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Game Codes – Newsletter of Games People Play

 Addresso'Set Publications

Special points of interest:

"Ya Gotta Listen to Me" player is quite familiar with getting nodded off. "Ya Gotta Listen to Me" is the name of the gimmick and the game: the trick of the talker is to get Look-I'm-Trying (Look IT) to talk to him anyway he can--to praise him, debase him, cuss him, any of these, just so he gets a word back, isn't ignored or indifferently nodded-on and nodded-off.

In treatment, the head-nodding motion can be interdicted on the two fold basis that 1) it is done automatically or compliantly to an old teaching and without awareness, and 2) that the decrease or discontinuance of nodding and the increase of vocal audibles will get Look-IT well of encouraging others to bore him, discourage him or stupify him.

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Manipulating Listeners continued

In the previous newsletter we quoted from a section of "Who's Listening" by Franklin H. Ernst Jr., MD. Chapter VIII in his book deals with the manipulation of listeners.

The first half of the chapter deals with "Talker Maneuvers Intended to Angle (Influence) The Listener. Several techniques are used to accomplish this: 1.) Delaying of dismissal, 2.) Courtesy and Politeness Rules, 3.) Contention Breeding Stratagems, and 4.) Rewording Tactic. 5.) Agreeableness Artifices.

We left off with agreeableness artifices. Agreeableness Artifices "are intended to impart a sense of agreeableness and peaceableness on the part of the talker toward the listener. The intent of the talker is to convey an attitude of open-mindedness while at the same time luring the listening person into a "cornered" or "trapped" situation.

This quality of seeming to be impartial and objective has as its aim the presentation of a preconceived idea, a view about which the talker made up his mind years ago (an opinionated idea, a prejudice) but around which he wants to appear to be a "good guy."⁵ In a group there are additional advantages which come from this self-created "forum for a discussion"

which he is "holding for the benefit of others and is offering out of the goodness of his heart."

The plan of the agreeableness maneuvers is to appear desirous of avoiding the argument or disagreement: first by stating his case gently, then by drawing the other fellow out. While doing this, Good-Ole-Agreeable is at the same time carefully pruning his buddy's responsive options down to two in number, and two only. Ole Buddy gets to be either:

- I. IN AGREEMENT with 'Ole-Agreeable, or Ole Buddy gets to be seen as
2. A DISAGREEABLE PERSON as he becomes vexed and irritable at Good-Ole-Agreeable who wants "a little consensus and thoughtful consideration." Ole-Agreeable has it all nailed down "because after all, you'd have to agree, you know, you'll just have to admit" that:

- (a) Ole-Agreeable did open the subject.
- (b) Ole-Agreeable did listen carefully and considerately and thoughtfully to Ole-Buddy through all of Ole-Buddy's points.
- (c) Ole-Agreeable did concede some to Ole-Buddy, as with, "I guess you could put it that way," "Yes, yes, yes, you do have an excellent point there,

but have you ever noticed how...." etc.

(d) Ole-Agreeable did listen to Ole-Buddy's points even though he may well not have been in complete (if any) agreement with them himself, you know, but he did listen thoughtfully anyhow, and how could you possibly be so crass as to have become vexed at Good-Ole-Agreeable?

Examples of AAs:

- A. "I was wondering if..."
- B. "Have you ever thought that..."
- C. "Now I don't want you to think that..."
- D. "I don't want you to get the wrong impression..."
- E. "Well, I think we can all see here that..."
- F. "Now wouldn't you say that...?"
- G. "I suppose then, you could say that ..."
- H. "..., right?" "Right!" "Right! ..."
- I. "Well now friend, (doctor, etc.) you don't mean to tell me that..." Agreeableness played harder.

If this last one is allowed to get farther, is allowed to go beyond this point, then the listener might just as well give in to an extended, if not vitriolic, rebuttal. If this "friendly talker" is not interrupted at exactly this point, any later interruption of him will be fought off as if the interrupter were questioning the virtue of the talker's mother and the man's family honor. The

listener's option in this case is to interrupt at just this point. The interrupting options could include:

1. "Well, I guess not.... to you!"
2. Hold up one's hands (in mock terror) saying: "Oh, No! No! Certainly not! Oh, please forgive me, kind sir!"
3. Or equivalent.

Whatever is done or said has to be gotten off prior to the beginning of the recitation, because once he has started, the talker's "family honor and all else that is sacred in this world" is bet on the line by this "friendly-meaning-Crusader."

J. "Well, it seems to me..." agreeableness:

Clinical Example: Jerry in a group

was noted to be repeatedly cutting in when germane items were being handled. He would invariably preface his remarks with, "Well, it seems to me that..." and launch into a monologue, a filibuster. Various measures were initiated by members of Jerry's group to cut through this. Invariably he responded with, "You're barging in on me! It seems to me that after all, you know, when I have the floor the least you could do is give me the courtesy of listening while I am talking until I have finished!"

Jerry's "It seems to me..." was explosively wired. One time Ron gave very careful attention to what Jerry was saying, even though Jerry's head

-tilt matched the angled prejudice of his presentation. After Jerry's opinion had been well portrayed, and at an appropriate moment, Ron gave an appreciative "WOW!" "Seeming" Jerry was quite angered. When Ron did not take back the "WOW!", did not cringe or apologize, Jerry barged out of the room. Later, after the "well, it seems to me..." bomb had been disarmed for the purpose of exploration, it became evident that there was a little boy inside who had carefully copied and memorized in detail what his daddy had taught him. He had been very accurately delivering himself of these teachings. Later, by way of a slip-of-the-tongue, Jerry told the group that "It seems to me that..." stood for "My

daddy says that..."

Individuals who use this phrase, "Well, it seems to me that..." with any degree of frequency are probably having trouble experiencing the reality of events. For them, experiences are of a "seeming" quality because of the extensive and intensive internal harking back to past teachings in order to deal with the now-and-the-here events. For them, the manner of dealing with today events is less often handled directly through the reality of today, but rather must first come into accord with "the sacred laws of my sacred teacher" (mommy, daddy, psychoanalyst, etc.).

Listener Maneuvers Intended to Angle (Influence) the Talker

Resources at the disposal of the Listener:

1. Visible body movement, including eye-blinking.
2. Visible body movement with absence of eye-blink.
3. Positioning of trunk and shoulders (posture).
4. Head-Countenance angle (attitude). Tilt-Angle: To one side or the other. Level Countenance: Upright or, Tipped: forward or back.
5. Nonvisible body movement (out of sight of the stimulating talker).
6. Cessation of all voluntary body muscle activity (trance, yoga, catatonic, "going blank," etc.).
7. Shifting of trunk, body movement.
8. Shifting countenance angle side-to-side and head tipping forward, up-right or backward for variations of "attitudinal set."
9. Intermittent non-vocal audibles (sounds made with a chair, clothing, thumping, tapping, sighing, etc.)
10. Intermittent vocal audibles ("ah," "oh," "um-hum," "yeah," "so.")

TO SUMMARIZE: The listener game strategies include the presence or absence of

- A. Visually attracting body movements
- B. Audible non-vocal sounds
- C. Audible vocal sounds.

Unique and Recognizable Listener Maneuvers

1. The moving, non-audible, non-vocal: The pseudo-contemplative, inverted-basket, hand gesture (fingertips-only-touching) without accompanying audible. (see Chapter V).

2. The moving, audible, non-vocal:

A. The "Hell-on-leather" sufferer listener: These are heard from a person who is causing leather articles (or plastic garments) such as coats to make audible squeaking sounds during the talking of another person. When heard from a person whose ankles are locked around each other, their shoes working on each

other, there is a noteworthy frequency with which these ankle-locking, audible-leather individuals affirm having chronic low back (lumbar) pain. Try it!

The "hell-on-leather" listener is describing particular listening experiences as having been "saddled" onto him. It is his intent to convey that the talker is being experienced as "riding" him.

One man regularly "worked leather" when his wife was talking in her monotonous, plaintive tone from which she could be jarred or loosened only with considerable difficulty. He did not interfere in words with her talking, but was efficiently and effectively complaining to the group, "What's a poor guy to do, his wife the way she is" via the "squeak, squeak!" of his shoes.

Transactional analysis of the "hell-on-leather," "cowhide" audible, has depicted the listener as "saddled," "suffering," "ready to be ridden," "why doesn't the person get off his back."

Heavy "leather (or plastic) coats" worn in group throughout the session will "crackle" and "squeal" at every movement of the person. Doing some conjecture about the sensation experienced by the person inside this heavily weighted, squealing piece of "legitimate" apparel offers interesting dimensions. As these people make the high-pitched sounds, they also produce fine vibrations within the underlying tissues of the wearer.

These small incremental vibrating movements are perceptible to the wearer and occur at "unpredictable" moments depending on the constancy or variation of the tension in the underlying muscles of the wearer. Therefore, the wearer can be experiencing "minor, small moving surprises" for himself and at the same time be non-vocally stimulating interest toward himself.

B. Sighing:

Sighs are used in some homes to impart the major volume of prohibiting messages.

Factors include:

- (1) The length of time of the sigh. A sigh can be long or short.
- (2) Looking at the person for whom it is primarily intended (or not).
- (3) Inspiratory and/or expiratory sighing;
- (4) Variations of audible intensity, volume (decibels) of sound produced; a sigh can be "tall or small," "high or low," etc.
- (5) A sigh can be nasal or oral, constrained or ejaculated, a snort or a "pphheeww!"

A sigh can say:

- "I'm tired,"
- "You're a bore,"
- "You're silly,"
- "You stupid sh--!"
- "I'm scared,"

- You better watch out."
- "Haarrummph!"
- "This is more than a body can be expected to stand,"
- "You're too much!"
- "You're much too much!"
- "How could I?"
- "How could you?"
- "You'll be sorry,"
- "You'll be sorry if you do (it)!"
- "There! Just like I thought you would say!" etc.

In one case, Larry told how his mother used to control and direct him and his siblings about what was right and what was wrong by the variety of sigh she used. He now found that his children were carefully responding to his own various sighs as directing cues for their behavior. One variety of sigh he eventually found had literally been evoking cringing, obedient compliance when his children were small,

and now was stimulating them to reckless defiance.

3. Moving, audible and vocal:

3.a. The "Um-hum" head-nod maneuver: The "ah-huh," "uh-hum" head-wagger, listener maneuver is in response to another person's seemingly "endless talking" of the game "Ya Gotta Listen to Me." In this maneuver, "ah-huh" head-bobber fancies himself to be giving reassurance to the speaker, letting the talker "unwind"; that he, the listener, is being "understanding" of the talker. In therapy groups, the "um-hum" head-bobber reports wishing that the talker would stop boring him, but at the same time he wants to be nice to the "yakker" because he would not want the "yakker" to get mad at him nor would he want to hurt "yakker's" feelings.

After all, Mr. "Uh-huh" is doing the right and courteous thing. The extended series of closed-lip murmurs usually is discontinued by the head-wagger before he stops his nodding. The "um-hums" are done with a deadpan expression, jaws slightly apart, teeth not touching, lips closed, and muscles of the cheeks below the eyes sagging. At this point his eyeblink rate is markedly slowed. When Mr. "Um-hum" lapses into silence but continues his wig-wagging, he is thinking to himself that if he is silent long enough, the other person will take the hint, stop talking, and get off his back. As the course of events is played through, however, there is invariably a different outcome which resembles the initial example of DDM, the old man whose appetite for being audibly stimulated was repeatedly disappointed.

Invariably, the "angled" wig-wag, nodding listeners with their "um-hum's" report that either:

- (1) people keep getting mad at them, or
- (2) they "wind up getting mad at" the yakker.

On the other hand, the yakkers tell how this letting them "unwind" gets them all wound up, that this kind of listening winds them up tight.

Often the game of the wig-wagger is "Look How Hard I'm Trying (to listen and be polite to you, can't you understand?)"

The serial "um-hum's" and nods of the head-wagger have stood for:

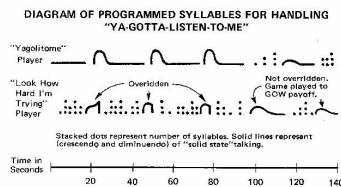
- "Sure is good to see you."
- "I understand."
- "I hear you."
- "Sure is hard to talk to you."
- "Yeah, like you say, it sure is awful."
- "Yeah, it sure is awful boring listening to you"
- "Isn't that all?"
- "This is all very nice to know."
- "Won't you ever dry up?"
- "Why don't you get lost; get off my back."
- "Yeah! So go practice drowning!"
- "So very nice to talk to you!"
- etc.

The treatment regimen for the listening head-wagger most regularly giving better resolution to this impasse has been for the head-wagger to increase the number and frequency of his audible responses and decrease the amount of head-nodding.

Ray wanted to be friends with his mother. "But, Doc, you know, sometimes she drives me batty, out of my mind, with her talk, talk, talking all the time." Ray's Adult and Kid selves were well sorted, so he was told: "OK

Ray, but you want to be better with her so here is what you can try out. When she's talking this way, you give her two or three syllables and no more. Do this every four to six seconds," and examples of vocals were given to Ray of "OK," "Yeah," "I see," "Fine," "Yep," "Could be," etc.

Continuing, Dr. M. said: "Then when she begins to pause for a second or two as if finished making her point to you, then you start up a sentence. You'll see she will override you with her words; so you plan to stop talking after three or four words. Then you go back to using the two or three syllables every four to six seconds again. She'll begin to pause again and you'll repeat with your three or four words and she'll bump you aside again. Carry out this set of steps until she wants you to talk. You'll find out after three or four repeats of this that she'll be with you. She will be wanting you to talk to her." See a larger image of this drawing on the next page.



Ray used this prescribed course of action and reported, "Hey, Doc, it works!" Others have also found it quite successful. Several head-waggers have reported their increased satisfaction in talking to the particular person and their preference for introducing a vocalized syllable every three to four seconds instead of waiting until the sixth second.

Other examples of the spoken syllables are "Oh, yeah?" "Oh, I see," "Okay," "Oh, really," "That's, good,"



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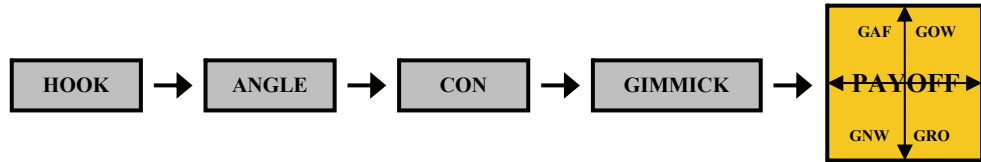
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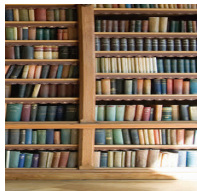
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A game is defined as a recurring set of transactions with ulterior transactions, concealed motivation, a gimmick, and a payoff. Eric Berne, M.D. used a particular variation of the duplex transactional diagram to represent the ulterior aspects of a 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:



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



"Uh-huh!" (open-mouthed, versus the closed-mouth "Um-hum!"), "Right!" "Yes," "You bet!" These can all be noncommittal as to being in agreement or not with the content of Yagolitome, but show a committed-ness to giving the talker the "You are OK with me" which he is searching for. The vocal tone in the spoken syllable gives far more information as to the quality of reception and good will being extended to the

talker than any number of head-nods. The "Ya Gotta Listen to Me" player is quite familiar with getting nodded off. "Ya Gotta Listen to Me" is the name of the gimmick and the game; the trick of the talker is to get Look-I'm-Trying (Look IT) to talk to him anyway he can--to praise him, debase him, cuss him, any of these, just so he gets a word back, isn't ignored or indifferently nodded-on and nodded-off.

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DIAGRAM OF PROGRAMMED SYLLABLES FOR HANDLING "YA-GOTTA-LISTEN-TO-ME"

