

Given that emotions come from the mind, I pride myself on being calm headed and normally objective in daily interactions with people. My emotional zone was recently tested and I found myself bouncing all over the place mentally. I had an interaction with a PH. D (in Psychology at the University) that tested my Fact Field and threw me into a clockwise spin of Judgment, and back to Doing, and then back to my Fact Field, and then back to Judgment, and so on. I continually felt my Fact Field shrink and I got stuck in the Refractory Zone repeatedly.

I waited for 20 minutes, in the PH. D's waiting room, past my appointment time. Which put me off a little, although I was on time for my appointment, I considered how, as Barry Schwartz puts it, "the more important a person is the more others' access to him must be regulated." I felt my emotions turn from calmness to frustration. Finally, I was ushered into his office, and was asked to sit in the chair opposite his desk. I felt that my judgment of him was somehow wrong and my fact field expanded back again to normal.

But, when no apology for the lateness was provided, I immediately got upset. He sat at his desk and wrote something down on a piece of paper, while I sat quietly. No words were exchanged for what seemed like an eternity. Finally, he looked up at me and asked me what the problem was. Now, I am used to a simple exchange of pleasantries, like, how are you?, my name is so and so, etc. I felt my body tense up. I took a deep breath, trying to center myself, and explained why I had made the appointment. But, afterwards, I realized I was angry. I was stuck in the refractory zone of anger. I didn't like the feeling.

To make matters worse, he swung his chair around and stopped within 2 feet of my face. This was another violation of the cultural norm, that of the Proxemis rule, my

personal space had been violated. My anger turned to fear and I immediately launched back toward the wall. I experienced confusion, because none of my expectations, so far, of a normal human interaction were met. I immediately judged this person as rude and maybe incompetent. I didn't know how to respond, or as Herbert Blumer puts it, I didn't know how to act. So I sat motionless, dazed, and hoped that this man would back away from me. I wanted to get up and run away.

The man suddenly backed away and spoke with a softer, more soothing, voice. Eckman says that "facial expressions are especially crucial in reading of (peoples) attitudes and emotions", and certainly I must have given the doctor a facial message. I was able to relax some and remembered to breathe and get back to the point at hand. I had suspended judgment and went back to the fact field, escaping the refractory zone feelings.

The doctor began to speak to me about the issue at hand, and, at first, I listened attentively, but soon felt 'judgment' creep back in because the good ole doctor was now being preachy, condescending, and long winded. I felt that here, maybe a sub cultural situation was unfolding, i.e. that I, an older male-student, without a career, was being judged and he the PH. D was the judge. I went into an uh-ha mode and waited for an opportunity to express myself. Finally, out of sheer frustration, I interrupted him and tried to get back onto the main reason I was there. I had taken an assertive role, which I felt was exiting judgment and becoming a doer. I was trying to change my fact field back to normal, in a counter clockwise manner, rather than a clockwise manner, i.e. going from fact field to doing and so on.

I started to feel less of a marginal man, (as Robert Parks says, “one who lives in two worlds as more or less a stranger”), that I, as an older male, going to school in a university setting, was taking control of the situation and getting the help that I was seeking. The doctor sensed my change of mannerism and began to speak directly to the issue. And now that I had suspended judgment (and maybe the doctor suspended judgment as well) I was able to listen and take in his advise and counsel. The session had ended on a positive note with the PH.D apologizing for having me wait so long to see him.

I had reached a calm and objective place and was able to find the right emotional zone, and, best of all, went away with an understanding of ‘doing’ as an integral part of life’s interactions. Emotions might come from the mind but the mind can control emotions, even when your cultural expectations are not what you expect. Everybody has emotions and knowing the Emotional Zone scheme can help in all sorts of every day (people) interactions.

'THE ZONE'

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Bibliography;

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