

TRANSACTIONAL ANALYSIS

The Games People Play

People often live their lives by consistently and predictably playing out identifiable games in their inner and interpersonal relationships. They play games to avoid reality, conceal ulterior motives, rationalize their reactive behavior or to avoid the responsibility of active participation in life situations. Some of the more common games are:

Now I've Got You, You Son-of-a Bitch (NIGYSOB)

Used to justify anger that has built up over an extended time period. The aggressor (usually unconscious) identifies their victim, sets up a trap and springs it as a form of getting even or gaining perceived power.

Ain' t It Awful

Person overtly expresses distress, but it is covertly gratified at the prospect of the satisfaction they can wring from their misfortune.

Blemish

Person seeks to find the blemish or weakness in another or themselves. They exploit others around the discovered blemish from an authoritarian posture. In themselves, it is used for negative reinforcement for inability to perform.

Why Don't you... Yes, But

Played out as a person presents a problem while others present solutions — each beginning with “Why don’t you...?” followed by the objection, “Yes, but...”. The payoff is the silence or masked objection when the solution giver has exhausted their data bank of solutions. This gives the “Yes, but” player evidence that they have won by demonstrating that it is the other person who is inadequate.

If It Weren't For You

Common games played between spouses and business people as a means to avoid responsibility for individual decisions.

Debtor

Often becomes a script.., a life-time plan. Used as a means to create purpose in life. Reaching the top often leaves the player feeling depressed and aimless. It is the struggle to get there that provides purpose.

Look What You Made Me Do

Played by someone who is feeling hurt and angry, who becomes engrossed in an

activity which tends to isolate them from people. When interrupted, an accident or error occurs. Player then turns on the intruder. Also used to direct cause or failure in a task the player is angry about having to do or does not know exactly how to do.

Harried, Hurried, Hassled, Hustled

Often played out by the harried housewife or business person whose position requires he/she be proficient in 10 or 12 different occupations or roles: mother, housemaid, provider, achiever, etc. All are conflicting and *fatiguing*. He/she takes on more and even asks for more, agreeing with other persons' criticisms and accepting all demands from them. Eventually, he/she collapses, letting down everyone. His/her self-reproach adds to his/her misery. The players act out of inadequacy and fear of being seen as such.

Let's You and Him Fight

Player maneuvers two others into fighting. They align themselves with the winner. Sometimes, while the two are fighting, they will align with a third party who appears to be above fighting or sees honest competition as a sucker's game.

Wooden Leg

Used to excuse dysfunctional behavior. "What do you expect of a person with a wooden leg?" Often used in statement form, i.e., "I'm a redhead and have a temper", or "I drink because I'm Irish", etc.

Kick Me

Played by people whose social manner invites them to be kicked. If people will not kick them, they will behave more and *more* provocatively until they have exceeded the limits, thereby forcing them to oblige. The jilted. . .the job losers., the rejected.

Conditional Love

I will love you if... then comes the checklist. If you don't accept my checklist in every way, I'll withdraw attention, acceptance, affection. If you do match my checklist, I'll reward you.

Push-Pull

Played by people who have a fear of closeness/intimacy but are also afraid of being left alone. They will entice or seduce the other person to come close, open up and then when the person has opened up, the push-pull player will retreat, leaving the other person confused.

The 3 Roles in Games

All games are played unconsciously when we experience a threat. Game playing serves the purpose of blaming others for our bad feelings/experience. Below are the three role-positions we can play and the characteristics of those roles:

Role	Persecutor	Victim	Rescuer
Triggers	Threat to my ability to get thing done "right"	Threat to my ability to escape responsibility	Threat to my ability to help you.
Initial Emotion	Anger (Guilt)	Hurt (Fear)	Fear (Sadness)
Social Artifice	"I'm just making things right."	"Life shouldn't be this hard. I can't do it alone."	"I'll make you succeed; you can't do it alone"
Initial Belief	I'm OK, You're Not	I'm Not OK, You're OK	I'm, OK, You're Not
Operating Belief	I'm better than you are; I know more than you.	I'm helpless	Only I can help them; they're incapable.
Opening Discount	Others	Self	Others
Originating Position	Critical Parent	Adaptive or rebellious child	Nurturing Parent
Plays With	Victim Child (best if Rebellious Child)	Parent (Persecuting or Rescuing)	Victim Child (best if Adaptive Child)
Payoff Artifice	"I'm better than you, even though it's painful."	"I'm no good, but can't you love me anyway?"	"Why can't you be more like me, and take care of yourself?"
Switched Role	Victim	Persecutor	Victim
Switched Role Payoff	"Don't you care about quality? You think I don't deserve better?"	"Why don't you mind your own business?"	"If you don't want me to help you, then leave me Alone"
Games	NIGYSOB Top Dog FMFY Blemish Withhold/Withdraw Know-it-all Nitpicker	Poor Me/Pity Me Ain't It Awful Wooden Leg Threadbare Hurried/Hassled Let's You and Him Fight Kick Me/Underdog	Why Don't You? I Was Only Trying to Help Here I Come, To Save Day! Sunnyside Up