

## II. *Creativity, Self, and Power*

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FOR A NUMBER of years—certainly from 1950 to 1957—my interest in creativity was peripheral. I was in the advertising business and while there is a great need for ideas in advertising, these are only one element in a complex campaign or plan of action.

Now, in 1973, after I have devoted many years to understanding the creative process and where it fits in the human scheme, I have broadened my definition of it. I see all problem solving as creative. I believe learning is much the same as problem solving and that both learning and problem solving are necessary for achievement which in turn is necessary to human satisfaction and self-esteem. This, of course, boils down to: creative activity is necessary to self-esteem.

However, if in 1950 a reporter had asked me what my underlying assumption about creativity was, I don't believe I could have told him. I had observed that one copywriter seemed to get better ideas than another and yet even this was a matter of opinion. I believed my own ideas (I was an ex-copywriter) were often better than anyone else's. Retrospectively, I might say "creativity seems to be a gift and one tends to exaggerate the extent of that gift in one's self—and at the same time is secretly afraid he does not have it." In the next few years—1952 to 1957—my views of creativity were focused by a series of events. First, I was put in charge of the company's creative departments: art and copywriting. My mandate was to make these operations more creative. Second, I went into psychoanalysis. And third, I came to know and work with Mark Wiseman, a skilled analytical thinker and experimenter in advertising effectiveness. He believes that a methodology can be devised for any task.

This combination started lines of thought and experiment that continue today. My thinking revolves around three needs that seem necessary to health: to problem solve, to be confident that one can do it repeatedly, and to continually build one's self-esteem. These three needs were not then clearly connected (in fact, they were not clear at all), but they proved to be recurrent themes in my work.

I was not naïve about the unconscious, but until psychoanalysis, I had not knowingly observed myself being the victim or beneficiary of it. This experience gave me an appreciation of the personal powers in all of us of which we are not only unaware, but often deny. I am not thinking only of the special unconscious which Freud made famous (or vice versa). I am thinking of the more commonplace unawareness like the completeness of our recall, the astounding perceptiveness and lightning speed of our powers of observation. In the early 1950s I did not wholly appreciate these faculties. Indeed, I am not certain I do now, not because I don't wish to, but because they are unbelievable to me due to my lack of referents and my cultural tendency to require logical explanations before acceptance.

But from 1952 to 1957, I was getting glimpses into some of these capacities: the feats of observation demonstrated with the tachistoscope in which a subject responds with a measurable skin resistance change to a dirty word flashed on a screen for a fraction of a second, does not respond to a clean word, and is unable to consciously read or recall either; the experiments with subliminal advertising in which a message like "you are thirsty, go get a Coke" was flashed on movie screens so rapidly it is not perceptible (results inconclusive).

While I found those experiments interesting and suggestive, I believed it would be more useful to understand the unconscious motives I was newly learning to experience. I was an early champion of something called motivational research. An example will clarify my thinking then. We had a bank as a client. I asked a psychologist to conduct interviews to determine how people *really* felt about banks in general and our client in particular. It will surprise no one now to learn that banks are hated, feared, and associated with stern unforgiving parents. At that time it was a surprise—at least so they told us—to the bankers.

Our copywriters and artists, known in the agency business as the creative people or, for short, creatives, took these findings and devised a series of advertisements that said, in effect, "We know you hate to come to us for money. We understand and will be easy on you." They even thought of having a small advertisement in the paper that said, "You don't have to ask us for money, just bring this advertisement and we will know." This was a successful campaign. Many people brought in the advertisement.

I believed that a person would be better able to get good ideas (be more creative) if he could get in closer touch with his own unconscious storehouse. To that end, since fortunately I was unable to persuade

everyone to go into psychoanalysis, I exposed the men and women in my departments to a random set of experiences that I thought would put them in closer touch with the unknown in themselves. These ranged from talks by one of the psychologists who worked on the Kinsey reports to individual discussions between each person and a very skillful psychologist involved in market research.

At the same time that I was tentatively exploring the little-known inner man, I was, with Mr. Wiseman's help, setting up some objective, analytical procedures to help the creative people tackle their problems with a methodology. These consisted mainly of systematic series of questions which, if answered, would better define the problem. I saw no reason, then, to question the wisdom of the old rule of thumb, "When one has really defined the problem, it is 90 percent solved."

The third area I interested myself in was validation. We availed ourselves of every opportunity to test our advertisements. Sometimes we could test for readership, compared to other advertisements in the same magazine or newspaper. Other times, as in the bank advertisements, or in mail order advertising, we could get a more accurate evaluation of the effectiveness of our creativity.

Validation of the quality of ideas proves to be a sticky business, as does any evaluation of a creativity system. While I did not see it at the time, I had set up in my department a crude creativity system complete with the following characteristics: the ability to be objective to understand the problem, to look inward and use the nonlogical, and finally, a feedback mechanism that could tell us when we were being effective and when we were not. The system appeared to work. We consistently won more readers than competing advertisements. Our few mail order accounts had excellent cost per order records. Among the business people in the agency the consensus was that we *were* more creative than we had been. We prospered.

Among the creative people there was less joy. Most resented the methodology. Most resented the motivation research. This second resentment I now understand better. I believe that one characteristic that set the creative people apart from the businessmen was their intuitive appreciation of motivation. It damaged their magic to have this information out in the open for all to interpret.

This dissatisfaction raised an issue with which I am still struggling. In our usual hierarchical organization much of the creative problem solving is done by managers. How does the subordinate maintain his or her self-esteem in this situation?

In that case we were a small group—perhaps twenty people—and we were friends. We had a lot of meetings regarding what to do about resentments. No real agreement was reached and we continued to use the loose system that had apparently produced results. We were all willing to change the system but none of us knew how to go about it. My real and obvious

concern about their dissatisfaction, the frequent meetings, and the friendship preserved the status quo. I suspect it cost us all a lot in satisfaction.

During this period I was enormously impressed with brainstorming. Within the loose, larger system we saw this as an exciting way to cooperate in problem solving. At the time it was the only well-defined, repeatable idea-getting strategy I knew. I still see the separation of evaluation from idea generation as one of the great breakthroughs in learning about the engines that move creativity. It was oversimplified and incomplete, but it remains a giant leap toward understanding. I believe that brainstorming has not been given its due. It was the first organized system for producing ideas. The very fact that Osborn invented a system that could be readily invoked by any group demonstrated to all of us that systems for increasing creativity are thinkable.

Another system I learned about was that of our copy chief. I believe now that every person has his own internal system, but Grantly Wallington could describe and demonstrate his before my very eyes and no one else could or would do that. His system was deceptively simple. First, he looked over the analysis to get the problem in mind. For example, in one case the problem was to emphasize the fine detail captured by a professional photographic paper. With the problem in mind he would take *The Saturday Evening Post* and leaf through it looking idly at the headlines, captions, and pictures. He stopped at a caption that said "It is wise to skirt the white water."

"That gives me an idea," he said. "We will take a picture of a complicated plaid skirt and we will magnify part of it to show how the detail comes through. We might even play around with Scotch and money savings in the headline."

I considered Mr. Wallington's system interesting. He could repeat it nearly at will and I found it impossible to evaluate. How good were these ideas he produced so easily? He could not explain exactly how he got from one thought to another, so his system appeared operational only for him. I understand it better now, and we regularly teach an idea-getting strategy that uses association and imaging as he did then. It turned out that to use the system required a loose, disciplined tolerance that is rather difficult to maintain.

During this same period I became a member of the management team of the agency. It was an experience that was quite different from my expectations and it had far-reaching effects. As a young man working my way up in the world after World War II, I had assumed that in every successful company there was a management team that really knew the answers. I also assumed that when I was taken into the fold, these experienced heads would help me learn the answers. This was not the case. No one knew for sure what the answers were and most of us were not even sure of the questions.

There were always urgent problems, and I was again impressed with the interplay of the need to problem solve, to understand how we were doing it, and to recognize that we were not each dependably logical and cooperative. Because I had been thoroughly indoctrinated in the need for methodology by Mr. Wiseman, I was sensitive to the fact that there was very little method to our management, but I had no idea what to do about it. We observed the structures, had executive committee meetings, and made decisions. Each meeting was an improvisation where opinions were freely given and rediscussed and reacted to, and we would seemingly drift into a position. In spite of this we were a rapidly growing, well-managed company, well regarded by clients and competitors. Much of our success grew out of the president's mode of operating. Charles Rumrill was a paradoxical mixture of easygoing, power sharing, and quietly determined to be successful. He was one of the most experimental, open-minded people I have ever known. I now realize that his willingness to share power encouraged each of us to problem solve and feel good about it.

Mr. Rumrill's style was important to my present thinking because as the company grew and each of the members of the management team was responsible for larger groups of people, much of the former excitement and satisfaction disappeared. We believed that in order to avoid errors and continue to be effective we must institutionalize what was successful. Because we had not studied our processes, we really did not know what to make rules about. We made them anyway, as we thought good managers should. In retrospect, this transition from easy power sharing toward greater control presents an interesting paradox. As we managers held power more closely, one would have thought we would do more creative problem solving and feel a greater sense of accomplishment and healthy self-esteem. This did not seem to be the case. The more control-oriented we became, the less was the sense of excitement and accomplishment.

I now believe we would have continued the excitement and sense of accomplishment if we had institutionalized Mr. Rumrill's easygoing power sharing and open-mindedness. These are difficult capabilities, or talents, to spread, yet the rewards for learning how to do so are great.

It was at this transitional time in 1957 that I read an article entitled "Operational Creativity" by William J. J. Gordon (1956). Mr. Gordon claimed to have devised a new systematic way to produce good ideas. It was the first new system I had heard of since brainstorming, and I was fascinated by the article. I was not able to apply the steps outlined in the article, but I apparently sensed their importance because I clipped the article and started a file on operational creativity. That is a file that has become very thick, for that was the seed thinking that led to the synectics process. From 1958, when I joined Mr. Gordon, to 1965, we were collaborators both in developing the process of synectics and in starting the company, Synectics, Inc.

The business of Synectics, Inc., was invention. We had three basic activities. In one we would invent for a company a new product to meet its specifications. For example, the Veeder Root Company wanted new uses for the counters with which most gasoline pumps are equipped. We conceived the idea of a pump that would dispense several octane blends of gasoline. Sunoco now uses this device.

A second activity was teaching small groups from other companies our system for invention and implementation. We trained groups for such companies as Kimberly-Clark, Johns Manville, Singer, and Whirlpool Corporation.

The third activity was to invent products ourselves which we sold to appropriate companies to make and market. Two examples were: a tampon that reduces menstrual pain, which we sold to Lehn and Fink; and a method of explosively forming metal fibers and other material into sheets, which was purchased by the Rohr Division of Brunswick.

While all these activities proceeded, we continued our research into the creative process. Our major research tool was the tape recorder. We did much problem solving in groups and we recorded these meetings. When the meetings produced results, we could go over the tapes and discover what modes of thinking were successful and learn how to repeat them.

In the agency business I was only faintly aware of process and peripherally interested in creativity. From 1958 to the present my main interest has been the process by which people cooperatively accomplish something that gives them satisfaction. And as time has passed I have become more and more interested in the importance of this process and its effect on a person's sense of self and the effect of this in turn on ability to learn, change, and grow. Early in that period the focus was narrowly on creative problem solving. Out of that joint work came Mr. Gordon's book *Synectics* (1961), and much later my own book *The Practice of Creativity* (1970). Briefly, the synectics process focuses on two basic and interrelated approaches: first, procedures that aid imaginative speculation, and second, disciplined ways of acting so that speculation is not reduced but valued and encouraged.

By 1965 Mr. Gordon's attention was shifting to children and the use of metaphor to help them learn. He started to design a series of metaphorical work books. The first was completed in 1967 and when Harper & Row contracted to publish this series titled *Making It Strange* (Synectics, Inc., 1968), Mr. Gordon left Synectics and started his own company to produce the series. My own understanding of our business was changing at this time also. I saw the synectics set of procedures as quite useful in helping people to produce novel ideas. However, the process was difficult to learn and even when learned the decay rate was rapid after the student returned to his post in industry. This and other observations about the effectiveness

of our services led to a gradual change in our activities and in my own view of what we could and could not do.

An experience that has had great influence on my thinking occurred in the early 1960s. A division of one of the large automobile companies came to us for an invention. The need for the specialized components they made was diminishing and they wanted something new. We met with the general manager and his second in command. We ran a long and systematic meeting to discover opportunity areas that would be acceptable to them. One was carburetion (I am altering the fact as the real invention remains wrapped in secrecy). They said that if we could give them a really new carburetion system, they would be happy. We went to work. Four months later we had conceived of an electrically driven gas vaporizer and system for delivery to each cylinder that showed great promise. The general manager and his assistant were excited by the enormous volume implied by our device. They were concerned over the crudeness of the model and the need for further invention and perfection. They wanted their chief engineer to come and see if it really did what we thought it did.

The chief engineer came and said yes, he thought so, but that he would like an outside opinion. A consultant came and said yes, it really does what we think it does. There was a month of silence from the client. I called him finally and arranged a meeting. He really did not want to commit himself to the next phase of development. I said, "If you could have anything you wanted right now, what would you want? You take over development? Get your money back? [His investment at this point was about \$30,000.] Stop everything?"

He asked if I would excuse him while he huddled with his assistant. On his return, he said he would like his money back. Within a couple of days I found a buyer who was a supplier to the automotive industry. When I reported this to our client he decided not to sell. Nor did he wish to proceed. The carburetion system went on the client's shelf.

This was the first of a series. A client would pay us to invent something. We would do it. It would then languish with little or no further action.

In contrast, the groups we worked with who did their own inventing would overcome one monstrous difficulty after another until they had a marketable product. The lesson gradually came clear to me: to change anything, to learn anything, to turn an idea into a product or process demands enormous and continuing energy and commitment. Unless one has some authorship, the lackey effect robs him of energy. If one is simply carrying out the ideas of others, this damages self-esteem, and no one needs that. So we redesigned that service to conform with people. We help with process, but the client and his people solve their own problems. This has become a successful service called a Problem Laboratory.

From 1964 to the present, Problem Laboratories gave me the opportu-

nity to work with many hundreds of problem solvers on a vast number of real problems ranging from highly technical, such as devising a more efficient way to acidize oil-bearing limestone strata, to very people-oriented problems such as determining ways to help a new salesman move more quickly from being an expense to making a profit. \*

Our training services changed also. We shifted emphasis from small groups of five people from the same company working with us for several months to larger groups of up to sixteen spending a week with us. Members come from different companies and institutions: schools, hospitals, communes. Each brings several real problems and the groups take turns working on each other's problems. We videotape these working sessions and a member of our staff reviews the tape with the participants.

Since 1964 this has provided me with the opportunity to study thousands of meetings and the actions of many different people. In the early sixties I looked mainly at idea-getting strategies. We made heavy use of analogy and metaphor to help people see problems in new ways. We also developed various ways to handle differences in a constructive way. We identified the key roles that are played in any meeting. All of this is described in detail in *The Practice of Creativity* (Prince, 1970).

Between 1967 and the present I gradually became convinced that we were overdoing our emphasis on idea-getting strategies. Getting good starting ideas appeared to be something just about everyone does well. The data that led me to this conclusion came at first from Problem Laboratories. The format of a two or three day Lab is quite standard. The opening hour and a half is devoted to an experiment with the eight members of the client team. We give them a problem unconnected with their business. We videotape ten or fifteen minutes of their meeting and then examine the tape with them. The purpose of this experiment is to increase the probability they and we will be successful in our work together. We use the tape to prove that they are able to work together. We use the tape to prove that they are able to get good ideas, that they quite naturally use something we call imaging (pictures in the mind's eye), that they are good at building on a starting idea, and that they are easily evoked into overcoming obstacles. They also see and hear that they tend to have several conversations at once, put ideas and each other down, lose ideas, get defensive, and as a result have some problems cooperating. We further identify the roles we will all be dealing with for the duration of the Problem Laboratory, which are the Leader, the Client, and the Participants. The Leader is in charge of process. It is his job to see that no thought or idea gets lost, that only one person talks at a time, that no idea or person gets put down and so on. The Client of the Laboratory is that person who will get his hands dirty implementing the possible solutions that may come out of the Laboratory. He is in charge of content, though he also contributes thoughts and ideas. He evaluates ideas and decides whether they meet his



specifications. He may consult other members of his team who have special expertise, but he basically governs the content. Participants are all the other members of the group, and we ask them to agree to go along with the Leader's decisions on process and the Client's decisions on content. This agreement is not difficult to obtain after people have seen the taped experiment of themselves and understand that we are not being arbitrary.

During the next two hours of the Problem Laboratory we go to work on the Client's problem. The role of Leader is taken by a member of our staff. Two or three other staff members are participants. It is unusual for these two hours not to produce some useful material for the Client. Our leaders employ no idea-getting strategies during this period. They protect ideas, welcome any sort of thinking, and encourage a lot of wishing about outcomes. A client almost never brings a brand-new problem to us. Typically he and his group have been working on it for several months—sometimes several years. Nevertheless, in their first two hours of work with a skilled leader who pays close attention and values individual thinking, the group nearly always produces one or two complete possible solutions and many beginning ideas. I suspect that very often the possible solutions that emerge this early are partially or even wholly formed in prior thinking. The supportive atmosphere brings them out.

The point that is important to me here is that I see a lot of solid examples of inherent creativity in Problem Laboratories and courses. Everyone who tries at all is good at getting ideas and at solving problems.

It was difficult for me to see this because we were in the business of teaching creativity and I had a built-in bias that influenced my observation. Without being aware of it, I was convinced that people tended to come to us weakly creative and leave strongly creative. Our function was to strengthen and add to the students' idea-getting strategies. The first link in this bias came when I was examining the role of speculation in idea getting. I believe that one makes ideas happen through speculation. Any activity that increases speculation will increase the probability of getting ideas. Whatever decreases speculation decreases probability.

In my observation I realized that in a given meeting people are willing and able to speculate until they are punished for it. Punishment may seem too strong a word because the action nearly always appears innocent of malice and even rational. For example: You and I have a flat tire and no jack. It is a cold, icy day and there are chunks of ice at the side of the road. You speculate, "How about using chunks of ice to prop the car up while we change the tire?" I reply, "I don't see how that will work because we don't have any way to get the car up on ice in the first place."

After watching thousands of exchanges like this and seeing the consequent reduction in speculation, I began to wonder if perhaps the real culprit in low creativity was high skill in discouraging speculation. Some examples of this skill are obvious, like my rejection of the ice idea. Others

are not so easily recognized: Such seemingly acceptable actions as close questioning of the offerer of an idea, good-natured kidding about someone's idea, or ignoring an idea. Any action that results in the offerer of an idea feeling defensive will tend to reduce not only his speculation but that of others in the group. The combination of all these actions and responses creates the climate of the meeting, or, in a larger sense, of the company.

In about 1967 I began to identify and evaluate every action and response I could spot by watching videotape and live action meetings. My thought was to eliminate by legislation the responses and actions that reduce speculation. For the next few years this occupied much of my attention. When speculation-reducing actions are [re]eliminated, there is no question that idea production and problem solving increase—and so does accomplishment and satisfaction. The real difficulty was and is to get the speculation-enhancing behaviors to persist. Take the tendency to reject ideas and find flaws in them illustrated by the flat tire exchange above. The flaws are generally real; unless corrected or overcome the idea will not solve the problem.

The rational way out of this dilemma is to say, "We are all mature people here. We must recognize that negative information is valuable and intended to help and should be perceived that way. Accept it and use it." This is the way the world ought to be but reality is quite different. Time after time we would see A point out a valid flaw in B's idea. B might even thank A. Later in the meeting A starts an idea and before he can even be clear what it is, B interrupts to say, "That will be too expensive." Or B will oppose a procedure A recommends, or start a conversation across A, or ignore him. There are an infinity of variations. We have become so familiar with this phenomenon that when we are sitting in a meeting with a client group and A puts B down in some even slight way, we can predict that there will be destructive consequences. If we have the permission of the group to lead the meeting, we can usually intervene, repair the damage, and prevent the destructive consequences.

We have had at different times on our staff two skilled sensitivity-group trainers. Each explained to me that the problem is one of lack of trust and not inability to level with each other. We experimented with fourteen different groups who had been through extensive sensitivity training (two weeks). They tended to be more open and outspoken in their put downs of each other and also more open and outspoken in their revenge reactions. Each of our National Training Laboratory (NTL) trainers became persuaded that learning to level is not the answer to this problem.

This pervasive sensitivity to hurt feelings is real. We see clear evidence of it among top, middle, and lower level executives as well as among underprivileged young people and blue collar workers. The reason I consider it a serious problem is that it appears in our culture wherever

I have had a chance to observe. But it is not generally visible. Few people believe it is a real factor until they have observed a number of instances on tape.

It is even more alarming because most of us in our culture appear to be programmed to diminish our fellows whenever we can. There are two behaviors which are indicative of the faulty assumptions that decrease creativity. The first assumption is that as a mature person I seldom get my feelings hurt. The second is that my intentions toward other people are generally fair and friendly. Given these assumptions, I had a lot of trouble explaining the way people repeatedly acted to reduce speculation in meetings. It is interesting to turn those assumptions around and lead a meeting where the leader does not permit people to act in any way to hurt the feelings of anyone and insists that each member is fair (if not friendly) to ideas and people. The contrast between this and a traditional, chaired meeting is startling. In both satisfaction and accomplishment, the chaired meeting tends to be far less productive. I have not been able to validate this in any scientifically acceptable way. Any member of our professional staff can demonstrate it. Businessmen and faculty members who know our process are nearly all persuaded of its validity in fact.

The symptoms of aggressiveness and hurt were clear to me, and I needed some hypotheses to help me understand them. I decided that the aggressive, combative behavior could be explained by the competitiveness that is such an important part of our culture. I believe that each of us views his own relationships with others as generally helpful and cooperative. At a deeper level, perhaps largely below our awareness, we feel in a win-lose competition with each of those around us. For example, I ask a couple of friends for help on a problem. X gives me an idea. My rational self says "Good; here is some possible help." But another element of self feels the threat of being a loser. This threatened self undertakes a defensive (aggressive) action. This would partly explain why so often we hear, "Yes, that's a good idea but . . ." even when the idea has much going for it.

Whenever I hear someone put another person in a win-lose position, I know that there is going to be a bad outcome for someone—and later a get-even action. We have all learned subtle ways of competing and also getting even, ways that are perfectly acceptable in our culture. A few examples are: disagreeing, nitpicking, sulking, asking the penetrating question, questioning assumptions, correcting, and so on. In every situation there is a rationalization for the behavior, yet if it is studied in context there is evidence of a nonrational motive. Recently a participant, Y, in a meeting I was videotaping, crossed his arms and closed his eyes for about five minutes. Some earlier actions of his suggested that he was sulking. In any case, it was a fairly gross nonverbal signal. When we were examining the tape, I stopped it on a view of Y apparently asleep. "What is happening here?" I asked.

There was a burst of laughter. Someone said, "Y is making a commentary on our meeting."

"Not at all," said Y, "I was meditating."

The victim of the win-lose or competitive posture is always speculation, and therefore idea production and problem solving. When one speculates he becomes vulnerable. It is too easy to make him look like a loser.

The problem of competition proved complex, and I tried a number of hypotheses to make it visible so people could deal with it. One line of thought was: competition in meetings is mostly out of one's awareness. By being aware that one may slip into it, one can avoid it. Further, it is a mistake to assume that because Z has an idea I am losing. Both of these were of some use, but were not entirely satisfying. For example, as some middle managers pointed out, they really *are* competing with each other for promotion. An answer I used was that one will probably get more promotions by putting oneself up than by putting others down. This made some sense, but, like an exhortation, it was not operational.

One of the tantalizing elements of this problem was that in Problem Laboratories (led by our staff) and with course groups after three days (of the five) we routinely develop noncompetitive climates. The acceleration in the production and use of ideas is quite exciting. Participants are persuaded that the noncompetitive climate is splendidly productive. The problem is: how to implement this climate back home on the job.

A second hypothesis, useful to me for a while, was that a person normally uses two strategies in his interactions with others (and himself). One strategy is aimed at getting ideas, the other strategy is aimed at getting and maintaining power over a situation. Going back to the flat tire example, the idea-getting strategy might have been one called looking for parallels. One thinks, "We want the tire off the ground. Where have I seen tires off the ground without a jack?" I remember a car up on blocks. I see some ice "blocks." The strategy produces an idea. When my friend presents the idea to me, I can join him in idea-getting strategies or I can go into a power strategy. If I join to get ideas and solve the problem, my response might be, "OK, let's figure a way to get the car up on the ice." If I go into a power mode my response is quite different. I make judgments and point out flaws.

This hypothesis has been particularly useful in understanding that there are real differences and that few of us are aware of slipping from one mode to the other. Confusion about this has serious consequences.

A third line of thought I experimented with is the redefinition of an idea. If we could make explicit the true nature of an idea, we could enjoy each other's ideas much as we appreciate a joke. (Koestler [1964] establishes a close connection between an idea and a joke in *The Act of Creation*.) I believe there is some good in this way of thinking. An idea is too

often treated like a monolithic, final, unalterable proposal. We believe we must accept it or reject it. In reality I believe an idea is more like a brief, tentative, position paper. It is a compressed communication device I use to tell you in an open way where I am in relation to the problem we are working on. It is more akin to an expression of taste than to a fact. A yes or no is not appropriate because there are too many implications to even the simplest idea. If we see an idea as a communication device, it changes our value system surrounding ideas. For example, in order for my idea to be successful, it must help you to learn. My notion here was to change the perception of an idea so that it could not threaten anyone with losing.

In 1969 I read Dr. Harris's *I'm OK, You're OK* (1969). As a result I attended some Transactional Analysis workshops, and by 1970 we had a full-time professional doing TA workshops and working with us on synectics developments. It appeared to me that many of the hypotheses of transactional analysis could be used to understand the problems of aggression, competition, and hurt with which I was having such difficulty. "Transactional Analysis, compared to psychoanalysis, puts less emphasis on probing the dark places of the psyche and more emphasis on understanding the personality as it reveals itself in social situations, or transactions" (Lamott, 1972).

With our videotape instant replays, this was exactly what we were doing: analyzing transactions. Our purpose, rather than therapeutic, was to help people transact in ways that would foster their own creativity and that of others. TA looks at transactions to learn what is going on within the transactors.

Transactional Analysis was originated by Dr. Eric Berne (1966) and draws heavily on the innovative thinking of Dr. Harry Stack Sullivan (1953). Berne believed that each of us has some deeply ingrained assumptions about himself and that these continually affect the way we behave toward ourselves and others. These assumptions about self, comparable to Sullivan's idea of self-concept, start to develop when we are born. "The nature of a child's self-concept will be determined by the balance of approval and disapproval in his existence" (Elkind, 1972). Berne and his followers believe that self-concept need not be static. Dr. Robert and Mary Goulding with their redecision theory (in Kaplan and Sager, eds., 1972) hold that everyone can reexamine the early decisions made at two to ten years of age upon which self-concept largely depends and remake those decisions in the present when one has more realistic data. For example, a decision made at three in an effort to comply with mixed signals from parents might be a generalized "Try hard but don't make it." Since this decision is an operating guide for the young person, it has an obvious effect on his competence and on his accomplishments—and on his self-concept. The Gouldings believe that such a person can, by documenting

the effects of that early decision, discover what it is and change it. This changes his transactions with himself and others and allows him to work toward accomplishments and a healthier self-concept.

Basically Berne says that each of us is capable of displaying three ego states—Parent, Adult, and Child (P, A, C)—in our dealings with other people as well as in our internal dialogues. The Parent in us tends to consist of directives we received while we were young—from 0 to 10 years old or so. The directives are of two kinds. Some are negatives and forbidding. “See, you have done it wrong again.” The others are nurturing and supportive. “Good boy. I can always depend on you.” The Adult in us tends to be reality-oriented and is developed as we grow up. It is the decider and the doer in us. It is influenced overtly by the P in us and less obviously but just as strongly by the C. The Child is our feeling both loving and rebellious—also our sense of fun, enjoyment, and exploration. There are several books (e.g., James and Jongeward, 1971) that give a clear and complete explanation of TA. I introduce this brief discussion above as background to help you understand how it has been useful to me.

We have worked with people of quite diverse backgrounds. Our objective was usually to help them learn creative problem solving. We have had courses for black high school drop-outs, blue collar workers, ministers and priests (many of whom tend to leave the problem solving to God), as well as with managers of every level. I am continually looking for patterns that might help me explain what I see happening. A pattern that is emerging (which TA helped me see) is a basic difference between the haves and the have nots in our culture. There is wide agreement among transactional analysts that nearly all of us as children decide we are not OK. I believe that the socialization or civilizing process used by parents has perhaps 80 percent negative to 20 percent positive input. These figures are un-supportable, but the proportion of negative to positive is high. I imagine myself as a three or four year old always being corrected and told not to do this or that (and my parents were about average). At some point I say, “Something is *wrong* with me. I am obviously not living up to specs. My parents, who know everything, would not have unreasonable specs. So it must be me.”

I believe nearly everyone goes through some experience like this. A very depressing business.

At five or six I go out in the world to kindergarten and first grade and so on. I continue to get put down by my teachers and also by my peers because that is the only way we know how to act. An eye-opening experiment is to watch and listen to a group of eight to ten year olds playing an unsupervised game of baseball or football. The murderous tones, vituperation, naked anger you see is their replay of the Parent in their heads. That is the Parent with whom they carry on internal dialogues. It gives one pause.

However, the game does go on and in school and at play and in church and Sunday school some fascinating things happen. I learn by observing (no one explicitly tells me this) that I live up to specs about as well as the rest. I begin to have success experiences. I pass into third grade. I get some Bs. I get elected to bring the milk in for the class. I don't really believe this data until there is a lot of it—ten or twelve years of success experiences—and I begin to believe that I am probably capable. I can accomplish things. When I get a job I get things done. I am one of the fortunates and my cross section looks like this:

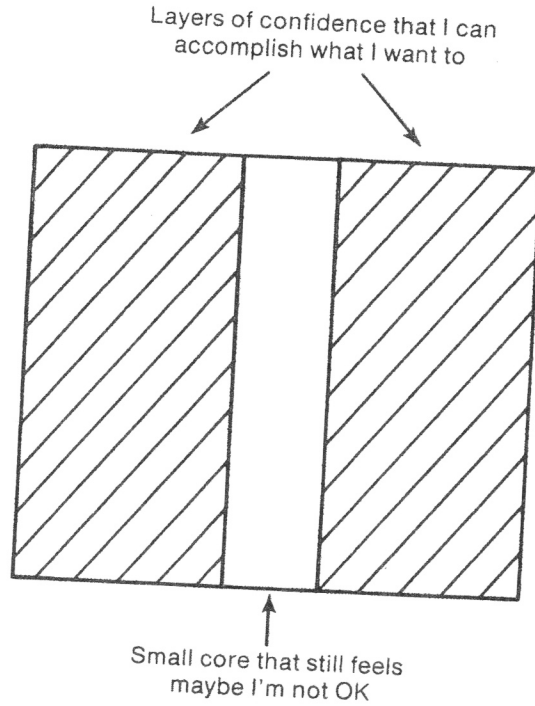


FIGURE 11.1.

The unfortunates have the same early experiences, but because they are poor or because their parents are particularly tough they don't have the success experiences in enough quantity to give them confidence. Their cross section looks more like Figure 11.2 (see next page).

The effect of these cross sections on behavior are considerable. Any action that I perceive diminishing me reverberates in that core of me that believes maybe I'm not OK. I feel it as a threat to my self-esteem. I feel anxious and I react with defensive maneuvers (from Sullivan). A very small input results in a disproportionate output. While the output mas-

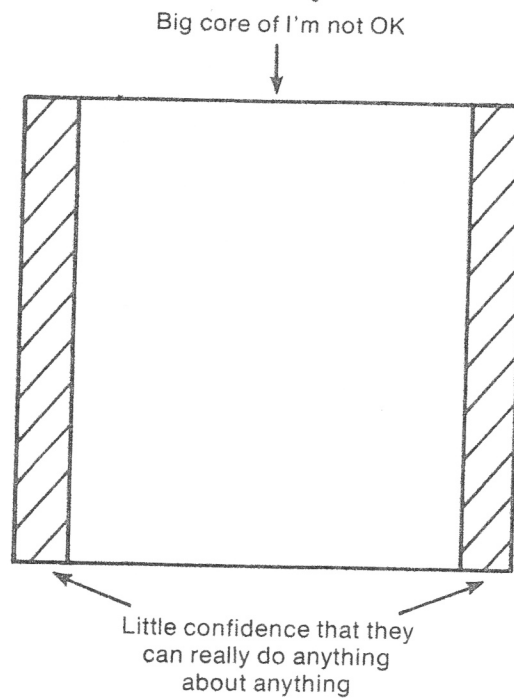


FIGURE 11.2.

querades as Adult it will actually be from my Child or my Parent. For example:

My friend, Joe, and I are meeting to have lunch together.

Me: "Joe, let's go to Chez Jacques."

Joe: "The food there is terrible. Let's go somewhere else."

If I am feeling perfectly OK I can perceive this as an Adult-to-Adult exchange and we can problem solve about lunch from there. If, however, I am not feeling OK, I can perceive Joe's words as meaning: "George, you are stupid about food." I then go into a defensive maneuver to avoid the threat to my self-esteem. One way that may appear to help is to diminish Joe. "You don't know what you are talking about." Another is to establish Chez Jacques' food as excellent. Neither of these will really make me feel OK, but I don't know that.

What is important here is to recognize that there is a continuing, more or less blind struggle to feel OK, to avoid the anxiety when one's self is threatened. TA makes visible some of the dynamics.

For example, if Joe were knowledgeable about TA and synectics he would know that in TA terms his statement "The food there is terrible."



is sweepingly judgmental and Parental. From synectics he would know that his response to my suggestion implies that it has no value. To avoid the possibility of misunderstanding he might say, "Jacques is a nice guy and the place is right around the corner [your suggestion, George, has valuable implication]. I don't like the food there [he's speaking for himself, not the whole world]."

I would like now to bring up again the three lines of thought that I have been pursuing in a rather scattered way since 1951. I am fascinated by the interplay between three human needs: the need to produce possible solutions to fit a given situation—that is, to accomplish objectives; the need to do this in some understandable, repeatable way—that is, to believe in one's competence; the need to be in touch with one's own nonlogical urgings, feelings, and anxieties.

The work we have done in creative problem solving and the examination of transactions between people, together with the remarkable work of Sullivan, Berne, the Gouldings, and Harris that has produced TA suggest a coherent hypothesis about cooperative accomplishment.

### *Hypotheses*

Each person's most fundamental enterprise is the development, enhancement, and protection of his or her self-concept.

One's self-concept has some stability. It is gradually developed and changed through transactions with other persons, and it remains dependent to a large extent on the reflected appraisals of other persons.

Self-esteem is the unstable component of self-concept.

Threats to self or self-esteem are experienced as anxiety and result in defensive maneuvers.

*To the degree that one is able to create a climate that (1) makes stimulating demands without threat and (2) explicitly appreciates process (e.g., wishing, imaging), those in the climate including oneself will flourish and grow as problem-solvers, learners, and accomplishers.*

TA and Synectics provide concrete behavioral tools to establish such a climate. They are appropriate for use with family, friends, co-workers—in virtually any encounter with anyone. They are particularly valuable practiced on oneself.

Further, the tools are realistic. They make possible delegation, cooperation, and decision making without expedient use of power over others and the consequent usurping of autonomy and threat to self.

This has implications for nearly every activity that one person undertakes with another—from learning and teaching, to marriage, to work, to inventing a new product.

Below are some examples of a mode of operating to effect this climate. Creating a solution to a problem is, I believe, exactly like learning. Here is a step-by-step reconstruction of solving a problem.

My wife, Mardi, enjoyed baking bread. I sometimes helped her knead it, a boring job. One morning she said, "I wish I could get the dough to knead itself when I tell it to."

A picture formed in my mind's eye (we call this imaging). The dough in my picture was having a convulsion. A second image formed of an old-fashioned package of white margarine being kneaded in its plastic bag with the yellow color pellet. I put that image aside for the moment and said, "How can we make the dough laugh itself into being kneaded?"

Mardi heard me say "lap" instead of "laugh" and the image that formed in her mind was of a wave lapping on the beach. When she said that, I could not see the connection and so said, "Keep talking about the wave and how it will help."

"It tumbles over and over on itself and so it would be kneaded."

I pictured the dough in a wave being tumbled.

Mardi said, "I was thinking of the dough as the wave."

I put aside my dough in a wave picture and saw the dough tumbling over itself like a breaker. I described my image of the breaker.

"How could we get it to tumble over like that?" I said.

Mardi imaged the breaker curling over and tumbling down. The image suddenly changed to sneakers tumbling and thumping (like she thumped the dough on the counter?) in the clothes dryer. The ridges in the rotating drum carry the sneakers up the wall and drop them back to the bottom. In her image she changed the sneakers to dough. She said, "I could put the dough in the dryer and let *it* do the kneading."

"Yes! And put it in a plastic bag so it won't spread flour."

"And I can turn it to no heat so the dough won't cook."

(The possible solution, when tested, worked. It is even better to put the dough in a cloth bag within the plastic bag.)

Then I asked Mardi where she got her wave image from. How did it connect with "laugh." She said, "Oh, I thought you said 'lap.'"

Misunderstandings like this happen far too often, it has seemed to me, for them not to be purposeful. There are many ways to be purposeful in addition to misunderstanding. The important process point here is the willingness to pursue temporarily *any* line of speculation however unconnected it seems to be.

Earlier I mentioned some remarkable personal powers of which we are unaware. One example is the way we somehow learn to make damaging, limited assumptions about our power to recall useful things from our past experiences. The same applies to our power of observation. These assumptions are self-fulfilling prophecies. Because we do not trust our recall and

our abilities to "read" a situation or understand a complex problem, we cannot. Imaging and wishing are tools to help you tap your recall.

There is a vast store of experience, feeling, knowledge, and intuition in each of us. We begin to pack it in as soon as we are born. Much more of it than we are aware of is available. With a problem in mind, when one is loose—relaxedly stimulated—and letting the images happen as of their own volition, one's mind chooses interestingly and purposefully. The connections won't always be clear nor always valid. They will always be interesting. Delightful even. One of the important benefits of reaching into one's self for these riches is that it increases one's self-esteem.

Imaging is as natural as breathing. A child images long before talking. He also learns wishing very early. Just as imaging helps you tap your vast storehouse of knowledge and experience, so does wishing help you become focused and purposeful and positive. Imaging and wishing are the two most basic tools of problem solving and, therefore, I believe, of learning.

Dr. Sullivan holds that "the child's sense of self evolves gradually during the first year of life, primarily as a consequence of the ministrations of the person who takes care of the child. If this caretaker is loving, comforting, and meets the infantile needs, the infant has a generalized feeling of "good me." On the other hand, if the caretaker is anxious, tense, and rejecting, this too is communicated to the infant, who experiences a generalized feeling of 'bad me'" (Elkind, 1972).

I believe the generalized feeling of "good me" comes to the child, partly at least, through his or her own efforts, and these efforts consist of problem solving or learning. For example, I can imagine myself at three weeks or a month feeling hungry, wishing a bottle (or breast) would appear. I image it. I wiggle for it. That does not work. I yell for it. That doesn't work. I cry for it. That works. I enjoy not only the bottle but the fact that I learned a way of getting it—solved a problem. This need—to learn, to solve problems, to accomplish—never leaves us. One's sense of "good me" depends on it and, of course, so does self-esteem.

Imagine the sense of self and self-esteem a child gets from learning the incredible art of walking and later talking. What happens to this enormous talent for problem solving? A parallel to what happens is described in Dr. Elkind's (1972) article about Sullivan. "If, for whatever reason, a child in our society is not reading by the end of first grade, he already begins to feel that he is a 'flop' in life. More and more, reading comes to be associated with the anticipation of negative self-appraisals. It is not long before anything connected with reading arouses anxiety and, to protect the self, reading is avoided. . . . In helping such children, the major task is not to teach them to read but to refurbish their self-concept."

In the case of wishing and imaging the extinguishing mechanism is much the same. Here is an example of imaging to acquire information

or to learn about an idea. We were working on a child-proof package for poison household liquids.

TOM: "I wish we could teach a poison bottle to be invisible to a child and visible only to a grown-up."

HARRY: "That gives me an idea."

LEADER: "Let's hear it, Harry."

HARRY DESCRIBING HIS IDEA  
"You know those snap-up bottles?"

MY IMAGING  
At this point I have very little data from Harry. So most of my image comes from my own store of information and imagination. I picture a bottle that bends in the middle and snaps up

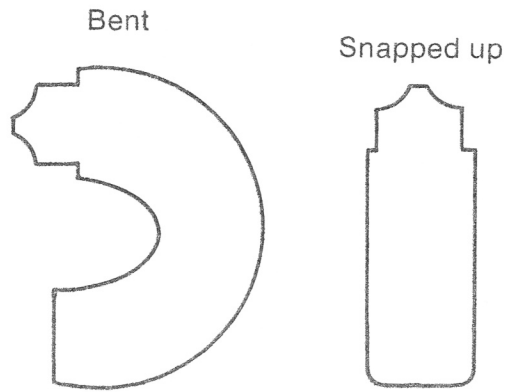


FIGURE 11.3.

"It has a sort of thing that goes in and out."

and my picture instantly changes to a bottle with an unrolling party favor I believe is called a dragon.

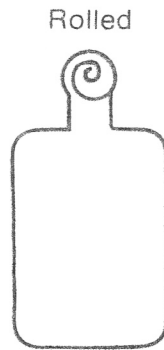


FIGURE 11.4.

"When it is in, it is closed. When out it is open."

When I squeeze the bottle the dragon unrolls.



Squeezed and Unrolled

FIGURE 11.5.

"They use them on Elmer's glue and Ivory liquid detergent."

I image the Ivory bottle that Harry had in mind.

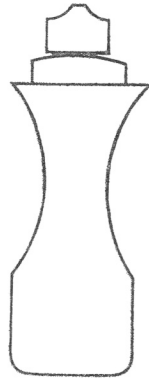


FIGURE 11.6.

"Well, let's control that opening not from the top but from some place invisible to the kid."

I image my squeeze activating Harry's closure.

GEORGE: "I think I know a way to do what Harry wants to do."

LEADER: "Good. What have you got?"

GEORGE: "We can mold ridges into the side of the plastic bottle. They are too stiff for a kid to press together but an adult can. When she squeezes, that pushes the snap top up and it is open."

This idea still needed help and the other members of the group used their imaging to build the idea to acceptability.

As the idea of imaging evolved and became more and more useful to us, I questioned people in both courses and Problem Laboratories. During the initial experiment when the group is working on a problem we give them, there is always at least one explanation of an idea that brings images to mind. I would replay one of these, stopping the tape after a few words to ask if anyone had formed a mental image. Usually one in eight has started to (or will admit it).

I play a little more of the tape and ask if anyone else has begun to see a picture of the idea in his mind's eye. Another of the eight says yes. When the whole incident is played, perhaps three to four of the eight will talk about their images. The others look puzzled.

When the first person says he has started to image, I ask him to describe his image or picture. Almost invariably he says, "Well, my image was wrong but what came to mind was . . ."

In many other experiments in helping people to relearn to image, there is reluctance to form images until the person is reassured that there is no right or wrong to it. Most young (6 to 8) children love to be asked the same sort of questions, and they give wonderfully imaginative, detailed descriptions of their images.

I believe that what happens is that as a child listens and images, the early pictures like my bent bottle prove to be off target. He begins to make judgments about his wrongness. When he is "wrong" he makes a negative self-appraisal. Before long he is avoiding imaging much like the slow reader avoids reading. This does not mean imaging stops. I believe it continues but below awareness, and the only image he permits himself to "see" is the correct one. You can see how this impoverishes him. If I had repressed my first three images in the poison bottle example, I would simply have understood the snap-up closure. As it was, I was able to add to it from my image material.

Wishing, which is so intimately entangled with imaging that often it is hard to know which comes first, suffers an even worse fate. It appears that people stop wishing except in daydreams, and even daydreaming is in bad repute. This is unfortunate because a wish is an unfettered, speculative way to define an objective. It was a result of seeing the power of wishing to lead to new perceptions and ideas that I began to question the wisdom of the saying, "When a problem is clearly defined it is 90 percent solved." Because a wish can make free with reality, it gives license to think without debilitating concerns about practicality. Neither of the wishes in my examples would be admissible into regular, serious meetings. What do you mean, "have the dough knead itself?" How can you teach a bottle anything—let alone how to be invisible?

Yet, one of the reasons children learn and problem solve at such fantastic

rates from 0-3 is that they are relatively free to wish and image in seemingly irresponsible ways. What the wishing and imaging hypotheses suggest is a much more participative and less rigorous approach to teaching children, one that would explicitly value their imaging and wishing capabilities.

Adults, as each learns to value and use his images even though "wrong" and rediscovers how to wish for outrageously satisfying outcomes, become better problem solvers and learners. At the same time every such episode builds a stronger self-concept.

In addition to wishing and imaging, there are other synectics devices that increase the probability of success and cooperation. The most important of these is the Itemized Response. Consider the following example.

The finance committee of a graduate school of business was having a synectics session to discover some new ways to get financial support for French students from people in France.

SAM: "Let's run a lottery and the winner gets a French business school graduate."  
(laughter)

(In a traditional meeting it is probable that this idea would be explored no further. In a synectics meeting the leader sees to it that every idea, no matter how seemingly outrageous, is explored with a presumption of value.)

LEADER: "Sounds like an idea. Tom (Client—the person with the problem), do you understand what Sam is proposing?"

TOM: "Yes, I understand it."

LEADER: "OK, what is useful about this idea?"

TOM: "It would raise money."

LEADER: "Right. What else is going for it?"

TOM: "It is more fun than simply being dunned. Also you have at least a chance of getting a return on your money. Another thing that suddenly occurs to me is that it would attract new people. We only reach our alumni in France now. If we run a lottery, we'll get wider participation in the business community, and the amount from each could be less."

LEADER: "That is a lot on the plus side. Now are there any elements that need more of our work? Will you word these as wishes?"

TOM: "I wish we did not have to promise an MBA body as the prize."

LEADER: "Anybody help with this?"

JOE: "Never mind his body, just promise his mind."

LEADER: "Would you say more about what you are thinking, Joe?"

JOE: "I was really just kidding."

DON: "I got an idea from that. When you said 'mind,' Joe, I thought that really is what they want. How about promising consulting time?"

Out of this starting idea developed a possible solution roughly as follows: one or more consulting firms sponsor the lottery and winners from

the business community get consulting services at special rates. The sponsors hire the French MBA candidates for summer jobs and presumably would have an inside track for hiring them on graduation.

We developed the Itemized Response originally to avoid the danger of the idea offerer feeling put down and thus going into defensive maneuvers. It has proved to have values far beyond that. In form, Itemized Response is simple. The client (the person who will implement the possible solution) thinks of the idea not as a simple, monolithic thing. He thinks of it as a multiplicity of implications.



FIGURE 11.7.

He exercises his imagination to multiply the useful and acceptable implications and he talks *first* about them. A skilled person discovers unexpected acceptables as Tom did. Next he turns his attention to the implications that need more work and he picks the toughest one. He turns it into a wish. The team works to solve it. If successful, the client brings out any other points that need more work. If the team is not successful the idea does not qualify as a possible solution and is put aside with the understanding that some later thinking may make it acceptable as a possible solution.

I have seen the Itemized Response repeatedly help groups take beginning ideas that would traditionally be ignored or treated as jokes and work them into solid, practical possible solutions—to the great delight of the whole team. Five years of experience with treating ideas this way has convinced me that a negative response to an idea is a bad habit and, more seriously, a defensive maneuver reflecting anxiety about self and self-esteem. It has had consequences for both the originator of the idea and the negator. An Itemized Response conveys the important information in a way that builds the self-esteem of both parties.

If one examines the transactions in synectics, he will find that the mechanisms like wishing, imaging, and Itemized Response are designed (in P-A-C terms) to keep the members in their creative Child and Adult, although we were unaware of P-A-C when we arrived at the mechanisms. They were simply something that worked.



Another synectics concept that has proven valuable in organizations to make the use of power less destructive to self-concept is that of clientship. We think of clientship in two contexts. One is that of a meeting, which I have already described. I should add that in some meeting cases the client is multiple. An extreme example is when everyone in the meeting has a stake in the possible solution selected. One way we handle this is to rotate the clientship during the meeting. When ideas are evaluated, we ask everyone to join in the Itemized Response. In effect, no idea is accepted as a possible solution until implications that are unacceptable to any member have been overcome.

The other context in which we use clientship is in organizations. We see a marriage or a family as an organization as well as companies and institutions. Here the governing condition is that the person who is responsible for getting the task done and is closest to the front line has clientship. Thus, in a meeting of a company executive committee which includes the president, the marketing vice-president, the sales vice-president, the production vice-president, and the research vice-president, if the problem has to do with production, the production vice-president is the primary client. This concept is akin to delegation and management by objectives, but it has basic assumptions that are different and are made explicit that bear on self-concept.

These assumptions are:

(1) Whenever I turn over clientship to a subordinate there is an automatic predisposition for me to be Parental (judgmental authoritarian) when talking with him or reviewing his progress. There is the same predisposition on his part to be Child (rebellious, resentful).

(2) When I turn over clientship to a subordinate he cannot, by definition, do the job as I want it done because he is not me. In addition, from his point of view I will not treat him the way he wishes I would because I am not him.

(3) Since I am accountable for the way he executes his clientship, it is necessary for us to devise a method of working together that will allow me to know about and where possible to help him with his activities.

It is clear that this complex relationship has a great built-in potential for threats to the self of both the manager and the subordinate. At this stage in my knowledge the best way to handle the turning over of clientship is to explicitly discuss these three assumptions and problem solve together. Some joint wishes (which we translate into How To's) generally are:

MANAGER: "How can I know by E.S.P. when my thinking will be useful to you?"

SUBORDINATE: "How can I take advantage of your experience without having you dominate me?"

MANAGER: "How can I feel comfortable letting you make your own decisions when I am accountable for them?"

SUBORDINATE: "How can I develop in my own way and do the job better than it has ever been done?"

MANAGER: "How can I enjoy your success without feeling competitive and threatened?"

SUBORDINATE: "How can I come to you when I am in trouble without losing stature and without your taking over?"

Out of this session comes an explicit contract between these two people. It is subject to modification whenever the needs of either change. An example of such a contract is:

(1) The words "need a meeting" will be a signal that one of us perceives a problem in this clientship. It also means that we will problem solve rather than dictate.

(2) Either of us can call a meeting.

(3) The subordinate is always the client unless the problem is clearly the manager's and this will be determined by the subordinate.

(4) Itemized Response will be used to make certain that any idea is thoroughly and carefully considered.

(5) Decisions about this clientship will be made by the subordinate.

The words of a contract are more symbolic than definitive. What makes such an arrangement work is the determination on both sides to value each other. By bringing out in the open their recognition of the built-in drawbacks and making their wishes explicit, the two increase the probability that they will cooperatively accomplish and grow in their jobs. An example will help clarify how this approach can work.

In the subject company the advertising manager reports to the sales manager. The sales manager was routinely checking an advertisement aimed at consumers. He believed that the headline might be misinterpreted by the trade.

SALES MGR.: "I need a meeting on this advertisement."

ADV. MGR.: "OK, let's go."

SALES MGR.: "My wish is 'How retain the effectiveness of this advertisement without adverse effect on the trade?' Would you like me to Itemize to the ad as it is?"

ADV. MGR.: "Yes, and I will listen for wishes."

SALES MGR.: "The ad strongly carries out our policy to increase winter usage. The illustration and the headline offer a clear user benefit, and the picture itself is really a nice job. The copy supports the claim and is clear. My wish is 'How to keep the trade from feeling that we are trying to load them up in the off season?'"

ADV. MGR.: "I see what you mean. It is in the headline. I had not thought it came across that way, and now I'll need to think some more about it."

SALES MGR.: "Do you want to problem solve on it?"

ADV. MGR.: "Thanks, no, not right now. I'd like to bring the agency into it. You are welcome to come to that meeting, though."

SALES MGR.: "If you'll let me know, I'll see if I can."

In the meeting with the agency, clientship shifted to the agency people. They are charged with writing the advertising. The agency chose to rewrite the headline on the spot and developed four alternative new headlines. Three of these survived the Itemized Response—that is, three of them were acceptable without concerns to the advertising manager or the sales manager. The advertising agency then decided which of the three to use.

The important element here is that traditionally, from the hierarchical view, the most powerful people would make the decision and quite probably word the headline. In the clientship model above, the alternatives must be acceptable to the people accountable, but the decisions are made by the person who does the actual work.

The first response of most managers to the above clientship system tends to be an unitemized, "For God's sake! Life is too short!" I sympathize. This procedure seems, and sometimes is, cumbersome and also confusing. As two people work with it, their skills increase and it becomes less so. I believe that better, more streamlined procedures will be invented, and in the meantime it is a useful way to help keep reality out in the open where it can be dealt with.

The accounting side of an organization presents an interesting parallel to the human side. Most accounting procedures are elaborate, complex, and effective. Nearly everyone accepts their importance and learns to conform to their necessary rules. In contrast, the human relationships in an organization are governed by power which is applied using the seat-of-the-pants judgment. To compound the possibility of misunderstanding, each manager operates with his own set of assumptions which are seldom articulated to his subordinates or even examined by himself. The cost in energy and time spent in defensive maneuvering has to be very high.

Earlier I said that I am concerned about the destructiveness to self of many of our habitual modes of transacting with others. Because most of us are unaware of our impact on other people, we feel no need to change. We are somewhat more aware of the impact of others on ourselves, but we are conditioned not to admit even to ourselves the extent of the threat to self. It seems weak to do so and we are oriented from birth to becoming powerful. "The full development of personality along the lines of security (avoidance of anxiety caused by threat to self) is chiefly founded on the infant's discovery of his powerlessness to achieve . . . with the tools . . . at his disposal." Unfortunately, our models of the acquisition and use of power are nearly all authoritarian. This leads to a difficult confusion. To develop a healthy self-concept I must manifest power. Power in this sense is the ability to accomplish. I equate this with power over other people. There is enough truth to this equation—that power over other people means I have the power to accomplish (and therefore have a healthy self-concept)—that it is extremely hard to see that this is not the only truth. In fact, exercising power over people has side-effects that are incalculable because the cause and effect is seldom visible. In our experimental en-

vironment we have been able to trace some of the effects of power strategies. We have also experienced the remarkable effect of careful power sharing.

This leads me to believe that it is vitally important that people in general be given education in how to interact with others in more rewarding ways. There is little doubt that education is needed: "Dr. Paul [psychiatrist, Harvard University] observes that very few human beings in our culture have . . . an objective consciousness-of-self. All people live under the mistaken belief that they are fully conscious and aware of themselves. This in spite of the fact that hardly anyone knows how his speech sounds to others, how his behavior affects others, what he looks like to others, and so forth" (Lederer, 1973).

The pay-off from becoming skillful in power sharing can be very great for the person who does so. To a much greater degree than most of us know, our own self-concepts depend upon the people we interact with. Sullivan holds that self-concept is "entirely interpersonal in origin and is gradually elaborated out of the reflected appraisals of other persons" (1953). My observations suggest to me that most people operate according to the principle of: "Don't get mad, get even." If I am skillful in my power sharing and in my transaction, the people I interact with have less need to "get even." Even more important is the posture I internalize. Instead of a predisposition to perceive interactions as threats to my power, I tend to see them as presentations of problems that invite me to *use* my creative power to help.

To summarize, in this time when we are becoming more aware of the importance of the human equation in family and business life, it is useful to attend to the fundamental enterprise in the forefront of everyone's mind—the development, enhancement, and protection of one's own self-concept.

By using the explicit tools of Transactional Analysis and those of synectics one can develop an "objective consciousness-of-self" and, therefore, change and become a person for whom it is possible to share power without in any way being powerless. The consequences of this self-interested sharing are enormously rewarding in increased capacity to be creative, to learn, to grow; in short, to cooperatively accomplish. And from accomplishment comes success in the enterprise dearest to each of us: a healthy and continually enlarging self-concept.

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