



Transactional Musings

The Great Handshake

From The Encounterer, issue Vol.2 No.23 Feb. 5, 1970, GGFGTI, edited by F.H. Ernst Jr., M.D.

"As most know, there are a wide variety of handshakes and handshaking techniques. Many small children receive extensive training (nagging) about which hand to do it with, as when saying "good-bye" to the doctor or "hello" to the new step-father: "No dear, with your right (other) hand!" Which hand is offered is more important than how the preferred hand is given or taken hold of. Yet, next to the tone of voice, there is probably no better single (ritualistic, ritualized) transactional indicator of the quality of person with whom one is dealing.

The handshake is the one physical-touching activity which remains sanctioned for (almost) all situations throughout a person's life. Other touching activities, eg, "brush touching," (slower) caressing, physically pressing another person, kissing (on lips or cheek), tickling, etc., have certain conventions and restrictions.

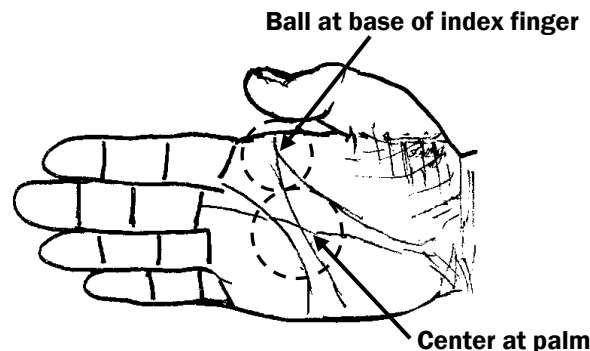
There are very few situations where the offer of the (right) hand as a gesture of good-will is out-of-bounds. Handshakes, as solutions to encounters, can be classi-

fied into the categories of Get-On-With, Get-Away-From, Get-Rid-Of, and Get-Nowhere handshake.

To identify personal examples: the overpowering, rim-of-the-hand, vice-like crunching, hold-back handshake; the limp, full-hand offered by a hard "Kick-Me" player for the crushing of that person's knuckles; the limp and drooping-distal-end-of-the-right-fingers offered by a "Cool-It, Man!" player; the stiffened-fingers, end-of-the-hand by a "Trying-Hard" player; the limp left-hand-fingers given to the other person by a "(Killer) Sweetheart"; the (center-of-the-hand) hold-out offered by "Ain't-It-Awful" and "I'm-Only-Trying-To-Help-You-Deer"; the heavy-pumping, shake-your-hand-and-arm-off-and-stick-it-in-your-face hand-shake; the stiff-fingers-only, handed-concealing-the-Palm, thumb-bruising-the-back-of-your-hand handshake; the I-get-(up-and-in-and-on)-more-of-your-hand-than-you-got-of-mine hand-

shake, etc.

There is one variety of handshake that repeatedly has warmed those giving and getting it: THE GREAT HANDSHAKE ! As a reproducible phenomenon, THE GREAT HANDSHAKE is defined as follows: The open hand is gently over-opened, (moderately hyper-extended) with the four fingers held together and thumb pulled to the side. Then (the ball at) the base of the first (index) finger is placed into the center of the other person's palm as the thumb rolls around to the back of the base of the other person's index finger. Then the rest of the fingers are smoothly and firmly wrapped around the balance of the recipient's hand as your thumb eases the base of the other person's index finger into your own palm. It will be found by those who do it, that, as with (other en) gendered behavior, almost any other person's hand is capable of becoming "Just-My-Size!" ... When the center



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Special points of interest:

- Not all handshakes are created equal. Many are an indicator of a game, some of power, some of a hold out. "The Great Handshake" is described here.
- It is time to study the writings of Eric Berne, M.D., again.
- "The Game Diagram" shows the moves of games people play.
- There are conflicts with and in city and county governmental goals and objectives sessions.
- Goals and Objectives session? Come on guys. What's really the agenda?

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The Great Handshake, continued

of the palm is pressed into by another person's hand, as described, it conveys a complementary filling-out, filling-in, a joining-up, a getting-on-with-you sensation; it gives the reciprocated sense of "I-am-OK-AND-you-are-OK!" It is "The Winner's Handshake!"

Those who have The (GOW) WINNER'S GREAT HANDSHAKE recognize each other in the act of shaking hands. Those who learned it in (Adult) measurement terms, teach others. Since first introduced as a definable phenomenon several

"5th, 6th, and 7th generation" students, unaware of its originator, have accurately, in words, informed me about how to go about doing it."

"Games People Play" by Eric Berne M.D.

Great reading and reference for understanding what's happening with people.

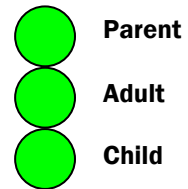
the book as a reference; read it many times. It's time to read it again.

"Games People Play. The Psychology of Human Relationships" by Dr. Eric Berne (MD), is about how people give and get strokes. I first heard about the book from my father, Franklin H. Ernst Jr., M.D. in 1964, and we talked about the topic thousands of times thru the years. Dad and I often used

The other must read by Eric Berne is "Transactional Analysis in Psychotherapy." It is easy reading, too.

Both books by-pass the "intellectual" jargon of "professional" psychiatry and psychology. Many millions of these books have been printed, and translated into

many languages. It is time to read this book again, too. It is time to study. These books are available on the internet, as new and used books.



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"I'm Only Trying to Help You is found most commonly and in its most florid form among social workers with a certain type of training."

Constitution Robbers

There is an effort afoot to rewrite the California Constitution, AGAIN. This happened in the mid 1990's and is happening now.

The (San Francisco) Bay Area Council and other business groups have been heard to say in the media that they are spearheading an effort calling for a constitutional convention. These are the same business groups outsourcing jobs and industry. State elected officials complain about the dysfunctional government, broken budget process. And "The Governor" (Governator) is leading the noise.

A group "Facilitator" of a local city council "goals and objec-

tives meeting" was heard to say "all eyes are on you."

Vallejo is "bankrupt." As a result it can't pay its bills, is closing fire stations, laying off policemen and shutting down other government functions. Councilmen lament the city may have to dis-incorporate. Recent City Managers have publicly said this, too.

Is "regional governance the goal/plan?"

What's really causing the difficulties? Is it the constantly changing accounting rules, excessive debt, taxation, or the lack of new taxes, regulation, land use restrictions, union demands, compromising councils, unfair trade practices? The

closure of Mare Island Naval Base in 1996 certainly expanded Vallejo's responsibilities. Outsourcing of industry and employment opportunities has contributed to the condition of devolution.

And clearly there are concerted, orchestrated activities putting "the environment" ahead of free people. Uncontrolled, unreasonable environmental regulatory sprawl has to be acknowledged as having participated in any "dysfunctional" descriptions being spoken by government managers, elect, media, and others.

“The Game Diagram” by Franklin H. Ernst Jr., M.D.

A game is defined as a recurring set of transactions with ulterior transactions, concealed motivation, a gimmick and a payoff. Game moves are named as follows:

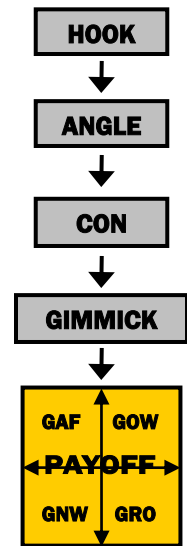
- Move #1 - **HOOK**,
- Move #2 - **ANGLE**,
- Move #3 - **CON**,
- Move #4 - **GIMMICK**,
- Move #5 - **PAYOFF**

“The Game Diagram” paper describes and diagram: (1): The sequential nature of the moves in a game. (2): The pro-

gression of the ulterior transactional events in a game. (3): The recycling phenomena within one play-through of a game. (4): The availability of options for the payoff of a game. (5): The pre-commitment and post-commitment phases of a game. (6): The game as a unit of behavior. (7): Game playing regulates the occurrence and quality of intimacy.

Payoff time is one of a mutually vivid stroke exchange. The payoffs of the person can be sorted into the four quadrants of the OK CORRAL: Grid for What’s Happening.

1. A **Get-On-With** payoff.
2. A **Get-Rid-Of** payoff.
3. A **Get-Away-From** payoff.
4. A **Get-Nowhere-With** payoff.



“The Structure and Dynamics of Organizations and Groups” by Eric Berne M.D.

“For a practical understanding of organizations and groups it is necessary to have a workable theory of group culture, since the culture influences almost everything that happens in a social aggregation. The following approach, based on the personality structure ..., has been found to be the most useful in dealing with ailing groups.”

“Culture is divided into three segments — technical culture, group etiquette and group character. The technical culture is used principally in the work and combat groups and includes all sorts of useful (and decorative) artifacts, from quartz chips to space ships; all sorts of practical technics for changing the environment, from daubing pigments to making plutonium; as well as all sorts of practical intellectual operations, from counting reindeer to programming computers. It includes those aspects of culture that require the use of a logical mind directed toward reality, that part

of the personality which later will be called the Adult.”

“The group etiquette is based on the general social etiquette and includes all items of etiquette which are different from the general etiquette but are acceptable in the given group. Etiquette deals with standards of behavior and ways of presenting an acceptable persona or of reinforcing or guiding the personas of others. What makes people comfortable socially is to feel that the other people see them as they want to be seen. Most people want to be seen as generous, intelligent, courageous, sincere and loyal—in general, acceptable according to the standards of the group. Each group has its own special standards and its own favored ways of presenting or reinforcing a persona. There is a different standard and a different approach for presenting oneself as courageous at a scientific meeting, at a revival meeting or in a

group of skin-divers. And there is a different etiquette for acknowledging courage in each of these situations. Etiquette is usually traditional and in most cases only changes slowly or under special conditions. This part of the group culture originates from that aspect of the personality which later will be called the Parent.”

“Character is more “primitive” than etiquette. Etiquette requires a restraint, an understanding and a knowledge of social behavior that an infant, for example, does not have. Character is a more direct expression of instinctual life. It includes many things that infants can do, such as laughing, singing and weeping. The group character is chiefly an expression of that aspect of the personality which are often called the Child.”

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“The Group Culture”



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"Mastery of the universe is proportional to the symbols man has by which to represent his universe."

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"Goals and Objectives Groups"

For several decades city and county governments have hired consultants to lead elected and city management at semi-public meetings called "goals and objectives" meetings. We had one here last week. The tone was not good. The "Facilitator" said soon after opening the meeting: "speak up, you are killing me ...," presumably to get the participants to speak. It was obvious no one wanted to be there. Its been a bad year in Vallejo.

Then the "hammers" came out. A councilwoman said: "... we did not use opportunities that the crisis provided ...," "... everything is broken ..." City Manager was heard to say "... current city structure is a dinosaur, need for change ..." Councilwoman said "... you are with us or against us, everyone in this room ..." Later the City Manager said: "... walk the plank"

This does not bode well for the people who live here, for whom the elect work for. So why do this? Is there some requirement or advantage for this kind of "group meeting?" Is it really for your own good that "you asked me to be your facilitator," an outsider?

This meeting was not held at city hall. Depending on your point of view it is semi-public or semi-closed.

The attending public got a glimpse of what it must be like at weekly contentious closed meetings where "legal/confidential" matters are discussed: bankruptcy, labor, wages, arbitration, lawsuits, property matters, and other disputes/negotiations, etc., etc., etc.

The rules at "goals and objectives" meetings: insiders get to speak/participate in "Facilitator's" group. Outsiders may be permitted to speak, but only and if invited. This satisfies the legal requirements of the "public open meeting law?" **Maybe!** In reality, members of the public are discouraged to get involved. In reality, **policy** is being discussed and set by the elect even though elect will deny it. Management say they "get direction." Led by "Facilitator."

Are participants tense (afraid) because they know the truth? Are participants encouraged to alienate and invalidate themselves? Tense because they "might give away something" that they are "not sposed to give away." They can't talk about what's talked about in

"closed sessions." A significant number of topics are off-limits to public view. So how do the elect and management communicate in public about these topics? In code? The public knows what's happening about city matters. Everybody is talking about it.

The very nature of a "goals and objectives" group session for elected and government management employees is controversial. The elect become alienated from the people. The people become suspicious of the elect. Hard to be Adult in this kind of setting.

The participants have to suffer thru this experience in order to "feel" more like a team. Later, from the outsiders perspective, the public wonders why the staff and elect are so buddy-buddy even though they still can't get anything done? The outsiders get to wonder why they (the public) "feel" (is) excluded.

Read "Structure and Dynamics of Organizations and Groups." The leader, "facilitator" has a secret. He's not really a magician. He knows the "power" of suggestion. Anyone for a nice game of "I'm Only Trying To Help (You)."