

# HAMLET'S MIND

ISSUE 63

JANUARY 2019



Why not make that next, in-house meeting something special?

**Special Announcement:** Is interpersonal communication a critical element of your organizational KSAs? Would you like to make that next meeting something special? If so, then let's collaborate to include a specifically designed webinar, included within your meeting. The session will address an interpersonal communication dynamic that you determine to be important. A focused session does not have to be lengthy to be effective.

Additionally, if you would like to have a specifically constructed and delivered online class for your organizational interviewers with no mandated times to be online - can happen. Again, the session can be structured to meet your specific needs and wishes.

Interested? Call me at 828-606-9167 or email: [dwrabon@msn.com](mailto:dwrabon@msn.com)

**2019 Course Listings:** Note: The five-day courses offered through the NC Community Colleges are tuition free for NC sworn personnel and \$125.00 for all others. The two-day courses are \$70.00 for those other than NC sworn personnel. *This partial list does not include the training I will be adding to the schedule as the year progresses or entity-specific classes.*

## Don Rabon's 2019 "Until I Get it Right" Tour

**Online:** Child Abuse Related Interviewing: Suspected Perpetrator, Blue Ridge CC, Jan 07 - Feb 03;

**Online:** Investigating Allegations, Jan 28 – Feb 24;

**Online: Honors Class: Socrates: I'm just asking, Mar 24 - Apr 21;**

Interviewing and Interrogation, April 8 – 12, Robeson Community College, Lumberton;

Interviewing and Interrogation, Apr 22 - 26, Guilford Tech, Greensboro;

Interviewing Persons with Intellectual Disabilities, May 7, Rowan/Cabarrus CC, Salisbury,

Interviewing and Interrogation, May 13 - 17, Rowan/Cabarrus CC, Salisbury;

**Online:** Interviewing Generation ME!, May 20 – Jun 16, Rowan/Cabarrus CC, Salisbury

Investigating Allegations: May 20 - 22, Haywood CC, Clyde, NC;

Advanced Interviewing: The Concept of Persuasion, May 28 - 29, Guilford Tech, Greensboro;

Investigative Discourse Analysis, June 10 – 14, Randolph CC, Asheboro;

Investigative Discourse Analysis, Aug 12 - 16, Haywood CC, Clyde, NC;

Investigative Discourse Analysis, Sep 23 - 27, Guilford Tech, Greensboro;

Interviewing and Interrogation, Oct 14 - 18, Guilford Tech, Greensboro;

Interviewing and Interrogation, Oct 21 - 25, Haywood, CC, Clyde, NC;

Interviewing and Interrogation, Nov 18 - 22, Randolph County CC, Asheboro;

**Note:** All of the above classes count fully in the Interview Training Recognition Program

## Ripped from Today's Headlines and into the Interview

Recently on LinkedIn, I posted the site for an article from the Huffington Post titled, “Millennials Now Bringing Their Parents Along On Job Interviews”. The article was written by Jillian Berman. In addition to the site, I posted the following:

*“I'm guessing we'll transition from parent-teacher conference to parent-employer conference. Johnny tries really hard and stays between the lines, but, with a little encouragement from you, we feel he can do even better. By the way, here's his latest trophy. You give it to him”.*

Before I became a recovering state employee I would get phone calls along the lines of:

**Caller:** *My twenty-three year old son wants to be a police officer, what should he do?*

**Rabon:** *Start making his own phone calls. We're looking for people with a modicum of initiative.*

**Caller:** *Well, I'm just trying to help him get started.*

**Rabon:** *My point, exactly.*

*\*Click\**”

The posting had over two-thousand views and I received a goodly amount of feedback from the field, mostly directly to me via email. However, this response was particularly salient:

*Don: “How about this? I had to tell a student to stop allowing his mother to use his college email to send me emails PRETENDING TO BE HIM. I met with the student and told him I would no longer respond to emails in which the writer pretended to be someone else, including his. He said he had told her many times not to email his professors but she kept doing it. I told him to change his passwords and not share them with her.”*

Here, in the United States, the delayed onset of adulthood – especially involving males - is a reality with ever-increasing adverse consequences. As, I have said to the point of over-kill, “interviewing is the theatre of life”. Right now, there are interviewers – be they HR or some other job title – interviewing applicants **along with their parents?** It is sad enough that Johnny needs to have mommy and daddy there with him, worse still that the parents would consent to go with him (an implied admission they did not raise him adequately to be able to stand on his own) but, profoundly worse that someone would agree to even entertain (as shown by the interview itself) the idea of hiring someone so emotionally fragile, unprepared for life and Milquetoast-like.

During the conduct of a professional-setting, as part of the hiring process, for the organizational representative to sit there and answer questions posed by mommy and daddy for the applicant is anathema to astute hiring practices. To me, it would be like the tea party scene in “Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland”.

I can see it now as Daddy leans over to Johnny and says, “Tell the nice lady how you always clean your room and eat everything on your plate.” He then looks at the

interviewer and notes, “To me that is an excellent indication of attention to detail, isn’t it?”

Whether in the public sector or private sector, you hire your problems. Guess what? There are three for certain problems sitting right there in front of you. What’s gonna happen when Johnny gets a verbal warning for poor performance, written up, passed over for a promotion or (heaven forbid) works for a supervisor who views the work environment as something more than play school involving constant praise, coloring books, comfort animals with a serving of milk and cookies? I’ll tell you what is gonna happen, you’ll be spending a goodly amount of time explaining/defending to mommy and daddy the organizational decisions and policies. The only circumstance that could make the problem even more ludicrous is if you find yourself going down into mommy and daddy’s basement and apologizing to Johnny for asking him to raise the level of his performance. If that is the case, don’t forget to bring the trophy.

As a post-script, as law enforcement remains a big part of my DNA, God forbid that a law enforcement agency would hire “Johnny” as an officer. At some point, a stand-up officer might be dependent upon him in the middle of a bad call. “I’ll be there eventually, but, only if mommy and daddy say that it’s okay”.

### **New On-going Segment – T. A. C**

Here is a new section I am adding to the newsletter – **T. A. C.** - *Texts Amplification Corner*. Within this portion, I will expand upon an element located within one or more of the texts I have currently in circulation. This undertaking may include a challenge, supplemental information, a video posted – who knows? At the end of the day, the two-fold purpose is to serve as a source of an enjoyable challenge for me and, more importantly, provide additional, applicable information within an interviewing related topic to the field.

In this initial examination we will chain “Element Three” found on page forty-two of the text, **“An Endless Stream of Lies”** with the subject’s response to the interviewer’s question found on page thirty-nine of the text, **“Fraud Related Interviewing”**:

For the interviewer, this element, within the interviewee’s cognition is foundational. It can serve as a viable precursor to rapport-building and to the compliance-gaining portion of an interview. As an example, turn to the **Teaching Point** found at the top of the page seventy-eight in “Fraud Related Interviewing” and read the short segment, focusing especially on the account provided by the arrestee. Focus on the individual’s cognition. It is important to note what the interviewee chooses to share may not, in reality, be factual. It could, very well, have been created after the fact, explicitly or implicitly. The interviewee “presents”, what to them, is a more acceptable element. Therefore, it is an element through which the interviewee will, more conceivably, transition from unwilling to willing – deceptive to truthful. This could very well serve as the “keys to the kingdom” for the interviewer now functioning as a persuader.

Remember, it is not required that you, the interviewer, agree with this disclosed cognition, but it **is** required that you keep any contrary assessments to yourself. We are not conducting the interview as a device to debate value verdicts, but rather, to get to the truth. By presenting a non-judgmental understanding of this element you gain entrance into the interviewee's "world" and can now, proceed accordingly.

Check out the Comey interview conducted by Stephanopoulos found at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XZCI5aurTWY>

See if you can find indications of the element under discussion, herein, in Comey's responses. Additionally, what would be viable amplification questions if this interview had been conducted by a real interviewer as opposed to a sycophant?

As always, I encourage you to share your thoughts and examples of amplifying questions you would pose – [dwrabon@msn.com](mailto:dwrabon@msn.com)

### **Wires from the Bunkers – For Which, I am always appreciative:**

**This first one is especially appreciated:**

*Hi Don:*

*I thought of you tonight. It is "elf on the shelf" time at my house and the elf cannot be touched or it loses its magic.*

*The elf magically moved on its own tonight. I questioned each of my 4 kids to try to figure out who moved the elf. When I got to my 5 year old, I asked her - "did you move the elf"? She said "my arms are not long enough".*

*I hope you and your family have a happy holiday. Thank you for all you do!*

-----

*Don: I have thoroughly enjoyed taking the classes you offer. Getting an Interviewing Training Recognition Program [ITRP] acknowledgement will be an achievement, but it will be an honor to keep studying under your courses beyond the acknowledgement. Studying the interplay between how all the characteristics and attributes that make us the unique individuals we are as interviewers and those that make interviewees who they are and how all of that affects how we interview has fascinated me. I've already seen how what I am learning has made me more effective on the street as a patrol officer, and I'm looking forward to the day I am able to move into an investigator position where I can be more involved in the interview process.*

*After taking Interview Discourse Analysis this past June, where I was first introduced to you, I was immediately hooked. I'm currently taking Personality Dynamics online via Blue Ridge Community College, and I'm excited about continuing this journey, taking the other courses you offer.*

-----

*Good morning Don:*

*I have been reading the latest Hamlet's Mind. I knew you'd have something to say on the Kavanaugh hearings. I agree 100% with what you wrote. I tried to disconnect from the circus, in large part because of what you wrote about TV. But, it was hard to avert my eyes and ears.*

*It has been a while since I've been to one of your classes on detecting deception. A personal comment: the problem I had early in my career and still have to a lesser degree is picking up cues of deception while I'm working to maintain rapport and a proper "industry approach" with the subject. I do well after the fact [reading a transcript or listening to the recording] identifying cues, and can really do it while I'm observing someone else interview, but I can't get going well on my own. That is what I mean by real time.*

**Rabon:** *Studies show that there is an inverse relationship between developing rapport and the ability to detect deception. I think that is exactly what is going on in your case. Your goal is the have the interviewee develop a rapport with you. You have to find "The Goldilocks Level" for rapport - it is established, but you are not impacted. The "industry approach" does not have to negatively impact your ability to detect deception. You can incorporate the elements for rapport development without becoming "involved". Don't change WHAT you are doing - it works. Change your perspective on WHY you are doing what you are doing. It is a means to an end.*

-----

*Don: I received the Interview Training Recognition Program certificate today in the mail. I wanted to thank you for such a nice certificate! I do not just want to thank you for the certificate itself but also for all the work you put into your program. I knew nothing about it until I took my first class with you. After signing up to be enrolled in the program, I fell in love with interviewing as I continued to take the classes you offered through Blue Ridge Community College. I have enjoyed each class I took and have become very passionate about becoming the best interviewer I can become. Even though I have received the certificate by meeting the minimum number of hours you require to receive it, I am currently signed up for two more classes to take in the upcoming months and want to take all of the elective classes you offer as well as other interviewing and investigations classes I can find in my area in order to continue to learn and grow as a law enforcement officer. I hope to stay in touch with you and maybe see you again in another class soon. Thank you again for this program. It definitely helped motivate me during my start in law enforcement and my start to learning valuable skills I can use each day in this career.*

## **Interviewing Courses Highlighted**

This element comprises a series involving the examination of and purpose for, specific interviewing courses that I offer. Interviewing is not a one size fits all, follow the footsteps-in-the-snow procedure. It is a complex process and contains unique factors that are as numerous to the degree that there are interviewers. Interviewing is as subtle as a kaleidoscope. One slight,

communication dynamic can change - for better or worse - the picture. That being the case, the macro and micro phases of the interviewing process, merit specific examinations.

We will continue with: **Investigating Allegations**

The dictum of the class, “Investigating Allegations” is, “*Neither disbelieving nor believing, but rather, seeking*”. When conducting any investigation, including investigating an allegation, the bedrock, foundational cornerstone, for the interviewer, has to be, an open mind.

In the same manner, we do not train people to adroitly play tennis by simply handing them a racket and a ball telling them “play tennis”, we can’t train an individual to have an open mind by telling them to “keep an open mind”. Much of what quickly formulates our perception takes place below the level of consciousness. Taking the participant to the point wherein they grasp the reality, that the greatest amount of their cognitions occur below the level of their awareness, is the first step in employing the skill-set required to employ and maintain an open mind.

Within this class, there are a series of concepts addressed involving states of mind: mirroring, anchoring, confirmation bias are just three examples. Practical exercises are the way and manner we then take the participant, “onto the court”. This is one of the few classes in which I team-teach. I am assisted in the (online and classroom setting) conduct of this class by the inimitable, Mr. Sherlock Holmes.

### **Commentary on the Passing of Ethics**

A recent Gallup survey examining ethics showed that journalists, telemarketers and politicians all scored lower than Catholic priests. To be sure, there is nothing surprising herein. Here in the states ethics – firm codes of right and wrong have long since been replaced by situational ethics. Situational ethics holds that choices should follow malleable guidelines rather than unconditional imperatives. There is nothing original with that mindset. Thousands of years ago, the Book of Judges (21:25) noted, “. . . every man did that which was right in his own eyes”.

While undoubtedly not a new concept, it is certainly now more pervasive throughout our society. Politicians who unilaterally refuse to enforce the law and journalists (I use the term loosely) with agendas rather than objectivity are only two salient examples. The same mindset can be found in teachers giving out the answers to end-of-grade exams or changing the answers thereon, financial institutions opening accounts unbeknownst to the individual, judicial activists (rendering decisions not based upon law or the constitution, but rather on their own political proclivities), car manufacturing entities modifying computers to show false emission levels are again, only a snowball on the tip of the iceberg.

So, for the interviewer, the downstream results are these: First, as situational ethics become even more pliable – and they will – whether job applicants, fraud, robbery, breaking and entering, drug sales and so forth, (smile) the truth is, it is going to get worse. Second: increasingly, you will be interviewing those who do not (have not the capacity to) feel badly about what they have done. They may lament the fact they got caught, but not the act itself. How could they? They did what was right in their own eyes. That, being the case, compliance-gaining frames that seek

to activate the “good found deep within the individual” are going to fall upon deaf ears. Third, two of the three interviewing elements that Aristotle identified as necessary for gaining compliance – logic (relevant information) and character (how we interact with the interviewee) – will be need to honed to Olympian levels. The third – emotion – will still play a role, only from a different perspective. (We’ll address that item in a future issue).

Stated simply, you as an interviewer are going to have to “up your game” if you are going to successfully contend within this arena. Mediocre and the “tried and true” will not, mechanically, win the day. Today, your interviewing KSAs **may** suffice. That fact, is no guarantee of success, on the morrow.

### **Update on the Status of the Interview Training Recognition Program**

Right now, there are approximately five hundred individuals advancing through the program. I expect that number to increase as I hit the deck running with my 2019 schedule of classes. I am most appreciative to the community colleges – Blue Ridge, Rowan/Cabarrus, Robeson, Randolph Haywood, Guilford Tech and Stanly - for their partnership with the program via additional online and in-class offerings of core courses and electives.

I have a number of additional framed and matted acknowledges set to go out. Thank you for your patience. As Bob Cratchit admitted to the now repentant Ebenezer Scrooge, “I have been making rather merry”. However, unlike Bob, I can’t promise that, “It won’t happen again”.

#### **My five texts - and no one should ever be without them all:**

*Interviewing and Interrogation*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition – **Newly released.**

*Fraud Related Interviewing*;

*Persuasive Interviewing 2<sup>nd</sup> edition*;

*Investigative Discourse Analysis 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition*;

These can be ordered directly from Carolina Academic Press - (919) 489-7486, online at <http://www.cap-press.com> or [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com).

My newest text, “*An Endless Stream of Lies: A Young Man’s Voyage into Fraud*” – is available in electronic and print formats from Amazon or Barnes and Noble.

Until March, remember: “Hearing ain't listening, looking ain't seeing and just asking ain't interviewing”. When it comes to conducting an interview are you merely in there or are you *there*?

Don Rabon, CFE

## Successful Interviewing Techniques