

## Special points of interest:

“Why Don’t You ... Yes, But” can be played by any number. One player, who is “It,” presents a problem. The others start to present solutions, each beginning with “Why don’t you?” To each of these the one who is “It” objects with a “Yes, but ...” A good player can stand off the rest of the group indefinitely, until they all give up, whereupon “It” wins. Hyacinth, for example, successfully objected to more than a dozen solutions before Rosita and the therapist broke up the game.”



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## Games People Play and the “new” Mobile Telephones

Recently I witnessed an encounter where several games were played: (a) “Why Don’t You”, (b) “Yes But”, (c) “I’m Only Trying To Help You”, (d) possibly WAHM (“Why is this Always Happening To Me”), and (e) “Look How Hard I’m Trying”. This occurred over several consecutive days and with a (known) third person acting as go between (3 of the 4 days) playing “I’m Only Trying To Help You,” too.

This was all fairly easy to follow as an Adult observer; I participated, too. As a student of “Games,” I am aware that a game can be played for the simple pleasure of playing (along), just as long as the intensity is low.

Being placed in a situation (tight spot?) where the other parties are the initiators of the game(s) leaves the responder the opportunity to go along or make an early exit (up to game move 3). I remembered from Dad’s talks with me that players of games lose track of where they are in the sequence of the game moves after the 3rd move, when the 4th move is played, the committed duplex transaction.

So in the recent encounter(s) it was especially important to keep my Adult tuned, while my Child played. And Dad taught me that it is possible to go for a desired outcome, whether it be GNW (Get-Nowhere-With), GOW (Get-

On-With), GAF (Get-Away-From), GRD (Get-Rid-Of). In this case GNW and small GOW steps.

I also observed \*other features that may have complicated, made the encounter(s) more interesting. \* Two handed games are easier to follow than three and four handed games. Two parties can more easily regulate the level of intensity. 3rd and 4th parties have motives of their own: for example playing “Let’s You and Him Fight,” “Cupid,” or involving the first two players in the games played by the 3rd and 4th parties. This gets into Intervener-Responder-Stimulator triangle phenomena. In retrospect, I was probably “interfering” (by invitation) in the games being played among the other players, possibly in the process of “bonding” activities. In some respects, I was an intruder, even though I was invited to give advice to the primary player by a 4th person who left the scene.

### Mobile Telephones \*

Telephones left on a table during a meeting with the speaker phone feature surreptitiously turned on may be “illegal.” It is now possible to be coached by unknown third parties with this new technology. Whether this was going on here, or not, is something to wonder about, because it is just too easy to do. Be careful. This gets into

FOOJY, “Let’s Pull a Fast One On Joey.”

Trust, but verify who you are (dealing with) going to play with. I’ve recently been at “executive” meetings where all attending have been required to turn off their phones. And there have been recent writings about the surreptitious use of the new telephony technology, too.

Clues about the use of telephones as a social crutch in social transactions are many. You’ve all heard that buzzing sound while a person is speaking into a microphone. It’s a give away that their telephone is on “silence mode”, and he/she is receiving a message. \* Some people are constantly checking their phones during conversations, some getting up/leaving in the middle of a conversation with their telephone in hand to do something with it, texting during conversations, etc. Having a private conversation is becoming more complicated/trickier by the day, because you don’t know if the other guy, the person you are talking with, has a buddy, (friend, coach, advisor) who is eavesdropping.

People, for privacy purposes, could agree to turn off all electronic devices before proceeding with their mutually agreed on social transactions.

The following is from [“Structure and Dynamics of Organizations and Groups”](#) by Eric Berne M.D., page 151.

#### “If It Weren’t For You”

“The game called “If It Weren’t For You,” which is the commonest game played between husbands and wives, can be used to illustrate the characteristics of games in general.”

“Mrs. White complained that her husband would not allow her to indulge in any athletic or social activities. As she improved with psychiatric treatment, she became more independent and decided to do some things she had always wanted to do. She signed up for swimming and dancing lessons. When the courses began, she was surprised and dismayed to discover that she had abnormal fears of both swimming pools and dance-floors and had to give up both projects.”

“These experiences revealed some important aspects of the structure of her marriage. There were good Parental and Adult reasons why she loved her husband, but her Child had a special interest in his domineering Parent. By prohibiting outside activities, he saved her from exposing herself to situations that would frighten her. This was the psychological advantage of her marriage. At the

In Dad’s notes are the game moves of several games people play.

#### “I’m Only Trying To Help You”

- i) **Hook** Game Move = Inquire
- ii) **Angle** Game Move = Correct (offer a correction to the other party)
- iii) **Con** Game Move = Reassure
- iv) **Gimmick** Game Move = Take to Task (I’m **Only Trying To Help You**)
- v) **Payoff** = Each of the four varieties have been witnessed: GOW, GNW, GAF, GRO.

#### “Yes But”

- i) **Hook** Game Move = So good to see you.
- ii) **Angle** Game Move = I have a problem.
- iii) **Con** Game Move = I tried this, but it didn’t work (You have any other suggestions?)
- iv) **Gimmick** Game Move = Yes but.
- v) **Payoff** = GNW usually. Complementary game is “Why Don’t You.”

#### “Why Don’t You”

“Why Don’t You” goes with the complimentary game of “Yes But” of the second party.

- i) **Hook** Game Move = Inquire as in the response to “Yes But” player looks. As if “Yes But” looks like they need “help.”
- ii) **Angle** Game Move = I’m very sorry you are not doing well.
- iii) **Con** Game Move = Tell me your problem.
- iv) **Gimmick** Game Move = “Why don’t you ... .”
- v) **Payoff** = GNW usually.



## “Look How Hard I’m Trying”

From [“Who’s Listening”](#) by F.H. Ernst Jr., M.D., page 115.

### **Chapter IX**

#### ***“Clean Out Your Ears!”***

#### **The Treatment of Listening**

Listening activity is modifiable. A person’s listening could come under scrutiny in a variety of situations: because of a salesman’s decline in sales, a teacher’s difficulty with a class, a supervisor’s problems with his men, a secretary’s with a boss, a lawyer’s with a particular judge, or a patient’s with a particular psychopathology (and spouse). The listener’s actions as these contribute to his troubles are amenable to successful, often quite simple interventions.

Harriet, initiating consultation, thought (was taught as a child) that being a good listener meant “You are supposed to be quiet when someone else is speaking. Don’t interrupt the speaker”; however, affirmative head nodding was permissible. When her turn came to talk she could ask questions of the talker. She had been taught that a good conversationalist was one who didn’t make “flat statements” but instead asked polite questions “showing interest.” The serial questions of her game **“Look-how-hard-I-am-trying- (to-get-along-with-you)”** were identified, and in their repetitive nightly appearance to her spouse, Ben, were trying and tiring to him at the end of his day.

#### “Why’s This Always Happening to Me” (WAHM)

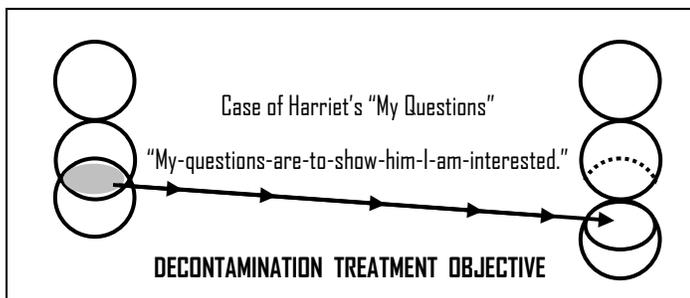
- i) **Hook** Game Move = Gather in notice of self, pretending not to notice.
- ii) **Angle** Game Move = Turn to notice other party (stroke him back).
- iii) **Con** Game Move = Turn back away from other party while still holding their attention.
- iv) **Gimmick** Game Move = Why’s this always happening to me. ( I got had in life; I hope it doesn’t show, I got had. I hope, I hope, I hope.)
- v) **Payoff** = all four types have been witnessed. (GAF, GRO, GNW, GOW)

Harriet described how infuriated he got at her and “how hurt” she became when “after all my interest I tried to show in him,” Ben would work it to get away from her and into another room which was “sacred” in her home.

Job number one was seen to be to get her to increase the amount of her audible, vocal responsiveness to the other person when she was listening. Initially, she had a trance-like appearance while “just listening to you!” Within twelve seconds of talking to her she would have stopped almost all body movement, except for some head nodding; her face would be sagging (she verified her teeth were not touching); her eye-blink rate would become markedly reduced (one every six to eight seconds).

In the first session, her lack of audibility was identified to her and she was shown she could give back more vocal recognition -- recognition which she was "probably, unknowingly, withholding from Ben," her husband, "when he gets home and starts talking to you." It was recommended to her that she increase the number of her one, two, or three syllable audible vocals during the sentences and paragraphs of her spouse's pastime offerings to her when he got home. Additionally, it was noticed, but no comment was made on the smiles she gave when she was asked to give back vocal responses during the first session. No recommendation was made about her head-wagging during the first session ... even as she told of having headaches. The treatment agreement reached before the end of that session was to get well of getting "hurt by and mad at" her spouse. During the ensuing week, the increased number of realistically stimulating vocals back to husband and the coincidental decrease in amount of silent (Parental) head-wagging, led to improvement at home. She also reported fewer headaches (from less head nodding?).

The next job for the "treater" was the control of her tedious, tiresome, trying comments ending with a question mark. The separation and control of this tiresome "why?" Child who was "overlapping" (contaminating) her Adult was initiated by the recommendation that she begin tabulating the number of questions she asked in the first hour after hubby got home. To her immediately forthcoming "Should I stop asking him questions when he gets home?" she was told that her conversational questions to him were to be counted by her; that it was not only permissible but desirable for her to continue her ques-



tions, especially as she kept track, as she counted the number of them. The prescription was: "Once a week count the number of questions you ask Ben during the first hour after he gets home!"

Next session: "I don't think I caught all of them Thursday, but there were 26, I counted!" She graphed the number of these questions on a weekly basis and began to bring the graphs in. Soon the correlation was being made by her: "the more questions I ask him, the bitchier I get with him."

Her own Adult monitoring of (listening to) herself was thus expanded and strengthened as her Child decreased the "overlapping" (contaminating) of her Adult. By explicitly recommending the continuance of (a portion of) her questioning of him which she was already doing, the Child ego state justifications for the reasonableness of her questions were bypassed. Effectively, this act of counting, by her newly "freed" Adult, served as a protection for her Child from the injunction "be nice to him even if it hurts you." The tabulating of the number of questions stimulated her Adult awareness of her Child-self, Harriet. The counter-injunction prescription, "Don't-stop-them-count-them!" offered her effective permission to try something besides questions "to show interest." Not unexpectedly, she soon was giving evidence of showing more smiling interest in Ben as a by-product. The statement that "My-questions-are-to-show-I-am-interested (even-if-it-hurts-

me!)" could be changed from being based solely on a now-and-here reasonableness, into a valued and continually attracting talent of long standing which need not cause her to be hurt. The (childhood-originating) then-and-there basis was established as still reasonable in the now-and-here attracting and holding Ben. The questionings of her "cute Kid" were affirmed to her as attracting Ben during courtship and therefore still stimulating to him.

Treatment considerations in Harriet's case: Shortly after the start of the first session, it was decided that her Child-based teachings about how to listen were in need of being treated. About halfway into the first session, the first recommendation was given. Named to her as a "prescription for getting well of getting hurt," she was enjoined to "give-with-an-audible-vocal more often." (These are the one, two or three syllable phrases -- not more than three -- which can be offered into transactions without disrupting the principal speaker.) This particular prescription was selected for several reasons :

- (1) It would activate her spouse into more regularly looking at and talking to her (stroking her) as she became more immediately stimulating to him with more vocals from herself.
- (2) It would counteract her trance-like "going-blank" facial appearance which indicated that a growing internal confusion (of her Kid) was in progress and needed to be reversed.

same time, as a kind of bonus, he gave her the "justifiable" right to complain about his restrictions. These complaints were part of the social advantages of the marriage. Within the family group, she could say to him "If It Weren't For You, I Could ...", etc. Outside the home, she was also in an advantageous position, since she could join her friends, with a sense of gratification and accomplishment, in their similar complaints about their husbands "If It Weren't For Him, I Could ...", etc.

"If It Weren't For You" was a game because it exploited her husband unfairly. In prohibiting outside activities, Mr. White was only doing what his wife's Child really wanted him to do (the psychological advantage), but instead of expressing appreciation, she took further advantage of him by enjoying herself in complaining about it (the social advantage).

But it was an even exchange, and that is what kept the marriage going; for Mr. White, on his side, was also using the situation to get questionable satisfactions out of it. As an important byproduct, the whites children emotional education included an intensive field course in playing this game, so that eventually the whole family could and did indulge in this occupation skillfully and frequently. Thus, the social dynamics of this family revolved around the game of "If It Weren't For You."

To be continued



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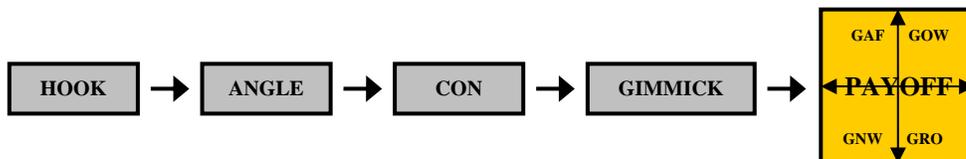
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A game is defined as a recurring set of transactions with ulterior transactions, concealed motivation, a gimmick, and a payoff. Eric Berne, M.D. used a particular variation of the duplex transactional diagram to represent the ulterior aspects of a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



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(3) This particular prescription for Get-Well would aid in setting aside a Parental injunction which was estimated to exist (but which was not inquired into). Without asking, it was clear to the therapist that whatever (Parental) protection her Child had against this growing confusion, this protection was not working; however, any act that might "lift" her Parent would likely aggravate her Kid's sense of being orphaned.

(4) In having a program to work on (a prescription to take) between visits she was enabled to turn some portion of her at-home-alone time, her obsessive ruminating time, into figuring out some new syllable to fit into the "openings with Ben" when he got home and began to talk to her. These particular intervals of time "at-home-alone" which were used to figure out new words, new vocal articulations to use that night, would predictably be "anxiety free" and unconfused. Now she had a program wherein her Kid didn't have to wait until next week or next month or next Christmas. By the third session she

told about "My Harriet-Self -- I told myself I can wait until later in the day and I knew I could, because he is really smiling and laughing like his old self when he's getting home now. So I thought of some other funny sounds to make... (pausing without going blank). That's funny, I just remembered. I used to do that when we were first going together."

The treatment of "My ... Bitchiness" was underway. Harriet's case illustrates some of the clinical "listening psychopathology" and treatment considerations which were dealt with early in her sessions.

A series of treatment techniques has been developed and designed which are given as "prescriptions" to patients. This is similar to how a person with a bacterial pyelonephritis may be given the recommendations: (1) Rx: Drink four quarts of liquid per day; (2) Rx: Take body temperature twice daily and record it; (3) Rx: Purchase a quantity of a sulfa drug preparation and take two teaspoons q.i.d. (4 times a day).

**TECHNIQUES: "Prescriptions for Getting-well":**

Some of the procedures used for the modification of the listening of the listener follow. In the colloquial they are known as:

1. Give-with-An-Audible
2. Selective-stroking
3. "Brush-Touch" -- the Other person (0.2 second on non-erotic skin surface)
4. Use-a-Sound-Screen
5. Duet-Talking
6. Get-a-Move-On
7. Teeth-Touching
8. Get-a-Level
9. Use-His-(First)-Name
10. Get-Your-(First)-Name
11. Get-a-Replay (Re-Listen)
12. Give-With-a-Move
13. Blink-Up
14. Thought-Pause -- "Give-yourself-a-second-to-think"

To be continued