

Theory of Interpersonal Relations
Basic Concerns of Any Group

by Bill Schutz

One of the ways of looking at what happens when people gather in a group includes three basic concerns:

- Inclusion: *Who else is here?*
Who can I be in relation to them?
What will it cost to join?
How much am I willing to pay?
Can I trust my real self to them?
Will they hold me up if I am falling?
- Control: *Who is calling the shots here?*
How much can I push for what I want?
What do they require of me?
Can I say what I really think?
Can I take it if they say what they really think?
- Affection: *Am I willing to care?*
Can I show my caring?
What will happen if I show I care for one person before I show caring for others?
What if no one cares for me?
What if they do?
What if I don't really ever care for some people in the group?
Will the group be able to bear it?

When confronted by the end of its life together, the process tends to reverse itself from I-C-A to A-C-I.

- We begin to pull back a little from affectional ties we know have no real future.
- We begin to get embroiled again in a game of "Who's boss here anyway?"
- We start to wonder if we really want to put in the time and effort to stay with the group.

It is important to realize that these concerns overlap during the life cycle of a group, although one of the three concerns may be more dominant than the others at any given period of time.