Interpersonal relationship

An **interpersonal relationship** is an association between two or more people that may range from fleeting to enduring. This association may be based on limerence,love, solidarity, regular business interactions, or some other type of social commitment. Interpersonal relationships are formed in the context of social, cultural and other influences. The context can vary from family or kinship relations, friendship, marriage, relations with associates, work, clubs, neighborhoods, and places of worship. They may be regulated by law, custom, or mutual agreement, and are the basis of social groups and society as a whole.

A relationship is normally viewed as a connection between two individuals, such as a romantic or intimate relationship, or a parent–child relationship. Individuals can also have relationships with groups of people, such as the relation between a pastor and his congregation, an uncle and a family, or a mayor and a town. Finally, groups or even nations may have relations with each other, though this is a much broader domain than that covered under the topic of interpersonal relationships. See such articles as international relations for more information on associations between groups. Most scholarly work on relationships focuses on the small subset of interpersonal relationships involving romantic partners in pairs or dyads.

Interpersonal relationships usually involve some level of interdependence. People in a relationship tend to influence each other, share their thoughts and feelings, and engage in activities together. Because of this interdependence, most things that change or impact one member of the relationship will have some level of impact on the other member.[1] The study of interpersonal relationships involves several branches of the social sciences, including such disciplines as sociology, psychology, anthropology, and social work. The scientific study of relationships is referred to as relationship science and distinguishes itself from anecdotal evidence or pseudo-experts by basing conclusions on data and objective analysis. Interpersonal ties are also a subject in mathematical sociology.

Development

Interpersonal relationships are dynamic systems that change continuously during their existence. Like living organisms, relationships have a beginning, a lifespan, and an end. They tend to grow and improve gradually, as people get to know each other and become closer emotionally, or they gradually deteriorate as people drift apart, move on with their lives and form new relationships with others. One of the most influential models of relationship development was proposed by psychologist George Levinger.[2] This model was formulated to describe heterosexual, adult romantic relationships, but it has been applied to other kinds of interpersonal relations as well. According to the model, the natural development of a relationship follows five stages:

1. *Acquaintance* – Becoming acquainted depends on previous relationships, physical proximity, first impressions, and a variety of other factors. If two people begin to like each other, continued interactions may lead to the next stage, but acquaintance can continue indefinitely.
2. *Buildup* – During this stage, people begin to trust and care about each other. The need for intimacy, compatibility and such filtering agents as common background and goals will influence whether or not interaction continues.
3. *Continuation* – This stage follows a mutual commitment to a long-term friendship, romantic relationship, or marriage. It is generally a long, relative stable period. Nevertheless, continued growth and development will occur during this time. Mutual trust is important for sustaining the relationship.
4. *Deterioration* – Not all relationships deteriorate, but those that do tend to show signs of trouble. Boredom, resentment, and dissatisfaction may occur, and individuals may communicate less and avoidself-disclosure. Loss of trust and betrayals may take place as the downward spiral continues, eventually ending the relationship. (Alternately, the participants may find some way to resolve the problems and reestablish trust.)
5. *Termination* – The final stage marks the end of the relationship, either by death in the case of a healthy relationship, or by separation.

Friendships may involve some degree of transitivity. In other words, a person may become a friend of an existing friend's friend. However, if two people have a sexual relationship with the same person, they may become competitors rather than friends. Accordingly, sexual behavior with the sexual partner of a friend may damage the friendship (see love

triangle). Sexual activities between two friends tend to alter that relationship, either by "taking it to the next level" or by severing it.

Legal sanction reinforces and regularizes marriages and civil unions as perceived "respectable" building-blocks of society. In the United States of America, for example, the de-criminalization of homosexualsexual relations in the Supreme Court decision, Lawrence v. Texas (2003) facilitated the mainstreaming of gay long-term relationships, and broached the possibility of the legalization of same-sex marriages in that country.

Flourishing relationships

Positive psychologists use the term "flourishing relationships" to describe interpersonal relationships that are not merely happy, but instead characterized by intimacy, growth, and resilience.[3] Flourishing relationships also allow a dynamic balance between focus on the intimate relationships and focus on other social relationships.

[edit]**Background**

While traditional psychologists specializing in close relationships have focused on relationship dysfunction, positive psychology argues that relationship health is not merely the absence of relationship dysfunction.[4] Healthy relationships are built on a foundation of secure attachment and are maintained with love and purposeful positive relationship behaviors. Additionally, healthy relationships can be made to "flourish." Positive psychologists are exploring what makes existing relationships flourish and what skills can be taught to partners to enhance their existing and future personal relationships.

Adult attachment

Healthy relationships are built on a foundation of secure attachments. Adult attachment models represent an internal set of expectations and preferences regarding relationship intimacy that guide behavior.[4]Secure adult attachment, characterized by low attachment-related avoidance and anxiety, has numerous benefits. Within the context of safe, secure attachments, people can pursue optimal human functioning and flourishing.[4]

Love

The capacity for love gives depth to human relationships, brings people closer to each other physically and emotionally, and makes people think expansively about themselves and the world.[4] In his triangular theory of love, psychologist Robert Sternberg theorizes that love is a mix of three components: some (1) passion, or physical attraction; (2) intimacy, or feelings of closeness; and (3) commitment, involving the decision to initiate and sustain a relationship. The presence of all three components characterizes consummate love, the most durable type of love. In addition, the presence of intimacy and passion in marital relationships predicts marital satisfaction. Also, commitment is the best predictor of relationship satisfaction, especially in long-term relationships. Positive consequences of being in love include increased self-esteem and self-efficacy.[4]

Theories and empirical research

Confucianism

Confucianism is a study and theory of relationships especially within hierarchies.[5] Social harmony — the central goal of Confucianism — results in part from every individual knowing his or her place in the social order, and playing his or her part well. Particular duties arise from each person's particular situation in relation to others. The individual stands simultaneously in several different relationships with different people: as a junior in relation to parents and elders, and as a senior in relation to younger siblings, students, and others. Juniors are considered in Confucianism to owe their seniors reverence and seniors have duties of benevolence and concern toward juniors. A focus on mutuality is prevalent in East Asian cultures to this day.

Minding relationships

The mindfulness theory of relationships shows how closeness in relationships may be enhanced. Minding is the "reciprocal knowing process involving the nonstop, interrelated thoughts, feelings, and behaviors of persons in a relationship."[6] Five components of "minding" include:[4]

1. Knowing and being known: seeking to understand the partner
2. Making relationship-enhancing attributions for behaviors: giving the benefit of the doubt

3. Accepting and respecting: empathy and social skills
4. Maintaining reciprocity: active participation in relationship enhancement
5. Continuity in minding: persisting in mindfulness

Culture of appreciation

After studying married couples for many years, psychologist John Gottman has proposed the theory of the "magic ratio" for successful marriages. The theory says that for a marriage to be successful, couples must average a ratio of five positive interactions to one negative interaction. As the ratio moves to 1:1, divorce becomes more likely.[4] Interpersonal interactions associated with negative relationships include criticism, contempt, defensiveness, and stonewalling. Over time, therapy aims to turn these interpersonal strategies into more positive ones, which include complaint, appreciation, acceptance of responsibility, and self-soothing.[citation needed] Similarly, partners in interpersonal relationships can incorporate positive components into difficult subjects in order to avoid emotional disconnection.[citation needed] Knowing when to go to the next step is very important.[citation needed]

Capitalizing on positive events

People can capitalize on positive events in an interpersonal context to work toward flourishing relationships. People often turn to others to share their good news (termed "capitalization"). Studies show that both the act of telling others about good events and the response of the person with whom the event was shared have personal and interpersonal consequences, including increased positive emotions, subjective well-being, and self-esteem, and relationship benefits including intimacy, commitment, trust, liking, closeness, and stability.[7] Studies show that the act of communicating positive events was associated with increased positive affect and well-being (beyond the impact of the positive event itself a). Other studies have found that relationships in which partners responded to "good news" communication enthusiastically were associated with higher relationship well-being.[8]

Other perspectives

Neurobiology of interpersonal connections

There is an emerging body of research across multiple disciplines investigating the neurological basis of attachment and the prosocial emotions and behaviors that are the prerequisites for healthy adult relationships.[4] The social environment, mediated by attachment, influences the maturation of structures in a child's brain. This might explain how infant attachment affects adult emotional health. Researchers are currently investigating the link between positive caregiver–child relationships and the development of hormone systems, such as the HPA axis.

Applications

Researchers are developing an approach to couples therapy that moves partners from patterns of repeated conflict to patterns of more positive, comfortable exchanges. Goals of therapy include development of social and interpersonal skills. Expressing gratitude and sharing appreciation for a partner is the primary means for creating a positive relationship. Positive marital counseling also emphasizes mindfulness. The further study of "flourishing relationships could shape the future of premarital and marital counseling as well."[4]

Controversies

Some researchers criticize positive psychology for studying positive processes in isolation from negative processes.[citation needed] Positive psychologists argue that positive and negative processes in relationships may be better understood as functionally independent, not as opposites of each other.[9]

What is interpersonal relationship and explanation of different relations? 1 Comment

Relationship is one the words often used, but taken for granted. We know what it means. We know relationships are important. We know relationships can be difficult. We know relationships can bring great happiness and sadness. But what actually is a relationship in the context of human behavior?

A relationship is a connection between two people in which some sort of exchange takes place. In other words, there is some sort of link between people and it involves interaction. That connection may be that we are born into, such as is the case with families, or it might arise out of a particular need. A classic example of the latter can be found in the marketplace. We might want to buy bread, so we look for someone who can sell us it. What is interesting about this is that the two sides have different interests (buying and selling). However, they can come together as their interests are compatible, both can be satisfied. There is advantage to both in the link.

A relationship may be verbal, emotional, physical or intellectual and often all of these. It may be include of an exchange of ideas, skills, attitudes or values, or even exchange of things – money, tools or food. Relationships happen at all times, in all places, in all places of society, and in all phases of development of individuals. We are involved in the relationships all the time.

It is important to hold onto an appreciation of relationship as something every day. However, we also need to recognize just how complex even apparently simple relationships such as buying and selling are. They entail cooperation and trust. Building such cooperation and trust is fundamental aspect of relationship. We have to work at them.

Interpersonal skills: identification and development of skills such as leadership, assertiveness, group working and relationships with other individuals.

Some features of inter-personal relationships

Purpose of the relationship: degree of equality and mutuality of benefit involved in the relationship.

Parent, child relationship

Friend, friend relationship

Professional relationship

Intellectual relationship

Emotional relationship

Relationship as a catalyst: an enabling dynamism in the support, nature and freeing of people's energies and motivations toward solving problems and using help.

The fact that someone is prepared to share our worries and concerns, to be with us when we are working at something can be very significant. It can reduce the feeling that we are alone and that the tasks we face are so huge. Their pleasure in our achievements or concern of our hurt can motivate us to act. Crucially, their valuing of us as people can help us to discover the worth in ourselves, and the belief that we can change things. Relationships can animate, breathe life into situations.

Relationships are obviously not all that we need. It is not all a substitute for the opportunities and material things people need in order to flourish. But it is essential accompanying condition, because it is nourisher and mover of the human being's wish and will to use the resources provided and the powers within him to fulfill his personal and social-well being.

Relationship is a human being's feeling or sense of emotional bonding with another. It leaps into being like an electric current, or it emerges and develops cautiously when emotion is aroused by and invested in someone or something and that someone or something connects back responsively. We feel related when we feel at one with another (person or object) in some heartfelt way.

Relationship may be inter-personal or group. While inter-personal relationship deals with two persons, group behavior deals with relations among the group members and between the groups. In each such case, the individual's behavior affects and is affected by the behavior of others. Such effect is reflected by change in perception, learning, personality and motivation. In many cases, the concept of inter-personal and group behavior may overlap.

Interpersonal behavior may be of two types:

Interpersonal co-operative behavior

Interpersonal conflicting behavior

Interpersonal co-operative behavior

When the interaction between two persons is mutually satisfying it is cooperative behavior. Conditions necessary for cooperative interpersonal behavior are mutual trust and respect, concern for each other needs and interaction with complementary ego states.

Interpersonal conflicting behavior

Interpersonal conflict may arise due to various relations such as personality differences, different value systems, conflict in interests, role ambiguity etc.

Improving interpersonal relationship

To analyse and improve interpersonal relationship, transactional analysis has been developed.

Transactional analysis (TA) offers a model of personality and the dynamics of self and its relationship to others.

TA refers to a method of analyzing and understanding interpersonal behavior. When people interact, there is social transaction in which one person responds to another. The study of these transactions between people is called TA.

TA involves analysis of awareness, structural analysis (ego states), analysis of transaction, script analysis and game analysis.

Levels of self awareness

Self is the core of personality pattern which provides interaction. Such a concept is cognitive: it describes the self in terms of image, both conscious and unconscious.

Ego States

People interact with each other in terms of three psychological positions, or behavior patterns, known as ego states. Thus, ego states are a person's way of thinking, feeling and behaving at any time.

Life script

When confronted with a situation, a person acts according to his script which is based on what he expects or how he views his life position.

Psychological games

When people play games, they do things like this: fail to come through for others, pass the buck, make mistakes, complain about and dote on their own sorrows and inadequacies, and catch others in the act.
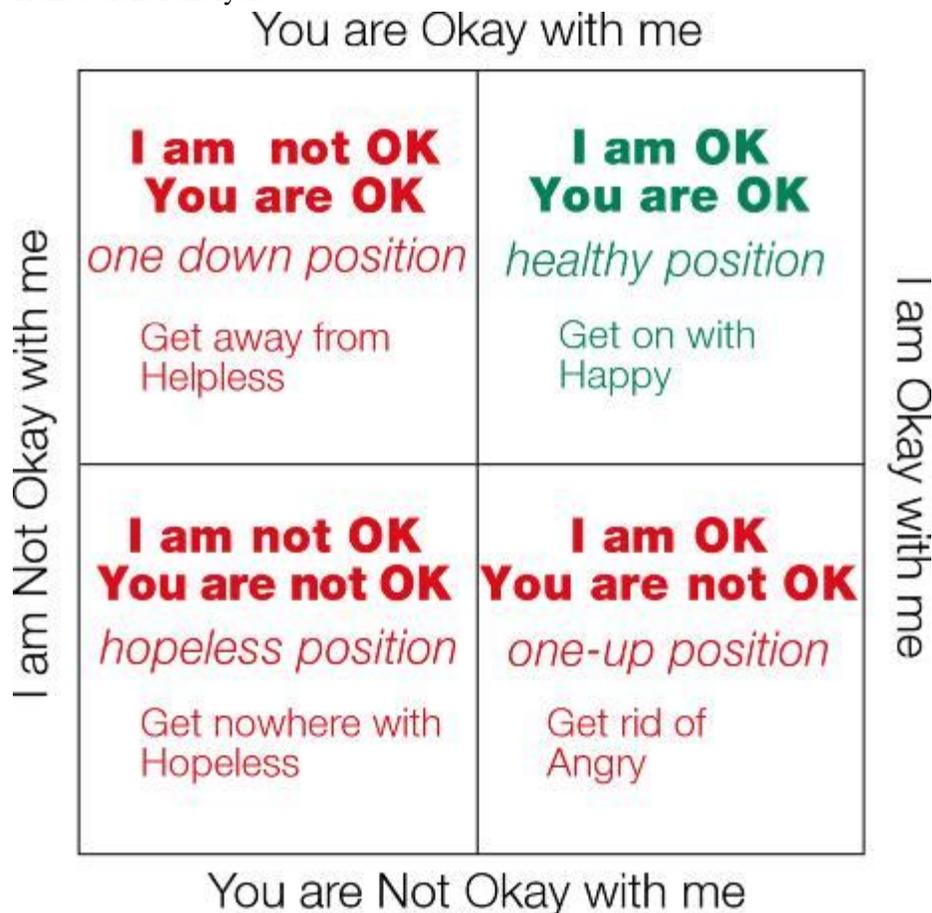
Benefits of transactional analysis

Developing positive thinking: brings clear change from negative feelings – confusion, defeat, fear, frustration, loneliness, pessimism and suppression to positive feelings – clear thinking, victory, courage, gratification, decision, friendship, optimism and fulfillment.

Interpersonal effectiveness: improves interpersonal relationship by providing understanding of ego states of persons involved in interaction.

Motivation: TA can be applied in motivation where it helps in satisfying human needs through complementary transactions and positive strokes. Stroking is defined as any act implying recognition of another's presence. People seek recognition in interaction with others.

Transactional analysis

You are Okay with me

I am Not Okay with me

I am not OK
You are OK
one down position

Get away from
Helpless

I am OK
You are OK
healthy position

Get on with
Happy

I am not OK
You are not OK
hopeless position

Get nowhere with
Hopeless

I am OK
You are not OK
one-up position

Get rid of
Angry

I am Okay with me

You are Not Okay with me

Transactional analysis, commonly known as **TA** to its adherents, is an *integrative* approach to the theory of psychology and psychotherapy. It is described as integrative because it has elements of psychoanalytic, humanist and cognitive approaches. TA was developed by Canadian-born US psychiatrist, Eric Berne, during the late 1950s.

According to the International Transactional Analysis Association,[1] TA 'is a theory of personality and a systematic psychotherapy for personal growth and personal change'.

1. As a theory of personality, TA describes how people are structured psychologically. It uses what is perhaps its best known model, the ego-state (Parent-Adult-Child) model, to do this. The same model helps explain how people function and express their personality in their behavior[1]

2. It is a theory of communication that can be extended to the analysis of systems and organisations.[1]

3. It offers a theory for child development by explaining how our adult patterns of life originated in childhood.[1] This explanation is based on the idea of a "Life (or Childhood) Script": the assumption that we continue to re-play childhood strategies, even when this results in pain or defeat. Thus it claims to offer a theory of psychopathology.[1]

4. In practical application, it can be used in the diagnosis and treatment of many types of psychological disorders and provides a method of therapy for individuals, couples, families and groups.

5. Outside the therapeutic field, it has been used in education to help teachers remain in clear communication at an appropriate level, in counselling and consultancy, in management and communicationstraining and by other bodies.[1]

[edit]**Philosophy**

- People are OK; thus each person has validity, importance, equality of respect.[2]
- Everyone (with only few exceptions, such as the severely brain-damaged) has the capacity to think.[2]
- People decide their story and destiny, therefore these decisions can be changed.[2]

Freedom from historical maladaptations embedded in the childhood script is required in order to become free of inappropriate, inauthentic and displaced emotions which are not a fair and honest reflection of here-and-now life (such as echoes of childhood suffering, pity-me and other mind games, compulsive behavior and repetitive dysfunctional life patterns). The aim of change under TA is to move toward autonomy (freedom from childhood script), spontaneity, intimacy, problem *solving* as opposed to *avoidance* or *passivity*, cure as an ideal rather than merely making progress and learning new choices.

[edit]History

TA is a neo-Freudian theory of personality. Berne's ego states are heavily influenced by Freud's id, ego and superego, although they do not precisely correspond with them.[3] A primary difference between Berne and Freud is the former's treatment of the observable transactions known as "games". A number of books popularized TA in the general public but did little to gain acceptance in the conventional psychoanalytic community. TA is considered by its adherents to be a more user-friendly and accessible model than the conventional psychoanalytic model. A number of modern-day TA practitioners emphasize the similarities with cognitive-behaviorist models while others emphasize different models.

[edit]**General**

TA is not only post-Freudian but, according to its founder's wishes, consciously extra-Freudian. That is to say that, while it has its roots in psychoanalysis, since Berne was a psychoanalytically-trainedpsychiatrist, it was designed as a dissenting branch of psychoanalysis in that it put its emphasis on transactional, rather than "psycho-", analysis.

With its focus on transactions, TA shifted the attention from internal psychological dynamics to the dynamics contained in people's interactions. Rather than believing that increasing awareness of the contents of unconsciously held ideas was the therapeutic path, TA concentrated on the content of people's interactions with each other. Changing these interactions was TA's path to solving emotional problems.

In addition, Berne believed in making a commitment to "curing" his patients rather than just understanding them. To that end he introduced one of the most important aspects of TA: the contract—an agreement entered into by both client and therapist to pursue specific changes that the client desires.

Revising Freud's concept of the human psyche as composed of the id, ego, and super-ego, Berne postulated in addition three "ego states"—the Parent, Adult, and Child states—which were largely shaped through childhood experiences. These three are all part of Freud's ego; none represent the id or the superego.

Unhealthy childhood experiences can lead to these being pathologically fixated in the Child and Parent ego states, bringing discomfort to an individual and/or others in a variety of forms, including many types ofmental illness.

Berne considered how individuals interact with one another, and how the ego states affect each set of transactions. Unproductive or counterproductive transactions were considered to be signs of ego state problems. Analyzing these transactions according to the person's individual developmental history would

enable the person to "get better". Berne thought that virtually everyone has something problematic about their ego states and that negative behavior would not be addressed by "treating" only the problematic individual.

Berne identified a typology of common counterproductive social interactions, identifying these as "games".

Berne presented his theories in two popular books on transactional analysis: *Games People Play* (1964) and *What Do You Say After You Say Hello?* (1975). *I'm OK, You're OK* (1969), written by Berne's longtime friend Thomas Anthony Harris, is probably the most popular TA book.

By the 1970s, because of TA's non-technical and non-threatening jargon and model of the human psyche, many of its terms and concepts were adopted by eclectic therapists as part of their individual approaches to psychotherapy. It also served well as a therapy model for groups of patients, or marital/family counselees, where interpersonal (rather than intrapersonal) disturbances were the focus of treatment. Critics[4] have charged that TA—especially as loosely interpreted by those outside the more formal TA community—is a pseudoscience, when it is in fact[*citation needed*] better understood as a philosophy.

TA's popularity in the U.S. waned in the 1970s, but it retains some popularity elsewhere in the world.[4] The more dedicated TA purists banded together in 1964 with Berne to form a research and professional accrediting body, the International Transactional Analysis Association, or ITAA.

Development

Leaving psychoanalysis half a century ago, Eric Berne presented transactional analysis to the world as a phenomenological approach supplementing Freud's philosophical construct with observable data. His theory built on the science of Penfield and Spitz along with the neo-psychoanalytic thought of people such as Paul Federn, Weiss, and Erikson. By moving to an interpersonal motivational theory, he placed it both in opposition to the psychoanalytic traditions of his day and within what would become the psychoanalytic traditions of the future.

From Berne, transactional analysts have inherited a determination to create an accessible and user-friendly system, an understanding of script or life-plan, ego states, transactions, and a theory of groups.

Fifty years later

Within the overarching framework of transactional analysis, more recent transactional analysts have developed several different and overlapping theories of Tranactional Analysis: cognitive, behavioral, relational, redecision, integrative, constructivist, narrative, body-work, positive psychological, personality adaptational, self-reparenting, psychodynamic, and neuroconstructivist.[*citation needed*]

Some transactional analysts highlight the many things they have in common with cognitive-behavioral therapists: the use of contracts with clear goals, the attention to cognitive distortions (called "Adult decontamination" or "Child deconfusion"), the focus on the client's conscious attitudes and behaviors and the use of "strokes".[*citation needed*]

Cognitive-based transactional analysts use ego state identification to identify communication distortions and teach different functional options in the dynamics of communication. Some make additional contracts for more profound work involving life-plans or scripts or with unconscious processes, including those which manifest in the client-therapist relationship as transference and countertransference, and define themselves as psychodynamic or relational transactional analysts. Some highlight the study and promotion of subjective well-being and optimal human functioning rather than pathology and so identify with positive psychology.[*citation needed*] Some are increasingly influenced by current research in

attachment, mother-infant interaction, and by the implications of interpersonal neurobiology, and non-linear dynamic systems.

Key ideas

Some core models and concepts are part of TA as follows:--

The Ego-State (or Parent-Adult-Child, PAC) model

At any given time, a person experiences and manifests their personality through a mixture of behaviours, thoughts and feelings. Typically, according to TA, there are three ego-states that people consistently use:

- **Parent ("exteropsyche"):** a state in which people behave, feel, and think in response to an unconscious mimicking of how their parents (or other parental figures) acted, or how they interpreted their parent's actions. For example, a person may shout at someone out of frustration because they learned from an influential figure in childhood the lesson that this seemed to be a way of relating that worked.
- **Adult ("neopsyche"):** a state of the ego which is most like a computer processing information and making predictions absent of major emotions that could affect its operation. Learning to strengthen the Adult is a goal of TA. While a person is in the Adult ego state, he/she is directed towards an objective appraisal of reality.
- **Child ("archaeopsyche"):** a state in which people behave, feel and think similarly to how they did in childhood. For example, a person who receives a poor evaluation at work may respond by looking at the floor, and crying or pouting, as they used to when scolded as a child. Conversely, a person who receives a good evaluation may respond with a broad smile and a joyful gesture of thanks. The Child is the source of emotions, creation, recreation, spontaneity and intimacy.

Berne differentiated his Parent, Adult, and Child ego states from actual adults, parents, and children, by using capital letters when describing them. These ego-states may or may not represent the relationships that they act out. For example, in the workplace, an adult supervisor may take on the Parent role, and scold an adult employee as though they were a Child. Or a child, using their Parent ego-state, could scold their actual parent as though the parent were a Child.

Within each of these ego states are subdivisions. Thus Parental figures are often either more *nurturing* (permission-giving, security-giving) or more *criticizing* (comparing to family traditions and ideals in generally negative ways); Childhood behaviours are either more natural (*free*) or more *adapted* to others. These subdivisions categorize individuals' patterns of behaviour, feelings, and ways of thinking, that can be functional (beneficial or *positive*) or dysfunctional/counterproductive (*negative*).

Berne states that there are four types of diagnosis of ego states. They are the behavioural diagnosis, social diagnosis, historical diagnosis and the phenomenological diagnosis of ego states. For a complete diagnosis one needs to complete all four types. It has been subsequently demonstrated that there is in fact a fifth way of diagnosis. It is known as the contextual diagnosis of ego states. For example if a man says, "On July 5th, 2007 the alignment of the planets will create a gravitational field so strong that there will be the biggest tides in half a century", what ego state would be diagnosed?[1]

If that man was of a dishevelled appearance, had not shaven for 2 days and was sitting on a park bench drinking out of a bottle in a brown paper bag what ego state would be diagnosed?. Probably some kind of regressed Child ego state. If that man was in an observatory wearing a white coat and carrying a

clip board what ego state would be diagnosed? Probably Adult ego state. The different contexts for the same statement would tend to result in a different diagnosis. The context in which the statement is made is central to the diagnosis of ego states.

Ego-states do not correspond directly to [Sigmund Freud](#)'s [Ego, Superego and Id](#), although there are obvious parallels: i.e., Superego:Ego:Id::Parent:Adult:Child. Ego states are consistent for each person and are argued by TA practitioners as more readily observable than the parts in Freud's hypothetical model. In other words, the particular ego state that a given person is communicating from is determinable by external observation and experience.

There is no "universal" ego-state; each state is individually and visibly manifested for each person. For example, each Child ego state is unique to the childhood experiences, mentality, intellect, and family of each individual; it is not a generalised childlike state.

Ego states can become contaminated, for example, when a person mistakes Parental rules and slogans, for here-and-now Adult reality, and when beliefs are taken as facts. Or when a person "knows" that everyone is laughing at them because "they always laughed". This would be an example of a childhood contamination, insofar as here-and-now reality is being overlaid with memories of previous historic incidents in childhood.

Although TA theory claims that Ego states do not correspond directly to thinking, feeling, and judging, as these processes are present in every ego state, this claim is self-contradictory to the claim that the Adult is like a computer processing information, therefore not feeling unless it is contaminated by the Child.

Berne suspected that Parent, Adult, and Child ego states might be tied to specific areas of the human brain; an idea that has not been proved.[4]

The three ego state model has been questioned by a TA group in Australia, who have devised a "two ego-state model" as a means of solving perceived theoretical problems:

"The two ego-state model says that there is a Child ego-state and a Parent ego-state, placing the Adult ego-state with the Parent ego-state. [...] How we learn to speak, add up and learn how to think is all just copied from our teachers. Just as our morals and values are copied from our parents. There is no absolute truth where facts exist out side a person's own belief system. Berne mistakenly concluded that there was and thus mistakenly put the Adult ego-state as separate from the Parent ego-state."[5][6]

Transactions and Strokes

- *Transactions* are the flow of communication, and more specifically the unspoken psychological flow of communication that runs in parallel. Transactions occur simultaneously at both explicit and psychological levels. Example: sweet caring voice with sarcastic intent. To read the real communication requires both surface and non-verbal reading.
- *Strokes* are the recognition, attention or responsiveness that one person gives another. Strokes can be positive (nicknamed "warm fuzzies"[7]) or negative ("cold pricklies"). A key idea is that people hunger for recognition, and that lacking positive strokes, will seek whatever kind they can, even if it is recognition of a negative kind. We test out as children what strategies and behaviours seem to get us strokes, of whatever kind we can get.

People often create pressure in (or experience pressure from) others to communicate in a way that matches their style, so that a boss who talks to his staff as a controlling parent will often engender self-abasement or other childlike responses. Those employees who resist may get removed or labeled as "trouble".

Transactions can be experienced as positive or negative depending on the nature of the strokes within them. However, a negative transaction is preferred to no transaction at all, because of a fundamental hunger for strokes.

The nature of transactions is important to understanding communication.

Kinds of transactions

There are basically three kinds of transactions:

1. Reciprocal/Complementary (the simplest)
2. Crossed
3. Duplex/Covert (the most complex)

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 skip this meeting and go watch a film with me instead?" (Child to Child)

B: "I'd love to - I don't want to work anymore, what should we go and see?" (Child to Child)

Example 3:

A: "You should have your room tidy by now!" (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 exchange 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)

This 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)

This is a more positive crossed transaction. There is however the risk that **A** will feel aggrieved that **B** is acting responsibly and not playing their 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?" (Adult to Adult)

... 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: "I need you to stay late at the office with me." (Adult words), body language indicates sexual intent (flirtatious Child)

B: "Of course." (Adult response to Adult statement), winking or grinning (Child accepts the hidden motive).

Phenomena behind the transactions

Life positions

In TA theory,"Life Position" refers to the general feeling about life (specifically, the unconscious feeling, as opposed to a conscious philosophical position) that colours every dyadic (i.e. person-to-person) transaction. Initially four such Life Positions were proposed:

1. "I'm Not OK, You're OK" (I-U+)
2. "I'm Not OK, You're Not OK" (I-U-)
3. "I'm OK, You're Not OK" (I+U-)
4. "I'm OK, You're OK" (I+U+)

However, lately, an Australian TA analyst has claimed that in order to better represent the Life Position behind disorders that were not, allegedly, as widespread and/or recognized at the time when TA was conceptualized as they are now (such as borderline personality disorder and narcissistic personality disorder) the above list requires alteration. Also, two additional Life Positions are proposed:[8]

1. "I'm not-OK, You're OK" (I-U+)
2. "I'm not-OK, You're not-OK" (I-U-)
3. "I'm not-OK, But You're Worse" (I-U--)
4. "I'm not-OK, You're Irrelevant" (I-U?)
5. "I'm a Bit More OK Than You Are" (I++U+)
6. "I'm OK, You're OK" (I+U+)
7. "I'm OK, You're Irrelevant" (I+U?)

The difference between one's own OK-ness and other's OK-ness captured by description "I'm OK, You're not-OK" is proposed to be substituted by description that more accurately captures one's own feeling (not jumping to conclusions based only on one's perceived behavior), therefore stating the difference in a new way: "I'm not-OK, but You're worse" (I-,U--), instead.

[edit]**Life (or Childhood) script**

- Script is a life plan, directed to a reward.[9]
- Script is decisional and responsive; i.e., decided upon in childhood in response to perceptions of the world and as a means of living with and making sense of the world. It is not just thrust upon a person by external forces.
- Script is reinforced by parents (or other influential figures and experiences).
- Script is for the most part outside awareness.
- Script is how we navigate and what we look for, the rest of reality is redefined (distorted) to match our filters.

Each culture, country and people in the world has a Mythos, that is, a legend explaining its origins, core beliefs and purpose. According to TA, so do individual people. A person begins writing his/her own life story (script) at a young age, as he/she tries to make sense of the world and his place within it. Although it is revised throughout life, the core story is selected and decided upon typically by age 7. As adults it passes out of awareness. A life script might be "to be hurt many times, and suffer and make others feel bad when I die", and could result in a person indeed setting himself up for this, by adopting behaviours in childhood that produce exactly this effect. Though Berne identified several dozen common scripts, there are a practically infinite number of them. Though often largely destructive, scripts could as easily be mostly positive or beneficial.

Redefining and Discounting

- *Redefining* means the distortion of reality when we deliberately (but unconsciously) distort things to match our preferred way of seeing the world. Thus a person whose script involves "struggling alone against a cold hard world" may redefine others' kindness, concluding that others are trying to get something by manipulation.

- *Discounting* means to take something as worth less than it is. Thus to give a substitute reaction which does not originate as a here-and-now Adult attempt to solve the actual problem, or to choose not to see evidence that would contradict one's script. Types of discount can also include: passivity (doing nothing), over-adaptation, agitation, incapacitation, anger and violence.

Ways of time structuring

There are six ways of structuring time by giving and receiving strokes:

1. Withdrawal
2. Ritual
3. Pastimes
4. Activity
5. Games
6. Intimacy

This is sorted in accordance with stroke strength; Intimacy and Games in general allow for the most intensive strokes. Berne actually ordered them: Withdrawal, Ritual, Activity, Pastimes, Games, Intimacy.

Withdrawal

This means no strokes are being exchanged

Rituals

A ritual is a series of transactions that are complementary (reciprocal), stereotyped and based on social programming. Rituals usually comprise a series of strokes exchanged between two parties.

For instance, two people may have a daily two stroke ritual, where, the first time they meet each day, each one greets the other with a "Hi". Others may have a four stroke ritual, such as:

A: Hi!

B: Hi! How are you?

A: Getting along. What about you?

B: Fine. See you around.

The next time they meet in the day, they may not exchange any strokes at all, or may just acknowledge each other's presence with a curt nod.

Some phenomena associated with daily rituals:

- If a person exchanges fewer strokes than expected, the other person may feel that he is either preoccupied or acting high and mighty.

- If a person exchanges more strokes than expected, the other person might wonder whether he is trying to butter him up or get on good terms for some vested interests.

- If two people do not meet for a long time, a backlog of strokes gets built up, so that the next time they meet, they may exchange a large number of strokes to *catch up*.

Pastimes

A pastime is a series of transactions that is complementary (reciprocal), semi-ritualistic, and is mainly intended as a time-structuring activity. Pastimes have no covert purpose and can usually be carried out only between people on the same wavelength. They are usually shallow and harmless. Pastimes are a type of smalltalk.

Individuals often partake in similar pastimes throughout their entire life, as pastimes are generally very much linked to one's life script and the games that one often plays. Some pastimes can even be understood as a reward for playing a certain game. For example, Eric Berne in *Games People Play* discusses how those who play the "Alcoholic" game (i.e., alcoholics, their Persecutors and their enablers) often enjoy the "Morning After" pastime in which participants share their most amusing or harrowing hangover stories.

Activities (Work)

Activities in this context mean the individuals work together for a common goal. This may be work, sports or something similar. In contrast to Pastimes, there is a meaningful purpose guiding the interactions, while Pastimes are just about exchanging strokes. Strokes can then be given in the context of the cooperation. Thus the strokes are generally not personal, but related to the activity.

Games

Intimacy

Intimacy as a way of structuring time allows one to exchange the strongest strokes without playing a Game. Intimacy differs from Games as there is no covert purpose, and differs from Activities as there is no other process going on which defines a context of cooperation. Strokes are personal, relating to the other person, and often unconditional.

Definition of game

A game[10] is a series of transactions that is complementary (reciprocal), ulterior, and proceeds towards a predictable outcome. Games are often characterized by a *switch* in roles of players towards the end. Games are usually played by Parent, Adult and Child ego states, and games usually have a fixed number of players; however, an individual's role can shift, and people can play multiple roles.

Berne identified dozens of games, noting that, regardless of when, where or by whom they were played, each game tended towards very similar structures in how many players or roles were involved, the rules of the game, and the game's goals.

Each game has a *payoff* for those playing it, such as the aim of earning sympathy, satisfaction, vindication, or some other emotion that usually reinforces the life script. The *antithesis* of a game, that is, the way to break it, lies in discovering how to deprive the actors of their payoff.

Students of transactional analysis have discovered that people who are accustomed to a game are willing to play it even as a different "actor" from what they originally were.

Analysis of a game

One important aspect of a game is its number of players. Games may be two handed (that is, played by two players), three handed (that is, played by three players), or many handed. Three other quantitative variables are often useful to consider for games:

- *Flexibility*: The ability of the players to change the currency of the game (that is, the tools they use to play it). In a flexible game, players may shift from words, to money, to parts of the body.
- *Tenacity*: The persistence with which people play and stick to their games and their resistance to breaking it.
- *Intensity*: *Easy* games are games played in a relaxed way. *Hard* games are games played in a tense and aggressive way.

Based on the degree of acceptability and potential harm, games are classified as:

- *First Degree Games* are socially acceptable in the players' social circle.

- *Second Degree Games* are games that the players would like to conceal, though they may not cause irreversible damage.
- *Third Degree Games* are games that could lead to drastic harm to one or more of the parties concerned.

Games are also studied based on their:

- Aim
- Roles
- Social and Psychological Paradigms
- Dynamics
- Advantages to players (Payoffs)

Contrast with rational (mathematical) games

Transactional game analysis is fundamentally different from rational or mathematical game analysis in the following senses:

- The players do not always behave rationally in transactional analysis, but behave more like *real* people.
- Their motives are often ulterior.

Drunk" or "Alcoholic"

Another example of Berne's approach was his identification of the game of "Drunk" or "Alcoholic." As he explained it, the transactional object of the drunk, aside from the personal pleasure obtained by drinking, could be seen as being to set up a situation where the *Child* can be severely scolded not only by the *internal parent* but by any parental figures in the immediate environment who are interested enough to oblige. The pattern is shown to be similar to that in the non-alcoholic game "Schlemiel," in which mess-making attracts attention and is a pleasure-giving way for **White** to lead up to the crux, which is obtaining forgiveness by **Black**.

There are a variety of organizations involved in playing 'Alcoholic', some of them national or even international in scope, others local.[*citation needed*] Many of them publish rules for the game. Nearly all of them explain how to play the role of Alcoholic: take a drink before breakfast, spend money allotted for other purposes, etc. They also explain the function of the Rescuer role in the game. Alcoholics Anonymous, Berne said, continues playing the actual game but concentrates on inducing the Alcoholic to take the role of Rescuer. Former Alcoholics are preferred because they know how the game goes, and hence are better qualified to play the supporting role of Rescuer than people who have never played before.

According to this type of analysis, with the rise of rescue organizations which publicize that alcoholism is a disease rather than a transactional game, alcoholics have been taught to play "Wooden Leg", a different game in which an organic ailment absolves **White** of blame.[11]

]**Rackets**

A racket is the dual strategy of getting "permitted feelings," while covering up feelings which we truly feel, but which we regard as being "not allowed". More technically, a racket feeling is "a familiar set of emotions, learned and enhanced during childhood, experienced in many different stress situations, and maladaptive as an adult means of problem solving".

A racket is then a set of behaviours which originate from the childhood script rather than in here-and-now full Adult thinking, which (1) are employed as a way to manipulate the environment to match the

script rather than to actually solve the problem, and (2) whose covert goal is not so much to solve the problem, as to experience these racket feelings and feel internally justified in experiencing them.

Examples of racket and racket feelings: "Why do I meet good guys who turn out to be so hurtful", or "He always takes advantage of my goodwill". The racket is then a set of behaviours and chosen strategies learned and practised in childhood which in fact help to cause these feelings to be experienced. Typically this happens *despite* their own surface protestations and hurt feelings, out of awareness and in a way that is perceived as someone else's fault. One covert pay-off for this racket and its feelings, might be to gain in a guilt free way, continued evidence and reinforcement for a childhood script belief that "People will always let you down".

TA and popular culture

Eric Berne's ability to express the ideas of TA in common language and his popularisation of the concepts in mass-market books inspired a boom of popular TA texts.[*citation needed*]

Thomas Harris's successful popular work from the late 1960s, *I'm OK, You're OK* is largely based on Transactional Analysis. A fundamental divergence, however, between Harris and Berne is that Berne postulates that everyone starts life in the *"I'm OK"* position, whereas Harris believes that life starts out *"I'm not OK, you're OK"*.[*citation needed*]

New Age author James Redfield has acknowledged[12] Harris and Berne as important influences in his best-seller The Celestine Prophecy. The protagonists in the novel survive by striving (and succeeding) in escaping from "control dramas" that resemble the games of TA.