

Hermes' Web/Hoberman by Jerry Fjerkenstad, MA, LP

This document is designed to assist clinicians in understanding more about Hermes' Web.

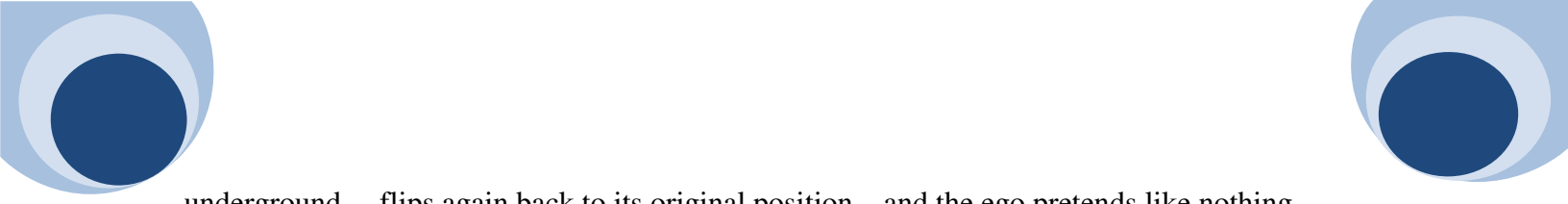
Hermes is from Greek Mythology; he is the messenger. He represents that place in us where everything comes together; he is a meeting of the crossroads. Whether it's for better or for worse is largely up to us. We have the choice to ignore what is inside of us or we can choose to do the work necessary to resolve our internal contradictions; to discover and deal with our hidden wounds/issues. This valuable tool will not replace your current work, rather enhance and help discuss difficult issues and to make the connection with your clients.

The Web was originally designed by Bradford Smith to teach geometry to children and it is essentially the representation of geometric structures. Shape it this way and that and you have a square, a rectangle, a tetrahedron and all sorts of geometric forms. Regardless of the shape, the place in the "center" is known as the core. The core is the place in a geometric form where all the planes intersect. It is a flexible, almost living place that adjusts readily as the shape shifts from one form to another. We all have a core or soul, but we tend to put a barrier between us and our core. How we deal with that barrier is the clue to our emotional intelligence, our integrity and the quality of our relationships with our self, our friends and our community.

This hands-on, colorful communication tool is extremely versatile to a number of issues and concerns. When opened, Hermes' Web can be multidimensional, an endless source of identifying different issues (characters) and needs inside of us. Examples include: the roles that we play, our jobs, our families, our dreams, and our feelings... Begin by asking your client what they think when they first see the web. If the web represents them, what would the different parts represent? What needs are represented by the different colors?

The Web represents the psyche as a whole—all of its parts, acknowledged and otherwise. It was originally designed to teach mathematics to students. The center represents the imaginal center—a place where all things connect. We call this center the core or soul of a person.

The top part of the web (choose one of the arms) signifies the part that we most identify with ourselves- who we think that we are; the part that we polish up and show the rest of the world. This is our ego. The things that we don't like about ourselves are shoved below our barrier (see Barrier below for more information). We dump and bury anything that we don't like about ourselves. We do not expose these weaknesses or issues to the rest of the world. But, when this pressure inside of our core builds up, a flip occurs. (Use the web to represent this- an aspect of their Web takes over temporarily to deal with this pressure) We do and say things that we wouldn't normally do, but had to find a way to let out this pressure. When the need that lies below is fed, gets attention, gets out--- the moment that its needs are met, it goes back



underground--- flips again back to its original position—and the ego pretends like nothing happened. If no one saw what I did, then it must not have happened. The Web can symbolize personal growth, evaluation, recognition of what lies within us. The best thing is its adaptability to each person- every web can represent something different to every person!

This black form shape is called the barrier. It slides down over the top of one of the arms of the Web. It represents the barrier that we construct between our ego (the top of the Web) and our core (the middle of the Web). The thicker the barrier, the less communication there is between our ego and our core. In order for our ego to look good, we shove things beneath the barrier that we don't like about ourselves. We may have another life—a double life—going on beneath our barrier. The barrier is our defense system. When we are feeling too much pressure and must release some of these feelings hidden inside of us, we find ways-- we may use drugs or alcohol to temporarily get through this barrier. It will make us feel temporarily better (during this flip), but often times the ugly characters come out during the “high” or when we are drinking. The next day, we may not remember what we did or said, but still need to pay the consequences of hurt feelings of others or for our actions/behaviors. Some choose to just run away from their problems thinking that they can leave their troubles behind. They think “out of sight; out of mind.”

Adults often have sophisticated and strong barriers. Many adults add a ton of cement on top of their barrier, thinking that if the core is covered up it doesn't exist. But, eventually the hidden issue will surface and have consequences. It may take 10, 20, 30, or even 40 years before it surfaces, but it will, and we need to take action to recognize what lies below, and see things for what they really are. **Compare this to an iceberg- it's what's below the surface of the water that you need to worry about and pay attention to!**


PUTTING THE WEB INTO ACTION

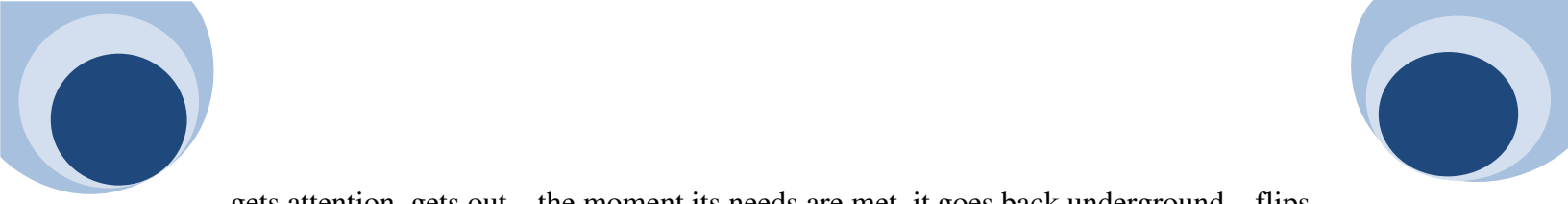
BASIC MANIPULATION SKILLS

1. FIRST, LEARN TO OPEN THE WEB WITH FINESSE, GRABBING A SINGLE PRONG AND OPENING THE WEB WITH A SNAP INTO FULL-BLOOM POSITION.
2. SECOND, LEARN TO SPIN THE WEB. ADJUST THE PRONGS SO THEY'RE AS EVENLY BALANCED AS POSSIBLE. THEN, USING YOUR THUMB AND FIRST TWO FINGERS ON EACH HAND, SPIN THE WEB.

BASIC PRESENTATION COMPONENTS

- a) Present the Web. Explain how it represents the psyche as a whole – all its parts, acknowledged and otherwise.
- b) Explain that the Web was invented to teach mathematics to kids. Show a square, a rectangle, a tetrahedron – that all geometric forms have one thing in common – the place where all the planes and points connect – the core. All the outer parts of a geometric form are fixed points, but the core is alive and remains intact regardless of what shape the form as a whole takes. Parts can shift closer or further away from the center, changing their degree of influence over behavior.
- c) The core could be called the core or soul – the place in a human being where all the different parts connect – for better or worse.
- d) Unfortunately, most human beings don't operate out of their core, or function well on those rare occasions when they do. Most put a barrier between the part we identify with – the ego (I usually choose yellow) and the rest of the psyche (which some call the unconscious and others just consider irrelevant). Use one of the barriers from the kit – slipping it over the top of the Web arm you choose to represent the ego. The barrier helps demonstrate how we can dump or bury whatever things we don't like about ourselves, don't want to deal with, etc., on the other side of the barrier – out of sight, out of mind. The realm of the core or soul becomes a garbage dump and potentially dangerous and toxic because it is un-tended – no responsibility is usually taken for it. The barrier also allows a double-life, hypocrisy, a place to hide real feelings, etc.
- e) We can often see the shape and condition of what's down below the barrier, in the core, when we witness people using excessive amounts of drugs or alcohol. Intoxication softens or eliminates the barrier, making visible or releasing whatever is imprisoned there, regardless of the shape that it is in. Some people are mellower – some get very aggressive. It just depends on what's been stored down there, how raw it is, how long it's been in storage, and what other things have gotten mixed in with it. A person's interests in pornography are also indicative of what is below in their core and its condition.

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- f) There are two basic kinds of people: those centered in their ego and those centered in their core. People can exist on either side of the barrier and both have major problems and some advantages. People centered in the ego are too often oblivious to what goes on in their core. Those centered in their core sometimes lack a stable ego and are often scary, dangerous or impulsive or severely depressed or disturbed. Mental illness is often an immersion in the core by an ego ill-prepared to handle it (a la Silvano Arietti).
- g) Because of the ego and how most of us are trained, our morals are on top and don't reach or trickle down into the core. A person's morality may not hold up under pressure because of this.
- h) We have our chronological age on the ego level and our psychological age in the core. When people drop down into their core, where the most common psychological age is between 1 and 5 years old, we tell them to shape *up* and "act their age, not their shoe size." Our psychological age usually represents a regression behaviorally and emotionally unless we have build a solid bridge between the ego and core. This is commonly known as the Jekyll-Hype phenomena. Chemical dependency and addiction treatments are all about bridging the ego and core, about the ego taking responsibility for managing a core with a low psychological age and a high degree of hunger and desperation.
- i) Successful treatment for addiction, sex offending, and other needs often requires establishing a bridge between the ego and core and perhaps shifting the locus of consciousness from the ego towards the core. This requires several steps:
- one – the top (ego) recognizes the reality of the core (unconscious/pathology).
 - two – the top establishes a bridge or opens a channel between itself and the core.
 - three – the core is sorted out – one figures out what each part needs and starts to manage those needs or find resources capable of making it manageable.
 - four – EQ is developed, EQ representing the degree to which one can enter the realm of the core, cross the barrier, and retain moral and ethical integrity.
 - five – EQ2 is developed, EQ@ representing the degree to which we have erotic intelligence, that the "two brains" have been connected and no longer operate independently of each other or only one at a time.
 - six -- a *manager* is now installed in the restaurant - a standard of behavior is established in the core that applies to all parts.
- j) The barrier has filters built into it that need to be identified – they control what is known/acknowledged/dealt with/remembered. This is similar to Rational-Emotional therapy of Behavioral-Cognitive work – articulating the attitudes and thought patterns that keep one stuck.
- k) Demonstrate the flip – how what is typically kept below, beneath the barrier, will rebel, stage a revolution, take over for a few minutes. That's all it takes. Then what is below gets fed,



gets attention, gets out – the moment its needs are met, it goes back underground – flips again – and the ego then pretends like nothing happened.

- l) the compacted core/knot in the gut/deadness in soul that leads to desperation and acting out, anything to bring in a sense of life/open things up (need Hoberman here)
- m) ego-dystonic nature of offenses leads to truthful lie and ego-bypass operations
- n) the ignored core/gravitational pull/ignorance is bliss/becomes criminalized -- does whatever is necessary to keep itself alive revolution/bloodshed – needs don't die
- o) Ask your clients to identify what needs the various points down below on the Web represent
- p) What about the innate good in human beings? Is that forgotten here? Or, is it just buried and inaccessible – can't be manifested without that archeological dig?

THE HOBERMAN SPHERE

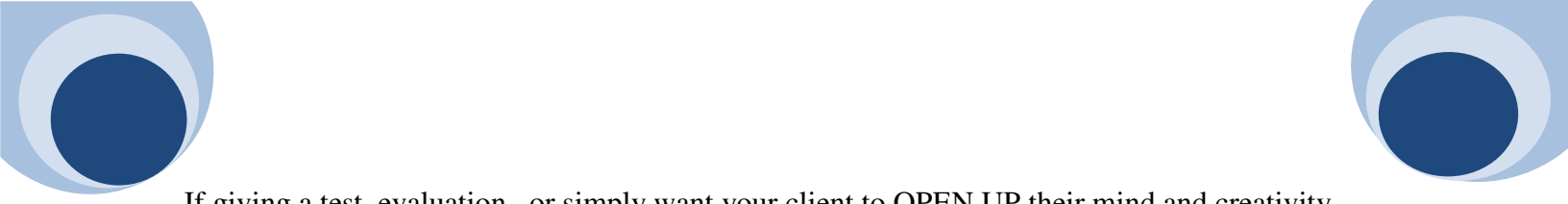
Some miscellaneous ideas for this communication tool

Use to help your clients describe how they're feeling that day- hand them the Hoberman and have them open and close the sphere to represent how they feel that day. If someone is feeling out of control, they might open/close the sphere quickly to represent this "out of control" feeling. Or if they feel so-so, they might just open it slightly. A closed up sphere may represent someone who is closed off to the rest of the world or so confused about how they feel that they just put a barrier around their core and keep themselves closed from everyone and everything.

For large hobermans- hook up the Hoberman to the pulley and string that is included- jus follow the instructions included and hang above your desk or in a busy area of your meeting room. Watch for the amazed responses of your clients and coworkers. Refer to and manipulate the Hoberman on the string during meetings, group discussions, etc. Be sure to follow the directions if you plan on using in a variety of situations. You can also spin the sphere when it's hooked up and still pull the string- watch how the sphere continues to spin and gives you an "out of control and dizzy" feeling.

Use to represent how a person feels trapped inside another person's problems, their own mental illness, their family, their job, their addiction, the world as a whole. Use with the Web to represent these different situations, it easily fits into the Hoberman sphere and the sphere can close with the Web inside of it.

Refer to a person's self-esteem by having the sphere closed and then talk about what makes your client happy- gradually open the sphere. Ask them at what point are they their happiest... now, what types of things bring your client down or close the sphere? Or, have the sphere opened (referring to a good day) and then ask what types of things tend to happen during the day to close the sphere or bring down a person's self-esteem or motivation throughout the day. Look at the patterns, causes, expectations. Set new goals for your client based on this information.



If giving a test, evaluation,, or simply want your client to OPEN UP their mind and creativity, use the sphere to demonstrate this process. Open and close the Hoberman and help them visualize opening up themselves.

Psychological Explanation of the Hoberman Sphere

The Hoberman Sphere is the magnification of the core. All the colorful pieces sticking out hither and thither around the little ball in the center represent all the different things we shove down in the core, push down past the barrier, making the core a dumping ground. They are all mashed together and need sorting out.

On the inside of the closed Hoberman, you see a little ball. This is what we are referring to when we say someone is “hard core.” That hard core is the tight fist some people feel down in their guts. Whatever human-ness and vulnerability is left in them is protected behind that wall. Nothing gets out – nothing gets in. Intimacy is impossible under those conditions. We can also call this emotional, spiritual and psychological constipation or a state of deadness. No human being can tolerate that state very long and will eventually find some means of opening up the hard core. This can be dangerous. On the one hand you get fed, get to breathe: on the other hand, you release whatever is in there, and, since it hasn’t been fed or seen the light of day for a long time, and, was stuff you didn’t like in the first place, the likelihood of it coming out clean, pleasant and polite are minimal at best.

Most people have two positions in their core: open and closed – and nothing in-between. You can show these on the Hoberman – the hard-core closed-ness and the slightly open position. Most people don’t necessarily know what gets them open. Therapy is designed to gradually open the core, to allow you to expand its openness when called-for and to close it to protect yourself, but overall to have some control and flexibility. In marriage/relationship counseling we often hear the complaint from one partner that the other is closed off and they don’t know how to get in. And, when they are open, which is wonderful, they can’t replicate it, they don’t know how it happens, and then they’re closed again and it’s extremely frustrating. Sometimes the closed-out partner just gives up and says it isn’t worth it – there isn’t enough contact to keep the intimacy and relationship going.

The torture chamber: what goes on inside the “hard core” is often the horrible secrets we hide from others – the ways we torture ourselves or our victims. Inside that vault are the acts of anorexia, self-mutilation, self-hatred, sex or drug addiction. Inside that same torture chamber as pulled various victims – sometimes left there for decades. Often, a perpetrator is only in his own torture chamber when he or she is busy torturing. A victim may never leave. Even the preparations for suicide take place in the torture chamber. The trial is held there, the sentence handed down, and the execution carried out – the gun to the head, the poison, the push in front of a speeding truck or car. *Out of sight, out of mind* applies here.

Victims are trapped in core. As noted above, the perpetrator is often only there during the perpetration – as soon as it is over, as soon as the feeding is completed, as soon as the ejaculation, as soon as shame or guilt kicks back in, the perp flees his own core, heads back up to the ego level and pulls the trap door shut/the barrier back into place. The victim isn’t given a warning – the victim is victimized inside the perp’s core. There is no announcement such as: K-

Mart Shoppers – the store is closing in five minutes. No – the sphere just slams shut and the victim is trapped in the perp’s core, and because they are trapped there and the perp immediately disowns it, the victim often feels responsible, attached, like the horror there is theirs.

Victims often feel more responsible than the perpetrator. After the flip, the perp is gone, flees the scene of the crime. The victim remains and often picks up the perp’s ugly shame-ridden and guilty core – as their own. They can’t shake it. It is not reasonable to take that responsibility, but the structure of the experience sets it up – the victim is drawn into the perp’s core and left there after the perp goes back up top to the ego level where the crime doesn’t even exist and the victim is simply a manipulative liar making up stories about something that didn’t happen in a place that doesn’t exist.

The hard core distorts what is locked in there – it comes out hungry, angry, ashamed, etc. Each time what is in the core “acts out” – another layer of shame is added, more force to keep itself shut.

Drugs and drinking are dangerous. Drugs and alcohol allow one’s soul to breathe a little, the opening of the hard core also can release whatever is pent up there. Therapy, on the other hand, is designed to open slowly, so that one can carefully attend to whatever is locked within. Drugs open it up fast and with that momentary freedom comes the release of the prisoners, often far worse or equal to what came over on the Muriel Boat Release from Cuba. That stuff was locked up for a reason – it couldn’t be handled. And now it is free.

How different drugs look on the Hoberman

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| Alcohol | Opens slowly, not very far. Closes slowly, unless one drinks an immense amount. |
| Crack | The biggest problem is what comes out during the open state. Opens quickly and quite far – then, as soon as the drug wears off, slams shut. This drives people crazy – they want to get back to that open state as quickly as possible because they have no other way to feel that alive. |
| PCP | Opens way up and then opens and closes rapidly, over and over. On the web, one jumps from one arms to another – one moment weeping, another laughing like crazy, and on and on. PCP takes the barrier right out and you drop into the core like you’re on an express elevator. Once it’s over, it’s like a kid coming off a wild ride at the carnival: they’re dizzy, perhaps nauseous. Then, 20 minutes later they want to go again because it was so damned intense. Daddy, can I go again?!! |

Used together Hermes’ Web and the Hoberman can be extremely effective tools for communication with client. For the clinician it takes lots of practice to learn to use these tools effectively. Clinicians should listen to the narrated Hermes’ Web PowerPoint and read this handout numerous times. Clinicians should also practice explaining Hermes’ Web and the Hoberman to peers, friends, and family. It is very important to have a lot of practice in explaining Hermes’ Web and the Hoberman before running the modules.