

## PRINCIPLES, CONTENT, AND THE PACKERS

## **Principles, Content, and the Packers**

As evidenced by his letters, Dr. Bowen was always the observer and was always thinking about his observations. Nothing was too insignificant; whether the plane was five minutes late or five minutes early, or what make and year the car in which a fellow passenger departed the airport after arriving in Washington. He was also a fan (and observer) of football and often worked his schedule around attending certain games, and was very appreciative when colleagues arranged tickets for him, e.g., at the Gator Bowl in Florida. He was always looking for important principles as well as enjoying the games. For example, he admired Doug Flutie's (a quarterback for New England Patriots) "ability to see the whole field and all the players on it," though he was only 5'8" tall. He also observed coaches, their principles of coaching, and which ones did better at it (e.g., Vince Lombardi).

Clinicians are inundated in waves of content that add to the emotional heat. The content is real and is often interesting. How does one get beyond it? How can one impact on a perception that focuses on content? How does one's thinking influence perception? What is the relationship between one's theoretical base and the principles one "hears"?

Dr. Bowen's letter of July 1984 to a fellow Greenbay Packer fan in Wisconsin was a response to a tape on the Packers that he had received from him. He uses the tape content to clarify theoretical perceptions, principles, and content.

July 2, 1984

Dear

Your call about the Packer tape was a reminder that something slipped in my last letter. I shall always be super responsible for that copy, locked in the drawer of my desk at the Fam Cntr. I shall not allow another copy, nor permit this one to be shown without my permission. That is why I wanted to keep it OUT of collection.

My total interest in this thing is theoretical. That is why I want to do some kind of a typed statement about theory to go with the pictures. Without it, people automatically assume I have some personal interest in the Packers. When I do the statement, I will send a copy. In my enthusiasm I guess I made a statement that the Packer story should go to a wider audience. That is purely a Packer problem.

Decades ago I became interested in the "differentiation" qualities that enabled certain coaches to pull athletic talents into teams. I think it is mostly intuitive with the coaches. They do not "know" the specific qualities. They either "have it" or "they don't". seemed to have more of the magic than the others. His principles are well hidden in the Packer tape. People get so hooked on content and feelings they miss the principles. Some fine day, when it is possible to get most of the FC faculty together I will do an "in house" run of the Packer tape to see if they pick up principles. If my guess is accurate, they will miss the theoretical principles.

Also in the 1950's, I became interested in the qualities that went into the selection of the original astronauts. That was the reverse side of pro football. It had to do with individual qualities and NASA was shooting blind, doing a lot of conventional tests in the hope they would choose right. They did okay, but the process could be refined better.

Last Thursday night, we did a review of the biography at the 3rd Thurs mtg. Hidden in her little biography are principles that I believed guided her thru the maze of genetic detail to a Nobel prize. As expected, the audience focused on content rather than process. Even my faculty was caught up in the run toward the pile on content. Maybe my expectations are too high. I had hoped the theoretical orientation of the faculty would enable more of them to ferret out principles from the content.

The thing about Green Bay and "coaching" is merely one fragment of theory. Eventually I will do a brief write up to go along with the pictures to let people know my interest was theoretical, and that I am not a PR man for the Packers. The statement should help them focus on process and not content. The Packer tape is loaded with hiddle principle from Green Bay, from Lambeau, and from . I will send a copy of my statement. That should alert faculty to look for principle that goes into content. Sometime after that I will do a showing of the tape to faculty to see if they can ferret out principle. I will let you know what happens. There simply have to be a few people in this world who can see beyond content.

I shall regard the tape as private property, not permit it to be reproduced, and never shown without my personal supervision. If the enthusiasm in my previous letter conveyed something else I am sorry.

Sincerely,  
Murray Bowen, M.D.