

THE COMPULSION TO MOVE

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I want to talk to you about what is undoubtedly the most puzzling of all the mental mechanisms; not only the most puzzling, but also evidently the one that's least understood. There's not even a word in the English language that gets close to describing the mechanism.

Yet the mechanism is very, very common. It causes considerable stress to every games player, particularly compulsive games players who are highly prone to the mechanism. And under certain circumstances the game loss that it can bring about can ruin a person's life, although at the other end of the spectrum the game loss can be quite trivial. Nevertheless there's a broad spectrum of possible game loss associated with it, so the mechanism is far from trivial.

When I first discovered this mechanism in my own psyche during my research, I started to hunt up my psychology books and general reference books and I could find absolutely no trace of this mechanism. And I was hard put upon to find a title that would describe the mechanism till I remembered that it occurs in the noble game of chess. In chess the mechanism is called *zugzwang* and so we will adopt that title and use the word *zugzwang* to describe this mental mechanism.

The word *Zugzwang* in German describes the mechanism exactly as it occurs in the game of chess and although the translation of the word *Zugzwang* - which means the compulsion to move - is not an exact description of the mental mechanism it's close enough for our purposes so we will call this mental mechanism *zugzwang*. It's as good a name as any and it's better than most.

Zugzwang occurs in chess when any move a player makes, although it's his move and his position is quite sound, is a bad move and will lead to inevitable game loss. However, one of the rules of chess says that the player when it is his turn to move must make a move or he will forfeit the game. So the unfortunate player in *zugzwang* is faced with two losing game options. He either makes a move and loses the game by making a bad move, or he loses the game by breach of the rules of chess. So to celebrate that they call the mechanism *zugzwang*, which means literally the compulsion to move. The player is beaten by the compulsion to move.

Even in the game of chess we see this quality that is reflected in the life game: the player is under no particular threat. Yet suddenly he loses the game, because of this compulsion to move. And similarly in life the player can be jogging along in games play, everything seems to be going well, when suddenly an event occurs, the next moment

immediately he's in zugzwang. He hits a zugzwang situation and immediately goes into game loss. And it can be tremendously puzzling to the player because he just doesn't know what went on, what's happening. He's not under tremendous duress from the opponent. He's not under tremendous duress from the universe, but because of the particular circumstances that occur a game loss is inevitable. And that's the situation he finds himself in; it's a most puzzling situation.

What makes it particularly upsetting for the games player is that he can't really blame anyone for the zugzwang. He doesn't know quite how he got overwhelmed, how he lost the game, because he's under no particular duress from anyone. And it's just because of the particular circumstances he finds himself in that he goes into game loss.

So psychologically the mechanism hangs fire on the time track. Nearly anyone who's been zugzwanged in life, and most people have, will find that the incident will sit there as a great puzzlement. They just don't know how it happened; they don't know quite what happened. The unfortunate thing is that while they don't understand what happened in the incident, the incident contains a 'not know', a 'not be known'. It contains a mystery and while the incident contains a mystery it won't erase; and while the incident won't erase, the To Know goals package won't erase. Can't erase the To Know goals package in the presence of mysteries, you see. So the whole of Level Five¹ can be prevented from completing because of a zugzwang incident sitting on a person's track.

This is why I'm mentioning the mechanism; I have to mention it to you, because you may need this data to get it apart. You may solve it, you may get the incident apart and discover it all for yourself, a person could do this like I discovered the mechanism in my own research, but nevertheless this would be helpful to you, particularly if you'd tried and tried and tried and then despaired. This would then solve it for you, because I do understand the exact anatomy of zugzwang and the solution to zugzwang .

Now without more ado I think the best approach would be to give an immediate example of zugzwang from life.

A wealthy businessman decides that he'd like to engage upon a little tax evasion and so he writes on his tax return form that he's made a large donation to a well known charity, when in fact, of course, he hasn't. He completes the tax return, sends it off to the tax office and thinks no more about it. And a few weeks later he gets telephone call from the charity thanking him very much for his donation and asking him when they can expect a cheque. Now granting only that this businessman regards any unnecessary

expenditure of money to the tax office or to the charity as a game loss, granting that and only granting that, then the man is zugzwang.

Now let's examine this situation. First of all it's quite clear what has happened. He sent his tax return in and because there's such a large amount of money involved on the donation the tax office contacted the charity and asked if it's true that he has made this donation to the charity. The charity upon receiving this information from the tax office said to the tax office, "We'll investigate, hang on, we'll let you know," and have thought to themselves, "Right, well, we can well get a good donation here." So they're very hopeful so that they immediately contact the businessman and work on the assumption that he's made this donation and they just simply want to know when they can expect to get the cheque. See? They're hopeful and the tax office is simply doing their job.

That's how the situation came about, quite clearly. Now when we examine this situation, the businessman isn't under any tremendous duress here, is he? There's no overwhelming force being directed against him, yet his game loss is inevitable. What could he do?

Well the first thing that he could do is pay the charity the amount that he said he would pay them in his tax return. He pays the charity. The charity then reports back to the tax office that they've received the cheque from the businessman and that satisfies the tax office, and so they're happy. And the charity is happy, the tax office is happy but the man has lost the game because he's now paid, in his own mind, an unnecessary expenditure of money to the charity, so he suffered game loss.

So that's one option. The other option he can make is to not pay the charity, but if he doesn't pay the charity, the charity is bound to report back to the tax office that they've received no donation from this businessman in that financial year. Now because of the large amount of money involved on the tax return, the tax office is bound to take some action on this and they will fine the man for forwarding a false tax return. So again, he suffers game loss here; he's now paying out unnecessary money to the tax office.

So if he pays the charity he loses the game and if he doesn't pay the charity then he has to pay the tax office and again he loses the game, so either way, one way or the other he's going to lose the game. So we say he's zugzwang: the game loss is inevitable.

I could give you many more examples of zugzwang but I won't do so because that example is quite sufficient for our purposes and is a good typical example of zugzwang. Not every zugzwang contains an intent on the part of the game player to break the law or do anything

untoward but, nevertheless, that example is quite typical, quite typical of the zugzwang situation.

Now the first thing we must understand about zugzwang situation is that game loss is inevitable. Don't miss that one, game loss in zugzwang is inevitable. The person isn't going to get out of the game loss, it's inevitable. One way or another he's going to lose the game. And it's our goal, our purpose here to discover just what is going on and why this is inevitable.

Well there's a few technical terms and technical things we need to look at and examine. Then we can go ahead and do what we call a zugzwang analysis and you will see when we've completed the analysis the whole picture becomes very, very clear.

So first of all let's take up the first of these technical terms. The first of our technical terms we need to look at is this subject of a losing game option.

A losing game option is any action that the player is free to undertake that he knows will lead to game loss.

So there's two things about the losing game option that are important. One is that there is freedom of choice in it. A person is free to engage upon this action or not to engage upon the action. There is no compulsion. There's a free action. And the other is that consciously, aware, they do know that if they engage upon this action they will lose the game. That's why we call it a losing game option.

Now every postulate that a person operates on in games play can have a number of losing game options. I'll give you an example of this and you'll see what I mean. If a person is operating on the purpose to survive, then a losing game option is to throw themselves off a cliff. They know that if they throw themselves off a cliff they will lose the game; they will not survive.

That's game option *a*, so as we say "Losing game option *a*, throw themselves off a cliff". Losing game option *b*, "to shoot themselves through the heart with a bullet" will cause them to die and to lose the game when they're running on the postulate to survive. So you see that any postulate can have a large number of losing game options. It's not a one to one proposition, not a one to one relationship between a postulate and a losing game option.

The other thing you need to know about the relationship here between a postulate and losing game options is that if the postulate changes the losing game options change. That much is obvious on first principles but I thought I'd better mention it for completeness sake.

Now the next technical thing we need to understand is the concept of a senior encompassing game. I won't give a precise definition of this; I'll simply describe it to you and you'll understand what it is. By its name it's obviously the game the person is playing is surrounded by a larger game.

An example of a senior encompassing game is all the games on this planet are played within the physical laws that govern this universe. So the laws that govern the physical universe are a senior encompassing game to any games that are played on this planet. Another example of a senior encompassing game can be the laws of the land in which you live. You may be playing certain games within the country in which you live but you're playing these within the structure of the laws of the land.

Generally speaking senior encompassing games fall into two types. They're either the laws of the physical universe itself or they're the laws of the land or the laws that you're operating on in the society in which you're living. They may be something as simple as the laws of the game of chess, but they're nevertheless an agreed upon set of laws. So there again they're a part of the society in which you live.

Now zugzwang comes about in games play when a situation arises where the senior encompassing game impinges upon the game of the player and produces a relationship between his losing game options of a particular type. And this is the inner datum of the inner datum about zugzwang.

Let's call any two of the losing games options of a postulate, *a* and *b*. So we have this postulate and any two of the losing game options of this postulate we'll call *a* and *b*. The zugzwang situation occurs when the situation is such that the senior encompassing game impinges upon the game of the player and causes any two of his losing game options to be related in the form² 'if not *a* then *b*'.

I'll give you a formal definition of zugzwang: A player is said to be zugzwang when any two of the losing game options of a postulate, call them *a* and *b*, are brought into the relationship 'if not *a* then *b*' by the impingement of a senior encompassing game. The game loss in zugzwang is inevitable.

Now when we look at that definition, we see why the games loss is inevitable. It's inevitable simply because if the person's losing game options are in the relationship 'if not *a* then *b*', then if a person doesn't embark upon losing game option *a* then he must embark upon losing game option *b* and therefore would lose the game.

So he's in this cleft stick of he either loses the game by adopting losing game option *a* or if he doesn't embark upon game option *a* then

he will embark upon game option b and lose the game. See that? That is the zugzwang mechanism.

Now if you followed the complexity of this through so far you'll see that it's not surprising that the mechanism is very deeply buried and is very little understood. Why do people get so terribly puzzled when they get zugzwanged? They simply do not understand the mechanism. You have to be a bit of a logician, you have to be a bit of a psychologist and you have to be a bit of a mental researcher like me before you could even get close to understanding the mechanism of zugzwang in life.

For those of you who are logically inclined I can give you the logical propositions, the logical postulates of zugzwang. The person is operating on postulate x , shall we say, and postulate x has at least two losing game options, which we will call a and b . There's our background, and zugzwang occurs when the senior encompassing game impinges and brings about this following situation. We have 'if a then not x ,' 'if b then not x ,' 'if not a then b '.

When you examine those three propositions in logic you will find that one of the valid deductions from them is that postulate x is reduced to zero. When those three propositions hold, then $x = 0$. In other words, postulate x cannot maintain; it goes into loss. That's why the game loss is inevitable in zugzwang. Postulate x cannot succeed, it can only fail under those circumstances.

So the point, for the benefit of logicians who may be listening, is that that's the logic of zugzwang and if you write it down on paper and do the necessary piece of logical deduction you'll see that what I say is true.

Now let us apply what we know to what we call the zugzwang analysis. The most difficult part of the analysis is understanding what we're doing, in other words if you've understood this so far the rest is easy.

A zugzwang analysis simply consists of isolating losing game options a and b ; once you've got them it will stand out like a sore thumb that they're in the relationship 'if not a then b .' You'll see then why the game loss was inevitable, so the zugzwang analysis simply boils down to picking up the situation on the track at the point where zugzwang occurred, when you became aware that game loss was inevitable here, and listing your losing game options.

Just list them, there won't be many. Usually there's only two, three, four, half a dozen at the very outside. Most commonly there's just two, call them a and b and you will see in a glance that you're faced with a situation of either adopting a and if you don't adopt a

then you must adopt *b*. But because *b* is a losing game option, game loss is inevitable. And once you've done that you understand the zugzwang. The mystery comes out of the zugzwang. You see how the senior encompassing game has been forced, that peculiar relationship of 'if not *a* then *b*' between the two losing game options in the situation, and then you understand everything about the zugzwang in that situation and it collapses.

You don't really need to know what your postulate was once you start listing your losing game options. The postulates that these losing game options are associated with or connected to will pop into your mind so that you will discover the postulates. There's only one postulate that goes into failure in zugzwang, and it is the failure of that postulate that brings about the game loss. There's not a number of postulates that go into failure in zugzwang, there's just the one.

Now let's apply this analysis to our examples of zugzwang. First we'll apply it to the game of chess; here the application is so trivial that it will fall apart as we touch it. The player's got two losing game options: *a* he makes a move, bearing in mind they're all bad moves, and losing game option *b* is to refuse to make a move.

Well, the senior encompassing game here is the laws of chess, and when he's in the zugzwang situation then he's in a situation where 'if not *a* then *b*' maintains. The laws of chess insist on that. Now that's the senior encompassing game impinging upon the particular game of chess that's being played. In other words he's faced with the situation where if he doesn't make a move then he's refusing to make a move and if he's refusing to make a move he loses the game by default, by violation of the rules of chess.

The postulate that the player is operating on is to not lose the game. The chess player is always happy to either win the game or draw the game, his goal is not to lose it. So that's his postulate and his two losing game options will deny this postulate. Okay, that completes the analysis in the chess game.

Now let's apply the analysis to the businessman and his donations to charity. The postulate I've already given is that the businessman doesn't want to make any unnecessary expenditure of money. That's his postulate. So his losing game option *a* is to pay the charity, and losing game option *b* is to pay the tax office fine.

Now the senior encompassing game here is the laws of the land, the laws of the tax office system which say that under certain circumstances the tax office is bound to check up on what people put on their tax returns. That's a standard part of their operating procedure, to make checks particularly when there's large amounts of money involved.

So that's the laws of the land, and this senior encompassing game impinges upon his game that he's playing and enforces this relationship of 'if not a then b ' between his losing game options and says that if you don't pay the charity then you will pay the tax office fine. And thereby reduces him to zugzwang and inevitable game loss.

And you see how easy it is. Now all the bits are easily explainable. The whole mechanism comes apart when you understand the postulate, the losing game options, the senior encompassing game and this peculiar relationship of 'if not a then b ' that under certain circumstances the senior encompassing game can impose upon the losing game options.

What always puzzles a player about zugzwang is that he makes a postulate which is not in opposition to any postulate in the universe or any law of the society in which he lives, necessarily. He makes this postulate and the next thing he knows is that the law of the universe or the law of the society under certain circumstances steps in and enforces game loss upon him. This is what makes it so terribly, terribly puzzling. He doesn't understand the mechanism of the senior encompassing game and the fact that he's not living in a vacuum. He's living in a society, he's living in a universe and this universe can impinge and can impose upon him and can upset the affairs of mice and men. You see what I'm getting at here? This is what he doesn't grasp.

When the person understands that there is such a thing as a senior encompassing game and that he's got games within games, then he starts to understand the zugzwang mechanism. He just adds to that this subject of the losing game options and that peculiar relationship of 'if not a then b ' that gets imposed upon any two of the losing games options of a postulate, then that's the whole picture.

Now this analysis is sufficient to take apart any zugzwang situation. If you've got an incident on your track when you were zugzwanged, then pick up the incident at the point at which game loss became inevitable. That's the point to address and that's the point where you will most easily find your losing game options and the senior encompassing game. It will all be there in that instant in time where the senior encompassing game imposed itself upon the junior game, you might say, and imposed zugzwang upon it. If you pick the incident up at that exact point, all the bits will be there. They'll just fall into place, bang, bang, bang, bang. The zugzwang will come apart in a flash and you'll understand, possibly for the first time in many years, just how come you lost that particular game.

If a games player understands this mechanism very thoroughly and very well, and is able to change his postulates very quickly - in

other words his postulates are in a fluid state - he can avoid the zugzwang because there's always intimations that it's happening. He's always got some time, if only a few fractions of a second. Sometimes he's got days, weeks, months but he's always got some time in which to change his postulates and avoid the game loss.

In the game of chess it's inevitable. He can't avoid the game loss because the rules of chess are quite inflexible, quite fixed and he abides by those rules.

But let's take the example of the businessman. If at the point where he received that phone call from the charity asking when they can expect to receive a cheque, he changed his mind about this postulate about what he considered game loss regarding the expenditure of money - in other words if he no longer regarded it as a game loss to pay the charity - he can escape the zugzwang; you see? He could simply write out a cheque for the charity and say, "Well, I'm not losing the game when I pay the charity." So everyone would be happy and he would not lose the game, if he could change his mind and adopt that mental attitude. The non compulsive games player could do that. The compulsive games player can't, so he suffers the zugzwang.

So as I said earlier on, the people most likely to suffer zugzwang are the compulsive game players. They're in a state of compulsive games play which fixes their postulates to such an extent that they can't change their postulates at a moment's notice when they have to in a zugzwang situation, so they go into inevitable game loss. So it's the compulsive games player that suffers most zugzwang. The non compulsive games player can avoid it.

Actually it's a very interesting observation upon our society, and how little is understood about life and games play in our society, that this mechanism of zugzwang is not understood. I can assure you that the mechanism is totally not understood in our society. This fact is a total indictment upon our society in terms of how much it understands about life and games play, because the mechanism isn't a difficult one to take apart if you study it and are familiar with a few basics of life and livingness.

Finally, and very, very briefly, there is a connection between the subjects of zugzwang, overwhelm and game strategies. Quite obviously if you're in a frame of mind to do so and you know the losing game options and postulates of your opponent and the senior encompassing game of your opponent it's not difficult to set up a situation which puts your opponent in zugzwang and therefore inevitable game loss. There are a number of game strategies called zugzwang game strategies. They used to be regarded in life as rather fiendish. Nobody really understands them but they can be highly workable by people

who do have some understanding of this mechanism and have an urge to use such game strategies. So be prepared to find a connection between the subject of zugzwang and the subject of game strategies in life and livingness.

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¹ Level Five is the final level of TROM, the mental discipline that Stephens taught.

² Essentially this is a disjunction ab ; 'if not a then b ' simply makes not- a , not- b a null set. It does not make the set a,b null too; if the man in the example was foolish he might end up paying both the charity and the tax office.

In other cases it could be a double bonding, 'if not a then b and if not b then a ', known formally as exclusive disjunction. A person might have to choose between suicide and getting lynched, but they cannot do both.

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