

HAMLET'S MIND

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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. Interested? Call me at 828-606-9167 or email: dwrabon@msn.com

Happy 10th, Newsletter Anniversary!!

2018 Course Listing: 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.*

Interviewing for Quality Information, July 12 - 13, Houston, - Closed session

ACFE Professional Interviewing Techniques, July 24 - 25, Philadelphia, Open enrollment

Interviewing for Quality Information, July 31, Raleigh, - Closed session

Detecting Deception, Aug 1, - Atlantic Beach, NC, - Closed session

Online Investigative Discourse Analysis, Aug 6 - Sep 9, - Session is full

Webinar: Interviewer Attribute: Objectifying the Interview - Session is full

Questioning for Quality Information Aug 13 - 14, Boone, NC, Closed session

Online Interviewer Personality Dynamics Blue Ridge CC, Sep 3 - Sep 30, - Open enrollment

Advanced Interviewing: The Concept of Persuasion, Sep 10 - 11, GTCC, - Open enrollment

Interviewing and Interrogation, Sep 24 – 28, Randolph CCC, Asheboro, - Open enrollment

Interviewing for Quality Information, Oct 24, Raleigh, - Closed session

NC CPA Association, Oct 29, Greensboro, Closed session

Interviewing and Interrogation, Nov 5 – 9, Guilford Tech, Greensboro, - Open enrollment

Interviewing and Interrogation, Nov 26 - 30, Stanly County CC, Albemarle, - Open enrollment

The Interview: A Societal Microcosm

This examination is the fifth in a six-part series addressing the societal, shifting paradigms impacting the conduct of the interviewing process. Interviewing is “the theatre of life”. Consequently, that which is on-going within society will be reflected accordingly within the interviewing operation. Our focus will be on the interviewer as well as the interviewee.

My attention is entirely on the issues as they manifest here in the United States. For those readers in other countries, I would never presume to opine on the societal circumstances, causality or ramifications outside of my own borders. It is a Southern thing that is just not done in polite society. Hopefully, you'll follow suit.

I am looking forward to the feedback from the readership – some may agree with my assessments and others find issues. In either case, it is all designed to make for stimulating, mutually informative discussion. As my dad always told me, “*Son if we all thought alike, everyone would be in love with your mother*”. For me, it is not necessary that we think alike, but, more importantly, that we think!

Additionally, our explorations do not serve as a pulpit for ascribing blame - there's more than enough to go around - but, rather, to become aware of the condition, its impact upon the interviewing process and, as interviewers, adjust accordingly.

This, our next examination is: **Interviewing the Entitled**

I remember President Kennedy's instruction about our not asking what our country can do for us, but rather, asking what we can do for our county. That insight stuck with me even though I was just a kid at the time. A couple of years later, I joined the army with that motivation in mind. Now, any democrat, running for office, or currently in office, offering that piece of advice would be ridden out on a rail. A Republican would be drawn and quartered. A Conservative would be hanged at dawn.

We, here in the states, are a-washed with the aggrieved and the entitled. Snowflakes are entitled to good grades even if they can't read or write. For example, recently, in New York City, the Regents' examination rules for the coming year now provide that students can get a passing grade with a score of 30%. Think about it, get 70% of the answers wrong and still pass.

Everyone is entitled to a trophy even if they have no athletic ability whatsoever. New employees are entitled to a promotion at least by the end of the first week. Recently, the Wall Street Journal, reported that corporations such as Lands End and Bank of America are hiring “praise teams”. These "teams" are designed to address the growing employee demand for constant positive reinforcement - *"I did good, didn't I, Mommy?"*

College graduates are entitled not to have to repay their student loans. Our socialist candidates run on telling those who see themselves as totally entitled, that everything should be free:

education, medical attention, housing, food, vacations, all from the cradle (provided free at birth) to the grave (also free and covered by the government - Hey, "Soylent Green is people!").

Recently, an incident, parallel to our examination herein, caught my eye. It was reported that Amy Schumer wanted to do a bit of stand-up comedy (I use the term loosely, here) at Carolines on Broadway in the middle of up and coming comedian, Brendan Sagalow's bit. When the manager explained to her that Brendan was in the middle of a long set, she exclaimed, "***But, I'm Amy Schumer!***"

That pronouncement, right there, should be the clarion call from this point forward. If, you are boarding the plane with group seven and you want to board with group one, shout out, "***But, I'm Amy Schumer!***" When I want to see a play at the Flat Rock Theatre and they want me to pay premium for the best seats, I am going to exclaim, "***But, I'm Amy Schumer!***" Anytime, yes anytime, I want to be recognized and accommodated for my exclusivity, I will say with a conviction, experienced only by Robert De Niro at an awards ceremony, "***But, I'm Amy Schumer!***" The next time I announce a fee-based course, the first person that registers and posts, "***But, I'm Amy Schumer!***", gets in free. Free! Yes, free, because we are all entitled.

But, back to the point at hand - interviewing. Here's what I think (are) (will) be the most viable options: Think about this, "who sees themselves as the most entitled during maturation - two and three year olds?" Take the position, "I am communicating with a two or three-year-old child". Accept it that you are not going to offset a lifetime of being told, "you are so special", during the conduct of the interview. Rationalization and shifting-the-blame are, once again, going to be your stock in trade. Criticism will not carry the flag, neither will argument. Failing that, perhaps an "interviewee praise team" that would shower accolades and ribbons each time the subject made a positive move forward, would do the trick. Finally, if that doesn't work, you will be forced to use the ultimate in compliance-gaining methodologies. Look the entitled interviewee straight in the eye and inform them, "***But, I'm Amy Schumer!***"

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

Don. In reference to your class, Interview Attribute: Maintaining Objectivity, I guess I am currently in middle of the road (with regard to being objective) but, on the verge of being better able to control my emotions. After taking Interviewing and Interrogation and now this class, I can see that I was not always objective and did let my emotions dictate certain points of interviews I had conducted. I am a perfectionist (to a fault sometimes), so when I started doing interviews I was uncomfortable because I did not have the proper training and I was concerned I would not be able to achieve the ultimate goal of obtaining the truth. Boy was I right! I would get so frustrated when interviewees would lie to me, but I was mostly frustrated at the fact that I could not get them to tell me the truth. I can also look back and see that I did judge people and set frames around cases based on experiences I had with similar cases or prior assessments I had made of the case and/or people involved. I have been going over my interviews with a new set of eyes and can now see all the clues I missed and mistakes I made. Some of these mistakes include: losing the trust of the interviewee, setting frames and using confirmation bias, not focusing on change but rather kind of bouncing around, not picking up on deception clues, not

discovering or recognizing what is holding the interviewee back, running out of questions when there was so much more to ask, etc. My biggest regret is not taking these classes sooner because these two classes have been a Godsend for me not only in the interview room but out in the field. I personally learn the best from mistakes I have made. In fact, most things I can remember in detail from my childhood are times when I got in trouble for doing something wrong. So, although I regret not having these classes before I started, I have learned a lot from the mistakes I have made interviewing.

Don. Thank you for the fantastic training in the past week! I have never had such a systematic training in interviews with all the concepts and techniques explained clearly with real case videos. This really opens a door for me and I will definitely register for your online courses! Thank you again and hope we could meet again in the near future!

Don. After being in your class all this week, I returned home with the immediate opportunity to put some of the tools and techniques you taught this week. Although my suspect had the immediate willingness to confess and tell me what happened and why he did what he did, everything I learned and picked up came into play. The building rapport, smiling, using first names, doing WAY more listening than talking and not asking closed ended questions.

A supervisor watched and said it was a great interview and it was definitely not credit to me, but to the new skills I learned. The suspect willingly gave me a verbal and written confession.

Thank you for everything!

Interviewing Courses Highlighted

This element begins 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 commence with the class about which I am most often asked: "**How to Interview like a Psychopath**".

What if, as a law enforcement officer, every time I investigated a wreck, where there was significant injury, the carnage and chaos affected me so dramatically that I could not function? What if, during the times that I had to deliver a death notification, I experienced the grief and pain of the family? Were that the case, it would not have been long before I would have been emotionally and physically debilitated. As it turns out, I wasn't. And there's the point.

The characteristics of a psychopath are not, for everyone, set at a "Hannibal Lecter" level. There is a continuum of these characteristic settings. At the right settings, these characteristics can be most advantageous. Without the proper settings, a surgeon couldn't slice a patient open in order to save their life, an executive could not make the hard decisions to save the company and a military commander could not lead soldiers into battle in order to prevail.

Consequently, in this class, we examine the characteristics of a psychopath and how, at the proper settings, they can serve as assets to the conduct of the interview. For example, let's examine the characteristic of "focusing". It is critical that an interviewer have the ability to stay in the moment, attend to the interviewee's verbal, vocal and non-verbal contexts, develop and engage amplifying questions toward a successful conclusion. This attentiveness being the case, the participants in the class self-assess to determine where their individual, ability-to-focus setting happens to be. If the setting is adequate, great. If not, we identify strategies for improvement. This process is repeated for each of the characteristics. Additionally, we determine where our overall psychopathy scale is set. My score is particularly interesting, at least to me. It was set at . . . oh, well, that's not important.

The class involves a series of group readings for which the groups have to prepare briefings to the rest of the class. Lastly, there are a series of video clips to facilitate discussion and application of the information provided. The efficacy of the class has increased, beyond what I initially envisioned, as electronic devices have drawn people more and more away from interpersonal, face-to-face communication to communicating with our fingers through some form of digital platform.

I enjoy delivering this class. It is an interviewing class about the interviewer, not the interviewee. The Ancient Greek aphorism "know thyself" is just as applicable now as it was then. And for the interviewer, even more so.

Ripped from the headlines and into the interview

Headline: *Reporter resigns after false tweet that Maryland shooting suspect had MAGA hat*

I have a one-hour webinar session, with an optional, eight-hour online class, titled: *Interviewer Attribute: Maintaining Objectivity*. It is, I believe, one of the most vital classes that I conduct. An interviewer may possess all of the knowledge, skill and abilities, requisite to the craft, but lacking objectivity, that interviewer is more hazardous than a decision made by a governmental committee.

Here in the states, objectivity and civility, (we'll deal with the second item in a later issue) have gone the way of the dinosaur. Judgment prior to inquiry is rampant. Histrionic reactions to the vicissitudes of life are bountiful. Be it social, political, faith-based and so on, the ability to maintain an open mind, by so many, has diminished dramatically. We'll also, leave the possible causalities for another time. This newsletter is focused on the interviewing process and so we'll endeavor to stay on point.

The interviewer **MUST** maintain an open mind. Just because the interviewer may have encountered a myriad of circumstances or persons, similar to this situation, in the past, does not automatically mean that this matter is identical to those before. Experience should be a guide, a resource but not a final, automatic template for responding to the circumstance. The engagement

parameters of the interview are few and simple: Never do anything to cause someone to make an admission to something they have not done; never take away the volitional aspect of an admission and treat the person in the other chair the way that you would want to be treated if it were you.

Objectivity can easily be replaced by judgment. As interviewers, we are not tasked with judgment, only to find the truth. We have to identify what circumstances or interviewee actions can/will negatively influence our objectivity. Then, we must undertake to strengthen those professional vulnerabilities. Objectivity is a muscle. It can be strengthened.

Before the interview begins, the interviewer should be able to conceptualize and incorporate the possibility that, "Everything I know might be wrong". Lastly, remember that whatever the individual may have done - and **may** is the operative word, they did not do it to you. Don't conduct the interview as if you have been personally aggrieved. Your interview is a professional encounter. You are being paid to conduct the interview. If you weren't there, someone else would be paid to do it.

Don Quixote has got the delusionary, subjectivity bases covered. He doesn't need any assistance from you or me. We construct our own windmills when we abdicate our objectivity.

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

Interviewing and Interrogation, 2nd edition;

Fraud Related Interviewing;

Persuasive Interviewing 2nd edition; (released April, 2016 - power-point slides are available upon request)

Investigative Discourse Analysis 2nd Edition;

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

Okay, see you in September. Remember, be nice and make someone's day just a little better every time you get the chance.

Don Rabon, CFE

Successful Interviewing Techniques