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## THE PSYCHODRAMATIC ENCOUNTER

J.L. Moreno, my teacher, envisioned the encounter as a meeting, exploring the positive and negative currents that flow between two persons. His inspiring "Invitation to a Meeting" has been translated from "Einladung zu einer Begegnung" (Vienna: Anzenberger Verlag, 1914):

"A meeting of two: eye to eye, face to face.

And when you are near I will tear your eyes out  
and place them instead of mine,  
and you will tear my eyes out  
and will place them instead of yours,  
then I will look at you with your eyes  
and you will look at me with mine.

Thus even the common things serves the silence and  
our meeting remains the chainless goal:  
The undetermined place, at an underdetermined time,  
the undetermined word to the undetermined man."

The key elements of encountering Moreno-style are (1) proximity, (2) maximization, (3) seeing, (4) role reversal and (5) freedom from bonds.

The director of a psychodramatic encounter needs to have developed "at least three major sources of strength...analytical ability for understanding the processes of encounter...a communication style for effective intervention and have tactical choices available for facilitating management of the encounter." (Frost/Wilmot, 1978) Learning to be a director or facilitator of encounter first requires breaking down the process of the encounter into recognizable elements, practicing segments of the process, directing an encounter with one significant other absent, practicing encounter with both parties present, and then directing multiple protagonists. Also, it is crucial that directors be involved as protagonists in encounters.

Attached to this page are two excerpts from chapter IV of my book, Conducting Clinical Sociometric Explorations: a manual for psychodramatists and sociometrists (1981) which focus on the role reversal function and a model for learning to direct encounter.

I also wish to recommend the very best book I've found on conflict resolution and the facilitator role: Joyce Hocker Frost and William W. Wilmot, Interpersonal Conflict Dubuque, Iowa, Wm. C. Brown Co. Publisher, 1978. \$10.95pa.

QUESTION: Whom have I a desire to meet?  
Whom do I want to meet me?

Question: When?



## CONFLICT RESOLUTION FACILITATOR TRAINING MODEL (HALE)

This model is presented as a process which assists persons in developing the role of facilitator in conflict resolution situations. It is abstracted from psychodramatic method and provides for the application of action methods in a sequence of events which may occur, one after the other, or, interspersed throughout the exercise. Of importance is not so much the order of events but rather an increasing recognition of the elements which affect the potential for resolution. This model is not a "how to" for conducting encounters, although there may be confrontations which may benefit from the method which is implied here.

The model is best used by first practicing the role in interpersonal conflicts with the significant other absent. Once the facilitator-in-training is comfortable with the model, then he/she may begin facilitating encounters with both parties present, progressing to intergroup and multiple-protagonist sessions when fluent with the method.

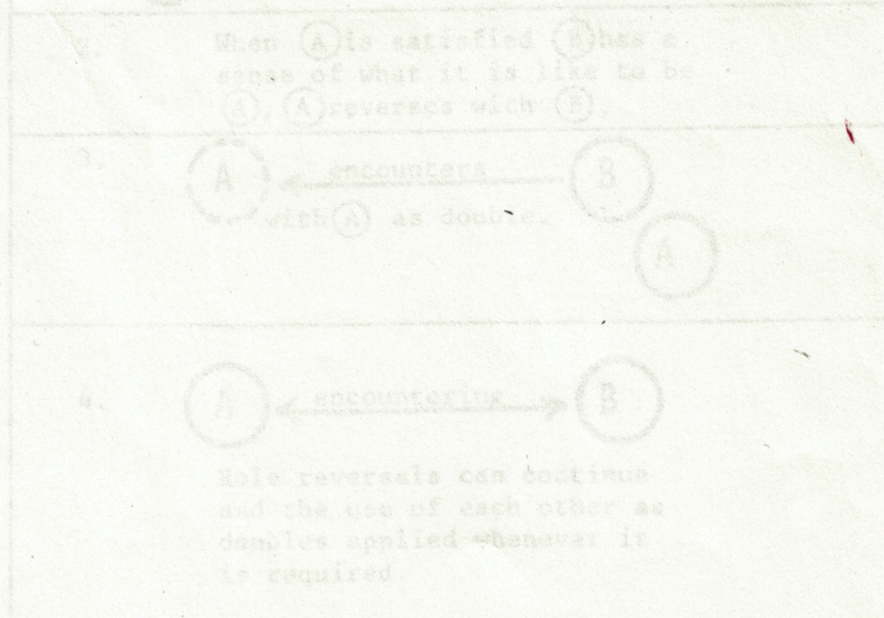
### The Facilitator Training Model

- 1) Person states his/her position in the conflict directly to the other person. (An empty chair is used in the case of the absent other.) The position is stated:
  - a. Clearly
  - b. Firmly
  - c. Honestly
- 2) Person is encouraged to ventilate pent up tension and emotions evoked by the conflict, the other person, and/or their behavior. Ventilate:
  - a. Freely
  - b. Loudly and physically
  - c. Maximally
- 3) Person identifies the interference resulting in barriers to communication, resistance to change, and inability to affect a resolution. Interferences may involve:
  - a. Ghosts - persons from his/her past having the same or similar impact; a transference figure.
  - b. Parental Injunctions - a tape, script, or life stance which has a strong influence on his/her behavior and may need to be re-examined in light of this conflict situation.
  - c. Physical and Socioeconomic Realities - here and now constraints or "facts of life" which need to be acknowledge or re-examined.
  - d. Third parties - persons directly involved in the conflict, who may even be primary causes of the conflict, and who have either an interest in the outcome of the conflict, or in the continuation of it.
- 4) When directing a conflict resolution with significant other absent have the person reverse roles with the absent other and repeat steps 1, 2 and 3 as outlined above.



5) Double-bonding role reversal

- a. Ask one person to reverse roles and become the double of the other person while he/she remains in his/her own role.
  - b. Place an empty chair to represent the person who is now being a double.
  - c. Direct the person, and their double, to make clear statements about:
    - (1) feelings being experienced in the here and now
    - (2) ways to relate to each other and the issue in the future
    - (3) a possible contract
  - d. Help the double to stay in role by coaching him/her, using an echo, and taking a similar body stance.
  - e. Once the process has been completed, repeat it with the other person taking the role of double. If the significant other is absent, simply role reverse.
  - f. Have the person being doubled reply to the statement of feelings and the prospective contract, with his/her own feelings, and his/her own suggestions for resolution.
- 6) When each person is back in his/her own role, they discuss the contract, reach an agreement, and discuss how they will deal with this conflict situation in the future.
- 7) Persons rehearse new behaviors which they have agreed upon in the contract. A role training session can be introduced which will allow each person to practice these behaviors in a supportive environment.
- 8) If additional group members are present they may wish to respond to the persons by sharing what was evoked in them as the conflict situation progressed.



B. Repeat the verbal dialogue, mirroring and incorporating (1) gestures, (2) tone of voice, and (3) range and mode of expression.



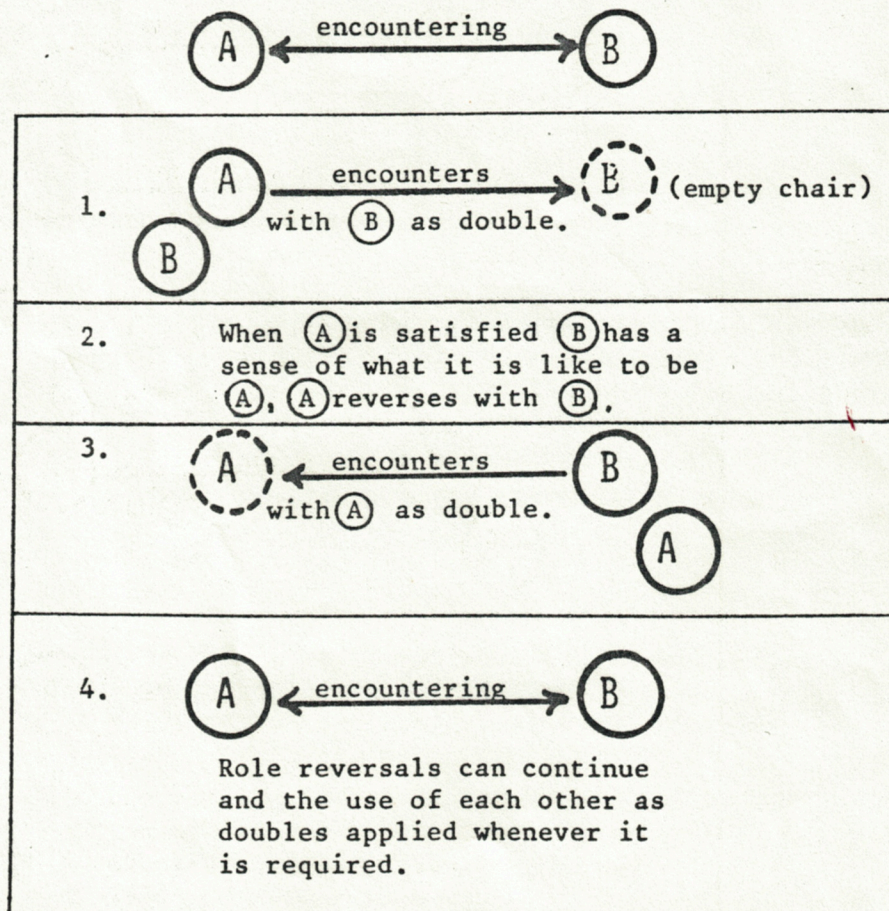
## ROLE REVERSAL TRAINING TIPS

When first taking the role of another person, it helps to:

A. Approximate the person physically

1. Imagine what it feels like to wear this person's clothing and to have his or her physical appearance. If the person's clothing is tight and binding, adjust your own clothing until you can feel that tightness. Let yourself put on their physical appearance.
2. Mirror the body stance and facial expression.

(Note: Some persons may find it difficult or painful to mirror another person's actions, or to be mirrored. The process of doing so can evoke images of crude characterizing or mimicking, the intention of which has been to humiliate another person. Or, the person(s) involved may experience performance anxiety, block, and be unable to affectively recall. A way to minimize these problems is to have each person teach the other person how to take his or her role, by first accepting the other person as his or her double.



- B. Repeat the verbal dialogue, mirroring and incorporating (1) gestures, (2) tone of voice, and (3) range and mode of expression.



C. Deepen the experience internally.

Allow yourself to make contact with the feelings in the role of the other, to experience the reverberations which occur in the person as he or she interacts with you. As the other person takes your role, interact with the person playing you, rather than simply observing him or her. Take in what it feels like to relate to yourself from the other person's internal, private, personal place. Interact from that place.

D. Risk in the role of the other, putting the insights you have from being that person into action. Make statements to yourself from the role of the other.

E. Reverse back into your own role.

Allow yourself to respond to the content of the interaction as well as the process of role reversal. Correct any misperceptions of you as produced by the other person. Make additions or deletions where necessary. Share with each other the experience you had being in his or her role.

QUESTION: Whom have I a desire to meet?  
How do I want to meet her?

QUESTION: What?