

SPARK 146

Distinction: Either you consciously design each gameworld you live in or you are a pawn in someone else's gameworld.

Notes: It's not bad, being a pawn. Psychopaths *need* pawns... *millions of them*. And there are benefits for acting as a pawn, benefits for your Gremlin. For example, if things go wrong you always have someone to blame! You are allowed to expect someone else to take care of you (the doctor, the government, the insurance company, your boss, your parents) and when they don't do it well enough, you can seethe in righteous resentment! Plus you have a defensible excuse for not doing what you came here to do: "*Because I am exhausted by just surviving!*" "*Because my Boss won't give me the time off!*" "*Because they never showed me how!*"

Self-deception is required to play a pawn in someone else's gameworld because *avoiding responsibility is an illusion*. Even as pawn you are co-creator. The contracts for entering and exiting gameworlds always have *your* blood on the dotted line. Taking radical responsibility for co-creating gameworlds initiates you as a *Gameworld Mechanic*: assessing gameworld purposes, what they cost to play, what you get, reinventing gameworld contexts, hacking thoughtware, redirecting power flows... in other words, consciously owning gameworlds rather than acting as if they own you.

Your first discoveries in *Gameworld Mechanics* may not be pretty. You may see how often you've disgraced yourself, giving away your authority, rejecting invitations to expand and evolve. You may see that hiding-out as an extra in other people's gameworlds does not respect the gift of having been given a life. You may see all of this... and more... and so what? Learn *Gameworld Mechanics*.

This one SPARK can't possibly do justice to such a fascinating and important field, but it can be your *Gameworld Mechanic's Mini-Manual* and offer experiments to try. We start by defining 3 terms: *gameworld*, *context*, and *distinction*.

A *gameworld* is an interaction-space in which co-creators agree that a particular *context* applies. An interaction-space is not restricted to a physical-space.

A *context* is a clarity-platform built out of a specific set of distinctions.

A *distinction* is a refinement in discerning that reveals new options to choose from. New distinctions land in your energetic body, not in your mind. This is why getting a new distinction changes who you are.

Deleting, adding, or modifying even one distinction in a context changes the entire context, which immediately changes how the gameworlds that emerge from that context work. In other words, the context determines what is possible in the gameworld. Therefore, an effective way to evolve a gameworld is to land a new distinction in its context.

A gameworld's context is implemented through *rules*. For example, by signing an employee agreement you enter the gameworld of having a job and promising to

follow company policies even if the policies generate toxic wastes, use slave labor, promote war, or increase global warming. If you sign marriage papers you follow legal and social rules. If you drive a car, play soccer, enter a beauty contest, join a religion, a political party, or a government agency, you agree to behave according to that particular gameworld's rules.

Gameworld rules are unique and arbitrary. Rules from one gameworld do not necessarily apply in another. For example, it is nearly unthinkable to play golf with knitting needles. It would be absurd to use Parliamentary Procedure at a birthday party. Square dancing is not allowed at the Post Office! Whether you buy and sell postage stamps, run in a street gang, holiday with a kayaking association, practice at an aikido dojo, purchase groceries through a food cooperative, sing in a choir, build Earthships, study at a university, heat your house with oil, create an ecovillage, perform with a Kabuki theater troupe, or go on quests in a massively-multiplayer on-and-offline personal-development computer game, each gameworld requires you to formally or informally sign a *user agreement* that commits you to that context's ground-rules so everybody can play the same game.

Humans have an uncanny ability to “snap” from one gameworld into another without noticing the shift, even if the rules of the new gameworld utterly contradict the rules of the gameworld we only moments before defended with our lives. A prison guard, for example, can return home to his family and not torture his children even if they disagree with him. A corporate manager can pick-up a piece of litter from the street even if he spent his day ordering toxic wastes dumped into the Amazon. As a *Gameworld Mechanic* you start noticing context rifts between the gameworlds in your life, and may make changes that bring more resonance to the contexts you serve.

Gameworlds can weave together into a formidable Hydra so complex that it seems like reality. But it is not reality. It is only a gameworld built of gameworlds. Modern culture's capitalistic patriarchal empire is a composite gameworld that includes: the rule of law, land ownership, copyright, franchises, national sovereignty, mega-governments, international banking, currency exchanges, corporate personhood, stock markets, and mega-religions. Modern culture has already failed to create a bright future for humanity on Earth. As the catastrophe becomes visible to more and more people, modern culture's self-defenses become more fanatical. Luckily, *Gameworld Mechanics* can write themselves out of any scene and in no time start new gameworlds serving a sustainable context.

It is important to note that there is a difference between gameworld rules and laws of nature: gameworld rules are arbitrary and the laws of nature are not. If the rules of a gameworld conflict with the laws of nature, Mother Nature *always* wins. Being confused about this can bring an entire culture to its knees. Through *Gameworld Mechanics* you learn to reinvent your gameworld before Mother Nature smashes it with a hammer.

If you notice that your gameworld's rules are suicidal because they contradict the laws of nature, why would you continue to play in that gameworld? That would be insane. For example, when you see that the gameworld called *national sovereignty* emerges from a context that encourages competitions to consume the commons,

national sovereignty is no longer legitimate. Or if you must hand over your personal authority to a representative government which can be hijacked by a corporate agenda, the way to maintain self-respect is by exiting that gameworld. It may be beyond most people's awareness to recognize that they have the power to choose the gameworlds they live in. It does not have to be beyond yours.

That is why taking responsibility at the level of gameworlds turns out to be a crucial adulthood initiation. Think how many people do not yet have this initiation... Could it be your job to bring it to them?

You have an obligation to create the cultural gameworld in which you would love to live. It is an obligation to others, because if you do not create that particular gameworld for the world, who will? And it is an obligation to yourself, because why did you come here? To play in gameworlds created by others? Or to deliver the gameworld you brought with you when you were born.

Human gameworlds are maturing from tribal (*if you are different from us we eat you*) to national (*if you are different from us we kill you and take your resources*) and are now shifting to planetary, where there is no essential difference between humans. Exploring the diversity of human gameworlds is the new *edutainment* economy, experiencing raw appreciation of the unfathomable richness of human potential.

Experiment: Here is your 4-part *Gameworld Mechanic* experiment:

1. **LIST THE GAMEWORLDS YOU LIVE IN** for example, money, working for a company, riding buses, purchasing groceries at a supermarket, paying for health insurance, using credit cards, being in psychotherapy, being an African American, being a Freemason, being Gnostic, renting an apartment, loaning money at www.kiva.org, writing SMS messages, doing permaculture gardening, using a public sewer system, having a cat, eating at fast-food restaurants, writing on facebook, etc. List all your gameworlds.
2. **WRITE DOWN THE RULES OF ENGAGEMENT** For each of your gameworlds explain how it works as if you are talking to an alien or someone from an indigenous tribe never before exposed to modern civilization. What does a newbie new need to know? For example, you could explain about how to have a job like this: *You have to show up on time, sit where they put you and do what your boss says for 8 hours each day. In exchange for your time you get almost enough money to survive. What is time? Time is the opportunity spaces that come and go until it gets dark again. Money? It's a number in someone else's computer that you use to buy things. You win if you have more numbers in the computer than other people even if you don't know what to use them for. Boss? He's the big chief. You have to act like you are his slave and arrange things so he wins, or you lose your job and then you don't have enough money to survive.* The purpose of this experiment is to become acutely aware of the rules you are using to engage life. Seeing the rules gives you a chance to re-decide exactly what you are doing.

3. **EXTRACT YOURSELF FROM ONE GAMEWORLD** The purpose is to notice how a gameworld that you were long-inside looks from the outside. Pick one gameworld – big, small, central, peripheral, any gameworld that has been part of your life – and get completely out of it. By changing your mind (after all, whose mind is it?) and deciding not to continue playing in that gameworld, you see that it was always just a game, even if you previously thought it was real, true, or inescapable. Then you suddenly recognize there are ways out of every gameworld!

For example, I am extracting myself from the gameworld called *The United States of America*. I have already paid them \$450 cash and handed in my passport. They emphasized how serious this change is and asked if I wanted to reconsider? The exit ritual included me and the large woman sitting behind the bullet-proof glass raising our hands together and saying, “I do so swear.”

Two sticky gameworlds to extract yourself from are *health insurance* and *the church*. Extracting yourself from the church in Europe is easy. You simply go downtown, sign a paper, and you can stop paying church tax. The fear blocking most people from doing this was instilled during 700 years of inquisitions and is still passed on, generation after generation. It is the fear of being killed by the church or being buried without the church’s blessings.

The fear of getting out of the health insurance system is equally gripping but it helps to know that *it is possible* to get out. And while getting out it helps to join or start a local branch of a self-governed solidary group for promoting general health called *Artabana* www.artabana.de.

4. **START YOUR OWN GAMEWORLD** Big or small, temporary or long term: create a gameworld you would love to play in. Here are a few hints: First, soak in the vision of what you want to exist and the context it emerges from. Set your gameworld’s purpose. Then give your gameworld a name. With the context, purpose, and name you can open the door for others to co-create how it goes. If you interview collaborators and write down why they want to get in, what attracts them to this gameworld, then circle the 3 to 5 central reasons, you distill the Bright Principles of your gameworld. Over the years I have co-created a number of gameworlds that many people have loved to play in, including the Personal Growth Co-op, XSO Company, Industrial Learning & Magic, Possibility Management, Possibilica, Brückendorf, Next Culture Research & Training Center, Trainer Guild, the Gaian Road Team, Puls der Erde, and General Memetics. I can’t wait to hear about the gameworlds you create.

Best wishes,
Clinton