

This message and the attached PDF is archived under [IAPCT/Troubleddiscourse](#) where it will be available for future discussion.

From Dag Forssell (20220928_15:00 PDT)

I have been committed to PCT since 1989, and in my role as Archivist am proud to say that through my efforts from the beginning of the PCT discussion group (CSGnet, now Discourse), a complete record of all teachings, discussions, and yes, fights is available for students and researchers to peruse for decades and, I think, centuries to come.

The attached PDF file contains primarily my email conversation with Bill Powers over a period of years. This began as a private exchange between us, and then as you will see Bill chose to share these threads with others who are mentioned in it. These threads are not pretty, but I believe this part of our history is important and needs to be shared. This discussion of a difficult period, by participants in it, struggling to reach a common understanding, sheds some light on the dynamics of CSGnet discussions more generally.

Many years have passed, and our present Discourse platform is less vulnerable than email, but some underlying issues persist, and unavoidably so. As the expression goes, we are all human. I hope that a look back at difficulties that can befall even the best of us might provide some support and guidance in our collective control of professional, courteous communications.

These email exchanges are in three threads:

- 1) Bill & Dag discussing CSGnet, 2005 pages 2-42
- 2) Bill and Tom Bourbon pages 43-56
- 3) Decency Check, 2009 pages 57-68

At the end is a very relevant email that Clark McPhail sent privately to me. My heart still aches as I review these threads. I will let them speak for themselves.

The email is archived from Eudora, an ancient but well loved program. In place of the convention of indented text, I have inserted initials to identify who wrote what.

Note: If your browser warns <http://www.livingcontrolsystems.com/>... is not a secure connection, be assured that the links are valid. It is because your browser is configured to insist on secure (https://) links.

Best to all, Dag

To: CSGnet Archive
From: Dag Forssell <dag@livingcontrolsystems.com>
Subject: Bill & Dag discussing CSGnet, 2005
Cc:
Bcc:
Attached:

Bill Powers wrote a post to CSGnet on August 19, 2005 that started with a short reply to a post of mine, but continued with a discussion of CSGnet. A review of CSGnet at the time may or may not shed light on Bill's mindset; reason for this CSGnet post.

The post is reproduced below, followed by a private thread across a few months.

At the end, the thread was shared with Rick and Tom at Bill's insistence. Two additional threads follow.

Dag

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Date: Fri, 19 Aug 2005 09:29:56 -0600
From: Bill Powers
Subject: Re: Website updated
To: CSGNET@LISTSERV.UIUC.EDU [Post to CSGnet]

[From Bill Powers (2005.08.19.0822 MDT)]

Dag Forssell (2005 Aug 18, 10:00 pm)]

DF: I have just updated the website www.livingcontrolsystems.com to reflect Tim Carey's book (still being polished before final release later this year).

BP: Dag, that web site is looking better and better. Your little piece, Once Around the Loop, has shaped up into a really good paper -- it pays to keep fussing with things.

Now at the risk of embarrassing Rick, I have to write the following.

I would like to call special attention to an appendix that is mentioned here:

http://www.livingcontrolsystems.com/enclosures/teaching_dogma.pdf

[Included in pct_readings_ebook_2016.pdf]

The Appendix is by Rick Marken, and it's called Teaching Dogma in Psychology. It's Rick's farewell address at Augsburg College, in which he gives his reasons for not wanting to teach conventional ideas any more. It's a wonderful introduction to control theory for psychologists,

including all the reasons why psychologists might and might not want to learn about it. Reading it now, some 20 years after it was written, I realize that Rick's grasp of control theory and its implications was fully formed even in the first year that the Control Systems Group existed.

I think that many people who have joined the Hate Rick Club forget that they themselves played a major part in creating the escalating conflicts that nearly wrecked CSGnet, and for that matter, the CSG. It may be true that when goaded sufficiently, Rick resorted to counterproductive modes of argument (e.g., he lost it). But that was never the beginning. The beginning was almost always a statement by someone who knew less than Rick did about PCT, or at least forgot, temporarily, what he or she knew.

I wish that people would examine what preceded the blowups, which was almost always someone trying to push some idea that was really not consistent with PCT -- and which Rick, lacking my tact (or the tact that I once thought I had), immediately objected to, quite correctly if not always gently. In reply, Rick was attacked for being a thought policeman, for being closed-minded, for being arrogant in insisting on "PCT purity." And of course that infuriated him, and Rick infuriated is not the Rick of Teaching Dogma in Psychology. When he is angry Rick pours gasoline on the flames. Or he used to. But I have yet to see a case where he lit the match.

I have recently been told (not for the first time) by one of my oldest and dearest friends in the CSG that if Rick shows up at a meeting, this person will leave. If Rick is included in a discussion, this person will cease to participate. There are others who have expressed similar, if not quite such extreme, views -- despite the considerable degree of support given to Rick by a significant group of others on CSGnet. What all these people cite as justification is what was said at the peak of a conflict. Nobody seems to want to consider how there came to be a conflict in the first place, before the escalation got under way. I have never seen a one-sided conflict. I don't think that there is a single person involved who could say he or she is free of responsibility for making things worse, then worse again, and then still worse. Each person, focusing on the intransigence and excesses of the other, fails to see his or her own intransigence and excesses. If you simply focus on who said the most hurtful things just before everything collapsed, you will miss the point that the phenomenon of conflict arises from opposing goals and actions, and an inability to reorganize fast enough. It takes at least two to create, maintain, and increase a conflict. But it only takes one to nurture it for years and years and years.

After considerable wrestling with my own conflicts, I have decided that I will not make the choice I am being pressured to make. I expect other people to resolve conflicts, not to exacerbate them. I will not take sides in what is basically a pathological social relationship. I do not want to encourage people who indulge in tempers or hold childish grudges -- either one -- or who otherwise hunker down and refuse to change. Such behavior is against the interests of the CSG and a direct threat to my life's work.

Read the Appendix linked to above. See if you think the man who write that eloquent farewell address as he uprooted himself to follow the banner of PCT should be declared anathema and banned from the company of all Right Thinkers. Myself, I think that would be a really dumb idea and I don't intend to do it.

Best, Bill P.

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Post to Bill from Dag September 8, 2005

Bill, Private.

DF: I was truly sad to see your post on August 19. I understand your yearning for the old collegial days of CSG, but I think you are very wrong to think the way you do. I disagree with just about everything you said in your post.

I really don't want to send you this very private post, but I find that I have no peace of mind, I guess just like you did not recently, so I'll compose it as best I can and impose on you.

I have read CSGnet with attention from the inception through 2002 or so. I still read, of course, but not everything. I have archived everything. I do it because I think PCT is of extraordinary historic significance. People will read CSGnet in decades to come and will form opinions on our squabbles long after we are all dead. I don't think historians reading CSGnet will agree with your post any more than I do, but who knows. I am not going to reread CSGnet to prove anything at this stage. I have more productive things to do. Video for Tim's book is next on the agenda. A detailed script has already been prepared so people can "hear" the dialog clearly and have Tim's comments along the way.

Much work remains for me and you and our friends to do to develop applications, explain, demonstrate and otherwise attract and prepare the way for future PCTers. Your work on the modeling book and the demos that go with it is important. Tom's planned work and demos on social interaction will be helpful. Whatever articles or books Rick has in the works will be valuable contributions. If we work together in small, congenial groups we will move mountains. My hope is that through this post I will facilitate such a development, eventually leading to some healing and much satisfaction, both personal for all involved and with progress of PCT as science.

[From Bill Powers (2005.08.19.0822 MDT)]

<snip>

Now at the risk of embarrassing Rick, I have to write the following.

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The Appendix is by Rick Marken, and it's called Teaching Dogma in Psychology. It's Rick's farewell address at Augsburg College, in which he gives his reasons for not wanting to teach conventional ideas any more. It's a wonderful introduction to control theory for psychologists, including all the reasons why psychologists might and might not want to learn about it. Reading it now, some 20 years after it was written, I realize that Rick's grasp of control theory and its implications was fully formed even in the first year that the Control Systems Group existed.

DF: I absolutely agree that Rick grasps the implications of PCT and his farewell address is very good. In the last 21 days through Wednesday, ending with his post on convincing himself, Rick has just posted 43 posts on memory in perception. 33 of these from the job. By reason of volume alone, no-one can keep up with him, except perhaps yourself and Bruce Nevin. This sequence casts some doubt on his grasp of control theory and the way he thinks. Obviously, there are aspects of PCT he has never considered. Along the way, Rick said that meaning is a memory phenomenon, not a perceptual phenomenon, then claimed that this is PCT science, as if to clobber me. (I'll grant you I had needled him, asking what science he was referring to). It occurs to me that this is how a conventional psychologist would think. And it seems to me that the majority of Rick's subsequent "models" as you generously labeled them, are descriptive only. Rick has objected to my categorization of PCT as an engineering or natural science, I suppose because he has a very limited grasp of physics and natural science, and figures he understands PCT well enough. To me, it is not enough. PCT is about how stuff works in all the gory details, as far as we can figure it out. One thing we don't know is how perceptual functions work.

BP: I think that many people who have joined the Hate Rick Club forget that they themselves played a major part in creating the escalating conflicts that nearly wrecked CSGnet, and for that matter, the CSG. It may be true that when goaded sufficiently, Rick resorted to counterproductive modes of argument (e.g., he lost it). But that was never the beginning.

DF: Not true at all. And the concept of "the Hate Rick Club" is your fabrication. Rick has posted a very large number of gratuitous insults and denigrating statements about others, beginning with his ridicule of the Pope, the Catholic Church and Ed Ford back in 1993 or so. You may not have read Rick's posts or you may have agreed with their thrust, or his political views, or you may have filtered it all through your love for and liking of Rick. I certainly thought the very first, less severe, insults were funny and chuckled at the time. I am no fan of religion either. But I stopped chuckling by 1994.

I now wish I had had the guts to speak up during the coercion debate. Here, you and Rick picked on a single sentence in Ed's book. You have made much of "the RTP defenders" since, but I never saw any defense of RTP, only comments to the effect that you were nitpicking and that the whole discussion was inappropriate. Neither of you ever contacted Ed or Tom, (since Tom worked with Ed at the time), and they were nowhere near CSGnet. I am sure you can add up to at least 85 statements over several years (a steady drumbeat anyway) to the effect that the question was dishonest, which implied that Ed was dishonest.

You are certainly aware of a large number of very hateful remarks from Rick, surfacing every few months; many of them digs aimed at RTP. (Contrast this with the total absence of criticism of NewView and the IAACT group. A much wiser policy, requiring much patience, as we discussed in Toronto.) In recent years, you have distanced yourself on CSGnet from particularly nasty, out-of-the-blue statements by Rick. But many times you did not and thus gave the impression of tacit endorsement. CSGnet has needed moderation to defend it from Rick, not from anyone else, but CSGnet is your mail group and moderation has been out of the question. Email is a terrible medium unless people are careful. Rick has made statements that are simply vile.

A few days ago this gratuitous statement: "This whole discussion has helped me understand why almost no one bothers doing any research on PCT; apparently you discover more by writing about PCT than by going into the lab and studying it."

Vintage Rick. He makes up excuses to put people down, even when he himself is the one who is way off. Of course, I don't take Rick seriously enough to bother any more. But while he intended to put me down, he simultaneously denigrated Phil Runkel, Tim Carey, Gary Cziko and no doubt some others. Just casually -- in passing. And of course he did not mean it. Reading a dig aimed at someone else is not nearly as hurtful as being the target yourself, so most readers probably just chuckle.

By the way, doing PCT research is not that easy. Has Rick done any since 1989, the year I came on board? I have chosen to make my contribution by doing my best to make PCT available to others. I do not think I need to apologize to Rick for my contribution, or my understanding.

BP: The beginning was almost always a statement by someone who knew less than Rick did about PCT, or at least forgot, temporarily, what he or she knew.

DF: I don't think that is very true either. Rick has set himself up as the ultimate expert on PCT, your crown prince. You introduced him in 1998 to an IAACT function as the person who knows almost as much about PCT as you do. With hindsight, I think that kind of praise has done him a great disservice. In his own mind, he is invariably, always, without exception, RIGHT. He certainly has been RIGHT most of the time as he has resisted

your patient nudges in the recent posts, even suggesting that it was time to revise B:CP.

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BP: BCP has always shown imagined perceptions from one system passing upward to the inputs of higher systems. I didn't get in there and change it.

DF: Perhaps it's time to rethink it.

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DF: The thing I see as more consistent than anything else with Rick is hubris. In an exchange with limited distribution when my father died, you remarked to him on his amazing display of hubris or his display of amazing hubris as he imposed himself on the RTP discussion group. You added reassurance that you like him anyway.

On the concept of crown prince (and yes, it is clear from Rick's many postings that he perceives himself that way) nobody in the current PCT orbit comes close to having the appropriate background to take over where you leave off. My aim is to help present PCT such that people with appropriate understanding of physical science and an interest in neurology, biology, psychology and everything else you have studied with care during the last 50 years will catch on and carry on. Eventually, that will happen. In the meantime, publicity and correct characterization are important. It is also important that the core literature is clear and correct. I treasure my relationship with Alice and am proud of the website (soon to be websites) that I keep clean and correct.

BP: I wish that people would examine what preceded the blowups, which was almost always someone trying to push some idea that was really not consistent with PCT -- and which Rick, lacking my tact (or the tact that I once thought I had), immediately objected to, quite correctly if not always gently.

In reply, Rick was attacked for being a thought policeman, for being closed-minded, for being arrogant in insisting on "PCT purity." And of course that infuriated him, and Rick infuriated is not the Rick of Teaching Dogma in Psychology. When he is angry Rick pours gasoline on the flames. Or he used to.

DF: One problem I see with this is that while Rick's published works are well written and edited, he is often careless, endlessly confusing and wrong in his postings. But he is always RIGHT. And how can anyone discuss anything with him. He is always RIGHT. If you score a good point, he will change the subject. One habit he has acknowledged is that of reading one paragraph, picking it apart, then reading the second and third. By failing to read the entire post before starting to criticize, he sure has demonstrated a lack of respect for others.

BP: But I have yet to see a case where he lit the match.

DF: How do you characterize Rick's opening post in 2002?

Date: Tue, 1 Jan 2002 14:41:29 -0800
From: Richard Marken <marken@MINDREADINGS.COM>
Subject: What PCT Says

[From Rick Marken (2002.01.01.1221)]

I would like to suggest that we start this palindromic New Year by talking about how we should go about applying our understanding of PCT to practical situations. My interest in this question was piqued by my discovery of the following quote at the "Responsible Thinking" site: When I read it, it reminded me of the opening scene in a Shakespeare movie, I don't recall the name of it or much else, but it opened with Mark Anthony? stepping in front of the public and heaping praise on Caesar's killers, recounting the reasons to kill Caesar, which of course were that he had done things for the benefit of the people. Pretty soon, the people were enraged at the killers.

DF: You responded with a long post where you did your best to provide a perspective on the quote in question to show him his error in judgement. As usual, Rick argued with you.

Two days later [From Rick Marken (2002.01.03.0915)] Rick made this statement

RM: I think the difference comes not from different underlying assumptions but from different agendas. As you said in an earlier post, PCT doesn't really say anything; it doesn't speak for itself. People describe the implications of PCT in the context of their own agendas (higher level controlled perceptions). What I've learned from this exercise is that no matter how well people understand PCT they still have agendas. I used to believe that such agendas would tend go away as one becomes expert in PCT. But this is clearly not the case. Tom understands PCT as well or better than I do. Yet much of what he says about the implications of PCT strikes me as ludicrous. And it's quite clear from past interactions with Tom that he feels the same about what I say about it, too. Since we both understand PCT pretty darn well, this clash must be the result of different agendas. I have mine. He has his. I'm afraid that the dream of harmony based on mutual understanding of PCT is just that: a dream. And the fact that it is an unrealistic dream is hinted at, I think, by PCT itself. The dream works only if there is mutual acceptance of PCT as the agenda itself. To me, the first post, dripping with sarcasm, putting lots of words in Tom's mouth, then ridiculing them, was denigrating. No, a continuation of what had become a long campaign of character assassination. Despite your best efforts, Rick desperately wanted to say that what Tom says about the implications of PCT was ludicrous. Rick says Tom has an agenda. Rick implies that Tom's agenda is something other than PCT. Rick's motives, of course, are pure as the driven snow.

DF: Tom had not been mentioned on CSGnet in the preceding months. The time when it was established that you and Rick had no first-hand knowledge about RTP was long past. Yet here we go again, making an effort to push siblings out of the nest without any provocation at all. Purely a logical

exercise on an interesting aspect of PCT. Nothing personal at all. Tom did not participate in this discussion, but of course he knows about it. I said or posted nothing at the time.

Somewhere along the line, Rick attempted to "make nice" with Tom, as he put it in a more recent post. I saw just one of several posts between yourself and Rick, where you cc:d Tom. (Tom has not spread these nasty posts around). In the post I saw, Rick complained to you that Tom had "sold out" to RTP. You proceeded to lecture Rick on concepts of ethics. I don't think Tom ever participated in that exchange with any reply. He told me he had asked you to stop cc to him.

Rick has a reputation for sending nasty private posts, but I have not personally been the target of that. Coming to think of it, I have not been one of Rick's targets. I was recently told that my offspring figures I don't shy from a confrontation. That may be one good reason. I did submit some pretty strong posts in the 1999, 2000 time frame, such as: Coercion, RTP, arrogance [From Dag Forssell (991119 1345)]

Many people shy away from confronting others. Results can be disastrous if unhealthy situations are allowed to fester. Rick has been allowed to fester on CSGnet, and the results are not good.

Rick's nasty, character assassinating habits have been the subject of discussion on CSGnet every few years going way back. His hubris has not changed. His penchant for putting others down has not changed. But he has toned down in recent years, I think because you began to confront him a few years ago.

BP: I have recently been told (not for the first time) by one of my oldest and dearest friends in the CSG that if Rick shows up at a meeting, this person will leave. If Rick is included in a discussion, this person will cease to participate. There are others who have expressed similar, if not quite such extreme, views -- despite the considerable degree of support given to Rick by a significant group of others on CSGnet. What all these people cite as justification is what was said at the peak of a conflict.

DF: No, much of it relates to poisonous digs on CSGnet over a long period of time, directed at people who were not on CSGnet.

BP: Nobody seems to want to consider how there came to be a conflict in the first place, before the escalation got under way. I have never seen a one-sided conflict.

DF: Perhaps not, but you sure have seen a stream of one-sided insults.

BP: I don't think that there is a single person involved who could say he or she is free of responsibility for making things worse, then worse again, and then still worse. Each person, focusing on the intransigence and excesses of the other, fails to see his or her own intransigence and

excesses. If you simply focus on who said the most hurtful things just before everything collapsed, you will miss the point that the phenomenon of conflict arises from opposing goals and actions, and an inability to reorganize fast enough. It takes at least two to create, maintain, and increase a conflict. But it only takes one to nurture it for years and years and years.

DF: Yes, only one has kept up the drumbeat for years and years. But you are denying the victims of this drumbeat the right to give the drummer a wide berth.

Many people have not maintained and increased any conflict. They have voted with their feet, removed themselves. In part out of respect for you, in part perhaps because of an aversion to conflict, people just withdraw without saying much to you.

I, too, have reduced my participation on CSGnet to almost nothing. For me, it is not as productive and instructive as it was in the early 1990s. One reason may be that I think I understand already, but I also think the quality has dropped way down. And at least two years I really did not want to come to the CSG conference. I came anyway because I have little choice. It is too important to me that the early history of PCT be preserved for those who will follow us.

BP: After considerable wrestling with my own conflicts, I have decided that I will not make the choice I am being pressured to make.

DF: What choice? You were not pressured to make any choice at all, were you? Or is working with me and Tom and Tim on their book and demo program a deliberate choice to exclude Rick? On your own initiative, you insisted on including Rick in Tom's work because of your respect, love and liking of Rick, knowing full well how hurt Tom has felt by nasty posts and accusations from Rick.

BP: I expect other people to resolve conflicts, not to exacerbate them.

DF: But Rick has done nothing to resolve the hurt he has caused. Sure, a nominal "sorry" along the way, but no understanding, no change. As you say near the end of MSOB, if a person does not have a systems concept about something, it does not exist for him or her. I don't think Rick's systems concepts regarding respect for others resemble mine, or yours.

My father could not compel me to embrace the one of my sisters who accused me of incestuous behavior toward my daughter, wrote a nasty letter she read to him before she mailed it, talked about it within the family and refused to take it back. This pretty much destroyed my relationship with my father, but I cannot go back now. I understand what happened, feel sorry about it. I kept my distance and have my sense of personal integrity intact. I must be pathological too, whatever that word means. Does it have a meaning in PCT?

(Interestingly, when the oldest son of that sister sat on my patio having a beer a year ago, he told me that he had heard a lot of shit about Christine and me from his parents, but that he did not believe much of what his parents said about anything anyway. I thanked him and said that obviously he had nothing to do with any of his mother's letters, so there was no need to talk about it. Björn is now back in Sweden, his internship concluded. He will visit the American embassy next week to process his H-1 visa and will return to Pixar in mid-October as a full-time employee. We are his fourth set of parents and he values his American family. His is the story of a magnificent rescue from a very difficult home environment. BTW, last we talked, he said that joysticks under Windows are controlled using any number of USB channels through Active X, and that there are books readily available on that. I shall see if I can pick one up.)

You can not compel people to work with Rick when all they want is to keep a safe distance.

BP: I will not take sides in what is basically a pathological social relationship.

DF: Is it not taking sides to attempt to control one but not the other? If you are not to take sides, then do not attempt to force people to work together when they don't want to. Seems basic PCT to me.

Nobody questions your right to have a good, loving relationship with Rick. Nobody questions that you have a loving relationship with Rick. Nobody questions that Rick values your appreciation and endorsement very much, much like a father. I certainly have no reason to interfere with any of that. But I also care about the other very devoted friends and PCTers in our mutual orbit.

BP: I do not want to encourage people who indulge in tempers or hold childish grudges -- either one -- or who otherwise hunker down and refuse to change.

DF: Have you seen Rick change? I have been privy to some of your attempts to set Rick straight in private exchanges with limited distribution. Rather than get the point, Rick seems prone to blast you right back. He seems to thrive on conflict while you and most of the rest of us shy away from it.

BP: Such behavior is against the interests of the CSG

DF: Allowing Rick to continue putting people down is against the interests of CSG.

BP: and a direct threat to my life's work.

DF: No, it is not. The people who have made up their mind about Rick are as devoted to PCT as ever. You cannot put the genie back in the bottle. The only crime you can accuse these people of is wanting to keep their

distance.

PCT is your life's work. It was Mary's life's work. It is also Tom Bourbon's life's work. It is Phil Runkel's life's work. It is Rick's life's work. I have made it my life's work. It is Tim Carey's life's work. It is a large part of Greg Williams' life's work, and Bruce Nevin's. I don't mean to leave anyone out. PCT is not yours alone any more. Or Rick would not argue so vehemently with you in the last two weeks, would he? PCT is an emerging natural science. It is in the public domain. Natural science is not governed by gurus or associations or universities. PCT will evolve as more people steeped in physical science get involved and work with it. Ultimately, it will replace the confusing, unscientific mess that rules the roost today, and that makes life terrible for most of the world's population.

BP: Read the Appendix linked to above. See if you think the man who write that eloquent farewell address as he uprooted himself to follow the banner of PCT should be declared anathema and banned from the company of all Right Thinkers. Myself, I think that would be a really dumb idea and I don't intend to do it.

DF: This post of yours was not occassioned by anyone suggesting that Rick should be declared anathema and banned from the company of all Right Thinkers. (Though he is number one in that category :)) This post of yours was occasioned by one of Rick's victims insisting on keeping a safe distance. Perhaps you imagine someone asking you to ban Rick, but that would be your imagination only.

I am not sure what anyone can do about Rick as such. I think there is too much focus on Rick. He is not likely to change his systems concepts anytime soon.

Better just continue working on PCT in various ways with all the people who are devoted to it. I will continue to work with Rick for the good of PCT, such as cooperating on the official website without any rancor whatsoever. But of course, I will stand up for my own understanding as best I can, as I just did. And I will change my mind when someone makes a good point about clarity, validity or whatever. Rick's early point was helpful and I made a change to my paper to enhance clarity.

I will also continue to work with my very dear friends Bruce Nevin, Tom Bourbon, Tim Carey, Greg Williams and yourself. I sure hope that will not change.

With much love, Dag
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Date: Fri, 09 Sep 2005 13:42:27 -0600
To: Dag Forssell
From: Bill Powers
Subject: Re: Private

Hi, Dag --

I can see that you've been restraining yourself, and am glad that you've managed to do so. I'm quite aware of Rick's faults, but then I don't know anyone who doesn't have some less-than-perfect attributes that would cause friction and antagonism if challenged. Anyone.

I guess the question is, what do you want me to do about it? That's basically what I asked Tom: I asked him, are you saying I have to choose between you and Rick? He didn't answer that question. But it was clear that the answer was yes. When I told him I refused to choose -- that is, to prevent Rick (if I could) from taking part in forums where Tom might participate -- Tom's only reply was goodbye. The positive aspects of staying in touch with me evidently meant less to him than nursing and amplifying his violent dislike of Rick. If that's so, then his absence is not as regrettable as it would otherwise have been. I am not comfortable around haters. Tom claims he doesn't hate Rick, but that's obviously a self-delusion. He harbors a deep, vengeful, and acidic hatred for Rick which has been building up since shortly after they met. That long history of strong antipathy is one thing that makes me suspicious about the complaints about Rick that came up after the antipathy was well-established. Hate feeds on hate and magnifies mild criticisms into accusations of deadly sin.

But there is another thing seriously wrong here.

Remember the "I see you have chosen ..." fight? Do you know who first objected to that line, and said that it was basically dishonest? From what I'm hearing, it seems that everyone thinks Rick was the culprit. He wasn't. I said it first. It was I who pointed out that a teacher can't see what a child has chosen, and to imply that the child had made a choice when no such choice had been made was a bad approach, and did not teach the child to be responsible. In fact, it taught the opposite, because the teacher was rejecting responsibility for the decision to remove the child from the classroom, which the teacher was clearly making. I said it was dishonest.

In an effort to get across what was wrong with this approach, I (not Rick) used the example of the terrorists who bombed that airliner over Lockerbie, Scotland. They demanded that some of their terrorist friends be released from jail and that money be paid to them, and they said that if these conditions were not met, the consequences would be on the heads of those those refused. And after the Lockerbie incident, they said that this was the fault of those who refused to meet their demands even though they knew what the consequences would be. They said the equivalent of "I see you have chosen to have your airplane and passengers destroyed." My point was that if you accept the reasoning behind the "I see you have chosen .." idea, then you have to accept the reasoning behind the terrorists' claim that what they did was not their fault. And if you can see that there is something wrong with the terrorists' reasoning, then you should be able to

see that the same thing is wrong with telling teachers to reason the same way.

Rick echoed my argument (or perhaps he even understood it and agreed with it). But it was Rick, not I, who was on the receiving end of the thunderous irrelevant objections. "You're accusing the RTP teachers of being just like terrorists," roared Tom and others. They should have been saying that to me, of course, because I said it first, and repeated it, until I finally saw that there was no way to get the point across and dropped out of the "discussion." They shouldn't hve objected at all, of course, because that accusation is irrelevant and totally misses the point, perhaps even on purpose. But any objections should have been directed at the author, not someone who quoted me.

A great deal of what Rick has been accused of should have been aimed at me, because I have said most of the same things Rick said, although probably not in such an inflammatory way. Rick's problem was that he got mad and couldn't stand to leave the field of battle, and inevitably resorted to worse and worse tactics until he went too far (which didn't take long -- it never does). Rick hates to lose an argument almost as much as those who have opposed him hate it.

What I dislike the most about all this is the way objections to my statements have been deflected to Rick when he got around to repeating what I said. Hands off the Guru! Rick was an easier target, so he took the heat and people just sort of conveniently forgot who actually started the fight. It was so systematic that I find it hard to believe it was totally unconscious. Rick was literally the scapegoat, the one who is punished instead of the royal personage people didn't dare criticize. I see that as rather cowardly. And it's an insult when people treat me like a royal personage. Do they really think I want to be put above them? Or that I'm too fragile to take criticism directly?

I think Rick has been the easy safe target, the one who can be vilified and rejected without fear of effective counterattack or punishment. He is so transparently self-serving and at the same time self-doubting. He blurts out nonsense and thinks about it afterward and is sorry, and tries to save face. He utters outrageous things, and then acts hurt when people don't approve. He's the perfect underdog to kick.

But if we got rid of Rick, who would get the blame the next time the Guru says something to challenge the self-satisfaction of CSGers? Maybe the Guru would get it this time, but somehow I can't help thinking it would be someone else.

Bill

=====

From Dag September 14, 2005

Bill,

At 12:42 PM 9/9/2005, you wrote:

Hi, Dag --

I can see that you've been restraining yourself, and am glad that you've managed to do so. I'm quite aware of Rick's faults, but then I don't know anyone who doesn't have some less-than-perfect attributes that would cause friction and antagonism if challenged. Anyone.

DF: Fair enough.

BP: I guess the question is, what do you want me to do about it?

DF: Nothing much. Continue to disassociate yourself from putdowns of others and gratuitous nastiness. There have not been many lately.

BP: That's basically what I asked Tom: I asked him, are you saying I have to choose between you and Rick?

DF: What did he do to deserve being asked that question?

All I know is that I suggested to him that we ask you if you could and would participate, help us update the "conflict" and "helping" demos he developed in the late 80's based on your work. You had told me in Toronto that you were not going to work on those because they were his. I can see that he is not capable given the intervening years and programming skills required. Rick is not capable of working with Delphi stuff either. Nor I. I suppose with a major effort, I could learn, but I think my efforts are more productively spent the way I promote PCT now.

So he wrote you, explained about his book and you signed on. The answer was yes.

From what I gather talking to Tim (I have not shared this correspondence with anyone. I have mentioned to Tim that I am corresponding with you) somewhere along the line you simply included Rick in your correspondence and work with Tom -- without warning or asking.

If that is correct, Tom did not instigate this unfortunate situation. You did.

Even if you asked, you knew that you would rub Tom's nose in past excesses by Rick.

BP: He didn't answer that question. But it was clear that the answer was yes. When I told him I refused to choose -- that is, to prevent Rick (if I could) from taking part in forums where Tom might participate -- Tom's only reply was goodbye.

DF: Where did "forums where Tom might participate" come from. Does that mean private correspondence with you? Was this in fact what you asked?

BP: The positive aspects of staying in touch with me evidently meant less to him than nursing and amplifying his violent dislike of Rick.

DF: Are you sure you were not the one nursing it by bringing it up and forcing the issue? Seems to me that Tom's only crime was attempting to correspond with you in a productive, friendly way.

BP: If that's so, then his absence is not as regrettable as it would otherwise have been.

DF: I think the whole situation is awfully regrettable. We are talking about the one person who taught PCT in earnest to college students for 15 years (noone else comes close to his experience and insight from teaching PCT in the real world - you don't either), has been given credit for calling the first CSG meeting and has been a steadfast friend and warrior for how many years?

BP: I am not comfortable around haters.

DF: Why call Tom a hater? Why not perceive him as a decent, faithful person, committed for life to PCT, who just wants to keep his distance from what he has experienced as loads of nastiness and putdowns, some from you, most from Rick.

Rick has been casually putting people down and ridiculing others on CSGnet for years, without any apparent dislike from you. I have perceived it long before I became aware (I think you must have pointed it out to me) that Tom held any such antipathy. Certainly, Tom participated regularly and in a positive way on CSGnet through the first half of the 90s.

Far away from any participation by Tom, Rick's way of posting was the subject of an hour-long discussion in St Louis. [Caused quite directly by [From Dag Forssell (010415 18:00)]] As I recall, you suggested to Rick that he write a post, then sit on it for 24 hours and read it again before pressing the Send button. Perceptions of Rick's particular nastiness are not unique to Tom, and most of the people who want no part of it have removed themselves to lurking status or signed off.

BP: Tom claims he doesn't hate Rick, but that's obviously a self-delusion. He harbors a deep, vengeful, and acidic hatred for Rick which has been building up since shortly after they met.

DF: Shortly after they met? That is news to me, but I suppose I can understand it if that is so. Rick has a way of coming across as if he is looking down his nose at others, being that he is so brilliant. He may have brilliant moments but he is also very limited in lots of ways, but we don't perceive our own shortcomings, do we? If you don't have a systems concept regarding something, it does not exist for you. Rick does not perceive that which he does not know, and neither do I. So we should all be a bit humble. Most of us are. I have given Rick far too much time thinking about him down through the years. Seems to me he is quite

insecure and makes up for it with bravado and hubris. I find that you agree.

BP: That long history of strong antipathy is one thing that makes me suspicious about the complaints about Rick that came up after the antipathy was well-established.

DF: Here you are referring to Tom alone? Or are you referring to numerous people who avoid CSGnet and CSG? I think you should put your suspicions under scrutiny and not indulge in labeling those who avoid CSGnet pathological.

BP: Hate feeds on hate and magnifies mild criticisms into accusations of deadly sin.

But there is another thing seriously wrong here.

Remember the "I see you have chosen ..." fight? Do you know who first objected to that line, and said that it was basically dishonest? From what I'm hearing, it seems that everyone thinks Rick was the culprit. He wasn't. I said it first. It was I who pointed out that a teacher can't see what a child has chosen, and to imply that the child had made a choice when no such choice had been made was a bad approach, and did not teach the child to be responsible. In fact, it taught the opposite, because the teacher was rejecting responsibility for the decision to remove the child from the classroom, which the teacher was clearly making. I said it was dishonest.

In an effort to get across what was wrong with this approach, I (not Rick) used the example of the terrorists who bombed that airliner over Lockerbie, Scotland. They demanded that some of their terrorist friends be released from jail and that money be paid to them, and they said that if these conditions were not met, the consequences would be on the heads of those those refused. And after the Lockerbie incident, they said that this was the fault of those who refused to meet their demands even though they knew what the consequences would be. They said the equivalent of "I see you have chosen to have your airplane and passengers destroyed." My point was that if you accept the reasoning behind the "I see you have chosen .." idea, then you have to accept the reasoning behind the terrorists' claim that what they did was not their fault. And if you can see that there is something wrong with the terrorists' reasoning, then you should be able to see that the same thing is wrong with telling teachers to reason the same way.

Rick echoed my argument (or perhaps he even understood it and agreed with it). But it was Rick, not I, who was on the receiving end of the thunderous irrelevant objections. "You're accusing the RTP teachers of being just like terrorists," roared Tom and others. They should have been saying that to me, of course, because I said it first, and repeated it, until I finally saw that there was no way to get the point across and dropped out of the "discussion." They shouldn't hve objected at all, of

course, because that accusation is irrelevant and totally misses the point, perhaps even on purpose. But any objections should have been directed at the author, not someone who quoted me.

A great deal of what Rick has been accused of should have been aimed at me, because I have said most of the same things Rick said, although probably not in such an inflammatory way.

DF: In terms of the coercion debate, this is probably true.

BP: Rick's problem was that he got mad and couldn't stand to leave the field of battle, and inevitably resorted to worse and worse tactics until he went too far (which didn't take long -- it never does). Rick hates to lose an argument almost as much as those who have opposed him hate it.

DF: Rick certainly kept up hateful statements about the choice question for years afterward. The last I remember was when Rick made some statement about Saddam and choice that you took exception to, saying that he must REALLY hate RTP.

BP: What I dislike the most about all this is the way objections to my statements have been deflected to Rick when he got around to repeating what I said. Hands off the Guru! Rick was an easier target, so he took the heat and people just sort of conveniently forgot who actually started the fight. It was so systematic that I find it hard to believe it was totally unconscious. Rick was literally the scapegoat, the one who is punished instead of the royal personage people didn't dare criticize. I see that as rather cowardly. And it's an insult when people treat me like a royal personage. Do they really think I want to be put above them? Or that I'm too fragile to take criticism directly?

DF: I agree with much of what you say here. But when you post, you don't come across as if you are talking to morons (even when you post in response to people who have made little effort to study PCT). Rick has a way of slipping in digs now and then so you understand that you are an inferior person. He does not have to do it often to get it across. I pointed out to you that he did it to me just a few weeks ago. That one was mild.

BP: I think Rick has been the easy safe target, the one who can be vilified and rejected without fear of effective counterattack or punishment. He is so transparently self-serving and at the same time self-doubting. He blurts out nonsense and thinks about it afterward and is sorry, and tries to save face. He utters outrageous things, and then acts hurt when people don't approve. He's the perfect underdog to kick.

DF: It is unfortunate that he himself has such a track record of kicking others without provocation.

BP: But if we got rid of Rick, who would get the blame the next time the

Guru says something to challenge the self-satisfaction of CSGers? Maybe the Guru would get it this time, but somehow I can't help thinking it would be someone else.

DF: I have not suggested getting rid of Rick, and I very much doubt that Tom has. Tom has removed himself from CSGnet and GSG. You won't allow that. Tom must work with Rick in perfect harmony, or you will not allow him to work with you. Have I misunderstood?

There is yet another thing wrong with communications between people, in general and on CSGnet. When he grasped the basics of PCT way back, Jim Soldani started asking questions of people who worked with him, rather than telling. See http://www.livingcontrolsystems.com/files/other_pct.html. [Included in [pct_readings_ebook_2016.pdf](#)]

Given the nature of the mailing list, people tell each other what they think about a post, at worst just the first paragraph, rather than asking what the sender meant, wanted to accomplish, circumstances, etc.

In more personal communications, such as by phone or face-to-face, questions are asked, explanations offered in a much more immediate way. Jim Soldani did not manage through email. He asked probing questions about where people were coming from, what their personal priorities were, and the difficult ones about whether they could buy into the tasks at work, all face-to-face. This takes time and effort, but Jim's associates loved him as a manager.

I wish I were in Durango for this discussion. I wish you and Tom could get together in person for a few days.

Tim and I have just had some pleasant and productive exchanges with Rick occasioned by his post to CSGnet the other day. See

http://www.livingcontrolsystems.com/people_say_mol/marken_says.html.

I figure I am as realistic about Rick as I can see that you are. I said in posts in 2000 that I had come to loathe him. I meant it at the time. I thought of him to myself as "Rick Marken is my name; character assassination is my game". But not any more.

I wish you would soften your perception of Tom as I have softened my perception of Rick.

PCT is gaining momentum. I think you are wise to start teaching in your local area.

I will work with Tom and Tim to support their new books, one for that publisher in England who is encouraging them and a more technical one for me. I am comfortable being a boutique publisher, capable of producing small runs to start.

Now I must get back to my personal salt mine. I have a deadline this afternoon. I spent a lot of time yesterday getting my new inkjet printer up and running with inexpensive ink and am now printing a batch of covers for Tim's book. BTW, I trust you received your five copies.

Best, Dag

=====

Date: Wed, 14 Sep 2005 17:04:00 -0600
To: Dag Forssell
From: Bill Powers
Subject: Re: Private

Hi, Dag --

BP: That's basically what I asked Tom: I asked him, are you saying I have to choose between you and Rick?

DF: What did he do to deserve being asked that question?

BP: Here's what I wrote:

Hi, Tom --

I realize that I have a rather serious problem, Tom. One of our most proficient modelers and a staunch supporter of PCT for over 25 years is being left out of this discussion. I just realized that I have been avoiding putting Rick Marken on this mini-list because I am afraid that if I did, you would leave. I am caught between two disasters. Help me.

Here is his reply:

=====

TB: I am sorry to tell you that this will always be a problem.

When a grown man deliberately attacks other people -- many other people, ad hominem, by way of slander and libel, his actions have consequences.

People tell me, repeatedly, that I hate Rick. That is not true. I merely dissociate myself from people who slander me and libel me. I do not trust, or respect, people who do those kinds of things, and I do not give them fourth or fifth chances.

There is nothing more to it than that.

At the very least, Rick and I operate with different principle-level references. I am sorry that you are caught in the middle.

Tom

=====

BP: It was after that that I said he was making me choose between him and

Rick, and the rest happened. Frankly, I think all that "grown man" and "actions have consequences" stuff is just self-righteous bullshit. He sounds like some old-fashioned preacher condemning a sinner to eternal hellfire, and enjoying his own purity as he does so. I have no patience with it. He puts a very heavy price on friendship.

DF: All I know is that I suggested to him that we ask you if you could and would participate, help us update the "conflict" and "helping" demos he developed in the late 80's based on your work. You had told me in Toronto that you were not going to work on those because they were his.

BP: I think you misunderstood me. I said that I had kept hands off those programs in the past because he developed them. I didn't want to seem to be taking them over or intruding on his territory. I'm perfectly willing to help Tom get up to speed with programming in Delphi (which he can do), but he should really continue to be the author of his own programs. His name, not mine, should be on them.

I'm certainly willing to help with the programming. I still am, but not under the condition that I repudiate Rick. I can see now that it was naive of me to think that getting Rick to help with the programming might lead to a reconciliation; Tom has no intention at all of seeking any reconciliation. He enjoys looking down on Rick too much. Well, screw it.

DF: somewhere along the line you simply included Rick in your correspondence and work with Tom -- without warning or asking.

BP: Well, I hope you can see that that's not true: in the post above, I asked before I included Rick, and still haven't included him. What would be the point? "Rick, how about helping Tom get his two-person tasks running in Delphi, because he detests your guts and tells everyone how terrible you are, and fully intends to go on feeling that way forever?" When I explained to Rick why I was NOT including him, he understood completely and said he wouldn't even try to join that project, and he hasn't. He's willing to work with Tom, but he realizes that Tom would not accept that.

DF: If that is correct, Tom did not instigate this unfortunate situation. You did.

BP: You can see the extent to which I instigated it. I said I had a problem with excluding Rick. You know the rest. The real problem is Tom's stiff neck.

DF: Even if you asked, you knew that you would rub Tom's nose in past excesses by Rick.

BP: Dag, that is Tom's problem, not mine. It's time he got over it. the key word is "past". How long can one wallow in memories of past transgressions? Rick has tried to do better and has done better; all it took was pointing out what was wrong with what he did and asking him to

give it some thought. Self-righteousness and condemnation did not make him change and never would make him change. He did it himself, given some rational objections presented without rancor. He is trying to stay cool, even when people snipe at him. He is not like Marc Abrams, who can't say three sentences without losing his temper and attacking. And he's not like Tom, who decides that people are Bad and puts them on his shit list forever.

BP: He didn't answer that question. But it was clear that the answer was yes. When I told him I refused to choose -- that is, to prevent Rick (if I could) from taking part in forums where Tom might participate -- Tom's only reply was goodbye.

DF: Where did "forums where Tom might participate" come from. Does that mean private correspondence with you? Was this in fact what you asked?

BP: The positive aspects of staying in touch with me evidently meant less to him than nursing and amplifying his violent dislike of Rick.

DF: Are you sure you were not the one nursing it by bringing it up and forcing the issue?

BP: You see how much I "forced" it. I explained that I had a problem and asked him to help me with it. He refused. I truly didn't think he would refuse, but he did.

DF: I think the whole situation is awfully regrettable. We are talking about the one person who taught PCT in earnest to college students for 15 years (noone else comes close to his experience and insight from teaching PCT in the real world - you don't either), has been given credit for calling the first CSG meeting and has been a steadfast friend and warrior for how many years?

BP: About as many years as Rick. It was Dick Robertson who proposed that we form the CSG. Tom actually misunderstood the date of the first CSG meeting and missed it. Dick and Mary did the organizing.

You're right about his once being a staunch supporter and friend. I don't count what he's doing now as "support" and he is certainly not acting like a friend.

BP: I am not comfortable around haters.

DF: Why call Tom a hater? Why not perceive him as a decent, faithful person, committed for life to PCT, who just wants to keep his distance from what he has experienced as loads of nastiness and putdowns, some from you, most from Rick.

BP: That's how Tom puts it. But I don't buy blaming other people for my own actions, which is what Tom is doing.

DF: Rick has been casually putting people down and ridiculing others on CSGnet for years, without any apparent dislike from you.

BP: Don't give me that. You've seen criticisms from me to Rick about things he has said many, many times on CSGnet. There have been many more in private.

DF: I have perceived it long before I became aware (I think you must have pointed it out to me) that Tom held any such antipathy. Certainly, Tom participated regularly and in a positive way on CSGnet through the first half of the 90s.

BP: Yes, but he and Rick were jealous of each other practically from the moment they met. They both said nasty things to and about each other. It always irritated me that they couldn't get along -- they seemed to be vying for my approval, as if that were more important than PCT, and as if I should love one of them more than the other. I accused them once of "sibling rivalry" and they both got mad.

DF: Far away from any participation by Tom, Rick's way of posting was the subject of an hour-long discussion in St Louis. As I recall, you suggested to Rick that he write a post, then sit on it for 24 hours and read it again before pressing the Send button. Perceptions of Rick's particular nastiness are not unique to Tom, and most of the people who want no part of it have removed themselves to lurking status or signed off.

BP: And those who can tolerate it are still here. You don't need to spell out Rick's transgressions to me. I'm quite aware of them. But my attitude toward people's transgressions is not one of condemnation or hatred or rejection, not if I see any redeeming features as I do in Rick. I've been very pissed off with Rick, but that didn't make me dislike him. I just tried to get him to see how dumb it was to negate his effectiveness that way. And it is dumb, dumber than he has any reason to be.

BP: That long history of strong antipathy is one thing that makes me suspicious about the complaints about Rick that came up after the antipathy was well-established.

DF: Here you are referring to Tom alone? Or are you referring to numerous people who avoid CSGnet and CSG? I think you should put your suspicions under scrutiny and not indulge in labeling those who avoid CSGnet pathological.

BP: I can't say any one thing about all the people who have left CSGnet, because they did it for different reasons. But I know that for quite a while there were people who simply resented Rick for being a PCT purist and criticising them for saying things which showed they simply hadn't got it. I got a lot of the same guff, as when I tried to say that "control" has a specific meaning in PCT and that other uses of the term were simply not correct. "Who are you to say how we should use words?" was the

response from some people, whom I was very glad to be rid of when they left. I was not heartbroken to see people leave because their ignorance of PCT was incurable.

BP: A great deal of what Rick has been accused of should have been aimed at me, because I have said most of the same things Rick said, although probably not in such an inflammatory way.

DF: In terms of the coercion debate, this is probably true.

BP: That's not the only case where it was true.

BP: Rick's problem was that he got mad and couldn't stand to leave the field of battle, and inevitably resorted to worse and worse tactics until he went too far (which didn't take long -- it never does). Rick hates to lose an argument almost as much as those who have opposed him hate it.

DF: Rick certainly kept up hateful statements about the choice question for years afterward.

BP: And others kept bringing it up, too, reminding us of Rick's stupidity in arguing against it. Remember Bill Williams, for example? He never lost an opportunity to ridicule Rick or me for various statements we made (for which he had no effective refutation, of course). Rick got mad. I didn't get mad as often.

DF: The last I remember was when made some statement about Saddam and choice that you took exception to, saying that he must REALLY hate RTP.

BP: Right, but why do you assume that just because I got mad at Rick and took exception to what he said, that I must therefore dislike him and should have nothing further to do with him? That seems to be what a lot of people expect. Do you cut off your relationships with people and declare them enemies every time you disagree with them or get mad at them?

DF: I agree with much of what you say here. But when you post, you don't come across as if you are talking to morons (even when you post in response to people who have made little effort to study PCT). Rick has a way of slipping in digs now and then so you understand that you are an inferior person. He does not have to do it often to get it across. I pointed out to you that he did it to me just a few weeks ago. That one was mild.

BP: Well, why not call him on it, challenge him and ask if he really meant that you are a moron who doesn't know anything about PCT? When you show Rick what he's saying clearly enough, he backs down and usually regrets what he said. When you say "he doesn't have to do it often," aren't you saying that you're giving more weight to occasional lapses than to a far larger number of positive behaviors?

DF: It is unfortunate that he himself has such a track record of kicking others without provocation.

BP: Yes, that's unfortunate, but it's even more unfortunate that so many people don't know how to stick up for themselves and simply nurse their resentments until they finally explode. If they just said, "Rick, you just told me that I am stupid and ignorant. Is that really what you think of me?" they would quickly have him falling all over himself apologizing, and we wouldn't have a problem. Rick isn't evil. He just hasn't grown up.

BP: But if we got rid of Rick, who would get the blame the next time the Guru says something to challenge the self-satisfaction of CSGers? Maybe the Guru would get it this time, but somehow I can't help thinking it would be someone else.

DF: I have not suggested getting rid of Rick, and I very much doubt that Tom has. Tom has removed himself from CSGnet and GSG. You won't allow that. Tom must work with Rick in perfect harmony, or you will not allow him to work with you. Have I misunderstood?

BP: Tom is acting like the mother-in-law who, when she doesn't get her way, threatens to have a heart attack.

Well, Tom hasn't said "get rid of Rick" recently, but he's indicated before that if I go on tolerating him, Rick will destroy the CSG and drive him, Tom, away. Of course it's up to me, you understand -- maybe I really want to destroy the CSG and drive Tom away, and am putting up with Rick in order to do that, so it's really my own free choice. And anyway, it's up to me if I want to work with Tom -- all I have to do is keep Rick out of it. My choice entirely. Shades of "I see you have chosen." Tom is the one throwing monkey-wrenches into the machinery, not me.

I am perfectly willing to work with Tom. I am not willing to repudiate Rick. If that's too much for Tom to take, too bad. If Tom wants to work with me on learning Delphi, I'll start tomorrow. Anyway, Rick has taken himself out of it, as anyone with any self-respect would have done.

DF: I wish you would soften your perception of Tom as I have softened my perception of Rick.

BP: I think I have a very clear picture of both Tom and Rick. I also have some very clear principles of my own: I will not be pushed around by other people having tantrums. that doesn't mean I don't like them. It just means I won't let it happen.

DF: I will work with Tom and Tim to support their new books, one for that publisher in England who is encouraging them and a more technical one for me. I am comfortable being a boutique publisher, capable of producing small runs to start.

BP: That's excellent. I wish Tom realized that it would be just as good,

or even better, if he had an amnesia attack and forgot that he was resentful of Rick.

DF: BTW, I trust you received your five copies.

Yup. And you will receive a check in due course, tomorrow or soon after. TCIITM.

Best, Bill
=====

From Dag November 22, 2005

Bill,

I have been stewing on this for over two months. A reply to you is overdue.

Nothing new about that, of course. I have been spending far too many hours for too many years stewing over the nasty nonsense I have seen on CSGnet. Good, bad or indifferent, I need to get this out of my system. You may label me, too, psychotic. Needless to say I am very unhappy about the foolish, needless parting you forced with Tom.

Meanwhile, I am making some progress. Bruce N has finished editing Tim's book. It will be printed in December. I have resolved to talk PCT for the next ten years, perhaps starting with with a discussion of scientific revolutions, past and future, addressing various engineering-related associations. I have one contact in the works.

At 03:04 PM 9/14/2005, you wrote:

Hi, Dag --

That's basically what I asked Tom: I asked him, are you saying I have to choose between you and Rick?

What did he do to deserve being asked that question?

Here's what I wrote:

DF: Why on earth did you send an email on a sensitive, personal matter such as this? I can't get Tom to call you and you won't call him. Are you both stuck in the old paradigm where a phone call cost five bucks a minute?

BP: Hi, Tom --

I realize that I have a rather serious problem, Tom. One of our most proficient modelers and a staunch supporter of PCT for over 25 years is being left out of this discussion. I just realized that I have been avoiding putting Rick Marken on this mini-list because I am afraid that

if I did, you would leave. I am caught between two disasters. Help me.

DF: I suggested to Tom that we solicit your assistance to develop an updated interactive tracking program, hoping that the result would be some reconciliation between Tom and yourself. Badly needed considering all the abuse that has been casually thrown in Tom's direction.

What makes it a disaster not to invite Rick??????? Does every project have to have a maximum number of cooks? Rick had not worked with you on the model you presented in Toronto, had he? It seemed like news to him. I don't work with everyone I know on every project. Rick is not proficient with Delphi, which we were talking about.

BP: Here is his reply:

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I am sorry to tell you that this will always be a problem.

When a grown man deliberately attacks other people -- many other people, ad hominem, by way of slander and libel, his actions have consequences.

People tell me, repeatedly, that I hate Rick. That is not true. I merely dissociate myself from people who slander me and libel me. I do not trust, or respect, people who do those kinds of things, and I do not give them fourth or fifth chances.

There is nothing more to it than that.

DF: Why not take Tom at his word?

DF: Rick's nastiness is well established. Tom came to Vancouver 98 to stand up to both of you and point out that the entire one-sided coercion "debate" had been very unscientific indeed. Following the conference itself, Tom and Rick came to an understanding on the foredeck of the excursion boat. Rick committed to restrict his comments relative to Tom and RTP until he had an opportunity to find out what he was talking about. That only lasted a couple of weeks. Nasty, uninformed misstatements resumed.

TB: At the very least, Rick and I operate with different principle-level references. I am sorry that you are caught in the middle.

DF: I, too, have concluded that the principles and systems concepts are very different. Understandings are too. For instance, I think in terms of how neurons must interact, Rick thinks in terms of psychological phenomena.

To me, Rick's understanding of PCT is only one way of understanding PCT. To be allergic to perceived misstatements and jump on people, reading and judging one paragraph at a time, amounts to violence. CSGnet has been a violent place. Your approach of writing complete essays is far better.

Tom

=====

BP: It was after that that I said he was making me choose between him and Rick, and the rest happened.

DF: But you don't have to choose. Never did. Tom never asked you to. You are making things up.

BP: Frankly, I think all that "grown man" and "actions have consequences" stuff is just self-righteous bullshit.

DF: Tom's huge mistake was getting fired from the Huston medical school, where he was doing PCT research. Until then, he was a frequent contributor to CSGnet. He also made the mistake of caring for his ailing mother. So he signed off CSGnet. Another huge mistake was his desire to bring real PCT to the RTP program, because he felt that educator's deserved to get proper information. At the time, RTP was already being discredited by some PCT gurus.

One result of Tom's contribution here is Tim Carey. Tom taught Tim PCT. They are still working together. Unfortunately, Tom got screwed by Ed too. I know too much.

Just who is self-righteous here?

BP: He sounds like some old-fashioned preacher condemning a sinner to eternal hellfire, and enjoying his own purity as he does so. I have no patience with it. He puts a very heavy price on friendship.

DF: You are making this up, too. It is downright amazing how much of what a person perceives comes straight from the person's imagination. You are the one who puts a very heavy price on friendship. You are asking a person who has been regularly insulted, denigrated, misrepresented and otherwise pissed upon, to belly up to the bar for more, based on an extremely short email. All Tom asked for was to be allowed to keep his distance.

You yearn for the CSG of old, so you won't allow people to keep their distance from memories that make their insides churn with error signals. Thus you are coercing and dishing out violence anew.

DF: All I know is that I suggested to him that we ask you if you could and would participate, help us update the "conflict" and "helping" demos he developed in the late 80's based on your work. You had told me in Toronto that you were not going to work on those because they were his.

BP: I think you misunderstood me. I said that I had kept hands off those programs in the past because he developed them. I didn't want to seem to be taking them over or intruding on his territory. I'm perfectly willing to help Tom get up to speed with programming in Delphi (which he can do), but he should really continue to be the author of his own programs. His name, not mine, should be on them.

I'm certainly willing to help with the programming. I still am, but not under the condition that I repudiate Rick.

DF: Who has asked you to repudiate Rick? I keep a certain distance, too, but that does not mean that I have asked you to repudiate him, whatever that means. Neither I nor Tom or Tim ever even mentioned Rick when we brought the idea of Tom's and Tim's forthcoming book project to your attention. You brought him up and then claim that Tom is asking you to repudiate Rick. You make it up, sir! Bullshit indeed.

BP: I can see now that it was naive of me to think that getting Rick to help with the programming might lead to a reconciliation;

DF: My mistake was to suggest to Tom that we solicit your assistance, hoping for some reconciliation with you. I know how hurt by you he has felt for years.

BP: Tom has no intention at all of seeking any reconciliation. He enjoys looking down on Rick too much. Well, screw it.

DF: Again, you are making things up. You have a brilliant intellect, but here you use your imagination hog wild. So screw Tom. While you are at it, screw Tim and Isaac, and me and everyone else who values Tom as one of the most solid and committed PCTers around.

DF: somewhere along the line you simply included Rick in your correspondence and work with Tom -- without warning or asking.

BP: Well, I hope you can see that that's not true: in the post above, I asked before I included Rick, and still haven't included him. What would be the point? "Rick, how about helping Tom get his two-person tasks running in Delphi, because he detests your guts and tells everyone how terrible you are, and fully intends to go on feeling that way forever?" When I explained to Rick why I was NOT including him, he understood completely and said he wouldn't even try to join that project, and he hasn't. He's willing to work with Tom, but he realizes that Tom would not accept that.

DF: So you went ahead and spilled all this to Rick, and he magnanimously offered to forgive his victim, the person he has been pissing on for so many years. See, I can interpret too.

DF: If that is correct, Tom did not instigate this unfortunate situation. You did.

BP: You can see the extent to which I instigated it. I said I had a problem with excluding Rick. You know the rest. The real problem is Tom's stiff neck.

DF: No, the real problem is your yearning for a time before insults and

misrepresentations became a routine feature of CSGnet.

DF: Even if you asked, you knew that you would rub Tom's nose in past excesses by Rick.

BP: Dag, that is Tom's problem, not mine.

DF: Yes, that is your problem. You have no business rubbing anyone's nose in what you know darn well to be gut-wrenching memories of multi-year uninhibited and unchecked nastiness.

BP: It's time he got over it. the key word is "past". How long can one wallow in memories of past transgressions?

DF: Most people manage to do that for the rest of their lives. As I said, I was hoping (naively, I guess) that you and Tom could and would start working together again.

BP: Rick has tried to do better and has done better; all it took was pointing out what was wrong with what he did and asking him to give it some thought. Self-righteousness and condemnation did not make him change and never would make him change. He did it himself, given some rational objections presented without rancor. He is trying to stay cool, even when people snipe at him.

DF: I suppose Rick is doing better as you say, and staying cool. But has he had the personal integrity to acknowledge his past habit of insulting people right and left, offering a sincere apology. Never mind. My father told me long ago that people never apologize. I guess that is true.

BP: He is not like Marc Abrams, who can't say three sentences without losing his temper and attacking.

DF: I have no personal problem with Marc because I don't take him and some others seriously. I don't return his phone calls and ignore him as best I can. If he asks a legitimate question on CSGnet where I have the answer, as when he recently asked Rick regarding the CSG web site, I don't mind answering.

The biggest problem with Rick down through the years is that he insists on being taken seriously, yet he has somewhat one-sided grasp of PCT, is often wrong and very often confusing. Hubris all the way.

BP: And he's not like Tom, who decides that people are Bad and puts them on his shit list forever.

DF: Where did forever come from? You go to the other extreme, asking in a four-line email, without context, without any acknowledgement of Tom as a person, nor with any recognition or acknowledgement of what he has experienced, for instant acceptance. You sure won't allow time and new experiences to mend fences the natural way, by covering nasty old

experiences with good new ones.

BP: He didn't answer that question. But it was clear that the answer was yes.

DF: Tom said nothing about you having to choose. You never had to. Still don't.

BP: When I told him I refused to choose -- that is, to prevent Rick (if I could) from taking part in forums where Tom might participate -- Tom's only reply was goodbye.

DF: This was never mentioned, was it. You are adding conditions after the fact.

DF: Where did "forums where Tom might participate" come from. Does that mean private correspondence with you? Was this in fact what you asked?

BP: The positive aspects of staying in touch with me evidently meant less to him than nursing and amplifying his violent dislike of Rick.

DF: Are you sure you were not the one nursing it by bringing it up and forcing the issue?

BP: You see how much I "forced" it. I explained that I had a problem and asked him to help me with it.

DF: So you forced it 100%. You sure did not explain much. You ride roughshod over sore wounds because to you all appears to be an intellectual exercise.

BP: He refused. I truly didn't think he would refuse, but he did.

DF: You sure as hell did not give him any choice. You set up false choices for no reason at all.

DF: I think the whole situation is awfully regrettable. We are talking about the one person who taught PCT in earnest to college students for 15 years (noone else comes close to his experience and insight from teaching PCT in the real world - you don't either), has been given credit for calling the first CSG meeting and has been a steadfast friend and warrior for how many years?

BP: About as many years as Rick. It was Dick Robertson who proposed that we form the CSG. Tom actually misunderstood the date of the first CSG meeting and missed it. Dick and Mary did the organizing.

You're right about his once being a staunch supporter and friend. I don't count what he's doing now as "support" and he is certainly not acting like a friend.

DF: Truly, he did not do anything other than asking you for some assistance. You are not acting the friend.

BP: I am not comfortable around haters.

DF: Why call Tom a hater? Why not perceive him as a decent, faithful person, committed for life to PCT, who just wants to keep his distance from what he has experienced as loads of nastiness and putdowns, some from you, most from Rick.

BP: That's how Tom puts it. But I don't buy blaming other people for my own actions, which is what Tom is doing.

DF: Whoa, you are very good at making things up. Suppose you piss on me 99 times and I try to piss back once, that makes me blame you for my actions.

DF: Rick has been casually putting people down and ridiculing others on CSGnet for years, without any apparent dislike from you.

BP: Don't give me that. You've seen criticisms from me to Rick about things he has said many, many times on CSGnet. There have been many more in private.

DF: In the early years you did not intervene much on CSGnet. I have no doubt that you did privately. I have seen a very small part of that since I was included on some distribution lists. In the last five years you have taken exception to some of the gratuitous nastiness right on CSGnet.

I recall discussing nastiness with Rick on CSGnet in the early 90s. He would claim that all the nastiness was a function of my reading, none of it a function of his writing letters on the screen.

DF: I have perceived it long before I became aware (I think you must have pointed it out to me) that Tom held any such antipathy. Certainly, Tom participated regularly and in a positive way on CSGnet through the first half of the 90s.

BP: Yes, but he and Rick were jealous of each other practically from the moment they met. They both said nasty things to and about each other. It always irritated me that they couldn't get along -- they seemed to be vying for my approval, as if that were more important than PCT, and as if I should love one of them more than the other. I accused them once of "sibling rivalry" and they both got mad.

DF: If Rick were as juvenile 30 years ago as he has been in the last 15, I would understand.

DF: Far away from any participation by Tom, Rick's way of posting was the subject of an hour-long discussion in St Louis. As I recall, you suggested to Rick that he write a post, then sit on it for 24 hours and read it again before pressing the Send button. Perceptions of Rick's

particular nastiness are not unique to Tom, and most of the people who want no part of it have removed themselves to lurking status or signed off.

BP: And those who can tolerate it are still here.

DF: There are not many serious PCTers left.

BP: You don't need to spell out Rick's transgressions to me. I'm quite aware of them. But my attitude toward people's transgressions is not one of condemnation or hatred or rejection, not if I see any redeeming features as I do in Rick. I've been very pissed off with Rick, but that didn't make me dislike him. I just tried to get him to see how dumb it was to negate his effectiveness that way. And it is dumb, dumber than he has any reason to be.

BP: That long history of strong antipathy is one thing that makes me suspicious about the complaints about Rick that came up after the antipathy was well-established.

DF: Here you are referring to Tom alone? Or are you referring to numerous people who avoid CSGnet and CSG? I think you should put your suspicions under scrutiny and not indulge in labeling those who avoid CSGnet pathological.

BP: I can't say any one thing about all the people who have left CSGnet, because they did it for different reasons. But I know that for quite a while there were people who simply resented Rick for being a PCT purist and criticising them for saying things which showed they simply hadn't got it. I got a lot of the same guff, as when I tried to say that "control" has a specific meaning in PCT and that other uses of the term were simply not correct. "Who are you to say how we should use words?" was the response from some people, whom I was very glad to be rid of when they left. I was not heartbroken to see people leave because their ignorance of PCT was incurable.

BP: A great deal of what Rick has been accused of should have been aimed at me, because I have said most of the same things Rick said, although probably not in such an inflammatory way.

DF: In terms of the coercion debate, this is probably true.

BP: That's not the only case where it was true.

BP: Rick's problem was that he got mad and couldn't stand to leave the field of battle, and inevitably resorted to worse and worse tactics until he went too far (which didn't take long -- it never does). Rick hates to lose an argument almost as much as those who have opposed him hate it.

DF: Rick certainly kept up hateful statements about the choice question

for years afterward.

BP: And others kept bringing it up, too, reminding us of Rick's stupidity in arguing against it. Remember Bill Williams, for example? He never lost an opportunity to ridicule Rick or me for various statements we made (for which he had no effective refutation, of course). Rick got mad. I didn't get mad as often.

DF: Bill Williams got screwed by Rick back in 89 when Rick cut half his article and wrote his own ending. I recall Rick making denigrating comments to me about Bill Williams c:a 1994, saying that all he had was that one article. Bill's stated purpose in giving you a hard time on CSGnet was to demonstrate to you and Rick how unpleasant CSGnet had become. He certainly demonstrated. He overdid it too.

DF: The last I remember was when Rick made some statement about Saddam and choice that you took exception to, saying that he must REALLY hate RTP.

BP: Right, but why do you assume that just because I got mad at Rick and took exception to what he said, that I must therefore dislike him and should have nothing further to do with him? That seems to be what a lot of people expect. Do you cut off your relationships with people and declare them enemies every time you disagree with them or get mad at them?

DF: I agree with much of what you say here. But when you post, you don't come across as if you are talking to morons (even when you post in response to people who have made little effort to study PCT). Rick has a way of slipping in digs now and then so you understand that you are an inferior person. He does not have to do it often to get it across. I pointed out to you that he did it to me just a few weeks ago. That one was mild.

BP: Well, why not call him on it, challenge him and ask if he really meant that you are a moron who doesn't know anything about PCT? When you show Rick what he's saying clearly enough, he backs down and usually regrets what he said. When you say "he doesn't have to do it often," aren't you saying that you're giving more weight to occasional lapses than to a far larger number of positive behaviors?

DF: It is unfortunate that he himself has such a track record of kicking others without provocation.

BP: Yes, that's unfortunate, but it's even more unfortunate that so many people don't know how to stick up for themselves and simply nurse their resentments until they finally explode. If they just said, "Rick, you just told me that I am stupid and ignorant. Is that really what you think of me?" they would quickly have him falling all over himself apologizing, and we wouldn't have a problem. Rick isn't evil. He just hasn't grown up.

DF: It is not easy to stand up to Rick. You can complain and then he just wants you to explain and discuss it some more. He wages a war of attrition, with an unending rapid-fire stream of posts on any subject.

BP: But if we got rid of Rick, who would get the blame the next time the Guru says something to challenge the self-satisfaction of CSGers? Maybe the Guru would get it this time, but somehow I can't help thinking it would be someone else.

DF: I have not suggested getting rid of Rick, and I very much doubt that Tom has. Tom has removed himself from CSGnet and GSG. You won't allow that. Tom must work with Rick in perfect harmony, or you will not allow him to work with you. Have I misunderstood?

BP: Tom is acting like the mother-in-law who, when she doesn't get her way, threatens to have a heart attack.

DF: For that mother-in-law who wants her way, look in the mirror.

BP: Well, Tom hasn't said "get rid of Rick" recently, but he's indicated before that if I go on tolerating him, Rick will destroy the CSG and drive him, Tom, away. Of course it's up to me, you understand -- maybe I really want to destroy the CSG and drive Tom away, and am putting up with Rick in order to do that, so it's really my own free choice. And anyway, it's up to me if I want to work with Tom -- all I have to do is keep Rick out of it. My choice entirely. Shades of "I see you have chosen." Tom is the one throwing monkey-wrenches into the machinery, not me.

DF: Tom threw no monkey wrench anywhere this time around.

BP: I am perfectly willing to work with Tom. I am not willing to repudiate Rick.

DF: Again, I don't see that Tom has ever asked you to repudiate Rick. He just asked you to work with him.

BP: If that's too much for Tom to take, too bad. If Tom wants to work with me on learning Delphi, I'll start tomorrow. Anyway, Rick has taken himself out of it, as anyone with any self-respect would have done.

DF: Rick was never in it. Tom took himself out as anyone with any self-respect would have done given the made-up ultimatum you gave him.

DF: I wish you would soften your perception of Tom as I have softened my perception of Rick.

BP: I think I have a very clear picture of both Tom and Rick. I also have some very clear principles of my own: I will not be pushed around by other people having tantrums. that doesn't mean I don't like them. It just means I won't let it happen.

DF: You were not being pushed around, but started to push yourself.

DF: I will work with Tom and Tim to support their new books, one for that publisher in England who is encouraging them and a more technical one for me. I am comfortable being a boutique publisher, capable of producing small runs to start.

BP: That's excellent. I wish Tom realized that it would be just as good, or even better, if he had an amnesia attack and forgot that he was resentful of Rick.

DF: BTW, I trust you received your five copies.

BP: Yup. And you will receive a check in due course, tomorrow or soon after. TCIITM.

Best, Bill

DF: For my own peace of mind, I want you to know how I think about this. You don't have to answer this. We seem set in the ways we perceive this. I can live with the fact that you perceive things your way, I guess. Anyhow, PCT is bigger than this atrocity.

If you ever feel like letting Tom know you understand that he has felt abused big time and for a long time, please do so in a phone call or personal visit.

I will still nurture some hope that you can enjoy him and he can enjoy you.

Best, Dag

=====

Date: Wed, 23 Nov 2005 15:55:17 -0700
To: Dag Forssell
From: Bill Powers
Subject: Re: Private

Hi, Dag --

DF: Needless to say I am very unhappy about the foolish, needless parting you forced with Tom.

BP: I forced it? It didn't seem that way to me. It seemed to me that Tom forced the parting by saying "It's been nice" and not another word since. The only way I forced it was to ask if I had to choose between Rick's joining in the programming and Tom's continued work on it. Despite what you assumed, I did not just go ahead and do it. I asked. I was told to stuff it. I said I wasn't going to be pushed around. Fini.

But we clearly have very different views of what went on, and just going around and around about them won't clear anything up. Yes, I could simply decide not to include Rick in any programming project in which Tom is, or might be, involved. And not to invite Rick to any meeting that Tom might otherwise attend (Tom told me personally that he would no longer stay in any room that had Rick in it). This puts me in the position of juggling schedules, attention, communications, and so on to keep the squabbling parties apart, as if I'm somehow responsible for their behavior on both sides.

I think it's up to Tom and Rick, and you and Rick, to figure out how to get along with each other. I'm not here to act as policeman or daddy. If the people involved don't want to get along, don't want to forgive, don't want to give up whatever moral contests they think they have to win, then nothing will happen to change anything. I certainly can't do it for them, and won't try.

I'm going to be 80 years old next August. At some point I'm going to slow down and lose the creative juices, if that hasn't begun already. I have problems of my own that make it much too hard to take on other people's problems as well. And I have work to do that takes all my attention. You guys have all just got to solve your own problems, and if any of you decide to do that at the expense of PCT there isn't a damned thing I can do about it. I'll just keep on doing what I do until I can't do it any more, and then stop. What else can I do?

Bill

P.S. Your subject line says Private. I would just as soon have cc'd this to Rick and Tom. You can forward it if you agree.

=====

At 02:55 PM 11/23/2005, you wrote:

Hi, Dag --

<snip>

P.S. Your subject line says Private. I would just as soon have cc'd this to Rick and Tom. You can forward it if you agree.

DF: Just to confirm: "this" refers to the entire thread, right? This last post makes little sense without context.

I have read and reread the thread. I notice that I misunderstood your statement: "But I don't buy blaming other people for my own actions, which is what Tom is doing." I now think you meant that Tom is blaming Rick for your actions. I don't think that is right either. Yes, you may have been part of the problem, but not 100% as you appear to claim.

I note that during the course of our correspondence, each of us has escalated. It is time to relax the rubber band.

I don't think anyone can be proud of what has happened conflict-wise on CSGnet, with this last development, or with our correspondence. It is clear to me from our correspondence that memory figures in current perception big time. I have been looking at the three short emails that preceded that "fini". You have brought up memories of interactions with Tom from many years ago to justify your interpretations. Tom certainly referred to memories from many years ago. I trust Rick has some memories too. You cannot tell someone else to suddenly have amnesia. Any one of us can reorganize, but chances are that takes a fair amount of time.

Please confirm that you meant the entire thread. I will package it in a single pdf file and pass it on.

I try to live my life with everything out in the open. This thread is not pretty and it seems to me highly unlikely that anything will change in the short run, but if anything is going to change in the longer term, I think we all have to understand each other. Good, bad or indifferent, this thread may accomplish some of that.

Meanwhile, as you say, you have your own problems. And you need to focus on the book on modeling. I ponder what next with my life now that I just turned 65. I want to make a difference during the next ten years. To start, I shall focus on both the official CSG website and the PCTresources website with its extensive archives. They are important references for all serious PCTers.

Love, Dag

P.S. Shelley Roy sent me some questions so I called her today. She sure is moving forward.

=====
Date: Mon, 28 Nov 2005 12:34:07 -0700
To: Dag Forssell
From: Bill Powers
Subject: Re: Private

Hi, Dag --

Yes, I meant the whole thread. Might as well.

Hey, happy 65th birthday! It's very hard to believe you're that old -- yet still 14 years younger than I am. I guess you and I installed the correct genes.

Shelley Roy is very smart, as you're seeing. At an IAACT meeting in Chapel Hill, I asked if anyone wanted to see the algebra for a simple control-system model. Shelley was the one who said yes. And she understood it.

Best,

Bill

=====
Date: Mon, 28 Nov 2005 21:38:09 -0800
To: Dag Forssell
From: Rick Marken
Subject: Re: Private discussion
Cc: Rick Marken , Bill Powers , Tom Bourbon

Gee, thanks. That was entertaining.

I think the solution is really very simple:

Bill, feel free to work with whoever you want to work with whenever you want to work with them. If including me would result in anybody not working with you, feel free to not include me.

Tom and Dag, feel free to continue maintaining the level of (non) relationship with me that makes you comfortable.

I will feel free to publish papers, participate in public discussions about PCT and attend public conferences on PCT. Anyone who doesn't want to read my papers or wants to avoid the discussions because I am participating or doesn't want to attend the conferences because I'm attending is free to do so.

Best regards

Rick

=====
Date: Tue, 29 Nov 2005 04:40:38 -0700
To: Rick Marken, Dag Forssell
From: Bill Powers
Subject: Re: Private discussion
Cc: Tom Bourbon

Hello, Rick --

Your solution is very simple, and I agree with it.

It does leave me in the same position as before, but that's not your fault. For example, I would certainly not forbid you to come to a CSG meeting even if there were some way I could do that, but if you do come, that means Tom will not come, which is a damned shame, in my opinion, just as it would be a damned shame if you did not come. Similarly for a European CSG meeting associated with a meeting in Scotland on the method of levels. If programming help is needed for any of Tom's projects so they can run under Windows, Bruce Abbott or I will have to be the one to give it even if that creates conflicts with other work we're trying to do. In fact, whether Tom works on any project or goes to any gathering seems to

depend entirely on whether you decide to work on the project, too (even independently) or join the gathering. Tom's decision gives you rather extensive control of his behavior. And by avoiding any situation where he must share a room or a discussion with you, he puts pressure on anyone else who wishes to work with both him and you. You can't work with both of us, he says: if you work with Rick, you can't work with me because I won't be there. That's the dilemma I was put in, and apparently will continue to be put in.

As far as I can see, you have taken criticisms to heart, and do not want to cause harm or pain to anyone. By listening to yourself from a level or two higher, you seem to have managed to reorganize some important things. That is much better than an insincere apology. I think both of those processes, listening to oneself from a higher level and reorganizing, are a good thing. I wish more people did it.

Best, Bill

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=====
Date: Tue, 29 Nov 2005 09:41:36 -0800
Subject: Re: Private discussion
From: Rick Marken
To: Bill Powers , Dag Forssell , Richard Marken
CC: Tom Bourbon
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Hi Bill et al

> Hello, Rick --
>
> Your solution is very simple, and I agree with it.

What else could be done?

> It does leave me in the same position as before, but that's not your
> fault.

It leaves you in that position only if you continue to hope that everyone who loves your work will get along with each other. I think the best thing to do is to just stop harboring such hopes.

> For example, I would certainly not forbid you to come to a CSG
> meeting even if there were some way I could do that, but if you do
> come, that means Tom will not come, which is a damned shame, in my
> opinion, just as it would be a damned shame if you did not come.

It would be a damned shame. But there are lots of damned shames in the world about which we can do nothing. And if I didn't come to a meeting because Tom was coming it wouldn't be a damned shame; it would be damned silly.

> Similarly for a European CSG meeting associated with a meeting in
> Scotland on the method of levels. If programming help is needed for
> any of Tom's projects so they can run under Windows, Bruce Abbott or
> I will have to be the one to give it even if that creates conflicts
> with other work we're trying to do. In fact, whether Tom works on any
> project or goes to any gathering seems to depend entirely on whether
> you decide to work on the project, too (even independently) or join
> the gathering. Tom's decision gives you rather extensive control of
> his behavior. And by avoiding any situation where he must share a
> room or a discussion with you, he puts pressure on anyone else who
> wishes to work with both him and you. You can't work with both of us,
> he says: if you work with Rick, you can't work with me because I
> won't be there. That's the dilemma I was put in, and apparently will
> continue to be put in.

>
> As far as I can see, you have taken criticisms to heart, and do not
> want to cause harm or pain to anyone. By listening to yourself from a
> level or two higher, you seem to have managed to reorganize some
> important things. That is much better than an insincere apology. I
> think both of those processes, listening to oneself from a higher
> level and reorganizing, are a good thing. I wish more people did it.

Thanks. I have taken some criticism to heart and reorganized. But I think that much of the criticism I've received is pretty far off the map. I have re-read all of my posts from the most tumultuous periods and, by and large, found them to be pretty decent, certainly not the hateful, sarcastic screeds they are sometimes made out to be. But I'm not running for President so I don't really care about defending myself against the Swift Boating;-)

For the record, I have never felt any rivalry toward Tom; I don't know why you perceived it but there were certainly never any such feelings on my side. I had some disagreements with Tom even from the very first (I remember

Tom wrote a pretty critical review of what became the first paper I published on PCT, the "Cause of control movements" paper, a review with which I strongly disagreed) but I was always very happy to have a peer -- a fellow experimental psychologist like Tom -- as an ally who really understood the basics of PCT. I still have no feelings of rivalry (or dislike) towards Tom.

So I'm really sorry if you are in an uncomfortable position, Bill. I want to make things as comfortable for you as possible, to the extent that I can. Feel free to ask that I not participate in things like conferences if it means that Tom might come. I certainly won't be offended. I might want to participate anyway but now that I'm "semi-retired" there's a good chance that I'll be happy to be let off the hook, especially if it involves travel.

Best regards to all

Rick

=====

Date: Tue, 29 Nov 2005 13:26:29 -0700
To: Rick Marken , Dag Forssell , Richard Marken
From: Bill Powers
Subject: Re: Private discussion
Cc: Tom Bourbon

Hello, all --

Thanks, Rick. I prefer to keep my ilusions and let other people try to live up to them, since the alternative is for me to try to live up to theirs.

Best,

Bill

To: CSGnet archive
From: Dag Forssell <dag@livingcontrolsystems.com>
Subject: Bill and Tom B. 2009
Cc:
Bcc:
Attached:

For the historical record

At some point in time, I believe this private thread should become part of the historical record. A question is when. Perhaps posted to CSGnet at some time, perhaps merely deposited with the Powers archive at Evanston, where some future biographer focusing on Bill and relevant history can find it.

Dag
=====

Date: Tue, 16 Dec 2008 11:59:32 -0700
To: dag@livingcontrolsystems.com
From: Bill Powers
Subject: Bill and Tom B.

Hi, Dag --

Your [telephone] words echoed in my mind today. Would you mind laying out for me what Tom thinks I owe him a "big time" apology for?

Bill
=====

Date: Thur, 18 Dec 2008 09:53
To: Bill Powers
From: Dag Forssell
Subject: Re: Bill and Tom B.

I'll reply.

Dag
=====

Date: Mon, 23 Mar 2009 16:56
To: Bill Powers
From: Dag Forssell
Subject: Re: Bill and Tom B.

Bill, Private

I drafted most of this in December and early January, sometimes angry, sometimes just sad, then set it aside. I know that you recently had an

exchange with Greg and I see Martin's lament the other day [Martin Taylor 2009.03.22.17.51]. The basic issue is not going away. I have to shit or get off the pot, so here is what I put down a few months ago. I choose to shit rather than delete the post, hoping that some good for both you and Tom will come of it. I am not fishing for an exchange or justification or anything else.

My whole point in putting these thoughts down is to suggest that apologizing for your failure to understand and failure to know what to do, both mostly sins of omission, would go a long way toward normalizing relations and/or at least create some peace of mind.

For me, my problem is that I think I understand what PCT is all about. I, too, have made it my life's work. I try to be sober about the players; who they are and what they do as fallible human beings. I wholeheartedly subscribe to what Phil expresses in that post of 13 Oct 1999, now placed at the end of Dialogues. Your dedication and generosity knows no bounds. That is both good and bad. I was pleased to see your replies to Gavin Ritz in December :)

Please do not pass this on to Rick or post to CSGnet. This is meant to be private to you only. I am not cc'ing anyone. My head is no longer churning the way it was in December. I have no desire to start churning that way again.

Since I take Rick for who he is, I have cordial relations with him. I have supported his teaching. He recently sent me a Word file of his revolutions/methods paper so I will be able to post a non-copyrighted early version at pctresources where anyone can access it, not just academics. I want to refer to it in my editor's preface to Dialogues. I want to keep my interactions with Rick the way they are.

On a lighter, but not so funny note, I thought of Rick when I saw the attached strip in the paper. He has always been quick to say sorry, but has never seemed to mean it.

Dag March 23 09

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At 10:59 AM 12/16/2008, you wrote:

Hi, Dag --

Your words echoed in my mind today. Would you mind laying out for me what Tom thinks I owe him a "big time" apology for?

DF: Thanks for hearing me.

I find I have to try to deal with this, not that I want to, before my head will clear of this churning so I can write a good editor's preface for Dialogues.

As you say in MSOB about systems concepts, p 150 bottom: If you did not perceive and in some way support a systems concept like the law, it would not exist for you.

Seems to me that all participants on CSGnet have different systems concepts regarding several things. Science, Politics, Religion, Relationships, Communications...

We sure seem to see things differently. Seems to me I have to let you know how I see things, or I cannot have peace of mind, knowing that I have done what I can to ultimately bring some peace of mind to others I care about, you included.

Seems to me that Rick Marken has no clear systems concept regarding common decency or clear communications. Rick respects nothing and nobody. He has said so numerous times on CSGnet. You do not build a community on that. You do not teach anything that way. The one endearing quality Rick has is that he is totally dedicated to PCT as he understands it with high loop gain, and is always there. While perhaps endearing, this is not necessarily good. Disastrous is more like it.

Your systems concepts regarding managers and teachers have come across as stereotypes a few times, including the first draft for MSOB. I understand Tom gave you some very good advice at the time. You gave me a hard time in the early 90s because I wanted to teach managers how to be better managers by teaching them PCT. Those bloodsuckers.

Ed's RTP program received a less than warm welcome in the mid-90s. All teachers want is for pupils to sit ramrod straight and quiet in class.

Early on, Rick made it a habit to write toxic insults on CSGnet. He ranted and raved about his personal political views, which had nothing to do with PCT except that Rick thinks EVERYTHING is fair game on CSGnet, especially if he has an opinion. I tend to agree with much of it, but it is totally inappropriate. I have noted the lack of politics on CSGnet during the recent season. Thank you.

Besides routine insults, Rick made it a habit not to read posts through before he started answering individual sentences or paragraphs. I could spend half a day or more composing a post on an issue, only to receive a dismissive reply half an hour after I posted.

As if this was not annoying enough, Rick would often change the subject rather than carry on a focused discussion. Given that Rick was always there, the result was that he often monopolized CSGnet. You would post to CSGnet at your peril, because Rick would always be there with a reply that distorted your writing and your intent. Better not to post.

Suggestions were made to convert CSGnet to a moderated mailing list so posts could be screened for appropriateness. You would not hear of it.

Proponents dropped the idea because CSGnet is your mail list and everyone has tremendous respect for your creation.

Good people have dropped out of the PCT and CSG orbit. Greg Williams told you years ago why he left, or so he tells me. Ed left and Tom did too, especially since Tom began supporting the RTP program with real PCT, something that put him at odds with Marken and yourself, at least as he understood it.

As Issac once noted, Rick's nastiness and what to do about it was discussed on CSGnet about every two years. It was discussed for a whole hour at the opening of the conference in St. Louis.

At the Chicago conference, I asked Gary Cziko about McPhail, who was within driving distance. Gary said he had touched base with Clark, who begged off with reference to Marken.

You have complained about the "Hate Rick Club" as a way of dismissing those who belong to it. There is no such club. Never was. Each person, myself included, has observed Rick and decided to keep a safe distance from the occasional poison and regular distortion, whether in person or at conferences.

Others have been nasty, such as Marc Abrams, but they do not count because they never claimed that they were the number two expert on PCT. The fact that Rick screwed him in 1989 was never brought up when people lamented Bill Williams' behavior during the Chicago conference. I remember Kenny observing during lunch that Rick very, very, very, reluctantly eventually apologized on CSGnet for having destroyed Bill's work, cutting it in half, putting in a new ending and passing it off as the work of Bill Williams.

Things got especially bad when a nice little scientific discussion of the "I see you have chosen" question got started. As Nevin granted you years later, you had a valid point, but to CSGnetters at the time it seemed a nitpicky item and they said so. Tom and Ed were not on CSGnet and you did not contact them, so there was nobody with whom you could discuss the issue. Bruce Nevin and others who objected that the discussion was off the mark got the derogatory label "defenders of RTP" and were pushed aside. One thing is for sure, when you review Rick's posts on RTP, the hate campaign goes on and on and on.

You were caught off-guard when Tom exploded with complaints. You wrote a post where you said you had reviewed the entire thread (or just your posts?) and found absolutely nothing wrong. How did you read Marken's claims at the time? Oh, how much better his RTP program would be, Rick's Thinking Program.

I understand that over the years you wrote personal posts to Rick to slow him down, but since they had little effect, they do not count. i.kurtzer (2000.09.20.1620) To my mind, Rick managed to drag you with him into the gutter with pointless RTP-bashing and far-fetched unscientific speculation

as to why children might give up in the RTP program. Neither of you had any experience with the RTP program, but that did not slow you down.

Tom came to the conference in Vancouver 1998. Walking along, I heard you express relief, saying that you were afraid you had lost him. Did you sit down with him for an hour or so to understand him and demonstrate some respect for him as a person? You have to get into the other person's head, as Jim Soldani puts it. I heard about Lukachukai along the way. Pretty heavy duty personal rejection of RTP and Ed and Tom from you and Mary if I understood correctly. You sort of apologize by mentioning it in the attached thread.

During the conference, Tom stood up to loudly express for the record that the whole thread and discussion of Coercion and The Universal Error Curve had been grossly unscientific. I saw Rick shrug it off. Did *you* listen to Tom?

During the cruise afterward, Rick promised Tom he would not post again unless he knew what he was talking about. That did not last long. Soon the armchair scientist was at it again. The nasty insults never stopped.

I wrote on CSGnet in about 2000 that my admiration for Rick had turned to loathing. My way of dealing with it is to just think very little of him. I have come to realize that Rick's understanding of physics and PCT is very superficial. His brightness is overstated and he does not belong at the right hand side of God. If I did not see clearly before how limited he is, it became abundantly apparent to me how superficial his understanding is when he flailed about in his discussion with you about memory in perception.

Allowing Rick to attach himself to your hip to become the Bill and Rick, Rick and Bill team has not served you well. Incessant self-promotion is Rick's game. Contrast that with Bruce Nevin's always thoughtful and considerate approach, or with Phil Runkel's always respectful and on-topic correspondence. I recall at some conference Phil simply shaking his head when the subject of Rick and CSGnet came up.

As I have worked to clean up CSGnet for posting to pctresources.com I came across some of these posts and found others on my hard disk. Phil expressed his appreciation for your post 2000.09.16.0254 MDT, and Tom's 2000.09.16. at 10:07 CDT. I made a word file with selections from the thread. Attached.

Much later, Tom expressed a desire to me to document, tape, and make available his demonstrations of social interactions; his presentations in Durango failed twice to get videotaped. To that end, and to gently get the two of you to work together again, I approached you for help in resurrecting the demos and recruited by nephew Bjorn to help me understand the programming necessary to work with two mice rather than two paddles. I figured that over time, collaboration would bring back the mutual affection that once prevailed.

All of a sudden, you just HAD TO bring Rick into Tom's fledgling program. You sure did not bother to ask Tom. Tom took this as you insisting on stuffing toxic Rick down his throat despite your being well aware of Tom's desire to keep his distance. It did not take Tom long to tell you to go to hell or some such. Shortly thereafter, you wrote what to me was a nauseating post to CSGnet praising Rick to high heaven and labeling all those good people who have chosen to keep their distance from him, and thus you, pathological.

I was sorely disappointed but I sure cannot blame Tom for telling you to stuff it. I took you to task for your post. I came to think of the thread that developed between the two of us as my personal declaration of independence. I no longer feel that I am a junior PCTer watching from the sidelines. In that thread, I remember you saying that you cannot stand haters, meaning Tom. I wondered to myself why you have put up with the only hater among us, which is Rick, and insist on blaming his victims, people such as Tom who do not hate Rick, but whose sensible defense is to keep their distance.

As I see it, Tom is now the most qualified PCTer alive besides yourself. He is about my age (68), is totally dedicated to PCT, and has much left to give. He taught PCT for at least 15 years with numerous students to show for it. He created the research into conflict and other social interactions.

You have said from time to time that you wish Tom would come back. I remember you saying so out loud in Minneapolis. You express that wish again in your mail of December 2 regarding the Future of PCT. To me this is naïve.

Tom has never told me he thinks you owe him an apology. I do. I have not spoken to him about you for several years now. What I said to you on the phone was that I think it will take an apology, big time, for your wish to come true.

I am not saying you have to contact Tom, meet with him face to face and really seek some mutual understanding. You can let the situation ride until we all die. The CSGnet record is there and cannot be changed. But I certainly wish some reconciliation between you and Tom were in the cards. I think a thoughtful apology would go a long way toward enhancing respect for you from Tom but also among others who have been troubled by your sins of omission, failing to stop nastiness when it was discussed over and over. To my mind, you might want to apologize for

- 1) Allowing excessive nastiness on CSGnet
- 2) Participating in RTP-bashing as a small technical issue without considering the larger context and absence of RTP principals.
- 3) Dismissing anyone who left CSG or CSGnet as pathological (whatever that is)

How about a simple acknowledgement to Tom in person (not by email, a lousy medium, and preferably not by phone either) that you now realize he has been hurt and say you are sorry you allowed it to happen on your watch? It would give me some peace of mind. I think you too might find it worthwhile, even if you never again actually work with Tom. I think it would allow him to keep writing about PCT and document his interactive research with more peace of mind. (I understand Tom works with Tim on some writings, though perhaps at a slow pace).

I may be off in some details of the picture I have painted here. No matter. It is not my recollection and overall impression that counts. What I would love to see happen is some mutual in-depth understanding followed by respect between you and Tom. At this point that seems to be a tall order, but hope springs eternal.

BTW, I scanned the issue of Closed Loop and found that it ends up being an unreasonable number of MegaBytes as an image. So I have started the effort to lay it out again. Each issue of the Closed Loop is a small book. Greg did a huge amount of work editing and publishing for CSG.

All this is just my opinion. I just have to get it off my chest. Hope it will do some good though I am sure it will be upsetting at first.

I hope this will stop spinning in my head so I can proceed with an outline of Editor's Preface for Dialogues.

Best, Dag
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Date: Mon, 23 Mar 2009 19:50:48 -0600
To: Dag Forssell
From: Bill Powers
Subject: Re: Bill and Tom B.

Hi, Dag --

A sad collection of posts, though the last exchange between Tom and me was an improvement.

I actually did go to the Lukachikai school on the Navajo reservation, to a meeting of Ed and Tom with the teachers. It was clear that some of the teachers who spoke at the meeting simply didn't get it, and Ed said as much to me. Ed said the administrators at that school were sabotaging the program. Rod Bond, one of the teachers from there who came to a CSG meeting in Durango, lost his job and was unable to help with Ed's program, though he was good at it and understood it. I never sat in on classroom activities there, but hearing the teachers talk was informative.

I don't know if you're aware that Ed Ford now insists that Tom almost ruined his program by insisting on teaching teachers about PCT in ways that were far over their heads -- they complained to Ed about it. Ed

claims that he supported Tom to the tune of hundreds of thousands of dollars (from Ed's brother) and Tom didn't do what Ed wanted him to do. He says "I didn't fire Tom Bourbon: he quit doing the job I was paying him to do." That's how Ed saw the relationship.

Ed really doesn't grasp PCT very well, and still speaks in terms of punishments and rewards even when he's claiming he doesn't believe in them (though he does that a lot less now). It's been a struggle for me to get him to eliminate the coercive or dishonest aspects of his program (they no longer say "I see you have chosen...") and to do it without destroying Ed's confidence in his work, but we're still on good terms. He asked me to write a chapter for his latest book on "fundamentals." I wrote a chapter basically about the method of levels, and Ed is very happy with it, saying it's the favorite chapter of people who read the book. I think he learned some new things from it. I try to support his ideas that come closest to PCT and avoid telling him he's wrong about other things, and I really think this has helped him come closer to understanding what we mean. That's all I really ask of anyone -- that they keep getting closer.

Obviously I don't believe what Ed says about Tom; it's not true just because he says it. I understand why he's threatened by Tom's superior grasp of PCT. But I don't take sides in whatever problems he tells me about. What would be the point? Ed's program is better than any other I know about, even with whatever shortcomings it may have. And I don't judge Tom by Ed's reactions to him.

Nor do I judge any person by how other people react. Nobody is totally right and nobody is totally wrong. What I try to work for is better understanding of PCT, and I try not to go overboard for or against anyone's other ideas. As you know, I will state my opinion when the occasion arises. But I try to be fair and to acknowledge fallibility. I saw some things wrong with Ed's program, and Tom thought I was speaking nonsense because I hadn't visited schools. But I knew Ed, and I could hear and read what he was teaching, and I thought he was on the wrong track with some things, and said so. Tom reacted as if I had totally trashed RTP, which I thought was far too extreme a view of what I was saying; it was as if one either had to approve of absolutely everything or be declared an enemy of RTP. But I don't judge myself, either, by how others react to me. Tom's reactions go to extremes; I didn't go along with them even when he was aiming them at traditional psychology. But I didn't value Tom less or want to get rid of him because of that. He had his reasons, as I have mine. As you have yours. As Rick has his.

I know that there are people who think I should have exerted my authority and influence and basically kicked Rick out of the CSG, and off CSGnet. They are telling me they would have done that if they had been the ones with authority and influence. But if that were the case, they would have had to kick me out, too, because while I was somewhat more diplomatic, I agreed with Rick about a number of critical issues -- I simply avoided his unpleasant ways of stating his case (though I had a few of my own). Actually, it was Rick who more often was agreeing with me, because he

tends to echo my positions on many things, so a lot of the blame that is placed on Rick really was diverted from me -- he attracted the objections because he was nastier about them and carried his objections farther than I would have done. It often happened that I would say something with which people would argue, but then Rick would chime in saying basically the same things but most unpleasantly, and all the resentment that should have been directed at me was diverted to him. He was the scapegoat who conveniently, by his manner, invited the resentment and allowed it to be fully expressed, whereas those who disagreed with me tended to defer to my authority and influence and not say what they really wanted to say. When they attacked

Rick they were really attacking me; to anyone who had followed the sequence of comments and arguments, that was fairly obvious. They didn't quite have the nerve to go after me, so they landed on Rick with both feet.

Now that I mention it, isn't that fairly obvious to you, too?

Bill

=====

Date: Thur, 24 Mar 2009 12:19
To: Bill Powers
From: Dag Forssell
Subject: Re: Bill and Tom B.

Bill,

BP: A sad collection of posts, though the last exchange between Tom and me was an improvement.

DF: Sure was an improvement. You are referring to the thread, right?

BP: I don't know if you're aware that Ed Ford now insists that Tom almost ruined his program by insisting on teaching teachers about PCT in ways that were far over their heads -- they complained to Ed about it.

DF: I suppose that will hold for anyone who tries to teach PCT to people with other concerns, people raised in our stimulus-response culture.

When Ed cut out PCT, Tim too left in a huff.

BP: Ed claims that he supported Tom to the tune of hundreds of thousands of dollars (from Ed's brother) and Tom didn't do what Ed wanted him to do.

DF: Ed's brother's foundation granted a very modest amount to Tom, a bit over \$20,000 a year as I recall, specifically to support Tom while he developed a business teaching PCT. I saw the original documents. Ed disregarded those and made sure Tom never got paid by schools or had a chance to develop anything. Ed never paid Tom a dime.

BP: That's how Ed saw the relationship.

DF: And I remember Ed complaining to me during my last visit to Scottsdale that Tom was not supporting him at that time. Well, Tom's grant had expired a year earlier.

Ed has refused to remove Tom's writings from Ed's website, claiming that he paid for them. Not true. I know too much first hand.

BP: Ed really doesn't grasp PCT very well, and still speaks in terms of punishments and rewards even when he's claiming he doesn't believe in them (though he does that a lot less now). It's been a struggle for me to get him to eliminate the coercive or dishonest aspects of his program (they no longer say "I see you have chosen...") and to do it without destroying Ed's confidence in his work, but we're still on good terms. He asked me to write a chapter for his latest book on "fundamentals." I wrote a chapter basically about the method of levels, and Ed is very happy with it, saying it's the favorite chapter of people who read the book. I think he learned some new things from it. I try to support his ideas that come closest to PCT and avoid telling him he's wrong about other things, and I really think this has helped him come closer to understanding what we mean. That's all I really ask of anyone -- that they keep getting closer.

DF: You do good work in all of this.

BP: Obviously I don't believe what Ed says about Tom; it's not true just because he says it. I understand why he's threatened by Tom's superior grasp of PCT. But I don't take sides in whatever problems he tells me about. What would be the point? Ed's program is better than any other I know about, even with whatever shortcomings it may have. And I don't judge Tom by Ed's reactions to him.

DF: Indeed, what would be the point.

BP: Nor do I judge any person by how other people react. Nobody is totally right and nobody is totally wrong. What I try to work for is better understanding of PCT, and I try not to go overboard for or against anyone's other ideas. As you know, I will state my opinion when the occasion arises. But I try to be fair and to acknowledge fallibility. I saw some things wrong with Ed's program, and Tom thought I was speaking nonsense because I hadn't visited schools. But I knew Ed, and I could hear and read what he was teaching, and I thought he was on the wrong track with some things, and said so. Tom reacted as if I had totally trashed RTP, which I thought was far too extreme a view of what I was saying; it was as if one either had to approve of absolutely everything or be declared an enemy of RTP.

DF: I think you overlook here the impact of Rick's contributions.

BP: But I don't judge myself, either, by how others react to me. Tom's reactions go to extremes; I didn't go along with them even when he was aiming them at traditional psychology. But I didn't value Tom less or want to get rid of him because of that. He had his reasons, as I have mine. As you have yours. As Rick has his.

DF: So why did you insist on including Rick in Tom's project?

BP: I know that there are people who think I should have exerted my authority and influence and basically kicked Rick out of the CSG, and off CSGnet. They are telling me they would have done that if they had been the ones with authority and influence. But if that were the case, they would have had to kick me out, too, because while I was somewhat more diplomatic, I agreed with Rick about a number of critical issues -- I simply avoided his unpleasant ways of stating his case (though I had a few of my own). Actually, it was Rick who more often was agreeing with me, because he tends to echo my positions on many things, so a lot of the blame that is placed on Rick really was diverted from me -- he attracted the objections because he was nastier about them and carried his objections farther than I would have done. It often happened that I would say something with which people would argue, but then Rick would chime in saying basically the same things but most unpleasantly, and all the resentment that should have been directed at me was diverted to him. He was the scapegoat who conveniently, by his manner, invited the resentment and allowed it to be fully expressed, whereas those who disagreed with me tended to defer to my authority and influence and not say what they really wanted to say. When they attacked Rick they were really attacking me; to anyone who had followed the sequence of comments and arguments, that was fairly obvious. They didn't quite have the nerve to go after me, so they landed on Rick with both feet.

Now that I mention it, isn't that fairly obvious to you, too?

DF: No, that is not obvious to me.

The basic issue, I have come to think, is one of respect.

You are unfailingly respectful in your dealings with people, and especially careful when you write. You told me long ago to cut out the adjectives. Well, you do. You spell out how you think without expressing judgement about the other person.

You also read the entire message and try to get its gist before you respond.

You certainly have evidenced respect and tolerance of me with this reply to a difficult message. I respect you immensely.

Rick is another story. He will read part of a post, jump to conclusions and write a dismissive note, complete with adjectives about the sender not understanding. Rick puts words in your mouth and proceeds to respond to

his careless impression of your post with an insulting comment. If he is losing a lengthy exchange, he changes the subject rather than acknowledge that he might have had to learn something.

When I posted back then and Rick replied to me, I read his replies with care. I saw his distortions and innuendo because I was directly involved.

Did you read all of Rick's replies to me and others with the same care that I and others did? Or did you trust him so completely that his twists and turns escaped you? Given the volume and the massive amount of time you spent and continue to spend on your own correspondence, I can well imagine that you glossed over Rick's posts without ever noticing how he slipped in nasty comments and twisted things around in a way that was very frustrating to people who would post on CSGnet.

In short, it is my considered opinion that Rick evidences no respect for other contributors when he posts on CSGnet. Not all the time, but enough that contributors tired of getting trashed. I find it very difficult to respect Rick.

The idea that people take out their frustration with you on Rick as a scapegoat seems me rather farfetched. I do not buy it. When many people tell you they will not deal with CSG or CSGnet because they do not want their contributions trashed by Rick, that is what they mean, methinketh.

I think you are desperately wrong to think that people are sore at you when they refuse to deal with Rick. People see the difference between your respectful dealings with them and Rick's a lot less than respectful approach.

Now back to work. I am off to Palo Alto for Granny-nanny duty and a birthday celebration. Cake with four candles and song will wake up Annika tomorrow morning, Swedish style.

Best, Dag
=====

Date: Tue, 24 Mar 2009 16:07:25 -0600
To: Dag Forssell
From: Bill Powers
Subject: Re: Bill and Tom B.

Hello, Dag --

DF: So why did you insist on including Rick in Tom's project?

BP: I don't recall that I insisted, it was more that Tom wanted

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Date: Wed, 1 Apr 2009 11:21

To: Bill Powers
From: Dag Forssell
Subject: 1) Bill and Tom B.

Bill,

I have been preoccupied with other things for about a week.

At 03:07 PM 3/24/2009, you wrote:
Hello, Dag --

So why did you insist on including Rick in Tom's project?

I don't recall that I insisted, it was more that Tom wanted

DF: Tom wanted what? You shared this with me toward the end of our discussion three and a half years ago. (Time flies). I read it then as an ultimatum from you, saying in essence that Tom has to work with Rick, or you cannot work with him. I think Tom read it the same way.

BTW, Tom never read the thread which we shared with Rick. I have not talked with him about these things for many years.

=====
Date: Wed, 14 Sep 2005 17:04:00 -0600
To: Dag Forssell
From: Bill Powers
Subject: Re: Private

Hi, Dag --

That's basically what I asked Tom: I asked him, are you saying I have to choose between you and Rick?

What did he do to deserve being asked that question?

Here's what I wrote:

Hi, Tom --

BP: I realize that I have a rather serious problem, Tom. One of our most proficient modelers and a staunch supporter of PCT for over 25 years is being left out of this discussion. I just realized that I have been avoiding putting Rick Marken on this mini-list because I am afraid that if I did, you would leave. I am caught between two disasters. Help me.

Here is his reply:

=====
TB: I am sorry to tell you that this will always be a problem.

When a grown man deliberately attacks other people -- many other people,

ad hominem, by way of slander and libel, his actions have consequences.

People tell me, repeatedly, that I hate Rick. That is not true. I merely dissociate myself from people who slander me and libel me. I do not trust, or respect, people who do those kinds of things, and I do not give them fourth or fifth chances.

There is nothing more to it than that.

At the very least, Rick and I operate with different principle-level references. I am sorry that you are caught in the middle.

Tom

=====

DF: Bill, I realize that as before, neither you nor I are changing our minds. Our necks are just as stiff as Tom's, which you said was the basic problem.

A few more comments on the other post you forwarded: Decency check.

Dag

=====

To: CSGnet Archive
From: Dag Forssell <dag@livingcontrolsystems.com>
Subject: Decency Check, 2009
Cc:
Bcc:
Attached:

This is the third thread of discussions between Dag Forssell and Bill Powers

Bill initiated this separate thread, apparently thinking he sent the first post to me only.

Dag

=====
Date: Tue, 24 Mar 2009 16:17:37 -0600
To: dag@livingcontrolsystems.com
From: Bill Powers
Subject: Re: Decency Check
Cc: marken, tbourbon

Hello, Dag

I have a record of the posts that began with my appeal for an end to the war between Rick and Tom. Here is a post from Tom, with some of the preceding posts appended. I will send some of the later ones, too.

As you will see, Tom felt that the criticisms of Ed's program were aimed at him. He misinterpreted some analogies I tried to make (before Rick said anything of a similar nature) as being accusations against him. It seems very strange to me that Tom doesn't see this "war" going on.

Rick's cheap shots at Tom, especially the accusation that he was in the RTP program for the money, called my wrath down on him.

Bill

=====

Tom Bourbon:

Bill,

It has taken me a long time to even think of how to reply to this message. I still do not know.

The topic is a presumed "war" between Rick and me, with me as an active participant. I haven't a clue what that is supposed to be about.

There was never such a war.

Instead, from time to time, especially during the late 90s, there were outbursts of discussions on CSGNet about Ed Ford's program, and about my presumed role in it.

I logged off of CSGNet in 1995, when I was booted out of the medical school, in part for my preoccupations with talking about PCT, and with incorporating it into my research there.

Once in a while, someone (various someones) who was subscribed to CSGNet would send me copies of a few messages in which I was featured, typically in my role as an associate of Ed. A few times, when the things said about my alleged actions and my alleged intentions went totally over the top, I would reply, by way of someone still subscribed to the list.

In most of those replies, I tried to remind readers that I was not on the list, that I had not been on it for years, and that the words, thoughts, and motives (reference perceptions) attributed to me (most often by Rick) were inaccurate, to put it in the mildest term I can find.

In my few replies, I also described my then present status -- forced into early retirement; facing a steadily declining life style; moving (four major moves between 1992 and 1998); dealing with my mother's hopeless contest with Alzheimer's disease; and a few other things to round out the messy picture.

I was not a participant in a war. Any war, if there were one, existed entirely in the mind of Rick, and anyone else who decided that it existed.

On several occasions, I saw copies of CSGNet activity in which people who innocently entered into the discussions about PCT and RTP and coercion were labeled as RTPers. After that ridiculously inaccurate characterization, it was not long before Rick identified them as being under my dark influence, writing the things they did simply because I was peering over their shoulders. Sad to say, some of you had actually begun to believe the things you were writing about unilateral lineal causality, in the form of "coercion," and I was the darkest coercer of them all. That was bull shit -- an ugly insult to the intelligence and integrity of the others involved, and to me.

Now, this message titled "decency check" is part if the picture. The timing could not have been better.

One of the IRAs that I annuitized when I "left" the medical school runs out next month. After that, we will take one more step in the direction of "Social Security" becoming the largest portion of our "retirement income." Contrary to Rick's on-line speculation back then, about why I was saying things I was not saying, it is obvious that I was not in it (using RTP as a vehicle to teach PCT) for the money.

No matter how Ford now characterizes the financial relationship between us, he, personally did not pay a cent for my services, or allow me to bill

anyone for my services - at least not until twice during the final year, and that is why it was the final year. For a few years, I received grant support -- not from Ed -- that amounted to a fixed one-half of the salary I earned during my final year as a faculty member. That is why I had to start drawing down my retirement accounts, to subsidize my time with Ed. Had I merely remained in place at the university, from 1992 until now, with no further increases in salary, I would have earned at least an additional \$500,000, with a large part of that going into what would be still-growing retirement accounts. In it for the money, you say? What a lot of stupid rot! No, what a lot of stupid bull shit!)

Now, Betty and I are packing to move again. This will be our fifth move since I left the university to pursue a PCT dream. We are not any younger, this time. It is not what I planned for us, years ago.

In the process of packing, I am forced to go, one more time, through all of the boxes and files that are still in disarray from the earlier moves. My intention is to thin them out and organize them. When Mary died, I was digging through a set of boxes in which there were documents and letters from earlier, happier times -- and some of the first of the nonsensical things that appeared on CSGNet. There I sat, reading the news about Mary, right when I was looking at old memories of times when she and I shared the idea that we were collaborating to help birth the wondrous thing called PCT, and at the same time I was looking at ugly reminders of what had happened during the war that was not a war.

I am deeply saddened by Mary's death -- and by the other death that occurred earlier.

Tom

Tom and Rick,

I found this post from me to Rick saved under "personal" in Mary's computer. She was always saddened by the animosity that existed between you two, and the stubbornness on both sides that prevented a reconciliation. Please try again, you guys. I can't do anything else for her but try to finish her unfinished business.

You are both my friends.

Bill

=====
Hi, Rick --

That was a most edifying bit of research into the archives of the war between you and Tom. Both sides, of course, felt totally right and justified. Yet a disinterested bystander, if there had been one, could have made some pretty reasonable guesses about what was going on.

1. Rick had hold of a bone, called "it's coercion if even the threat of

force exists."

2. Tom had hold of the other end of the bone, only he called his end "You're grossly insulting me and RTP by likening us to slaveholders, dictators, rapists, and so forth."

Neither dog was able to make the other dog let go, but neither dog wanted to let go, either. The harder one dog pulled, the harder the other dog pulled. And as all this went on, gradually the two dogs went from having a tussle between friends to being mortal enemies, ready at times to drop the bone and go for each other's throats. I don't think I have ever seen a better example of the way a conflict can start small and escalate without limit.

Being, initially, a party to this conflict, I, too, had the feeling that there was a very simple point to be made (similar to Rick's) and that other people were deliberately being obtuse about it. So I started using similar tactics. If they don't see the coercion in this simple situation, maybe I could make it clearer by picking a more extreme example in which anyone would have to admit that coercion was going on.

Fortunately, I realized before too very long that people on the other side weren't looking where I was pointing, they were looking at my finger. My careful analogy was defeating itself, because the clearer I tried to make it, the more the other people took it to mean that I was accusing them of acting like rapists, bullies, dictators, torturers, and so on. And of course that is exactly what I was doing. I was saying "What you are defending is like what these horrible people have done." A little like it, but still like it.

That's about when I got out of the debate. I saw that there was no way to win the argument, because in fact I was telling them that what they were doing, or defending doing, did have basic features in common with what the worst examples of humanity have done. And of course they didn't want to hear that or even consider hypothetically that it might be true. They wanted only to do good for other people; how could anyone accuse them of such heinous behavior?

The lesson I learned from this was that the worst, the most horribly extreme, things that people do to each other are only extensions of and extrapolations from what all of us do to each other with the best of intentions. I have wondered since I was very small, four or five, how people could do the nasty things they do to each other -- how a bully could sit on the wing of my new toy riding-airplane while I screamed at him to be careful, to get off, until it broke, and then laugh at me. How people could deliberately hit me and hurt me and push me around. How grownups could laugh at my distress. When I grasped what the word "torture" meant, I was fascinated and horrified; I had nightmares about the idea, and long agonizing daydreams about what I would do to get away if it happened to me, along with the realization that I probably couldn't do anything. And I noticed how many people seemed to enjoy the thought of

doing such things to other people, if only in little ways, as John T. did to me in a fairly big way. He was watching me avidly first as he threatened to break the wing, and then as he did it. He was having fun. I tried that kind of fun a few times. But for me it wasn't fun for long. Just the opposite.

Well, time to bury that bone.

Best, Bill P.

"Pay no attention to that man behind the curtain."
The Wizard Of Oz

"Convince a man against his will;
He's of the same opinion still."
Embroidery by Grammy Alice

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Date: Tue, 24 Mar 2009 18:35:18 -0700
Subject: Re: Decency Check
From: Richard Marken
To: Bill Powers
Cc: dag, tbourbon

Hi Bill, Tom, Dag

What happened that I suddenly find this in my box?

Can someone show me the post where I accused Tom of being in RTP for the money? I guess I can imagine saying it, and I apologize for it. It was a stupid thing to say, if I said it. But I think I must have meant it in a good way. I certainly didn't mean to accuse Tom of being venal since I know he's not. What must have been going through my head was something like this: I was surprised by what Tom was saying about control since I knew he understood PCT was well (or better) than anyone. So I might have guessed that he was saying it for the sake of staying employed by Ed (mistakenly assuming that he was employed by Ed). So I would have meant it as a compliment; saying that I know that Tom understood things in the "right" way (that is, as I think of them;-) but that he might be willing to defend some RTP practices as being non-controlling in order to keep his job.

But I can see that, even if I said it in that context (which is why I would like to see the post, if anyone has it) it would likely be taken in the wrong way. Indeed, if I had said it in any context it would have been an awful thing to say. So the best I can do is again apologize profusely and, even if Tom still will not forgive me, take this opportunity to tell him that I do not think that he does (or did) things for the money. I think Tom is a highly principled person and I am a bull in a China shop. I wish to the non-existent Lord above that Tom would return to CSGNet and to

the group. His contributions to PCT are invaluable!

Best regards Rick

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Date: Wed, 25 Mar 2009 05:55:06 -0600
To: Richard Marken
From: Bill Powers
Subject: Re: Decency Check
Cc: dag,tbourbon

From Bill --

I'm very sorry, I didn't see the CC entries and thought I was sending that post just to Dag. Sorry, Rick. It's true, you did, but I don't judge you by what you have said in the heat of a conflict, even if I objected to it. Dag and I are trying to sort out some things and I meant to keep it private. I don't suppose there is really anything I can do about all this. I wish there were.

Bill

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Date: Wed, 25 Mar 2009 08:28:17 -0700
Subject: Re: Decency Check
From: Richard Marken
To: Bill Powers
Cc: dag, tbourbon

OK, sorry about that.

Best Rick

=====

Date: Wed, 1 Apr 2009 11:22
To: Bill Powers
From: Dag Forssell
Subject: 2) Decency Check

Bill,

I too remember that Rick said Tom was supporting RTP only for the money. I also remember Rick saying somewhere along the way that he does not care about Tom Bourbon.

You seem to insist on overlooking that Tom did not participate in what you make out to be a war between Tom and Rick. Tom left CSGnet in 1995.

Seems to me what we have here is high-level perceptual control with memory

in perception.

You have a deep and very valid appreciation for Rick and his work, on both a personal and professional level. He came on board some ten years before I did.

I too appreciated Rick as I came on board. His writings were clear and inspiring to me.

Reading CSGnet and saving all posts, I saw the gratuitous put downs and sarcasm. I too, think catholicism is bad news, but it went beyond tactless to say Ed is ridiculous just like the Pope and catholic church. (1993 or 1994).

(I have been looking for the post along the way, but find that even with individual posts in Eudora since 1997, finding posts is not a slam-dunk. You have to have the exact words. We remember a phrase and what it meant, but not precisely how it was stated, so no luck finding it.)

I saw twisting of posts and regular put downs. A few were aimed at me. I never saw people attacking Rick unless he put them down first with sarcasm and insults. Rick was not necessary right putting people down, people were not necessarily wrong in what they said about PCT; Rick often just did not seem to bother reading past the first paragraph of a post before responding with a put-down.

I saw a sustained, multi-year, campaign of ridicule aimed at the RTP program.

I saw political commentary and diatribes that would never end. The message was rather clear: A true PCTer will be a left-wing radical. While rather easy for me and you to agree with, people with a conservative bent would not feel welcome on CSGnet.

I saw people, such as Bruce Gregory, try to get to Rick by adopting his ways, ridiculing him in turn. Not pretty.

What I saw is very different from what you saw and report in these posts.

I did not interpret Rick's posts based on ten years (or 20) of appreciation for his work as I think you have done, being understanding every step of the way because of my long-standing appreciation for him.

I saw the confusing posts, wreckless comments, insults, put-downs. After ten years of that, you lose your desire to work with the guy. That makes me pathological, too.

The past is past, you say. And Rick has seen the light after 20 years and has changed.

How is Tom and others to find out? They cannot because they do not want to

revisit memories of past insults and put-downs.

I have said far too much in this thread. I have no business interfering with you or telling you how to think or what to do.

The only point I really have wanted to make is this:

Next time you find yourself wishing for a return to CSGnet circa 1994, consider picking up the phone to tell Tom you are sorry communications went awry and feelings ended up getting hurt. I think it will do you good and Tom good.

Sorry to come across as presumptuous, telling you what to do.

Back to work. Much groundwork remains to be laid at this end.

Best, Dag

At 03:17 PM 3/24/2009, you wrote:

Hello, Dag --

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Date: Thu, 02 Apr 2009 07:53:45 -0600

To: Dag Forssell

From: Bill Powers

Subject: Re: 2) Decency Check

Hello, Dag --

I saw twisting of posts and regular put downs. A few were aimed at me. I never saw people attacking Rick unless he put them down first with sarcasm and insults. Rick was not necessary right putting people down, people were not necessarily wrong in what they said about PCT; Rick often just did not seem to bother reading past the first paragraph of a post before responding with a put-down.

Yes, I agree. Rick often took a dislike to someone who had argued with him, and from then on simply assumed they were wrong about everything. This led to misreading their posts, skipping parts, and insisting they were saying something they were not saying.

Rick is not the only person on CSGnet who has done that, but he was, until Marc Abrams came along, the most aggressive about it.

What I saw is very different from what you saw and report in these posts.

Yes. I suppose I am as selective as anyone. And I was never the target.

The past is past, you say. And Rick has seen the light after 20 years and has changed.

How is Tom and others to find out? They cannot because they do not want to revisit memories of past insults and put-downs.

I have made occasional efforts to encourage forgiveness by Tom, and many efforts to show Rick what he was doing. I've approached Tom several times, asking for a another try at getting along, but he is adamant -- never again, is his attitude. He will not go to any meeting that Rick attends; he will not be in the same room with Rick. Those are quotes. It was clear that he was telling me "It's Rick or me -- take your choice." I don't give in to that kind of pressure, or blackmail. Tom made this choice, I didn't. I am not the teacher monitoring the playground to make sure the children get along with each other. I am not the father trying to settle sibling rivalries. I'm not the boss of the company who can fire employees who don't measure up. How other people get along with each other is their reponsibility, not mine. They have to resolve their own conflicts. I may have criticized Rick, but I've never told him to reform or get out. When Marc Abrams went too far, I simply put him on my own spam filter and refused any further messages. Sort of like Tom did with Rick. But that's the only person I have ever done that to. It felt like a defeat to me when I did that.

As you can see from the interactions between Rick and Martin, Rick is trying to stay cool. When Martin comes on with his intellectual superiority act, I'm sure Rick has to wrestle with himself to keep from exploding, but he's not exploding. And when Rick manages to keep his temper, he is a clear and original thinker who can make a point with the best of them.

I suppose I will try again before much longer. I don't contest anything you say about Rick. But you are working out your own relations with him, and that is as it should be. I wish Tom were at least trying, but he's not and there's nothing I can do about that, as much as I wish there were.

Bill

=====
Date: Thur, 2 Apr 2009 05:58
To: Bill Powers
From: Dag Forssell
Subject: Re: 2) Decency Check

Bill,

Thank you very much for your considered response. We inch closer to a common understanding.

I have made occasional efforts to encourage forgiveness by Tom, and many efforts to show Rick what he was doing. I've approached Tom several times, asking for a another try at getting along, but he is adamant -- never again, is his attitude.

Never again - I have harbored similar feelings. Rick has been such an ass, always proud of it.

He will not go to any meeting that Rick attends; he will not be in the same room with Rick. Those are quotes.

This I find sensible. Much better than hitting Rick in the solar plexus next time you see him and kicking him repeatedly in the balls.

Not very funny, but in the Chicago conference (where Bill Williams was a major subject), I think in a panel discussion, Rick said out loud: "Some people are very unpleasant on CSGnet." Bruce Nevin, seated straight across, looked Rick in the eye and said (but not very loud): "Yes, you are."

It was clear that he was telling me "It's Rick or me -- take your choice."

This does not follow. Not clear at all!!! You are imagining and setting up conditions of your own based on wishful thinking. This has been a major mistake. I cannot for a second believe that Tom ever gave you such an ultimatum; you gave it to him.

We were working together, you, Tom and I when you suddenly gave him the ultimatum. You were not provoked. Rick had not been mentioned by any of us.

I can understand that you have wanted everyone to work with Rick in perfect harmony, in one happy family. There was a time when our two daughters were in different places and did not get along very well. Not what parents want.

But it is not for parents to decide what their offspring's likes and dislikes are along the way, once they are adults or close to it.

As parents, we were supportive of each of our daughters separately. Now, they both have small children, live just two miles apart and cooperate up a storm. We are fortunate with our family setup where we get to be granny-nannies two days a week.

When he saw our discussion in 2005, Rick wrote you (11/28/05):

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RM: I think the solution is really very simple:

Bill, feel free to work with whoever you want to work with whenever you want to work with them. If including me would result in anybody not working with you, feel free to not include me.

=====

I don't give in to that kind of pressure, or blackmail.

There was no pressure or blackmail, was there?

Tom made this choice, I didn't.

By giving Tom an ultimatum you gave Tom a painful but easy choice. You were stuffing asshole Rick down his throat. That made you too an asshole from Tom's point of view. If you had done this to me, I too would have had to say goodbye Bill. Like Tom, I would continue to work on PCT.

I have not been happy living with awareness the attitude on your part or Tom's part. I think it is quite enough that Tom got screwed by Ed.

I am not the teacher monitoring the playground to make sure the children get along with each other. I am not the father trying to settle sibling rivalries. I'm not the boss of the company who can fire employees who don't measure up. How other people get along with each other is their responsibility, not mine. They have to resolve their own conflicts. I may have criticized Rick, but I've never told him to reform or get out. When Marc Abrams went too far, I simply put him on my own spam filter and refused any further messages. Sort of like Tom did with Rick. But that's the only person I have ever done that to. It felt like a defeat to me when I did that.

I cut off one of my five sisters when I understood that she was spreading lies about me around the family, poisoning my relationship with my father. Not what you want to do, I agree.

But what this discussion has been about is not Rick and Tom, but Bill and Tom. I have no expectation of influencing Tom's attitude toward Rick (which is in the toilet), nor do I worry much about Rick's attitude toward anyone.

I do care about your relationship with Tom and Tom's relationship with you. A measure of understanding and healing would be good all around because you are not an asshole and neither is Tom. Like all of us, I live in my head. I want to think of each of you as considering the other to be a normal human being of good will. That will reduce my error signals.

As you can see from the interactions between Rick and Martin, Rick is trying to stay cool. When Martin comes on with his intellectual superiority act, I'm sure Rick has to wrestle with himself to keep from exploding, but he's not exploding. And when Rick manages to keep his temper, he is a clear and original thinker who can make a point with the best of them.

I see that, and I appreciate that there was no political polemics the past election cycle, à la "Obama is my PCT president".

I suppose I will try again before much longer. I don't contest anything you say about Rick. But you are working out your own relations with him, and that is as it should be.

I simply cooperate for the good of PCT. Several others do too. Tim endorsed my giving Rick the right to duplicate chapters from MOL for his teaching.

I wish Tom were at least trying, but he's not and there's nothing I can do about that, as much as I wish there were.

I agree that there is nothing you can do to get Tom to cooperate with Rick.

I do hope that you can restore some sense of normalcy between yourself and Tom.

Reflecting on what I try to achieve by giving you a hard time in this thread, I think of two paragraphs that appear in my article
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Why study perceptual control theory?

<snip>

With PCT insight, I now see actions as symptoms of wants and understandings and ask people about their wants whenever a conflict arises. In PCT-speak, this means that I ask them what the situation looks like from their inside perspective and what perceptions they are trying to control, rather than jump to conclusions about the situation based on my incomplete observations from the outside, supplemented by a generous helping of other information retrieved in real time from my personal store of understanding and memories--in other words, based on what I imagine.

I realized that I had on many occasions caused conflict with others by insisting on my interpretations and by trying to impose my wants, telling people what to do and how to do it. So now I do my best to offer information instead, information that my friends and associates can consider and make their own; information that will affect how they understand their world, change what they want--and thus change their actions.

=====

Causing conflict sure comes easy. The only way out is to offer information. Thank you for considering what I have written to you. I think we are done. I wish for the best as opportunities to communicate with Tom arise or are created.

Email is a lousy medium, but to carry on this conversation by phone would not work either. It would have detoured immediately.

Best, Dag

To: CSGnet Archive
From: Dag Forssell <dag@livingcontrolsystems.com>
Subject: Why?
Cc:
Bcc:
Attached:

This personal letter from Clark McPhail illustrates well the consequences of the issues discussed in the previous three threads in this archive document.

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At 08:38 PM 11/19/2010, Clark McPhail wrote:

Dag,

You are a nice person and a hard worker in behalf of PCT but I probably owe you an explanation for my curt refusal to write a blurb for your edited collection of the musings of Powers and Runkel. [*Dialogue Concerning the Two Chief Approaches to a Science of Life*]

On many occasions over the course of 15 years I called attention to what I judge to be shortcomings in PCT. Based on my own considerable research on human behavior over the past four decades, I have argued that perception control theory should give attention to the importance of conversation between two individuals, the conversations that individuals have with themselves (aka thinking and planning), and the importance of language in the production of individual and collective action. My criticisms and suggestions have been ignored by perception control theorists and so I have turned my attention to other closed-loop negative feedback theorists because they recognized the importance of those phenomena. I also have published quite a number of articles in major sociological journals which called attention to the merits of PCT.

All of this was ignored by the holy trinity guarding the sacred center of PCT - Powers, Marken and whoever was at the moment the third party - the holy ghost to the father and the son of PCT. I think PCT is a brilliant theory but one that is vastly incomplete. I learned a lot about the hierarchical arrangement of control systems and the beauty of closed-loop, negative feedback systems from reading Powers' books and articles. I lectured on PCT to my students for 15 years. I gathered more data with "demo 1" than anyone I have run across and even published a piece reporting those results. Still there was no acknowledgement that I might have made a small contribution to PCT.

The guardians of the sacred center of PCT are perfectly willing to welcome all the acolytes and sycophants aboard as long as they voice the party line and find no fault with the limitations of perception control theory. But one is either 100% on board or one is ignored.

My work on purposive individual and collective action in temporary gatherings is noted, cited and respected around the world. Perhaps this is why you would like my endorsement of the PCT enterprise. Sorry, I'm not kowtowing in to an insular enterprise that is as dismissive of its constructive critics as PCT.

Now you know my reasons "why" I will not endorse the latest testimonial to PCT. You may now punch the discard button and get on with the rest of your day.

Clark

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Clark McPhail, PhD
Emeritus Professor of Sociology
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

[DF: See *Purpose, Meaning, and Action: Control Systems Theories in Sociology* Palgrave Macmillan (2006). PDF available at www.z-lib.org]

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Clark, 12:56 PM 11/20/2010

Many thanks for this. I understand and respect your stance. The holy trinity has been hugely unfortunate and damaging.

Sadly, the son is not all that brilliant. He has a very limited grasp of the world he lives in but takes every opportunity to voice an uninformed opinion in the most blatantly self-serving way.

Bill has made a major mistake by objecting to the Son only in private, allowing people to infer that he endorses obnoxious posts. The Son has not changed.

I wrote some rather harsh posts about this in 2001 and as a result the first hour of the conference in St Louis was a discussion of the Son's obnoxious appearance on CSGnet and what to do about it.

Five years ago I carried on a lengthy private discussion with Bill. I may share the thread when he has passed from the scene.

You, Greg Williams, Tom Bourbon, and who knows who else, have voted with your feet. I hold my nose with regard to the son and do what I can to promote PCT for the simple reason that I find the basics compelling and of great value to the world.

Anyhow, many thanks. I will send you the final book. I am putting the last few touches on it and will upload new files to the printer in about a week.

Best, Dag