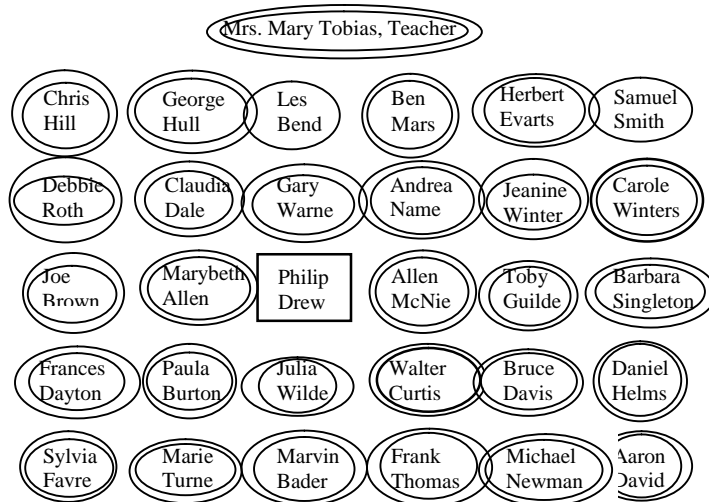


Andrea's Named Hellos

by

Franklin H. Ernst Jr., M.D.



A Seating Diagram of named hellos exchanged.

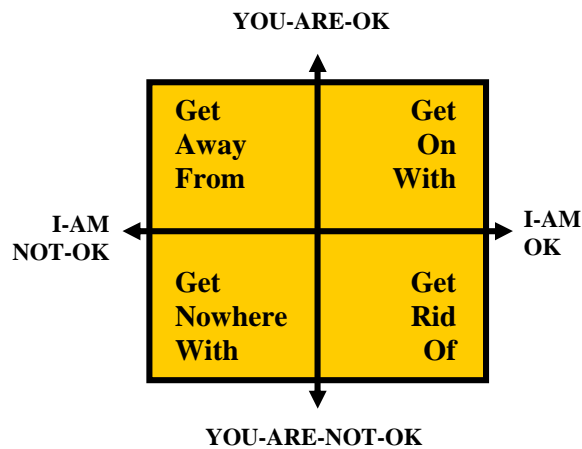
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OK Corral: Grid for What's Happening

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Andrea was taught what to do to get straight A's in her high school class subjects. Andrea teaches the doctor how she made the public school system work for her.

Muriel was a 34 year old single African-American parent who came to a private psychotherapist because "I get nervous at times at work for no reason at all." Muriel worked as a housekeeper for some 10-15 different clients in a nearby community of rather quite well to do families. Muriel also had a daughter she was both very proud of and rather restrictively protective of. No firm treatment contract was ever arrived at with her, other than "It's not good for my working in other people's homes to show that I am nervous. It makes the women I work for nervous." Muriel appeared to be a reasonably suspicious person while in the office about seeing a psychiatrist in her home town, apparently physically startled, for example by unexpected street sounds, by other persons walking by in the office building during her first office appointment. Other than her brief warm single smile as she referred to her 13 year old daughter and her working for years for some clients gave this writer some hope for her case. She looked "paranoid." She accepted a second appointment and agreed to pay the cost of her treatment sessions.

On her second visit she was promptly mechanically responsive and tight in what she presented to writer. There were some references to how it made her angry how people talked about her. "Where do people talk about you?" Response to this was vague. In her second appointment the ease with which "Parent Adult and Child" both as a set of words and as a diagram were rather easily received and her associated conversational references led writer to tentatively conclude that one or more of her clients had talked to her about a book they had read about, "Transactional Analysis" and how the client herself had found the concepts and diagram personally very useful. Muriel's acquaintance with

Transactional Analysis was NEVER BROUGHT UP TO WRITER by her. In her second appointment, another reference to her daughter, Andrea, came up. This time in the manner of daughter behaving at times in a way Muriel disapproved of. Again, request for some details about Andrea's behavior which she disapproved of were vague, non specific, apparently about Andrea bringing up the subject of "boys" at home.

In the course of this second appointment Muriel accepted the fact that the emotional self was probably her Child and her Adult self was the side of herself talking during the appointment about her problem. Muriel accepted a third appointment. During this, her third appointment, she volunteered very little. It was as if she was expecting her psychiatrist to push on her about her life details. Again there was one brief smiling reference to her daughter. Otherwise she was almost stoic, yet "productively" talkative. Muriel came for a fourth appointment, accepted a fifth appointment which she canceled by telephone two days later.

Some six months later she called for another appointment. When she arrived, writer forgot himself and smiled pleasantly on seeing her again. After this return, Muriel again came again for 4 or 5 appointments at weekly intervals. Question in writer's mind continued about how paranoid Muriel might be. In this series of visits Muriel asked if she could bring her daughter sometime. Writer agreed to her request, again after another 4 or 5 successive appointments. Muriel called two days after her most recent appointment to cancel any further appointments. This sequence was repeated two more times over the ensuing year. Muriel did try group therapy for three sequential weeks, then stopped.

Again during her four sequence of individual therapy sessions she brought her daughter, Andrea, once. Andrea was a beautiful adolescent young woman in full bloom. Muriel stayed in charge of the conversation when she brought Andrea with her. Then two days later she canceled further visits, again. This time it was six months later when her now 15 year old daughter Andrea called for an appointment. On meeting individually the first time she and I came to an implicit agreement that we would take care of what her mother wanted her to accomplish, then see what if anything she wanted to achieve.

It was apparent Andrea's mother wanted Andrea to go to college, was worried about Andrea dating boys.

Andrea developed facility with sorting her Adult from her Child rather easily, recognized the disciplining and nurturing Parent self both in herself and in her mother. As in the case of her mother, Andrea also had an adolescent Adult. Her descriptions of going to school were with some Child enthusiasm and pleasure. She did not go out on dates except for an occasion at school dances.

After seven individual weekly appointments this writer told Andrea: "We have taken care of what you came for. Is there anything else you want to work on here?"

Andrea: "Yes. I want to get better grades." She wanted to attend the University of California at Berkeley. She told that her most recent mid-term grades were one A, two B's, and 3 C's. Asked if she knew what grade point "Berkeley" required, she said: "Yes 3.0 or a B average." She still wanted to go to UC Berkeley.

So I told her: "OK. Here's what you can do."

We explored (1) how many of her classmates she knew by name, and (2) how many in each of her 6 periods she said hello to daily. She knew more than four by name in each of her classes.

Writer said: "OK, here's what you can do. Learn and write down the first and last names of every person in each class. While you are learning and writing down these first and last names in your own records, names of people, as you learn them start also to give a named hello to each person you already know and visit long enough for them to answer your named hello with a hello back to you. As you learn more names and have attached the names to the person in the classroom, give more named hellos: 'hello Sarah', 'hi Saul', 'hi Rebecca', etc. At first you will be giving a lot more named hellos than you get back, but within a week or so of starting to give somebody a named hello they will be giving you back your name in a hello to you. One or two in a class may even ask you for your name and say hello to you by name."

"Some people who have done this make a seating diagram of their class with first and last names every class and tally who exchanged names. A way to keep track is to write a person's name and then draw a circle around it for your hello and then another circle around it if you got a named hello back."

Writer: This is what you, the reader, can do also. People who have done this in their classes each day have had their grades improve a lot. You could do it for each class. Doing this for physical education class will take some thinking because you have the pen and paper with your street clothes in your gym locker.

“Are there questions about what I just covered?”

“**NO !**”

“OK then, if you happen to forget somebody's name when you see them later, don't forget the other person probably does remember his own name. So you can try this 'I'm Amanda Green. I don't remember your name at the moment. Would you please tell me what your name is so that I can say it to you.' Myself, I haven't had anybody I liked refuse to tell me their name when I had forgotten it. You can answer their answer with 'Hi Melinda. Thank you.' ”

Andrea was asked if she wanted to come back for another appointment next week. She responded: “**YES!**”

Andrea arrived the following week on time and enthused. She had gotten and written the largest number of her classmates first and last names and showed how she had made a named seating diagram for each of her five sit down classes. Almost all chair slots for each person had a first and last name. She was smiling as she told of learning and giving the names to her classmates and teacher in each room.

Writer commented: “It looks like you have it clearly in mind.” Did she have any questions? “Looks like you've gotten what you came for. Want to try it on your own for now? You can give me a call in a month or so, if you want?”

Andrea agreed; made two more appointments at monthly intervals.

On the second of these pair of visits she was all smiles. It was good to see her. She promptly announced: “It works. What you taught me about, class names, works. I just got my report card for the semester just finished. **I got all A's.**”

We agreed she could call if need be. “Good-bye for now !”

Her mother, apparently was also satisfied. Mother sent a couple of Christmas cards with a written “Thank You, Muriel.”

Case closed.

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