

Karmic double

The term “Karmic Double” (1) was first coined by Rudolf Steiner to describe a problematic aspect of the personality that originates from a past life. This double, which everyone has, manifests as inner resistances, unconscious habits, and moral weaknesses that can hinder personal growth and spiritual development. The karmic double, resulting from unresolved issues in a past life, can manifest as a sub-personality that disrupts one’s current life.

The karmic double does not arise from events in the present life, which might have resonances in different situations. Neither is it a result of what one’s parents and teachers may or may not have done. The karmic double might have resonances in those events, but this is only because one may have a predisposition towards this kind of trauma that the events in this life have triggered. The karmic double has a particular signature, beyond flashbacks from childhood, memories, triggers, or traumas from earlier in one’s biography, that arises rather like a smoking gun. This smoking gun has a surprising element, as if it has come out of nowhere, as one did not do it, but rather an unconscious part of one has been active. This part is often referred to as a sub-personality, one that has become relatively autonomous, originating from unresolved karma from a previous life.

Steiner explains that these unresolved elements are not merely passive remnants but active forces that can influence one’s current (2) life circumstances and inner experiences. They are part of the individual’s karma, shaping challenges and obstacles that one must confront and transform. The Karmic Double may temporarily take over one’s behaviour, leading to actions that one later regrets. When these influences persist for extended periods, they can contribute to personality disorders, where the Self struggles or is unable to manage or transform these behaviours.