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Carlos A. Raimundo, MD, and Melanie Raimundo

## RCompass, a Digital Sociometry. What Would Moreno Think About It?

Celebrating 100 Years of Moreno's Psychodrama and 60 Years of Rojas-Bermu' dez Psychodrama

Carlos A. Raimundo, MD,<sup>1</sup> and Melanie Raimundo<sup>2</sup>

Relationships are the source of our joy and happiness, just like they can be the cause of pain and suffering. Relationships are the most critical capital we could ever have. Relational experiences are concrete and clear, ephemeral, fleeting, and timeless. It is possible to forget an emotion we recently experienced and remember old ones as if they are happening now. When we are happy or content, we may see an event through a rose-colored lens or tragedy in gloomy times. We cannot fully trust our perceptions of relationships; emotions can overshadow them. Moreno developed psychodrama and sociometry in his genius creativity to facilitate a clearer understanding of relational dynamics aimed at relational change. RCompass is a digital application that uses Morenian philosophy and techniques to visualize, map, and clarify how we relate. It provides qualitative and measurable data to make the appropriate steps towards positive change. Mapping and making sense of relationships is pivotal to a better life. Therefore, this article looks at the RCompass app as a digital alternative to relationship mapping, digital sociometry.

**KEYWORDS:** Counselling; coaching; insight; conflict resolution; interpersonal relationships insight; tele; self-help; leadership; management; psychotherapy; role theory; social cognition; sociometry.

This is an interactive article with two sections. First, it briefly describes the basic theory of sociometry, including the concepts of tele, social atom, social mapping or sociograms, and role theory as an introduction to RCompass. Second, it discusses practical and experiential use of the Relationship Compass digital sociometry. RCompass can be linked to the Play of Life app, a digital psychodrama. Play of Life is

<sup>1</sup> Carlos Raimundo is Founder of Active Learning International. Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to the author at Active Learning International, Sydney Australia. E-mail: dr.carlos@relationship.capital.

<sup>2</sup> Melanie Raimundo is Director of Active Learning International. Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to the author at Active Learning International, Sydney, Australia. E-mail: melanie@relationship.capital.

an adjunct application that expands RCompass by depicting relationships in a tridimensional and interactive way, followed by an experiential use of the application.

## RCOMPASS, DIGITAL SOCIOMETRY



As much as relationships are the source of our joy and happiness, they can cause pain and suffering. Yet, relationships are the most critical capital we could ever have. RCompass (Relational Capital Compass) is a digital application geared toward enhancing insight into the relational dynamics of a social system. It provides qualitative and quantitative information to therapists, coaches, and leaders to develop a strategic action plan.

Relationship capital is based on Moreno's sociometry and Rojas-Bermudez's and Clayton's role theory, on which active role theory was developed. RCompass can be used at any stage of the therapeutic or coaching process and as a self-discovery tool about relationships for families, teams, and groups. In corporations, it is used as a human resources tool for team profiling, analysis, effectiveness and leadership alignment, and customer management. The effects of RCompass are expanded by the Play of Life app or other experiential interventions. For example, a relational dynamic shown in a Play of Life stage or a psychodrama session can be analyzed using RCompass to gain a broader picture of the present system. In the same way, the insights gained from the RCompass mapping can be enacted using the Play of Life app or other experiential therapeutic or communicational models.

### RCompass depicts the following:

- the intrinsic dynamics of a social atom, a person's micro social-relational world,
- the "tele," or the emotions mutually felt between people,
- the closeness perceived between people,
- the roles people play,
- their level of influence in the system, and
- other personal qualities that are relevant to relationships and communication.

## SECTION ONE

### Foundations of RCompass

RCompass is a new development of Levy Moreno's (1889–1974) expressive methods of therapy and communication. Moreno is known for his creation of

psychodrama, sociometry, and role-play (Howie, 2012). Howie, citing Hare et al., recognized that Moreno's ideas contributed to movements focused on human potential and action therapies and communication. Eric Berne, the creator of transactional analysis (Berne, 2011), mentioned the "Moreno problem: the fact that nearly all known 'active techniques' were first tried out by Moreno in psychodrama, so it is difficult to come up with an original idea in this regard." In Abraham Maslow's (1968) words, "I would like to add credit where credit is due. Many of the techniques were invented by Dr. Jacob Moreno." The leader of the encounter movement Will Schutz (1971), wrote, "virtually all of the methods that I have proudly compiled or invented, [Moreno] had more or less anticipated, in some cases forty years earlier . . ." (p. 111).

For Howie (2012), Moreno's philosophy was more than a philosophy of life or about nature. "Rather, it is a philosophy about living, which contains a call to action, rather than only contemplation" (p. 7). *RCompass* is the result of Moreno's creative vision, the contribution of professionals worldwide. It is a tool to be explored, analyzed, and evaluated by peers, colleagues, researchers, and end-users who will use and test the application.

The Morenean theories described in this section are tele, social atom, and role theory.

## Tele, Social Atom, and Role Theory

Alton Barbour (1994) began his article on tele, "With the possible exception of role, one would find it difficult to identify a concept more central and more basic to Moreno's psychodrama, sociometry, and group psychotherapy than that of tele." According to Dani Yaniv (2014), "Tele and the social atom are two of the most central concepts in the sociometric theory of Moreno and in the practice of classical psychodrama." Furthermore, Cohen (2020) asserted that "Tele is one of the most elusive and enigmatic concepts in psychodramatic theory."

Tele is, for Moreno, "the process which attracts individuals to one another or which repels them" (Moreno, 1953, p. 213). The term tele derives from the Greek word *sgke*, for distance. "Just as we use the words telephone, television, etc. to express action at a distance, so to express the simplest unit of feeling transmitted from one individual towards another, we use the term tele" (Moreno, 1953, pp. 159, 314). For Yaniv (2014), citing Moreno, "Tele is an abstraction; it has no social existence by itself. It has to be comprehended as a process within a social atom" (Moreno, 1953, p. 317). Yaniv (2014) argued, "Tele, refers to the phenomenon of interpersonal preference, the attractions or repulsions that occur between people or among group members and it is the focus of sociometric measurement" (109).

Tele is a phenomenon that has received considerable attention in the classical psychodrama literature by J. L. and Zerka Moreno (e.g., Moreno, 1953, 1983, 2000), as well as by other writers (e.g., Barbour, 1994; Blake, 1955; Blatner, 1994; Carlson-Sabelli, Sabelli, & Hale, 1994; Cohen, 2020; Dreikurs, 1955;

Giacomucci & Marquit, 2020; Hale, 2009; Kellerman, 1979). However, no one agrees about the definition of tele (Yaniv, 2014, p. 109). Cohen (2020) added, “Although [tele] represents one of the five main therapeutic factors that operate in psychodramatic practice, the lack of clarity and multiple meanings of the concept makes it difficult to use clinically or even as a general therapeutic guideline” (p. 1).

Blatner (2014) noted that there are similar words and phrases socially used that have a similar meaning; he mentioned a song in the 1960s with, “She’s sending me good vibrations,” or the slang word “vibes” and the use of the term “chemistry” as “referring to the mystery of their mutual attraction” (p. 203). He also mentioned rapport, click, fit, connectedness, or resonance. Blatner pointed out that these terms mostly reflect the positive feelings where “tele” discriminates on feelings of “attraction, rejection and indifference.” Barbour (1994) used the expressions “hit it off” or “are in sync” with some people and not with others.

There is a connection between the concept of tele with the relational dynamics of emotional and social intelligence and neuroscience, coinciding with Goleman and Boyatzis’ (2008) concept of “attunement” and empathy. They related attunement to the function of “spindle cells” that serve as our “social guidance system that are contributors to develop a ‘finely attuned leader’ ” and an “advantage for a leader in any context” (Goleman & Boyatzis, 2008, p. 4). It also relates to Lewis’ concept of “limbic resonance” regarding the emotional connection between two people. Despite a lack of agreement in the definition of tele, everyone agrees with Moreno that the tele phenomena is not a unidirectional emotion between two people but a bi-directional mutual experience that begins at birth.

### Tele, Empathy, and Emotional Intelligence

Empathy and the recognition of one’s own emotions are vital components of emotional intelligence. They are also fundamental in “people skills” as recognized by Goleman (2008). According to Goleman (2008), there are five domains of emotional intelligence:

1. knowing one’s emotions, or self-awareness,
2. managing emotions,
3. motivating oneself,
4. recognizing emotions in others, and
5. handling relationships (p. 52).

According to Goleman, empathy plays a crucial role in two of them, namely knowing one’s emotions—or self-awareness—and recognizing emotions in others. For Moreno, empathy is a one-way emotion; it defines one person’s emotions toward another but not its reciprocity, reflecting the human capacity to perceive or imagine how others feel about a relationship (Moreno, 1953, p. 644; Yaniv, 2014, p. 110).

On the other hand, tele represents both “emotional” directions—what each person feels toward the other. While empathy is measured qualitatively in research, tele adds a quantitative dimension, namely sociometry (Hale, 2009; Moreno, 1953). Sociometry measures tele through sociograms, also called role mapping graphic maps or role diagrams. Sociograms visually depict the different emotions people have toward each other in a “social atom” (Hale, 2009). Social atoms are reductions of an extensive social system described later.

## Different Types of Tele

Moreno stated that the experience of tele is a universal natural phenomenon, a way to sense other’s emotions and actions. The process is an emotional flow between people, experienced beyond symbolic language. Tele is articulated as attraction, acceptance, rejection, and indifference (Cohen, 2020; Moreno, 1953). From a neurophysiological view, tele is experienced by humans and mammals as a function of the limbic system (Damasio, 1999, 2010; Lewis, Amini, & Lannon 2001).

## The Development of Tele

Moreno (1987) said that

People are born with a capacity for tele, but it is diffuse and undifferentiated at first. The capacity for accurately assessing how other people might be reacting, whether they might be feeling a similar sense of positive or negative attraction, or even neutrality or indifference, is called telic sensitivity and develops with age. It is weak in children and grows with social awareness. (p. 344)

Rojas-Bermúdez (1975) coincided with Moreno that at birth, “the child does not distinguish between self and others; the baby survives by the caring of the auxiliary-ego, the mother or carer” (p. 54). Through the maturation of the nervous system, he added, the child [begins] to “discriminate between self and no-self or others and [begins] to respond to external ‘social’ stimulus showing attraction or rejection the first social reflex that indicates the emergence of tele” (Rojas-Bermúdez, 1975, p. 55). There is a similarity between the development of tele and spindle cells. According to Goleman and Boyatzis (2008), spindle cells are a key neuronal component of emotional intelligence. They are “our social guidance system” (Goleman & Boyatzis, 2008, p. 4). Spindle cells are not present at birth; instead, they are developed through “postnatal neurogenesis,” and their development is “influenced by environmental factors” (Allman et al., 2010, p. 510). Allman et al. resonated with Moreno, Rojas-Bermúdez, and Yaniv, emphasising the relevance of the type of influences a child receives from birth from the environment. Goleman and Boyatzis (2008) echoed this concept by promoting the relevance of applying emotional and social intelligence, awareness of tele early in life, seeing it as a “positive model of learning and education” (p. 103). Analyzing the social atoms

from birth and through life provides insight into relational dynamics that may explain roles people play and how others are perceived, affecting the lens from which we see one another and ourselves.

Rojas-Bermu' dez said that it is "probably impossible" to alter the tele as it depends on social interactions described by Moreno as psychopathological tele responses. It is the origin of transference, the pathological distortion of tele towards the "other" (Moreno, 1953, p. 85). Early social atom dynamics imprint ways of relating that emerge in later social atoms experiences. Hence, social mapping of a current social atom reveals patterns of behaviors learned or acquired experientially by each person through life. Tracking down different social atoms and the roles played through life would shed light on the present dynamic.

The original dyadic relationship between mother-carer and child sets up a relational pattern. Other relationships are incorporated as the child grows into life (Giacomucci & Marquit, 2020, p. 86). Each relational interaction creates a specific behavioral pattern a person may enact in every social constellation of life if stimulated with a similar pattern (Moreno, 1953, p. 703). Mapping a desired, healthier, and relational dynamic can stimulate spontaneity, an energy or force toward change. At the same time, imagining and dramatically playing new roles fosters creativity able to change a cultural conserve (Moreno, 1953, p. 46). As clients often say at depicting a healthier relational dynamic, "I want that," and they motivate and give the energy to find ways of changing the present system, their social conserve toward living a better life.

### Tele and Social Atom

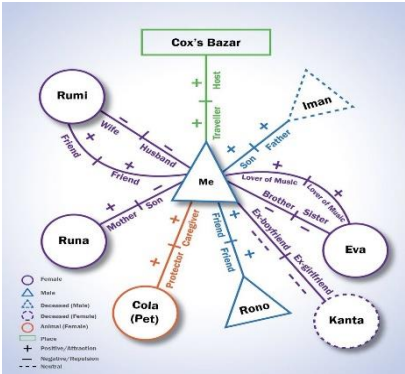
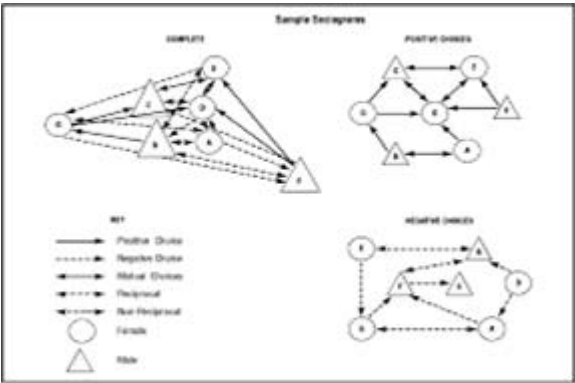
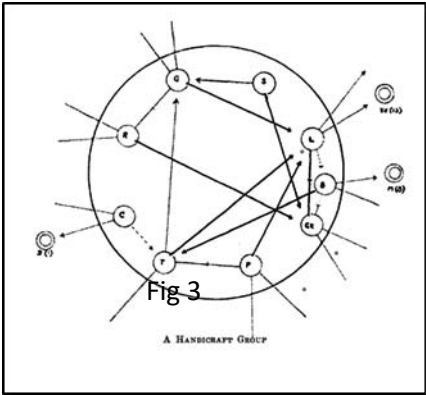
Tele "is an abstraction; it has no social existence by itself. It has to be comprehended as a process within a social atom" (Moreno, 1953, p. 317). The social atom is "the smallest living social unit, itself not further divisible" (Moreno, 1953, p. 291). According to Moreno, "The social atom represents a synthesis of qualitative and quantitative aspects of the socius" (Hale, 2009; Moreno, 1953) and encapsulates "the flow of feelings" (Yaniv, 2014) at play in a system. When depicted in a sociogram, the social atom describes quantitatively the acceptances, rejections, or indifference at play in the system. The concretization of the social atom visually simplifies the immense complexities of social interactions (Yaniv, 2014). It provides families, teams, and leadership with novel relational data to elicit relational insight that could enrich strategic planning and execution to achieve the desired relationships. Tele, like acceptance, rejection, and indifference, is enhanced by role naming, a function of role theory.

Social atoms are not stable; they organically change as a person aims to maintain sociostasis. The change can reinforce or replicate old pathological social or, through spontaneity and creativity, change the cultural conserve.

The social atom can be mapped as a sociogram, "which can then be captured on paper" (Carlson-Sabelli et al., 1994). Sociometric maps were initially described by Hale (2009), Moreno (1953), and Toeman (1948), among others.

Sociometry Map, Sociogram Samples

The following are three samples of social atoms depicted sociometrically. The first two images below are Morenian sociometry maps from *Who Shall Survive* (Moreno, 1953, p. 279). The third image is a contemporary sociometry map from Twitter @BRACUniversity.



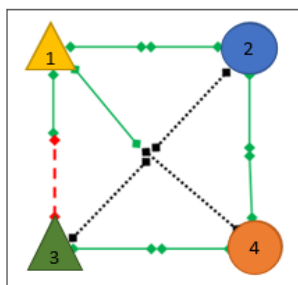


This article does not expand on different types of sociometric mapping. Further study of sociometry theory and mapping can be found in AANZPA (the Australian and Aotearoa New Zealand Psychodrama Association) and ASGPP (American Society of Group Psychotherapy and Psychodrama) journals and the works of Carlson-Sabelli et al. (1994), among others. RCompass moves from paper or computer screens to a digital experience of depicting social maps.

### Mapping Social Atoms

Describing the tele of a social atom reveals the reciprocal emotions in a system, creating any possible combination. The mapping of attraction or acceptance (A) is registered using a straight green line, rejection (A) as a broken red line, and indifference (I) as a dotted black line. The tele between two people, (A) and (B), can be (A) feeling attraction toward (B), and (B) reciprocating with acceptance toward (A). In this case, there is an “A-A” relationship. However, (A) could be feeling acceptance toward (C), but (C) is reciprocating with rejection, creating an “A-R” relationship. (C) and (B) could have mutual tele of indifference “I-I” (graphic below). The relational combination consists of A-A, A-R, A-I, R-R, R-I, and I-I in either direction. A sociogram provides a visual representation and insight into the different nuances of the system by analysing the tele in the system.

This sample social atom reflects the following tele: 3 acceptance – acceptance; 2 indifference – indifference; 1 acceptance – indifference; and one acceptance – rejection. (1) may find it challenging to communicate with (3) and (4) because even though he feels acceptance toward them, they respond with rejection and indifference. One possible way (1) could relate with (3) is long-winded through (2).



Mapping a social atom simplifies and concretizes the system. It provides qualitative information just by looking at it. It also offers quantitative information through the counting of types of relationships existing in a given system. Raimundo proposes a relationship capital index (RCI) and a relationship quality index to manage the data in a sociogram, described later in the RCompass section.

## Role Theory

The role theory described in this article represents the work developed by Moreno (1953) and expanded by Rojas-Bermúdez (1975), Clayton (1994), and Raimundo (2014). Other role theorizations, as presented by Biddle (1986), are outside its scope. Nevertheless, Moreno's role theory enriches the theory and practice of the competencies of emotional intelligence's "awareness and management of one's own emotions" and the "awareness and management of others' emotions" (Cherniss et al., 2006, p. 240).

### The Term *Role*

Biddle (1986) considered role theory as science related to people's behaviors as responses to relational stimulations in specific environments (p. 4). He saw it as a "subfield within anthropology, sociology, or psychology" (p. 10). According to Blatner (2005), Moreno was "one of the pioneers of social role theory" (Blatner, 2005, p. 9). Moreno was different from other academics who evaluated roles as theoretical phenomena because Moreno included a practical application of his theory using a friendly language for psychology. For Moreno (1953), "role is the unit of 'conserver' behavior" (p. 289) or the action a person takes in interaction with others. While describing roles, Moreno differentiated the actions of the roles as "role taking," "role playing," or "role creating."

Moreno used the term *role-taking* as a rigid role, with no possibility of variation, flexibility, adaptation, or freedom (Moreno, 1953, p. 75; Yaniv, 2014). The "taking" of this role lacks creativity. It creates inflexible patterns of behaviors within the social atom, which he called "cultural-conserves," a culture that is rigid and repeats the patterns of behaviour (p. 46). Goleman's description of a "culture and the leadership practices, we couldn't find much flexibility; tolerance for ambiguity, risk-taking, or innovation; or attunement to customers" (Goleman et al., 2013, p. 34) fits into this category, a cultural conserve. The cultural conserve will never change if those parts of that system continue relating through a role-taking dynamic, behaving as robots (Moreno, 1953, p. 68) or zootechnical animals (p. 597). Goleman used a case study related to a leader called John Lauder, whom he described, "Like a slowly boiling frog, Lauder had gradually adjusted to the disappointment, frustration, and even boredom of the practices and policies of a large corporation" (Goleman et al., 2013). Goleman et al. (2013) suggested that to change that culture, John Lauder or any leader would need "self-awareness and empathy, both to monitor their actions and to watch how others react to them" (p. 126). This concept is similar to what neuroscientist Christof Koch called "zombie": "Zombie agents carry out routine missions below the radar screen of consciousness" (Koch, 2012, p. 78). In contrast, role-playing "permits the individual some degree of freedom-and, role-creating-which permits the individual a high degree of freedom" (Koch, 2012, p. 78). According to Moreno, role-playing "may be considered as an experimental procedure, a method of learning to perform roles more adequately" (p. 75). The flexibility of role-taking and the creativity given by role-creating is one of the outcomes aspired by emotional and social intelligence.

RCompass allows the user to describe the roles at play, enabling characterizing each role for further action.

### Rojas-Bermúdez and Role Theory

Rojas-Bermúdez developed a theory of personality based on Moreno's role theory, neuroscience, ethology, philosophy, and psychodynamics called "role scheme" (Rojas-Bermúdez, 1997, p. 439). He categorized role in relation to their level of development: poorly-developed, as an embryonic role, without the ability to confront difficulties or challenges; little developed, gaining some skill and flexibility; and well-developed, assuming role mastery, always in development but able to face difficult challenges. Rojas-Bermúdez (1975) claimed that every role has a "complementary role" to relate to, reinforcing the concept of the dynamic between roles, the tele. This is aligned with the concept that the "I includes the other," also supported by Moreno's *Who Shall Survive* (1953); Martin Buber's "I and Thou" (1958),<sup>3</sup> George Mead's *Mind, Self and Society* (2015), and Emanuel Levinas' *Humanism of the Other* (2003).

In role scheme theory, Rojas-Bermúdez postulated that each role related to a complementary role develops a "link." The link is the "in-between" where the encounter takes place. Complementary social roles can be, for example, doctor–patient, father–daughter, husband–wife, and abuser–victim. When the roles are complementary, it provides clarity and experience to each role at play, and both roles "learn and grow" through the experience. For example, in pathological dynamics, an abuser becomes more skilled in the role, and the receiver builds pathological resilience and acceptance, reinforcing a cultural conserve, what Seligman (1972) called learned helplessness.

However, each role is not independent; they are part of a "role cluster" (p. 437). For example, a female doctor is also a daughter of a father, daughter of a mother, sister, friend, mother of each child, and member of a church. The role cluster of the social role, of being a doctor, is a doctor to patients, doctor–parent, and doctor–nurse. Each one of those clusters can be analyzed as related social atoms. Only by playing the specific complementary role, the roles will grow to create a sense of clarity, control, and possible tranquillity by diminishing anxiety. For example, the doctor may have had a fulfilled day at work playing the "complementary and well developed" roles of doctor–patient and doctor–nurse. However, if she arrives home and continues playing the role of a doctor to her husband or children, there will be confusion, tension, and anxiety as the roles played are not complementary. A person in different social atoms needs to play different roles. Only awareness of the role played could bring a possibility of change, emphasizing emotional intelligence competencies. Describing the roles played in a sociogram provides crucial information about the relational dynamic of a given social atom.

<sup>3</sup> To expand the connection between tele and Buber see: "Between tele relation and I-Thou meeting: The therapeutic value of the psychodramatic concept of tele from a Buberian approach" (Cohen, 2020).

## Roles and Max Clayton

Adam Blatner (1996) noted in *Acting-In*, “Max Clayton (1994) and others in Australia use role theory in an innovative fashion that helps people expand and work with their identities” (p. 159). Max Clayton was a pioneer of psychodrama in Australia and the founder of ANZPA, called now AANZPA, the Australian and Aotearoa New Zealand Psychodrama Association (L. Clayton, 2013). According to Clayton, “Role description is a basic element in the analysis of a role system. Its purpose is to identify a significant aspect of human functioning in a meaningful and enlivening way” (M. Clayton, 1994, p. 11). Clayton added a novel way to describe roles: “[The] first step in making any analysis of a system of roles is identifying individual roles” (p. 12). He guided members of a group to “have a first impression” of each member—for example, pupil, investigator, doubter—and add different qualities found in that person, or adjectives, creating a role definition as, “interested pupil,” “the curious investigator,” or “self-doubt” (M. Clayton, 1994, p. 13). Clayton also categorized roles as adequate, overdeveloped, underdeveloped, or conflicted. He added another category of roles as “progressive,” “fragmenting,” and “conflicted roles” to define the effectiveness of the role related to what is conducive toward “human functioning in a meaningful and enlivening way” (M. Clayton, 1994, p. 12).

## Active Role Theory

Active role theory is the development of role theory based on Moreno, Rojas-Bermúdez, and Clayton (Raimundo, 2002, p. 80). Raimundo’s role theory includes principles from neuroscience following Damasio (2010), Gazzaniga (2012), and Rojas-Bermúdez (1997). It is assumed that our actions and thoughts are based on emotions and create a feedback loop within oneself and between one another. Raimundo also aimed at finding a way to simplify the role naming to demonstrate an “awareness of own emotion and own behaviour” and “awareness of the behaviour and emotions of others,” calling them “active roles” (Raimundo, 2008). Like Clayton’s (1994), active roles are divided into constructive (C), a role that enlivens or animates a person and its relationships. It helps the person and others to grow, e.g., as a better father, friend, or influential leader. Fragmenting (F) roles weaken the person and the relationship with others. An ambivalent (A) role has a constructive and fragmenting element, producing confusion, low effectiveness, and burnout called conflicted by Clayton, Raimundo (2013). Active roles are a combination of a feeling and an action that can be either constructive or fragmenting. An active role with a “constructive feeling and a constructive action” is “constructive,” e.g., “self-assured presenter” (p. 110). When the active roles have a “fragmenting feeling and a fragmenting action,” it becomes a fragmenting role, e.g., “insensitive demander” (p. 96). Alternately, it can be formed by a “feeling or an action that is constructive and the other fragmenting,” e.g., “resentful carer,” “cynical acceptor.” Resentful is fragmenting, and carer is constructive, making this role ambivalent (Raimundo, 2017, p. 5). Fragmented and ambivalent roles are role-taking roles. They are reactive, with low or without spontaneity and creativity;

they lack flexibility or freedom, feeding a cultural conserve (Raimundo, 2017). Active roles can be used as a graphic representation of interpersonal role dynamics, the role cascade (Raimundo, 2002). In the “role cascade,” the parties can trace and map the active roles they played in a given interaction. In relationship capital, Raimundo (2002) described a role cascade between a boss, CEO, Toby Tillick, and Rolf, MD of Australian operations. This role dynamic graphically exemplified the “culture” (cultural conserve) of that “social atom.” Every role played is fragmenting, hence the effectiveness of that relationship (Raimundo, 2002, p. 96).

| Toby Tillick (counter-role) | Rolf (role taken) |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|
| Insensitive demander        | Clumsy justifier  |
| Arrogant tyrant             | Obedient servant  |
| Bullying dictator           | Defeated mule     |

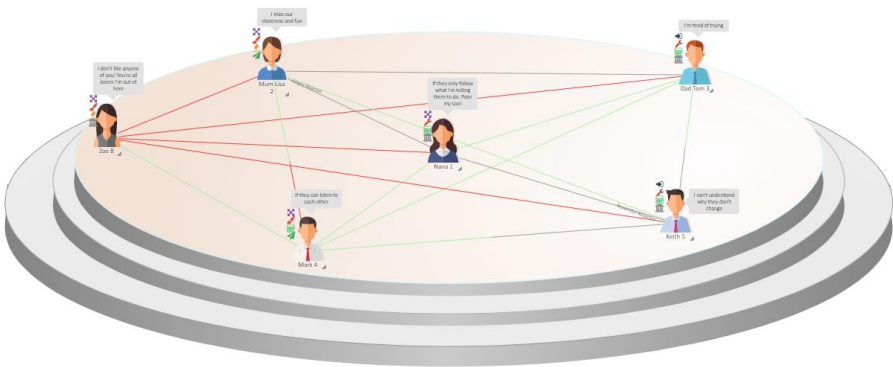
In the case study, Rolf was able to change due to his “awareness of his emotions and behaviours” and the “emotions of behaviours of others.” That insight motivated the energy needed, spontaneity, and ways to learn new roles, creativity to change that dynamic (Raimundo, 2002). The following section describes how RCompass incorporates the concept of the social atom, the interpersonal dynamics in terms of how tele and role naming interact to better manage relational dynamics.

SECTION TWO

RCompass: A Brief Overview

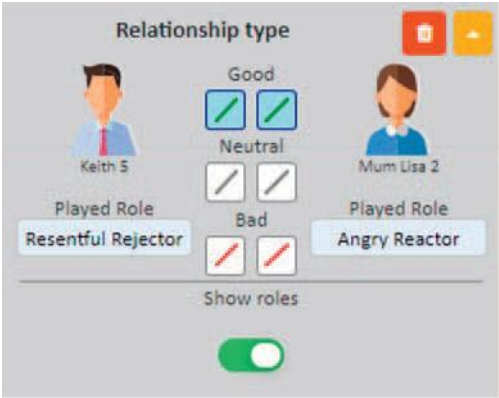
RCompass enables the user to:

- Depict each person in a social atom by choosing a list of icons in an avatar or adding photos.



- Place them at a distance that reveals the emotional closeness between each other.

· Describe the type of relationship between people, the tele, represented as good, bad, or indifferent.

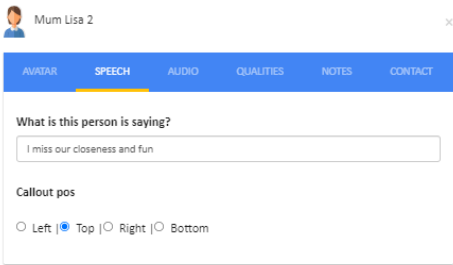


\* GOOD (green) – the desire for closeness, sharing time together, etc. There is trust, acceptance of differences, tolerance (attraction or acceptance for Moreno).

\* BAD (red) – as a reluctance, avoidance, or animosity between those people. There is a lack of trust, animosity, intolerance, fear of making mistakes (rejection for Moreno).

\* Indifferent (gray) – a person may not be the first choice for relationships, but it's tolerable.

Soliloquy: Role Reversal

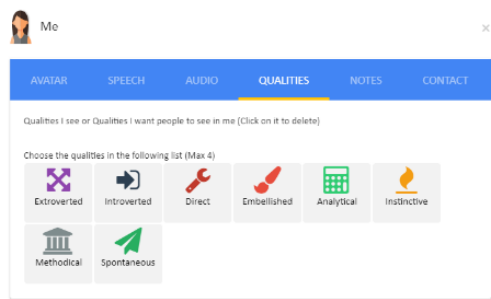


Role reversal is placing oneself in some else’s shoes. It is projecting yourself into the other person’s perspective and perception of the social atom from their place. What are they feeling? What are they thinking? This information can be written or recorded as a voice by clicking on the person, then speech or audio.



Qualities

Some tension between people emerges as a response to cultural, personal preferences, and relational styles differences. Being aware of them helps mutual understanding. Sometimes it’s like speaking a different language.



An introverted person may feel irritated and avoid an extroverted one, or vice versa. A person who likes to embellish a conversation may feel offended by a direct communicator as impolite and rude. An intuitive person may not understand and feel annoyed by the time it takes for an analytical person to make a decision, described as “analysis paralysis.”<sup>4</sup>

A methodical person may feel taken advantage of and resent how a spontaneous person responds to plan-making and deadlines.

Choose qualities by clicking on the person, go to Qualities, and choose from the options.

<sup>4</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Analysis\\_paralysis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Analysis_paralysis); <https://www.psychologytoday.com/au/blog/fixing-families/201904/do-you-have-analysis-paralysis>

## Quantitative Analysis



RCompass shows a qualitative picture of relationships. Every piece of information on the stage is recorded and provides, using algorithms, a quantitative analysis; some of these features are not functional in the Beta version.

RCI measures the distance between people, links, influence, alignment, and other features not fully functional in Beta.

There are other features and applications of RCompass described in [www.rcompass.life](http://www.rcompass.life) not included in this article.

## LET'S PLAY

In this section, you are invited to be a participant and experience the application yourself by describing a personal social atom.

You need to download the app from [www.RCompass.Life](http://www.RCompass.Life) and create a free account.

Note: This is a Beta (testing) version of the app. The professional version has other features for professional, research, and personal use. Your feedback on the functionality of the app is highly appreciated.

## RCompass Process

RCompass is an experiential app and follows an adapted version of the three stages of psychodrama: warm-up, serious play or enactment or dramatization, and share-and-go or sharing (Blatner, 1996; Moreno, 1987).

Set apart no less than 30 min to do the exercise. Find a comfortable and quiet place, have a cuppa if you like, and open the empty scenario.

## Warm-Up

Sit comfortably and breathe in and out a few times. Then, bring to mind a personal social network (social atom) you'd like to explore. What is the context? Family? Social? Work? What is happening or not happening in this network that you'd like to explore?

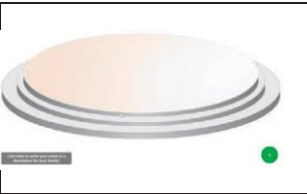
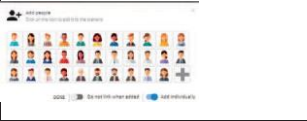
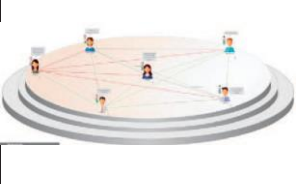
Who are the primary people involved in the system? Make it simple. This app version can add up to 10 relationships, but we recommend not adding more than five to get familiar with the app; you can add others later. What is your desire or motivation in looking at this social network? What is happening in this



social network that attracts your attention? Stay with that in mind and move to the next stage.

Serious Play

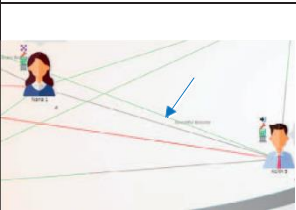
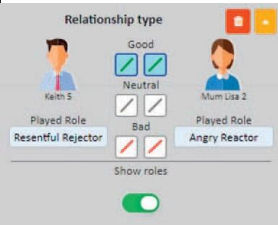
You'll start with yourself.


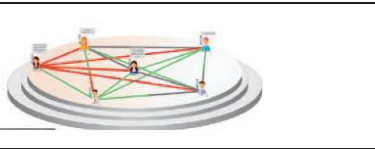
|   |  |
|---|--|
|  | <p>Start with the empty scenario.</p> <p>Click on the blinking GREEN + button and then on the Blue (add people) button.</p>  |
|  | <p>Chose an icon from the avatars for each person you want to represent, "starting with you," it will be named ME</p>  |
|  | <p>Drag each icon into the scenario, starting with you. Click on each icon, one a the time, and place them where you perceive they are regarding emotional closeness with each other. You can change any position at any time.</p> <p>Every person is linked, showing a Good (GREEN) relationship between each person.</p> |

Working on the scenario

The sample scenario on the left is the family system of the MacKay's family, created by the father, Tom.

You can look at the MacKays opening this link:  
<https://rcompass.life/rc/#/share/F3S8iex0RJVGzDZExhAFcKVQJaWTbpI8>

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <br> | <p>In your scenario, click on the link and choose what emotions (tele) each feels towards another: good (attraction), bad (rejection), or neutral (indifference). (see description in previous paragraphs). This is based on your perception.</p> <p>The link shows the mutuality between two people (Tele); any combination is possible.</p> <p>If you doubt between Good and Neutral, choose the latter. Likewise, if you doubt between Neutral and Bad, choose Bad.</p> <p>Remember, this is not measuring love or care for one another. There could be love between people but a great dislike or lack of trust in the relationship.</p> |
|--|--|

|   |   |
|---|---|
|  | <p>Name the scenario and save</p> <p>Click on the dark space below the scenario and give it a title.</p> <p>Click on Scenario A, GREEN box, and write the name of this scenario.</p> <p>To save, click on the SAVE icon on the top of the scenario.</p> <p>You can save the scenario in your computer or in the cloud.</p> <p>See directions.</p> |
|  | <p>Highlight the links</p> <p>Click on the ENLARGE icon to highlight the links for better Stephen of the relational dynamics.</p>   |

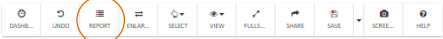
### Exploring

Look at the RCompass graph as a whole. You’re becoming an explorer of your own social scenario. What do you notice? Are you surprised by what you are seeing? For how long have you been experiencing this dynamic? If constructive, have you been celebrating your fruitful relationships?

If fragmented or ambivalent, have you experienced this dynamic in other moments of your life? Where did you learn this role system? What would happen if it doesn’t change? Have you invested time in making your relationships better? What are your hopes and fears in working on these dynamics? Do you have someone who can guide you and be with you through the process?

### Digging Deeper

To reach this information, go to the data view and click on the REPORT icon on the top right angle of the screen.



RCompass uses tele information and other adjunct data to create an RCI. It is a relational average from the quantitative analysis that feeds algorithms to predict behavioural dynamics in the system. A high RCI would indicate that the depicted social atom demonstrates a sense of relational flow, easiness in relationships, low and quick resolution of conflict. A Low RCI would predict a social atom with a higher level of tension and difficult conflict resolution. The RCI considers other factors apart from tele dynamics that could predict a team of a high level of dysfunction but having different qualities that could make the team of high performance, at least for a short time.

Note: As relationships are complex, a social atom with a high level of tension and competition could be, in some circumstances, more productive, but only for a short-term project.

There are systems, in business settings, with a high RCI that result in a sluggish performance. This is due to a confusion between mutual trust and friendship with accountability.



GRIM: The relational energy of the system is low making any achieving of a group task very difficult and also draining. One step forward and two step backwards. Even if goals are achieved there may not be much energy left to enjoy it.

Approach: New strategies and implementations are needed, resulting in significant changes, opposition to change is expected. A thorough situation analysis, (present situation, ideal, gap analysis) and an action plan are needed. External coaching for leader\*/s and the group may be the most appropriate way to realign the system.

High to medium level of coaching intervention.

The term leader/s refers to those with some kind of authority in the system, e.g., parents in a family.

Both indexes are from 5 to 5. How much is your RC quality?

Press on the expanding (arrow) button; you'll see who contributes more to the system.

Scroll down, expand the data, and you'll find the data added in this report.

Press on the person icon again and reflect on what you see; what do you notice?

The index flags different levels of attention depending on the index.

· GREAT: Your relations are satisfactory, but you should analyze the strategies to keep them working. Celebrating every relational achievement adds energy to the system.

ALMOST THERE: The relational energy of the system is high, but some of the dynamics present may need some realignment. The leader/s of the group can realign the system through ongoing coaching. The term leader/s refers to

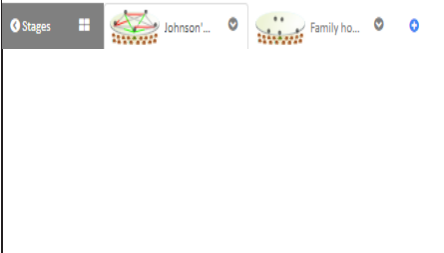

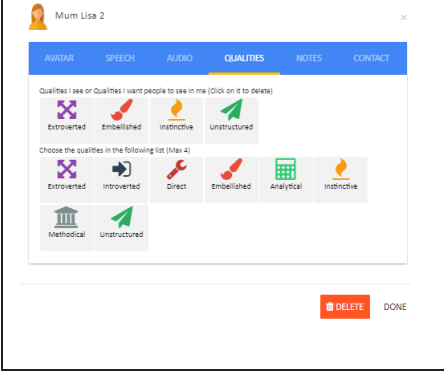
those with some authority in the system, e.g., parents in a family, management in business, or a respected "elder" in social settings.

GRIM: The relational energy of the system is low, making it very difficult to achieve any group task—a "one step forward and two-step backwards" scenario. Even if goals are achieved, there may not be much energy left to enjoy them.

APPROACH: New strategies and implementations are needed, resulting in significant changes. Opposition to change is expected. A thorough situation analysis (present situation, ideal, gap analysis) and an action plan will help the dynamics in the system. External coaching for leader/s and the group may be the most appropriate way to realign the system. A high- to medium-level coaching intervention may be needed. The term leader/s refers to those with some authority in the system, e.g., parents in a family, management in business, a respected "elder" in social settings.

· URGENT: You need to make significant changes and create new strategies. Please seek help.

Dreaming High:  
Imagine How You'd Like These Relationships To Be

|  |   |
|--|---|
|   | <p>Click on Scenario B</p> <p>Then click on the BLUE icon and in the window, click on the arrow down and chose scenario A; you'll have a copy of what you have created, so you don't need to add the people again.</p> <p>You can change the names of the scenarios by clicking on the edit (GREEN) icon.</p> <p>Move each person, one by one, to an ideal scenario. Then, change the links as desired, reflecting on what would be necessary for the system to change towards a healthier dynamic.</p>   |
|   | <p>Click on the group icon to look at the two scenarios side by side.</p> <p>Save the scenario again.</p>   |
|  | <p>Adding more information.</p> <p>Some relationships become difficult due to different ways of perceiving the environment and communication styles, such as being Extroverted or Introverted; Direct or Embellished; Analytical or Instinctive (gut feeling); Methodical or Unstructured.</p> <p>Click on the person, go to qualities and select what is appropriate.</p> <p>This is based on the perception of the user. Therefore, it is an excellent opportunity to ask others what are their communicational preferences.</p> <p>You can add more information to RCompass, writing or recording a soliloquy or role reversal, and the roles people play—not covered in this article.</p> |

Reflecting Looking at Both Scenarios

What do you see? What do you notice? Have you experienced in your life similar relational dynamics? You can click on the plus sign on the right of Scenario B and add other relational systems you experienced in life for further reflection. Unfortunately, we are unable to expand the topic in this article.

## SHARE AND GO

Share and go, or the sharing stage in psychodrama, is the time to start closing up this time of reflection, take notice of what you have discovered, and develop an action plan. Keep in mind your ideal relational dynamics; dwell on that picture. Revisit the scenario at another time and share it with others, if appropriate.

## From Explorer to Therapist or Coach

You have been a pilgrim and an explorer of your social atom. Now, put yourself on the therapist-coach chair and look at your RCompass scenario. If this were your client, what do you observe? What strategic steps would you take?

Which links could be strengthened to implement positive change?

Contact us for more information on how to use RCompass for therapy and supervision.

## Share Scenario: Live and Multiuser

RCompass scenarios, available in the professional app, can be shared between a client and a therapist and family members or team members. The app can also be used simultaneously among members of the social system. The professional subscriptions provide access to a professional community to further develop skills in using RCompass and the Play of Life.

## SUMMARY

RCompass, a social mapping app, provides insight into the relational dynamics of a social system, offering qualitative and quantitative information. It is a way of transforming a dysfunctional relational system into an opportunity. It takes advantage of technology not available before in mapping social dynamics, expanding the power of sociometry. RCompass introduces a novel way of mapping relationships in dealing with the old dilemma of relational conflict. The mapping of a social network, its links, and their relational and communicational styles provides the user with a visual understanding of their relational system. From that, changes can be made toward better relational living. This article demonstrates the use of the app from a practical perspective, skimming over the theories that support the model. The aim is to continue contributing to enrich human relationships towards a better world—to what in Judaism is called *Tikkun Olam*, healing or restoring the world, starting with oneself. One relationship at the time. One social atom at the time.

## LIMITATIONS

This article is primarily a practical paper with limited referencing on the theory behind the model. Therefore, it does not expand on comparative analysis of similar methods and critics on experiential forms of therapy or communication. The websites [www.rcompass.life](http://www.rcompass.life) and [www.playoflife.com](http://www.playoflife.com) expand on the theory with case studies, bibliography, and interactive forums for professional enrichment.

## Recognition



Aboriginal flag



Torres Strait  
Island flag ([links](#))

We pay respect to the Traditional Custodians and the First Peoples of Australia, where RCompass and the Play of Life have been developed and used, and acknowledge their continued connection to their country and culture.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

C. A. Raimundo gives credit to his teacher Jaime G. Rojas-Bermúdez, celebrating 60 years of his contributions to psychodrama and the foundation of the Argentinean Psychodrama Association, and 100 years of psychodrama created by J. L. Moreno. The apps presented in this article have a pivotal foundation on the work of those two innovators. The applications were also inspired by Max Clayton, pioneer of psychodrama and founder of the Australian and New Zealand Psychodrama Association (ANZPA), evolving later into the Aotearoa and Australian Psychodrama Association. Furthermore, the authors recognize New Zealander psychodramatist Peter Parkinson's original work pioneering computational technology for sociometry analysis. On the other side of the world, we acknowledge psychodramatists Tom Treadwell, creator of the Social Network Inventory, Anne Hale for her contributions to sociometry and psychodrama, and authors inspiring contributions to psychodrama sociometry continuing the creative spirit of Moreno. We also acknowledge psychodrama and group therapy associations around the world for having kept the lights on. Furthermore, much gratitude goes to those who have participated in workshops, training, individual and group psychotherapy, experiencing and provided feedback for more than 40 years to develop the Play of Life and RCompass. We recognize the programming and magic skills of Anton Cruz in Cuba and Jeisson Herrera in Colombia.

## The Logos

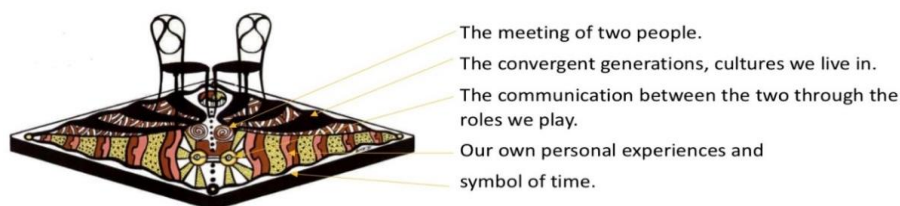


The logo in RCompass depicts the original psychodrama stage at Bacon Institute, honouring Moreno. The chairs recognize Rojas-Bermúdez contribu-

tions to psychodrama. To see more about the chairs, go to <https://www.playoflife.com/en/about-the-chairs/>.

The Active Learning International Logo

Aboriginal artist Bronwyn Bancroft developed the above original design in 1991, and the chairs were added to the original work as a symbol of the Argentinean school of psychodrama.



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