Face To Face And Non-Face To Face Social Settings

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Introduction

When an individual is in any conversation with another person or group of people, he/she tends to make a substantial impression on the person or group through different modes, i.e., personality, manner, style of talking, grip on the subject, etc., whereas the other person or group of people tries to get more information about the said individual. According to Goffman, all the contributors to the conversation try to avoid embarrassment, or if they are well cultured, they don't attempt to embarrass others either (Goffman 1959). This is the reason why Goffman felt there was a connection between the activities of the daily lives of people and a theatrical performance. The social interactions, as well as dramatic acts, have a front stage that appears to people, where positive aspects are shown, and a back end or backstage, where people act differently from their roles (Goffman 2006). Therefore, keeping in mind Goffman's analysis of the relationship between life and performance, I have staged face-to-face social settings and non-face-to-face social settings. In face-to-face social settings, I had a half-hour conversation with five people about smoking and its effects, covering the concept of symbolic interaction theory, conflict theory, and critical theory. In a non-face-to-face discussion, I sent an email to my team of four members informing them about their poor performance last month as the company couldn't achieve its target.

Setting # 1

There are two benches in a park, and six people are sitting on them, including myself, and they are between the ages of 18 and 25. Two of them are unemployed and looking for a job, while three are full-time students. All of them are smokers and are smoking at the moment. I am asking them the reason as to why they smoke and what their viewpoint is on smoking, irrespective of the general perception. My role in the group is to present the adverse effects of tobacco and to stress giving up smoking. I asked them pleasantly as to why they smoke and what pleasure they get out of smoking. I was continually observing myself. So, I noted that the way I presented my question, the participants found my style exciting and impressive. They started giving their opinions one by one. A student gave an interesting reply that smoking takes him out of the world, which is far better than the world he is living in; this was purely a symbolic interaction theory (Miller 1995).

The answer was in contrast to my belief and viewpoint, which is why I didn't like it at all, but I remained composed and cool-headed. I smiled and asked him how. He said there is not much excitement in my life; my parents have separated, I live with my mother, and the college routine is hectic. I don't go along with my classmates, and the whole situation is so stressful for me; under this situation, smoking relieves me; it takes me out of the stress I am facing; if I don't smoke, I may fall sick; this is probably my best companion or the source of my peace. He said all these words in a flow, and I was under the impression that he was using these words from his heart; he really meant every single word that he spoke. I heard his entire conversation and gave him a friendly smile, though he sounded a fool. I said to him, my friend, I understand your feelings very well; I know what you are going through. You are getting emotional pleasure out of smoking, but please don't overlook your health.

The most important thing that you have is your health, my friend; don't ruin it. Think about your future and use your willpower. You don't know you are risking your health. To make this clear to yourself, view the X-ray of your lungs and consult your doctor about how smoking is affecting your health and daily life. I know giving up at once is not an easy thing to do, but at least you can minimize tobacco use, and with the passage of time, you'll be able to relinquish it. While delivering all those words, I considered myself his proper mentor and well-wisher. I tried my best to be very polite and gentle during my conversation as I wanted to portray a correct image of myself. I further added that the average life of regular smokers is less than that of non-smokers; you are young, and you have to live a good and healthy life.

I was trying to apply the concept of critical theory. As I said to him, I wish to transform the lives of all smokers, and if I had the authority, I would give a suitable replacement to every smoker so that they can't think about smoking ever in their lives. I was trying to notice the facial expressions of every single participant in the conversation, and I noted that my words were reaching their ears and making an impression deep inside. I was feeling positive that at least these guys were considering my viewpoint. The same boy argued that it's not an easy thing to do, and others also supported his perspective. I said my final words with a smile and expressed the hope that they were all intelligent people and would give up smoking. With these words, I left, but I had a feeling of achievement as I knew that my words proved to be useful to them.

Front And Backstage Areas

For this conversation, I prepared a lecture on the disadvantages of smoking, and I said to myself that I'd remain composed at any cost. Although I am a non-smoker, which is why I don't like smoking, for this particular conversation, I prepared to portray myself as a decent person, which is why I chose proper and formal dress to attend the discussion. I wanted to look different from other participants, and I succeeded in my approach. I worked on my expressions as well, and I tried to remain calm and composed during the conversation. I practised friendly expressions before going onto the front stage. After completing all my homework, I went for the discussion in an attempt to assert my viewpoint,

which is stated above.

Stage #2

I wrote an email as a team leader to all four of my team members expressing my feelings about not achieving the current month's target. In the same email, I also conveyed the concerns and reaction of higher management about not completing the goal. At the same time, I wrote about my concerns in the email. That particular email was a strict warning to them that their non-serious and unprofessional attitude towards work would not be tolerated next month. Although I tried to be relatively calm, I felt I didn't keep my cool while writing the email. The reason behind this approach was that the management was not satisfied with the overall behavior and working style of my team, and I tried to use labeling theory in my conversation. Since I was angry, I didn't follow any particular sequence.

Front And Backstage

I was apparently upset, and my facial expressions were unusual. Probably, these were the expressions my team members had never seen during face-to-face conversations. I tried not to use words that were too harsh in the email, but somehow, I got a bit strict, and I used words that I would not include in my general conversation with them. I didn't use any particular sequence or script in the email. All I wanted was to convey my point and make them realize my anger and higher management's concern. While writing an email, my expressions were really rude, and if someone watched me at the time, they would be under the impression that I was about to fight with someone. As a team leader, I always tend to avoid such expressions in the workplace.

Conclusion

In both the above scenarios, my presentations were in contrast to each other. In setting 1, I acted calmly and with composure, and I was in full control of my emotions and expressions, whereas in stage 2, I reflected anger in my email and used words that I usually would not include in my conversation. Since in stage 2 my team members were not present, somehow more anger took over me while writing the email; even after completing my conversation, I felt I should've been much more relaxed, which wasn't the case.

Out of both stages, I liked myself in stage 1 as I acted very decently and with maturity. I was fully prepared for my conversation; I was composed and asserted my viewpoint in a kind, gentle, and convincing way, whereas, in stage 2, my anger was all over the communication, and I even forgot to highlight some positive points in phase 2. I learned lessons from both steps, and when I compare, I think I should further enhance the skills I used at stage 1, as this was the positive side of my personality, and I want to go along with these characteristics.

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