

Session Three

What's Happening

WARM UP

Begin today with twenty minutes of repetition and then read on.

• • • • •

THE THREE MOMENT GAME

I want to work with you now on this thing called “What’s happening.” To do this, I will give you a game to play, a game which is artificial but is useful in that it will serve as a bridge. A bridge which will take us from where we are now to what is next in the work. Here is how the game works: (Read the following and then I’ll have you do it.)

- Partner A: In your mind, you will make up a provocative question that you really want to ask your partner. Provocative in the greater sense of the word. The more provocative the better. Then, you will ask your partner the question.
- Partner B: You will repeat the question, just as you have been doing in the repetition, immediately. IMMEDIATELY! And allowing yourself to have, as best you can, whatever response you have to the question. Do not *try* to have a response, simply *allow* whatever response you have to the question as you repeat it.
- Partner A: You will then stop for a moment and describe as best you can what you saw happening over there. What did his or her *behavior* “say to you.” Something happened with your partner as he or she repeated the

question and it is your job to say what the behavior was, from *your point of view*. Grapple with this outloud and when you have narrowed it down and made it specific, you will state it to your partner directly. That's the end of the game, three moments. One, the provocative question. Two, the response as you repeat the question. Three, stating to your partner what his or her behavior said to you.

Three moments, you see? Here's an example:

Partner A: Does anyone really love you?

Partner B: Does anyone really love me?(As she repeated the question, her eyes looked away, she smiled and giggled.)

Partner A: (Working outloud...) Well there was a gleam in your eyes, but you didn't want me to see it. Your face got red, it's still red. I think the question really embarrassed you, yeah, that was the strongest thing I got. (He ends with a simple, direct statement to her...) That embarrassed you.

End of game. Now the other person asks the question.

Go ahead now and play the Three Moment Game with each other; each partner ask five questions. Take your time and have fun. Then let's talk about it. Now play, then read on.

• • • • •

Here are some important things to notice and to be aware of as you do this game. See if any relate to what just happened as you played: Sometimes you may find yourself, in the third moment, stating back to your partner what you think the answer to the question was.

Partner A: Do you like cleaning toilets?

Partner B: Do I like cleaning *toilets*?

Partner A: You really don't like cleaning toilets!!!

We are not interested here in the answer to the question. What we are interested in is what the behavior said to you. So in this example your statement to your partner might have been, "That made you ill!" or, "You wanna puke!" or whatever it was to you. If you find yourself stating back what you think the answer to the question was, stop and try to figure out what happened with your partner—*what was in their behavior that gave you the answer.*

Do you find yourself using words like "seem" or "look like" as you tell your partner what their behavior said to you. "*You seem* pissed" or "*You look like* you want to scream." You must take "seem" and "look like" and any other modifiers out of your acting vocabulary. Do you have a hunch why this is important?

You know it's a risk to say what we believe to be true. Horrific consequences are possible! The other person may not like us! Or, she may disagree. Or tell us we are just plain wrong. In life "seem" and "look like" and all the others are buffers, a way out. In our acting we want to take away from ourselves any way out, any safety net and we want to say exactly what we mean. So start catching yourself as you do this and stop, then say it over, tell your partner what you got from their behavior without the buffer word.

**To the Observer: If the partners working use the words "you look like," or "you seem" and so on, stop them and tell them so that they can begin to take those words out of their acting vocabulary.*

You may be finding, at times, that when your partner repeats your question, you think there is nothing to describe because very little is happening. Listen, THERE IS NEVER

NOTHING, THERE IS ALWAYS SOMETHING! (It's like your best friend calling you up late on Saturday night and saying, "Hey, I just went on that blind date you set me up on and boy did that girl have no personality!" That really isn't true is it? Isn't there really no such thing as "no personality?" There is always some kind of personality, you see?) All you can do is *take what you get* and work from that. So if your partner just looks blank to you, you might say, "You're blank" or, "That doesn't do much for you" or whatever words you find.

Did you find this difficult? Are you finding it hard to "read" your partner? It is difficult! We are stretching new muscles here! What I want you to know right now is that what you get from your partner is not simply what you see with your eyes. Sometimes you may get something and not really know how you got it, yet you have a hunch about it. TRUST THAT HUNCH. We'll talk more about this later, now I want you to do some work.

I want you to play the Three Moment Game for twenty minutes. Then read on.

• • • • •

Back to repetition: I now want you to take something away from your repetition. You no longer need to look away from each other to start the repetition. Now, you will sit down facing each other and begin. Who begins? You'll find out as you sit down. Whoever begins, begins. There is nothing to wait for! Whatever is the first thing you get as you sit with each other, is the thing you start with. So the looking away business, to get the first thing, served its purpose and is no longer needed. What I'm saying is, we are through with it so don't do it anymore. (That's very much how this work goes. We are always moving forward, never going back.) **To the*

Observer: Once the repetition has begun, you will call out the partners' names to have them work from a new observation. Now, the repetition will not stop but will be continuous. So, let's say the repetition is under way and you say, "Nancy Go!" Nancy will immediately say whatever she's aware of over on her partner, in that moment, and the repetition continues—the partners working from this new observation. Then, at some point you say, "Bill Go!" Bill will now immediately say what he observes in that moment and onward they go. And so on... You will continue to do this throughout the exercise. Have fun and be tricky (call the same persons name three times in a row, and so forth) so that the partners cannot anticipate the changes.

Now do ten minutes of repetition for each set of partners.

• • • • •

HOMEWORK

Between now and Session Four, meet at least twice with a partner and at each meeting do twenty minutes of the Three Moment Game. Then do ten minutes of repetition.

CLARIFICATION

You may have a question here about how, when you are working on your own, to start from new observations while the repetition is going. Well, as you have just learned, you both sit and one of you will begin. Then, as you are repeating, at some point, the other partner jumps in with their observation and then you both repeat that. Then, at some point, the other partner jumps in with a new observation and so on.

Are you wondering how long you should keep repeating before someone throws in a new observation? Please, don't worry so much about doing this right, remember? Explore! Whenever one of you has a strong impulse to change the repetition because of something you just observed, SAY IT! See where that takes the two of you.

See you at Session Four!

Living is a form of not being sure, not knowing what, next or how. The moment you know how, you begin to die a little. The artist never entirely knows. We guess. We may be wrong, but we take leap after leap in the dark.

—Agnes De Mille

Session Four

Working-Off

WARM UP

Do ten minutes of the Three Moment Game and then read on.

• • • • •

THREE MOMENT GAME: PART II

You know, what we are doing with the Three Moment Game is crucial. We are isolating this thing called behavior. We are zooming in on behavior and strengthening our ability to really see it. (And I don't mean just with the eyes.) As actors, we really must get on intimate terms with the domain of behavior...

Now, I want you to do the Three Moment Game in the following way. Everything stays the same except for the third moment. Now the third moment must happen immediately. So take out the thinking about what you get from your partner's behavior as they repeat the question and tell them what you got immediately! Then, let that third moment lead you into repetition. Here is an example:

Partner A: Do you stuff your face when nobody is looking?

Partner B: Do I stuff my face when nobody is looking?

Partner A: (*immediately!*) Ooh, that struck a nerve!

Partner B: Ooh, that struck a nerve?

Partner A: Ooh, that struck a nerve!

Partner B: Ooh, that struck a nerve.

And so on, and so on...

As you let the third moment lead you into repetition, continue repeating for seven or eight moments only. Do not go on at length as you have done before. OK, you can go ahead now and do the Three Moment Game in this manner for twenty minutes. Work now and then read on.

• • • • •

How does that feel? In the third moment, did you find that sometimes you knew that you got “something?” from your partner but you could not immediately find the words to describe it? That’s OK. If you don’t have the words you must still respond to what you got from your partner, so, respond in some way. You don’t have to say it good and it doesn’t have to make sense! So if your partner screams in delight your immediate response might be “WOWEE WOW WOW WOW!” You see, it is better to respond immediately, than to stop to “Get it right” or “Say it well”, ALWAYS!

I want you to read on into the next section now, as we bring the next element of the repetition into play.

• • • • •

REPETITION: WORKING-OFF

I want you each to try something right now.

Do the Three Moment Game as you have just done it, the third moment leading you into repetition. Now as you are repeating, when you are aware of *something happening over there*, something that you get from your partner, you can say it. I am telling you that now, as you are aware of things happening with your partner, you must respond to

that—which means that the repetition will now have changes in it. Give that a try and once your into the repetition, don't stop for a while. Simply allow the repetition to change when you are aware of something going on with your partner. Do it now one time and then read on.

• • • • •

Going back to the example I used before, here is an example of what we are working toward at this point:

Partner A: Do you stuff your face when nobody is looking?

Partner B: Do I stuff my face when nobody is looking?

Partner A: (*immediately!*) Ooh, that struck a nerve!

Partner B: Ooh, that struck a nerve?

Partner A: Ooh, that struck a nerve!

Partner B: Ooh, that struck a nerve.

Partner A: Yeah, that struck a nerve!

Partner B: Oh you think you got me.

Partner A: Oh I think I got you!

Partner B: Yeah, you think you got me.

Partner A: Yeah, I think I got you!

Partner B: You're proud of that.

Partner A: I am proud of that!

Partner B: You are proud of that?

Partner A: I am proud of that!!

Partner B: You are proud of that??

Partner A: You're angry.

Partner B: I'm angry.

Partner A: You're angry.

Partner B: I am angry!

Partner A: You admitted it.

Partner B: I admitted it.

Partner A: You admitted it.

Partner B: So I admitted it!

Partner A: You are really defensive.

Partner B: I am really defensive.
Partner A: Yeah, you're defensive.
Partner B: I'm not defensive.
Partner A: You are defensive.
Partner B: I'm not defensive.
Partner A: You are defensive.
Partner B: Sticking to your guns, huh.
Partner A: Sticking to my guns, huh?
Partner B: Sticking to your guns!
Partner A: Sticking to my guns?
Partner B: You don't understand.
Partner A: I don't understand.
Partner B: You don't understand.
Partner A: I don't understand!
Partner B: You really mean that.
Partner A: I do mean it.
Partner B: You do mean it.
Partner A: I do mean it.
Partner B: You do mean it.
Partner A: You're really taking me in.
Partner B: I'm really taking you in.

And so on...

What we are getting into now is *working-off*, becoming available to what is happening with our partner and being in response to that. I want you each to do twenty minute of repetition now, working-off your partner.

**To the Observer and All Group Members: You all must now be active participants, working in your seats. You must, at all times, be "working-off" the two partners who are doing repetition, sitting on the edge of your seats improving your own ability to work-off behavior. You must not be sitting back passively waiting to be entertained! The question is, what are you getting from where you are?*

Work now, twenty minutes for each set of partners and then let's talk.

• • • • •

As you did the repetition, did you find periods of working with each other where the repetition went on for a long time and it didn't change? Do not worry about that at this point. It is better for that to be happening right now than to be *looking for the next thing* or *trying* to make the repetition change. You see, this is all very new to you right now, so you will be missing moments, not getting all that is coming your way. Your work, as you keep doing the repetition, is to become more fully available to each moment as it happens.

How do you do that? Let me tell you something, you cannot *MAKE* yourself more available, you can only invite it and encourage it to occur. The repetition is your vehicle. It will take you there if you do the things I have told you. Again, work consistently and "Don't do the repetition, let the repetition do you", which, right now means: Repeat immediately and keep your attention on your partner. In this way you cannot get ahead of yourself and you will *discover* when the repetition must change rather than trying (efforting) to find the things to change it to. Did you find that, at times, you were aware of yourself having thoughts during the repetition? A lot of times these thoughts are the very thing you could have said to your partner but didn't, so you end up thinking about it. For example: You feel that your partner is "taking control" and you hear yourself repeating automatically (like a robot) for a good many moments while in your head you are thinking, "God, he's controlling this thing!"

There are two things to do:

First, you must begin to allow that voice in your head to be expressed to your partner, “God, you’re controlling this thing!” You see, that’s the repetition!

Or second, if the moment has passed, you must bring your attention back to your partner and what is happening *right now*.

So if you’re thinking “What a great smile” and by the time you realize you’ve been thinking this for a while she’s looking very serious, you work-off *right now* “You are very serious.”

Listen, the mind is extremely seductive, so you must bring it to awareness when you are getting lost in thought and out of sheer will, bring yourself back to your partner. It’s hard work now, but ultimately, it will all be like tying your shoes—you won’t have to think about it!

Each person do another ten minutes of repetition and then call it a day.

• • • • •

HOMEWORK

Between now and Session Five, meet at least twice with a partner and at each meeting do one-half hour of repetition as we have just been doing, *working-off your partner*.

“The right art,” cried the master, “is purposeless, aimless! The more obstinately you try to learn how to shoot the arrow for the sake of hitting the goal, the less you will succeed in the one and the further the other will recede. What stands in your way is that you have a much too willful will. You think that what you do not do yourself does not happen.”

“...How can the shot be loosed if I do not do it?” I asked the master.

“It shoots,” he replied.

—From, *Zen In The Art Of Archery*
by Eugen Herrigel

Session Five

Working-Off, Continued

WARM UP

Do a good ten minutes of repetition for each person and then read on.

• • • • •

REALLY TALK / REALLY LISTEN

In the repetition exercise, in all of this work, we must continually be leaving the exercise behind, giving up the “exerciseness” of it. I know this sounds strange when you are working so hard to “get” the exercise. You must keep moving yourself from repetition as some kind of trick you can do, toward your fully *being with* another human being. (Believe me, this work is not about becoming a great repeater!) Our aim, right now, is in you becoming fully available to your partner, authentically responsive in each moment. This starts right now with—really talk, really listen, really talk, really listen... really talk to each other, really listen to each other.

Here’s something I want you to hear again—don’t try so hard. You do not need to find the things to work-off, your partner will give them to you, always. You simply have to BE THERE. Also, you work-off everything. It can be behavior (“You are very sad”) it can be a physical observation (“funky

red tie!") it is whatever you get in the moment. Do not pass over anything, it's all grist for the mill. If you think something is not worth working-off, *you're in your head*.

The rule here is:

Don't do anything unless something makes you do it. And right now the *something* is over there. I'll say that again,

Don't do anything unless something makes you do it and *right now* the something is *over there*.

As you continue, stay relaxed. (I mean, what's the worst that could happen? The Repetition Patrol is not going to come and get you!) Don't push and *take what you get*.

Each partner will do another ten minutes of repetition right now and that's all for today.

• • • • •

HOMEWORK

Between now and Session Six, meet at least twice and at each meeting do a half hour of repetition.

KNOWING WHAT IS HAPPENING

W*hen you cannot see what is happening in a group, do not stare harder. Relax and look gently with your inner*

eye.

When you do not understand what a person is saying, do not grasp for every word. Give up your efforts. Become silent inside and listen with your deepest self.

When you are puzzled by what you see or hear, do not strive to figure things out. Stand back for a moment and become calm. When a person is calm, complex events appear simple.

To know what is happening, push less, open out and be aware. See without staring. Listen quietly rather than listening hard. Use intuition and reflection rather than trying to figure things out.

The more you can let go of trying, and the more open and receptive you become, the more easily you will know what is happening.

Also, stay in the present. The present is more available than either memories of the past or fantasies of the future.

So attend to what is happening now.

—From *The Tao Of Leadership,
Leadership Strategies For A New Age*
by John Heider