

Synanon

It's the Dichotomy, Stupid

I put in the grade change right now -- I gave you an A-, although I struggled with this because the paper -- as a work in history -- is problematic. I erred on side of being generous because of the work you put into it and some brilliant writing in parts (and also that it's doing something different and is creative). I find the topic and approach very interesting and enjoyed many aspects of your writing style and the way you weave in your recollections and interviews. As a historical work, however, there is a problem in how you frame it and discuss what has been researched and written on it, and what the focus of your intervention is. There are also many threads that are hard to follow as a reader and call for a tighter set-up and organization early on, with better transitions and signposting. In terms of framing the intro doesn't quite work and you took lots of liberties with the conclusion and "afterword." All of that said, it was a very interesting read and I hope you'll try to publish parts of this somewhere!

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Research Colloquium HIST B2321

Professor Lâle Can

14 August 2020

In crisp prose, Oliver Sacks, the inquisitive polymathic neurologist, wrote about the oddest brain maladies. The most memorable is about *not* remembering—*The Abyss: Music and Amnesia*. It is the story of “Clive Wearing, an eminent English musician and musicologist in his mid-forties, [who was] struck by a brain infection...affecting...the parts of his brain concerned with memory. He was left with a memory span of only seconds—the most devastating case of retrograde amnesia ever recorded. [He could not] preserve new memories. New events and experiences were effaced almost instantly, virtually [deleting] his entire past.”¹

Though not as debilitating as Mr. Wearing’s condition, the half-life of history in America has, since 1980, functionally shortened to roughly ninety days.² Our current troubles are forcing personal and public reassessments of the erasure of our social history. This paper focuses on the loss of historical memory of the swerving phenomenon of Synanon, an organization that is unfamiliar to most people outside the canopy of the recovery movement. Among this cohort—social scientists, clinicians, peer to peer counselors, and self-styled charismatics—Synanon is acknowledged worldwide as the first self-governed residential community for irredeemable hardcore heroin addicts—the forerunner of the thousands of drug rehabilitation entities formed in the past sixty years. Before Synanon, before the terms drug rehabilitation and therapeutic community were in common use, heroin addicts were hope-to-die dopefiends. Ex-addicts were rare—once a junkie, always a junkie.

The past fifty years’ revisionist history of Synanon has obscured the inestimable value of its seminal innovations. This paper argues that a fresh contextual review of Synanon’s early years (1958-1970) will illuminate society’s meager return on investment—the missed opportunities in the evolution of therapeutic communities, sociology, business governance, and interpersonal communication. Society’s loss is like a sunken pirate ship, bursting with treasure,

from which only a handful of doubloons has been brought to the surface. A critical analysis of Synanon's good works is long overdue; critical analyses of Synanon, the cult, are long overdue.

Heed George Santayana: Run Your Dirty Rotten Story

As a member of the Synanon community for twenty-two-years (1967-1990), it is fair to assume I have the whole story. I do not. Consider the ancient Hindu fable of *The Blind Men and the Elephant*. Six intellectually curious blind men encounter an elephant, a creature they have never seen before. Each examines a different part of the elephant and, in turn, confidently declares that the elephant is a wall (side), a spear (tusk), a snake (trunk), a tree (knee), a fan (ear), a rope (tail). As a one-eyed elephant man, my field of vision is thirty degrees—tops. Hence, I am not the final authority. Twenty-five thousand souls swung through the place. That is twenty-five thousand dirty rotten stories of twenty-five thousand irretrievable, irreparable, bent characters—junkies, pimps, drunks, prostitutes, and petty criminals—and thousands of squares (non-resident club members who were drawn to Synanon for myriad reasons). People stayed anywhere from a day up to thirty-three years. (Tommy Sands, Frank Sinatra's son-in-law, lasted about two weeks.) That is a lot of elephants.

My story begins here:

In the police, if you wish to advance, you must have a rabbi—a mentor, confessor, savior—who, when you are in extremis, pulls you back from an oncoming train. Jarrie Tent was my Synanon rabbi. We met in 1967 at a banquet style Thanksgiving (rectangular tables, white cloths, a decent dessert). Our place cards set us behind a pillar in the Detroit Synanon House. The pillar suited us fine. We were sad, scared newcomers. She could barely keep her eyes open; I could hardly speak. Nice to meet you. On that Thursday, Jarrie, twenty-nine, was a dopefiend—a boss

dopefiend. She had recently given birth to a baby girl in jail. Her daughter Michelle was given over to Jarrie's sisters, and Jarrie entered Synanon to get clean—again.

Three weeks earlier, just shy of eighteen, in the full tilt of a psychotic episode (the aftermath of an unsuccessful acid trip and terror of the draft), I was offered a choice of no choice—Bellevue or Synanon. My mother was done. She watched me board a Greyhound and stood there until the bus left Port Authority.

For the next thirty-nine years, if we weren't together for Thanksgiving, Jarrie and I had a long heart to heart on the phone. Skip ahead to 2005. I am in a Jack-in-the-Box drive-through waiting for an illicit burger and curly fries, and I get a rare call from Michelle: Jarrie, at sixty-four, has esophageal cancer. Years earlier (1977), when my mother, also sixty-four, was dying, I botched it. I was now mature enough to act the mensch: I could literally be there for Jarrie. We spent a lot of time together that last year. We were at her home in Bisbee, Arizona for her final Thanksgiving: ten people at the table, lots of laughs, and scrumptious food; she died a few hours after dinner. Our link, unexplainable outside of Synanon, has only strengthened since she died. You had to be there.³

Synanon I: Beginnings

Nothing comes from nothing. Synanon is on the continuum of the enlightened, humanizing restoration of the insane begun in 1793 when Dr. Philippe Pinel unshackled the inmates at the Bicêtre Hospital asylum. In England, the humanitarian mission of the York Retreat, founded by Quakers in 1777, was “[to relieve]. . . those unhappy sufferers who are the objects of terror and compassion to all around them. . . where the patients might expect . . . humane and disinterested treatment; and where they might have a chance of being restored to their health.’ If the public statements of its governors were an accurate guide, it fulfilled its

idealistic objectives and was run as a model institution. In 1788 the [asylum's board of] governors declared that... 'the utmost attention is paid to decency and cleanliness'"⁴ York pioneered the innovative practice of Moral Treatment.

In the well-known case of young King George III (yes, that King George), retroactively diagnosed as manic depressive, the King's hapless physicians did not know about Moral Treatment. They subjected George to the barbarous cutting-edge therapies of the time: blistering, purging, blood-letting, cupping, and arsenic-laced medicines before summoning Dr. Francis Willis. Willis was a Moral Treatment advocate. As depicted in the film *The Madness of King George*, Willis had a steadfast belief in his techniques of punishment and reward, fresh air, meaningful work, and moral uplift. Their first exchange sounds like a Synanon intake interview.

GEORGE III. I have you in my eye.

DR. WILLIS. No, I have you in mine. And I shall keep you in my eye until you learn to behave and do as you're told.

It is dicey to converse with a king this way. At first, when George resists Willis' commands, he is bound top to bottom in a restraining chair of Willis' design. Before he is gagged, they have this parley:

DR. WILLIS. If the King refuses food, he will be restrained. If he claims to have no appetite, he will be restrained. If he swears and indulges in meaningless discourse . . . he will be restrained. If he throws off his bed-clothes, tears away his bandages, scratches at his sores, and if he does not strive every day and always towards his own recovery...then he must be restrained.

GEORGE III. I am the King of England.

DR. WILLIS. No, sir. You are the patient.

Once the King acquiesces to Willis, he is steadily on the mend. The agitated mind of the manic person is greatly calmed by the imposition of a benevolently despotic structure like Synanon.⁵

Synanon was founded, in 1958, by Charles E. “Chuck” Dederich (CED), a flamboyant, bumptious, magnetic, restive member of Alcoholics Anonymous. Like many drunks, Chuck collided with his bottom and tripped headfirst into AA. He showed up at his first meeting after “a weekend bender that wouldn’t stop . . . for about a month. I wound up a real gibbering idiot. I was totally out of it. I was burning up and rattling . . . I suddenly realized that people were making speeches and that people were listening to them. So I leaped to my feet, rushed to the podium and broke into some kind of religious diatribe. I hadn’t the vaguest idea of the content, but it got a terrific hand. I probably cried. . . And so I said, “This is for me!”⁶

Few people are more annoying than the newly sober. Chuck, with his burly mania and charisma, was unbearable. “When I got into AA, I became . . . completely compulsive about it. I went to a meeting every goddamn day. . . I threw myself . . . into the whole AA mechanism . . . I could be very funny. I could play on peoples’ emotions . . . make them cry, make them laugh . . . I would be an evangelist or a philosopher, a psychologist . . . I may have set the whole movement back five years.”⁷ In 1957, unemployed, Chuck camped out at the AA office to help “individual drunks. I took every call that came in . . . I loaded my apartment with guys who would call in.”⁸

At AA, people speak one at a time: “My name is Jojo, and I’m an alcoholic.” Hi, Jojo.” When Jojo finishes, people clap politely. “Thank you for sharing, JoJo.” Feedback, if any, is muted, supportive. AA was too decorous for Chuck Dederich; he began hosting his own interactive, confrontational meetings. The weekly gatherings rocked his ratty apartment: “I began to yell and curse and accuse and ridicule: I talked to everyone in the room as if he had a tail.

Boy, I felt great, and everyone else loved it too. The next week they all came back. That was the birth of the Synanon Game, which basically hasn't changed at all since 1958.”⁹

Chuck drifted from AA, and, with a \$33.00 unemployment check, rented a shabby storefront/clubhouse in Ocean Park, California. Word spread on the street, and a few heroin addicts joined the meetings and then moved in. They figured this might help them stop using. (Most of the drunks, who disdained junkies, fell away.) When Chuck incorporated as a foundation in 1958, he learned that TLC (Tender Loving Care Club) was taken (whew). He chose Synanon, aptly a malaprop uttered by a member garbling the words seminar and symposium. Dederich, a onetime sales executive at Gulf Oil, thought “Synanon [would look good]on the side of a truck.” (Clark 11)

Within a few years, the unorthodox enterprise was recognized as the one place where hardcore addicts, if they stuck with it for two or three years, stayed off dope, with few exceptions, permanently. By the end of 1959, needing more space, the group of fewer than seventy people moved to a fixer-upper, a former National Guard Armory on tony Santa Monica Beach. “Members of a prominent theatrical club [The Friars] agreed to pay two years' rent . . .” Predictably, the Welcome Wagon was less than welcoming: “[A hastily formed] Beach Front Property Owners Association . . . trembled when they heard of this invasion by dangerous ‘felons.’ . . . [A *Santa Monica*] *Outlook* columnist expanded the definition of [felon] to include treason, murder, rape, robbery, arson, etc. . . . [The] property owners circulated a petition for the removal of Synanon . . . [They warned of] potential atrocities . . . Synanon has eighteen Negro members . . . [At the] City Council . . . [citizens] broke into tears as they asked that Synanon be removed to protect their homes, lives, and property values from the criminal addicts who had already been ‘menacing’ the beach . . . The Santa Monica Chief of Police made . . . a sudden and

acute discovery. ‘We don’t like the type of people it attracts here, he told the *Outlook*. The place attracts felons and narco’s [sic].’” (Yablonsky 26-28)

What it was really about was the Negroes. The most potent symbol of integration was Chuck’s marriage to Betty Coleman, one of Synanon’s earliest Black female members. Although she and Chuck began dating in 1959, they did not marry until 1963, keeping a low profile to avoid provoking the neighbors. “One opponent [said] ‘Synanon may even be ‘good but make them do it somewhere else.’” (Yablonsky 26) None of the critics who attempted to scuttle Synanon had ever set foot in the place. As these things go, Dederich was arrested, tried, and convicted of running a hospital without a license *and* out of zone; he served twenty-five days in jail.

This sort of publicity cannot be bought. On the heels of laudatory national press, “In May of [1961], the California legislature passed the Petris Bill¹⁰, which withdrew implied legal restrictions to the operation of Synanon, and in signing it, Governor [Edmund] Brown remarked: ‘Certainly, we owe Synanon and its founder, Charles Dederich, a chance to show what they can do.’”¹¹ The law shielded the Foundation from harassment, saving time and money it had spent defending itself.¹² Synanon became a national cause célèbre in the press—*Life Magazine*, *Time*, *Ebony*, *The Nation*, *Downbeat*, even *Walter Cronkite*,¹³ and politicians—notably, California Governor Edmund Brown, and United States Senator Thomas Dodd. Reflecting the times, attending a Synanon Saturday Night Party was hip. It attracted well-known actors, respected members of the press, writers, and scholars.¹⁴ The dopefiends took it in stride, running their stories and showing them around. (You won’t find this on the web: I spent a Saturday night party talking with Norman Fell.)¹⁵

“Senator Thomas J. Dodd, Chairman of the Senate Subcommittee to Investigate Juvenile Delinquency, [visited] Synanon. [Later, in] Washington [he addressed his colleagues, hailing ‘Synanon’s achievement [as] the first hopeful method of curing drug addicts that has ever been devised. It might [also] lead . . . to an effective treatment . . . for . . . criminals and juvenile delinquents . . .” Mr. President, there is indeed a miracle on the beach at Santa Monica, a man-made miracle that I feel can benefit thousands of drug addicts”(Yablonsky 73-74) Dodd invited Dederich to the 1962 White House Conference on Narcotics. John F. Kennedy, in his opening remarks, said, “There is no divergence of opinion on the need for vastly improved techniques and programs aimed at rehabilitating addicts . . . The discouragingly high rate of relapse among addicts who leave our medical institutions free of physical dependence is clear evidence that more must be done.” These ex-addicts, not the experts, were written up in *The Washington Post*: “Why has Synanon been able to succeed . . . where hospitals, prisons and jails have failed?” (Clark 71) And as a major selling point, as Dodd observed, was that it cost the government nothing, outside of Synanon’s 501(c)(3) tax exemption.

Seven years on, the headquarters moved a few blocks south to the formerly posh Casa del Mar Beach Club. Now, some eight hundred residents were voluntarily living together and staying clean. They were neither jailed nor in lockdown at one of the notorious Federal hospitals—the Lexington, Kentucky and Fort Worth Narcotic Farms; there were no doctors or staff dedicated to working on them.¹⁶ As President Kennedy pointed out, medical and psychiatric interventions and incarceration were abject failures. Claire Clark, an assistant professor of behavioral science at the University of Kentucky, throughout her 2017 book, *The Recovery Revolution: The Battle Over Addiction Treatment in the United States*, traces the government’s strategic and tactical blunders from the mid-twentieth century through today’s euphemistically

labeled opioid crisis. It is a parade of ignominy: there is the militaristic War on Drugs, overflowing penitentiaries (many run by profitable corporations) users left to live on the street, a dearth of tax-funded rehab beds, and, for the insured, inadequate ninety-day private rehabs¹⁷ where, regardless of their motives—predatory or righteous—the management expels clients when their insurance runs out.

Meanwhile, back at the ranch...

Synanon Becomes Bad for Synanon: The Charismatic Inventor Destroys His Creation

Naturally, unfamiliar readers will google Synanon. The following is a highlight reel of Synanon's implosion and the negative accounts that now define the group. Emphatically, this essay is not meant to set the record straight. Its focus is 1958-1972 before any of the events below occurred. Do your best to suspend your disbelief. Act as if the following has yet to happen.

Around 1972, Synanon's upward narrative arc dropped like a plummeting Acme safe about to flatten Wile E. Coyote. It went from Senator Dodd's "Miracle on the Beach" to pariah, included in dozens of top ten lists of cults. A web search brings up roughly one hundred twenty thousand results. Most will include some of these words: cult, violent cult, kooky cult, Imperial Marines, brainwashing, guns, lavish executive pay and perks, vasectomies, changing partners, bald heads, coercion, abuse, and the rattlesnake in the mailbox. The first sentence in Wikipedia is: "The *Synanon* organization was a violent cult, initially a drug rehabilitation program . . ."

Since 2019, amid a surging appetite for conspiracies and cult exposés, Synanon has been featured in outlets ranging from The Center for Investigative Reporting, Netflix, Oxygen TV, two doctoral dissertations, a memoir, and four or five podcasts.¹⁸ This past July tenth, the lead article in Jared Kushner's *Observer*—*The Multi-Billion Dollar 'Troubled Teen' Industry Is*

Getting a True-Crime Reckoning—features a glamor shot of Paris Hilton. (Apparently, Paris is a survivor.¹⁹) Assuredly, there are a fair number of substantive facts in these accounts. However, apart from a few lead sentences covering Synanon’s origin story, the balance of these narratives, written in incendiary language, is decontextualized by definition,

Readers will rightly ask, “If Synanon was so great, why is it defunct?” Usually, it comes down to “When and how did Chuck Dederich lose it?” To answer the question, consider the primary sources below. Such sources often carry greater weight than traditional methodologies. In other words, the “boots on the ground” are essential to the narrative. The statements below are from a survey of Synanon people conducted in May 2020. (They have been edited for clarity. “Betty” is Betty Dederich, Chuck’s wife from 1963 until she died in 1977.)

Q. What factors contributed to Synanon’s decline? Was Synanon a cult?

T.W. had been an addict for nine years when he joined in 1975

CED: great guy, great ideas, innovator, saved a lot of lives. He succumbed to the old AA adage: one drink is too many, and a thousand is not enough. Thirty years later . . . my thoughts are it never should have ended. There was no transfer of leadership, and the concept died when the man died.

Synanon was a microcosm of society. Some things went wrong, people had bad ideas, some people got hurt, some people went to jail, but nobody died. When you compare that to other societies, there is no comparison to what happens with injustice, prejudice, hunger, unemployment in the macro society.

L.S. was eleven in 1969 when she arrived with her mother and sister. Her dopefiend father had come a year earlier. The family had not seen him in three years. L.S. and her sister joined the kibbutz-style Synanon school and lived with their peers through high school. LS and her husband left in 1990. They are still together and have two adult children.

MONEY and greed!!! Once the executives [got] bonuses and large salaries [in 1976,] . . . everything was based on . . . what you did for a job and the money you made . . . We lost

our soul . . . he lost it the moment Betty died . . . She was . . . one of the only people that could go head to head with him. When she died, he lost that balance.

[Re: the snake in the mailbox:] . . . management allowed one of the best and most dear to my heart young man GO TO JAIL for this. He was a Synanon kid, and NO ONE stood up for him!! NO ONE!!! They let a Synanon kid take the blame . . . He was . . . one of the best! . . . For many years, his life was pure hell. It just wasn't right and will never be!

M.M. was among the earliest female addicts to join Synanon (1963-1980). She went on to become a public defender and judge.

I was using drugs and burning the candle at both ends and could no longer stay up all night and go to work in the morning . . .

The snake: A criminal act is a criminal act. Not to mention a cruel thing to do . . . [It] was equally cruel to the two kids who did it—the drug addict kid . . . made . . . genuine efforts to get past . . . Vietnam . . . He had killed people. [The progress] he had begun . . . [was] trampled.

L.P. (1969-1972) entered as a square in her late twenties.

I failed at a suicide attempt. Couldn't afford therapy. Thought I'd try the Game Club. It was free. I expected therapy. But when I entered for the first time, to investigate, I thought I saw sanctuary.

When we stopped smoking [in 1972]. That was the beginning of the end . . . with cults you're supposed to adore the leader. I disliked Chuck. Intensely. From the start. Thought he was an ugly pompous blowhard, a misogynist, a philistine, a bully . . . and he was not a good man . . . So, I followed the . . . people I could admire . . .

M.E. (1979-1998) was a young adult with no drug problems. "My cousins lived there and asked me to visit. I liked it so much. I decided to move in."

The snake—how poetic . . . The snake was another nail in the coffin . . .
Drinking? Ahhh... this too was a death knell . . . Economics, power imbalance, nepotism, entitlement, greed, hubris, paranoia. [It] was indeed a cult vis-a-vis the regimented lifestyle . . .

J.R. was eleven when his mother moved in with her kids

Is the Mormon Church a cult? When you get big enough, they quit calling you a cult and call you a religion. Scientology is still teetering on the brink. I think that the money was part of Chuck's plan to dissolve Synanon without leaving a bunch of people high and dry.

Two better informed Synanon observer/members, less hyperbolic than ordinary disgruntleds, were Lewis Yablonsky and Harold Benjamin. Yablonsky was an adventurous young sociologist, who immersed himself in Synanon from 1961 to 1965. His research transcended the academic protocols of objective and subjective. His engrossing book, *Synanon: The Tunnel Back*, published in 1965, is as intimate as it is accurate. His unconventional, intensely personal relationship with Dederich, and the vivid oral histories of dozens of ex-addicts make the book a page-turner. (Yablonsky had a seventeen-year marriage with an ex-addict he met at Synanon.) At a remove of forty years, in 2002, Yablonsky published an article—*Whatever Happened to Synanon?*—in the Criminal Justice Policy Review:²⁰

[People] often confront me about the controversy about Synanon . . . They ask . . . about the negative aspects and stories about Synanon and Chuck’s bizarre machinations . . . in his later years. I seldom go into detail and have a uniform answer: Alexander Bell invented the telephone . . . If Bell went off-track and manifested bizarre behavior in his later years, does this change the enormous utility of his invention? From my viewpoint, Chuck Dederich’s creation, Synanon One [the period between 1958-1972 when drug rehab was its central focus], is one of the great humanitarian inventions of the past century for [addressing] the crime problem. As the methodology created in Synanon becomes more developed, known, and utilized, its value for changing behavior in a positive direction will become increasingly apparent to many people in this century.

Harold Benjamin, a prosperous lawyer, and his wife Harriet lived in Synanon from 1966 to 1972. In 1982, they founded The Wellness Community, since merged with Gilda’s Club (Gilda Radner) and now known as The Cancer Support Community. (CSC’s website claims it is the “largest professionally led nonprofit network of cancer support worldwide.”) Harold’s clear-eyed, warts-included dirty rotten story is all the more compelling because of his professional bona fides, astute insights gleaned from his close relationship with Chuck, and his years as the manager of the two thousand member game club in Santa Monica. His lively recollections were recorded at a research seminar sponsored by The Graduate Theological Center for the Study of

New Religious Movements in 1982. Ten years past his departure, Harold's profound Synanon experience was centered in the now of the then, as powerfully as his later life was centered in the now of the now. I have read the seventy-five-page transcript three times and cannot find a quote that stands out. That's the thing: Harold's Synanon story *is* the context. You had to be there. I urge the reader to listen to the recording.²¹

The Synanon Game: No Dichotomy, No Game; No Game, No Synanon

The "loud, dirty and wild" sessions at the TLC Club were the first of what became the Synanon Game, the methodological and spiritual core of the organization. (Yablonsky 49) It is the template that, for good or ill, has been adopted by thousands of therapeutic communities, luxury rehab getaways costing as much as \$80,000 per week,²² intentional communities, body broker scams (see page 9), and the human potential movement. It is not attack therapy, peer to peer counseling, tough love, scared straight, encounter groups, intervention, group therapy, ego destruction, Spanish Inquisition, or psychic surgery. Though it falls beyond the boundaries of the Overton Window, it is pure Occam's razor. The only rules are no physical violence or the threat of violence. You can say anything to anyone, in any way: your boss, your boyfriend, your rivals, your elders, even the Old Man (CED). No subject is off-limits, and no one's vested status counts for anything. The game is, by turns, the untethered id, the engaged mind, and the bleeding heart. Notably, it is leaderless. Few, if any, of the variations employed elsewhere feature leaderlessness. In the optimal game, the players must conjure a profound measure of trust.

An intake interview is a preview of a newcomer's first game. After four days going cold turkey on the kicking couch: "Big deal, you kicked a habit. Billions of people in the world don't shoot dope. You've kicked, what, four, five times? We could drop you out of a plane anywhere

in the world, and you'd score in twenty minutes. You're not addicted to dope; you're addicted to stupidity.

The game's basic format—about a dozen people sitting in a circle—has not changed since 1958. A regular two-hour game is one-third high-decibel hollering, anger, envy, insult, rage, and hatred within a flood of profanity. The second third is a mix of humor, farce, satire, ridicule, pants-pissing laughs, self-aggrandizement, and gross exaggeration. The rest is a blend of pop psychology, the pearls of Ralph Waldo Emerson, Bertolt Brecht and Kafka; the Erichs—Fromm and Hoffer, and Khalil Gibran. Occasionally, a moving insight, some serendipity will just spring from nowhere. There is valiant weeping, truth-telling, painful secrets revealed, projection, and identifying. Adept players can steer the action by dint of their experience, theatrics, humor, legitimacy in the community, verbal skill, and empathy. It can be quite sophisticated—Chuck advised players to defend vigorously, indict everybody, tap into your prejudices, use metaphor, exaggerate, lie, bring up old indictments, allude to authority, allege subversion, involve several people in the indictment, use carrom shots.²³

Ordinarily, a game begins with an indictment. Someone has a beef, likely superficial, sometimes dire, with another person in the circle. Other players support the charge, bringing the heat. If the game is on you, you're defensive. Half the time, you will try to brazen it out with a fierce counterattack; you might respond humbly to deflect the noise. One way or another, depending on how receptive or skilled you are, if the charge is valid, you will probably field it in dozens of games. An intractable character flaw can dog you repeatedly.

The first line of the following clip, from an early documentary, *House on the Beach*, is verbatim.²⁴ The rest is reconstructed.

(Two guys from Pelham Bay, at full throttle, are screaming at each other.)

ANDY. [I said:] Tony, please take it easy—and BANG!, you broke the fucking window.

TONY. *You* broke the fucking window

ANDY. No, asshole, *you* broke the fucking window.



TONY. (*appealing for help*) HUGH, you were there. You saw him break the goddam thing.

HUGH. You both broke the fucking window.

JIMMY T. (*a fireplug, also from the Bronx, runs the Construction Dept.*) Tony, let's say you broke the window 'cause you probably did, you dumb douche. Just cop to it. Here's what I know: we're out an expensive fucking window. I could give a shit why you did it. Maybe you were thinking about Rita dumping you in the shitter. All I know is if you did it, copout or you're gonna feel like shit until you split. I'll drop you at Loser's Corner²⁵ myself.

TONY. Go fuck yourself, asshole. When I knew you on the street, you were a punk. I *dropped* more dope than you ever shot.

JIMMY T. (*turning to Andy*) Hey, Andy. You're running the job. The fuck's wrong with you? You got enough WAM [walk around money] to pay for it?

ANDY, TONY, and HUGH. Fuck you, Jimmy.

And so it goes and goes. Often, after a withering assault, someone, usually an oldtimer (called the strength or the glue), identifies with Tony. He tells him how he ran a forklift through a wall in the warehouse. He is picking Tony up before the game turns on someone else. On reflection, Andy and Tony might agree with the bromide, "We're not attacking you; we're attacking your behavior." This is true maybe half the time, but it's not a bad idea to act as if it's true.

"Regardless of when they were there, former members believed almost universally that the game had transformative effects . . . It was a primary venue for expressing new ideas and disagreeing with Synanon policies. In this way . . . the game performed the same function for Synanon that mutual-criticism sessions did for the Oneida community, where, as Charles Nordhoff wrote, 'the institution of criticism . . . [is] the cornerstone of their community life. It is, in fact, their main institution of government.'" (Janzen 15)

There is a strict dichotomy between in-the-game and out-of-the game. Outside of the game, you act respectfully, cooperate, and look out for one another. Chuck explained: "We go out of the Game and put our backs to each other . . . we take care of business. Then we come into the Game . . . we turn and, we face each other, and we fight." (Janzen 17).

The game is not for everybody; it is not for most people. In 1963, the eminent humanistic psychologist, Abraham Maslow, after sitting in a game at Daytop, an early Synanon spin-off managed by former Synanon alumni, said:

I have done clinical psychotherapy . . . with privileged characters generally . . . [I treated] them as if they were like brittle china . . . [Maybe this] whole attitude is wrong. What I have read about Synanon, . . . what I saw last night . . . suggests that. . . maybe these ideas are outdated.

[After the game last night] did anybody . . . commit suicide or crack in any way? No. Has anyone gone crazy from this rough treatment? No. Extremely direct talking . . . worked fine. [This] contradicts a whole lifetime of training . . .

How strong are people?. . . How much honesty can people take? . . . [This] . . . indicates that not only can people take honesty, but also that it may be very helpful, very therapeutic. It may . . . [be] true even when the honesty hurts.

[A] name for this might be “no-crap therapy.” It serves to clean out the defenses, the rationalizations, the veils, the evasions and politenesses of the world . . . In these groups people . . . refuse to take any crap or excuses or evasions of any sort.

[All] sorts of games [are] cooked up to cover up the Truth . . . that the average American does not have a real friend in the world, . . . what a psychologist would call real friendships. The marriages are mostly no good . . . [Not] being able to resist alcohol, not being able to resist drugs, not being able to resist crime, not being able to resist anything . . . are due to the lack of . . . basic psychological gratifications.

[People need safety, [freedom from] anxiety . . . belongingness, you have to belong to a group . . . [of] people who like you; and finally, respect . . . Could it be that Daytop is effective because it provides an environment where these feelings are possible?²⁶

Steve Simon, a prize student of Dr. Maslow's, came to Synanon in 1969 to conduct research for his Ph.D. and stayed on as a full-fledged resident for over a dozen years. Dr. Simon can wax as expansively as anyone in academia. If you prefer the rococo language of the late eighteenth century, Dr. Simon is your man. In 1978, Steve published *Synanon: Toward Building a Humanistic Organization* in *The Journal of Humanistic Psychology*.

Gaming . . . is an elaborately contrived exercise— . . . players express their values . . . to . . . create their society . . . [It] is an aesthetic medium, an art-form, a craft, like a symphony to be written or played, a lithograph to be printed, a tapestry to be woven . . .

In Maslow's terms, a gaming organization tends to the metaneeds of its members. The Synanon game meets metaneeds in a generation of metapathologies (meaninglessness, anomie, alienation, cynicism, nihilism, disintegration, robotizing, depression, despair,

loss of zest in life, spiritual illness and crises, futility, aimless destruction, and indifference)...²⁴

Whoa, Nellie! I knew Steve well. He never talked like this in real life.

There are as many takes on the game as there are players. These responses to the survey are as valid as any scholar's examination.

Q. How do you feel about the game and the in-the-game/on-the-floor dichotomy?

WK was eighteen when his mother pulled him from a Brooklyn corner and shipped him to Synanon. (1969-1990). He has since led a very successful square life. All that he does is infused with his Synanon values. His children are the evidence. Born after WK left, they may as well be Synanon kids. They are different—good different.

[There was a strict division in behavior . . . FUN, every bit of it . . . [when] it was pure and not corrupt . . . But impossible in the great world. Needs tight community, where . . . people connect regularly. I . . . felt safest in the game . . . [all of us equals] . . . [We] learned to express our pain, reveal our character flaws . . . [It was] OK to show hurt and be vulnerable. It saved my life!

LS.

Well, it was good when we actually practiced the “leave it in the game.” I remember many times when someone would “patch-in” to the game lab and send someone to the pot sink or break up relationships and send someone packing. The game changed somewhere along the way. Maybe after Betty died but the game got mean and unfair! Somewhere we blurred the lines of “in and out.”

What we see here is that the dichotomies, the essential operating principles of Synanon's civil society, began unraveling—and it took the place down.

Character Capitalism

In 1966, CED addressed the patrician Comstock Club in Sacramento: “Synanon is like General Motors or Ford, or the used car dealer over here on the corner, or any other group of people which is attempting to develop a thrust forward in space-time. [It] is autocratic in its internal politics. Synanon has a power structure just *exactly* like . . . a corporation with a

chairman and a board of directors and status levels and vertical lines of communication with *one* thing added—that thing is the Synanon Game which...provides another line of communication for human groupings which, in my opinion, is responsible for everything that Synanon does.”²⁸ (This reference to the in-the-game/out-of-the game dichotomy comes up in all the research. It is the secret sauce, the pure operational heart.)

“Character is the Only Rank,”²⁹ a Ralph Waldo Emerson pearl, was the cornerstone of Synanon’s business model. Pooling resources at the TLC Club, a broke, fledgling commune, was not so much a core value as a necessity. An upside was that in these conditions sustaining a character-based economy is easy. To remain viable, as the group expands and prospers, it takes self-discipline, commitment, group sacrifice, trust, consciousness, and eternal vigilance. Utopian communities with no organized system, quickly dissolve when the dishes need washing, and junk cars, propped up by cinder blocks, are strewn about. No matter its lofty visions and ambitions, a durable utopia must be underpinned by a social contract of trust that rests on a mundane system at its center around which human tribes can coalesce. The tribe must meet the quotidian demands—to feed the kids, sweep the floor, keep the toilets flushing, and make dinner—before changing the world. “‘Synanon pioneered the hippie business,’ said . . . Dederich. The group modeled communal living before it became fashionable. Yet Dederich viewed latter-day hippies as hypocrites who ‘took what they liked from the established world and then tuned in, turned on, and dropped out.’ Their communes were not self-sufficient, their righteous spirituality disguised immaturity. ‘What’s holy about getting loaded to your eyelashes and leaving your garbage to pile up and breed flies while your plumbing goes out of whack and your girls get babies and the clap at the same time?’” (Clark 17)

CED knew how to drive a desk; he understood this stuff. He was the witch doctor of this hodgepodge. Synanon wasn't really in the dopefiend business. It was in the delayed gratification business. Chuck upended the medical and carceral models of wrangling dopefiends with a culture built from open doors, deliberate integration—by race, ethnicity, gender, religion, class—self-reliance, peer to peer accountability, iconoclasm, Emily Post, real work, real play, noon seminars, whimsy, dirty rotten stories, free cigarettes,³¹ and the game. Chuck captained a tight ship with loose people.

The pillars of the Character Economy (my coinage) are straightforward:

- I. The game.
- II. Dichotomies.
- III. Government money. Government strings will snuff out a good idea in less than a year. For Synanon people, taxpayer money equals jail, peeing in cups, never being trusted, busy work, confinement, guards, clueless doctors, and puffed up policymakers.
- IV. Real jobs. We do the work that needs doing. Every job offers a chance to acquire skills pass on skills, take responsibility, learn, and teach teamwork, and keep the place afloat.

As repeatedly stated, Synanon was not for everyone: “Newcomer, you are a Synanon dunce, a baby. You want what you want when you want it. You want to stay clean? You’ll have to grow up. If you can’t do that, it doesn’t matter how many times you kick a habit, or OD, or see your running partners OD; no matter how long you stay here, you *will* fall down a manhole and run home to mommy. Trust us; do what we tell you, and you might make it. Most people don’t.” What worked best for me on my darkest days, were the last four words of the final paragraph of the Synanon Philosophy

No one can force a person towards permanent and creative learning. He will learn only if he wills to. Any other type of learning is temporary and inconsistent with the self and will disappear as soon as the threat is removed. Learning is possible in an environment that provides information, the setting, materials, resources, **and by his being there.**[emphasis added]

History runs in cycles. The joy for historians is to unearth something astounding.

Meanwhile, we ferret out a fresh rephrasing of tired sermons like the Synanon Philosophy.

These days, “by his being there” is not so dire, so I use the final lines of Lord Buckley’s riff on Jonah and the Whale.³²

And, phallam!, he hit the whale's big sneezin' meter and,
fffsheeww!,
blew him out on the cool groovey sands of serenity.

Which only goes to prove, as Confushi said,
"If you get to it, and you [cannot] do it . . . There you jolly
well are, aren't you!

In Synanon’s character economy, vested status (outer-direction) was subordinate to personal status (inner-direction). The outer-directed/inner-directed dichotomy derives from the in the game/out of the game dichotomy. In Synanon, one’s worth was judged by what economists might label soft metrics: What do you do for the common good? Are you fully conscious—are you a noticer?³⁰ Do you look out for newcomers? Are you a good game player. Do you “seek and assume responsibility?” (This is the third line of the Synanon Prayer.) By contrast, the cash metric is the holy of holies in the Milton Friedman unfettered market economy. Cash maximizes shareholder value. There is no social contract. Instead, the core values and the mission statement—corporate citizenship, stewardship of the environment, the primacy of “our people”—are minstrelsy, reserved for advertising and the annual report. Thomas Hobbes is Chairman of the Board. Never mind that the unshakeable belief that cost and value are quantifiable, free of irksome consequences, is delusional.

Chuck Dederich's description of The Synanon Foundation as a corporate enterprise was elegant in its simplicity. Chuck was not a faddist, but the younger managers jumped on the techniques and jargon of the flood of business transformation manifestos of the eighties that claimed their own aisle at Barnes & Noble. Tom Peters' 1982 book, *In Search of Excellence*, was widely read and debated. Synanon often tracked the trends of the "outside world." These were Synanon's operating principles all along, albeit with a peppier vocabulary. Sadly, when Synanon embraced the go-go eighties, the baby dissolved in the bathwater. My rabbi, Jarrie Tent, split around that time. I drove her to the airport.³²

During this period—a fractious time in Synanon—a cadre of Synanon executives tried mightily to implement the methods and philosophy of W. Edwards Deming's System of Profound Knowledge® throughout AdGap, Synanon's successful advertising and marketing promotions business, the main source of Synanon's revenue.³³ Dr. Deming, a sui generis genius statistician and reluctant quality shaman, was instrumental in improving the government's logistics management during World War II. After the war, he was shunned by the booming, hubristic American companies drunk on a Marlboro Man American exceptionalism not seen before or since. So Deming went to work in Japan to teach Japanese manufacturers the methods of Statistical Process Control (SPC). Deming is the father of the Total Quality Management movement. (The annual quality award in Japan is the Deming Prize.) His fourteen points,³⁴ as deceptively simple as AA's twelve steps, are the template for the continuous improvement process. The idea is to optimize every node in a complicated, compartmentalized system by integrating its thousands of processes to create an interconnected whole that emphasizes communication at and between all levels. The system requires sincerely committed leadership and employee empowerment. In a sense, it is the academic virtue of critical thinking applied to

capitalist institutions. Four of the fourteen points comport with my Synanon training and have profoundly informed my worldview—Drive out fear. (i.e., promote joy in the workplace.) Remove barriers that rob people of pride of workmanship . . . Eliminate slogans, exhortations and targets for the workforce. Institute a vigorous program of education and self-improvement for everyone.

Around that time, I attended a Ford-sponsored Deming Seminar. Dr. Deming, then eighty-four, despite his stern, flat delivery, was a compelling oracle. The science of SPC eluded me, but his humanistic arguments for the fourteen points stuck. He told the story of a female executive of a Chicago firm who had a nine o'clock appointment the following morning to close a big deal. She was instructed to take the red-eye, go straight to the meeting, don't pass Go, don't collect \$200.00, and fly back that night. Management was eager to save money on airfare and lodging. The woman arrived at the meeting, exhausted, and stressed. Her value hadn't been optimized. She closed the deal, but at what measurable and immeasurable costs? This is the Deming's genius.

A year later, I was dispatched to the International Conference on Systems Thinking and Dynamic Behavior (Woodstock for Deming groupies). When the first breakout groups were called, I was caught flat-footed and had to grab the first available seat in the first room I could find. A young whiz named Fred Kofman, from MIT's Organizational Learning Center, was conducting a seminar about something that sounded important. His casual, accessible presentation belied his pile of academic credentials. His subject was something like "Bringing Your Whole Self to Work." He was good—a TED Talker before there were TED Talks. It is the first time I heard of Monday Morning Parking Lot Heart Attack Syndrome. But wait...Last week I found Fred in a dry academic book, *Awakening Compassion at Work: The Quiet Power That*

Elevates People and Organizations by Monica C. Worline and Jane E. Dutton.³⁵ On page ten of the foreword, they write “People dread going to work . . . often using drugs and alcohol to dull their pain . . . [It is] a stark reality that heart attacks are the highest on Monday mornings, by at least 20 percent . . . more than other days. More than wars, murderers, and terrorists, our work is literally killing us. As Fred Kofman wrote, ‘There are no death camps in corporations, but . . . companies hide great suffering in their basements.’”³⁶

AdGap people rejected SPC: they were stung by the cleavage of the dichotomies. Management, lacking the political will to neutralize CED, was morally compromised. Many of my colleagues took the fourteen points with them along with rock solid enthusiasm and sturdy delayed gratification muscles and built heavy-duty careers and companies. (When you stop shooting dope, you have a lot of time to do a lot of things.) Their income taxes and ancillary social and economic payout are an incalculable return on America’s investment in Synanon.

Taking an Incomplete

A savvy scholar might rewrite his introduction after writing the conclusion. Before my six months’ seat-of-the pants, tip-of-the-iceberg research, my holy writ was: there is no absolute history, no single set of causes and effects for any discrete historical event. Rather, history is the hub of a wheel whose spokes fan out to myriad understandings. This conceit does not help make a case for rehabilitating Synanon’s reputation. In this instance, there is a single root cause—the ruinous rupture of the in the game/out of the game dichotomy. The permutations of that dichotomy nurtured the institution and safeguarded it from itself. To restore the Synanon ideal, to take its place as an untapped resource for the commonweal, it must join the queue for another generation while the rebirth of the nation careens like an untethered bumper car.

Afterword

Lewis Yablonsky's *The Tunnel Back* holds up as the most passionate, dispassionate, compassionate, and accurate study of Synanon. Yablonsky knew the primary sources intimately and as he matured and tended to his craft, he became the most articulate primary source of Synanon I. An immersion in his papers is due.

Endnotes

¹ Oliver Sacks *The Abyss: Music and Amnesia* (The New Yorker: September 24, 2007) 100

² *Accelerating Dynamics of Collective Attention*. Nature Communications

Our modeling suggests that shorter attention cycles are mainly driven by increasing information flows, represented as content production and consumption rates. As influx increases, individual topics are adopted more rapidly, leading to steeper rises in collective attention with the self-inhibitory effects of saturation resulting in an equally steepening downfall. Thus, in our modeling framework, producing and consuming more content results in shortening of attention spans for individual topics and higher turnover rates between popular cultural items. In other words, the ever-present competition for recency and the abundance of information leads to the squeezing of more topics in the same time intervals as the result of limitations of the available collective attention.

³ Consider this instructive excerpt from the 2003 doctoral dissertation of Sandra Barty, a non-resident game player who later lived in Synanon from 1970-1990.

Synanon is simply impossible to communicate in individualistic, logical, linear, rational language. This . . . is further complicated because most of Synanon's communication was oral rather than written: meaning was created in group conversations. Explaining Synanon demands [an] emotional, even spiritual expression that goes outside the boundaries of standard academic form.

⁴ Digby, Anne *Changes in the Asylum: The Case of York, 1777-1815* (Glasgow: The Economic History Review, New Series, 36, no. 2 May 1983) 218-39

⁵ Millstein, Josh *Give My Regards to Broadmoor* A paper from Psychiatry, Madness, and Society Professor Andreas Killen CCNY, New York, NY May 2018

⁶ Dederich, Charles E. *Ten Years Sober* (Oral History Program University of California Los Angeles, CA, 1964), 21 (transcript of an audio recording)

⁷ *Ibid.*, 21.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 21

⁹ *Ten Years Sober*, 9

¹⁰ Nick Petris was a long-serving California State Assemblyman

¹¹ Citation missing at this time

¹² The Legislature is well aware of the Synanon program: Health and Safety Code section 11391, which prescribes the places in which addiction may be treated (e.g., state and county prisons and hospitals), was amended in 1961 by adding the caveat that "neither this section nor any other provision of this division shall be construed to prohibit the maintenance of a place in which persons seeking to recover from narcotic addiction reside and endeavor to aid one another and receive aid from others in recovering from such addiction, nor does this section or such division prohibit such aid, provided that no person is treated for addiction in such place by means of administering, furnishing, or prescribing of narcotics. The preceding sentence is declaratory of pre-existing law." (Stats. 1961, ch. 1075.) The Assembly Interim Committee on Criminal Procedure subsequently explained that the amendment "indicated that the State Legislature had no intention to prohibit private efforts at narcotics rehabilitation. ... [S]pecifically recognizing the legality of 'places of aid' the Legislature attempted to disassociate the State from local efforts to close Synanon." (22 Assembly Interim Com. Report No. 3 (1963) p. <https://law.justia.com/cases/california/supreme-court/2d/71/31.html>)

¹³ Walter Cronkite, "Synanon in Prison," episode 13, season 9, Twentieth Century, CBS, aired March 13, 1966

¹⁴ A sampling: "James Mason, Jane Russell, Henry Miller¹⁴, Rod Serling, and Ray Bradbury, Steve Allen, Milton Berle, and Jack Lemmon. Some of them Sponsors of Synanon (SOS) was formed. Among the group were Hollywood types;; members of the national media: Life reporter Richard Stolley, and Henry Geiger (publisher of *Manas Magazine*); and "criminology and mental health researchers such as Karl Menninger, Donald Cressey, and Lewis Yablonsky." (Clark 39)

¹⁵ Norman Fell was, once a capable journeyman, was best-known for his role in the hit comedy *Three's Company* (1977-1984) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mJZ-PtjMbNU> https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Norman_Fell

¹⁶ Pedrick, Alexis J. Treating America's Opioid Addiction, Science History Institute, August, 2018 Podcast, <https://www.sciencehistory.org/distillations/podcast/treating-americas-opioid-addiction-1>

John Stallone: Everything I read, everything I heard was once a junkie always a junkie, once a dopefiend, always a dopefiend. That was from doctors, psychiatrists, psychologists, the whole medical field, lawyers, judges...They all said the same thing, and this is like around the world.

John Stallone: They had a psychiatrist talk to you, and they wanted you to talk about your mother. I mean, here I am from Brooklyn. I'm going to tell this stranger about my mother? I want to get up and smack him. You know? You were treated like, therapeutically like a chimp in an experimental lab. That's the feeling I got from the psychiatrist and the therapist that tried to work with me in Lexington, Kentucky.

¹⁷ Haden, Peter, Cornish Audie "*Body Brokers*" *Get Kickbacks To Lure People With Addictions To Bad Rehab*, All Things Considered National Public Radio, 15 August 2017 15 Aug. 2017 <https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2017/08/15/542630442/body-brokers-get-kickbacks-to-lure-people-with-addictions-to-bad-rehab>

¹⁸ My favorites are *Coffee and Cults* and *Let's Talk About Sects*

¹⁹ The Multi-Billion Dollar 'Troubled Teen' Industry Is Getting a True-Crime Reckoning <https://observer.com/2020/07/this-is-paris-hilton-the-lost-kids-troubled-teen-industry/>

²⁰ Yablonsky, Lewis. "Whatever Happened to Synanon? The Birth of the Anticriminal Therapeutic Community Methodology." *Criminal Justice Policy Review*, vol. 13, no. 4, SAGE Publications, Dec. 2002, pp. 329–36, doi:10.1177/088740302237802. © 2002 Sage Publications

²¹ Synanon, Research Seminar, Center for the Study of New Religious Movements
<https://californiarevealed.org/islandora/object/cavpp%3A18167>

²² <https://passagesmalibu.com/>

²³ A carrom shot is a misdirection. While talking to one person the speaker says something really meant for a different player on the other side of the room. As in a game of pool: strike one ball so it hits another that veers off to hit another that goes into the pocket

²⁴ See the trailer <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iF2vzb9xW9g>

²⁵ The intersection of Pico and Sepulveda, about a mile from the Santa Monica House

²⁶ Maslow, A. H. *Synanon and Eupsychia*. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, 1967, 7(1), 28–35.

²⁷ Simon, Steven I. "Synanon: Toward Building a Humanistic Organization." *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, vol. 18, no. 3, Sage Publications, July 1978, pp. 3–20

²⁸ CED from a talk at the Comstock Club (Sacramento, CA), a non-partisan Sacramento organization which sponsored state and national figures from the political, business, military, and entertainment fields to provide talks on the issues of the day Comstock Club speaker series
https://archive.org/details/casacsh_000534/casacsh_000534_a_access.mp3

²⁹ Emerson, Ralph Waldo, and Gilman, William H. *Journals and Miscellaneous Notebooks of Ralph Waldo Emerson*. Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1960. 250

³⁰ Ongoing leitmotifs in Synanon were tidiness, awareness of one's surrounding, safety, manners, etc. One of the more frivolous fiats in the crazy eighties was for everyone to have two pocket shirts for 3x5 cards for recording anything in the facility that may need attention (broken fence rail, water leak, poorly placed pothole). This sounds OK so far, but how is everyone going to lay his hands on a two pocket shirt for the following morning? How about a sewing bee? Ten or so people sewed pockets on everyone's t-shirt. But wait...this went on for a while. We custom ordered two-pocket t shirts—replete with a Synanon logo—from one of our suppliers. In those days it took three weeks to deliver an order. They are quite a collector's item.

³¹ At considerable cost, every resident received a carton of his brand of cigarettes every week. In prison, cigarettes are currency. Free cigarettes underscored the fact that Synanon was not jail.

³² Lord Buckley (1906-1960), a hipster and proto rapper had an eclectic edgy following: "Dizzy Gillespie, Lenny Bruce, Wavy Gravy, Del Close, and, even after Buckley's death, Ken Kesey, George Harrison, Tom Waits, Frank Zappa, Robin Williams, and Jimmy Buffett. Bob Dylan, in his book *Chronicles*, said "Buckley was the hipster bebop preacher who defied all labels."

Audio:: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=svvfhcvtBAC> Text <http://keever.us/jonah.html>

³³ This was the third bookend of me and Jarrie sitting side by side—In the back seat of a Chevy Malibu. she was on my left, our tribe leader (Manny Rivera?) to my right. I thought we were headed to Baskin Robbins. In truth, I had been pretty manic for a couple of weeks, and management thought it would best for me to crash down at the L.A. County psych ward. When the orderlies cut off my Grandfather's naked mermaid signet ring, she held on to it until I was discharged. My brother came to fetch me and take me back to New York to taper off the Thorazine. Thinking it might get lost, Jarrie kept the ring for the four months I was gone. Maybe it wouldn't have been lost if she gave it to Ezra, but why take he chance. Last year we gave it to our Grandson. His mother has it on a high shelf until she is sure he won't lose it.

³³ AdGap had a quirky start. Two guys were out trying to hustle toilet paper. They entered a small factory, thinking there would be enough toilet paper there for the owner to donate some to a place saving drug addicts. The owner agreed to the donation, but said he had a better fundraising idea. The factory printed pens with company logos to give to customers. The factory sold their products through distributors who would call on the customer companies and send the orders to the factory which then imprinted the goods and shipped them to the end user. This was a great business for Synanon. It required no capital investment, would be great training for the residents, and would generate cash. By the 1980s, Synanon's sales were in the single digit millions and was one of the top fifty distributors in the industry. It was a regular business with sales, bookkeeping, customer service, computers, etc.

³⁴ Create constancy of purpose for improving products and services.

Adopt the new philosophy.

Cease dependence on inspection to achieve quality.

End the practice of awarding business on price alone; instead, minimize total cost by working with a single supplier.

Improve constantly and forever every process for planning, production and service.

Institute training on the job.

Adopt and institute leadership.

Drive out fear.

Break down barriers between staff areas.

Eliminate slogans, exhortations and targets for the workforce.

Eliminate numerical quotas for the workforce and numerical goals for management.

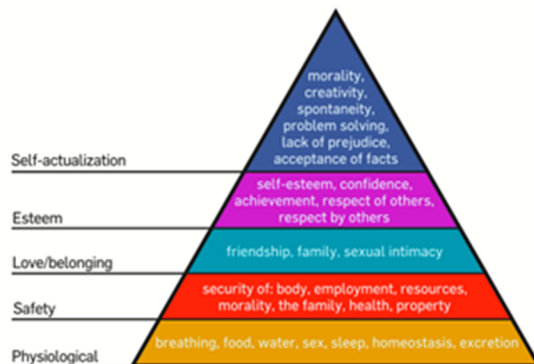
Remove barriers that rob people of pride of workmanship, and eliminate the annual rating or merit system.

Institute a vigorous program of education and self-improvement for everyone.

Put everybody in the company to work accomplishing the transformation

³⁵ Worline, Monica C., and Jane E. Dutton. *Awakening Compassion at Work: the Quiet Power That Elevates People and Organizations*. First edition. Oakland, California: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2018

³⁶ Kofman, Fred. *Conscious Business: How to Build Value Through Values* Booksurge Llc. (North Charleston, SC) 2008 [This is straight out of Maslow's influential Hierarchy of Needs]



Riddle me this. How many character disorders are in the picture?



L-R: Chuck, Alan Felix, Gil Faucette, John Ciampa, A.H. Maslow

9/18/2020

Further Reading

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<https://www.sciencehistory.org/distillations/podcast/treating-americas-opioid-addiction-1>

1. Miner, Horace. "Body Ritual among the Nacirema." *American Anthropologist*, vol. 58, no. 3, 1956, pp. 503–507

²⁶ ²⁶ See the entire Horace Miner essay at <https://www-jstor-org.ccny-proxy1.libr.ccny.cuny.edu/action/doAdvancedSearch?q0=Body+Ritual+Among+the+Nacirema&f0=ti&c1=AND&q1=horace+miner&f1=au&c2=AND&q2=&f2=all&c3=AND&q3=&f3=all&c4=AND&q4=&f4=all&c5=AND&q5=&f5=all&c6=AND&q6=&f6=all&acc=on&la=&sd=&ed=&pt=&isbn=&group=none>

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Wikipedia Buckminster Fuller <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Synanon>

Rosenthal, Mitchell, Columbia University Center for Oral History Research <https://www.ccohr.incite.columbia.edu/mitch-rosenthal/>

Mitch Rosenthal Oral History [Mitch Rosenthal ORAL ISSTORY 1_Mitchell_2014-2015.pdf](#)

On his involvement with Synanon I Page 27-35

Then it went wrong 37-@57

Lasting impact

Rosenthal: Well, what was dramatic in Synanon—it's dramatic in Phoenix House—is that you can sit down with someone, get their story, and get how chaotic and self-destructive their lives were. And now you're looking at them. And there they are, healthy, and vigorous, and participating in life, and sober, and helping other people to get through the same kind of problems. It is a revelation to see that. [interruption]

[Ftuerer Shock Alvin er on experimental communities page 237, 118. Fractured famil chapter on page 126 in PDF pp 226, 237](#)

Ta-Nehisi Coates Between the World and Me

<https://www.rehabs.com/top-rated-treatment-centers/>
<https://www.therapeuticcommunities.org/about-us/tc-core-values/>
<http://www.treatmentcommunitiesofamerica.org/>

<http://wftc.org/wps/>

<http://www.asapnys.org/links-of-interest/>

<https://artausa.org/residential-mental-health-directory/>

What's Wrong with Addiction? by Helen Keane (Per Claire Clark) https://www-jstor-org.ccny-proxy1.libr.ccny.cuny.edu/stable/4005374?Search=yes&resultItemClick=true&searchText=what%27s&searchText=wrong&searchText=with&searchText=addiction&searchUri=%2Faction%2FdoBasicSearch%3FQuery%3Dwhat%2527s%2Bwrong%2Bwith%2Baddiction&ab_segments=0%2Fbasic_SYC-4946%2Fcontrol&refreqid=search%3A16a4a982e9f36a40155343b94a1d1673&seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents

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The Filter Filter part 1

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On his involvement with Synanon I Page 27-35

Then it went wrong 37-@57

Lasting impact

Rosenthal: Well, what was dramatic in Synanon—it's dramatic in Phoenix House—is that you can sit down with someone, get their story, and get how chaotic and self-destructive their lives were. And now you're looking at them. And there they are, healthy, and vigorous, and participating in life, and sober, and helping other people to get through the same kind of problems. It is a revelation to see that. [interruption]

[Ftuere Shock Alvin er on experimental communities page 237, 118. Fractured famil chapter on page 126 in PDF pp 226, 237](#)

Ta-Nehisi Coates Between the World and Me

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