

8-26-2009

## The Presentation of Self Reminded Me of Dale Carnegie's Best Selling How to Win Friends and Influence People

Ralph Turner  
University of California - Los Angeles

Follow this and additional works at: [https://digitalscholarship.unlv.edu/goffman\\_archives](https://digitalscholarship.unlv.edu/goffman_archives)



Part of the [Politics and Social Change Commons](#), and the [Social Psychology and Interaction Commons](#)

---

### Repository Citation

Turner, R. (2009). The Presentation of Self Reminded Me of Dale Carnegie's Best Selling How to Win Friends and Influence People. In Dmitri N. Shalin, *Bios Sociologicus: The Erving Goffman Archives* 1-2. Available at: [https://digitalscholarship.unlv.edu/goffman\\_archives/70](https://digitalscholarship.unlv.edu/goffman_archives/70)

This Correspondence is protected by copyright and/or related rights. It has been brought to you by Digital Scholarship@UNLV with permission from the rights-holder(s). You are free to use this Correspondence in any way that is permitted by the copyright and related rights legislation that applies to your use. For other uses you need to obtain permission from the rights-holder(s) directly, unless additional rights are indicated by a Creative Commons license in the record and/or on the work itself.

This Correspondence has been accepted for inclusion in Bios Sociologicus: The Erving Goffman Archives by an authorized administrator of Digital Scholarship@UNLV. For more information, please contact [digitalscholarship@unlv.edu](mailto:digitalscholarship@unlv.edu).

## Remembering Erving Goffman

**Ralph Turner:**

***The Presentation of Self Reminded Me of Dale Carnegie's Best Selling How to Win Friends and Influence People***

Dr. Ralph Turner, professor emeritus of sociology at the University of California Los Angeles, wrote this memoir for the Erving Goffman Archives and approved posting the present version on the web.

[Posted 08-26-09]

### **August 4**

Hello, Dmitri,

I have read the materials you sent me and given considerable thought to your request. After reading your essay and the three interviews you sent, I realize that my own interaction with Goffman was much too casual and infrequent to permit the kind of understandings and reactions that you are dealing with. I have read and appreciated most of his works, including *The Presentation of Self*, which I read in 1958. My first impression was of an affinity to Dale Carnegie's best selling *How to Win Friends and Influence People*, which I had read in the 1930s. Although the aim of the two books was quite different, both tried to bring to light the subtle nuances of interpersonal encounters. I notice that my copy, published as a monograph by the University of Edinburgh in 1958, has considerable underlining! Others have noted that *The Presentation* inspired a broadened perspective of what could legitimately be called sociological analysis. I was impressed that Goffman regarded his thinking as work in process rather than finished pieces. I remarked to him at one time that I found his concept of role distancing quite useful, and his reply was to the effect that he had already gone far beyond that concept.

I must comment that I tend to be skeptical of attempts to explain how a scholar comes to choose a topic or a point of view when the

subject is not around to rebut or enlarge on the explanations, though I respect the effort that you are making to reach a fair and balanced understand of what Goffman was doing.

I know that this reply is not helpful in what you are doing. But I must say again that my relations with Goffman were never extensive or deeply personal enough to be really useful for your project.

With best wishes, **Ralph**