

Self-Esteem: A Family Affair

a newsletter for people who care about self-esteem

Volume 17, Number 4 - Issue 97 - July/August, 1998

Dear Readers,

Self-Esteem: A Family Affair was out of print. Now it is back in the book stores so this issue is about that book and some theoretical background for teaching *Self-Esteem: A Family Affair* and *Growing Up Again, Parenting Ourselves, Parenting Our Children*, and some tips on teaching role-plays.

You will hear about **Lena's son**, a story involving the *Self-Esteem: A Family Affair* book.

Self-Esteem: A Family Affair is based on the psychological theory of Transactional Analysis. Mary Paananen is a student of Transactional Analysis and will soon be a certified Transactional Analyst. She teaches both *Self-Esteem: A Family Affair* and *Growing Up Again, Parenting Ourselves, Parenting Our Children* classes. Mary has written a **Dear parents letter** to give to students who want to know more about TA and how it is reflected in the classes. Thank you, Mary, for this thoughtful piece.

Some of you have requested a reprint of the **poster**, *This Home is a Human Sanctuary*. It fits well with *Self-Esteem: A Family Affair*.

For those of you who lead **role-playing** in any setting, there is a reminder about the importance of creating safety when doing role-playing, and how to do that.

Many of you who have played the game **Spaces** with me have asked for written directions. Here they are. Playing Spaces is reported to strengthen

the corpus callosum, which facilitates left brain-right brain thinking and systems thinking. I recommend the game. It is fun as well as brain-building. Thanks to Craig Hockstedter for teaching me to play Spaces.

And finally, a story of **cows**. Why cows? Because the cows on the streets of Zurich, Switzerland, tickled me so much I had to share the story with you.

Thanks for your response to the last issue, *Recycling - A Theory of Hope*. Please remember to send your stories about recycling at different ages. Also your stories about the differences between recycling behaviors and misbehaviors that are a call for help, a call for some lesson of discipline.

Happily,

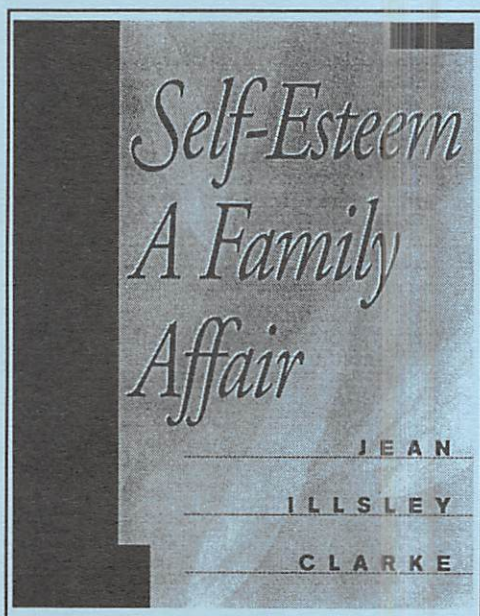
Self-Esteem: A Family Affair

About the book

After Rupert Murdoch acquired HarperSanFrancisco and changed the direction of that press, all of my books were dropped. It was extremely difficult to get the papers necessary to reissue those books with another publisher, but finally the legal papers are in hand and Hazelden Educational Materials is reprinting *Self-Esteem: A Family Affair*. It will be on the book shelves in October. If it is not on the shelf, any book store

can order it. This issue, with a new cover, is exactly like the original 1978 book except for an updated preface and the removal of most illustrations.

This book focuses on building self-esteem. Not the "feel good" pap that has been peddled recently, but how to build a true, deep, positive self-image. There is a chapter for each developmental stage with attention to adult recycling of each stage. Five different family forms are represented.



It feels very good to have the book back in print and even better to know that Hazelden plans to publish a revised version in two or three years. So here is a request for anyone who has read or is reading *Self-Esteem: A Family Affair*. What do you want added, changed, deleted in the revised book? Please jot your suggestions on the enclosed questionnaire and mail or fax or e-mail it to me. Exercise your power; use your influence to get what you want. With appreciation,

JIC

Lena's son
A powerful use of the
***Self-Esteem: A Family Affair* book**

The Transactional Analysis community in St. Petersburg, Russia and I spent a day together last October. They were intensely interested in how to

use TA with parents and I left a copy of *Self-Esteem: A Family Affair* with them.

This August, in Zurich, Lena Soboleva told me this story about her son. Lena's son returned home after his second stay in a psychiatric hospital. He was fine for one day and then his depression returned. The family hesitated to readmit him because of their concern about the appropriateness of the treatment, but after three months he was re-hospitalized. When he came home again the weather was warm, but he huddled in heavy sweaters all day and refused to go outside. He was pale and withdrawn. Lena was deeply concerned.

At the time, Lena was reading *Self-Esteem: A Family Affair* and planning to use it in her work. She wanted to have the material in Russian and, since her son is fluent in English, she asked him to translate it. He agreed to do that.

After he translated the chapter about the infant, he seemed to come alive. For several weeks he did some babyish things. He clung to his mother and wanted her to hold him. He wanted to wear her rings and he often stroked them on his finger. He wanted special foods. Lena accommodated him.

After a while as he continued translating the book, he left this oral stage and started moving through older stages. But he was still reclusive and still huddling in lots of clothes, even though it was warm.

Lena asked her son to be the translator for the workshop when a visiting trainer came from England. He did; he did it well, and he stayed in his grownup, adult state the entire day. After that day he was able to go out in the sunshine, take off his shirt, and move about more freely.

Lena's joy brought tears and caught my heart as she told me this story. She attributes her son's growth to translating *Self-Esteem: A Family Affair*.

We can think of other reasons Lena's son may have been ready to heal himself, but surely with his use of the book as a catalyst he was able to do some

powerful recycling. More likely, with the support of his mother, he did some powerful self-reparenting. Either way, it's a fascinating story about how one young man used a book about parenting to get what he needed. I thank Lena Soboleva for sharing this story with me and for giving me permission to share it with you.

Dear parents letter

A letter from Mary Paananen, a teacher of *Self-Esteem: A Family Affair and Growing Up Again*, identifying some of the Transactional Analysis theories that underpin those classes.

Dear Parents:

You have asked me about the psychological theory underlying *Self-Esteem: A Family Affair and Growing Up Again, Parenting Ourselves, Parenting Our Children*. To answer you, I want to explain some of what I have learned from the social psychology called Transactional Analysis (TA) and how I have learned to use this theory in parent education classes. I will not explain all of the TA theories, but I will bold the words that refer to specific pieces of TA theory. Many parts of the theory have become common knowledge so many of the bolded words will be familiar to you. Since these classes are more about practice than theory, many of the theories on which the process is based will be practiced, but will not necessarily be identified. If, after you read this letter, you want to know more about TA theory, I recommend that you consult the reading list at the end.

General TA theory

The founder of TA was Eric Berne, M.D., who was head of psychiatry in the 1950's and 60's at several hospitals in the San Francisco area. As he worked with patients, drew upon his broad educational background, and observed life, he invented a theory about living with self and in relationships. This theory focuses on three

questions: Who am I? What am I to do? How do I relate to other people?

TA proposes that, from the beginning of a person's life, she does what is necessary to survive. From the first moment, the **strokes** she receives, the social transactions between the child and those around her, impact her psychological view of herself and others, her **frame of reference**. She reaches for responses from others, especially her family, to give her recognition that she is **Being OK and Doing OK**.

At some point in early life, she will make decisions about herself, not reasoned, intellectual decisions from a developed mind and body, but decisions coming from her whole being. These decisions are strongly influenced by those around her who are responsible for her nurturing and structuring. These decisions become a life plan, a **script** that is outside of her awareness. The healthier the **transactions** between her and others, the healthier the life script can be. **Analyzing these transactions** gives the name to this theory, Transactional Analysis.

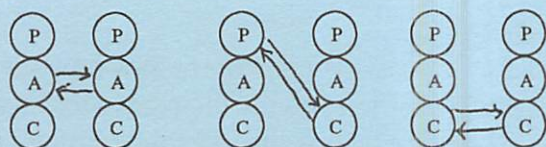
From studying his patients, Berne saw how the transactions during early life impacted--for better or worse--each person's life. He did not think that the negative experiences were fatalistic with no hope for change. He believed that bringing a script into awareness increases the possibility of living beyond negative restrictions of the script. He did not believe the doctor cured the patient; he believed the doctor and patient had to work together so the patient could cure himself. Even people with **winner scripts** can benefit from acting in awareness in the here and now.

Berne developed a theory, based on study and observation, that social transactions reflect the three ego states of **Parent**, the part that contains learned ways of doing things and standards and values; **Adult**, the part with which we assess the current situation and do here and now thinking; and **Child**, the spontaneous and adaptive part that expresses emotions freely and also harbors old joys

and sorrows, often called "inner" child. The healthy person has all three of these ego states available at all times, even though one ego state may dominate at the moment.

We are social beings; our Being and Doing connect constantly with the Being and Doing of others. To support any life decisions about our **not OKness** we **discount** ourselves, others or situations. If we become aware of this, we can be more understanding and less judgmental in our transactions. We can give and receive messages of **I'm OK, You're OK**. We can learn to recognize when someone invites us into **game-playing** and find ways to exchange life supporting strokes without discounting or **redefining** ourselves or others. As parents, we can **nurture** and provide structure to our children that will help them act responsible for self and to others.

Berne created diagrams as tools to understand transactions. Any spoken transaction between two people can be diagrammed showing which one of the three ego states is used by each person:



Some say, "If it can't be diagrammed, it's not TA!"

Group process

Berne also studies **social transactions of groups**. He developed a theory, **group imago**, that shows how the way individuals view their place in a group impacts the functioning of that group. He also showed how the functioning of the group impacts the individual.

A couple of words more about Berne....Until his death in 1970, he worked with colleagues and expanded his study and teaching of TA. The legacy he left made clear that he felt TA will never be finished, that it is an ongoing, growing study of social transactions. And that is what has continued since his death.

Transactional Analysis for parents

In 1978, Jean Illsley Clarke developed a class using TA theory, adult learning theory, and developmental theory to support parents and others who care about children. I use that *Self-Esteem: A Family Affair Leader Guide* and her 1998 leader guide for *Growing Up Again, Parenting Ourselves, Parenting Our Children* in my parent education classes and workshops. Both courses are based on the belief in the OK-OK position, mutual respect, and on recognizing that a child's needs are best met by a parent whose own needs are met.

As we work together, you will recognize many theories from TA: strokes, ego states, discounting, frame of reference, I'm OK-You're OK transactions. Three important words to think about are **Nurture, Structure, and Discounting**. Some of the structure you notice immediately in this room with the posters, chair arrangement, lighting, ventilation. We want to feel comfortable physically. The classes are also designed to meet our need for comfort by providing for the three psychological needs: **stimulus, recognition, and structure**.

Some of the other structures to help us feel comfortable while learning are:

Contracts. All of us--you and I--make contracts so we can have clear understandings about our relationships in the group.

Ground rules. Ground rules are part of the contract. These tell us how to be OK-OK in class. They give us **permission** to learn and grow with **protection**. This is to be a safe place to try new behaviors, change words, consider attitudes, and think about underlying beliefs about parenting. These ground rules honor our worth and give us the opportunity to learn in our own ways. We don't have to be embarrassed about mistakes.

Personal Responsibility. This sets boundaries and helps us honor that each person has unique needs, can be trusted to ask for the support she needs, and will make her own decisions about what she learns.

Everyone has a Right to Pass. People can be in charge of how they learn.

All Beliefs Honored. This includes attitudes and opinions. It affirms each person's validity, ability to think and to decide. It protects us from competition.

Confidentiality. We respect the privacy of others. We will be role-playing new behaviors and people may share some private knowledge or problems to solve.

Mutual Respect. This protects our integrity; avoids hurtful criticism.

Goals. We work together on the goals supporting the belief that that children are valuable and parents are valuable and that children deserve parents whose needs are met.

Learning in an orderly fashion. This course is organized so we move forward by steps, using what we have learned in each successive step. Each person has the right and responsibility to learn to use old skills in new ways.

About the educator

This is a good time to tell you that I am an educator trained in TA, not a therapist. It is inappropriate for us to view this course in any way but as education. My **contract** with you calls for me to act with mutual respect, to work with you Adult to Adult, honoring the Child in you, while we discuss ways and skills to help your Parent.

What can you expect from me? It's my job to know and follow all of the above. I do the same homework you do. I prepare for every class. I trust you to learn and make decisions for yourself.

I offer tools, give you words, help you practice new skills. I am the guide in your discovery of how you want to grow and share, to celebrate and be celebrated in Being and Doing.

The learning experience

The learning experiences of this course give us a chance to decide what parenting skills we want to change and what to keep. As we participate in role-playing and ask for help in a Suggestion Circle or in other ways, we are recognized and respected. By choosing to come to a class that starts on time and ends on time, that has stated goals and objectives, we experience OK-OK ways to use our time. We will see how **developmental theory** and **recycling theories** meet the needs of children and adults. We can practice sincere, meaningful **affirmations** and strokes. We will speak of our needs as parents in the here and now. By practicing the posture, tone, and gestures of each **ego state**--Nurturing and Structuring (Parent), Problem-Solving (Adult), and Spontaneous and Adaptive (Child)--we will learn to identify our own ego states. We will have the opportunity to use our personal power to communicate more effectively. By increasing our own personal awareness and claiming our responsibility in communication, we will increase our **potency**.

Questions

If you have any questions or problems, bring them to class. Remember, we can have as many Suggestion Circles as you need. I'm looking forward to seeing...and hearing...and talking...and learning...and deciding...and celebrating our Being and Doing together!

Sincerely,



7024 33rd Ave NE
Seattle, WA 98115

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Safety and role-playing

Role-playing is a powerful learning tool. We learn more, faster, and retain the learning longer when we involve our bodies than if we only use our eyes and our ears to access learning.

Since anything that is very powerful also carries inherent dangers, it is important to create safety for the individuals doing the role-plays and for the people watching. This is done in many ways.

First, at the start the *purpose* and a one or two line description of the role-play scenario is offered so people can judge whether they want to participate.

Second, the players are always given the *right to pass*. This safety permission is offered at the beginning of the session and repeated just before people volunteer for the role-play.

Third, players are offered the *right to pass*, without explanation, at any time *during the role-play*. Sometimes role-players get in touch with something personal that they choose not to share. Or they might recognize possible later negative fallout from the role-play that the leader had no way of anticipating.

Fourth, if the problem being played was presented by a person in the group, that person may choose to play or to learn by *watching others* play.

Fifth, distance and therefore protection (and usually added learning) is provided by having the person *role-play someone other than self*.

Sixth, distance and therefore safety is created by changing a problem presented to a more *generic problem* or to a similar problem. This is especially important in any group (social group, school, business, agency, church or synagogue) where words and actions used in a role-play could be used against the player later on.



Seventh, *deroling the players* is essential. The players must derole themselves with words: *Please see me as Chris, not as the role I played*. Players also derole each other, perhaps by shaking hands, or by removing role signs from each other: *Bill, thank you for playing this role so I could learn. I see you not as the role you played, but as yourself*.

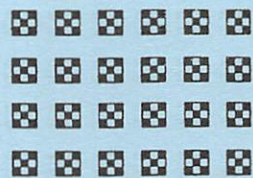
Eighth, *deroling both players and the audience* is essential. *Will the players and audience look at each other and drop the roles of players and onlookers and all see each other as the capable participants that you are, as yourselves?*

Spaces

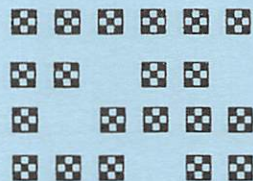
A solitaire card game exercising one's executive function
and ability to think in systems

Spaces is played by a single player. The cards are set up and played as follows.

1. Pick all the **aces, twos, threes, fours, fives and sixes** from a standard deck of cards. This makes a twenty-four card short deck that is used for playing *Spaces*.
2. Shuffle the twenty-four cards well. Then, **deal all the cards face up** in a rectangular pattern, a field of **four horizontal rows by six vertical columns** as shown below.



3. Remove the four sixes from the field of cards, creating four randomly positioned empty spaces in the field (example below). Set the sixes aside. They will not be used again until the cards are reshuffled for the next game of *Spaces*.



4. You are now ready to play. The object of the game is to **sort the cards into four rows of like suit, ascending in order from ace to five**, from left to right, with a space following each five. It is the player's option which suit ends up in which row.



The player wins when the cards are successfully sorted into numerical order. The game is lost when the player becomes stymied and can't sort the cards into their proper order.

5. The rules of play are these:

The player may **pick up any card** in the field and **place (play) it in any empty space** in the field where the following two conditions are satisfied.

- ♦ **An ace may be placed only in an empty space in the aces column.**

The aces column is the first (leftmost) column of the field. It is made up of the first (leftmost) position of each row. Any ace may be played in the aces column of any row. Once an ace is in the aces column, it may be moved up and down the aces column, to an empty space, or switched with another ace within the aces column.

- ♦ **Any card higher than an ace** may be moved to an empty space only when that the space is to the **immediate right of the next lower card of the same suit**. Cards must be placed **in exact numerical order**. Ace is the lowest. Five is the highest.

There is no limit to the number of times a deuce, three, four, or five may be picked up and moved (placed, played).

6. The basic rules mean that:

- Aces must be played in the aces column, and only aces may be placed there.
 - The card to the left of an empty space is the only card that determines what suit, and what card value, may be played into that particular empty space.
 - A deuce must follow (be played to the immediate right of) an ace of the same suit.
 - A three must follow a deuce of the same suit.
 - A four must follow a three of the same suit.
 - A five must follow a four of the same suit.
 - Nothing may be placed in a space following a five.
 - Nothing may be put to the immediate right of an empty space. If two or more spaces are contiguous in a row, a card may only be placed in the leftmost empty space.
 - The game ends when, either the cards become correctly sorted, or the player gets stuck and can make no legal move.
- ♦ In order to win at *Spaces*, the player will need to devise multiple step strategies for maneuvering the cards toward their properly sorted order.
 - ♦ About 15% of the time, the cards are dealt such that the game can't be won.

Ninth, deroling takes *time and care*. It is not enough for the leader to say, *Remember to derole each other*, and move immediately to the next topic.

Careful attention to each of these safety factors can create a safe and supportive situation in which people can gain full benefit from role-plays.

Individual activity

Creating safe role-plays

Goal:

To assess how I, as a leader, provide safety during role-plays.

Preparation:

Copy the article about safety and role-playing. Cut apart the nine *safety provisions*. Or copy each item on a card. Provide additional cards.

Activity:

1. Arrange the nine items in order of importance to you.
2. Add other items that you think help provide safety.
3. Think about the last time you led a role-play and put to one side each safety provision you provided. Celebrate that.
4. Look at each item you did not provide and think about how you could do that the next time you lead.
5. Make any contracts with yourself that will help you remember to be vigorous in the role of safety patrol.

Group activity

Teaching people who lead groups to create safe role-plays

Goal:

To encourage group members to assess the ways each of them provide safety for role-players and to share ideas with each other.

Preparation:

Prepare a set of the nine *Safety Provisions* for each member of the group. Cut up a copy of the article or copy onto cards. Provide extra cards.

Activity:

1. Ask group members to generate a list of negative things that can happen when role-plays are done without adequate safety provisions.
2. Hand a set of *Safety Provisions* to each person.
3. Ask each person to arrange the items in order of importance.
4. Ask people to work in groups of three or four and share their top three items and why they are most important.
5. Hand out extra cards. Ask people to write additional ways to provide safety and share with the whole group.
6. Ask someone to describe a situation that has been offered in a group and that could be role-played.
7. Ask the group to make suggestions as to how the situation could be made more generic, given distance.
8. Ask the group to discuss how creating distance provides safety.
9. Ask someone to lead a simple role-play and use all of the safety provisions that have been identified.
10. Ask the group to go back to the list of negative things that can happen during a role-play and see how many of them were avoided.

The cows of Zurich

As I prepared to attend the International Transactional Analysis conference in Zurich, Switzerland, I pictured a quiet, orderly, rather sober Swiss city with clean streets, buildings in good repair, efficient tram service, perhaps a little stuffy. Imagine my surprise when, in this clean, beautiful, orderly, nonflamboyant city, I saw cows. Cows on the sidewalks, cows on top of the tram station, cows in front of the hotel, cows jumping out of balconies, cows emerging from holes in the ground, cows swinging from the rafters of the train station, cows with angel wings lolling in front of the church, some cows standing, some lying down.

Cows about the size of a small Guernsey, made of some sturdy material like papier-mâché, only stronger.

Were the cows that looked like tigers really tigers masquerading as cows? Some of the cows on the parks and in the streets were just plain colorful. Many of the cows in front of shops signaled what was within. A blue cow covered with white shoes and a white cow

covered with blue shoes grazed in front of (you guessed it) a shoe shop. The cow in front of the bank was covered with money. In front of a men's clothing shop two men hung over a cow, their heads and hands dangling down one side, their legs and feet the other. Watches and clocks decorated the cow in front of the clock shop. Some cows were covered with clouds or flowers, a maze of flowers or just edelweiss or daisies. The dance school cow wore a tutu. There was even a Harley Davidson cow painted silver with a tailpipe attached.

Some of the cows were simply decorated, but still eye-catching. Consider a plain white cow with a bright lime green udder. In front of a book store a cow featuring ocean scenes with a windswept woman on its back. Europa perhaps?

There were cows at many street corners and I soon learned to use them to tell directions. It was easier for me to change trams at the cow with the peace dove than to decipher the German street signs. In some parts of the city the cows were very sparsely placed, but on the fashionable shopping streets

there might be ten to a block. Everyone seemed to be enjoying them. Children sat on them and had their pictures taken. Lovers kissed across them.

The cows were treated with amusement, but obviously with respect. They were in excellent repair, no graffiti.

I asked several people to tell me about the cows and this is what I learned: The city of Zurich does this with



animals to raise money and perhaps as a tourist attraction. It must add a lot of liveliness to the shop life of the city. I was told it was lions the last time. The cows were provided by the city who had artists paint them for free or for 1,000 francs a cow. The cows were given or sold for 4,000 francs a cow to the shop keepers who then decorated them themselves or acquired an artist who painted them for free or for 2,000 francs a cow. At the end of the season the cows are sold from the streets in a blind auction or all moved to a large, empty field where they are sold for 3,000 francs a piece, or are all moved to a large auditorium where they are sold at auction. I have no idea what the real story is; take your pick. But think about how much amusement as well as revenue this provides for a city. I would love to have brought one of these creatures home. I'm imagining what the neighbors would say to my husband if one of these colorful cows took up living space on our lawn.



This home is a **HUMAN SANCTUARY**

In This House

We give non-violent
consequences.

We encourage each other.

Each person is an individual.

Everyone is responsible for
his/her own mess and
success.

Everyone is allowed to feel
good about her/his own
body, and to have a safe
'bubble' of space.

We talk openly about feelings
and problems.

We don't hit or hurt
Anyone.

We don't put each other
down or call each other
names.

No one is unfavorably
compared to someone
else.

No one is 'rescued' from
learning the important
lessons of life (unless they
are in danger of harming
themselves or others).

No one is to be tricked,
forced or trapped into
unwanted sexual touching.

Big problems are never a
'secret' to be swept under
the rug.

Opening activity

To encourage people to think about the power of role-playing

Hand out name tags and ask people to:

- Choose a partner. Make a name tag for him and ask him to tell you about one time he learned something from a role-play.
- Introduce your partner and tell the group what he learned if he is willing for you to share that information.

Closing activity

To encourage people to claim their power of role-playing

At the end of the meeting, briefly review the activities of the meeting.

- Ask several people to tell about one way they will provide safety the next time they lead a role-play.
- Ask for Resentments. Listen to resentments, do not defend or explain.
- Ask for Appreciations.

Leader Guides

The eight session leader guide for use by educators, *Self-Esteem: A Family Affair Leader Guide*, by Jean Illsley Clarke.

The six session Leader Guide for use by educators, *Growing Up Again, Helping Ourselves, Helping Our Children*, by Jean Illsley Clarke.

The ten session Leader Guide for use by mental health professionals in a therapeutic setting, *Growing Up Again Facilitator's Manual: A Course In Being An Affirming Parent To Your Children And Yourself*.

All three are available from Daisy Press, 16535 9th Ave N, Minneapolis, Mn 55447 Phone/fax 612 473-1840.

WE

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Edited by Jean Illsley Clarke

* Ideas and activities or materials to use individually or in support groups. \$17.50 in U.S. per year (6 issues)
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\$27.00 in Australia, (U.S. funds)

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