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choosing those most useful to you personally.

An Interactional analysis is a tool like a Functional analysis except it is aimed at situations and behaviors rather than brains and networks. We are analyzing behavior in various situations to determine who is, and who is not, interacting, and to look at what may be getting in the way of that. This enables us to see patterns of interaction that succeed, and patterns of action/reaction (nonuse or wronguse) that don't succeed and that lead to problems. When you get into it, this becomes a great game to play anywhere social in real life too.

Details

Interactional Analysis in all its forms is based on our growing knowledge of how intelligence works, and what intelligence can do as expressed through interaction. You will also encounter this technique in the tutorials. The tutorials are a training program for mental fitness, strength, and flexibility; and it is not coincidental that these are the skills necessary for success in most fields. In the modern world, adaptation to stressful environments and events is still a survival and thriving skill, just as it was in ancient times when a human's ability to hunt big scary things and hit them accurately with spears without being afraid would have been survival skills. Today the mind is still our most expedient tool for personal (and group) success.

Awareness of the power of interaction enables a smart personal strategy for life, or 'personal autonomy', is something all happy, sane and successful people have in common, and this is an ability based on certain habits of mind that can be learned. This doesn't mean that all successful people are smarter or braver or more willing to take risks than anyone else. These habits of thought can be used by anyone; successful people are just the ones who figured out these strategies for themselves early on or were taught them by others. Interactional analysis is one such strategic skill.

It doesn't matter whether you want to use such strategies in running a successful company, being an amazing racing driver, mastering new intellectual skills, or successfully raising a family and keeping emotionally healthy relationships together, Interactional analysis is a tool that works for all scenarios because there is no life situation that intelligence applied strategically to

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cannot improve.

In situational analysis we look at life situations in terms of interactions, and use that overview to apply the decision-making skills that lead to both understanding what interaction is through experience, and achieving successful outcomes. By analysis of our own interactions (later) we can be confident that we are employing behaviors to increase our success in different kinds of situations (business, health, relationships, creativity etc).

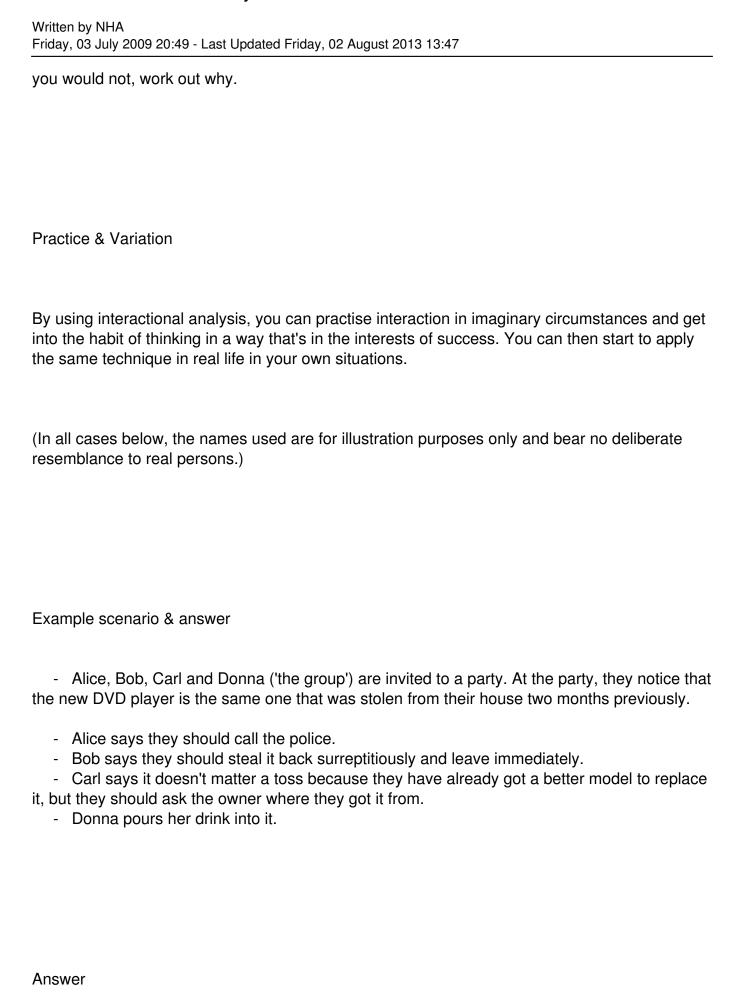
Modeling

You should treat Interactional Analysis as a game. In order to play, you need to read the introductory notes on Interaction and core conditions in the basics section of the library. At the very least, you need to know about the three basic responses we call 'nonuse' 'wronguse' and 'interaction'.

By going through the quizzes below (we will give you an example scenario and answer first), you will see examples of all three types of responses from a fictional group of people (called "the group") placed in various situations. Go through each scenario and see if you can spot who is stuck in NONUSE, who is stuck in WRONGUSE and who is interacting using the core conditions, (causing an INTERACTIVE event to take place). Some events do not have all three possibilities going on, but some do.

In each scenario, decide who you think is using which response, then scroll down and look at how your answers compare with ours. By analyzing these situations you will start to get the hang of the types of behavior that lead to interaction, and you can copy them. You'll soon start seeing ways to enable an interaction in various circumstances in real life. Once you do that, you won't need us to tell you what a difference it makes!

(for advanced users) Consider how you personally would have behaved in each situation, and work out how often you would have been able to interact. In the situations where you feel that



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Alice, Bob and Donna are all stuck in wronguse. They are assuming that the new owner is the original thief. They have no proof for this (it could have been bought from a second-hand shop or off ebay). In all their actions and reactions, somebody loses.

If Carl had just said it didn't matter, this would have been nonuse (nobody gains anything), but his decision to talk to the owner turns this into an interaction. He wants to find out more (always wise). If the new owner says they bought it new from a store, he will discover that there is some dishonesty here and judge the person accordingly. If it was bought second-hand or given as a gift, he may discover who was the original thief. He can then tell the new owner what has happened and not to trust the seller, making a new ally. He is open minded and assuming nothing without proof.

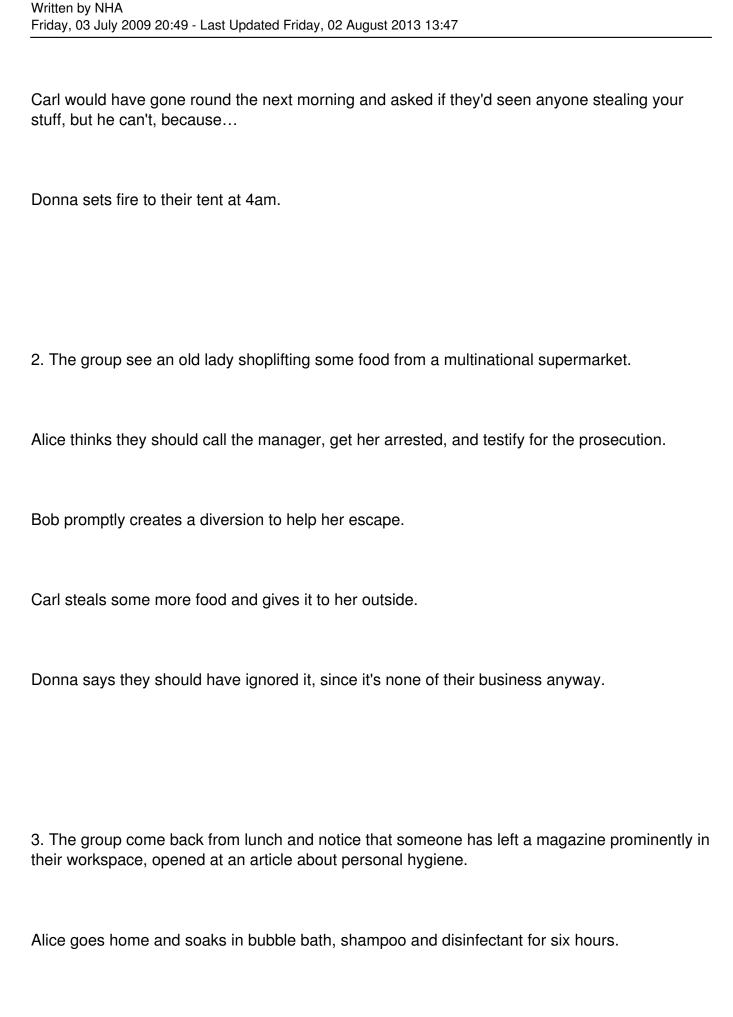
Interactional Analysis Quiz 1

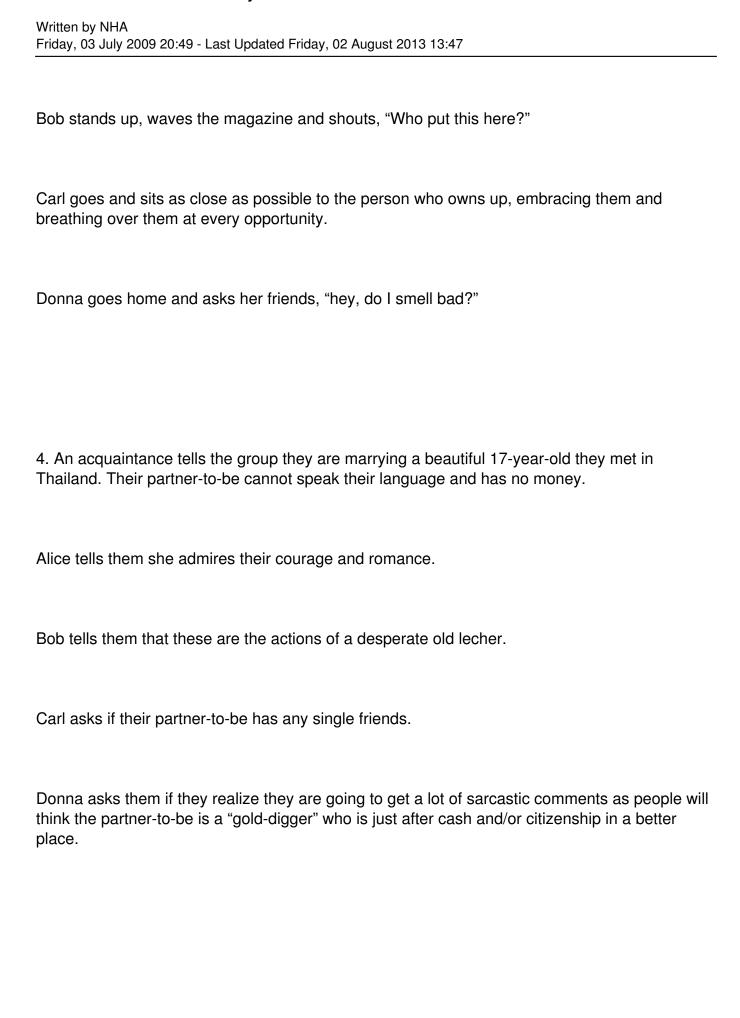
Use the same method to analyze the situations below

1. The group are camping. They return from a night out to find all their food and drink gone. There are empty cans outside a neighboring tent and sounds of drunken laughter from within.

Alice says, "Well I'm glad someone else was happy tonight too!"

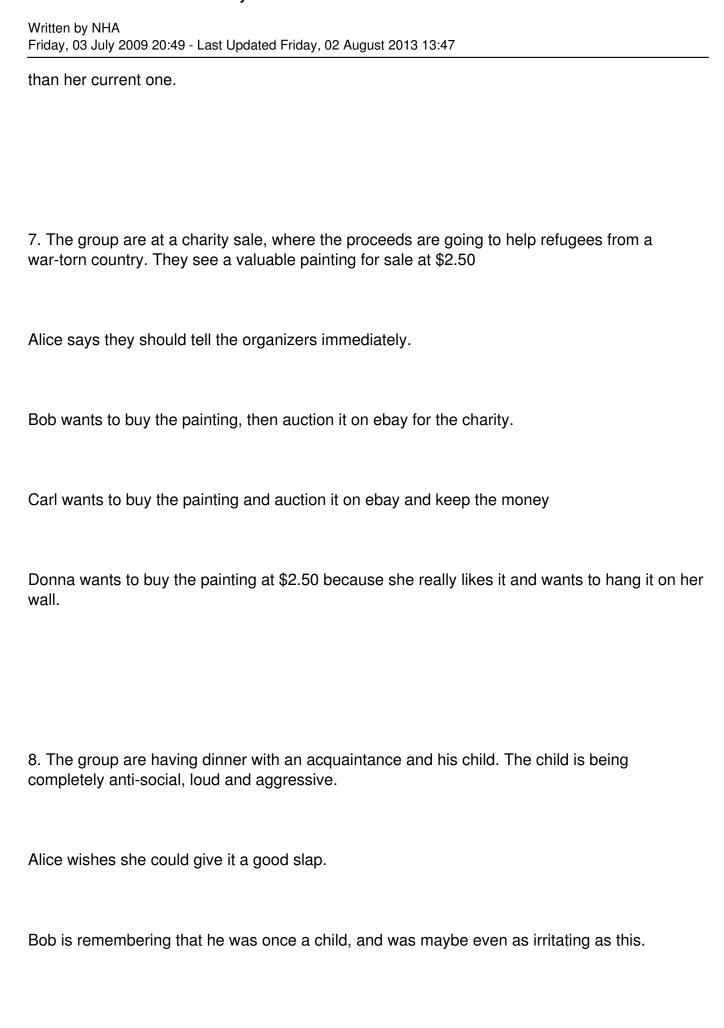
Bob gets really angry, does nothing, but decides to glower at the neighbors for the rest of the holiday.

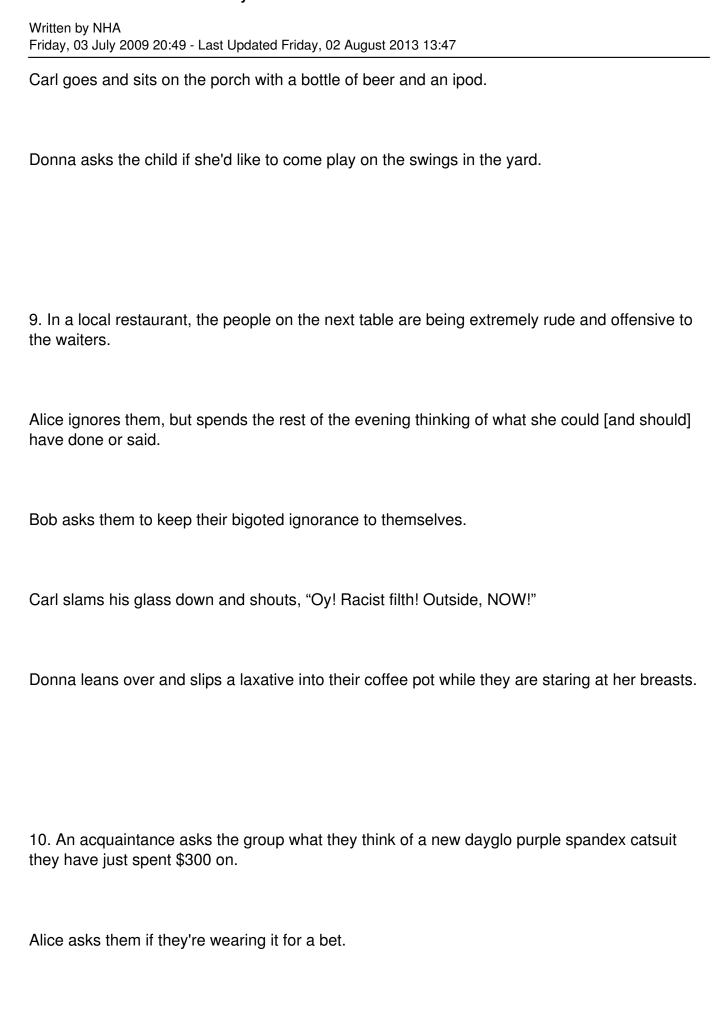


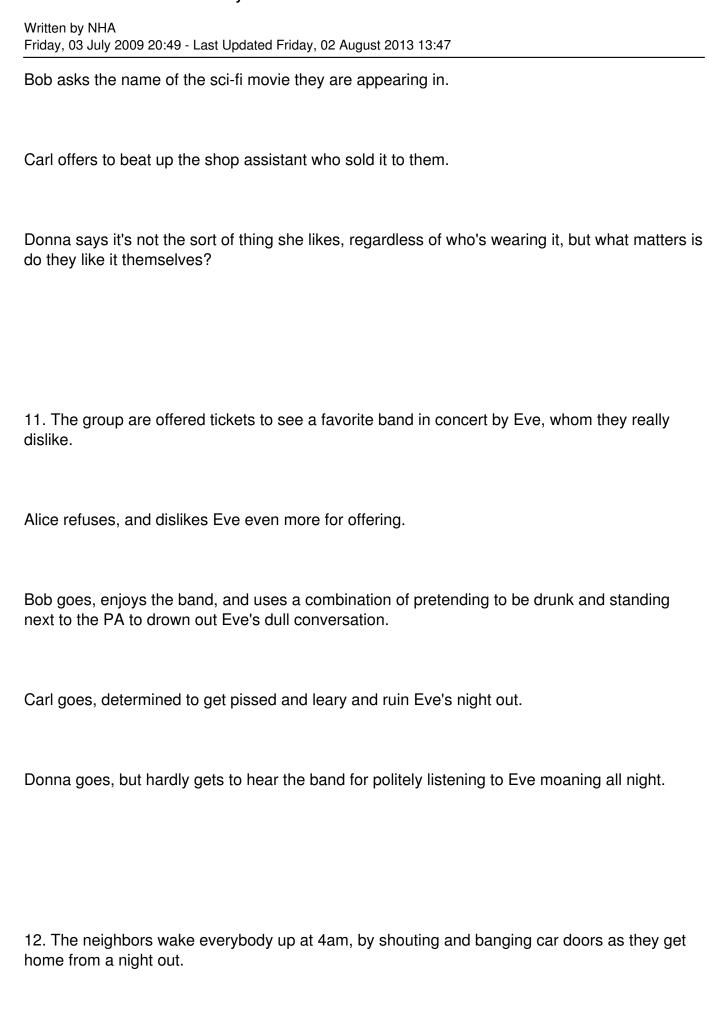


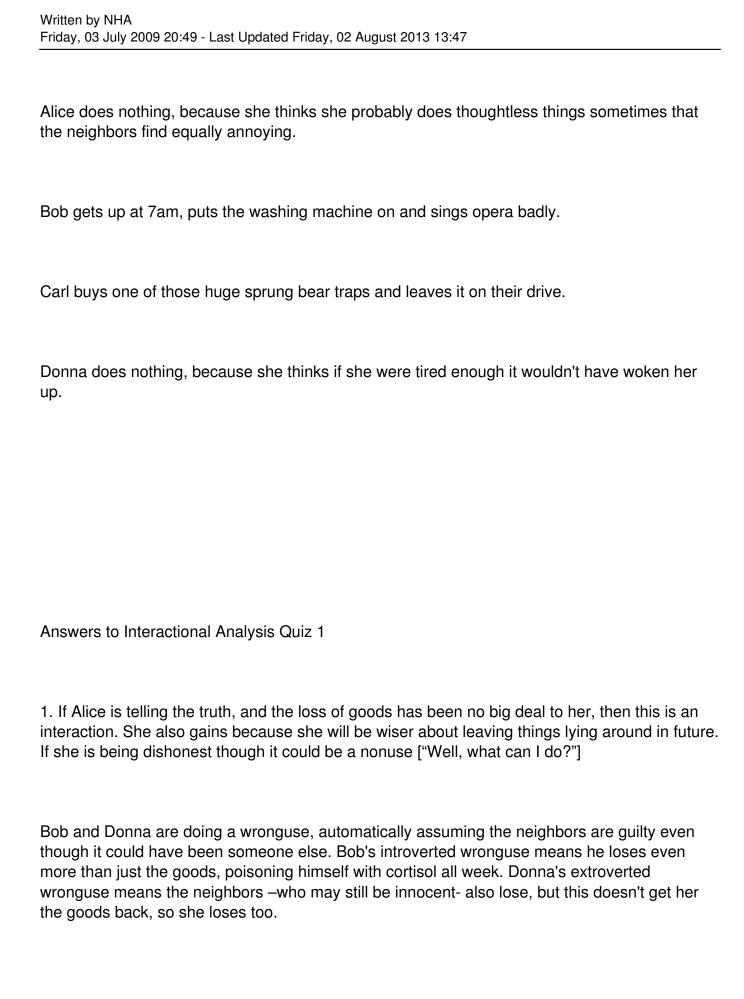
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5. The group are stopped on the street by a woman doing a survey. They are asked for their opinion on the economy.
Alice suggests that the current government should be tarred and feathered in a public place.
Bob stares blankly at her and says, "What's an economy?"
Carl tells her his mother told him not to talk to strangers.
Donna says she hasn't got time right now, but would be delighted to do an online survey, and hands over the email address of someone she knows is dodgy.
6. Work is under new management and the group all get a promotion. However, the new manager keeps asking them to do non-work-related things like order flowers for his wife, pick up his shopping, and post letters.
Alice flatly refuses, waving her job specification at him.
Bob starts making deliberate mistakes in these jobs, like ordering coal for his wife and squashing his shopping on the way back.
Carl asks him if he needs his toenails cutting or his tires changed.
Donna tells him he needs a personal assistant and says she'd consider the job if it paid more









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Carl would have achieved the best interaction outcome —he's not automatically assuming guilt, but seeking more information —if the neighbors look guilty when he talks to them he will also have more information and can decide what to do next. Everybody gains something from the situation.

2. Alice does an obvious wronguse –takes it upon herself to judge a situation without knowing all the facts about what is 'beneficial' in reality (societal 'law' is rarely beneficial in real life, due to being "made-up stuff" that is not an integral part of reality). Genuine laws are aligned with reality. Many of them are 'laws of nature'. In reality, it is not 'just' that little old ladies (or entire African villages) should starve while multinational supermarket chains make billions.

Donna is doing a nonuse. —"Well, what can I do?" She doesn't lose, but she doesn't gain —nothing changes.

Bob and Carl achieve an interactive outcome, they open up the possibility of making a new friend, while causing no harm to anyone else. Carl's example opens up a new dimension of interaction because we are reminded that, just like you eating a chicken, the entity involved with the least potential for intelligence (in this case the supermarket) does in fact lose. Energy is removed from the deleterious and given to the beneficial –this is known as "Robin Hood Style", in which interaction only benefits the 'good guys'. Stealing from an asshole to give to the nice but needy is part of a rational morality rather than a legal one –another difference between reality and "made-up stuff".

But what if Carl had been caught? Carl would then have revealed himself as not so intelligent as he thought he was, so he either gains knowledge [ie learns from his mistake] or he is relegated to 'less beneficial' from the perspective of reality.

3. Only Donna achieves an unquestioned interaction here. It's success depends on the honesty

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of her friends, but if they were not honest, they would not be her friends; they would only be acquaintances. (Take notice of the difference between the two; it is vital.)

Alice loses time and resources, never questioning the possibility that her judgment of the situation is presumptuous, and for that reason she is doing an introverted wronguse.

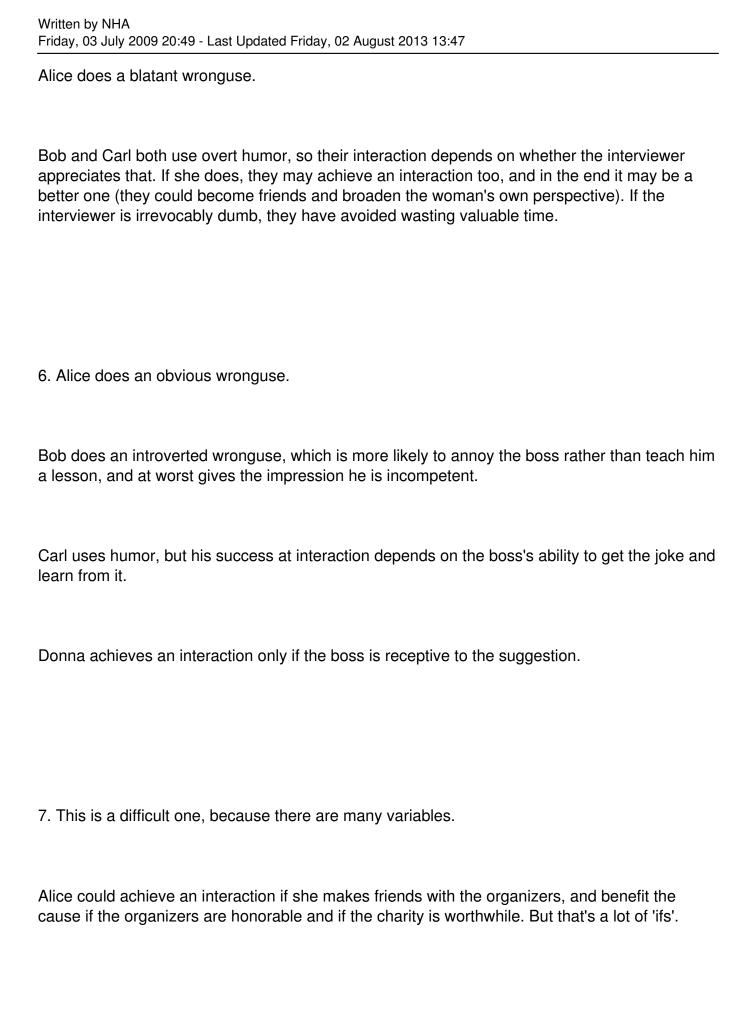
Bob and Carl are doing an extroverted wronguse. Neither of them questions the possibility that the magazine was left open at that page by sheer coincidence. Because Carl uses humor however, he may achieve an interaction if his colleague takes the joke in good form.

4. Carl and Donna achieve an interaction. Carl opens up the possibility of meeting new friends, and Donna solidifies her existing friendship by being helpful.

If Alice is being honest she achieves an interaction too, but she may be doing a nonuse by just being polite and/or sentimental.

Bob does an obvious wronguse, jumping to unproved conclusions. He is not using the core conditions, with which we assume everyone to be operating from the best intent unless their behavior proves otherwise.

5. Donna achieves an interaction here. She doesn't waste her own time, and inconveniences someone harmful. This is close to Robin Hood style, because she steals time from the deleterious.



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Bob gets a bit closer to straightforward interaction by cutting out one variable, but the outcome is still dependant on the integrity of the charity organizers.

Carl could achieve an interaction if the money is spent on beneficial things, but he is assuming that he has better use for the money than the charity does, and there is no proof for this yet. The charity may be a money-making scam, but it may be genuine.

Donna could achieve an interaction but it is dependant on how much inspiration she gains from the aesthetics of the painting over time versus whether the charity is legitimate or not; another unknown variable. She could just photograph the painting, and put a print on her wall!

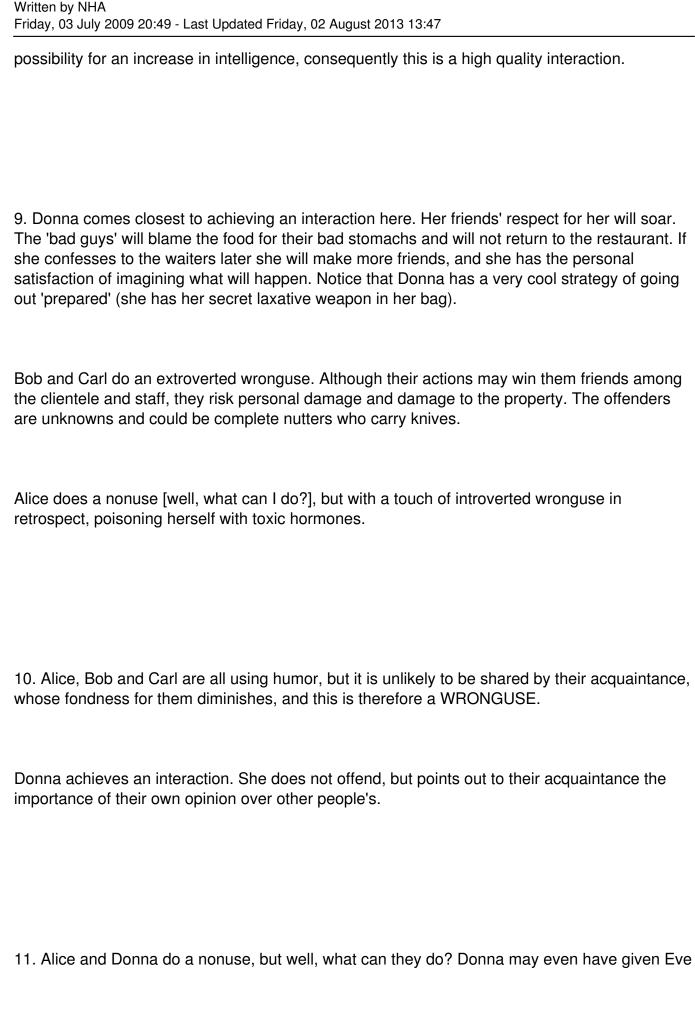
Perhaps you begin to see how complex interaction can be, and how we can only choose the correct strategy when we are able to weigh many things against each other very fast in real time. This cannot be achieved by mere logic; it requires other aspects of intelligence that must be developed.

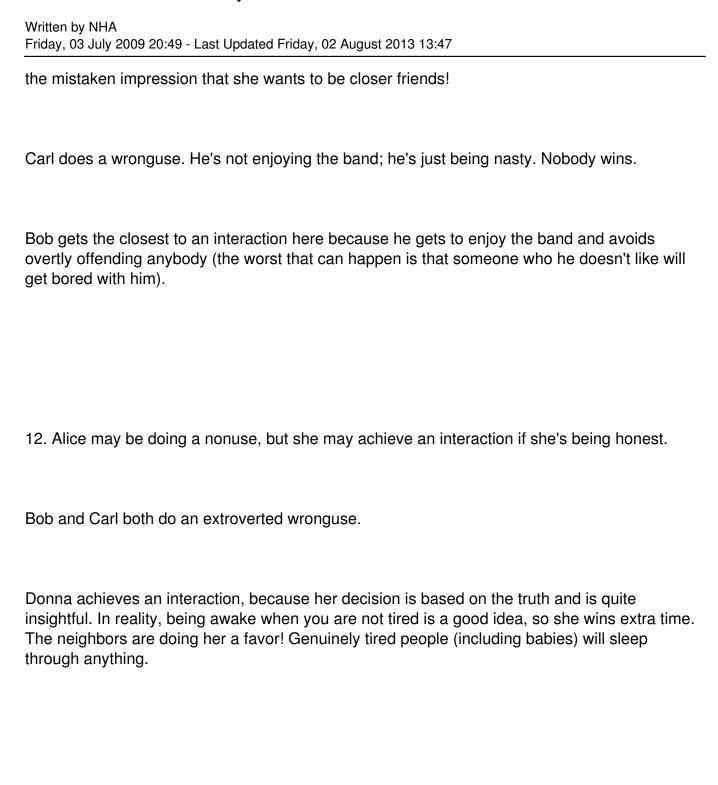
8. Alice does an introverted wronguse, poisoning herself getting wound up all day.

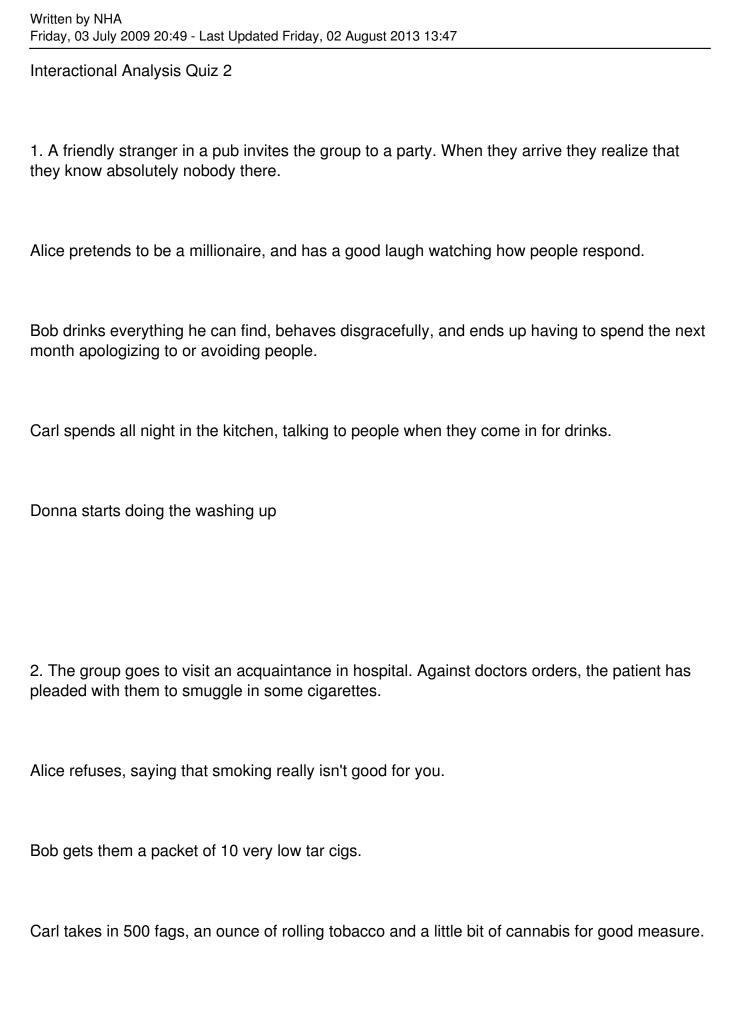
Bob may achieve an interaction, if he is trying to learn and to get perspective, but he is probably doing a nonuse [well, what can I do?]

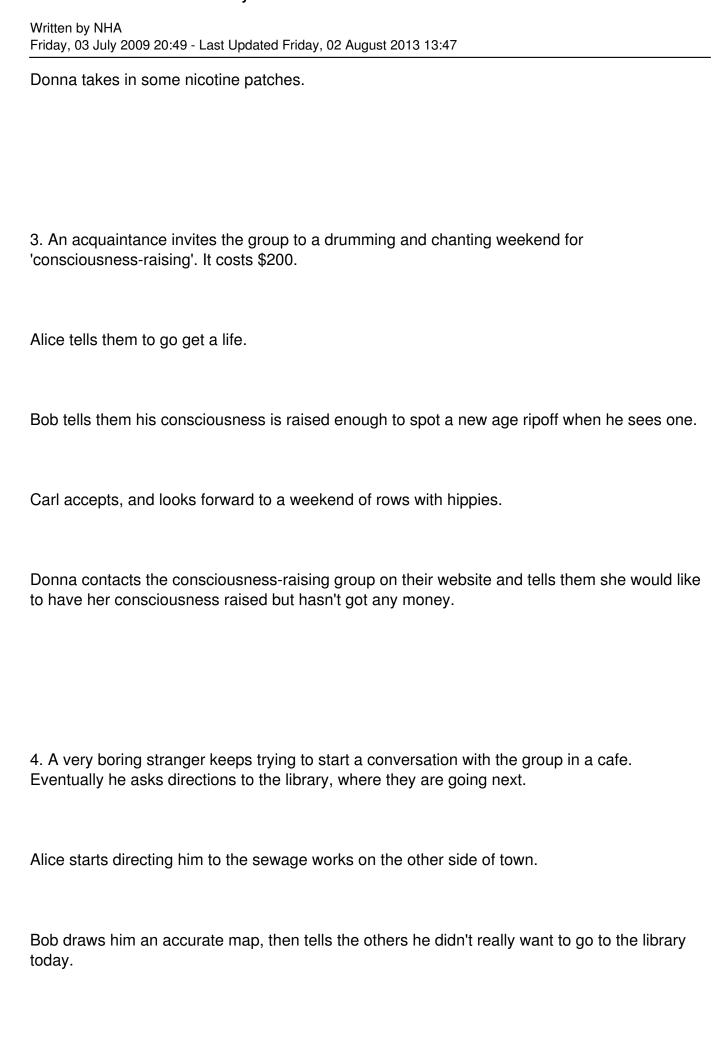
Carl at first glance does a nonuse, opting out rather than interacting. He is however preserving his own peace of mind, and may make it plain to his host that it's not a fun household to visit. Carl's likelihood of successful interaction therefore depends on how intelligent his host is.

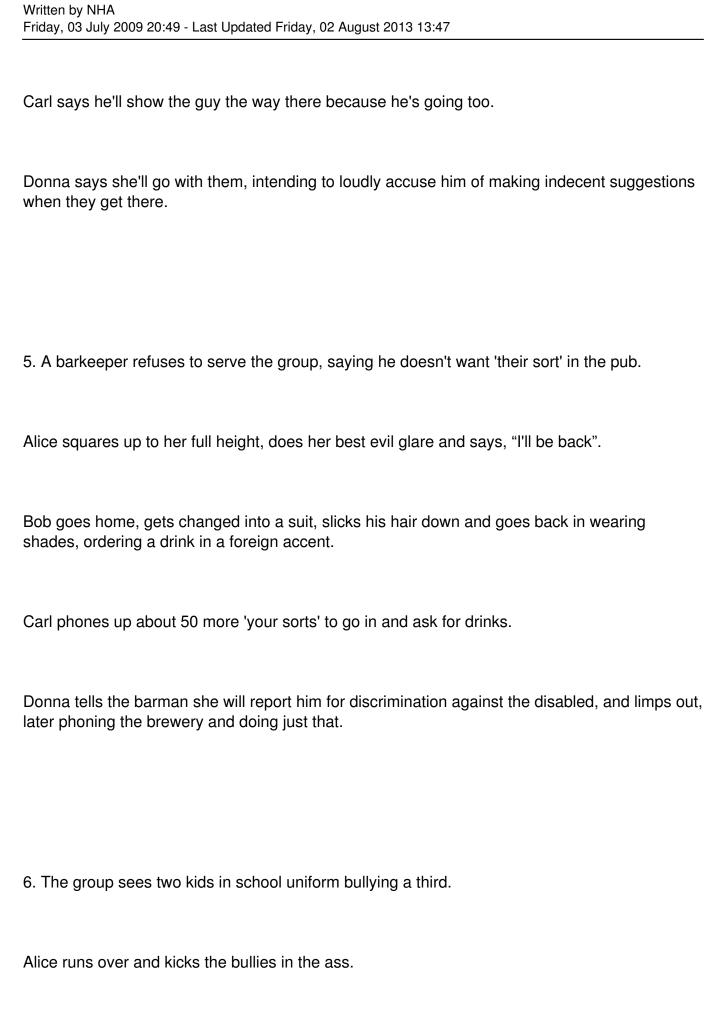
Donna achieves an interaction despite having to invest her own energy and time. She wins the gratitude of everyone involved and maybe teaches a lesson to their host as well. She sees exactly what is needed and provides it. The child is almost certainly the agent with the highest

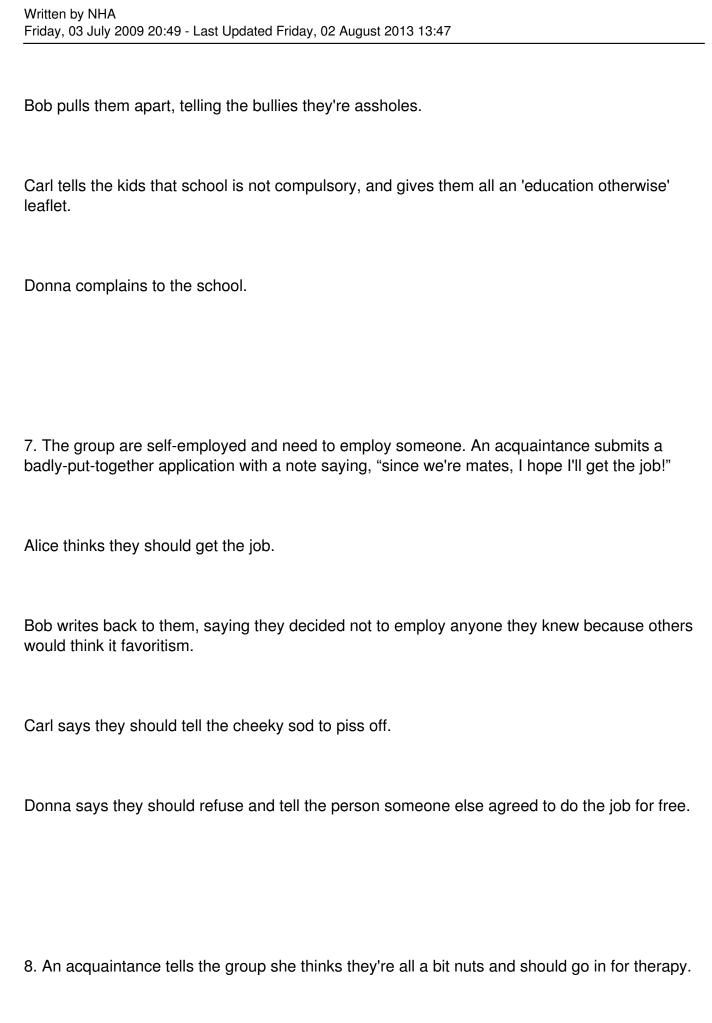


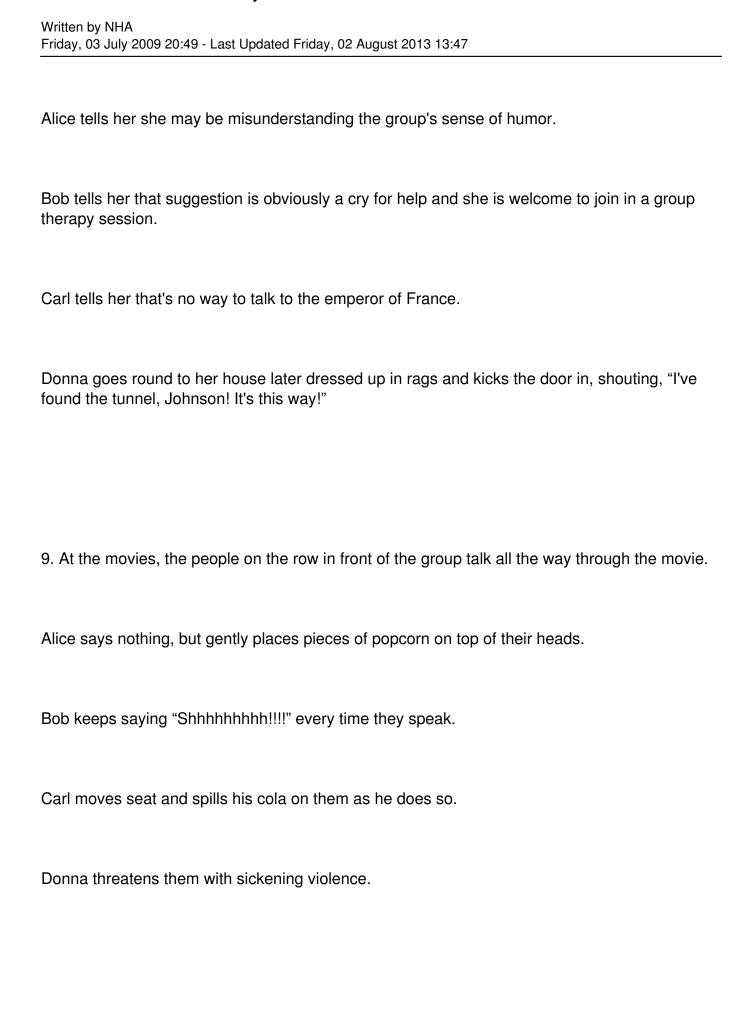


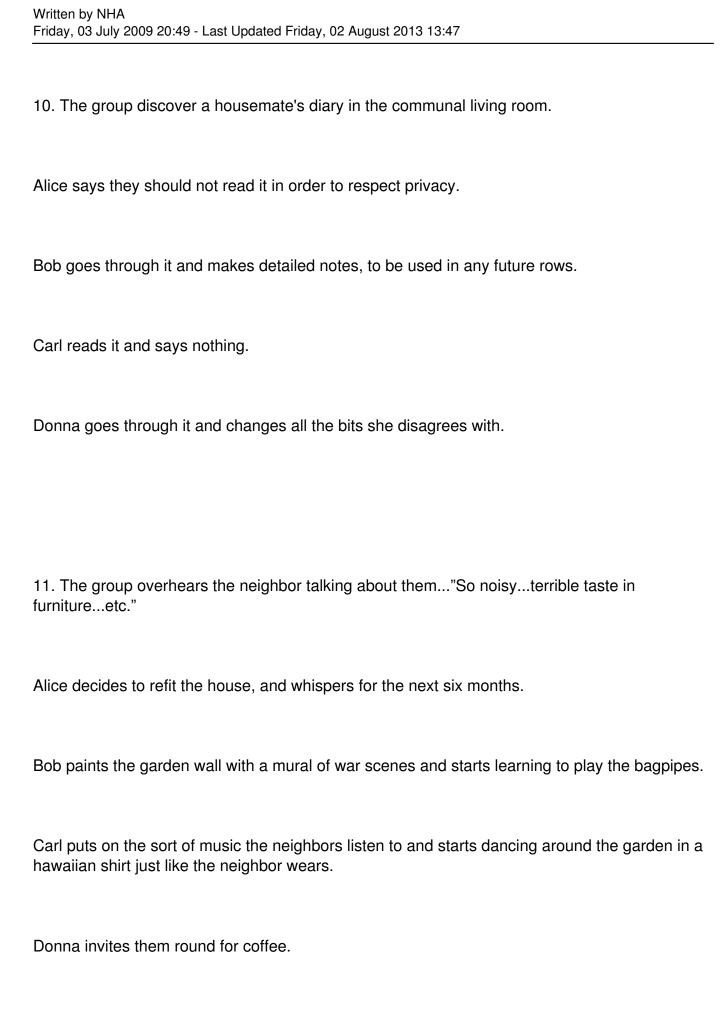


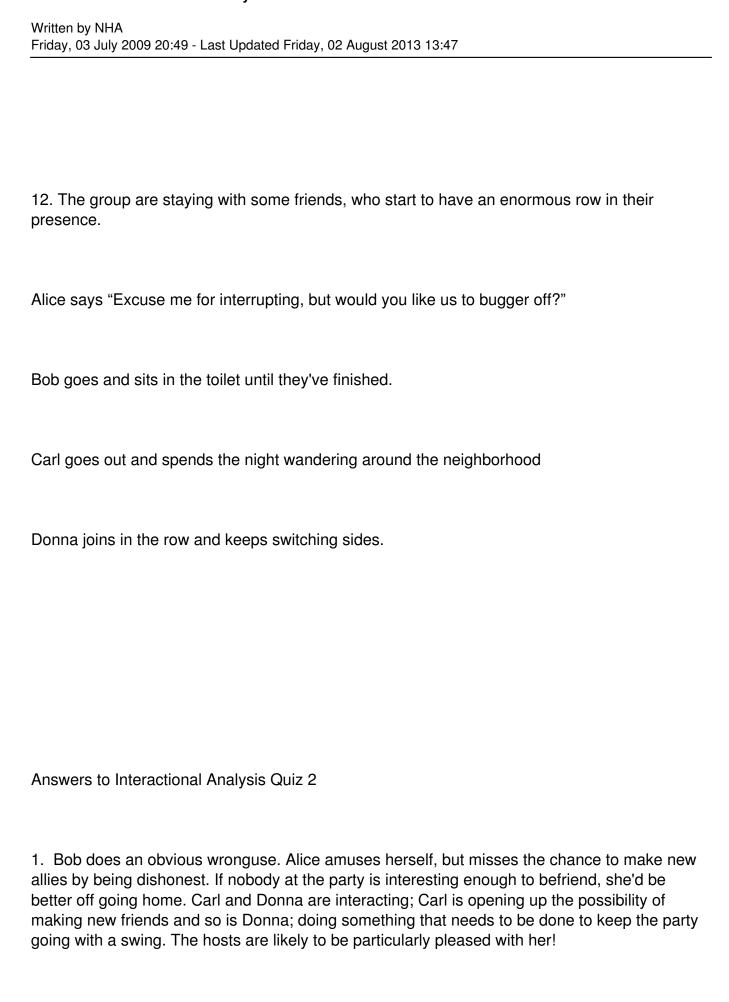












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2. Alice is doing a wronguse (assuming things without enough information) and also possibly losing a potential friend (although we are told the person is currently only an acquaintance). Bob is playing it safe, but if the acquaintance is careless may end up annoying the doctor (another potential friend), although this is a possible interaction he also doesn't know enough, and could end up harming the patient.

Carl is doing a wronguse bigtime, he has no idea what medication this dude is on and could cause serious problems (if the patient is hypoglycemic, or has low BP, even death!) Donna's chance of achieving an interaction here is highest. The acquaintance may not be satisfied with the patches, but will at least see that she is trying to help, ditto the doctor. Donna will find out how sensible the acquaintance is, which gives her extra information, and if the dude is happy to use the patches she has made a new friend.

Nobody gets full marks here, however. A good interaction would be based on finding out as much as possible from both doctors and patient before proceeding.

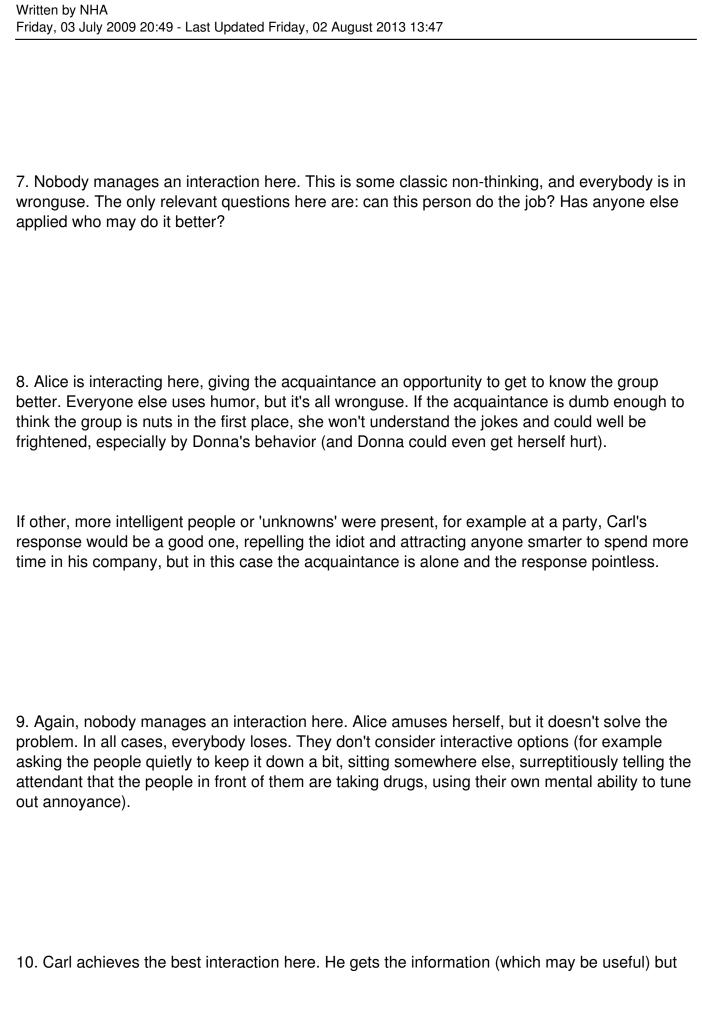
3. Alice and Bob(and this may surprise you) are interacting. They have enough information to know that the people running the event are dodgy, and are being honest in expressing disgust. Alice doesn't express it in a very polite way, but the communication is only to an acquaintance, and is just rude enough to stop them inviting her again. If the acquaintance wishes to be closer friends with Alice, they will reconsider their attitude towards this event or ask Alice why she feels this way —and they will learn something, but this would be wronguse if Alice were talking to a friend.

Carl's behavior is clearly wronguse; he will lose resources and make enemies —everybody loses. Donna has the best interaction here, especially if she informs the acquaintance of what she is doing (the consciousness-raising group's reply may reveal things to them too).

Written by NHA Friday, 03 July 2009 20:49 - Last Updated Friday, 02 August 2013 13:47 4. Bob and Carl are interacting, as long as Bob is being honest about his situation. Alice and Donna are in wronguse. If the stranger had been offensive rather than just boring, though, Alice's solution would have been an interaction. 5. Alice is in wronguse. Her reaction is pointless and achieves nothing. Bob is also wasting his time –why does he want to drink in a place run by idiots and give his resources to them? Carl's solution is funny, and also an interaction –his friends learn where not to drink and the word spreads that the barkeeper is dodgy, enabling sensible people to avoid the place. Donna is also interacting, and her solution may be the best -the barkeeper has an opportunity to interact by changing his mind, and if he doesn't, he may get into trouble and possibly even be replaced. (If Donna had said nothing and then reported him, however, this would have been a wronguse). NB This is a genuine example, although the names have been changed. In real life, half a dozen friends all reported the same person in a similar manner. It succeeded in getting a rude, violent barkeeper replaced by the brewery concerned, to the benefit of a whole village.) 6. Only Carl manages an interaction here. Everyone else misses the point that they have no idea what led to this situation -how do they know that the 'bullied' kid has not been bullying the others for months and is finally getting their own medicine as the victims get together for defense? They know nothing about the situation, and Alice, Bob and Donna are in wronguse. Donna slips from wronguse to nonuse and hands the problem over to 'professionals'. Carl's response could ultimately remove some or all of these kids from school and solve the problem

completely, and also spreads the word about alternative education. He speaks to all three with

equal respect and is using the core conditions.



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respects privacy and tells no one. Alice would have achieved an interaction if the diary had been in someone's private space, but it isn't; it's in a communal area. The owner needs to learn that private things should be kept in private places, and it's good they can learn this now (when with friendly housemates) than make the mistake somewhere really disastrous.

Bob and Donna are both in wronguse, and in these circumstances Alice is in nonuse. There is no point ignoring what could be useful information, as long as intent is pure. (What if Carl got to the end and read "god I'm so depressed, I wish someone would help me"?)

11. Alice is in introverted wronguse, scared of what other people think of her. Bob is in extroverted wronguse and will simply cause more anxiety.

Carl's solution is very funny, so it's an interaction with his housemates, but unless he wants to keep it up for months it will not lead to interaction with the neighbors, so it's a waste of time and virtually a nonuse. Only Donna is interacting. When people know nothing about you, they will quite happily make stuff up. At least she has a chance of making friends.

12. Bob and Carl are in nonuse (well, what can they do?) Donna is in obvious wronguse. Alice risks injury if the row is vicious, but is the closest to interaction. If the whole group had got together and said, "Give us a ring when you're finished and we'll visit again" and promptly left, this would have been the best interaction, especially if followed up, when contacted, with "We really like you, but we're not coming round if you guys are rowing, okay?" This gives a clear message that the behavior is unacceptable and repels nice people from visiting. It also separates the behavior from the people, which is a great thing to do in interaction.

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You can find more interactional analysis practice in the article called 'More Interactional Analysis Practice' (in progress) in the Methods & Technology section of the library.