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Game Codes – Newsletter of Games People Play

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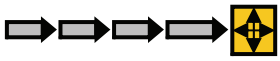
Special points of interest:

* … the entire format of a game is especially more readily understandable when the transactional units and **the sequencing** of the different qualities of behavioral presentation (different ego states) are viewed 'en toto,' as algorithms.
* Game Moves



Inside this issue:

Games and New Game Theory

Franklin H. Ernst Jr., MD. wrote the following unpublished paper on "Games" in the late 1980s.

Games and New Game Theory

Over the last few days, especially as I was getting ready to go to sleep new "ideas" on how to teach Game Theory in "respectable" and new terms kept coming to mind. The social stimulus for this was the upcoming (tomorrow) talk at NSH Continuing Medical Education course on "learning disabilities."

"Learning Disabilities" in game theory are based around the Game of "Stupid." 17 or 18 years ago I began to observe that Games as they are played by people involve the semi-sequential unfolding of a set of "Game Moves", each move characterized at the psychological level by an identifiable, "nameable" quality. (See "The Game Diagram" for a description of game moves.)

The Game of "**Stupid**" in particular is seen to unfold characteristically through a sequence in which the initial opening move offered by the "player" was full of brightness in tones, inviting to the other person, showing a lot of alertness. The second quality of "move" offered shows a much lessened level of inviting, less brightness in appearance, tones and facial features, also showing in less alertness most of the time in the person's body attitude, bearing, carriage. The third quality is again an even further diminution in the show of alert attentiveness. In the fourth quality of operational personality shown during the unfolding sequence of this game there is almost a total absence (at least by comparison) of animation, presenting the picture of "stupidity", "dopiness" to use the colloquial. Of course, as with a Game, by definition it ends with some quality of denouement, "payoff", emotional experience and display.

What has been missing up to this point, however, was that the entire format of a game is especially more readily understandable when the transactional units and **the sequencing** of the different qualities of behavioral presentation (different ego states) are viewed en toto, as algorithms.

ALGORITHMS:

Actually, although E. Berne had not yet begun to use the term in his writings before his death, it is quite clear in retrospect, that he saw treatment and the understanding of the human condition in terms of a set of procedures designed to bring about the improved functioning of a malfunctioning human unit. By this I refer to his precepts:

1. Talk to and listen to the person. Engage the person in conversation that is meaningful to that person.

2. Sort out and "strengthen" the Adult, reinforce the element able to reason.

3. Identify the Child, the emotional element, the one with feelings, with the (quality of) distress.

Then begin the job of assisting the person in sorting out where his feelings are taking over his thinking, directing the patient's attention to the intrusion of feelings into areas best managed in his affairs by a more matter-of-fact approach, **rather than using his own thinking to justify the continuation of his distressed feeling state.**

Back to the **Game ALGORITHM**:

The **Game of STUPID** has the algorithm

Move 1: FULL BRIGHT
Move 2: HALF BRIGHT
Move 3: QUARTER BRIGHT
Move 4: "GOOD NIGHT" OUTCOME, artful stratagem.
PAYOFF: Varies from time to time. But the outcomes of these events can be sorted into one of the four qualities shown in the **GRID FOR WHAT'S HAPPENING**: get-away-from, get-nowhere-with, get-rid-of, get-on-with.

The classroom procedure is quite simple (once you have done it 2 or 3 times). You give a simple explanation to the class of students with learning disabilities about how you have noticed that some of the conversations seem to follow a pattern of moving from one step to the next. AND then write it up on the blackboard either in words or apt pictures or even with 4 different electric light globes with these degrees of relative brightness. Then ask "did anyone of you notice something like that from a classmate here in my classroom?"

Either way, the initiation of teaching them to look for this algorithm, in oneself or another student, is to identify it for them; then let it rest for awhile. Incrementally then, in succeeding hours, one then another example of this game is found of move ONE, then move ONE followed by move 2, etc. The goal is the identification of the moves so the members of the class begin to spot them with each other, and then finally as coming from themselves personally. This has been done in many, many classes witnessed (taught) by another without anyone being intimidated when teacher has been matter-of-fact.

The goal is the identification of the behavioral qualities, in a matter-of-fact way, as being worthy of note. Noticing move ONE, a quality of bright alertness can be taken as a compliment. It would be unreasonable for the student to not have some emotional response. BUT as any remedial teacher knows, the feelings of learning disability students are hanging out all over the place, almost continuously.

The teacher's goal is to give the student some workable formula that enables the student to gain improved personal control of his feelings. This is in order to teach the student to do something else with himself besides play "Stupid" in class. This educational procedure is carried out in order to teach the student in a manner so he becomes able to use his own currently trapped, bottled up, and inactivated intellectual capacity to (learn how to better) manipulate the symbols for reading and writing in addition to better handling the people in his immediate environment.

The teacher's goal, in this instance' is likened to teaching the Educationally Handicapped how to find their way through a maze. The maze is the one of the student's own making, his handicap to success in the manipulation of the symbols used to read and write, and cipher.

MORE GAME ALGORITHMS:

I'M-ONLY-TRYING-TO-HELP-YOU (IOTHY):
1. Inquire.
2. Correct.
3. Reassure.
4. Take to task in a style of "I'm Only Trying To Help You."
5. PAYOFF.

AIN'T-IT-AWFUL (AIA):
1. This is laughable.
2. This is serious.
3. (?) Personally overwhelmed.
4. You're Awful (projective), I'm Awful (introjective).
5. PAYOFF.

WHY'S-THIS-ALWAYS-HAPPENING-TO-ME (WAHM):
1. Gather in notice of self, while pretending not to notice.
2. Turn to face other party as if surprised.
3. Turn away from the other party (huffy?)
4. Being "HAD", Why's this always happening to me, I hope it doesn't show.
5. PAYOFF.

NOW-I-GOT-YOU-YOU-SOB (NIGYSOB):
1. I notice you.
2. You're offensive.
3. You offend me.
4. Now I got you, you SOB.
5. PAYOFF.

IN (TWO) HANDED GAMES each party has his own game (motif). (* A "party" may be one person or several people, each engaged in the same game with the other "party.") Two handed games are played in pairs. **IOTHY** is played, for example, along with **AIA** or **STUPID**. **WAHM** and **NIGYSOB** are complementary games, usually paired with ea. other.

There are some sets of games played with the same set of maneuvers, but with the intensity of the drama heightened. These varying intensities are defined in "Games People Play" (Berne) as the "Degrees", i.e. "a 1st degree game", "a 2nd degree game", or a "3rd degree game." The "Degree" references the amount of dramatic outpouring accompanying the GAME. 1st degree game is socially acceptable. A 3rd degree game refers to "blood and tissue" (damage) of the players involved.

This is typified by the rubrics BUZZ-OFF-BUSTER, FRIGID WOMAN, RAPO. The former is a 1st degree game; the latter a 3rd degree game.

The general rubric for this set of games is "Cool-It-Man (Girl)"

COOL-IT-MAN (GIRL)
The algorithm (the "Game Code") for this game is:
1. Warm up of self.
2. Cool off of self.
3. Re-warm other person.
4. Cool IT, MAN (Girl), in a fashion to challenge, to heat up the other person.
5. Payoff

WHY-DON'T-YOU is routinely played with
YES,-BUT.

WHY-DIDN'T-YOU is routinely played with
NO,-BUT.

STUPID algorithm:
1. Full bright.
2. Half bright.
3. Quarter bright.
4. Stupid (Lights out).
5. PAYOFF.

FATHER'S (Mother, Teacher, Boss) ALWAYS RIGHT

PAYOFFs of GAMES:

These occur in one of the 4 corners of The **OK Corral: GRID FOR WHAT'S HAPPENING**.

The Payoff of a game can be classified into one of:
1. GET-ON-WITH
2. GET-RID-OF
3. GET-NOWHERE-WITH, or
4. GET-AWAY-FROM.

The DENOUEMENT, The Outcome, the Payoff of a game is the goal of a game.

THE ALGORITHM of a game refers to the (sequencing of) behaviors by the player. The (sequenced) behaviors shown by the game player can also be understood as the maneuvers involved in the game. (See the chart at the top of the next page.)

Game Move No.	Class of Ulterior Transaction	Colloquial Name of the Move	Social Term
1.	Tentative Angular	Hook	Invitation
2.	Committed Angular	Angle	Maneuver #1 - Engagement
3.	Tentative Duplex	Con	Maneuver #2 - Involvement
4.	Committed Duplex	Gimmick	Trick, Switch. Two-edged, two-sided artful stratagem
5.	Denouement (Outcome)	PAYOFF	Commitment

KEY ELEMENTS TO A GAME:

* Each of the moves in a game is accomplished by a different (set of) behavior. Whether the different moves are accompanied by a different class of ego state is not crucial for purposes of this discussion. The player's behavior is differently organized in each of these five (sets of) game moves.

* The minimum number of transactions in a game played through, is FIVE.

A transaction is defined as the mutual exchange (stimulus-response) of an acknowledging look, a touch or spoken words of recognition by two parties, of each other.

* Compared to playing from the first move through to payoff, a player will have MOVED THE LOCATION of his primary (executive) EGO STATE. He will look like a different person AND be feeling, experiencing himself and his surroundings from a different internal perspective.

* If you want to abort a game before you are irrevocably drawn in with someone, stop talking, stop responding to the other person totally before the (a) fourth exchange has started. You may become committed to initiating your own responsive gimmick, at the fourth transactional (social) exchange.

* The playing of a game proceeds down the flow chart ladder and successively through the sequence of moves, one through five, once initiated. Since a game involves at least two people, a player may not have brought his fellow player along to where the companion is ready to go on to the next move of his own game. To bring the other player along may well require some recycling of some of the game's moves by the first party.

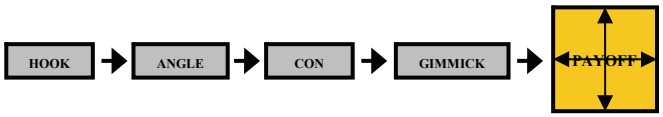
Further, recycling the moves can intensify the excitement.

RECYCLING:

This is where RECYCLING of game moves helps to understand what next transpires between players. RECYCLING also enables us to account for the wide variations in length of time and number of transactional exchanges from one game to the next, as seen.

If one of the players has not kept up with his playmate in the unfolding of the dramatics of the action, he may elect to "back-space" his action to a previously played move. If Joey is not ready to play his "con" after Freddy has played his and instead Joey replays his "angle" again, then Freddy may elect to 1) play his own con again, 2) go back to his angle or, 3) go back to replay his own "hook" move (behavior) again, since his "hook" worked before to get his playmate to "play," (stroke) back to him: to bring Joey along AND to keep the action from being broken off between the parties; to keep the action from getting dull between them.

THE GENERAL GAME DIAGRAM:



A. A player may play his hook (issue the invitation to play) numerous times before advancing to his next (angle) move, ie circling his proposed playmate with many "invitations." If he believes he has his playmate engaged with him and hooked on the other end of the line, then he may proceed to his "angle," Move #2.

B. After playing his "angle" a game player may elect 1) to play it some more, 2) to "backspace" to his own "hook" move again and play it again some more OR, 3) if his fellow player is coming along OK, to then unfold his "con" move.

C. After playing his "con" a player may 1) replay it any number (more) of times, or 2) "backspace" one move to replay his "angle" some more, OR 3) "backspace" two moves directly back to replay his "hook" again, some more. OR he may feel confident, seeing his playmate coming along with him, to play his next move, THE GIMMICK.

D. Once a player has played his "gimmick" game move the first time, he has effectively committed himself to playing through his game to get his PAYOFF, regardless of how disadvantageous he may see that it will prove to him. In a word, NOW he's hooked for sure, the hook is SET.

After playing his gimmick, a player may 1) replay that move several more times, 2) backspace one move to play his con some more, or 3) directly backspace two moves to his angle for some more of this behavioral activity, or 4) directly backspace three moves to play some more of his "hook" move behavior transactions.

In any case, at some point after both he and his playmate have each played out their gimmicks in direct sequence of each other, both players will then proceed to live out their respective PAYOFFs.

HANDEDNESS OF GAMES

A game is a social activity involving at least one other separate, differently organized and behaving person, one capable of a variety of ways of organizing his own behaviors in stimulating and

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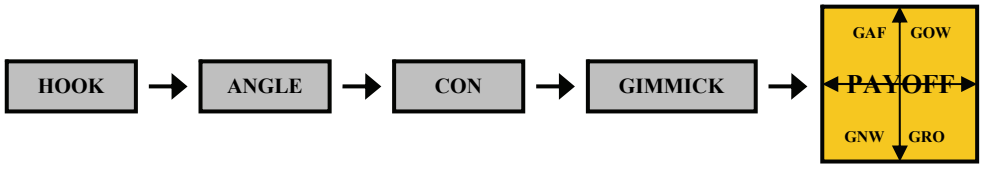
A game is defined as a recurring set of transactions with ulterior transactions, concealed motivation, a gimmick, and a payoff. Eric Berne, M.D. used a particular variation of the duplex transactional diagram to represent the ulterior aspects of a game. Berne added the concept of switch in 1966 and introduced "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."

responding to the second person. For purposes of this discussion a game involves at least two people. Several people may be participating in one or more of the hands of a game. A typical two-handed game where several people may be contributing to one of the hands would be in those instances where one skillful "**YES-BUT**" player is fielding the "helpful" suggestions of a dozen players on the "**WHY-DON'T-YOU**" side of that pair of games.

PASTIME "GAMES" vs GAME GAMES

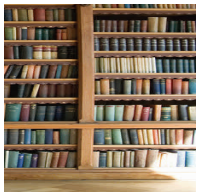
The variety of spectator and participatory sports are here defined as pastime and/or activity forms of time structuring. Card games as a rule are for the pleasure of passing the time with each other or as part of the job, eg a Caterpillar Tractor Co executive on the road playing gin rummy with one of the personnel of a local distributorship. If there is gambling (money) involved it may or not be a game depending on whether a gimmick (artful, duplex stratagem) is present in the players. Playing for money by some is a pastime, some money stakes can add some zest to passing that time. If one of the parties does not have extra discretionary money to play with, but is instead "desperate" in his playing, then you have a person playing "gambler."

In card playing there are the two -handed: e.g. casino, gin rummy, cribbage. There are the three handed: e.g. 3 handed pinochle. The four handed: contract bridge, 4 handed pinochle. Then there are the multi-handed games: e.g. poker, etc. In black-jack we have a two-handed situation: dealer vs the others (playing against the dealer).

In the GAMES PEOPLE PLAY the number of hands involved in a game is also referred to as the NUMBER OF PARTIES in the game. A "party" can include one or several people. Therefore one hand, ie one party in a game may include more than one person.

While there may be GAMES with more than four hands involved, 1) they have not been studied, 2) as a rule and on closer inspection they can be understood as having no more than four hands at the most. One of the hands in a three or four handed game can well have more than one aspect visible (more than one face to show, ie artful stratagem) at different times, eg the "Producer" in the four-handed "**LET'S-YOU-AND-HIM-FIGHT**."

Footnote: In Games People Play, Berne lists Alcoholic as a five handed game: "It", Persecutor, Rescuer, Patsy and the Seller (of the beverage). The last named is not in fact a player in the game. He has no gimmick. His is a straight procedure: salesman conducting his half of a contractual procedure.



To be continued

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