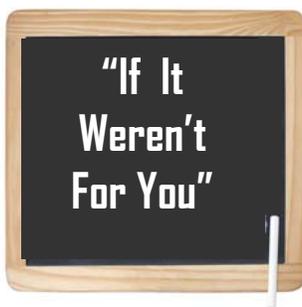


## Special points of interest:

The thing that stands out about "If It Weren't For You" is that present day society does not seem to be concerned about the consequences of playing this game, whether it be played among married couples, politicians, labor groups, partisans, nations. (If It Weren't For Them.)

I ask myself, is it possible that these individuals, couples, groups, and organizations are oblivious to playing this game and/or are they being played by people and groups in the know? Why are people and groups talking about their loved ones, friends, neighbors in a manner that violates their fiduciary relationships, trust, responsibility? All for the sake of "play"? To be part of the group? Are they being encouraged?. GRD, GAF Payoffs?



## Inside this issue:

"If It Weren't For You" 1

## "If It Weren't For You"

Eric Berne M.D. writes about the game "If It Weren't For You" in three of his most popular titles: "Games People Play," "Transactional Analysis in Psychotherapy," and "The Structure and Dynamics of Organizations and Groups." (\*#1)

In SAODG, Berne wrote: "The kind of games, such as those mentioned above, which are of interest to the student of social dynamics, are of a serious nature, even though their descriptions may bring to mind the English humorists. They form the stuff out of which many lives are made and many personal and **national destinies are decided**. Any set of transactions that occurs repeatedly in a group, and that can be analyzed on two levels like the illustrations shown here, is probably a game. The diagnosis is confirmed if an ulterior motive can be found which leads progressively to the same climax again and again."

"Games People Play" page 50: "The most common game played between spouses is colloquially called "**If It Weren't For You**", and this will be used to illustrate the characteristics of games in general."

"Mrs. White complained that her husband severely restricted her social activities, so that she never learned to dance. Due to changes in her attitude brought about by psychiatric treatment, her husband became less sure

of himself and more indulgent. Mrs. White was then free to enlarge the scope of her activities. She signed up for dancing classes, and then discovered to her despair that she had a morbid fear of dance floors and had to abandon this project."

"This unfortunate adventure, along with similar ones, laid bare some important aspects of the structure of her marriage. Out of her many suitors she had picked a domineering man for a husband. She was then in a position to complain that she could do all sorts of things "if it weren't for you." Many of her women friends also had domineering husbands, and when they met for their morning coffee, they spent a good deal of time playing "If It Weren't For Him."

"As it turned out, however, contrary to her complaints, her husband was performing a very real service for her by forbidding her to do something she was deeply afraid of, and by preventing her, in fact, from even becoming aware of her fears. This was one reason her Child had shrewdly chosen such a husband."

"But there was more to it than that. His prohibitions and her complaints frequently led to quarrels, so that their sex life was seriously impaired. And because of his feelings of guilt, he frequently brought her gifts which might not otherwise have been forth-

coming; certainly when he gave her more freedom, his gifts diminished in lavishness and frequency. She and her husband had little in common besides their household worries and their children, so that quarrels stood out as important events; it was mainly on these occasions that they had anything but the most casual conversations. At any rate, her married life had proved one thing to her that she had always maintained: that all men were mean and tyrannical (\* #2). As it turned out, this attitude was related to some day-dreams of being sexually abused which had plagued her in earlier years."

"There are various ways of describing this game in general terms. It is apparent that it belongs to the large field of SOCIAL DYNAMICS. The basic fact is that by marrying, Mr. and Mrs. White have an opportunity to communicate with each other, and such an opportunity may be called SOCIAL CONTACT. The fact that they use this opportunity makes their household a social aggregation, as contrasted with a New York subway train, for example, where people are in spatial contact but rarely avail themselves of the opportunity and so form a dissocial aggregation. The influence the Whites exert on each other's behavior and responses constitutes SOCIAL ACTION. Various disciplines would investigate such social action from different points of view. Since we are here concerned

Dr. Ernst was a student and teacher of Dr. Berne. What I mean by this is that Dr. Ernst taught Dr. Berne some things, too. Dr. Berne credits Dr. Ernst several times in his writings.

The following are notes by FH Ernst, Jr., MD about Berne's book "Games People Play."

\* #1: Sometimes partisan groups play this game *IWFY* vigorously. And at times the game intensifies into "FOOJY," "Big Store," or in some cases a "Sting." See "Games People Play" pg 139.

There is, however, and nothing has ever come along that beats the varieties of "cons" going on now by "The Invisible Bureaucracy" and the inner workings of the big Establishment Groups. For example see G. North's "Conspiracy: A Biblical View," the weekly newspapers AFP (American Free Press), and many others.

\* #2: Anna recounted, and it had been in verified earlier in group, that she played "If It Weren't For You" at home. One day coming into the office with her Bob, and after the preliminaries she came out with "Doctor if it weren't for Bob, I wouldn't have those beautiful children and the home we have" smiling and turning to him. This is but one example of how a game can come out with a GOW Payoff. page 52

\*#3: "Cultural" again. I'm not sure who he was bending to at time of this writing but do recall "Culture, schmulture", detesting that word with a specialized aversion to its use by seminar attenders in the late 50s and early 60s while in the Washington St (SF) apartment and "What is called culture refers to the games people are playing in a particular locale, in a particular segment of society."

#4: This is where my newer work on GAMES PEOPLE PLAY fits in. See "The Game Diagram."

with the personal histories and psychodynamics of the individuals involved, the present approach is one aspect of SOCIAL PSYCHIATRY; some implicit or explicit judgment is passed on the "healthiness" of the games studied. This is somewhat different from the more neutral and less committed attitudes of sociology. Psychiatry reserves the right to say, "Just a moment!" which the other disciplines do not. Transactional analysis is a branch of social psychiatry, and game analysis is a special aspect of transactional analysis."

"Practical game analysis deals with special cases as they appear in specific situations. Theoretical game analysis attempts to abstract and generalize the characteristics of various games, so that they can be recognized independently of their momentary verbal content and their cultural matrix (\* #3). The theoretical analysis of "If It Weren't For You", Marital Type, for example, should state the characteristics of that game in such a way that it can be recognized just as easily in a New Guinea jungle village as in a Manhattan penthouse, whether it is concerned with a nuptial party or with the financial problems of getting a fishing rod for the grandchildren; and regardless of how bluntly or subtly the moves are made, according to the permissible degrees of frankness between husband and wife. The PREVALENCE of the game in a given society is a matter for sociology and anthropology. Game analysis, as a part of social psychiatry, is only interested in describing the game when it does occur, regardless of how often that may be. This distinction is not complete, but it is analogous to the distinction between public health and internal medicine; the first is interested in the prevalence of malaria, while the latter studies cases

of malaria as they come up, in the jungle or in Manhattan."

"At the present time the scheme given below has been found the most useful one for theoretical game analysis. No doubt it will be improved as further knowledge accumulates. The first requisite is to recognize that a certain sequence of maneuvers meets the criteria of a game. As many samples as possible of the game are then collected. The significant features of the collection are then isolated (\* #4). Certain aspects emerge as an essential. These are then classified under headings which are designed to be as meaningful and instructive as possible in the current state of knowledge. The analysis is undertaken from the point of view of the one who is "it" -- in this case, Mrs. White."

"**THESIS.** This is a general description of the game, including the immediate sequence of events (the social level) and information about their psychological background, evolution and significance (the psychological level). In the case of "If It Weren't For You" Marital Type, the details already given will serve (pp. 50-51). For the sake of brevity, this game will henceforth be referred to as *IWFY*."

"**ANTITHESIS.** The presumption that a certain sequence constitutes a game is tentative until it has been existentially validated. This validation is carried out by a refusal to play or by undercutting the payoff. The one who is "it" will then make more intense efforts to continue the game. In the face of adamant refusal to play or a successful undercutting he will then lapse into a state called "despair," which in some respects resembles a depression, but is different in significant ways. It is more acute and contains elements of frustration and bewilderment. It may be manifested,

for example, by the onset of perplexing weeping (\* #5). In a successful therapeutic situation this may soon be replaced by humorous laughter, implying an Adult realization: "There I go again!" Thus despair is a concern of the Adult, while in depression it is the Child who has the executive power. Hopefulness, enthusiasm or a lively interest in one's surroundings is the opposite of depression; laughter is the opposite of despair. Hence the enjoyable quality of therapeutic game analysis. The antithesis to *IWFY* is permissiveness. As long as the husband is prohibitive, the game can proceed. If instead of saying "Don't you dare!" he says "Go ahead!" the underlying phobias are unmasked, and the wife can no longer turn on him, as demonstrated in Mrs. White's case."

"For clear understanding of a game, the antithesis should be known and its effectiveness demonstrated in practice."

"**AIM.** This states simply the general purpose of the game. Sometimes there are alternatives. The aim of *IWFY* may be stated as either reassurance ("It's not that I'm afraid, it's that he won't let me") or vindication ("It's not that I'm not trying, it's that he holds me back"). The reassuring function is easier to clarify and is more in accord with the security needs of the wife; therefore *IWFY* is most simply regarded as having the aim of reassurance."

"**ROLES (\* #6).** As previously noted, ego states are not roles but phenomena. Therefore ego states and roles have to be distinguished in a formal description. Games may be described as two-handed, three-handed, many-handed, etc, according to the number of roles offered. Sometimes the ego state of each player corresponds to his role, sometimes it does not."

"*IWFY* is a two-handed game and calls for a restricted wife and a domi-

neering husband. The wife may play her role either as a prudent Adult ("It's best that I do as he says") or as a petulant Child. The domineering husband may preserve an Adult ego state ("It's best that you do as I say") or slip into a Parental one ("You'd better do what I say")."

**"DYNAMICS.** There are alternatives in stating the psychodynamic driving forces behind each case of a game. It is usually possible, however, to pick out a single psychodynamic concept which usefully, aptly and meaningfully epitomizes the situation. Thus **IWFY** is best described as deriving from phobic sources."

**"EXAMPLES.** Since childhood origins of a game, or its infantile prototypes, are instructive to study, it is worthwhile to search for such cognates in making a formal description. It happens that **IWFY** is just as frequently played by little children as by grown-ups, so the childhood version is the same as the later one, with the actual parent substituted for the restricting husband."

**"TRANSACTIONAL PARADIGM.** The transactional analysis of a typical situation is presented, giving both the social and psychological levels of a revealing ulterior transaction. In its most dramatic form, **IWFY** at the social level is a Parent-Child game."

Mr. White: "You stay home and take care of the house."

Mrs. White: "If it weren't for you, I could be out having fun."

"At the psychological level (the ulterior marriage contract) the relationship is Child-Child, and quite different."

Mr. White: "You must always be here when I get home. I'm terrified of desertion."

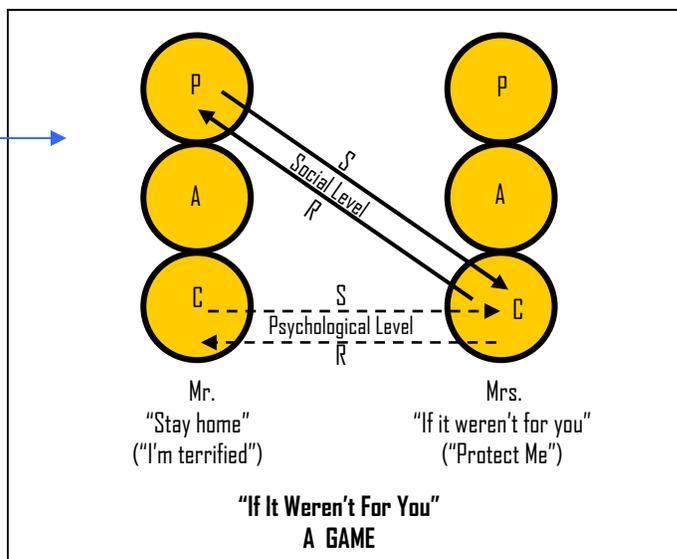
Mrs. White: "I will be if you help me avoid phobic situations."

"The two levels are illustrated.

**"MOVES (\* #7).** The moves of a game correspond roughly to the strokes in a ritual. As in any game, the player become increasingly adept with practice. Wasteful moves are eliminated, and more and more purpose is condensed into each move. "Beautiful friendships" are often based on the fact that the players complement each other with great economy and satisfaction, so that there is maximum yield with minimum effort from the games they play with each other. Certain intermediate, precautionary or concessional moves can be elided, giving a high degree of elegance to the relationship. The effort save on defensive maneuvers can be devoted to ornamental flourishes instead, to the delight of both parties and sometimes of the onlookers as well. The student observes that there is a minimum number of moves essential to the progress of the game, and these can be stated in the protocol. Individual players will embellish or multiply these basic moves according to their needs, talents or desires."

"The framework for **IWFY** is as follows: (1) Instruction-Compliance ("You stay home"--"All right") (2) Instruction-Protest ("You stay home again"—"If it weren't for you")

**"ADVANTAGES.** The general advantages of a game consist in its stabilizing (homeostatic) functions. Biological homeostasis is promoted by the stroking, and the psychological stability is reinforced by the confirmation of position (\* #8). As has already been noted, stroking may take various forms, so that the **BIOLOGICAL ADVANTAGE** of a game may be stated in



tactile terms. Thus the husband's role in **IWFY** is reminiscent of a back-handed slap (quite different in effect from a palm slap, which is direct humiliation), and the wife's response is something like a petulant kick in the shins. Hence the biological gain from **IWFY** is derived from belligerence-petulance exchanges: a distressing (\* #9) but apparently effective way to maintain the health of nervous tissues.

"Confirmation of the wife's position -- "All men are tyrants" -- is the **EXISTENTIAL ADVANTAGE.** This position is a reaction to the need to surrender that is inherent in the phobias, a demonstration of the coherent structure which underlies all games. The expanded statement would be: "If I went out alone in a crowd, I would be overcome by the temptation to surrender; at home I don't surrender: he forces me, which proves that all men are tyrants." Hence this game is commonly played by women who suffer from feelings of unreality, which signifies their difficulty in keeping the Adult in charge in situations of strong temptation. The detailed elucidation of these mechanisms belongs to psychoanalysis rather than game analysis. In game analysis the end product is the chief concern."

- \* #5: Would this be a "Tears" Racket with an implicit demand?
- \* #6: Roles are also found in the scripts of fairy tales. Individuals know the roles in their "fairy tale", eg the man whose life story so closely resemble "Beauty and The Beast." Most of the time he was "The Beast", occasionally the "Lost Wayfarer", etc.
- \* #7: Here my recycling diagram of moves and my explanation of the desirability, even necessity of bringing along the fellow player in order to keep the game moving toward payoff is especially useful in helping to explain the observations of games as they unfold. See "The Game Diagram."
- \* #8: This has to do both with the game moves AND the game payoff, which class of payoff outcome is promoted by the player to support his position.
- \* #9: "Distressing" - Berne well knew this would satisfy the sentimental reader. A stroke is a stroke and people will go to almost any length to get those that restore their internal stability and enable them to maintain their positions vis-a-vis the world.
- \* #10: Related to the game of "Harried"?



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*"Mastery of the universe is proportional to the symbols man has by which to represent his universe."*

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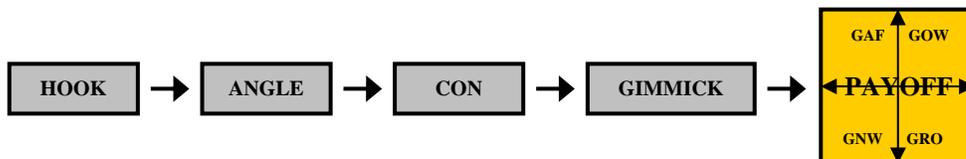
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A game is defined as a recurring set of transactions with ulterior transactions, concealed motivation, a gimmick, and a payoff. Eric Berne, M.D. used a particular variation of the duplex transactional diagram to represent the ulterior aspects of a game. Berne added the concept of switch in 1966 and introduced "The Game Formula."  $Con + Gimmick = Response > Switch > Payoff$ . The "Ernst Game Diagram" as described by Franklin H. Ernst Jr., M.D. in his paper "The Game Diagram" shows the phenomena of the variableness of a game and number of variations without contradicting "Berne's Game Formula." The Game Diagram" has five moves: Move #1-Hook, Move #2-Angle, Move #3-Con, Move #4-Gimmick, Move #5-Payoff. Diagrammatically it looks like this:



**"INTERNAL PSYCHOLOGICAL ADVANTAGE** of a game is its direct effect on the psychic economy (libido). In **IWFY** the socially acceptable surrender to the husband's authority keeps the woman from experiencing neurotic fears. At the same time it satisfies masochistic needs, if they exist, using masochism not in the sense of self-abnegation but with its classical meaning of sexual excitement in situations of deprivation, humiliation or pain. That is, it excites her to be deprived and dominated."

**"EXTERNAL PSYCHOLOGICAL ADVANTAGE** is the avoidance of the feared situation by playing the game. This is especially obvious in **IWFY**, where it is the outstanding motivation: by complying with the husband's strictures, the wife avoids the public situations which she fears."

**"INTERNAL SOCIAL ADVANTAGE** is designated by the name of the game as it is played in the individual's intimate circle. By her compliance, the wife gains the privilege of saying

"If it weren't for you." This helps to structure the time she must spend with her husband; in the case of Mrs. White, this need for structure was especially strong because of the lack of other common interests, especially before the arrival of their offspring and after the children were grown. In between, the game was played intensively and less frequently, because the children performed their usual function of structuring time for their parents, and also provided an even more widely accepted version of **IWFY**, the busy-housewife variation (**\* #10**). The fact that young mothers in America often really are very busy does not change the analysis of this variation. Game analysis only attempts to answer this question without prejudice: given that a young woman is busy, how does she go about exploiting her busyness in order to get some compensation for it?"

**"EXTERNAL SOCIAL ADVANTAGE** is designated by the use made of the situation in outside social contacts. In the case of the game **"If It Weren't**

**For You"**, which is what the wife says to her husband, there is a transformation into the pastime **"If It Weren't For Him"** when she meets with her friends over morning coffee. Again, the influence of games at the selection of social companions is shown. The new neighbor who is invited for morning coffee is being invited to play **"If It Weren't For Him."** If she plays, well and good, she will soon be a bosom friend of the old timers, other things being equal. If she refuses to play and insists on taking a charitable view of her husband, she will not last long. Her situation will be the same as if she kept refusing to drink at cocktail parties -- in most circles, she would gradually be dropped from the guest lists.

"This completes the analysis of the formal features of **IWFY**. In order to clarify the procedure further, analysis of **"Why Don't You-- Yes But"**, which is the most common game played at social gatherings, committee meetings and psychotherapy groups the world over, should be consulted (pg 116)."