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Chapter: 2

Concept: Family and Peers in the Role They Play in Anticipatory Role Socialization

Source: Community (Season 1, Episode 1)

Chapter 2 talks about Anticipatory Role Socialization which is defined as how our communication experiences shape our decisions about the roles we take in our careers and organizations. The book speaks to specific influences such as family, peers, media, and education. Chapter 2 also discusses Anticipatory Organization Communication which is defined as how our communication experiences shape our decision about what roles to join or not to join.

The two concepts I chose were family and peers and the role they play in anticipatory role socialization as these are two influences that we feel are the most formative in how we see ourselves and the path we choose to walk in life. Your role in your family and how you view your home life often mirrors itself in your career choice. A great example of this is in the show *Community (season 1, episode 1)*, the lead character Jeff makes a statement of “from a young age I learned that if I talk long enough, I can make anything right or wrong, so either I’m God or the truth is relative”. From what we know of Jeff so far, he is an attorney (with an invalid law degree) who is facing disbarment unless he completes community college. The truth being relative is a concept that is often associated with lawyers as they are often seen as manipulators of the truth and unethical. Based on his comments, I don’t think Jeff’s character grew up in a home with a lot of love or support. I also think that he is not close with his family because they would have known that he didn’t have a degree from an American institution, as most parents would attend a law school graduation. It seems he learned to master his words but not his morals and now he is forced to face the consequences of that character deficiency. It makes me wonder how many of us have gone against what we knew to be right in order to succeed and prove out worth to our families.

The second concept is the role of peers in anticipatory role socialization. Towards the end of the episode Jeff gives a speech about how we as humans are able to see and connect to the good in anything, even an inanimate object but fail to recognize and celebrate to good within ourselves. This is an important statement. I think (and it’s been my experience) that when you celebrate yourself, even if it is well deserved, that you are viewed as arrogant or cocky and people tend to respond negatively. If you don’t have a safe space to celebrate and recognize your achievements, then the only measure of self-worth at your disposal is the opinion of others. I think this is also a reason that Jeff chose to become a lawyer. It is one of the few professions where being braggadocious is seen as a plus. Clients need to know that you are confident in your abilities in order for them to feel comfortable that they have chosen the right counsel. He tries to use this confidence to manipulate his college advisor into giving him the answers to his tests, and while he thinks his manipulation worked, we find out at the end of the episode that it didn’t, and that Jeff for the first time will have to put in the work in order to preserve his career. On a positive note, his peers end up connecting to him and accepting him into their group even though he tried to trick them into turning on each other to take away from the fact that he was not a qualified Spanish tutor.