
From the Beginning

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John W. Gittinger... how does one write about someone who has been an important factor in one's life for about 40 years? With difficulty! Therefore, this is going to be a meandering story with flashbacks.

My first glimpse of this man, who was going to change the way I think about people was in 1954. Sitting in an office waiting to be interviewed for a job in New York City, I was getting impatient when another person in the same waiting room, a large pale gentleman suddenly sputtered, "I hate waiting. My time is just as valuable as anyone else's!"

Next vision is in New York City... evidently, we both got the jobs. I now learn that John W. Gittinger is a psychologist who has a personality theory. Of course, John tested us all and told us our strengths and weaknesses confounding us with his insight. This is the winter of 1954-55 and John is still struggling to put his theory into words that will explain it to others.

John's theory began to come to fruition while he was working in the 1940's at a state mental institution in Norman, Oklahoma, his home town. He began noticing characteristics in his patients who had certain similarities in the Wechsler Bellevue profiles. One of my tasks, during 1955, was to go to Norman and get copies of these original Wechslers. These had to be Thermofaxed and identities sterilized. I can still smell the Thermofax!

John took these profiles and broke them

down into his three Primitives (small diagrams). We would spread these diagrams out on the floor and walk around trying to match them.

Shining memories of lunches that we dreamed up and shared with John, the true gourmand, and Dr. Harold G. Wolf, a prominent neurologist who was a spartan in everything including food. A most vivid picture is of John G. astounding the students of Cornell Medical College with a blind assessment of one of Dr. Berlin's (a neurologist) patients using only the Wechsler profile.

Other flashbacks... Dave Saunders coming to visit and introducing us to Allport's Test of Values... Dr. Robert Hyde, Dick York, and cohorts from Butler Hospital in Providence, R. I., arriving with reports of strange behavior of clients and staff who had used LSD and Alcohol. There are so many stories.

In the early 1960s... Glory Be! There is an opportunity to go to Japan with John and Mary Frances. My job is to help set up the office and help John get his theory on paper. Wonderful, exciting memories! A little man who came in regularly to water the plants that were on top of the partition that separated the office from my quarters... a Japanese salesman who would say Hai (Yes) no matter what the question was... our Japanese teacher and his literal lessons... John arriving early and dictating... my questioning; and, lo and behold *The Opus*. Delicious food, super beer... Dave Saunders' visit and our going to the Kabuki and Noh theaters as well as the race track (the horses run the opposite

from the way our horses run).

Later, in 1962, believers and practitioners in John's theory have been increasing so it is time for a meeting of the minds. The first retreat on John's theory took place in Orleans, Ma. in September 1962. What a weekend! Top minds! Helen Schucman (much later, the author of *The Course in Miracles*) who was a strong believer in John's theory and Bill Thetford were among the group. This was the precursor of the PAS Fall and Annual meetings.

As the years passed researcher and practitioners in John's theory that is now called the Personality Assessment System continued to grow. After some time in New York working with Human Ecology (where John was a consultant), in 1963 I went to work with the Psychological Assessment Associates on Connecticut Ave. in Washington, D. C., (where John was in residence). Different faces and personalities!

In 1967, I went back to New York to Columbia University to work there for ten years. Naturally, I kept in touch with John and Mary Frances but was not in close working relationships. However, once indoctrinated in the theory, you will forever put individuals into PAS categories.

After this hiatus, I went to a meeting in Springfield, Ma. in either 1979 or 1980 and was astonished at the progress that had been made in spreading the word, according to John G. From there it has been Damn the torpedoes, full speed ahead! The Journal, the Foundation, the courses, the myriad of research, Hocking and all the publications!

So from an uncompensated EFU, this is a thank you, John, for letting me be a small part in the beginning of such a wonderful contribution to the understanding of the human personality.