form the framework for this exploration of the “wild life” around us.

In this chapter, there will be presented an outline/overview of how we get to be the way we are. There will then be separate chapters on each of the “frog species” which will examine in detail how all that works, along with what to do to find your way back to “princedom” from each “starting point.” Right now, though, we will start with a bird’s eye view of the whole realm of “frogdom.”

The basic model is a kind of “step-ladder,” with “rungs” at each of a series of “critical turning points” in the person’s experience of life and emotional development, where various key components of the individual’s way of dealing with things are more or less settled on and solidified.

It is a “developmental milestone” kind of thing that is similar to those for the body, the mind, the social self, the moral sense, and the like. This particular “developmental ladder” deals with the “critical periods” and “turning points” for the emotional and existential patterns that profoundly affect how the person experiences and deals with life.

The foundational notion involved here is that the “rungs” of the “developmental ladder” represent a series of resolutions reached on how each of several fundamental aspects of one’s experience, orientation and manifestation process in life are going to be emotionally reacted to, interpreted and acted upon. The result is a type of “fundamental premise” foundation and framework of existential attitudes that determine how everything will subsequently be interpreted and manifested.

Which means that it operates from processes and principles that only partly overlap with those of the physical plane. It also means that the being can “think,” “choose” and “learn” on that level while the physical equipment of the forming fetus is still highly primitive.

Meanwhile, back at the ranch on the physical plane, what is going on in this extremely early period of development? The most truthful answer is that we really don’t know at this point.

But we can put forth some ideas about what seems to be involved. For one thing, there appears to be spans of time during which as yet pretty much unknown underlying processes take place which make the individual particularly sensitized and vulnerable to some types of events, while others are more or less “on hold” with regard to their impact on the forming person.

Furthermore, there seem to be several of these “sensitive spans,” each for different aspects of experience and evolution, and they are apparently overlapping in their operation and in their developmental timetables.

As a result, a given set of events occurring during a particular time period would be affecting the outcomes of a number of different “critical spans” at the same time, while the processes involved in other, as yet not “primed” “critical spans” are not especially affected at the time of a given “critical span.”

The particular processes that are going on in the fetus and the kinds of changes that are taking place are not at all clear. It is known, though, that the individual does respond to environmental sounds and to chemicals in the mother’s placenta-filtered blood and in the amniotic fluid.

There also appears to be genetically-based processes that are unique to each individual that play a major role in the individual’s reactions to things, and even in precipitating various events and processes along the way.

It is strongly suspected that muscular rigidity and reactions in the uterine walls may be what lies at the base of the “quiet” (non-kicking) baby’s behavioral stillness. And it seems likely that various energy fields around and within the mother affect the developing person’s intrauterine experience. But exactly what physical or other effects these types of influences have, and what it is within the infant that is affected is not known - though it is being vigorously explored at present.

There are essentially two ways that one can approach the problem of how to look at these “critical periods,” given our present perspective. One is to assume a purely physical/chemical/mechanical model, and to decide that what is going on is a series of cumulatively building physical results of events which finally “go over the top” in any area of particular sensitivity and vulnerability at the time.

The “outcomes” of this process would be in effect a semi-irreversible change in the individual’s structural/chemical make up which then serve as a kind of “bottom floor” for the next “critical period” developmental process.

The other approach is to assume that there is such a thing as a “soul” which is actively involved in the process of constructing the physical/emotional/mental system which will be its “vehicle” for “this” life, and that the “critical periods” represent intensive environment-assessing and -testing processes by the “soul.” The

“turning points” would then represent “choices” or “decisions” based on the outcomes of this information-gathering process.

The fact of the matter is that the data available to test either of these formulations is so scanty at present that a definitive answer is simply out of the question. One approach that I favor is to operate as if both processes might be happening in an interactive and mutually determining manner.

In any case, the “rungs” of the “developmental ladder” correspond to the “turning points” with regard to the emotional/existential attitude and operations formation processes, and they have been labeled “outcomes” or “decisions” here for the purpose of brevity and clarity.

What follows is a layout of a series of such “outcomes” and/or “decisions” in terms of what the emotional/existential “issue” or area of living is. Each will be discussed in terms of what the results are if the “outcome” or “decision” is “positive” (i.e., “releasing” of the human potentials involved) or “negative” (i.e., arresting of the unfolding of the particular capabilities in question).

Figure 1 presents the “developmental ladder” in terms of what issues are involved, and in terms of what the “positive” results and the “negative” results are for the various “outcomes” or “decisions.” This is done for each “critical period,” from the point of conception to the point where this “critical period” process apparently comes to an end.

Beyond the last “outcome” or “decision” in the “developmental ladder,” the individual’s developmental processes seem to shift from emotional/existential matters to skill, knowledge and wisdom development.

In other words, the primary developmental process shifts from formation to elaboration, integration and enculturation. Other aspects of the individual’s functioning and capabilities take center stage at this point - particularly the physical, mental, moral, social, pragmatic and spiritual development processes.

One of the first things to note about this model is that the critical periods start intrauterine. This is based on the information recently accumulated that indicates a great deal is going on during that part of the developmental process. Another thing to observe is that the critical periods often overlap, and that sometimes the “turning point” is the same for two different outcomes or decisions.

This is because development is not a step-series of beginnings and endings. It is rather a multi-level process undertaking in which much is going on simultaneously. It should also be noticed that some of the critical periods extend from within the intrauterine period to points in time after birth.

Finally, it should be seen that the critical period durations and the turning points indicated are “rough ball park estimates” based on a wealth of clinical data, with a growing body of research data backing them up.

This whole model is intended to convey the general characteristics of the emotional/existential development process. It also makes it very clear how early emotional development starts, and how soon after birth it is seemingly completed in its fundamental formative process.

Learning is, of course, lifelong, but it is also essentially an “inverted pyramid” process in which the very early stuff has a profound and continuing effect on all subsequent experiences, interpretations, actions and learning.

The model is *not* intended to be a definitive statement of the exact time spans of the critical periods, nor of the precise dates of the turning points for the outcomes or decisions. As for the decisions themselves, it could be said that they each represent a radical shift in the individual's perspective and approach to life.

It also seems that these decisions are cumulative in their effects. That is, each decision is a major milestone of emotional development, and the results of the earlier decisions profoundly affect (and sometimes even pre-determine) the subsequent decisions.

Starting with the beginning decision, TO CONCEIVE, the initial step can be thought of as a random outcome of the sperm swimming or as a decision by the soul. In either case, once the physical process of joining the egg and sperm has occurred, the Great Journey has begun.

Immediately, the budding individual commences experiencing the nature of the life that is in store for them, in the form of the physiological and structural conditions surrounding the rapidly multiplying cell complex. At the same time, the individual is also experiencing the energetic, emotional, mental and other fields and emanations from the mother, and to a greatly lesser extent, from the environment.

If things are going well, the fetus continues to form and develop. But if the intrauterine environment is inhospitable, if the genetic equipment is not up to the requirements, and/or if the soul finds that things are not in congruence with its plans, sooner or later there will be a spontaneous abortion outcome around the TO CONTINUE decision period.

While the formal data on this is pretty much restricted to some rather delimited physical conditions, it is strongly suspected that many such "miscarriages" are the result of unsuitable conditions brought about by the biochemical effects of negative emotions, by lifestyle/environmental stress reactions, by ingested substances, by intrauterine conditions and muscular responses, and/or by genetic nonviability factors.

It is also suspected that such outcomes may sometimes be the results of such indirect traumas as the hearing and feeling of emotional violence in the environment or the effects of "bad vibes" - energy fields, psychic emanations, injunctions, intense desires or admonitions coming from the mother and/or the environment.

In any case, the model will assume that there are no accidents, and that spontaneous abortion is itself a decision - in this case by the soul primarily, based on emotional body experiences, perceptions, interpretations and evaluations.

It is assumed that the individual simply found it impossible to sustain life, based on what has happened up to that point. The time span for this decision runs from conception to birth, with the "hottest spot" (the turning point) typically being around two to three months along, intrauterine.

Incidentally, it is probably the case that a considerable proportion of such outcomes are intended from the destiny design point onward. In other words, in many cases, this early experience with this particular mother/environment is all that was wanted by the soul for this particular embodiment experience.

However, there are other cases where things took a turn that does not sustain the intended destiny, and the decision to leave is made.