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Game Codes – Newsletter of Games People Play

Addresso'Set Publications

Special points of interest:

As a prescription for treatment, "get-a-move-on" is at times given to patients for getting well variously of "I-can't-talk-to-my-friends," "Nobody-talks-to-me," "I-lose-track-of-what-people-are-saying," "Nobody-likes-me," obesity, etc. The nonmoving, unblinking person can reliably be estimated to be a non-listener. ...



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The Level Adult Phenomenon

In Chapter 10 of "Who's Listening?" Dr. Ernst (Dad) writes about head leveling. This material also appears in Dad's writing called "Handbook of Listening, Transactional Analysis of the Listening Activity." Also see the "Transactional Musings Newsletters" Vol. 2, Issue 2-8.

"Who's Listening?", Chapter X [10]:

"Come On Now, On The Level – Who Are You Really?"

The Level Adult Phenomenon

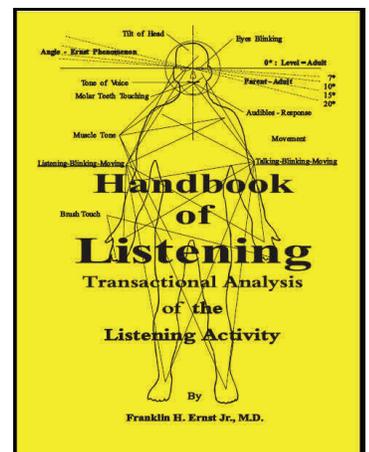
"Get-a-level" refers to the specific activity of squaring the head and face to the vertical-horizontal plane so that a level-headed posture is evident; so that a straightforward presentation of attitude is apparent to the other person, whether he is a listener or a talker. This one procedure, also known as the **ERNST PHENOMENON**, more reliably than any other developed to date, has the effect of cathecting the Adult ego state.

Example: Jason, a young man of 23, sought an appointment because he was about to be dismissed from his job as a police officer. As he talked in the first session, Jason was initially objective in tone and level in appearance. He wanted to keep his job. In fact, he wanted to stay in his present

unit with the same personnel and the same duties. He saw that because of his present predicament with his superiors this might well mean his spending some time off-duty and with an unfavorable report in his personnel file, whether he liked it or not. His unit commander called him "cocky and unreliable," he said. During this portion of the session his reasoning about his situation was well thought out, including his own background motivations. As he went on in his story, he told of instances which showed this "problem" was an intermittent one for him. In one of the examples he gave, he told of getting back at a particular sergeant and bugging the sergeant with his own rules (known as "cramming the other guy's Bible down his own throat"). As Jason ended this particular story, a broad smile broke out on his face. His neck and head moved forward some and then to the left. His forehead was furrowed. His face was tipped slightly forward and down, his gaze was directed up at the listener, to be looking almost through his own raised eyebrows. The therapist also noticed a slight pinking of the whites of Jason's eyes and thought, "So this is what is called 'cocky'." Jason was immediately asked if he could guess what his captain would say about his appearance at that immediate moment, if the C.O. could

see him. After a second of thought, Jason asked, "Cocky?" Affirming this, the therapist then asked further what he felt like at that moment. Jason leveled up his physical posture in his seat and said that inside himself "Right now? Right at this moment? I feel scared!" Then as he reported the balance of this feeling state, his physical attitude, face and head angle and his forehead all came back to the "cocky" appearance again. Then he said that what he wanted to show outside himself was, "I could care less. You don't scare me." Followed by, "Why, Doc? What do I look like to you?"

The therapist then matter-of-factly told Jason of the physically evident postural and body attitudinal changes described above, especially his head angling. Then directly following the verbal matter-of-fact description, therapist simulated Jason's, "cocky



In "The Game Diagram"

Dr. Ernst describes game moves. Page 16.

Game Moves

"There are four classes of ulterior transactions in each game. They are: the tentative angular (Move #1 in a game), the committed angular ulterior (Move #2 in a game), the tentative duplex ulterior (Move #3 in a game), and the committed duplex ulterior (Move #4 in a game). These classes of ulterior transactions are referred to here as game moves. Each game move has both social and a psychological level. The psychological level contains the ulterior aspect of the particular transaction."

"In the transactional diagrams (Figures 12 thru 21) shown on the following pages the other person's responses are deleted for clarity."

" ... "

attitude" in posture and then answered Jason in a second way with, "Well, I'll tell you," etc., in a manner of miming (mimicking) Jason. Then therapist leveled himself and matter-of-factly talked some more to Jason about the C.O. and Jason.

Jason did some homework after this first session. He studied himself in the mirror, his posture and appearance, on three different occasions during the one week interval before the next session. During the next session, he enthusiastically began, "It worked! Doc, you know, you got something there! It really works!" And then he told of practicing in front of the mirror and of finding that when he could hold his head and face level while talking to the captain or the sergeant they were straight in their dealings with him.

He also said that he had not had as much fun with the two of them. He didn't have as many laughs with them. They didn't have as many laughs with him. "I reckon this is sort of a reasonable exchange, though."

Jason did not get fined or fired. He discontinued his treatment, after a few more sessions. He wrote back a few months later saying that he had not been "canned", but in fact he had received a promotion from this same commanding officer and was doing the work he wanted. The job with Jason was done. He was listed as a treatment success and cure.

What is it that is weighing down a person's head more on one side than on the other?

What is it that at times causes this angling of the countenance when talking to another person? First, it is often a Parental prejudice or opinion. Second, angling can also be present when a Childhood belief is under con-

sideration, either to be fought against, protected from attack, or adhered to. Third, an angle may show on the person's face if the "Kid self" spots some potential for playful (mischievous) pleasure in dealing with another angled talking person. What does it mean "an angle-in-mind?" A person who is "on-the-level" looks like it to the outsider.

"Leveling" has been presented to people by the leaders of groups of students, trainees and patients. It has been shown by group members to each other.

On an appropriate occasion, "tilt" and "square" are analyzed and demonstrated as follows: Using both hands, the thumbs are placed on the posterior angles of the right and left side of the mandible (at the back side of the lower jaw). The index (first) fingers are placed one on each of the bony ridges (zygomatic process) running from the ear forward to the cheek, and the tips of the middle fingers are placed at the outer angles of the two eye-sockets. Using these points and the kinesthetic (balance) sense of the hand, arm, and shoulder muscles with the head position, a good quality leveling of the head, as visualized across the eyes, can be obtained, i.e., within 3 degrees, i.e. one percent.. The level can be verified by looking in a mirror. Those wearing glasses often use the upper rims, of their spectacles and a known horizontal plane, e.g., wall shelving, to aid in aligning their head posture. This procedure can be called a gimmick or a trick; it can be referred to as educating or training the patient, or by any other equally opprobrious term to dismiss its impactful significance; however, since its discovery and introduction as a treatment procedure by the author, "leveling" has been used with benefi-

cial results for cases in various diagnostic categories including sociopathic disturbances, chronic and acute anxiety, panics, psychoses, etc. It has been used by patients in institutional and private treatment settings. Members of training seminars have found it useful when they were having difficulty picking up what was going on. "Is it me or the talker who is angled and angling?" It is useful as a back-up aid in counter-checking one's own quality of receptiveness and perception; to increase one's own individual learning efficiency and capacity, to locate when "on-the-level" or "tilted." It has been used to assess when speakers are likely to have an "angle-in-mind" or are "coming on straight."

One high school teacher of "learning disability" students reported it as the single most useful item to watch in students and to tell the students about themselves. "The students don't question it. They use it right now, then later when I've asked them they say 'I don't know why it works, but it works'." The same teacher told that there was a fifteen to twenty point increase of functioning I.Q. in eighty percent of her students after one school year in this transactional analysis oriented "educationally handicapped" class.

Of these instances studied to date, a level appearance in a visibly moving person has corresponded to an actively cathected Adult ego state in over 90 percent of occasions; that is, individuals who are appraising, objective, thoughtful, reliable, reasoning, etc., are "on-the-level" either in their listening or in their talking at least 90 percent of the time. These persons without an "angle-in-mind," without a "tilt" are with remarkable regularity workmanlike in approach, are thoughtfully compassionate and non-

opinionated, and are humorless with this attitude. The remaining percentage (which may be lower than 10 percent) afford interesting diagnostic and treatment situations of trance-like behavior, Child confusions, or other states.

Ethel, an "Old-Woman-in-the-Shoe-at-Twenty-Two," late for her first session, arrived disheveled and talking at 350 words a minute, and by the end of that session at 250 words a minute. On time for the next interview, she started talking at 300 words a minute. After thirty minutes of this she rather abruptly sat forward in her chair and slowly asked "What can I do? (pause) I get so mad at him (fiance) I can't think. I don't want to be screaming at my kids all the time!" And then she stopped for a few seconds.

This moment was taken to introduce her to the procedure of "leveling" her facial countenance and head.

At that moment she did have a level countenance. She had just described her boyfriend's "angle." Therapist: "You can watch your boyfriend for when he has his angle going. By that, I mean you can watch his face; when he's on-the-level with you, his head and face will be leveled, and when he has an angle-in-mind he will very likely have an angle on his face. If you can get yourself to come on straight with him, then.... I mean set your head and your face level like this..." describing by example the "leveling" method to her. She carried out the leveling procedure shown and talked in a more organized manner for 30 to 40 seconds; then taking her hands from her head she again began to "angle" her face and to increase her talking rate up to 250 words per minute with a crescendo-

ing voice. At her next 0.4 second pause for air, therapist asked, "Why not level yourself again -- looks like it works pretty good for you!" while again going through the physical procedure himself.

"What? Oh! Okay!" And she did it again, and again became more composed. This was done once more near the end of that session. She had to stop coming after a few more sessions.

A year later, when she was able to resume therapy, she started right off at 300 words a minute about her current domestic troubles. After an initial 15-minute burst of Indianapolis-Speedway rate of talk, she slowed to look at therapist and comment on her own handling of the particular instance of being baited which she had just cited -- "but that time I kept my level and he didn't get to me!" with a reflective smile of self-assurance and an acknowledging glance at therapist.

As measured across the person's eyes, he is level with the horizon or off his level and showing an angle. In practice, a listening or talking person will be seen shifting his head forward and back, tipping and moving his head side to side, from moment to moment. What is referred to here is the principal attitudinal mode (posture) and the attitudinal view inside the person; the ego state which is "really me" then. There is the additional factor noted by students of "angles-and-levels" that very few people have a symmetrical face. The nose and the jaw may be more to one side than the other. The eyes may look as if they were fitted into the face somewhat off the horizontal.²

What does an angled countenance convey? What does "tilt" on a person's face mean? In the listening

(moving) person, it means that when an imaginary line is drawn across the eyes (which is parallel to the horizon) the person is more than likely listening with a reasoning, objective view of the situation, is portraying a reality-oriented view, is assessing the particular event in order to get the facts. When an angle with the horizontal is measured by an imaginary line across the eyes, this means that one view of the situation carries more weight for the person than another (internal) view of that same situation. When the angle is present, it may be that there is a partial withdrawal from the situation to some related fantasy, or it may be that the angle is for cheering on of the speaker, or for the jeering of the speaker. Persons who are "square shooters" and listening with a level attitude are predictably giving a reasoned quality of attentiveness to the situation and are quite likely also influencing the situation toward reasoning. These references to angles and levels have to do with which ego state has the executive (Adult or non-Adult).

In her twentieth session, Holly was level most of the time. Her eyes were pinking intermittently. About every 3 to 8 seconds her head moved to one angle or another. Periodically she held up her Parental pointing finger to tell of events between herself and her husband, to tell about their children, and to tell about her own background. Her choice of words and voice tone remained objective. There was a lack of impassioned pleading. She returned to the leveled countenance for 6 to 20 seconds at least once every 20 seconds during that session. At first glance, it looked as if she might be trying to persuade the therapist, that she was expounding on the right, correct and only true way

of raising children as contrasted to her husband's lack of good quality child-raising techniques. Looking carefully and listening closely to her descriptions, it became apparent that not only was she looking, watching, listening, and carefully assessing how she was being listened to by the therapist, but further she was also listening to herself and assessing how she might be influencing the resolution of events in the home.

Particularly she wanted to get well of intermittent hives. She knew her "**If It Weren't For You**" and "**I'm Only Trying To Help You**" alienated Howie into playing his complementary "**Yes, (Holly), You're Entirely Right.**" his variant of "**(Holly)-You're-Always-Right.**" In the past, her payoff event for these game sequences had been either to (1) yell and scream him out of the room, out of the house (Get-Rid-Of payoff) or he'd go to sleep for a Get-Away-From for himself or (2) she'd go quiet, as would he, and they would "put each other on silence for hours or days" for a mutual Get-Nowhere-With each other quality of payoff. First he and then she had come to recognize that after this latter event had gone on for twelve or more hours then the chances of her breaking out with giant hives would greatly increase. Although previously a hard "**Cool it, Man**" player (frigid woman), they infrequently locked onto this game now for a mutually repelling set of payoffs.

"But," she continued in this twentieth session, "some-times I get to telling him about how I want to go live closer to my family" (head tilted 15 degrees), "and how much my mother and brother want to see our children," (head brought up to an 8 to 10



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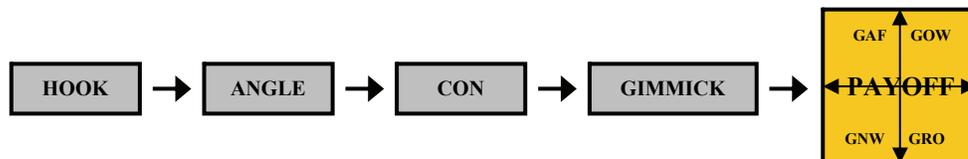
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A game is defined as a recurring set of transactions with ulterior transactions, concealed motivation, a gimmick, and a payoff. Eric Berne, M.D. used a particular variation of the duplex transactional diagram to represent the ulterior aspects of a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

degree tilt)" and I can just see him start to go blank. Then he goes to bed. Night before last" (head level, eyes pink), "Suzie, our oldest, got sick again and started fussing, so by the time I got to bed I wanted to talk some more, to tell him I shouldn't have brought it all up," (head to side 20 degrees, pink eyes)" and that he was right, that we probably shouldn't go to live near them. But I'd gone too far already. He just said, 'Yes, yes, you're right. You're entirely right. You're entirely right, dear,' and he rolled over and went to sleep."

"I thought to myself (leveled face, clear eyes) right then, 'Hey, this is it. I wonder if I'm going to get hives tomorrow. I hope not, but I may.' You know, I could see then, he didn't say my name once after I started all this stuff up to try to get him into a corner" (angling of her face for 6 seconds). "Then yesterday morning I got the hives bad. I started to itch all over. The lotions wouldn't work. When he came home for lunch he began to call me 'Holly', to say my name to me." Then (leveling again,

pinkened eyes), "I saw he wasn't mad, he did care. He did want me." (head now way over 25 to 30 degrees) "You know, (smiling and coming upright) my hives got well by that night, by supper time." Leveling. "I guess then it's my Parent who gets on him" (finger up and pointing with an 8 to 10 degree tilt to her face)" and feeling hurt, that he's so inconsiderate and unwilling to listen to me or hear me out on my views." (Smiling, shaking her head side to side, then leveling and going ahead.)

During the twentieth session, she was watching carefully for information as to what she could learn, for what she could pick up about her own behavior from therapist and for more information on how she herself (her Adult) could better keep track of when her game-playing self was adversely affecting the outcome of the events at home. This was predominantly ADULT. For more than 50 percent of the total number of seconds in that session, she was on-the-level.

Characteristically, when a patient or other person in a group is actively angling and someone inquires, "What is your angle about?" the angled person will laugh, then level, and within a few seconds discontinue the activity he had previously been embarked on as if to say, "Aw shucks, you caught me." This single act of "leveling" the head and then holding this level for 30 seconds will, with rather good regularity, lead the way toward a rearrangement of the internal way of thinking with corresponding modifications of the rest of the expressive behavior, such as tone of voice, the setting of other muscles of the body. ...

To be continued



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