

# 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.

Additionally, contact me if you would like to have a specifically constructed and delivered online class for your organizational interviewers with no mandated times to be online. 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)

**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.*

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

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

**Online** How to Interview like a Psychopath, Oct. 1 - 28 Rowan/Cabarrus CC, Salisbury - Open enrollment

**Conference** Interviewing Persons with Intellectual Disabilities- Breaking Thru the Barriers, Rowan/Cabarrus CC, Salisbury, October 11 - 12 - Open enrollment

Interviewing and Interrogation, Oct 15 - 19, Haywood CC, Clyde, - Open enrollment

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

**Online** Interviewer Personality Dynamics Blue Ridge CC, Oct. 29 - Nov 25, - Open enrollment  
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

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

## *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 is our concluding examination in this series: **Situational Ethics and the Interviewing Process**

One interviewee response that is becoming more and more prevalent - especially with regard to addressing deception, gaining-compliance and exploring actions is, "Well, this is *my* truth". That position, rests upon the notion that truth - read that as "right or wrong" - is situationally determined. The decision to act (or not) is not based upon a societal, agreed upon, code of conduct, but rather, the context of the situation as determined by the individual. There is nothing new herein. About 2600 years ago, someone wrote, "*every man did that which was right in his own eyes*".

Awhile back, I was conducting a one-day session on Interviewing Generation ME! One of the topics we addressed was the rampant cheating and plagiarism in our colleges. I asked the question, "Why do you think this is the case?" A young man, near the top seating of the amphitheater, stood up and remarked, "You have to cheat. Everyone is cheating, so, in order to stay competitive, you have to cheat". While, I appreciated his honesty, at least in this case, it struck me as strange that none of the other several hundred participants seemed to disagree with his assertion - at least not to the point of speaking out.

Recently, a survey indicated that forty percent of financial industry workers were not averse to using lying, cheating, backstabbing or blackmail to advance themselves. Twenty-nine percent believe that those within the financial industry might need to utilize unethical or illegal actions in order to be successful. We are now, challenged by the consequences of an ever-growing,

positive attitude toward situational ethics. To state it simply, more and more people believe the ends justify the means. On a more global example, consider the vehicle manufactures that modified their program testing for emissions.

I don't care where you look, let's take the rules of the road for example. For more and more individuals, it is *their* road. You just happen to be on it. And, they are so important that they are willing to risk your life and limb to get to wherever they happen to be going. Fraud is, still another, growing example of the consequences of situational ethics.

There are additional, mitigating factors involved, too numerous to delineate herein, but, I will throw one out for the sake of contemplation. Studies show that with the more time spent on electronic devices there is a negative impact on the ability to empathize. Diminished ability to empathize and situational ethics combine to produce a most aversive cocktail.

As interviewers, we are face-to-face with the consequences of the shifting paradigms in our society. They are right across the table from us. And a most salient shifting paradigm is situational ethics. We are going to have to adjust accordingly. Themes and approaches that are designed to touch the interviewee's inner core sense of right and wrong - "You are a good person who just made a bad decision. You know what you did was wrong" - are not going to prevail. As we have noted in previous elements of this six-part series, **rationalization** and **shifting-the-blame** are going to be the most optimal go-to frames. Additionally, strengthening your ability to consistently develop a rapport, utilize open, tag and attitudinal questions will assist in procuring a successful interview outcome.

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

Don: I just returned last week from a visit to the Middle East with three of my team members who have been through your I&I course. It was a setting that was something less than ideal for interviewing. We were working with an investigator who had quite a different style of interviewing, but we adapted. (Team member one) had the most opportunity to participate in interviews and I could see marked improvement in technique. (Team member one) was well prepared with great questions and stepped out of the comfort zone to connect and develop rapport during the interviews. On the ride back to our hotel, I complimented (Team member one) on this obvious improvement and the reply was, "*Thank you Don Rabon!*" – it's great to see the effect that your training is having on our team. It is really becoming somewhat ingrained in each individual. We are continuing to advocate putting the training into practice whenever possible. There are only a couple of our team members who haven't been to your training in person yet and I believe they are scheduled for the fall. I just wanted you to hear that feedback and also take the opportunity to thank you again for the attention and accommodations you have made for us.

Don: I was signed up for a different breakout session and switched the day before the post conference began - to say I am glad would be an understatement! The time flew by and was filled with thought-provoking information and discussion, laughter, and insight into who I am as an individual - how to use my strengths and work on my weaknesses in my career as an

investigator. After hearing, "admission seeking interviews" throughout the conference, it was refreshing to hear that we, as investigators, are not tasked with getting an admission, but with learning the truth.

## 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: **Interviewer Attribute: Objectifying the Interview**

Of all the courses I have developed and presented, none has provided more personal satisfaction than the course we are highlighting herein. From an investigative/interviewing perspective, nothing has caused more problems, resulted in wrongful convictions, allowed the guilty to go free and resulted in civil litigation than lack of or diminished objectivity. It is so important that I have, through the combined use of online and webinar formats, offered the classes tuition free.

In the past, I have conducted interviews wherein I determined that the target of the inquiry did not commit the wrongful act and others, involved in the inquiry, experienced profound disappointment. This mindset should never be the case. Taking the light of suspicion off of an innocent person is right up there with finding the guilty.

As we (here in the states) have become more divisive, segmented and sectarian, objectivity has moderated accordingly. This reality is evidenced within the investigative/interviewing arena. Nationally, we see investigations - and I use the term loosely herein - where, in one case, those involved were determined **NOT** to find what **WAS** there and currently, in another case, determined to find something that is **NOT** there - both inquiries involving many of the same persons.

The total lack of objectivity within the main stream media is reflected in their approval ratings significantly below that of disease and pestilence. The same can be said for the congress.

You see, objectivity necessitates thinking. For more and more of us, that is just a bit too much effort. For investigators (or for any seeking *to know*) having the ability to be open to various lines of inquiry and to viewing a circumstance from another's viewpoint - theory of mind - is critical for getting to the truth. Thomas Aquinas said, "Doubt leads to inquiry and inquiry leads to the truth". (Look for any evidence of real, critical thinking curriculum in any secondary or higher education institutions).

Feedback from one of the participants, having completed the Maintaining Objectivity session:

*"I have a tendency to make assumptions based on my current knowledge about a person that influences the way I feel about a person I'm speaking with and what I believe about what they tell me. Before attending the "Objectifying the Interview" webinar, I was not even aware of how detrimental that can be. After attending the webinar, I can see that I need to be very intentional about acknowledging my tendency to operate by assumptions and combat that by forcing myself to stay open to the very real possibility that my assumptions are wrong and could easily prevent me from getting to the truth of a matter. Moving forward, I will intentionally take pause prior to any interview to focus my mind on remaining open to all possible theories and to remain open to listening to the person speaking to me so I may thoroughly understand what they are really telling me. This will aid me in getting to the actual truth in whatever matter I am investigating, instead of falling into the trap of reinforcing a potentially false truth I want to be true out of pride or arrogance."*

Objectivity is a muscle. Through application, it can be strengthened. For those of us, who seek the truth, through our direct communication with others, objectivity is not a luxury. It is a necessity.

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

*Interviewing and Interrogation*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition;

*Fraud Related Interviewing*;

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

*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 November, keep asking, keep listening, keep looking. The answer is there.

Don Rabon, CFE

Successful Interviewing Techniques