

1. Our species has come to a new node-time of open exploration of the meaning and potential of human relations, intimate and ultimate and everything in between. In this node as in all those before, the man/woman relationship is the core of the node: what becomes of it is, more than any other energy-factor, determining of what becomes not just of the home and nation but of the species itself. When wife and husband are working to free and enrich their relationship, they are doing, in Mother Teresa's phrase (in another connection), "something beautiful for [themselves, humankind, nature, and] God." This is the context of this think-sheet and of couples' workshops Loree and I have participated in and led through the years. We Christians are called to work toward "liberation" from all possible angles or radii: this relationship is the earthly center [the woman/man relationships being the only total-person engagement] of life's basic polarities: life/death, pleasure/pain, sin/forgiveness, justice/joy, distance/intimacy, conflict/reconciliation, resistance/risk-taking, fear/love, struggle/grace, damnation/salvation.

2. While habit/continuity/permanence are as essential to, and indeed cognate with, experiment/discontinuity/change, by "habituation" I mean the sclerosis of habit, compulsive behavior in one habitual mode to the exclusion of other essential-to-humanity habitual modes, the spastic lock into "my way of doing things" and "our way of relating." "Good" habits free us to experiment and explore, and so to mature and grow in joy and helpfulness: "bad" habits shrink the human potential: "habituations" are dysfunctional habit-specializations, usually reinforced by ignorance [innocent or willful], arrogance, and rigidity ["contract" in situations, marriage e.g., calling for "covenant"]. [An analog for habituation: "addiction."]

3. Marriage education-and-therapy processes ["family counseling," "Marriage Encounter," etc.] work on certain presuppositions and expectations. This thinksheet is confined to one question: *How can this particular marriage work better for the freeing and enriching of each partner together and severally, thus releasing more of their and its enabling (freeing and enriching) power in church and world?*

4. More narrowly still, this thinksheet concentrates on the "habituations" impeding this freeing/enriching/releasing/enabling goal. Thos. C. Oden [TAG: THE TRANSACTIONAL AWARENESS GAME (Harper/76)] masterfully lays out the troubles, as though in description of Murphy's Law that if anything can go wrong, it will. These self-and-relationship-canceling "habituations" [cp. the common term "binds," or Laing's "knots"] apply to any interpersonal relationships. Best to see them on "The Collusion [wheel of 9 "channels"] Spectrum," described through p.16 of the main book of TAG, which is a kit inclusive also of a small book and a playing board with cards. Here, now, are the habituations:

Channel 1 lock-in ["Fight"]	<u>CONFLICT</u> -habituated. Non-habituated fighting is occasionally necessary to "clear the air, vent aggression, clarify frustrations, and offer legitimate resistance." I call the habituation Armageddon.
Channel 2 lock-in ["Demand"]	<u>BLAME</u> -habituated. While every relationship needs some critical candor, being "tuned in to Channel 2" makes a destructive habit of rebellious/punitive behavior.
Channel 3 lock-in ["Win-Lose"]	<u>STRIFE</u> -habituated. Frozen offense/defense.
Channel 4 lock-in ["Assertion"]	<u>PUTDOWN</u> -habituated. Assertive/apologetic.
Channel 5 lock-in ["Influence"]	<u>COMPLIANCE</u> -habituated. Instead of command/obey as frozen roles, each needs to develop leadership, direction, compliance, acquiescence. Could also be called the Decision Channel or the Power Channel.
Channel 6 lock-in ["Guidance"]	<u>GUIDANCE</u> -habituated.
Channel 7 lock-in ["Mutuality"]	<u>DEPENDENCY</u> -habituated. Old Am. housewife?
Channel 8 lock-in ["Sympathy"]	<u>SENTIMENT</u> -habituated. "Nothing but" support!
Channel 9 lock-in ["Intimacy"]	<u>AFFECTION</u> -habituated. Warmth, not power.