

# Karl and Anton – Two brothers

I want to tell you the story of two brothers. Their names are Karl and Anton. Karl, the elder brother, is 7 years old at the time, near the end of WW2. The family lives in the eastern outskirts of Berlin. The war is close at hand every day. Karl is aware of what is happening around him and notices how concerned the parents are about everyone's safety. He also senses his mother's fears. He feels insecure and unsettled. He can hardly handle his own fears, let alone bear those of his mother. He is anxious and feels all alone. He does not dare to express his fears, because he is afraid that he would make things even worse. He sees no other way out than just to swallow them down.

Karl remembers exactly the insistent words of his parents, who said that he must be very brave and also to take good care of Anton. Karl wants to be brave and takes his task very much to heart.

Anton, the younger brother, is 3 years old. He doesn't really understand what war means. What he does notice, however, is that when the alarm sirens are heard, everyone has to go down to the basement for protection. To comfort the children, his father hands out a home-made caramel sweet to each of them.

Anton often wishes there were bomb alarms again to get another treat.

But when a bomb hit the house next door and Anton sees the destroyed house, he is deeply frightened. He feels guilty and begins to cry bitterly.

Karl does not understand why Anton is crying so much. He wants to protect him and spontaneously gives him a big hug to comfort him.

Karl feels good in the role of protector and is proud of it. He wants to be praised and recognized for this. He also longs himself for a big brother who would protect him and with whom he could share his worries.

But he realizes that he neither has a big brother, nor does he get praise and recognition from his parents.

Anton's world, however, looks different.

Anton loves his big brother and looks up to him. He enjoys being in his company and feels safe and comfortable. He is full of vitality and wants to embrace everyone around him. He does not worry and is self-confident.

He is usually in a good mood, but sometimes he is too cocky; it then gets out of hand, and he has to be stopped. He loves to be the family clown and is happy when everyone laughs at his jokes.

No wonder that Anton's parents love him and are full of praise.

Karl, on the other hand, is rather serious, quiet and introvert.

He withdraws more and more or is defiant.

His parents wonder why he behaves so impossibly. They do not understand his behavior and do not want to tolerate nor accept it.

They want him to be different and do not accept him as he is. Often, they make critical remarks.

They sometimes even tease him, in order to provoke him and lure him out of his reserve.

But in doing so they only achieve the opposite, since Karl is deeply hurt by this. He defiantly resists. To protect himself, he isolates himself even more and, again, feels left alone.

Karl is quite desperate and keeps asking himself why he doesn't get more recognition from his parents. He does not know what he is doing wrong. He has always done his best.

- as best he could.

But he cannot find an answer. He feels neglected and betrayed.

Whenever his mother or father pay attention to Anton instead of him, he hardly can bare the sharp pain in his chest.

Can one blame his parents for not knowing what they are doing?

All they do is worry about him. They are at a loss and do not know how to help him.

The more Karl notices how happy, carefree and without worry Anton lives, the more he feels his anger towards

Anton grows.

He is jealous of Anton, who seems to have everything fall into his lap without having to make any effort.

Karl does not understand why this is so, only that everything is immensely unfair.

Karl feels trapped and notices how his anger towards Anton is growing stronger and he cannot defend himself against his rising jealousy. His jealousy is like a shadow over his heart, and he can't push it away. He starts to hate his brother.

To find a way out of his dilemma, he begins to fantasize. In his fantasies he creates scenarios in which he humiliates and hurts Anton and in which he is strong admired and loved by everyone.

This is the environment and atmosphere in which the two brothers experienced their early childhood.

These earlier childhood experiences, without any doubt, have shaped their future lives.

Karl stays trapped in his world. He cannot or will not change and remains stuck.

He is afraid of anything new and shies away from taking any risks.

He continues to withdraw from his parents and brother. Karl is not aware that he is doing himself great harm.

For Karl, the years pass without anything significant changing. But over time, his wounds also heal.

Karl lives a conventional lifestyle, a typical traditional bourgeois family life. He is reasonably successful professionally, marries a woman who suits him and is a lovely father.

Anton's life on the other hand takes a different path.

He welcomes everything new and does not shy away from taking risks.

He wants to go out into the world and get to know foreign countries, with their cultures and people.

Even at night Anton dreams of unknown strange worlds. In his dreams he is able to fly and often he flies over indescribably beautiful landscapes, like hot sandy deserts, snow-covered mountains and also far out into the universe.

When he wakes up from his dreams, he feels happy, keeps daydreaming for a while which animates his desire to travel.

Anton lives an unorthodox lifestyle, following the slogan.

'Live and let live.'

He has many friends and lives together with some of them in a commune.

Anton is a qualified social worker, is socially-politically active and loves his profession.

He has several intimate relationships with women without committing himself but cultivates their friendships. He likes to remain independent and loves his freedom.

66However, one day a drastic change is on the horizon, in a way he never thought possible, which turns Anton's life upside down, so to speak.

He falls head over heels in love with a man.

He spends nights discussing with him what their future life together might look like.

It is not long before it is certain that Anton will leave his familiar surroundings behind and say goodbye to his friends.

With his lover, he moves to England to start a new life.