

HAMLET'S MIND

ISSUE 24
2012

AUGUST

Welcome to the August Issue of Hamlet's Mind
This issue marks our fourth year publication anniversary!
Who "woulda" thought? Happy Birthday to us.

credo quia absurdum est

Before We Get Started.

Elicitation: *To bring or draw out something latent; educe; to call forth, draw out, or produce a desired reaction.*

First: Course Announcement

<http://www.hamletsmind.com/news.html>

I have posted an announcement regarding a most challenging, advanced course I will be conducting in October. I would appreciate it greatly if you would check it out and pass the announcement along to anyone you know having interpersonal communication as a critical job-task function.

Course title

**Elicitation
Techniques:**

Tier Alpha

October

22-23

Second: Check out the resume at the end of this issue. I want to introduce you to my good and longtime friend Van Ritch. You will be hearing more from Van as he and I team up for a series of advanced courses that fall under the umbrella of the scope of this newsletter.

Third: Recording the interview – An informative discussion wherein I had a good time.

Between the June issue and the publication of this issue, I had an enjoyable, multi-person conference call with a group of attorneys and investigators from a large corporation. The focus of the electronic meeting was to discuss recording the interview, in particular, with regard to subsequent personnel actions. Those of you having been with me for any length of time know my positioning on two critical interviewing related topics: Every organization – private or public – for whom interviewing is a critical component should have a **written interviewing policy** and interviews, involving the potential for significant downstream consequences, should be recorded.

First of all, I appreciated the fact they were exploring the concept – I think at the behest of personnel responsible for conducting the interviews – and were willing to take time out of, what I know is a busy and challenging schedule, to spend a little time discussing the topic with me.

During the conversation they shared with me that they had canvassed attorneys in similar organizations across the fruited plain and there was an overwhelming opinion that the interviews SHOULD NOT be recorded. To me, that is like saying – and I say this as a Baptist- that a group of Baptist preachers asked some other Baptist preachers what they thought of full immersion baptism and they were all for it! Well, what do you know?

I responded to them with all of the sincerity I have in my precious, little heart that maybe it would be a good idea to canvas others – for example, those who conduct the interviews, to gain their perspective. Why? Because I believe (and I told them so) the default setting in an attorney's mind is, "No".

Don't get me wrong. These attorneys' mindsets and my own are the same – err on the side of caution. Their collective concern is that the other side could use the recording to "pick out" or "focus on" some component of the recorded interview to their advantage. That's a valid thought.

My concern is that when there is nothing, it opens the door widely to implication: *If the interview was appropriate, why can't we hear it? Why must we have only one side of the articulation of the interview process that occurred as well as the results of the interview?* They countered with, "There is a written record or summary of the results with the interviewee's signature". Once more: *Whose written record or summary is it? Exactly how was it obtained?*

The same people who would endeavor to attack some small element of the recorded interview are the same who will fly the implication flag – *If they were not trying to hide something, they would want for us to be able to hear or see it, wouldn't they?* To me, if the interview is appropriate, it will stand for itself. Countering implication, most especially in this age of societal skepticism, is going to be a continuing and ever more difficult challenge. I hope I'm wrong.

In the early 1990's, I conducted a training session for the interview instructors of a federal agency. At the end of the session they asked if I had any videos of interviews they could use as training aids. Well, some people collect stamps but I collect interviews, statements and transcripts – that's just me. "Sure", I answered. "But don't you think you would be better served having your personnel evaluate your own interviews rather than those of other organizations with different topics on the table?" "We don't record our interviews". "Wow, I didn't know that, how come?" After a significant, latency response, they answered, "We're afraid they'll screw up".

You know, we readily address and present other forms of supporting evidence: audit summaries, transactional- electronic data flow, documents, trance analysis and ballistics to name a few. I don't think we would ever have the position of; we don't want to perform the analysis because

we are afraid they will screw up or we don't want to perform the audit (investigation) because we are afraid they'll screw up. Wonder why the hesitancy specific to the interview itself?

Keep in mind; I don't have a dog in this fight. I am just looking around, trying to pay attention to what's going on and endeavoring to keep you all aware of the interviewing related hazards I think are coming or are already here. But at the end of the day, record or don't record and we're still friends.

******* Hey, I know you all have an individual opinion regarding recording the interview. Tell me what it is. I'm not thin skinned. Nothing left back there anyway but bone and scar tissue.**

Transition – Now to the Point

Interviewing Fundamental:

The Art of Interviewing and Motorcycle Riding

In this issue, I have the third of a series of articles relating two topics I enjoy a great deal – interviewing and riding my motorcycle. As we progress, we will explore the broad commonality and application between the two. Seems like a bit of a stretch doesn't it? Well, that is what this newsletter is all about – looking at interviewing dynamics in new and different ways, anchoring what we are exploring to what we already know and making sure we never get too settled in a restricting, self-imposed comfort zone.

The Interview Process: The need to have an interviewing front brake



Which brake is the most effective?

The front brake is the most effective, giving between 60 & 80 percent of the bike's stopping power in hard stops, depending upon surface conditions. This is because most of the weight of the bike and rider transfers forward onto the front wheel when the brakes are applied.

<http://www.webbikeworld.com/Motorcycle-Safety/braking-tips.htm>

Many riders believe the rear brake should be applied first. On the contrary, the sooner you apply the front brake, the sooner you slow down.

http://www.ehow.com/how_5251_brake-properly-motorcycle.html

For our metaphorical purposes here, “brake” can be defined as:

Noun: *a device for slowing or stopping a vehicle or other moving mechanism by the absorption or transfer of the energy of momentum.*

Verb (used with object): *to slow or stop by means of:* (Dictionary.com)

Motorcycles have two braking systems - front and rear. In terms of nouns, we are going to consider the front brake in relating to the actions of the interviewer and the rear break in relating to the actions of the interviewee. The interviewer (i.e. the rider of the bike) controls both the front and rear brakes. In this issue, we will address the most important brake – the front brake.

To gain perspective, let’s modify the response to the question in the first box above regarding which brake is most the most effective. Now we pose the question, “**Whose actions are the most critical?**”

*The action of the interviewer is the most critical, determining between 80 & 90 percent of the interview direction and outcome. Concurrently, direction and outcome are a function of variables to include (but are not limited to): information available to the interviewer, information known by the interviewee, mental acuity and interpersonal communication skills of the interviewee. This outcome-determining-factor is in place, because: most of the stimuli **determining** the interview outcome, transfers forward toward the objective, when the interviewer can exercise self-control. This factor is a function of the interviewer’s ability to apply the brakes to himself. If the interviewer lacks the ability to apply the personal front brake, all of the other dynamics – knowledge, skill and ability – run off of the road.*

The interviewer has to have a controlling grasp on the hand brake of their own emotions. As interviewers, we evaluate our strengths and weaknesses during stress producing situations. We ask ourselves and evaluate the answers to:

- How controlling am I of my emotions within the conduct of the interview?
- Are there certain personality types that can easily push my button?
- Are there certain crime related dynamics that produce an emotive response on my part?
- When I begin to lose control of my emotions am I aware of the fact?
- Can I apply the front brakes to my adverse emotional response?
- Do I apply the front brakes to my adverse emotional response?

Borrowing and paraphrasing from the second box above: *the sooner you (the interviewer) apply the front brake (to your own adverse emotional response), the more effectively you will maintain control of the interview.* In order to control the interviewee and subsequently the interview outcome, the interviewer must first have self-control.

Now we can address “brake” as a verb - *to slow or stop by means of*". We can trace part of its origins to the late fourteenth century having the meaning “to beat flax”. (etymonline.com) Flax seeds were *released* from the bolls by *beating* them with a flail.

For our purposes, the key word in the above (for our continued examination) is “released”. Now, stay with me on this: the interviewer that can adroitly brake during the conduct of the interview is able to *release the behaviors (seed) from the interviewee, conducive to a favorable outcome. At the same time the interviewee behaviors, contrary to the desired outcome (the bolls) are set aside.*

In this frame of reference, the interviewer applies and releases the interview momentum appropriately, to move the interview forward to the destination. The momentum referenced to herein is comprised of the verbal, vocal and non-verbal behavior of the interviewer directed toward the interviewee – *what* the interviewer is doing and *how* it is being performed. Much of the content of the previous twenty-three issues of Hamlet’s Mind has been devoted to addressing those very dynamics.

As with the motorcycle, for the interviewer, *brake* is both a noun and a verb. In one case it is a thing and in another it is an action. The motorcycle rider with his fingers on his front brake may literally have his life in his own hand. The interviewer, having his interview-related front brake effectively in hand, may be said to be maintaining the most optimal level of control. In either case, without the brake or the ability to apply appropriately, both the bike rider and the interviewer are destined to run off the road and into the wall.

Advice from an Interviewer

Here is a new feature I want to start with this issue. In one sentence I will provide an interpersonal communication tip having application to the public at large. I will start with a few that I think are applicable:

1. Shake a person’s hand when you meet or greet them.
2. Look a person in the eye when you talk to them and when they talk to you.
3. When talking with someone be more interested than interesting.

***** I know you have some words of wisdom along these lines. Take a second and send them to me at dwrabon@msn.com Let me know if I can credit them to you.**

Book Recommendations

Here is some of what I have been reading lately. I found each to be information and applicable to our continuing endeavor to understand and communicate with people.

Steal like an Artist by Austin Kleon;

Rainmaking Conversations by Mike Schultz and John E. Doerr

If you have an interest in Americana, two excellent books I strongly want to recommend to you are: *Laughin', Livin' and Learnin'* and *Guy Brown is Back* by Bobby Brown. The first will give you a most interesting, pensive and humorous journey into a Southern mill town during the last century. The second book is the story of Carolinas Boxing Hall of Fame member, Champion 'One Punch' Guy Brown. It examines his life and times in and out of the ring in the 1940s.

Both of these books can be obtained at: BobbyBrownBooks.com, Barnes and Noble.com and Amazon.com

My texts (and no one should ever be without them): The texts I have currently in publication are: *Interviewing and Interrogation*, 2nd edition. *Fraud Related Interviewing, Persuasive Interviewing* and *Investigative Discourse Analysis 2nd Edition*. They can be ordered directly from Carolina Academic Press. (919) 489-7486 or online at <http://www.cap-press.com> or www.amazon.com

Courses that I am currently offering:

Note: I am planning the first half of my 2013 schedule at this time. If you would like to have one of the courses listed below, a combination thereof or a course developed to meet your specific interviewing needs and conducted at your location or in your area, please contact me at:

dwrabon@msn.com or 828-606-9167

Elicitation Techniques: Tier Alpha
Interviewing for Quality Information
Fraud Related Interviewing
Is That the Truth?
Interviewing from Head to Toe
Interviewer Personality Dynamics
Interviewing Generation ME!

Rapport and the Interview Process
Persuasive Interviewing
Investigative Discourse Analysis
How to Interview like the Dickens
Finding Shakespeare in the Interview
Huh? Staying Focused during the Interview

A most appreciated submission from the field

The following article is submitted by Lisa Mayhew, a longtime friend of mine. Lisa is a Child Death Investigator/Trainer with the North Carolina Medical Examiner's Office. She is a published author and conducts training sessions nationally. Her text, *Child Death Investigations: Interdisciplinary Techniques From Cradle to Court* is available from Carolina Academic Press. It has been an honor for me to consult with her on a number of cases over the years. Lisa has an excellent track record of working with a multitude of agencies all involved in the same case. Her experience and lessons learned can have application for us all. You can reach Lisa at: lisa.mayhew@dhhs.nc.gov or gottapointconsulting@gmail.com.

The Importance of Interdisciplinary Collaboration

Lisa Mayhew, MS

Have you ever taken the time to just watch children on a playground? It is the ultimate combination of personalities, agendas and strategies with the masters of collaboration, problem solving and manipulation at play. The joys of innocence! As adults, we tend to forget simplicity in our work lives. Instead of applying the wisdom of "All I Really Need to Know I Learned In Kindergarten"¹, we tend to operate sometimes by "Toddler Rules"². And then we attend yet another meeting and complain about why it is taking so long for something to be finished or even done at all. When we are not communicating and working together to achieve results, we should not have the expectation of reaching those goals, which is the fundamental concept of interdisciplinary collaboration.

Interdisciplinary collaboration is an intricate balance of communication and leadership that when applied to any professional setting leads to successful outcomes. While some use the terms interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary interchangeably, there is a distinct difference between the two. Multidisciplinary does not necessarily imply communication across agencies or professionals and can result in parallel efforts, thus it is not applicable for the purposes of this article. Interdisciplinary approaches are necessary for several reasons. Most importantly, it is the rare profession that functions independently. Whether the business is financial, legal, or managerial; there is almost always an interdependent relationship with another business entity. Success is built on collaboration. Secondly, it is important to maximize the sharing of information. Too often, mistakes can be traced directly to a miscommunication, be it a missing piece of information or information shared at the wrong time or to the wrong party. With collaborative efforts, the sharing of information is open and organized, thereby, minimizing those mistakes. The added benefit is also keeping parties vested in the process. When people do not feel included in a process, it can have deleterious effects to the overall success of a project.

¹ Fulghum, R. (1988). *All I Really Need to Know I Learned In Kindergarten*. New York: Villard Books.

² Author Unknown

Lastly, true coordination of efforts results in more cohesiveness and respect among a group; resulting in less overall mistakes. The likelihood of gaps in the process or duplication of efforts is greatly reduced.

The first step in the collaborative process is to identify the key vested parties and define their roles and responsibilities as they relate to the business at hand. They should bring something to the table to satisfy an identified need, or perhaps more than one need. Since communication is the root of many obstacles, regardless of profession, defining everyone's roles and responsibilities is crucial. Incorporated into these roles will be paths of communication and timelines, which should blossom into a full-fledged plan of action. Clearly defining who does what, when and why serves the dual purpose of creating distinct lines of communication and avoids the scenario, "But So-and-So said they were going to take care of that." Never assume things are "understood". Everything gets written down and shared, or that meeting never took place.

All professions have their own "rule books" so to speak. Policies and procedures guide how the organization or business functions. When the private sector interfaces with the public sector, there will also be legislative policies, procedures and mandates to take into consideration. Specifics regarding duties, abilities and authority are typically included. Depending on the organization or business involved, information sharing may also be regulated. Important as it may be to know and understand how parties *must* operate on paper, it is equally important to explore how they *can* function within those parameters. Examine alternatives to the literal interpretation that meets procedural requirements but flexes the boundaries. Creative thinking opens up many more doors to compromise and cohesive collaboration. Flexibility avoids conflict and helps create firm foundations for future endeavors.

Throughout the collaborative process, it is crucial to maintain respect for professional boundaries. Depending on the nature of the work, too many "hands in the cookie jar" with competing personalities result in conflict. A tight hold on the reins is required to ensure everyone stays within the bounds of *their* rules and authority. It is an exercise in micromanagement.

My final thoughts on the collaborative process originate from my occasional tendency towards laziness. Why waste energy and time on something someone else has already tried? Anyone involved in an interdisciplinary collaborative endeavor should explore their resources. Chances are, good efforts have been made to accomplish a similar goal. You may not have to look very far, either. Their success and failures are your learning tools so utilize them. I often see too many professionals unwilling to look outside their own group for guidance and that is an unfortunate weakness easily corrected. Don't reinvent the wheel if all you have to do is modify it!

In Conclusion

Please remember that Van and I will be conducting the advanced elicitation class in October.

Until the October issue, stay in touch, throw me some questions, let me know what is going on and share with me your interviewing experiences. Hey, you know how I worry when I don't hear from you. And by the way, as I have said before, you are my favorite.

All the best,

Don Rabon, CFE



Let me introduce you to:

William Van Ritch

5912 90th Ave. Circle E

Parrish, FL 34219 / 941- 531-4006

Email: vritch55@yahoo.com

EDUCATION:

Master of Arts – Webster University – Security Management

Bachelor of Science – Appalachian State University – Business Administration

BACKGROUND SUMMARY:

Over 30 years experience in management, operational planning and execution, logistical planning, security operations, vulnerability assessments, intelligence operations, terrorism analysis and investigations. Author of the books: “**Background Investigations for Law Enforcement**” & “**Rural Surveillance Operations**” and author of a Body Language video.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:

Currently working as a Government Technical Monitor for the US State Department. Conducting oversight, inspections and guidance on projects supporting State Department efforts to provide training and advising in the International Narcotics & Law Enforcement Program. Supporting the Contracting Officer with contract document maintenance and conducting quality assurance/surveillance. Evaluating contractor performance by monitoring multiple contract projects to ensure results meet the goals of the program. Identifying problems & recommending solutions or corrective action to the Contracting Officer to resolve problems that interfere with the completion of contracts supporting DOS efforts in Afghanistan.

Served as the In-Country Director for SOC, LLC in Iraq. Also served as the Director of Operations. Provided oversight and leadership for a number of sensitive Site Security operations throughout Iraq to include the largest site security operation in the country. Responsible for managing business development efforts in Iraq and the Middle East. Supervising the operational, financial and business development efforts of more than a dozen projects valued at 220+ million dollars. Managing the operations of over 5400 armed personnel throughout Iraq. July 09 – July 10

Served as the Senior Analyst for Lessons Learned representing CTC with the US Special Operations Command program within USASOC. Worked to establish the program objectives and structure to retrieve sensitive real world data to assist future operations planning and success. Lead a team of experienced Special Operations personnel whose job is to transform the command's Lessons Learned retrieval system into a functional and responsive operational planning tool. Sept 08 – June 09

The *Vice President for Operations & Business Development* in the Middle East. Serving as the sole representative for Navigator Development Group throughout the Gulf Region. Established beneficial working relationships with businesses throughout the region. Developed mutually beneficial business agreements with Arab businesses leading to contractual vehicles allowing all organizations to manage and expand services they can offer potential clients. Developed unique marketing approaches to increasing partnerships & potential revenue streams. Through diligent efforts, established very useful relationships with key businesses & government agencies in the UAE. Feb 07 – Aug 07

Served as the *Executive Mentor* to the Afghanistan Ministry of Interior, Directorate of Intelligence. Personally reorganized and streamlined the entire Intelligence organization from top to bottom. Created national intelligence requirements for the Ministry. Developed Intelligence Architecture between MOI and MOD intelligence agencies to combat terrorist and insurgency operations in Afghanistan. Serving as the executive organizational advisor for the Director.

Apr 06 – Feb 07

President of American Iraqi Solutions Group (AISG) providing exceptional leadership and mentoring while directing over 2500 personnel from 12 different nations in one of the most challenging work environments in the world. These efforts directly resulted in growing the business to over 60 million in revenue in less than a year and having a direct and positive impact on the building of Iraq. Successfully represented the company to the US Embassy, Iraqi Ministries, private US and Iraqi businesses and other business interests in the Middle East. Built a dynamic team of professionals and created a climate in which employees succeeded in doing their best. Constantly made decisions of major impact based on a mixture of analysis, wisdom and real world experience. Jan 05 – Dec 05

Director of Security and Intelligence for RONCO Consulting. Developed and supervised security operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. Initiated Business Development efforts in countries throughout the Middle East. Directly recruited personnel to support security operations and coordinated directly with sub-contractors insuring all contractual obligations were met. Initiated and directed all operational and logistical support for all high risk security operations within the region. Feb 04 – Jan 05

Deputy Federal Security Director for the Transportation Security Administration. Supervised a team of federal security employees conducting security operations at a public airport. Built a cohesive team of professionals from scratch resulting in one of the first "showcase" models of how security screening operations should be conducted for airport security operations. Advised key officials on sensitive field operations. Insured security operations met all federal standard requirements. Effectively managed all workforce, budgetary and security issues. Sep 03 – Feb 04

Law Enforcement Instructor with the North Carolina Justice Academy. Trained and advised senior law enforcement personnel in the areas of Management, Leadership, Budgeting Investigations, Criminal Intelligence, Policy Development and Operations. Provided training to senior investigators throughout the State in specialized investigative courses such as Interviewing & Interrogation, Background Investigations and Surveillance Operations. Project Manager for the Academy's year long flagship program responsible for management training for select law enforcement officers throughout the State. Jul 94 – Feb 02.

SECURITY CLEARANCE: Top Secret Clearance – SCI Eligible

MILITARY EXPERIENCE: Retired Army Lieutenant Colonel with 22 years of service.

Operations Officer for the Allied Counterintelligence Group in Europe. Directed all counterintelligence operations and technical security services throughout the NATO Alliance. Developed and fostered partnerships with US and European agencies resulting in marked improvements in NATO security. Initiated and supervised the production of counter-terrorist and hostile intelligence threat assessments for NATO and its facilities. Planned and directed the development of logistical and operational support for counterintelligence teams operating in the Balkans in support of NATO and US intelligence objectives.

Senior Intelligence Officer for the U.S. Army Special Forces Command managing intelligence activities in support of Army Special Forces units worldwide. Served as the Senior Advisor to the Commanding General on intelligence support and operations for subordinate units. Developed plans and procedures to insure subordinate elements received the necessary intelligence assets to accomplish their missions. Developed personnel and budget requirements within the headquarters resulting in all intelligence support requirements being successfully met. Served as the primary Project Manager on several classified projects supporting overseas Special Operations missions. Directed and conducted sensitive CI operations in support of select Special Mission Units.

Desk Chief supervising the planning and conduct of intelligence activities in the Middle East and Africa designed to support Special Operations missions. Successfully directed and conducted operations which supported national intelligence objectives. Designed unique intelligence support operations to provide real world assessments to senior US leadership. The primary Project Manager on operations in the region serving to de-conflict sensitive issues arising from high risk operations which provided unique options to the highest levels in the US government

Deputy Director of the Army Survival School training select high-risk personnel. Developed sensitive material and plans for use in operations overseas operations to support national objectives. Supervised the activities of all survival training as well as the acquisition of equipment to support remote training and operations. Recruited and supervised all instructors and support personnel. Directed the implementation of the Army's anti-terrorism training program.

Commander of a unique Special Forces detachment capable of providing counter-terrorist training to select military and federal organizations. Conducted vulnerability assessments and penetration operations against sensitive installations to determine methods to improve their security. Trained & advised foreign military personnel in sensitive special operations.

Director of Counterespionage in the American sector of West Berlin, Germany. Supervised U.S. and foreign Counterintelligence agents in the conduct of a wide range of extremely sensitive investigations and operations. As the liaison officer and project manager with allied agencies, I developed and coordinated operations which resulted in the neutralization of hostile intelligence operations against US Forces. Recruited assets and developed double agent operations resulting in the direct protection of US Forces in West Berlin.

PROFESSIONAL TRAINING:

Special Forces Officer Course

US Army Ranger Course

Counterintelligence Agent Course

Intelligence Advance Course

Industrial Security Course

US Secret Service Course

British Special Intelligence Course

US Army Staff Course

USAF Anti-Terrorism Course

British Surveillance Course

US Navy Survival School

Special Operations Course