

Lifestyle

# Psychology instructor publishes "Game Plan" for human relations

Laney Fouse  
Editor-in-Chief

Loren Ford's personal accounts about life and growing up as a middle child could fill a book -- in fact they already have.

"In high school there was this counselor who wore this weird green eye shadow. She would sit there and stare at me with these weird blinking eyes. I would think, who is this and where did she come from and why are they sending me here and is she going to help me? I don't recall ever getting down to talking about the stuff that would have made some sort of significant difference to me," recounts Loren Ford, psychology instructor, of the many times he spent in the counselor's office.

This is but one of the many personal accounts of Ford's life he shares with his students, bringing the focus of psychology to a more personal level rather than a detached setting.

"I was the middle kid and much more observant about my family and its dynamics. I was much more questioning of authority -- the one who challenged my dad. [Ford's father was a high school principal.] By the time I started high school, I was 14, wore glasses, had braces and was smart -- none of which was going to make me popular. I didn't want to be [a nerd], so I became the rebel trying to fit in," said Ford.

At some point he wished he could help the kids like himself.

"I got suspended once a semester in high school, but it was always for something different so they could never quite see a pattern. Having gone through sitting in counselors' offices, I wanted to do something for kids like me. I didn't want other kids to have a counselor like mine, sort of the 'Lizard Lady,'" Ford said.

All that questioning of authority helped set the course for his future career as a psychology instructor and counselor.

"I just kept taking these psychology classes, hoping they were going to deal somehow with something that might be useful, in my life to understand me and my family and where we were going," he said.

For the most part, Ford found the classes to be academically interesting, though they seldom had anything to do with what was going on in his life. When he entered graduate school, his encounter with a new clinical psychology program changed all that.

"I was doing more counseling, supervision, and they had a clinic set up on campus where I was actually seeing clients, doing counseling. That was sort of what I had been looking for all along,"

said Ford.

Ford, who's been a full-time instructor at Clackamas since 1984, tells how the process of teaching human relations classes and attending personal-growth seminars helped him decide to write his book *Game Plan*.

"Around 1990 a number of variables came together. I was just at a two-week workshop talking about teaching and learning and education styles. Michael Grinder was the real sort of mentor who was inspirational for me in looking at how can I use what I do and was primarily responsible for helping me believe the book was possible. The whole process of the book was something I always had in the back of my brain," Ford recalls.

His original goal was to write a book just for his human relations class. He was tired of using other books because they did not conform to his class lectures.

"We would use half the chapters. They did not always follow in the same order. I wanted to put a book together that would follow my curriculum," said Ford.

During one term in 1990, he taped his lectures and had them transcribed. He discovered how he talked in class and how he told stories had nothing to do with the written word.

"That was the groundwork that kind of got me going. For my personality and who I am if I sat

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**-Loren Ford  
Psychology Instructor**

down with a piece a paper at my typewriter and had to write a book, I would of had no idea where to go. So it was really a good start on getting this big stack of papers and having a couple hundred pages. It was a matter of 'How do I fix this, change this and rearrange this?' That seemed more doable," Ford said.

Each summer it became his goal to work on the book. The first edition was about 180 pages and, according to Ford, had more typos in it than he cared to admit. Apparently, he combined the chore of learning word processing along with writing his book.

"So my first edition, in interest to the students to keep the cost down, was just a three-ring binder thing shrink-wrapped," Ford said.

The following edition in 1992

was updated to include articles from Jann Mitchell's *Oregonian* column. Ford said he basically used the cut-and-paste method for the spiral-bound edition.

"The next year I got someone on campus to help me out. I realized I needed someone with better computer skills to put things together to make it look less like cut-and-paste. This was the next stage. We put a cover on it and made it more book-like," he said.

Three years passed, and with his courage up, he decided to take the next step in getting his book published. He explains why this turned out to be a good strategy.

"When I sent it out, a lot of book reps said, 'Oh, just give us whatever you got. It's okay. It could just be a rough draft. We want to take it into our publishers' I didn't understand a whole lot about the publishing market. What I quickly figured out was that they get so many of these things that they don't have a whole lot of time or energy to do the imagining of what can we turn this into," Ford said.

He was coming from the position of "here's what I started on. Can we make it a book?" while the reps were thinking it was a finished project. It was no surprise to him when rejections followed.

"That's when I decided I had to make it look like as much as possible what I wanted it to look like so that when somebody got it into their hands, they wouldn't have to do any imagining," said Ford.

Using his own money, he hired computer specialists and a few other people who helped make what had started as lecture material into a real book.

"It was a long process. I tell all kinds of stories in my Psych 142 class about college success

and personal development. It was really expanding my comfort zone -- taking risks, trying to walk the talk. For me to sit in my office from six in the morning to six at night was a bummer," said Ford.

He spoke of the difficulty of trying to stay on track and focused. The process of putting together a book required him to develop the less strong parts of himself.

"I was trying to create a balance for myself. I knew telling the stories in class was one thing, but trying to put them on paper was a whole other ability and task," said Ford on how *Game Plan* came about.

Following the completion of his book, three publishers -- Prentice-Hall, McGraw-Hill and Allen Bacon -- expressed an interest in it. Prentice-Hall won out.

"My editor said they had narrowed it down to three books that they had wanted to publish. Whatever it was that I did, it must have impressed someone, somewhere because I got the prize this time around," Ford said.

The target audience for the original book was the eighteen-to twenty-year-old crowd just entering community college.

Following acceptance by the publisher, Ford was requested to add a few things here and there in the book to expand his audience. After the rewrites, the book finally hit the bookstore shelves in fall, 1996.

"I've been working on this book during the summers for the last five or six years, and I'm really looking forward to this being the first summer of doing nothing," Ford said.

His first indication on how the book is doing will come in March -- when his first royalty check is mailed out. Ford has received

some positive feedback on the book from a Portland Community College instructor.

"I'm real curious, and it's like waiting for Christmas for five years because royalty checks only get sent twice a year -- March and October. I got the contract in 1995, worked on the rewrites in 1996. The book reps didn't actually start trying to sell it until last September. So right now is when the actual orders are starting to come in," said Ford.

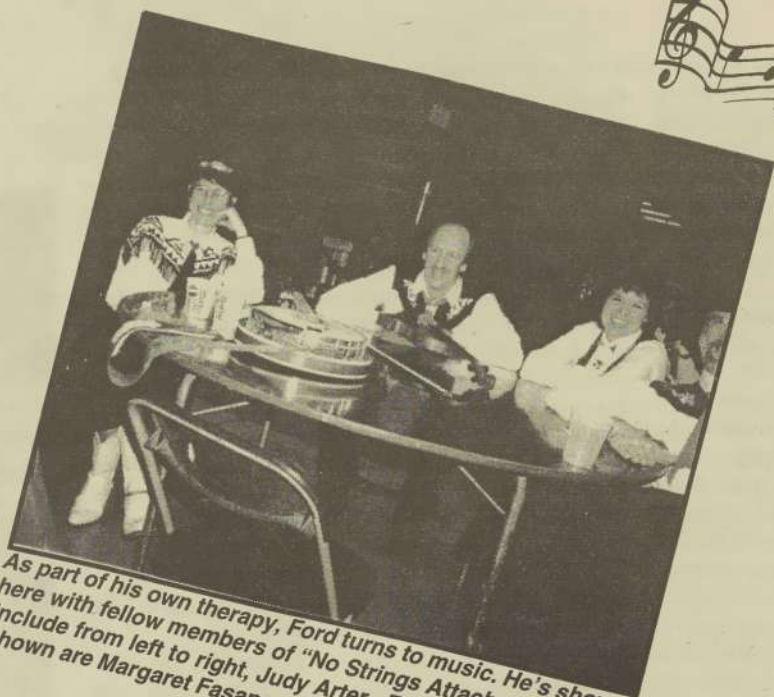
In actuality, little time will be spent sitting around waiting for royalty checks; Ford is a married father of four children. Along with wife Leslie, fifteen-year old daughter Maegann, eight-year son Riley and two-year old twins, Sadie and Evan, reside in a log cabin located on five acres nestled in the woods.

Besides being a community college instructor, Ford also has a private practice as a Licensed Professional Counselor. He teaches a variety of personal development classes, including human relations, college success and introduction to counseling.

So how does this busy instructor relax? Ford says his own form of mental therapy is music. He sings and plays guitar and mandolin with local folk group "No Strings Attached."

It is difficult for him to narrow down the two most important things he hopes to accomplish with his classes and through his book, but Ford offers this:

"With the content and curriculum of my courses, I have the luxury of being able to help students address what is important in their lives. I consider this to be more of the life skills psychology classes. I love teaching the classes because I get to say to the students what I wished someone had said to me 30 years ago."



As part of his own therapy, Ford turns to music. He's shown here with fellow members of "No Strings Attached." Members include from left to right, Judy Arter, Ford, Kathy Boyd; not shown are Margaret Fasano and Dave Arter.