

SPARK 089

(Matrix Code: **SPARK089.00** for StartOver.xyz game.)

DISTINCTION: The vast majority of your actions originate from the weakest of motives: status.

NOTES: You could assume that your day-to-day interactions with other people in ordinary circumstances are neutral. But they are never neutral. Every interaction on even the subtlest level is a maneuvering that involves status. Status means social positioning but status transactions are much deeper than that.

Both animals and humans exhibit equivalent status interactions. This shows that the impetus for status transactions entered our behavior patterns millions of years ago in our evolutionary development, long before we were monkeys or even humanoid.

Status is not something you have or are. Status is something you do. Status is largely about territory and space relationships. Watch a bustling crowd of people from above. Notice how they avoid bumping into each other through constantly exchanging subliminal status challenges. The lower status person meekly gets out of the way.

Status transactions occur man to man, woman to man, parent to child, child to parent, child to child, man to boss, boss to boss, doctor to patient, student to teacher, caste to caste, one profession to different profession, religion to religion, culture to culture, title to title, subordinate to subordinate, etc. Consciously or not, balancing and flowing status transactions format the bulk of our interactions.

The intricacies and nuances of status transactions are influential enough to cause racial and religious conflicts and even war. You may tend to have and defend a certain status your whole life until such time as you examine the true motivation for your interactions. In order to create nonlinear results a Possibility Manager needs versatility, to be able to play high or low status, or to consciously raise or lower their status or the status of others in any situation. The invitation in this SPARK is to start becoming conscious of the purpose and form of status-motivated actions so that you are not so trapped in their automatic mechanical grip. Without doing the work to learn about status transactions the deep mechanisms run you blindly. You are a marionette denying the strings that dance you about so.

You can catch yourself and others dealing status transactions when you know some of the game setups. Once you know what you are looking for you can detect status transactions in films, in newspaper stories, in books, in songs and on TV shows. Status transactions form the spine of some of our favorite story themes. Examples of status transactions include:

- Having low status and acting as if you have high status. (An employee acting as CEO.)
- Having high status and acting as if you have low status. (The Queen trying to be anonymous.)

- Raising your status to the highest status allowed, just under, equal to, or far above another's status.
- Lowering your status to the lowest possible status, just above, equal to, or far below another's status.
- Raising another person's low status to the level just above yours, equal to yours, or just below yours.
- Lowering another person's high status to the level just above yours, equal to yours, or just below yours.
- Defending your high status against someone trying to raise their status above yours.
- Defending your high status against someone trying to lower your status below theirs.
- Defending your low status against someone trying to raise your status above theirs.
- Defending your low status against someone trying to lower their status below yours.
- Raising your status by encouraging another person not to lower their status.
- Finding the order of your status in a new group of people, who is higher and who is lower than you so you know how to play status with them. (Arriving at a party.)

And so on. You know from experience what each of these status struggles feels like. Every inflection of voice, every redirection of attention, every change of attitude, every subtle timing of movement or speech implies a status. No action is due to chance. No action is motiveless. It is impossible to be neutral. This weakest of motives colors the fabric of your daily life and although you are intimately involved it is almost taboo to speak about status transactions. This makes it a very interesting subject to speak about.

EXPERIMENTS:

Learn to observe and consciously enact status transactions. Beware that although gaining an understanding and skill of status transactions can be fun and enlightening, it can also be alarming. Seeing status transactions for what they are exposes all of your secret maneuverings, secret even to yourself. This knowledge is therefore very useful for sidestepping conflicts, avoiding being manipulated, and maintaining clear communications.

SPARK089.01 LEVEL ONE: ANIMALS To begin waking up about status transactions start by observing animals. Notice the predictable series of rapid interactions when a new dog enters a group of other dogs. Go to the zoo and watch how complicated, subtle and constant the status transactions are between the chimpanzees. Watch the way horses, zebras, or giraffes position themselves relative to each other and quickly establish who has what status. It is so revealing to watch chickens for a while to see how the obvious "pecking order" is maintained. The top chicken pecks on the head of the next lower status chicken, who then pecks on the head of the chicken below it.

SPARK089.02 LEVEL TWO: HUMANS. You might think chickens pecking each other is funny, but this pecking is exactly what happens at work, in school, jockeying for position in the grocery store line, and in every interaction between people. For example, notice how the drivers of "high status" cars expect to be treated as high status people – you should get out of their way immediately; they do not have to bother signaling when changing lanes, etc. Notice that wherever two or more people meet there are status transactions, also over the telephone and through the Internet!

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SPARK089.03 LEVEL THREE: YOURSELF. Choose one of the status transactions described in the listed examples above. Three times during the day consciously enact that status transaction even if it is not appropriate and see what happens. Do not tell anyone what you are doing. For example, raise the status of the grocery store clerk to above your status. Then return to playing status transactions the way you normally would. Alternate back and forth: push the limits and then return to the safety of your “normal.” Observe what your “normal” status position is. Keep playing around with this until sensing status transactions becomes an added dimension to your perceptions.