Transaction Analysis --- A Model for Understanding Human Behavior

Transaction Analysis
   Was developed by Dr. Eric Berne
   Made popular by Tom Harris’ Book “I’m OK -- You’re OK”

Is not a value system
Is based on the assumptions that each person is responsible for his/her own
   Feelings   Thoughts   Behavior
   And that each person can control their own feelings, thoughts, and behavior

Dr. Eric Berne observed that the human brain functions like a tape recorder
   Everything that has ever happened is indelibly recorded
   . . . along with the feelings associated with the event

Dr. Walter Penfield - A Neurosurgeon experimented with open brain surgery trying to understand
   more about how the human brain operates
Dr. Penfield confirmed Eric Berne’s theory: “The human brain does functions very much like a
   tape recorder playing back events and associated feelings

There are three parts to the human brain . . .
   The Parent ego state is a collection past messages and events that occurred early in life
      that shape our opinions and beliefs
   Sometimes referred to as the “Learned Concepts Of Life”

Thoughts, Feelings, Attitudes and related behavioral patterns recorded in the past from outside
   sources . . . primarily your parents

Prejudicial Parent – The Prejudicial parent represents the attitudes and opinions held without
   objective reasoning ---- “Ought to’s” and “Shoulds”
      and direct our lives to meet the standards set by authority figures

Prejudicial Parent ---- Our lives are filled with “messages” about things like
   Religion   Politics   Work   Money

These guidelines are often taught to us in the form of slogans or mottoes
We often learn important messages by sayings that are repeated
Money is a good example . . .
   Familiar Parent Messages About Money
   “Don’t let it burn a hole in your pocket”
   “A Penny saved is a penny earned”
   “Save it for a rainy day”
   “Money doesn’t grow on trees”
Prejudicial Parent - Dress, Sex Roles, Speech
Other Examples
Management is out to get the laborers
What you do is more important that how you look
Kids should be seen and not heard
Men don’t wash dishes
Red tractors are better than green tractors
Good fences make good neighbors

Nurturing Parent --- The Nurturing parent is part of us that . . . “Takes care of” others.
Is sympathetic part of us ------ Wants to make others feel better.
Protects others.
The nurturing parent acts like Florence Nightingale always wanting to help people.

Examples . . .
“Boy you worked hard today.”
“Hey . . . Don’t worry about it . . . -- It could happen to anyone.”
“Anyone can make a mistake”
“I’ll take care of that for you.”

Critical Parent — The critical parent is the part of us that . . .
Finds fault and blames others, Criticizes others
Passes judgement, Puts others down
Examples . . .
“Can’t you do anything right?”
“Your late” “Can’t we ever depend on you.”
“You shouldn’t talk like that.”

Adult Ego State – The Adult Ego State is the part of us that deals objectively with reality.
It is sometimes referred to as the “computer part of us”

The Adult Ego state
Objectively deals with reality, Gathers information
Organizes, Tests reality
Estimates probabilities, Computes dispassionately
Makes decisions

Child Ego State ----- The Child Ego State represents the natural feelings of a child.
Impulses, Feelings and behavior that come Naturally to a child;
Contains recordings of early experiences
And how he/she felt about them and responded to them

Natural Child Ego State - Natural impulses and emotions of very young children
Impulsive, Self Centered, Pleasure loving, Anger, Fear
Happy, Affectionate, Rebellious, Sad, Aggressive
The Little Professor — The Little Professor represents . . .
   The innate unschooled wisdom of a child that intuitively understands how
   to manipulate others to get what he/she wants.
   The natural creative inquisitive nature.
   The need to figure things out.

Adapted Child Ego State — The Adapted Child represents.
   The modification of natural child to authority figures.
   Adapting to “oughts” and “shoulds” of parents / authority figures.
   The adapted child represents doing what you “should” do when you “should” do it.

Ego Portraits — Most people have a favorite ego state. . . one they spend more time in.

These “favorite” ego states may be represented by different size circles.

Primarily Parent ------ Can be describes as . . .
   Protective, Worried, Care Giving
   Demanding, Critical, Condescending
   Intimidating, Bossy
   Conservative, Careful

Examples of TV Personalities ----- Archie Bunker
Professions that favor this personality type . . .
   Teachers, Preachers, Priests
   Police and Military Officers
   Nuns, Nurses, Social Workers

   Can be described as . . .
   Logical, Intelligent, Analytical
   Objective, Rational, Organized
   Sensitive, Thoughtful

Examples of TV personalities
   Dr. Spock and Mr. Data
Professions that favor this personality type
   Engineers, Accountants
   Scientists, Researchers
   New broadcasters

Primarily Child ---- Can be describes as . . .
   Impulsive, Immature, Impatient
   Spontaneous, Creative, Curious
   Rebellious, Emotional, High strung
   Active, Fun Loving, Competitive

TV Personalities — Gilligan Robin Williams
Professions that favor this personality type
   Entertainers, Artists, Musicians, Architects, and Media Professionals
Transactions
A transaction is anything that happens between two people.
Involves both person’s ego state.
A transaction is always sent from one and only one ego state of the sender and is sent to a specific ego state of the receiver.

Complementary Transactions

Crossed Transactions

Implicit Transactions

Strokes
Eric Berne believed that every person has the need to be recognized by others.
Any recognition of another person’s presence is known as a stroke.
- A word
- A greeting
- A gesture
- A touch
Anything that says, “I know you are there.”

Strokes Stimulate Development
Infants will not grow and develop normally without strokes to stimulate the body chemistry.

Susan . . .
- Was brought to a hospital for observation
- 22 months old
- 15 pounds (average of a 5 month old)
- 28 inches long (average of 10 month old)
- Couldn’t walk or talk

Susan was diagnosed as “maternal deprivation syndrome”
Susan was provided much stroking by a “volunteer” mother.
After two months of treatment, Susan
- Became quite affectionate
- Gained 6 pounds
- Grew 2 inches
- Was able to crawl and walk

Need For Strokes
As a child grows older he/she learns to substitute words and gestures for physical strokes.
Each person seems to have a “stroke reservoir” that must be kept sufficiently filled in order for people to feel good about themselves.
Different people seem to have different sized reservoirs.
We seem to have “built-in stroke counters” and we like to keep the strokes fairly even.

“Hi!” “Hi”
“How are you?” “Fine, how are you?”
“Sure been dry lately.” “Yeah, really begin’in to hurt the crops”
“See ya around” “See ya”

Positive Strokes
A positive stroke is any recognition that is direct, appropriate, and relevant
Positive strokes leaves the other person feeling alive, alert, and significant
Positive strokes may be . . .
Complimentary
Affectionate

Positive Unconditional Strokes
The best stroke is a positive unconditional stroke
This is a stroke that says . . .
“I like you -- you’re OK” -- No strings attached
Positive unconditional strokes must be
Genuine, Honest, Straight

Examples
“That’s a neat looking shirt you have on.”
“I really liked the way you handled the meeting.”
“You really know how to close a sale.”
“I appreciate the tact you used with that customer.”
“Boy, it is sure a pleasure to work with you.”
“Honey, I just don’t know what I would do without you.”

Positive unconditional strokes are sometimes called “Warm Fuzzies”
Listening is one of the finest Warm Fuzzies you can give
Active listening
Gives feedback to the other person
Hears the feelings as well as the words
Concentrates on the needs of the other person

Other Unconditional Strokes
A Super Stroke is a positive unconditional stroke that comes from a very special person about something that is very important to you.
“Great job on your homework assignment”
Cotton Candy Strokes are positive strokes that sound good but lack meaning
“Pleased to meet you.”
Maintenance Strokes are simple transactions which . . .
Lack much content
Still give recognition
Keep communication lines open

Positive Conditional Strokes
Positive Conditional Strokes are strokes that have strings attached and are designed to modify another’s behavior.
Positive Conditional Strokes really say . . .
“I like you if . . .”
“You’re OK with me when . . .”

Examples . . .
“If you keep that up, you will get a big bonus.”
“When you work like that you really contribute to the team.”
“Son, I am really proud of you when you dress like that.”

Positive Conditional Strokes are also called “Plastic Fuzzies”

Negative Strokes
Strokes can also be negative
A put down
An insult
Laughing at someone
Physical abuse

Negative strokes are sometimes called
“Cold Pricklies

People who have difficulty accumulating enough positive strokes sometimes become skillful at setting people up to give them negative strokes
They become accustomed to negative strokes
Negative strokes become a way of life that makes sense to them

Positive and Negative Strokes
Negative strokes are not nearly as good as positive strokes
but they are a lot better than no strokes at all. at least the person’s presence is recognized
Both positive and negative strokes help fill a person’s stroke receiver,
but only positive strokes help people feel good about themselves