

CHAPTER 3

All things considered, I have very few conscious memories of my early childhood. Those I have almost all include my father; my mother is a blank. I have *only one* memory of her from early life . . . from the age of two or three . . . in Austria. That memory is of her taking a splinter out of my foot. I have no memories of her whatsoever during our stay in England, although I do have a few fuzzy ones of dad. It was the same in Cuba, when I was five or six; I have a few vague memories of either of my parents. Actually, I have virtually no clear memories of mom at all, from any period in my life. She was absent across the board, failing to impress herself into my memory banks -- or I have repressed what memories I do have of her, prior to my being of High School age. If my father was like an army of tanks and soldiers approaching you, my mother was like poison gas that you couldn't see but that was equally lethal. I was, essentially, indistinguishable to my mother from a box of Kleenex tissues, while at the same time having no capacity whatsoever to see anything from my point of view. She would "take me out" whenever she needed to blow her nose, and then she'd lose interest in me and discard me. And no, I'm not exaggerating.

I didn't understand her until, much later when I was in college and I learned about *narcissism*. A main difference between my parents was that my dad would attack you if you broke a rule (displeased him); my mom would sneak up on you when you weren't looking, whenever she felt a need to have comfort and companionship . . . and she'd stick herself onto you like a barnacle, and suck comfort from you. Don't misunderstand: she wasn't "crazy" in the clinical sense of the word; she cooked and shopped and did helpful domestic things . . . but she had a personality disorder such that others' needing anything was unintelligible to her. She was not at all emotionally equipped to nourish or comfort a child.

If the things I've read about human personality development are true, and human beings complete (or mostly complete) the formation of their basic personalities by the age of three, then I was a done deal while I was living in Austria . . . with all of its post-war lack, disruption, and depletion of everything . . . and also my very disturbed caretakers. I lived in Austria until age four. Anyone with any understanding and discernment of human behaviors could have, at that point, described me accurately as a young person who didn't really know that he existed, or even had a right to have opinions.

MY DAD'S PUBLIC PERSONA

My dad was a control freak/tyrant, who was unstable to the point of becoming violent at the drop of a hat, and he was in fact the better of my two parents. He had some capacity to remember things that someone had done or said, and/or that he had done or said, and thus had some sense of reality. And he had been left with *some* caring still in him, underneath his internal turmoil. And, not least, he had the ability to charm; he could be really impressive in social mode -- that is, with people he didn't know well and that he had business relationships with -- but not close relationships -- and whom he was not related to. Really impressive. He had learned, early on, the sheer survival value of

being friendly and charming. And he'd learned it well. I trust that you know that individuals who have had the most difficult childhoods are those who have the most useful senses of humor. I say "useful" because a sense of humor is in large measure a coping mechanism. Well, it's the same with charm. With us, unfortunately, dad was only Charming in the sense of having the first letter removed from that word.

While my father had it in him to make a really good impression, socially – as well as being a domestic tyrant and brute – the reason for that was that he actually had two personalities; I'll say more about this later. Later on, when we lived in Mexico, he became so well regarded by the larger business community in the city that we lived in that he got invited to join the local Lion's Club. I don't know how or what that organization is doing today, but in those days it was an honor and a distinction to be part of that sort of professional/social group. And my dad had had it in him to not decompensate in the presence of anyone from that world. And I might add that my father did this while not being a Mexican (everyone else in the organization was), and speaking Spanish with an accent so pronounced that anyone could immediately tell that he was a foreigner. He was invited into the Lion's Club anyway because he impressed himself as being someone worth knowing. That, in itself, is an accomplishment worth acknowledging.

I am pretty sure that my dad learned his own effective approaches for securing this or that benefit from some authority figure, in one or another of the wartime concentration/ labor camps. And maybe even from the many beatings he'd received from his own parents when he was a boy. He learned to use those skills to survive. Then, after the war, when he was facing new kinds of survival tasks, he could modify those skills to surviving in the work/business environment. *He was really good* at being winning, and to be friendly and charming. With others. He was an actor skilled in playing such a role. For all of his shortcomings I have to admit that my dad had it in him to be an amazing charmer, an excellent traveling salesman, and a difficult if reliable provider -- in addition to being a crazed and tormented animal. He could be a great story teller. As a salesman – whether a traveling one or not -- he was better educated than anyone he knew or worked with. He'd gone to University in Hungary, he was quite smart in a having-learned-things-in-school way, and multi-lingual, and he had seen a lot of the world and had lots of interesting anecdotes to tell about things he'd learned and seen and done.

Dad was a salesman and, whether traveling or not, salesmen are blue-collar level citizens; and dad's role as a charmer disappeared when the final curtain went down, as it were. His sociableness was short-term and with a certain understood social distance between the people talking. None of these people were friends. They were all colleagues of a sort, and not there to share genuine stories and confessions with. I don't think that my dad ever had any real friends. You know: people he could open up with and to. He was incapable of opening up. Not in the time I knew him. Even though he was a Lion's Club member, no citizen from any level of society was ever invited into our home for a dinner.

And of course no one knew of the dysfunctions we lived with at home. Others would have had their own dysfunctions, of course; but no one ever spoke of such things. Not in the fifties or sixties or seventies; the touchy-feely stuff hadn't caught on yet. Our family certainly looked like a

million other families. We lived in a house or apartment that had furniture in it . . . that looked fairly neat and tidy . . . and that we entered and left and then returned back into, every day. Where we ate, and slept and stored our clothes in and washed them as needed. And we dressed so that we looked “normal”. But . . . we lived without a past or a future. These were never brought up in any conversation. I have several memories of our moving from one country to another accompanied by only two suitcases full of possessions – one for each of my parents to carry. We carried our clothes with us. But that was all. No furniture. No art. No books. No keepsakes or heirlooms. No toys . . . or anything like any of that. The most portable things we had were the languages that we’d learned along the way . . . and we took these with us. I certainly did so. I like words. I can play fun games with them.

I want to add two more things. One is that no matter what was going on in my life, I’ve always learned things. But in all the time that I knew my parents, I am not aware that they ever learned anything new at all. Not that I ever noticed. No “new things” were ever mentioned. The normal ongoing experiences of going through life, at least as revealed by domestic speech, were unknown to my sister and me. Either that, or I’m just not remembering . . . but I don’t think I’m wrong. Our parents existed in a long-past-its-expiration-date soap bubble and, all in all, our family put up a great fuckade. Uh . . . I mean façade.

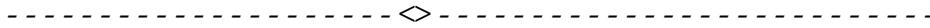
The second thing is that no one in my family had conscious thoughts or understanding about any of the family dynamics I’ve been describing. It was all knee-jerk role-playing based in adherence to Rules, with penalties if I said or did anything not allowed by those Rules. We lived lives that were pure and unsullied by conscious awareness of what we were doing or of how it affected others. So I’ve wondered about the family lives of the 19 people I was with in the Children of Holocaust Survivors’ group I’ve mentioned. Yes, their families contained dysfunction, suicide, depressions, and weirdnesses; but I wonder if their families were like mine in that there wasn’t any even semi-conscious awareness of why their lives were as they were. My guess is that those other parents did not have any such thing, either.

IN AUSTRIA AFTER THE WAR

I was born in Budapest; but I have no memories whatsoever of life in Hungary. Not conscious ones, at least. But my unconscious ones were formative; the earliest of them were gotten and absorbed, by me, in wartime Budapest. My earliest conscious memories, on the other hand, are of living in Austria. We got there in 1945, soon after the war ended. We lived there for two years.

In 1945 my father was working with the British Forces in the city of Klagenfurt. He was serving as a translator for the Brits; they spoke only English, and my father was useful to them because he spoke English as well as German and Hungarian . . . and a lot of Europe was flooded with non-English-speaking German and Hungarian refugees and survivors who were wandering around lost, and needing food, a safe place to stay, identification papers, reconnecting with what friends and family were still living, scrape together whatever was left of their lives and, largely, trying to make a fresh start -- often with nothing. Or close to it.

How we arrived in Austria is an interesting and complicated story in itself – both for how it happened and what happened as a result of how we did it. And I'll start with the already-mentioned fact that my father had been taken away, in 1944 . . . to be killed . . . because he was a Jew and thus, by law, forbidden to live. My mother and I didn't see him again for a year and a half. Those were obscenely difficult times and she didn't know if dad was alive or dead. My dad did manage to survive unimaginable conditions . . . but he never ever talked about them with us. Well, almost never.



Only one time, years later and when I was in high school, my father told one of my friends an unforgettably riveting account of how, toward the end of his year-and-a-half period of being owned by the Nazis, he had escaped from a transport to Mauthausen -- one of the infamous German concentration camps that functioned primarily as a killing site. He told him that story in my presence.

That escape was a mix of luck, timing, boldness and, quite honestly, having a sense of nothing to lose. It was near the end of the war and everyone knew things were winding down. The Nazis were scrambling to get rid of witnesses and bury as much evidence of their crimes as they could. The "transport" that my father was in was a long column of prisoners who were being marched to their deaths, on foot. The column was stopped at a railway crossing that had become a bottleneck; a long column of retreating German vehicles and soldiers was passing through; and a freight train had also been stopped to allow them through. In the general confusion my father simply backed away from the line of standing prisoners and sat down on the coupling between two railroad cars. And when the train started to move, he moved on with it without any guard having noticed. That's how he survived that. He escaped on Good Friday. My mother told me that her own mother, the day before, had had a feeling that something critical was about to happen. So she stayed up all night praying for my father. And he escaped the next day. Maybe there is something to prayer that I'm ignorant of.

My father rode that train as long as the ride lasted. He was filthy and dressed in rags, and he told the train people who saw him that he'd been buried under a building when it collapsed from a bombing. I guess they accepted that. When he got off that train he made his way West, as carefully as he could; and after two weeks of hiding, starving, and moving at night he met up with the British forces on the outskirts of Klagenfurt, Austria. It's hard for me to imagine what those two weeks of hiding like a hunted animal, and starving, must have been like. At one point during those two weeks he had stopped at a house to beg some food; he was taking a chance that whoever lived there wouldn't report him. The woman who lived there took pity on him, fed him, and told him to not go down a certain street because there was a roadblock there and he would certainly be caught, and that he should go down a different street. She said that she didn't know where her own husband was or if he was even alive, but she hoped that if he were alive he'd be helped by someone . . . in the same way she was helping my father. I imagine that there must have been a lot of houses then that were occupied by women who didn't know if they were widows or not. My dad was lucky in having stopped at *that* house, to beg for some food. And, soon after that, he met up with the advancing British Forces, and he was "safe"

My father's tale of meeting with the advancing British forces was a vivid, dramatic and even romanticized account that certainly no high school boy could ever hope to top. I hated my friend after that for his being the kind of person my father would tell that kind of stuff to, because he certainly never shared any of that kind of thing with me. Of course, telling that kind of story to a family member would have brought the memories back too painfully; and in wowing my friend he was entertaining and bragging. I did know a very little about that story, mostly from my mother's telling the same few stories over and over again. But I don't think my parents talked about those matters with each other. For that matter, I never heard my parents talk about the past *or* the future at all. Our family lived without either, in a tenuous present.

AUSTRIA

My father worked as a translator/interpreter for the British forces in Klagenfurt, Austria, from 1945 to 1947. In his work as a translator my dad helped many displaced refugees to tell their stories, find shelter, acquire Identity Papers, and hopefully find home and family, and survive. Many of them asked to be sent to Palestine . . . where they met the Zionists who already lived there and who had been agitating to have their own Jewish country. The nation of Israel was founded through the combined efforts of these groups and others who joined them. So, in a small and indirect way, my father helped to create Israel.

The British also gave my father jobs to do other things for the British as well, such as finding difficult-to-find food and alcohol for the officers -- from the Black Market. He could do this because (1) he could speak German and (2) he could charm his way past anything. Really. He could be very manipulative; it's hard to imagine an actor who could beat him at that. There was a study done some years ago that supported the proposition that Hungarian is the language that has the most colorful assortment of comments, descriptions, metaphors, witticisms, sayings, and adages. The one that would have applied to my dad translates as *"he could talk a baby into someone's womb"*.

Then, two years after the war ended, the British forces were withdrawn from Austria . . . and my dad decided that we should go to England with them. For one thing, my father's job would have disappeared, and we would have remained living within a population that would have been happy to know that we were dead. So we moved to England -- although without the necessary permits and papers . . . which caught up with us later. But before I tell you about England, let me tell you some things about our life in Klagenfurt.

KLAGENFURT

I have memories of living in three places in and near that city. Our lives were unsettled and transitory even at that point after the war. I have a memory, at about the age of 3, of being alone in a room that I wasn't familiar with. It is the second earliest memory that I've ever been able to access. It was twilight. As it got darker there was a storm outside with much thunder and lightning, which

frightened me. I squatted under a table to protect myself from the fright . . . and after a while a youngish (pre-teenage?) girl I didn't know came into the room and gave me some diamond-shaped colored wooden blocks to play with, and then went away leaving me alone again. The girl hadn't turned a light on and I played with the blocks until it got too dark to see. My parents were nowhere around and I didn't see them again until the next day.

I once told my mother of this memory and she explained it to me. We were all staying at an Austrian inn during a trip, and my father suddenly got very ill with what was later found to be blood poisoning. He had to be taken to a hospital in a nearby town. My mother went with my dad on the train to that place, and she had left me with the people who ran the inn. She did not tell me what was going on. The inn people of course didn't have time to entertain me so I got left alone for pretty much the whole day. I stayed there overnight as well. I don't remember feeling panicked that my parents had disappeared. I think I'd already learned by then that my parents weren't ever within calling distance.

It was a long trip, and mom's return was delayed until the next day. On her way back she noticed lots of water puddles and knew that there had been a storm -- so she surmised that this was the storm of my memory. When I asked her how she could have left me alone with strangers all day long she said, with evident unconcern, that it was o.k. because in those days I slept all the time; that I slept from about one o'clock in the afternoon on, all afternoon and all night. Every day. The idea that there might have been something wrong never entered her head. She always told me how good I was as a child, how quiet [*milyen csendes*], how undemanding, how calm, how happy and smiling [*mindeg mosolygós és jó kedvű*] I always was. She told me I slept 20 hours a day. I must have been a very depressed three-year-old to be so totally withdrawn as to be sleeping most of the time -- and such a report would set off alarm bells in any medical or mental health person today who heard about this. But my mother was oblivious to this, and it relieved her of a burden to spend time or energy in taking care of me. I don't know whether this is attributable to what I later recognized as her complete narcissism, or the shell-shock and P.T.S.D. that she was buried under in those times. Either way, I was never more than a two-dimensional construct for her. Like a paper doll. I imagine that narcissism can be increased under stress. But, either way, she was oblivious of me. I was not a priority for them.

The *very* earliest memory I am aware of is from when I was two. I don't seem to have been at the walking stage yet, even so late chronologically. I was on the cement floor of a room that I would only much later have recognized as a basement laundry-room; there were big cement things which anyone older would have recognized as laundry sinks. I was sitting on the floor alone and unsupervised, and noticed a squarish-roundish green object on the floor. I remember crawling over to it, picking it up, and putting it in my mouth, and biting off a piece and swallowing it. The reason this is fixed in my memory is that I remember how nauseous I felt afterwards. I later understood that I'd bitten into and swallowed a piece of soap. It's interesting that all my early memories involve lack of supervision. Of not of being held or talked to or played with, or even within someone's arc of awareness. And had that soap been something more toxic I would have died for that same reason. This event happened in the daytime, and mom was probably chatting and gossiping with one or more of the women who lived in that building. Dad would have been off at work with the Brits.

Well, overall, my mom ignored me. Regardless of how she spent her time, I wasn't an agenda item for her. I was lucky to have survived. Finally, as an irrelevant observation -- but because I'm describing life experiences that would certainly qualify as something to complain about -- the very name of the city we were living in, Klagenfurt, is odd. "Furt" means ford, crossing, going from one side to the other. "Klagen", in German, means "to complain".

As to who took any care of me during at least some of that time, my parents had been able to find a nanny for me, a middle-aged woman called "Teta". Given how poor we were I don't imagine that Teta got paid much; but some of the [relatively few] memories that I have of that part of my life involve her. While I have good memories of her, I at the same time *only one memory* of my mother spending time with me -- when she removed a splinter from my foot. In the few family photographs that have survived from that time, in no photograph of me with my mother are we physically touching or even looking at one another. It speaks loudly of a fundamental disconnect.

PARENTAL P.T.S.D.

As far as the processes of my young mental and emotional development were concerned, there was no way in which I wasn't continually picking up my parents' P.T.S.D.; I mean, it's the only thing they could provide. And this was compounded, as I'd said, by how aware they were of living among people who, had they known who we were, would have been happy to see us dead and buried. I remember that in 1948, at the age of four, I watched a military parade on the streets of Klagenfurt. The town itself had many collapsed buildings, damaged houses, and piles of bricks on lots where buildings had once stood, and also standing buildings pockmarked with bullet holes. I remember a field outside the city that was full of dead airplanes and airplane parts. Not knowing any better, I accepted these as being the normal appearance of any town. I climbed over and into them and played with them, by myself. I don't remember having had any friends in Austria -- but of course my parents would not under any circumstances have been friendly with any neighbors and their children. In any event, the parade itself consisted of the then usual trucks, tanks, military vehicles, and marching soldiers. It wasn't a drum majorettes or high-school-marching-band type parade. My parents and I were on the street, observing it all, and the townspeople around us were waving festive-looking flags. They looked like they were having so much fun that I told my parents that I wanted to have a flag like those. The reason I remember that occasion as vividly as I do is that my parents gave me a look then that I've never forgotten. And then they got very, very quiet. It was only years later that I understood what had just happened. All the flags had swastikas on them.

In any event, Klagenfurt was not our home; we were not Austrian; we were there because my father was working with the British. The people we lived among were not our friends, and never would be, and would have been happy to see us dead. We did not feel safe, and we were no doubt socially isolated and essentially friendless. We "passed" because both my parents spoke German and we didn't "look" foreign. German was also my first language. I hadn't learned to vocalize Hungarian yet; that came second. Spanish and English followed later. And as would continue to be the case, my parents ignored me. I have a few memories of doing things by myself, but only the vaguest ones about interacting with them.

TETA

As to who took any care of me in that time, my parents had been able to find a woman whom I called "Teta", who took care of me. Given how poor we were I don't imagine that Teta got paid much; but many of the [relatively few] memories that I have of that part of my life involve her. I also have a handful of fleeting memories of playing or exploring or doing something or other, in Klagenfurt. By myself. I don't think I had any friends or supervision at all. Almost every single fragment of memory I have is of my doing whatever it was that I was doing . . . alone.

Teta took any care of me in Klagenfurt. I remember her because she was kind. What memories I still have about the housing we occupied while in Austria was of rooms with not very much furniture, with nothing on the walls, and nothing on the floor. It was all pretty bare-bones. I don't think we had any more money than what we needed and we lived simply. At the same time I have *only one memory* of my mother spending time with me, in the two years we spent in Austria – the splinter incident that I'd mentioned earlier. I have a flash of memory about my dad; we were having dinner and we had a guest – probably one of the Brits my dad worked with. We were sitting at the table and I did something that I wasn't supposed to or that dad didn't like, and he knocked my hand out of the way -- with his knife. Granted, that knife wasn't sharp and I wasn't injured. But I'd been told that knives were dangerous. And for my dear daddy to have hit me with something I'd been told was dangerous, as casually and suddenly as he did . . . well, I understood that he didn't care if he hurt me or not. I've never forgotten that incident. Whatever caring or attention I received in those days, I owe greatly to Teta.

As a side-note, my parents re-visited Europe, and Austria, in the late nineteen-sixties. To my surprise, they looked Teta up. I was very surprised to hear that they'd made that effort. She was in an old-age home then. I presume that Teta was old and debilitated, and perhaps even ill, because of my dad's one-sentence completely unemotional and insensitive description of her. I asked him how Teta was, and he replied "*She's a lemon*". Quote unquote. Well, I don't imagine that dad had a lot of good memories of that period of his life, not to mention carrying a massive load of P.T.S.D. that was *never* diagnosed (the idea of P.T.S.D. did not exist then; that came in with the Vietnamese wars. In the Korean war it was called Shellshock. In World War I it was called Battle Fatigue. In the Civil War it was called Homesickness. And until the Viet-Nam war these labels only applied to soldiers. Not civilians. *Can you imagine that? There was no concept of ordinary-person trauma in those days!*). But . . . fuck dad. Teta deserved *some* recognition and thanks. And why did they take the trouble to look her up? To my knowledge they'd last spoken with each other twenty years before. My parents never ever mentioned her name; and I can't imagine that they had liked one another. But then again, my parents *never* mentioned, referred to, or talked about anything in the past. Never. The past was locked away and the key gotten rid of.

I have few memories of my father from those early Austrian days, for that matter. He was off working all the time, every day and, as I keep on saying, I was scared of him. After-war plumbing and sanitation being as they were I imagine that there may have been functioning toilets, but little kids of that time would shit into a potty-bowl-with-a-pitcher-like handle that was used for picking it

up. Once, when I was two -- that being the age at which youngsters start to become defiant -- my father told me to shit into the “*bili*”, which is what we called it. I said no. He then spanked me for that until I was black and blue. Really. Yeah, I was quite frightened of him. He of course acted toward vulnerable people who could not defend themselves the way people with more power and authority had acted toward him. He’d certainly been treated like that by his own parents. And his concentration camp guards. So what else did he know? Any competent child-physician today who saw a toddler with black and blue marks like I had would call Child Protective Services.

FROM AUSTRIA TO ENGLAND

We moved from Austria to England in 1948. The British forces were being withdrawn from Europe and repatriated, and the prospect of remaining in such an unrepentantly pro-Nazi country, and being unemployed, would have been too horrible for my parents to contemplate. We would have been left stranded, vulnerable, with no papers, and with no income. So we moved to England. We lacked any “official paperwork” for going there . . . and that caught up with us later.

POST-WAR ENGLAND

I have few scattered memories of England. I was four years old. We lived in two rented rooms of a house somewhere in the suburbs of London, that was run by a severe and unhappy-feeling woman. She was a person who lived alone and needed to take in boarders like us. The house itself impressed my young mind as being spare, undecorated, plain, and bare. Like the landlady herself. I can feel sympathy for her now because her situation is more comprehensible to me: there was no husband on the scene, and she’d had two sons, David and Richard, who were both dead. I think that one of her sons died in the war; the other had died from having drunk a bottle of ink. I think the woman had no one. I don’t recall her ever speaking to me, but I imagine she did talk with my parents. At least about food and rent. She fed us. I remember eating a lot of porridge -- which was very, very watery oatmeal without sugar or anything else in it. Food was scarce in England in those days.

We were in England for some six months. I don’t know what my dad did; he presumably either had some kind of job or a string of temporary jobs, or was connected to a relief agency. As a matter of fact, I *never* knew what my father did until he started working for my uncle in 1950. My mother is an almost complete mental blank for me throughout that whole period. I have no idea of what she did or where she did it. I don’t think she had a job that took her out of the house. I just don’t know. Neither of my parents ever talked to me so as to explain anything. One thing that I do remember is that I attended school. All of us kids wore “the school uniform”, and I remember having worn it. And, after about six months, we left England very suddenly. We were taken into custody and deported for being illegals. I’ll come to that a bit further on.

POST-WAR MENTAL HEALTH

Well, yes, both of my parents were badly traumatized in World War II . . . just as were the populations of Hungary, Germany, Western Russia, Ukraine, Czechoslovakia, Poland, and the rest of Eastern Europe . . . and all around the Pacific Ocean and Southeast Asia. It's estimated that 85,000,000 people were killed in that war . . . and probably at least that many wounded and traumatized. The Jewish community was specifically singled out for extermination for no other reason than that it was a handy distraction and unifying national behavior for the purpose of hyping the patriotic German mindset. It was a Political/attitudinal move that was encouraged for people who already shared the same thoughts, beliefs, prejudices, and hatreds – and to have them more strongly. My dad once told me about one time, when he was a young boy, that he was standing on a Budapest street corner. He was waiting to cross, and he was standing next to a man he didn't know. The man looked down at him and asked if he was Jewish. Being young and innocent, my dad said that yes, he was. And then the man walloped my dad so hard that he got knocked off his feet. This would have happened in the daytime, and probably out in public. The way that American Southerners treated Blacks (which was one of the things they were called then) wasn't exactly like that, but they didn't have to ask who or what the people they were looking down on were. They *all* looked guilty. Of being black. And that's something that Americans should feel ashamed of.

MY SENSE OF HUMOR

A sense of humor is a good thing to have. A great deal of it is a coping mechanism against life's difficulties and ironies. Mine is; as I've said, I like Jewish humor with its wry and dry ironies. It's the humor of the underdog. Mostly, it's statements from people who can't do anything about life's imbalances other than to just comment on them. American Jewish humor tends to be as I just described, and "authentic" Jewish humor is different in that it is darker; but they both look at the same world from different elevations on the mountain of life, if I can put it like that.

I would say that kids don't have a sense of humor. They don't need one. They have a sense of fun instead. No one in politics has a sense of humor: they're in charge of things and humor is unnecessary for them. Soldiers need a sense of humor for releasing a lot of the tensions of their lives. And they're not in charge; the sergeant or other leader is in charge, and the others have to do what he says. He doesn't have much of a sense of humor either. Working people have more sense of humor than does management.