



## A THERAPY SESSION WITH MYSELF – ZOOM VERSION

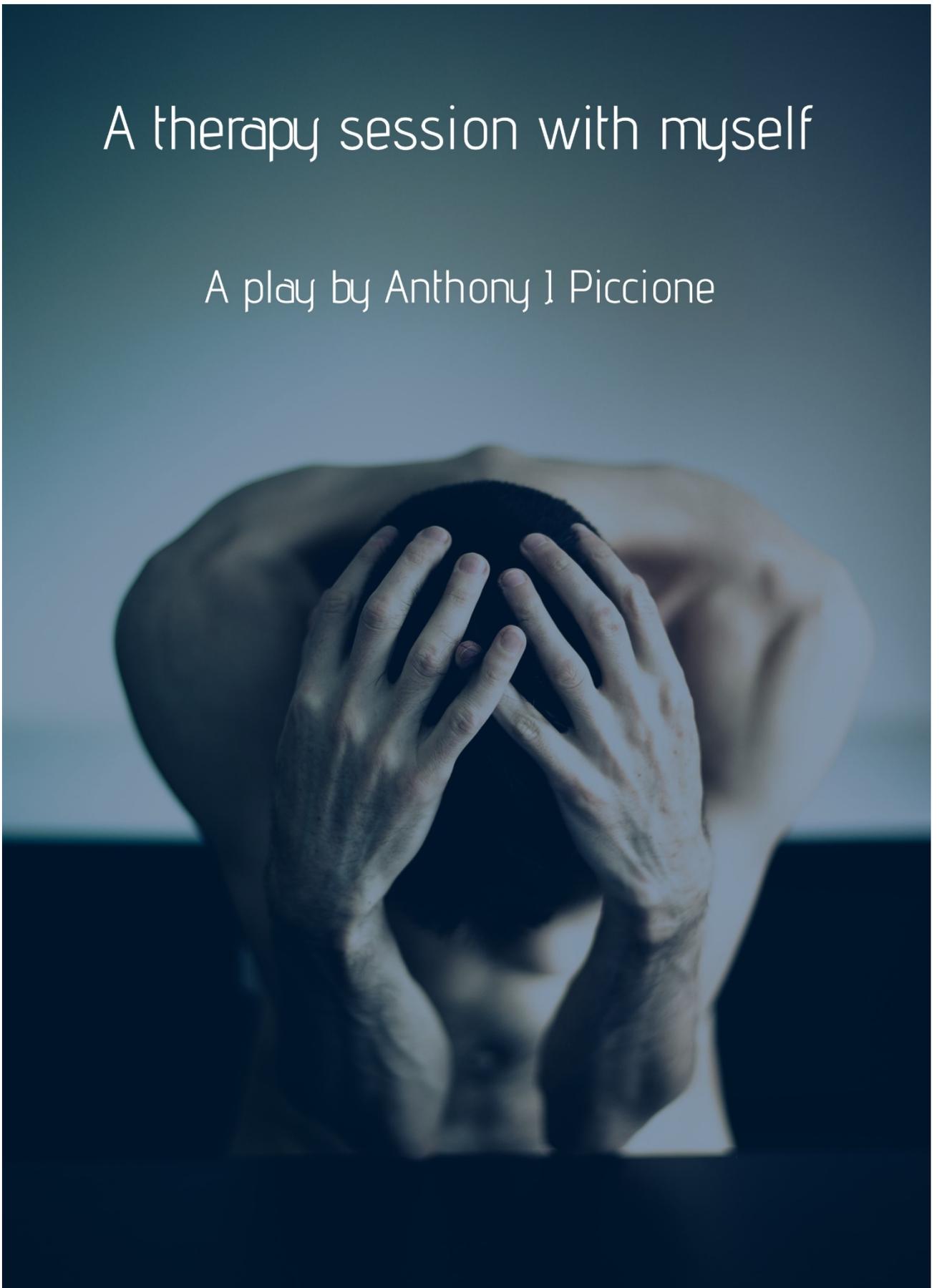
By Anthony J Piccione

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# A therapy session with myself

A play by Anthony J Piccione



**Playwright's Note**

When I began writing this play in 2015, while I was still a student at Eastern Connecticut State University, I did so because I wanted to show people what it was like - at least, based on my own perspective - to be a teenager and college student with social anxiety, depression and Asperger's syndrome, so that people might possibly have a better understanding of how a kid like me - who might be going through similarly rough times - could be feeling.

The play is semi-autobiographical, so while it's not an exact retelling of my life, it comes extremely close. It's a deliberately messy play, to reflect what was once (and often still is) the frequent state of my mind, and it probably raises at least as many questions as it provides answers. Nonetheless, I do hope that it helps fuel a significant conversation about issues of mental illness and autism awareness, and that maybe it will leave people thinking about them, in new ways. I also hope it leaves anyone who has been through dark times with the reminder that life can - and often does - get better, as long as you're willing to go out there and give people a chance...

*Anthony J. Riccio*

A Therapy Session with Myself

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## Cast of Characters

<u>Alex:</u>	A young college student and aspiring writer with anxiety, depression and Asperger's syndrome, horribly bullied when he was younger, and afraid of putting himself back out into the world.
<u>You:</u>	A human reflection of the other half of Alex's consciousness.
<u>Me:</u>	Alex's past self, appearing in flashbacks.
<u>Kate:</u>	Alex's mother.
<u>Ray:</u>	Alex's father.
<u>Lily:</u>	Alex's little sister.
<u>Henry:</u>	Alex's best friend, and one of the few he has left.
<u>Kelly:</u>	Alex's ex-girlfriend.
<u>Professor Collins:</u>	Alex's writing mentor.
<u>Beth:</u>	Alex's acting mentor.
<u>Tim:</u>	Alex's ex-college roommate.
<u>Philip:</u>	Alex's ex-college roommate.
<u>Ensemble:</u>	Students, professors, teachers, hospital patients, etc.

## Scene

Alex's apartment near the college campus (with flashbacks taking place at various other places)

## Time

A lonely afternoon during the summer before Alex's senior year of college

## A THERAPY SESSION WITH MYSELF

### Prologue

("ME" - A SLIGHTLY YOUNGER VERSION OF ALEX - IS FACING THE CAMERA.)

ME

My mind is fucked up.  
Has been since the day I was born.  
My entire life, I tried to hide who I am.  
Ashamed of the way I was.  
Embarrassed of how I was born.  
Felt that people wouldn't understand.  
By the time I did start telling my friends, they just kept asking:  
"What's it like?"  
I couldn't give them a good answer even if I wanted to. How could I know what it was like to be the way I am, if I didn't even know what it was like NOT to be the way I am?  
It pisses me off.  
How people try and "understand".  
When people say they are "aware".  
When they think they can "help".  
They can't help me. I learned that A long time ago. I'm destined to live with this Until the day I die, a day I used to wish Would come every day because of it.  
Because of the doctors who kept telling me I had to be "treated".  
Or the so-called "advocates" who still think we need a "cure".  
Because of the idiots who think this is the same as being stupid.  
Or because of the assholes who still use this as a word that is intended to be insulting.  
Too many of them still aren't able to see I'm every bit as human as they are.  
I don't need people to understand.  
I don't care if people show their "awareness".  
I just want them to accept me for who I am, flaws and everything...  
I wouldn't wish this on my own worst enemy...

Scene 1

(ALEX IS SEATED IN FRONT OF HIS LAPTOP, TYPING. RIGHT NEXT TO HIS LAPTOP IS A SMALL COFFEE MUG. HE STOPS TYPING, AND PAUSES TO STARE AT WHAT HE HAS TYPED. HE RESUMES TYPING FOR A FEW MOMENTS. HE STOPS TYPING, AND PAUSES TO STARE AGAIN. HE RESUMES TYPING FOR A FEW MOMENTS. HE STOPS TYPING.)

ALEX

(SHRUGS)  
God dammit!!

(ALEX PAUSES, TAKES A DEEP BREATH AND TAKES ANOTHER SIP FROM HIS MUG, ONLY TO REALIZE THAT IT IS NOW EMPTY.)

ALEX

Annnnd I'm out of coffee, too!  
(SARCASTIC)  
Lovely!

(ALEX STARES BLANKLY FOR A BRIEF MOMENT, AND THEN LOOKS UPWARD.)

ALEX

Maybe if I just make one more pot, that'll do the trick. That's right. Just one more-

YOU (V.O)

More caffeine isn't gonna help, Alex. Shouldn't you have figured that out by now?

(ALEX LOOKS AROUND.)

ALEX

(STARTLED)  
Who said that?

YOU (V.O)

You did.

ALEX

Huh?

("YOU" - A SELF-REFLECTION OF ALEX - APPEARS. ALEX IS STARTLED.)

ALEX

What the fu-

(CONTINUED)

YOU

You've already had over a dozen cups of coffee today  
PLUS two energy drinks.

ALEX

Wha-who...who are you?

YOU

I'm you.

ALEX

Huh?

YOU

I'm you. I'm Alex Grayson.

(PAUSE)

(ALEX BURSTS INTO LAUGHTER.)

ALEX

Seriously, though. Who are you?

YOU

I'm you. Your consciousness. The second half of your  
consciousness, to be specific.

ALEX

I...I-I-no, this isn't actually-

YOU

What? Don't I look like you?

ALEX

This...this is soo trippy, I...okay, so if you're me,  
why don't you tell me a little something about  
yourself...or myself?

YOU

Well, I was born on New Year's Eve.

ALEX

I'm pretty sure anyone who's taken even a quick look at  
my Facebook profile knows that.

YOU

I'm about to go into my last year of college.

ALEX

What else?

YOU

I'm an aspiring scriptwriter. Professional procrastinator. Prolific Facebooker. Avid caffeine drinker. Lifelong fan of The Lord of the Rings, Star Wars, Batman, Harry Potter...and also, I don't always like to talk about it, but I happen to have social anxiety, depression and Asperger's syndrome-

ALEX

Why don't you tell me something that ONLY I would know.

YOU

Okay: This morning, you accidentally hit your head on the way to the shower, which never normally happens, because USUALLY, you remember to have coffee BEFORE you shower and get dressed.

ALEX

I...wha-how did you...who told you...have you been stalking-

YOU

You believe me yet?

ALEX

(LAUGHS SOFTLY)

And to think, I've had plenty of coffee, but not a drop of alcohol yet today.

YOU

Not one drop, huh?

ALEX

Nope.

YOU

It's already getting close to the evening, yet you've made it this far. Not bad.

ALEX

Although, maybe it's not a bad idea to have just one drink now-

YOU

Nope. That's not how you're gonna fix this.

ALEX

Oh c'mon. Just ONE drink, to help me get rid of this fucking writer's block-

YOU

I'm not just talking about writer's block.

ALEX

Wha-I...what are you-

YOU

Alcohol isn't a solution to anything, and you know it. You're just covering it up, and eventually, it's gonna catch up with you, and just cause MORE problems for you.

ALEX

But...but if I just stop, then...then what can I-

YOU

So exactly how much cups of coffee have you had today?

ALEX

Like, over a dozen or something, like you said.

YOU

That's not an exact number.

ALEX

(ANNOYED)

I-I don't know. Why does that even matter?

YOU

Don't you think you're gonna give yourself a heart attack or something?

ALEX

Oh, c'mon. If you were really me, you'd know that I need at least a gallon or so just to get out of bed.

YOU

And isn't that sad?

ALEX

I...I dunno, I guess I'm just used to it, by now.

YOU

And how did you get used to it, exactly?

ALEX

Well, if you were really me, wouldn't you know-

YOU

Oh, I know how. YOU know how. But can you SAY how?

ALEX

(CHUCKLES NERVOUSLY)

I mean, I-

YOU

THAT is why I'm here. Because you need to talk about this.

ALEX

About my growing addiction to caffeine??

YOU

No. About what's fueling your caffeine addition. You are where you are in life because you can't talk HONESTLY with others about how you really feel about it.

ALEX

I...I mean, c'mon, I did just start going to counseling, recently.

YOU

And how much have you REALLY said so far, in those counseling sessions?

ALEX

I JUST started going, and it takes awhile for me to get comfortable with anyone. Just give it time.

YOU

Wasn't "time" supposed to eventually make all those past therapy sessions in high school work out for you, too?

ALEX

Maybe this time will be different.

YOU

It could be, but how do you think you'll EVER get to a point where you can talk to others about your life, if you're can't be honest with yourself about it?

ALEX

(SHRUGS)

It's hard, because talking about these things, in general, just makes me feel more miserable.

YOU

But it's necessary. For your own good, you need to be able to do this.

ALEX

Why, though? I mean...it still hurts to think about the past...

Scene 2

(ME IS IN A BATHROOM, HOLDING A HANDFUL OF PILLS.  
KATE AND RAY - ALEX'S PARENTS - ARE OUTSIDE THE  
CLOSED DOOR TO THE BATHROOM.)

KATE

Alex? Alex?!

(KATE STARTS BANGING ON THE DOOR.)

KATE

Alex, are you in here?!

(ME SIMPLY STARES AT THE PILLS, AS BANGING ON THE  
DOOR CAN STILL BE HEARD IN THE BACKGROUND.)

RAY

Alex, open this door!

(PAUSES)

You open this door right this instant!

(PAUSE)

KATE

Alex?

(PAUSES)

Alex?!

(PAUSES)

Oh God. Alex, please open the door.

(PAUSES)

Please, please, PLEASE OPEN THE DOOR!!!

RAY

Alex? Alex?! ALEX??!!

(AFTER STARING AT THE PILLS FOR SEVERAL MOMENTS,  
ME TOSSES TO THE GROUND AND BREAKS DOWN IN TEARS.)

Scene 3

(ALEX AND YOU ARE SPEAKING TO EACH OTHER IN THEIR  
APARTMENT.)

YOU

But don't you see how by ignoring it, you're only being  
dishonest with how you feel?

ALEX

I'm not IGNORING it. I'd just rather try not to look  
back on it too much. Besides, things might not be great  
right now, but it could be worse.

(CONTINUED)