



## What Role Did You Play?

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Members in families naturally take on different roles. When an argument occurs, the family needs a peacemaker. When illness strikes, the family needs someone to provide care. When a family member excels, the family can have a healthy pride. In a healthy family unit these roles are flexible. The dysfunctional family organizes itself around some problem, and family members can get squeezed into rigid, inappropriate roles.

Did you find yourself in one of these roles in your family?

**The Hero:** Heroes often excel in sports or academics, and they take on over-responsibility for themselves and others.

**The Scapegoat:** This is the child who gets blamed for the family's problems, and will often get attention by getting into trouble.

**The Lost Child:** The lost child deals with difficult family dynamics by denying that they exist and by staying very quiet. They never make waves, or draw attention to themselves.

**The Mascot:** This is the child who seeks to relieve the tension in a stress-filled family by telling jokes, making funny facial expressions, or doing humorous antics that relieve the tension in some way.

**The Enabler:** This person keeps the family secret, helps clean up messes that are created by others, and sees to it that difficult family members never have to encounter the reality or consequences of their actions.

