

Module XIII : Transactional Analysis

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Chapter I

Transactional Analysis

A. **Introduction**

Transactional Analysis (or TA as it is often called) is a model of people and relationships that was developed during the 1960s by Dr. Eric Berne. It is based on two notions: first that we have three parts or 'ego-states' to our personality. The other assumption is that these converse with one another in 'transactions' (hence the name). TA is a very common model used in therapy and there is a great deal written about it.

Transactional Analysis is a social psychology and a method to improve communication. The theory outlines how we have developed and treat ourselves, how we relate and communicate with others, and offers suggestions and interventions which will enable us to change and grow. Transactional Analysis is underpinned by the philosophy that:

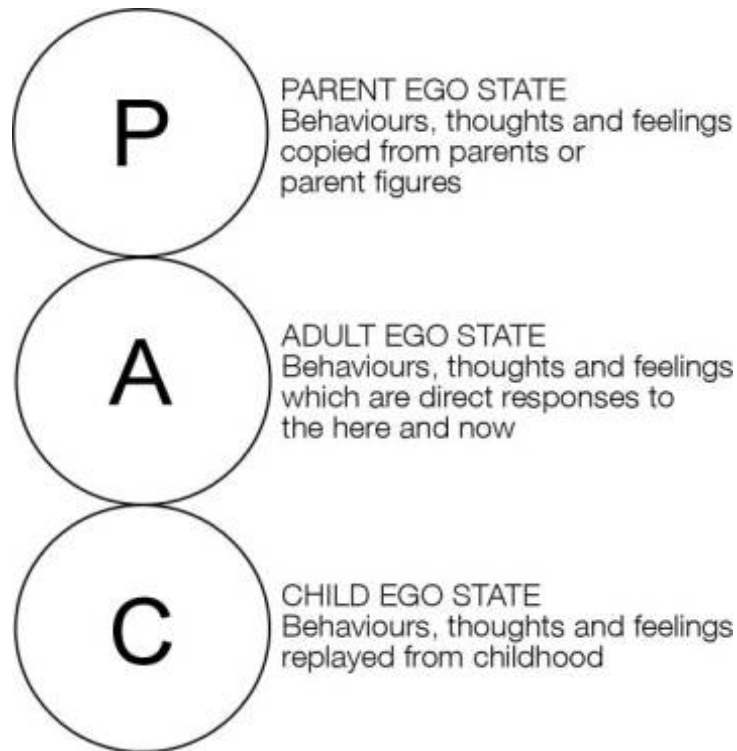
- people can change
- we all have a right to be in the world and be accepted

There are some key concepts in Transactional Analysis which are outlined here.

B. **Transactional analysis - ego states**

Berne devised the concept of ego states to help explain how we are made up, and how we relate to others. These are drawn as three stacked circles and they are one of the building blocks of Transactional Analysis. They categorize the ways we think, feel and behave and are called Parent, Adult, and Child. Each ego state is given a capital letter to denote the difference between actual parents, adults and children.

We each have internal models of parents, children and also adults, and we play these roles with one another in our relationships. We even do it with ourselves, in our internal conversations.



Parent ego state

This is a set of feelings, thinking and behaviour that we have copied from our parents and significant others.

As we grow up we take in ideas, beliefs, feelings and behaviours from our parents and caretakers. If we live in an extended family then there are more people to learn and take in from. When we do this, it is called interjecting and it is just as if we take in the whole of the care giver. For example, we may notice that we are saying things just as our father, mother, grandmother may have done, even though, consciously, we don't want to. We do this as we have lived with this person so long that we automatically reproduce certain things that were said to us, or treat others as we might have been treated.

There are two forms of Parent we can play.

The *Nurturing Parent* is caring and concerned and often may appear as a mother-figure (though men can play it too). They seek to keep the Child safe and offer unconditional love, calming them when they are troubled.

The *Controlling (or Critical) Parent*, on the other hand, tries to make the Child do as the parent wants them to do, perhaps transferring values or beliefs or helping the Child to understand and live in society. They may also have negative intent, using the Child as a whipping-boy or worse.

Adult ego state

The Adult ego state is about direct responses to the here and now. We deal with things that are going on today in ways that are not unhealthily influenced by our past.

The Adult ego state is about being spontaneous and aware with the capacity for intimacy. When in our Adult, we are able to see people as they are, rather than what we project onto them. We ask for information rather than stay scared and rather than make assumptions. Taking the best from the past and using it appropriately in the present is an integration of the positive aspects of both our Parent and Child ego states. So this can be called the Integrating Adult. Integrating means that we are constantly updating ourselves through our every day experiences and using this to inform us.

In this structural model, the Integrating Adult ego state circle is placed in the middle to show how it needs to orchestrate between the Parent and the Child ego states. For example, the internal Parent ego state may beat up on the internal Child, saying "You are no good, look at what you did wrong again, you are useless". The Child may then respond with "I am no good, look how useless I am, I never get anything right". Many people hardly hear this kind of internal dialogue as it goes on so much they might just believe life is this way. An effective Integrating Adult ego state can intervene between the Parent and Child ego states. This might be done by stating that this kind of parenting is not helpful and asking if it is prepared to learn another way. Alternatively, the Integrating Adult ego state can just stop any negative dialogue and decide to develop another positive

Parent ego state perhaps taken in from other people they have met over the years.

The Adult in us is the 'grown up' rational person who talks reasonably and assertively, neither trying to control nor reacting. The Adult is comfortable with themselves and is, for many of us, our 'ideal self'.

Child ego state

The Child ego state is a set of behaviours, thoughts and feelings which are replayed from our own childhood.

Perhaps the boss calls us into his or her office, we may immediately get a churning in our stomach and wonder what we have done wrong. If this were explored we might remember the time the head teacher called us in to tell us off. Of course, not everything in the Child ego state is negative. We might go into someone's house and smell a lovely smell and remember our grandmother's house when we were little, and all the same warm feelings we had at six year's of age may come flooding back.

Both the Parent and Child ego states are constantly being updated. For example, we may meet someone who gives us the permission we needed as a child, and did not get, to be fun and joyous. We may well use that person in our imagination when we are stressed to counteract our old ways of thinking that we must work longer and longer hours to keep up with everything. We might ask ourselves "I wonder what X would say now". Then on hearing the new permissions to relax and take some time out, do just that and then return to the work renewed and ready for the challenge. Subsequently, rather than beating up on ourselves for what we did or did not do, what tends to happen is we automatically start to give ourselves new permissions and take care of ourselves.

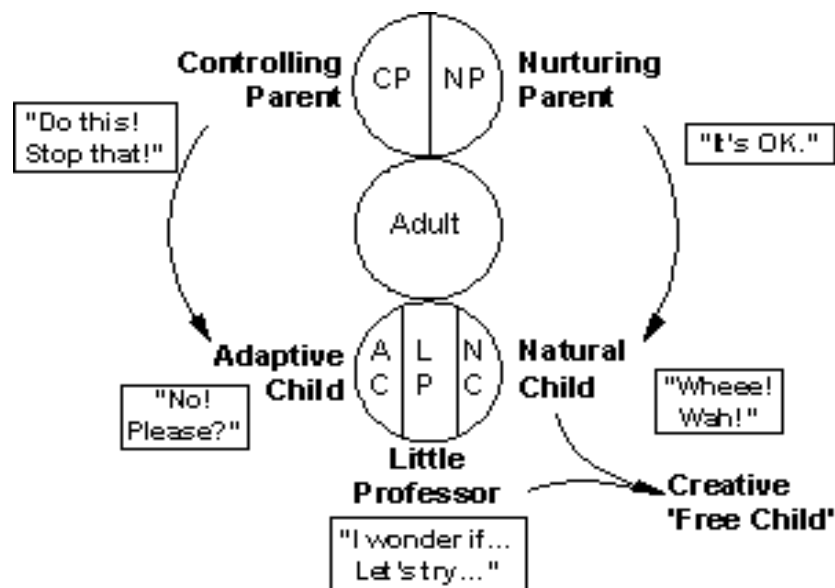
Alternatively, we might have had a traumatic experience yesterday which goes into the Child ego state as an archaic memory that hampers our growth. Positive experiences will also go into the Child ego state as archaic memories. The positive experiences can then be drawn on to remind us that positive things do happen.

There are three types of Child we can play.

The *Natural Child* is largely un-self-aware and is characterized by the non-speech noises they make (yahoo, etc.). They like playing and are open and vulnerable.

The cutely-named *Little Professor* is the curious and exploring Child who is always trying out new stuff (often much to their Controlling Parent's annoyance). Together with the Natural Child they make up the Free Child.

The *Adaptive Child* reacts to the world around them, either changing themselves to fit in or rebelling against the forces they feel.

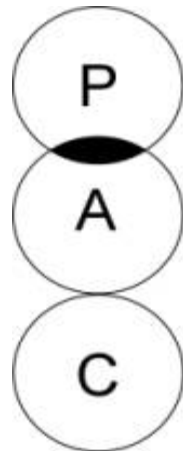


The process of analyzing personality in terms of ego states is called structural analysis. It is important to remember that ego states do not have an existence of their own, they are concepts to enable understanding. Therefore it is important to say "I want some fun" rather than "My Child wants some fun". We may be in our Child ego state when we say this, but saying "I" reminds us to take responsibility for our actions.

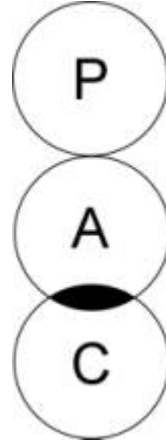
C. Contamination of the ego states

The word contamination for many conjures up the idea of disease. For instance, we tend to use the word for when bacteria has gone into milk. Well, this is similar to the case with the contaminated Integrating Adult ego state. This occurs when we talk as if something is a fact or a reality when really this is a belief. Racism is an example of this. The Integrating Adult ego state is contaminated in this case by the Parent ego state. If we are white we might have lived with parents or significant others who said such things as "Black people take our jobs". Growing up it is likely, that having no real experience to go by, we believed this. We might also have been told that Black people are aggressive. In our Child ego state may well lodge some scared feelings about Black people and in this ego state we may start to believe "All Black people are scary". This would mean that there would be a double contamination of the Integrating Adult ego state. However, we would think that such statements were facts rather than beliefs and when this happens we say that this is Integrating Adult ego synchronic. That is, they fit with the Integrating Adult ego state and only those people outside of our situation and sometimes outside of our peer group or culture can see that, objectively, such beliefs are just that and therefore they can be changed.

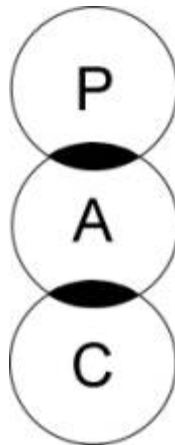
Parent contamination



Child contamination

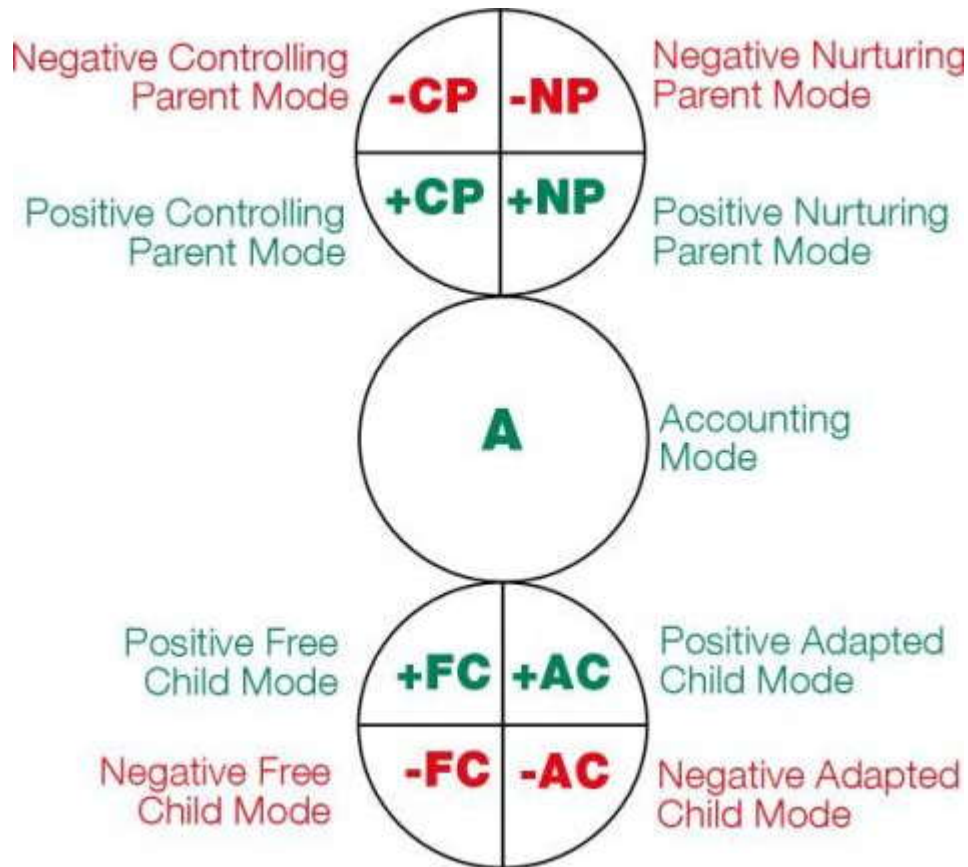


Double contamination (Parent and Child)



D. Transactional analysis - the descriptive model

This model shows how we function or behave with others. The model used here is divided up into nine.



Ineffective modes

Negative Controlling Parent - communicates a "You're not OK" message, and is punitive.

Negative Nurturing Parent - communicates a "You're not OK" message. When in this mode the person will often do things for others which they are capable of doing for themselves. When in this mode the person is engulfing and overprotective.

Negative Adapted Child - expresses an "I'm not OK" message. When in this mode the person over-adapts to others and tends to experience such emotions as depression, unrealistic fear and anxiety.

Negative Free Child - in this mode the person runs wild with no restrictions or boundaries. In this mode they express a "You're not OK" message.

Effective modes

Positive Nurturing Parent - communicates the message "You're OK". When in this mode the person is caring and affirming.

Positive Controlling Parent - communicates the message "You're OK". This is the boundary setting mode, offering constructive criticism, whilst being caring but firm.

Positive Adapted Child - communicates an "I'm OK" message. From this mode we learn the rules to help us live with others.

Positive Free Child - communicates an "I'm OK" message. This is the creative, fun loving, curious and energetic mode.

Accounting mode - communicates "We're OK" messages. The Adult is able to assess reality in the here and now. When the Accounting mode is in the executive position it is possible to choose which of the other effective modes to go into, dependent on the situation. This is then called Accounting Mode. When using the descriptive behavioural model the term Accounting Mode helps to differentiate it from the structural model where it is referred to as Adult. When stable in this Accounting Mode we are taking account of the present context and situation and deciding the most appropriate mode to come from. We are then able to respond appropriately rather than flipping into archaic or historic ways of being, thinking and behaving which are likely to be inappropriate and unhelpful.

E. Kinds of transactions

Reciprocal or Complementary Transactions

A simple, reciprocal transaction occurs when both partners are addressing the ego state the other is in. These are also called complementary transactions.

Example 1

A: "Have you been able to write the report?" (Adult to Adult)

B: "Yes - I'm about to email it to you." (Adult to Adult)

Example 2

A: "Would you like to come and watch a film with me?" (Child to Child)

B: "I'd love to - what shall we go and see?" (Child to Child)

Example 3

A: "Is your room tidy yet?" (Parent to Child)

B: "Will you stop hassling me? I'll do it eventually!" (Child to Parent)

Communication like this can continue indefinitely. (Clearly it will stop at some stage - but this psychologically balanced exchanged of strokes can continue for some time).

Crossed Transactions

Communication failures are typically caused by a 'crossed transaction' where partners address ego states other than that their partner is in. Consider the above examples jumbled up a bit.

Example 1a:

A: "Have you been able to write that report?" (Adult to Adult)

B: "Will you stop hassling me? I'll do it eventually!" (Child to Parent)

is a crossed transaction likely to produce problems in the workplace. "A" may respond with a Parent to Child transaction. For instance:

A: "If you don't change your attitude you'll get fired"

Example 2a:

A: "Is your room tidy yet?" (Parent to Child)

B: "I'm just going to do it, actually." (Adult to Adult)

is a more positive crossed transaction. However there is the risk that "A" will feel aggrieved that "B" is acting responsibly and not playing his role, and the conversation will develop into:

A: "I can never trust you to do things!" (Parent to Child)

B: "Why don't you believe anything I say?" (Child to Parent)

which can continue indefinitely.

Duplex or Covert transactions

Another class of transaction is the 'duplex' or 'covert' transactions, where the explicit social conversation occurs in parallel with an implicit psychological transaction. For instance,

A: "Would you like to come and see the barn?"

B: "I've loved barns ever since I was a little girl."

Social level adult-to-adult; psychological level child-to-child flirtation.

F. Transactional analysis – diagnosis

It is helpful to be able to assess or diagnose which ego state in the structural model, or which mode in the descriptive model, somebody is in. In this way we can respond appropriately as well as ensure which mode we are addressing.

However, when we work with other staff or are relating with young people, we are responding on the behavioural level. It is not always possible, or appropriate, to be undertaking more in-depth types of diagnosis. I have outlined them here through so that an understanding of the complexity of the process can be achieved.

Behavioural diagnosis

Words, tone, tempo of speech, expressions, postures, gestures, breathing, and muscle tone provide clues for diagnosing ego states.

Parent mode words typically contain value judgments, Adult words are clear and definable, and Free Child mode words are direct and

spontaneous. For example, a person in Adapted Child mode may cry silently, whereas when in Free Child mode we are likely to make a lot of noise. “You” or “one” usually comes from Parent. This can switch even mid-sentence. If we are leaning forward it is likely we are in the posture of the Parent mode, whereas if we are in Adult mode we tend to be erect.

These are indicators not guarantees. Assessment needs to be supported by other methods of diagnosis.

Social diagnosis

Observation of the kinds of transactions a person is having with others. For example, if eliciting a response from someone’s caretaking Parent it is likely that the stimulus is coming from Child, though not necessarily the Adapted Child mode. Our own responses to someone will often be a way of assessing which ego state or mode they are coming from.

Historical diagnosis

The person’s past also provides important information. If, as a child we had feelings similar to those we are experiencing now, it is likely we are in Child ego state. If our mother or father behaved or talked in the same way that we are behaving or talking now then we are probably in a Parent ego state.

Phenomenological diagnosis

This occurs when we re-experience the past instead of just remembering it. This means that diagnosis is undertaken by self-examination. This is sometimes accurate and sometimes very inaccurate as the Child ego state may be afraid to allow our Adult to know what is going on.

G. Transactional analysis - strokes

In Transactional Analysis we call compliments and general ways of giving recognition strokes. This name came from research which indicated that babies require touching in order to survive and grow. It apparently makes no difference whether the touching induces pain or

pleasure - it is still important. On the whole we prefer to receive negative strokes than no strokes at all, at least that way we know we exist and others know we exist.

We all have particular strokes we will accept and those we will reject. For example, if we have always been told we are clever, and our brother is creative, then we are likely to accept strokes for being clever, but not for being creative. From this frame of reference only one person in the family can be the creative one and so on.

Stroking can be physical, verbal or nonverbal. It is likely that the great variety of stroke needs and styles present in the world results from *differences in wealth, cultural mores, and methods of parenting.*

The stroke economy

Claude Steiner suggests that, as children, we are all indoctrinated by our parents with five restrictive rules about stroking.

- don't give strokes when we have them to give
- don't ask for strokes when we need them
- don't accept strokes if we want them
- don't reject strokes when we don't want them
- don't give ourselves strokes

Together these five rules are the basis of what Steiner calls the stroke economy. By training children to obey these rules, says Steiner, parents ensure that "... a situation in which strokes could be available in a limitless supply is transformed into a situation in which the supply is low and the price parents can extract for them is high."

We therefore need to change the restrictive rules to unrestrictive ones:

- give strokes when we have them to give
- ask for strokes when we want them
- accept strokes if we want them
- reject manipulative strokes
- give ourselves positive strokes

Strokes can be positive or negative:

- A) "I like you"
- B) "I don't like you"

Strokes can be unconditional or conditional.

An unconditional stroke is a stroke for being whereas a conditional stroke is a stroke for doing. For instance:

"I like you" - unconditional

"I like you when you smile" - conditional

As negative strokes these might be:

"I don't like you" - negative unconditional

"I don't like you when you're sarcastic" - negative conditional

People often have a stroke filter. They only let in strokes which they think they are allowed to let in. For instance they allow themselves to receive strokes for being clever and keep out strokes for being good looking. One way to think about this to consider being out in the rain. The rain is the strokes that are available to us, both positive and negative. There is a hole in the umbrella and some of the strokes go through and we save them in a bucket to enjoy in lean times. Conversely we might use them negatively to reinforce the negative strokes we give to ourselves. Of course, some just bounce off the umbrella and we might not accept the good strokes that are coming our way. Some might come in but fall straight onto the floor.

H. Transactional analysis - life positions

Life positions are basic beliefs about self and others, which are used to justify decisions and behaviour.

When we are conceived we are hopefully at peace, waiting to emerge into the world once we have grown sufficiently to be able to survive in the outside of the womb. If nothing untoward happens we will

emerge contented and relaxed. In this case we are likely to perceive the world from the perspective of I am OK and You are OK.

However, perhaps our mother had some traumatic experiences, or the birth was difficult or even life threatening. This experience is likely to have an effect on the way we experience the world, even at the somatic level. In which case we might emerge sensing that life is scary and might, for example, go into "I am not OK and You are not OK either".

Let's take it that the pregnancy went fine, and the birth was easy enough. What then? Well life experiences might reinforce our initial somatic level life position, or contradict it. If we were treated punitively, talked down to, and not held, we may begin to believe "I am not OK and You are OK". This might be the only sense we can make of our experiences.

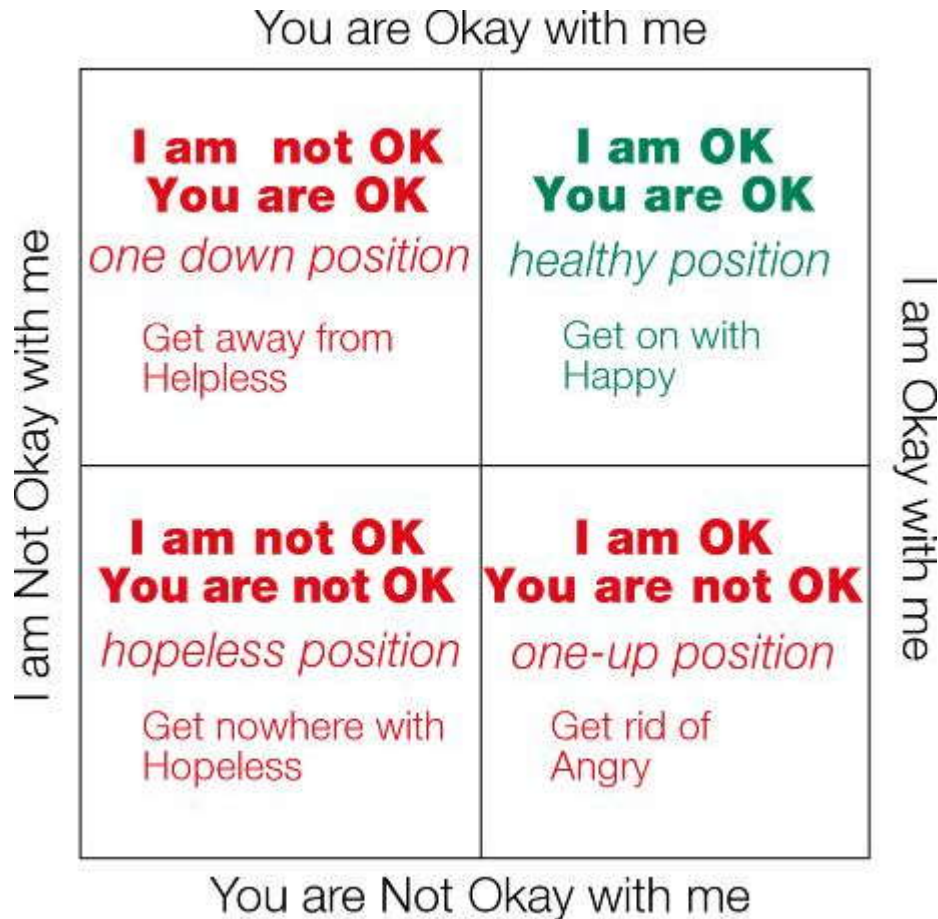
Let's take another situation. Perhaps we were picked on and bullied as a child. We learnt that the way to get by was to bully others and that way we felt stronger and in control. Our behaviour then comes into the I am OK and You are not OK quadrant. Of course this may cover up our belief that we are really not OK, but nobody sees that. They just see our behaviour, and in fact we may have forgotten all about our negative feelings about ourselves as we have tried so hard to deny the pain of believing we are not OK.

These life positions are perceptions of the world. The reality is I just am and you just are, therefore how I view myself and others are just that "views" not fact. However, we tend to act as if they are a fact. Just like when somebody says "I can't do this, I'm useless". Rather than "I don't know how to do this. Will you show me?" The latter is staying with the fact that they do not yet know how to do it, whilst the former links being useless with not being able to do something.

There are a number of ways of diagramming the life positions. Franklyn Ernst (1971) the originator of the OK Corral drew it in quadrants, We have put these into red and green to show the effective and ineffective quadrants for communication and healthy relationships. By shading in the quadrants according to the amount of

time we think we spend in each we can get an idea of the amount of time we spend in each.

The ok corral



Berne talked about the life positions as existential positions, one of which we are more likely to go to under stress. This is significantly different to the concept Ernst uses, i.e. that we move around them all during the day. Whilst there is some truth in this we could agree with Berne that there will be one major position we go into under stress, with perhaps another position underneath this one. These positions can change as we develop and grow. The difference between Berne and Ernst is important.

Chris Davidson (1999) writes about the three dimensional model of Okayness. All of the previous diagrams talk as if there were only one other person in the equation, when in reality there are often more. For example, the behaviour of young people in gangs may say that they believe they are okay and perhaps other gangs in their neighborhood are okay, but an individual or gang from another neighborhood are not okay. We often do this at work as well. We find other people who we like and then we gossip and put other people down. We are therefore saying that we believe we are okay but those others are awful (underneath this there may be a belief that we are not okay either but we feel better by putting someone else down). In this way the two dimensional model of okayness i.e. that there are only two people involved, becomes three dimensional model where there can be three or more involved.

There is also the way in which we view life itself. If we consider that there is something wrong with us, and that others are not to be trusted and are not OK either, then the world would be a scary place and we are likely to experience life as tough and believe we will only be all right if we keep alert and on the look out for danger and difficulties.

Blame model

The Transactional Analysis 'Okay Corral' can be linked to 'blame', for which Jim Davis TSTA developed this simple and helpful model. Commonly when emotions are triggered people adopt one of three attitudes relating to blame, which each correlate to a position on the Okay Corral:

- I'm to blame (You are okay and I'm not okay - 'helpless')
- You are to blame (I'm okay and you are not okay - 'angry')
- We are both to blame (I'm not okay and you are not okay - 'hopeless')

None of these is a healthy position.

Instead the healthy position is, and the mindset should be: "It's no-one's fault, blame isn't the issue - what matters is how we go forward and sort things out." (I'm okay and you are okay - 'happy')

(With acknowledgements to Jim Davis TSTA)

I. Transactional analysis - the script

The script is a life plan, made when we are growing up. It is like having the script of a play in front of us - we read the lines and decide what will happen in each act and how the play will end. The script is developed from our early decisions based upon our life experience. We may not realise that we have set ourselves a plan but we can often find this out if we ask ourselves what our favorite childhood story was, who was our favorite character in the story and who do we identify with. Then consider the beginning, middle and end of the story. How is this story reflected in our life today?

Another way of getting to what script is may be to think about what we believe will happen when we are in old age. Do we believe we will be alive at 80 or 90 years old, be healthy, happy, and contented? What do we think will be on the headstone for our grave? What would we like to be on it?

J. Transactional analysis - driver behaviour or working styles

These are ways in which we defend against the injunctions. These are very helpful to us and when we understand them we can work to their strengths through choice, rather than because subconsciously we believe we have to do things this way to be okay. The names of five working styles have been developed, these are:

- be perfect
- be strong
- try hard
- please others
- hurry up

The importance of recognizing these in ourselves and others is that we can then work to the best of them rather than be driven by them.

The working style Be Perfect means that we will be really good at doing accurate detailed reports, we will be neat in our appearance and our homes will be clean and tidy. If we have this style and are under stress it is likely that we would beat up on ourselves for not being

good enough, for making a mistake, for something being out of place. Of course, we created the rule about what perfection is, and then we don't meet up to it we have a go at ourselves. This may also mean that we expect others to be perfect too which can be hard on the colleagues we work with.

If we have a Be Strong working style we will be great in a crisis. We can take control of situations and people will often feel safe around us. The difficulty is we may come across as aloof as we don't express feelings very often. For us there is a tendency to say "it is" rather than "I am". The former phrase distances us from our feelings, enabling us to safe. We may stand apart from playful activities fearing we may look stupid. Instead of saying this however, it is likely that we condemn the activity as stupid and put down the person who suggested it.

If we have the Try Hard style we are great pioneers. We love new projects and new things to do. We probably have a great wealth of information as we like to gather different ideas together. We are best working under pressure. When stressed we may start too many things. We are more likely to start things but not finish them so celebrating achievements may not happen very often. We get sidetracked by starting to experiment with different ideas or ways to do things. We are likely to use phrases such as: "I'll try and do what we agreed" or "What I am trying to tell you is".

If we have the Please Others style we will be a great team member. We like to please people without even asking them how we can do this as we prefer to guess. We can see both sides of an argument and attempt to calm things down. We will be keen to do things for others, often to the point of Rescuing them. Decision making is not our strong point and we may frustrate people by not expressing our own opinion. We prefer other people to determine priorities, not us. We worry about changing our behaviour in case others won't like us.

Those of us with the Hurry Up working style will get a great deal done in a short amount of time. If reports are wanted in on time we are the person to do them. However, we tend to overload our time table and take on too much. This may mean that important aspects are overlooked. We are likely to be impatient with others and often finish

their sentences for them. We make only superficial changes as we are so quick to get on with things and not take an in-depth perspective. We might select priorities so quickly that a significant area is overlooked.

The way we structure our time is also influenced by our script.

K. Transactional analysis - time structuring

The way in which we structure time is likely to reflect the different hungers. We all structure time in a variety of ways:

- Withdrawal
- Rituals
- Pastiming
- Activities
- Games
- Intimacy

Obtaining balance means ensuring that we have sufficient time for play and intimacy and if this does not occur then it would be beneficial to explore what we might be avoiding.

L. Transactional analysis - games

I am sure that every one of us must have been in the situation where we have said, "Why does this always keep happening to me" or "I always keep meeting people who hurt me and then go off and leave me". Sometimes it may be that we like to help people and then it goes wrong as the person we were trying to help says that we didn't do it well enough and that we got it wrong. We might think "Well, I was only trying to help" and feel got at.

When similar situations keep happening over and over again then the term Transactional Analysis uses for this is a game. A game is a familiar pattern of behaviour with a predictable outcome. Games are played outside Adult awareness and they are our best attempt to get our needs met - although of course we don't.

Games are learned patterns of behaviour, and most people play a small number of favourite games with a range of different people and in varying intensities.

First Degree games are played in social circles generally lead to mild upsets not major traumas.

Second Degree games occur when the stakes may be higher. This usually occurs in more intimate circles, and ends up with an even greater negative payoff.

Third Degree games involve tissue damage and may end up in the jail, hospital or morgue.

Chris Davidson (2002) has argued that world politics can involve fourth degree games - where the outcomes involve whole communities, countries or even the world.

Games vary in the length of time that passes while they are being played. Some can take seconds or minutes while others take weeks months or even years. People play games for these reasons:

- to structure time
- to acquire strokes
- to maintain the substitute feeling and the system of thinking, beliefs and actions that go with it
- to confirm parental injunctions and further the life script
- to maintain the person's life position by "proving" that self/others are not OK
- to provide a high level of stroke exchange while blocking intimacy and maintaining distance
- to make people predictable.

Ways to deal with games

There are various ways to stop a game, including the use of different options than the one automatically used. We can:

- cross the transaction by responding from a different ego state than the one the stimulus is designed to hook.

- pick up the ulterior rather than the social message e.g. when a person says "I can't do this, I'm useless". Rather than saying "let me do this for you" instead say "It sounds like you have a problem. What do you want me to do about it?" (said from the Adult ego state)
- the opening message to the game always entails a discount. There are further discounts at each stage of the game. By detecting discounts we can identify game invitations and defuse them with options. (A discount is when we minimise, maximise or ignore some aspect of a problem which would assist us in resolving it. Such as saying in a whiny voice "This is too difficult for me to do", so we automatically help them).
- replace the game strokes. Loss of strokes to the Child ego state means a threat to survival. We get a great many strokes from games, even if they are negative. However, if we don't obtain sufficient positive strokes, or give ourselves positive strokes, we will go for quantity rather than quality of strokes and play games to get them. This loss of strokes is also a loss of excitement that the game has generated.

Another way to think about this is to consider the game role we or the other person is likely to take. One way to discover this is to ask the following questions:

- 1 What keeps happening over and over again
- 2 How does it start?
- 3 What happens next?
- 4 And then what happens?
- 5 How does it end?
- 6 How do feel after it ends? (John James, 1973)

We can then consider the reason we might have taken up a particular role, where we might switch to, and then consider how to do things differently. We need to consider what our own responsibility is in this - if the situation is too violent for us to get involved what options do we have? We could call for help, get others to come with us to

intervene and so on. We need to choose the appropriate assistance and take the action required.

M. Transactional analysis - contracting

Transactional Analysis is a contractual approach. A contract is "an explicit bilateral commitment to a well-defined course of action" Berne E. (1966). Which means that all parties need to agree:

- why they want to do something
- with whom
- what they are going to do
- by when
- any fees, payment or exchanges there will be

For example, we want the outside of our house painted, we need to find a person who will paint it and who will give us a quote for doing it. If we agree the quote, and we like him or her enough, we will no doubt employ them. We will agree a date and time, perhaps check they are insured, and choose the colour of the paint and off they go.

Sometimes contracts will be multi-handed with all parties to the contract having their own expectations. If these expectations are all congruent then fine, if not then discussing everyone's expectations will lead to greater understanding and therefore to a clear contract.

Contracts need to be outlined in positive words i.e. what is wanted, rather than what is not wanted. Our minds tend to focus on the negative and so this encourages failure. For example, how many times do we look round when someone says to us "Don't look now but....." , the same is true when we set up contracts which start "I don't want to do anymore".

We have contracts about employment, how much will we be paid and when, what holidays we are due, what deductions there will be etc. In order to ensure placements are effective then different, but similar, details are required. Naturally, these details will vary dependent on the setting in which we work.

All parties need to state what are they are prepared to do. Are they able and willing to undertake what is being asked, is this appropriate? Does it fit within any statements of purpose and function? Is it legal?

Do they have the competence to deliver this? Do they want to? What does each party want of the others?

In summary contracts need to be: measurable, manageable and motivational. Measurable means that the goals need to be tangible. That each party involved in the contract will be able to say in advance how they will know when the goal has been achieved. The goal will be specific and behavioural and clearly defined. The contract will also need to be manageable and feasible for all those concerned.