

## 22. The Shrink

*(The lunch room / lounge of a large magazine. #1, a psychologist, is there. #2 enters.)*

- #1: Mr./Ms. Watkins? Please sit down. I'm Dr. Schneck.  
#2: *(Sits.)* I'm sorry, did you say Schneck?  
#1: Yes.  
#2: Wow. You know, for fifty bucks, I can put you in touch with a guy that can take care of the people who gave you that name.  
#1: I'll have you know that Schneck is a very old family name. It is of German derivation and dates back several centuries.  
#2: I see. So you're proud to come from a long line of Bavarian Schnecks.  
#1: I...I suppose one might put it that way.  
#2: No supposing necessary. I just did. But to each his own. So Schnecky, what can I do for you?  
#1: It's Dr. Schnecky...uh Schneck and you can take this meeting a little more seriously.  
#2: Fine, I'll be as serious as a heart attack – as soon as you tell me why I'm here.  
#1: I haven't told you?  
#2: No. Having a short term memory problem, Doc?  
#1: No, I've just seen so many people in the last couple of days that I guess I'm a little...little...uhh...  
#2: Never mind. I get a little...uhh, myself on occasion. So, what's up?  
#1: I'm a psychologist and I was hired by your boss, Mr. Wapple, to try and find out why morale has been so low here at the magazine.  
#2: That's easy, I can tell you why right now.  
#1: What is it?

- #2: You've taken over the lunch room. We get very cranky when we have no place to eat.  
#1: I think Mr. Wapple feels that this morale problem started before I got here. Now, Mr./Ms. Watkins...  
#2: Please, call me Tommy/Tammy.  
#1: *(Checks his/her file.)* But you're name is Dean/Deena.  
#2: I know.  
#1: Then why do you want me to call you Tommy/Tammy?  
#2: I've always liked that name. I was curious to hear how it would sound.  
#1: *(Slams the file shut.)* Mr./Ms. Watkins! You're not being very cooperative. Why is that?  
#2: I don't know. You're the shrink. You tell me.  
#1: Maybe you think this whole thing is foolish?  
#2: BINGO! Right on the money! Can I go now?  
#1: No! Mr. Wapple doesn't share that opinion.  
#2: And which Mr. Wapple is that? Junior or senior?  
#1: Junior.  
#2: Figures. He's probably just upset about the suggestion box.  
#1: Aha! So you do know about that!  
#2: Aha! Who doesn't? He sent around a memo asking people to start putting real suggestions in the box.  
#1: Do you know what was in there?  
#2: I've heard stories.  
#1: Let me read you some. *(Takes out some notes and starts to read them.)* "I think we should start using elves as reporters. They're little and can get into places that big reporters can't. They also like to work at night and we can pay them less." *(Takes out another one.)* Or this one, "How about if we write all our articles in Sanskrit?" Or this one...well, this one suggests Mr. Wapple put his head somewhere that's physically impossible. These are just a few of the hundred or so that have been in the box. Mr. Wapple just wants to know who's doing this and why.  
#2: And how do you plan to find out?

- #1:** By giving everyone a few simple tests. Then I analyze their responses and that should tell me who is involved.
- #2:** What kind of tests are you talking about?
- #1:** Simple things like...word association, where...
- #2:** You say a word, then I say the first thing that comes to mind.
- #1:** Exactly! For example – I might say black and you would say...
- #2:** Affirmative action.
- #1:** What?
- #2:** Why.
- #1:** No.
- #2:** Yes.
- #1:** Stop!
- #2:** Go!
- #1:** Please!
- #2:** Thank you!
- #1:** Stop it! I'm not doing the test!
- #2:** *(Doesn't repeat.)* Oh. *(Pause)* Too bad. I was doing real well.
- #1:** No you weren't. When I said black you said affirmative action.
- #2:** We're doing a cover story on it and it's the first thing that came to mind. So according to the rules, it wasn't wrong. Boy, if you don't know that then you're not a very good shrink at all, are you?
- #1:** I happen to be an excellent shrink...uh, psychologist. Let's just move on to another test.
- #2:** You know what, I've got a better idea. Let's not!
- #1:** Are you refusing to take the tests?
- #2:** Yes.
- #1:** Why?
- #2:** We're not doing that word association thing again, are we?
- #1:** No.

- #2:** Good. Then I'll tell you why I don't want to take any tests. They're a waste of time. If you want to know if I know who wrote the suggestions, why don't you just...ask me?
- #1:** *(Eyes #2.)* Fine, I'll play your little game. Do you know who wrote the suggestions?
- #2:** Yes, I do. Ask me who it was.
- #1:** Who was it?
- #2:** Me. Now, ask me how many notes I wrote.
- #1:** How many did you write?
- #2:** All of them. Can you figure out what the next question should be?
- #1:** Why...did you write them?
- #2:** Very good. You're brighter than you appear. I wrote them because Wapple Jr. – sounds like a hamburger, doesn't it – anyway, he's an idiot.
- #1:** Actually, he happens to have a Ph.D. in...
- #2:** In business! He's trying to make this place like...a company. It's not. It's a magazine and he's talking to reporters and photographers, and ad people, and layout people. You can't talk to us like...normal people. We're a very quirky bunch. What he should do is either call a meeting and get to know us all, as we are, or just stick to the money end and stop trying to change things.
- #1:** Well why didn't you write that suggestion down and put it in the box?
- #2:** Simple – it wasn't funny. See you later, Doc. *(#2 gets up and starts to leave. He/she reaches into his/her pocket and pulls out one last note. #2 walks back to #1.)* Here you go. I wrote this suggestion for you when I was told to come here. *(Exits.)*
- #1:** *(Opens and reads the note.)* Oh my goodness! If I did that I'd be in therapy for years. I'd be...