

Special points of interest:

"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.

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The Function of Games

In "Games People Play, the Psychology of Human Relationships" Eric Berne, M.D. writes on page 61:

Because there is so little opportunity for intimacy in daily life, and because some forms of intimacy (especially if intense) are psychologically impossible for most people, the bulk of the time in serious social life is taken up with playing games. Hence games are both necessary and desirable (#1), and the only problem at issue is whether the games played by an individual offer the best yield for him. In this connection it should be remembered that the essential feature of a game is its culmination, or payoff. The principal function of the preliminary moves is to set up the situation for this payoff, but they are always designed to harvest the maximum permissible satisfaction at each step as a secondary product. Thus in "Schlemiel" (making messes and then apologizing) the payoff, the purpose of the game, is to obtain the forgiveness which is forced by the apology; the spilling and cigarette burns are only steps leading up to this, but each such trespass yields its own pleasures. The enjoyment derived from the spilling does not make spilling the game. The apology is the critical stimulus that leads to the denouement. Otherwise the spilling would simply be a destructive procedure, a delinquency perhaps*

enjoyable.

The game of "Alcoholic" is similar: whatever the physiological origin, if any, of the need to drink, in terms of game analysis the imbibing is merely a move in a game which is carried on with the people in the environment. The drinking may bring its own kind of pleasure, but is not the essence of the game (#2). This is demonstrated in the variant of "Dry Alcoholic", which involves the same moves and leads to the same payoff as the regular game, but is played without any bottles (page 76 [of Games People Play]).*

Beyond their social function in structuring time satisfactorily, some games are urgently necessary for the maintenance of health in certain individuals (#3). These people's psychic stability is so precarious, and their positions are so tenuously maintained, that to deprive them of their games may plunge them into irreversible despair and even psychosis. Such people will fight very hard against any antithetical moves (* #4). This is often observed in marital situations when the psychiatric improvement of one spouse (ie, the abandonment of destructive games) leads to rapid deterioration in the other spouse, to whom the games were of paramount importance in maintaining equilibrium. Hence it is necessary to exercise*

prudence in game analysis.

Fortunately, the rewards of game-free intimacy (#5), which is or should be the most perfect form of human living, are so great that even precariously balanced personalities can safely and joyfully relinquish their games if an appropriate partner can be found for the better relationship.*

On a larger scale, games are integral and dynamic components of the unconscious life-plan, or script, of each individual; they serve to fill in the time while he waits for the final fulfillment, simultaneously advancing the action. Since the last act of a script characteristically calls for either a miracle or a catastrophe, depending on whether the script is constructive or destructive, the corresponding games are accordingly either constructive or destructive. In colloquial terms, an individual whose script is oriented toward "waiting for Santa Claus" is likely to be pleasant to deal with in such games as "Gee You're Wonderful, Mr Murgatroyd", while someone with a tragic script oriented toward "Waiting for RIGOR MORTIS to set in" may play such disagreeable games as "Now I've Got You, You Son Of a Bitch."

It should be noted that colloquialisms such as those in the previous sentence



From "Who's Listening," Chapter IX, F.H. Ernst Jr., M.D.:

Optimal listening efficiency varies between 30 and 70 percent (listening). Listening less than 30 percent is correlated with a lowered rate of improvement in patients and a slower rate of learning by persons in business, school or at meetings. Patients in group who listen 50 percent are the ones accomplishing their treatment objective. Theoretically, this is consistent with the fact that events in the groups are first experienced, then reviewed and lastly, if fitting and usable, they are assimilated in some measure during the session. When an event is being assimilated, externally directed listening activity is decreased. Some events are of less significance and some are more pertinent to each individual in the group. In order to most efficiently utilize the time and the information coming in, the individual will be storing some information, partially working through other, and occasionally completing a piece of working-through during a group session. Many of the transactions in a session are repetitive, especially as to new information coming up. So there will be times when there is less call for continuous unique listening attentiveness.

Cerebral assimilation of ("reflecting back on") the selected-for-listening-to experience maximizes the value and vividness of that experience. Everything Hearing serves to adequately cover the survival aspects of the non-listening intervals and it is quite adequate to alert and key the person back into listening to an event in the audible (visible) situation. This is the situation with many a group member after he has his Child and Adult sorted and

are an integral part of game analysis, and are freely used in transactional psychotherapy groups and seminars. The expression "waiting for rigor mortis to set in" originated in a dream of a patient, in which she decided to get certain things done "before Rigor mortis set in." A patient in a sophisticated group pointed out what the therapist had overlooked: that in practice, waiting for Santa Claus and waiting for death are synonymous. Since colloquialisms are of decisive

importance (#6) in game analysis, they will be discussed at length later on.*

The following are footnotes added by F.H. Ernst, Jr., MD in his notes.

- * #1 "Games are both necessary and desirable"
- * #2 Earl's "drinking" talk throughout (throughout) sessions with me and especially amplified (X3) when his wife came with him.
- * #3 "Game playing to maintain health." see page 62 of GPP
- * #4 Antithesis to "Stupid" ("first

confusies")

#5 "Ain't no such animal." I'm satisfied from watching Bern's own intimacy exercises there is no such thing. I refused to become involved in the (exercises) because those participating were offered to pair up with someone who already had a "situational" Parent. Also, the most efficient and the only effective way I've seen attain "game-free intimacy" has been through a playing a game where the payoff was a Get-On-With event of intimacy.

* #6 "Decisive importance" deserves another sentence or so.

Leveling and Games

"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. Page 133 of "Who's Listening" by FH Ernst Jr.

Page 138: *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 with-*

drawal 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).

There are instances when a person has a level countenance and has not activated his Adult ego-state: trance-like Child ego-state, point-in-mind listening, peripheral-vision "peeping" style of listening.

Page 146 of "Who's Listening": *The 10 percent or less of persons who are level but are in a non-Adult ego state fall into 3 categories:*

1. Trance-like Child ego state: *Marked diminution of body movement and eye blink rate has been noted. In these instances the Child ego state is working to avoid showing confusion.*

Shelly, a 23-year-old male with

*schizophrenia, was being cynical, and trying to stimulate an **Uproar** game. He was quite motionless when others were talking, did not laugh and had a very minimal amount of bodily movement except for his lips during the time he was talking. His game was "**Doctor-Is-Always-Right**," and he regularly said, "Yes, sir!" as an automatic response when such a response could be used by him. Shelly was in a semi-hypnotic state, as if he were drugged. He was almost unblinking as he was "looking through" (non-convergent gaze) the person he was talking to, "steamrolling-ahead" in his conversation, recollecting disconnected thoughts without converging his eyes or his voice onto any one person. When asked who he was talking to, he said "Everybody!" which, two other patients said, meant "nobody was supposed to be listening."*

Another instance was a young "dopey," a user of LSD, housed in a prison. In group, he was motionless and unblinking when talking except for the short range of movement of his lower jaw.

2. Point-in-Mind Listening:

Watching, looking, listening for the

occasion when next they will be called on, holding their next point-in-mind for when it is expected or demanded they perform; waiting until it gets to be their turn so that they can climb back on the stage again. Marijane was carefully hoarding an item (a point she wanted to make) in her mind because she wanted to bring it up at the first "proper" opportunity to "barge in." She was waiting only for the slightest pause in the talk (0.3 seconds would be enough) to insert her peripheral but "jeweled" item into the conversation.

She would remain alert and leveled throughout her waits. There was almost no perceptible movement except occasional eye-blinks. She was "not going to let anyone see if things bothered me," or that what was said in group had any perceptible effect on her.

She more than once demonstrated she was doing a lot of listening in group. This could not be accounted for in terms of any immediately evident, visualizable movement unless, ... unless she were moving in some stimulating but out-of-sight or overlooked manner. It turned out that she was keeping the tip of one fingernail on one hand in touch with and continuously riding back and forth over the edge of another fingernail on the other hand. One objective of this continuous exercise, she said, was to do it with as little slipping off or down onto the other side of the fingernail as possible. A second objective was to make no perceptible noise. Those in her group who tried this movement reported and showed a significant rise in attentiveness, especially in their readiness to be responsive to situations at hand. With a little practice, they also were able to begin to effect an appearance of level-headed,

unblinking, almost unmoving nonchalance about these same events.

3. Peripheral-vision "peeping" style of listening.

Listening, waiting with little movement except for some minimal eye-balling of the scene, almost unblinking.

Slim was apparently listening with rapt attentiveness, as level as could be, some periodic body movement. Episodically he was a disconcerting person to talk to or observe. Aged 36, he was in prison for his third term. This "Cinderfellow" wanted to get well of going back to jail and also wanted to revive previously renounced ties with his childhood family. In prison this time for burglary, he had told of occasional peeping-Tom experiences in his youth. Eventually it became evident that his cheek muscles below his eyes and his lower eyelids were relaxed and sagging, "flattened out." He acknowledged that at the times in question, his teeth were not touching. Always polite to the women professionals (students) visiting the group, he did not seem to ever be looking at any of them ---- at least he never was caught at it by any of the women or the therapist. Yet coloring and huskiness of tone at times coincided with other data he gave to indicate he was looking and watching some of the visitors very attentively. The secret worked out, which he corroborated, was that he would become interested in a woman who moved, who had many and a fairly steady stream of body movements, hair movements, clothing movement. He then would fasten his gaze on another usually talking person in the vicinity of this particular woman and appear attentive to the talker. He would be ready with some words in case he was talked to. Then by stopping almost all of his own blinking and otherwise



becoming almost completely motionless, he could let his peripheral vision peep on her and take in this female vision. Another advantage: He couldn't be accused of looking. Another: Being motionless decreased the likelihood of drawing adverse or unwanted conversational stimuli.

In a second instance, a man reported an event where he was preoccupied in concentrating on his own physical posture and in showing a squared-up posture ("being-an-upright, on-the-level-citizen"). Instead, he got "up-tight" to the extent of almost overlooking a significant external listening event. (There was no one else available for him to talk to and he was alone, driving his automobile.) He very nearly got hit by an oncoming, loudly-honking train at a railroad crossing.

Many a patient tells of never having taken the opportunity to study his countenance angle in the mirror, of not having located whether his countenance was level or not. Most in therapy who have become adept with "leveling" have found it correlates with one of their Adult tones and pitches of voice.

When "leveling" was introduced to Mrs. There's-No-Reason-at-All-Why-I-Should-Feel-This-Way, she threw it up, tossed it off. She regularly threw up other prescriptions given to her. Her Parental injunction was "There is absolutely no reason at all for you to feel the way you do." She was strongly committed against giving in to reasoned treatment recommendations and she did tax the therapist's skills.

Those who are resistant to the head-leveling procedure are better handled by not bothering to contend

he isn't preoccupied or distracted by his Parent or Child. When and if something new is developing, he can get-with-it within a few seconds via "everything hearing" and perhaps some continuing slowed rate of movement. The Parental injunction "Sit still and stop moving all around (wiggling) when someone is speaking to you!" is the childhood training for non-listening, for "letting-it-go-in-one-ear-and-out-the-other."

The one-hundred percent listeners have been found to be ruminants, grazers, who later go home to sit down, regurgitate, and chew over the material (away from the group, away from the therapist) to then formulate and energize countering, interfering, opinionated rebuttal to treatment-type thinking.

"I'll have to think that over some more later (vs. now)." "I will think on that later;" when accompanied by a "tilt" from the patient, usually means the person is figuring out how to disregard what was said to him, to prove that it will not work.

Individuals who have consistently reported and manifested "100 percent listening" in group, to date, have been troubled either with (latent) psychosis or manifest obesity.

Maximum efficiency of the listening operation for any given person lies between one-third and two-thirds. More listening -- either one is accompanied by decreasing usefulness of, decreasing efficiency in the listening. The one-third to two-thirds listening for maximum efficiency, depending on the situation, refers to: (1) the sum of incoming (audible) material and/or (2) the portion of time spent with externally directed auditioning.



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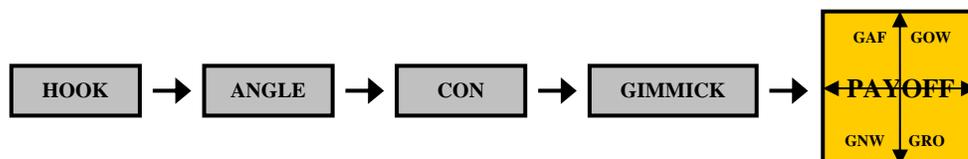
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A game is defined as a recurring set of transactions with ulterior transactions, concealed motivation, a gimmick, and a payoff. Eric Berne, M.D. used a particular variation of the duplex transactional diagram to represent the ulterior aspects of a game. Berne added the concept of switch in 1966 and introduced "The Game Formula." $\text{Con} + \text{Gimmick} = \text{Response} > \text{Switch} > \text{Payoff}$. 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."

with the resistance (commitment) to not carrying out the leveling procedure. Instead they are told, "Come on -- let's do it now. Let's get well. Let's do the treatment and analyze how it works later." Occasionally a patient will respond in words, "No, I don't want to do this. I don't see why I should do it. I don't have to do it if I don't want to." Assuming that the therapist's timing is good, the treatment contract may be cited back to patient, as with "You came here to get well of..."; then continue to "OK, so you don't want to do it, but come on anyhow and let's do it now--" therapist then proceeding to show how leveling is done, both with word description and simultaneously carrying out the physical moves described, to demonstrate it.

A man who said he did not want to do the leveling was persuaded, "Aw, come on. Let's do it anyhow." He was told, shown, and did do it the second time through, with other group members who came along with the therapist in doing it. During the session and the succeeding 60 group ses-

sions he continued to, in his words, "practice leveling." One of his rewards was the description a woman in the group gave him: "Rob, you sure have a heck of a lot more sex appeal than you used to." She was comparing that previously he had either been reluctant to commit himself in a conversation when talked to, or he was furtively looking up the legs of the women members. His games had been: "See-What-You-Made-Me-Do!" (washout, that's what)" for a Get-Nowhere-With payoff and "Look-What-I-Made-You-Do!" (rebuff me)" for a Get-Away-From payoff. Rob changed from a "stiff-necked boy" with a "chronic washout" style of life to one of the more active and warm individuals in the group. Starting from the single procedure of leveling, he described that now he no longer felt compelled to "have to be ready to washout of conversations because I am afraid I will goof; now I can stay better with the talk." Both his confidence in his own staying abilities, as well as his "staying ability" itself, increased.

There are advantages which accrue to the therapist who notices and makes predictive estimates about the success of particular intervention events, depending on the angle or level of the patient. For example, the therapist will be able to gauge more reliably when he is likely to be talking to the objective person and when he will be talking to one of the non-objective qualities of the individual's personality structure. He can choose to talk when leveling is going on, or ask the patient, "Hey, I want to talk to your Adult. Get a level for a few seconds?" He does this in order to decrease the other ego state self, e.g., from taking umbrage.. Therapist can ask a patient to temporarily set aside the particular quality of the moment in favor of an Adult self and then see if, in fact, the patient has temporarily set aside, e.g., internal prejudices, opinions and beliefs which might interfere with assessing what therapist figures is appropriate to say then.

To be continued

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