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Therapeutic Journey: Practice & Life



by James Allen
and Barbara Allen

"This extraordinary book is a must read! From an introductory guide to the therapeutic encounter for the novice to clear and accessible expositions of such topics as constructivism and the inner neurobiology of intersubjectivity, it does, indeed, offer us a therapeutic journey full of insight, wisdom, and joy."

Mary Goulding, MSW

This book is a collection of papers by Jim and Barbara Allen, who spent 40 years integrating mental health principles into their public and private lives and their teaching. The topics they write about range widely and include what to do after meeting the patient, types of treatment, trauma, social constructivism, working with children and adolescents, the biological underpinnings of transactional analysis and mental health interventions, family therapy, transference, rededication therapy, and social issues related to drug use, American Indian adolescents, the Oklahoma City bombing, war, and the Tulsa race riots of the 1920s. While neither solely a textbook nor a memoir, these papers can be used by both beginning and experienced practitioners.

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To Liberate the Spirit

by Alex Lawson

We are pleased to present here excerpts from the introductory speech given by Alex Lawson at the first conference of the Americas Transactional Analysis Association (ATAA) held in Canmore, Alberta, Canada in October 2004.

When I was asked to be the introductory speaker for the ATAA conference, I penned something I firmly believe and that has undergirded my ministry and my use of transactional analysis: I believe that at the core we are spiritual beings. We were not meant to be earthbound with worries, fears, anxieties, and depression; we were created for life in all its fullness. Only our misguided early beliefs about ourselves, others, and life, which become our script, rob us of the joy of living. The goal of all ministry and all therapy is to liberate the spirit.

We use transactional analysis theory, skills, philosophy, and caring to help those who turn to us to change their self-limiting beliefs, poor self-image, low self-esteem, and self-defeating behaviors. When we apply these fine insights, we are happy with who we are; our relationships are intimate, we are productive, we have energy and health, our lives have meaning and purpose, and we liberate the spirit.

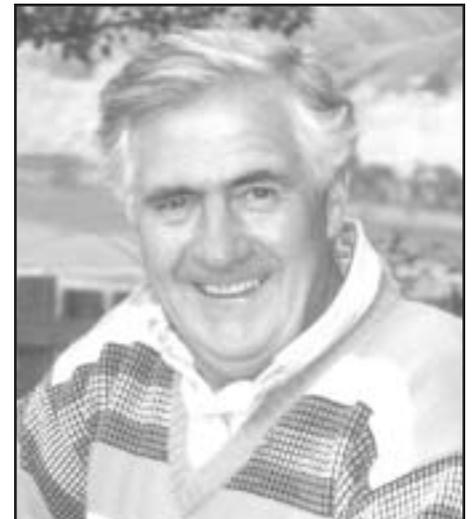
In liberating the spirit, we liberate the whole person. We may talk about body, mind, and spirit as if they were separate entities, but they are indivisible. We humans are beings in whom the sacred

and the secular, the physical and the spiritual, the human and the divine are wonderfully intertwined. All our therapy is a spiritual endeavor.

We do not mention belief much in our transactional analysis writings—we seldom find the word in the indexes of our publications—but Bob Goulding often talked about belief systems, and Richard Erskine and Marilyn Zalcman (1979) in their Eric Berne Memorial Scientific Award winning article, "The Racket System," wrote that when we are in script, we are replaying outdated beliefs about ourselves, other people, and the quality of life.

"When we free people from their hindering adaptations and scripts and help them to be the persons they were meant to be—and indeed already are—we liberate the spirit."

The beauty and strength of transactional analysis is that it deals with the whole person and respects the ability of people to make their own decisions and take charge of their lives. It does not label people by categorizing personality types or mental illnesses. Labeling is truly disabling; people will believe the label and think, "That's who I am." For example, I sat next to a woman at a dinner who told me she has multiple



sclerosis. I asked her if it was constant or varied. She replied that it came and went. I asked if she saw where she had some involvement in the fluctuations. "Oh, yes," she said, "I'm a Calvinist, I am your typical Type A personality, a perfectionist, and when things go wrong, I get stressed and my condition flares up." I wanted to tell her that being a perfectionist, as she labels herself, is not who she is, it is who she is not—that is, her Adapted Child and not her authentic self—and she is in charge.

Richard Erskine said at our Calgary Conference in 1996 that we have pathologized normal human behaviors and emotions. Claude Steiner (1974), in the Introduction to *Scripts People Live*, pointed out that the genius of Eric Berne was his break with labeling people with lengthy Latin or Greek names; instead, Berne talked

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Corporate Initiative to Spread Transactional Analysis in India

by C. Suriyaprakash
and I. A. Mohan Raj

*I*n a whirlwind tour of eight states in India (Kerala, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Uttaranchal, Rajasthan, Gujarat, and Delhi) in about 4 weeks, we conducted nine TA 101s in as many cities (Ernakulam, Bangalore, Nagpur, Mumbai, Allahabad, Dehradun, Jaipur, Ahmedabad and Delhi) during May-June 2005. The program was the brainchild of V. Karthik, director of Apex Laboratories based in Chennai, one of the leading pharmaceutical companies in India.

As part of his recruitment drive for new young employees, Karthik wanted to expose the youth of India to the principles, concepts, and effectiveness of transactional analysis. He and his team of sales managers went to the campuses of leading colleges in all of these states, selected the best talent, and pooled them in the respective cities for a 4-day capsule training: two days of TA 101 conducted by us and 2 days of training on "Self-Esteem and the Power of Believing" by Karthik and his team. And all of this occurred even before the candidates appeared for their

final interviews! At the end of the four days, suitable candidates were placed with the firm, and the rest went away with immense goodwill and a rich experience that they will cherish throughout their lives.

"This program was unique, perhaps the only one so far to have taken transactional analysis to such a wide audience in such a short time."

Over 500 participants attended these sessions. This is definitely a pioneering corporate initiative to spread transactional analysis among the most influential segment of our society: the youth. The response was excellent. Many felt a great sense of awareness and gratitude for having been exposed to the richness of transactional analysis so early in their lives.

Karthik himself has 20 years of experience with transactional analysis. He has been in advanced



V. Karthik

training for several years under the stewardship of Fr. George Kandathil. Although he did not feel the need to go through the certification process, he has applied transactional analysis in all areas of his personal and professional life. He pays personal attention to see that transactional analysis is part of all the training programs in his company, which prompted him to think of the enormous gesture of generosity just described.

It was a pleasure and privilege for us to be part of this process. It was a rich and energizing exercise hopping onto trains and flights every other day, moving from one city to the other, and facing a new bunch of lively young faces full of aspirations and zest. In spite of the sweltering

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Where Have We Been and Where Are We Going?

I found the letter from Fanita English (May-June *Script*) and the exchange between Pat Crossman and Jim Allen (current issue) very thought provoking. They made me think about the functions of our professional associations. Why do we belong to a particular association? What do our associations owe us in return for our dues (and for some of us, our volunteer work on behalf of the association)? What are the practical services that associations may provide? What are the social and psychological functions of professional associations?

Fanita's letter addresses the decline of transactional analysis training in the United States and the plans and hopes of the United States of America Transactional Analysis Association (USATAA) for addressing this situation independent of the ITAA. (There are additional efforts by the newly formed Americas Transactional Analysis Association [ATAA] seeking the renewal and unity of transactional analysis throughout North America.) Her comments carried me back to a crucial period in the political evolution of the ITAA, now 2 decades past, that had major consequences for the development of transactional analysis worldwide and its lack of development in the United States. It is a history that I think has been lost to many of our current practitioners, not only in the United States, but probably even more so in Europe.

During the early 1980s, the ITAA faced major decisions about its functions in support of the continuing development and recognition of transactional analysis. The association had become involved in the first phase of recognition of its training and certification procedures by the U.S. National Board of Health Certifying Organizations (NBHCO), which had been established to evaluate and accredit health-care-related trainings that occurred outside of university systems. The ITAA's examination process passed the first round of reviews with flying colors. The second and final round required extensive statistical measures of the reliability of exam procedures and would have involved a significant investment of money and volunteer time. At that same time, the ITAA Board of Trustees recognized that our membership was rapidly growing outside of the United States, and the trustees faced a serious choice. The decision was made not to pursue NBHCO recognition and to put our organizational resources into a structural and political reorganization to reflect and represent our truly international membership. The long-range planning task force was established by the board, chaired by myself and Jenni Hine and involving many others, to make recommendations for the restructuring of the ITAA.

It was a turning point for the association. In opting out of the NBHCO process, the board effectively eliminated the possibility of transactional analysis credentials maintaining economic viability in the United States. As Fanita points out in her letter, such recognition is further complicated by the incredible diversity of licensure laws in the 50 states. So, as a result of ITAA certification losing its economic viability, training programs in the United States collapsed. Neither the ITAA nor USATAA has yet to reposition itself successfully to provide ongoing, postgraduate professional development independent of certification and licensure (as have, for example, the gestaltists).

The eventual outcome of the long-range planning task force was disappointing for those of us who put several years of effort into the project. The structure we optimistically (and probably naively) proposed did not hold up in the long run. It could not withstand the forces of

competing personalities, political pressures, and nationalistic rivalries nor the complex demands of the economic and credentialing requirements

into working within the credentialing procedures and requirements of national governments and other professional associations. This has often paid off, with transactional analysis training being stable or growing in many countries and transactional analysis certification becoming a professionally and economically viable credential. I have great admiration for such efforts.

I also have considerable concern about the long-range consequences of pouring so many financial and time resources into training and certification while not providing more for those who are already certified. I know many transactional analysis colleagues who sign PTSTA contracts so as to stay in the training loop and to gain more recognition and influence in theory and practice. The fact is, I do not think our associations, ITAA included, give sufficient attention to Level I certified transactional analysts—often richly experienced senior practitioners—for their ongoing professional involvement: what they have to offer as teachers and supervisors and what they need for their own ongoing professional development outside of certification. I think we lose many people because our associations do not provide enough to our certified members.

With regard to the letters between Pat Crossman and Jim Allen, I think they invite us to think deeply about the nature and function of theory and theory evolution. I imagine these letters will also stimulate further comment from our readers. This correspondence underscores our professional responsibility to teach our trainees and members how to think rather than what to think. We can recognize significant contributions to the history and evolution of our ideas without embalming or enshrining them, and it is the responsibility of transactional analysis associations worldwide to ensure the questioning and development of theory and technique through our conferences, journals, and newsletters.

I invite vigorous response from our readers. I want to thank Fanita and Pat for their contributions and their willingness to accept a significant amount of editing by Robin Fryer and me to make the letters clearer, more focused, and succinct.

Bill Cornell can be reached at 145 44th St., Pittsburgh, PA 15044, USA, or at bcornell@nauticom.net.



"In opting out of the NBHCO process, the board effectively eliminated the possibility of transactional analysis credentials maintaining economic viability in the United States."

of various regions of the world. From my personal point of view, the ITAA continues to provide essential international services that are not, and probably cannot, be duplicated by regional associations. But our grand vision of wonderfully cooperative national, regional, and international associations has yet to come. Two decades later I still hear that the ITAA is an American organization—an absurd suggestion that flies in the face of history.

This is, of course, my personal recollection and view of ITAA's history, our political decisions, and some of the consequences. I imagine there are other perspectives and welcome discussions of where we have been and where we are going.

Many transactional analysis associations, in contrast to the ITAA, have put enormous resources

ITAA The Script

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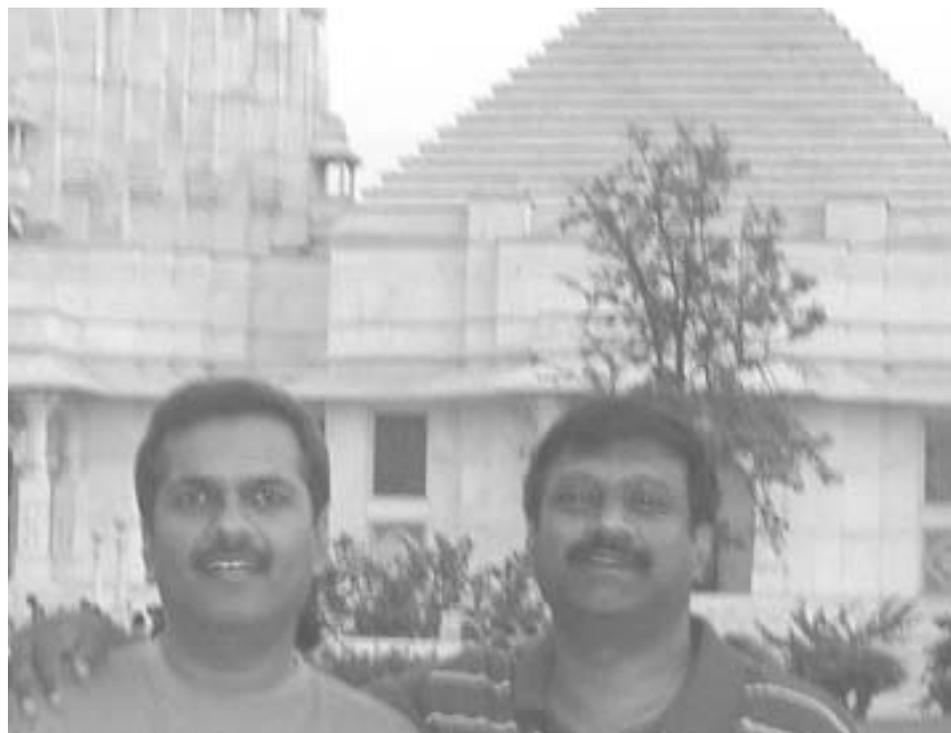
Corporate Initiative

continued from page 1

heat wave (at times close to 50 degrees Celsius [122 degrees Fahrenheit]) in North India, we enjoyed the experience because of both the participants' enthusiasm and the fulfillment of being part of this pioneering effort. In many places we visited, ours was the first transactional analysis program conducted there. Thus, this program was unique, perhaps the only one so far to have taken transactional analysis to such a wide audience in such a short time.

Karthik is planning to repeat the program in coming years. With such keen enthusiasts around, transactional analysis is set to make a mark in the corporate and social fabric of India!

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Suriyaprakash and I. A. Mohan Raj at the Birla Temple in Jaipur, India

Bernean Poker

by James A. McKenna

Eric Berne influenced millions of lives both before and after his death. Although I came into transactional analysis after Berne's death, I had the good fortune of being taught by ITAA Teaching Members—including Fanita English, Natalie and Morris Haimowitz, and Lois Johnson—who knew him when he was an avid poker player. And interestingly, although I used transactional analysis theories and methods in my professional life as a clinician, supervisor, and trainer over many years, it was the lessons I learned from Berne about poker that affected my life the most. By reading his writings and understanding his theory, I improved my game and garnered essential information about myself and my opponents.

One of the highlights of transactional analysis conferences for many years was the Eric Berne Memorial Poker Games. I am sure that they are still going on. I never did too well in those games. I went mostly for the comradery and did not really know what I was doing swimming with such "sharks" as Abe Wagner and Ken Windes. However, after I retired, I took what Eric Berne said more seriously: that you could always tell a person's script by the way he or she played poker. Well, since then I have done some major work on both my poker game and my script. One of the things I learned playing poker was how hard it was for me to keep my mouth shut. I would give every bluff away because my mother had said, "Jimmy, I know every time you are lying." And, she did. Well, I overcame that "script tell" and stopped looking people in the eyes when I was bluffing. Berne was right. My script about telling lies was showing at the poker table.

As some of you may know, I have been writing about the psychology of poker for the past 6

years—both in the *Gambling Times* and *Poker Player*, magazines that are distributed in casino poker rooms all over the United States and Canada. In fact, I am now a poker player trapped in a writer's body. Besides influencing my game, Berne influenced my writing, as can be seen by the titles of some of my articles, including "Psychological Games and Gaming" (2003e), "Player Themes, Parts 1-4" (2003a, 200b, 2003c, 2003d), and "The 'If Onlys'" (2004).

"Berne noticed how much poker is a metaphor for how people live their scripts. Some are winners, some losers, and many are nonwinners who break even."

Berne noticed how much poker is a metaphor for how people live their scripts. Some are winners, some losers, and many are nonwinners who break even. I decided to do a more detailed study and discovered Mike Caro's (1984) book on the body language of poker, referred to in poker as "tells." What he had to say made sense, but it did not hold up when different personality types were considered. So, I looked at another transactional analysis person's work (Kahler, 1989) and began to study how different personality types "tell" on themselves.

Script themes (Berne, 1970) are eventually all played out in the game of poker. For example, there are "Arachne" players who keep making the same mistakes and weave themselves into losing. There are a good number of "Sisyphus" players who try harder and almost win. You will find players who never seem to get both good hands and win, like "Tantalus." Many players remain serious and will not even celebrate a good win for fear of the sword of "Damocles." Most regular players are retired men and women who are just there "over and over"—like the theme

from the Greek myth of Baucus and Laurel—to enjoy the fruits of their leisure. They just break even and call it a day until the next day.

I even took my Stroking Profile (McKenna, 1974)—which measures how people give, take, ask for, and refuse to give strokes—and applied it to the game of poker. I call it the Gambler's Awareness Profile (GAP) (McKenna, 2005). The Stroking Profile reveals life scripts; the GAP reveals a person's strengths and liabilities in gaming. It measures these four areas:

- **Betting:** Many players will only bet on hunches; others will be very structured and their bets are based on odds. How people invest (give) their money can tell a lot about them as players.
- **Managing:** This is one area in which most players can improve. Money management (take) is one of the essential keys to survival in any casino. Some players will use stakes that they cannot afford to lose. Often, a player may play with what is called "stolen money" (money taken from household or business budgets) to gamble; this is always a mistake.
- **Thinking:** Playing thinking styles can range from passive to aggressive and from structured to impulsive. Somewhere in the middle of these traits is ideal. Casinos love nonthinking play and may even encourage players by providing complementary liquor. Using odds (ask for) ensures better results.
- **Quitting:** I have asked players, "Do you have a win/loss rule?" and many did not know what I meant. Quitting (refuse to give) is an important skill in gaming. Some players will get ahead but stay too long.

My 6 years of research into the dynamics surrounding poker were prompted by what Eric Berne said about how poker players reveal their scripts. It resulted in my book, *Beyond Tells: Power Poker Psychology* (McKenna, 2005), so now hopefully Berne will continue to influence more lives.



As to "what do you say after you say hello?" these days I say, "Shuffle up and deal!"

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TA CONFERENCES WORLDWIDE

October 27-29, 2005: Nashville, Tennessee. USA TA Association Conference. Contact: Suzanne Wilson, 229 Ward Circle, Suite B-21, Brentwood, TN 37027, USA; phone: 615-373-0443; email: psswlp@bellsouth.net .

JANUARY 29-FEBRUARY 5, 2006: Frenchman's Cove, Jamaica. Eleventh Annual USATAA Gathering. Contact: Dianne Maki, 908-234-1873, email: makisethi@aol.com .

JULY 26-29 2006: Istanbul, Turkey. World TA Conference sponsored by ITAA and TAD. Contact: Fatma Torun Reid, Sarigul Sok 15/5, Caddebostan, Istanbul 81060, Turkey; tel: +90 216 302 7598; fax: +90 216 363 3484; email: frreid@yahoo.com .

SEPTEMBER 7-9 2006: Bahia, Brazil. XXVI Latin American TA Association Conference. Contact: Antonio Pedreira (ALAT President) at atpedreira@uol.com.br or call 71 3237-2035/3331-6855; or contact Noeliza Bianchini at noeliza@directnet.com.br .

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- Institute with Vann Joines: "Introduction to Energy Psychology" (Thurs., 27 October, 9-5)

For details about these preconference offerings, the theme and program, hotel registration, and the Nashville area as well as an online registration form, please visit www.usataaconference.org

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- (full price: \$150; \$125 before 7/31) _____
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CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

Transactional Analysis in Organizations: New Developments



Günther Mohr



Thomas Steinert

Deadline: 15 December 2005

by Günther Mohr and Thomas Steinert

For the last 2 years, we have been engaged in a project to achieve a more complete understanding of what transactional analysis in organizations means to those who use it around the world. At this point we are interested in collecting articles published from 1995 to 2005 that have not been previously published in either the *Transactional Analysis Journal* or *The Script* newsletter. We also hope to stimulate organizational transactional analysis practitioners who may not be ready to write up an entire article or who find writing in English a challenge to submit less formal statements, hypotheses, observations, or training or workshop materials. We will then work with such authors to polish their writing and perhaps work on translation. Our plan is to integrate both the articles and the less formal statements and other materials into one publication, a second volume of selected articles on transactional analysis in organizations. The title of the book will be *Transactional Analysis in Organizations: New Developments*.

We would like to see this book focus on organizational work in emerging-market countries (former second- and third-world countries). Our commitment is to give voice to practitioners from the worldwide transactional analysis community who may normally not have easy access to transactional analysis media. To this end we are interested in shared understandings as well as differences in the organizational application of transactional analysis with respect to culture and traditions. For example:

- What common understandings do transactional analysis practitioners worldwide share about
- leadership
 - interventions
 - the role of a trainer and a consultant
 - the roles of organizations in various cultures worldwide and the way these perceptions affect individuals and vice versa
- What differences are there about
- the models and meanings of economic success
 - the meaning of growth for individuals and cultural expectations for how growth can be supported
 - the self-concept of employees

By considering these questions, the worldwide community of practitioners in the organizational field will be enriched, and this richness will then be brought to a wider public through the book. This publication will increase access to transactional analysis organizational know-how through stimulating discussions on the topics covered in the book, increasing conference presentations, and encouraging contacts among organizational practitioners.

We held a panel at the 2004 transactional analysis conference in Bangalore, India, on the subject of "Transactional Analysis in Organizations for One World." Participants on the panel focused on the following key issues:

- ethics in organizations
- global business cultures
- dealing with diversity
- perceptual distortions
- differences in GOs and NGOs
- differences in profit organizations
- shared core values

This panel was part of our project to collect information about how organizational transactional analysis practitioners work in different cultures. We will continue with similar efforts as we gather material for the book.

Contributions to the second volume of articles on transactional analysis in organizations (which is authorized by the ITAA) are welcome and should be sent to Günther Mohr, TSTA (O) at infomohr-coaching.de or Dr. Thomas Steinert, TSTA (O) at thomas.steinert@mt-berater.ag. The deadline for submissions is 15 December 2005.

Congratulations to Successful Examinees

Wellington, New Zealand, CTA Exams—11 November 2004

- Rob Sandle, New Zealand (psychotherapy)
- Marina Tomasevic, New Zealand (psychotherapy)
- Christina Del Medico, Australia (psychotherapy)

EXAMINERS: Heather Foley (chair), Elana Leigh (chair), Sean Manning (chair); Annie Rogers, Jan Coleman, Sue Cornforth, Jo Stuthridge, Judy Morris, Maurice Vaughan, Odette Reader, Jan Grant, Jan Plummer

EXAM SUPERVISOR: Charlotte Daellenbach

PROCESS FACILITATOR: Trudi Newton

Keeping Transactional Analysis an Open System

Dear Editor:

I read with interest Bill Cornell's interview with Graham Barnes in the *April Script* ("The Personal Is Political," 2005). I was surprised and somewhat encouraged to read Graham stating candidly that he thinks transactional analysis is a "closed system" (p. 6) and comparing it to psychoanalysis in that way. As he said, to be a transactional analyst "one must accept and agree to certain theoretical premises and the techniques that are based on those premises" (p. 6). I agree. However, he failed to comment on the inherent dangers of such a closed thinking system.

Closed systems are not OK. A cult is a closed system; so is an abusive family. A closed system is like a house without windows. Secrets accumulate in the backroom until the system implodes or runs out of control, or until external controls are imposed. A closed system it is unable to monitor itself so that the most primitive and potentially pathological influence may assume control. The problem is that innocent and vulnerable people get hurt, and people matter more than any theory.

Transactional analysis as it is currently promoted and taught around the world is based in large part on a number of Eric Berne Memorial Scientific Award (EBMSA) winning models or theories on the subject of psychopathology and its treatment. Central to these are: the script matrix created by Claude Steiner, the egogram created by Jack Dusay, the drama triangle created by Steve Karpman, Jacqui Schiff's reparenting and passivity confrontation, and my own deplorable paper on permission and protection (for which I won the EBMSA and later returned it). There is no conclusive proof that any of these models or procedures are effective or that they are not harmful. They have been reified into a rigid "central dogma," invulnerable to criticism and viewed as based on so-called scientific evidence.

For example, the script matrix gives us a diagram of a child hanging down between the parents in a victim position and being pierced with negative injunctions from an assumed "witch mother," injunctions that like curses will script the child to a life of misery. The now famous diagram fails to provide any information as to how and why the child got there in the first place or what was going on between the real parents at the time! Surely to understand pathology it is necessary to start with a healthy model—an open system—and then study the effects of uncertainty on this system. We do not need to propose the existence of an invisible witch mother to explain why things go wrong with families. We do not need to return to magical medicine.

For its part, the egogram assumes that the human psyche is activated by psychic energy that is invisible but constant and can therefore be shifted from one ego state to another (assuming that there are no leaks!). But ego states are not historical entities occupying psychic space. They are metaphors. They are not real. And there is no such thing as psychic energy. This is a relic of the nineteenth century's preoccupation with steam, and if it was once believed, it is out of date. And even if there were such a substance, it would not remain constant. The human psyche is not a closed system as Dusay claims. In fact, the brutal practice of passivity confrontation is based on this mistaken notion. Passivity is often the result of exhaustion or fear, not energy that is compressed and thus dangerous.

The drama triangle is interesting, but Karpman fails to explain that the phenomenon of victims, rescuers, and persecutors switching places is characteristic only of a closed system, such as a

prison environment. There are real persecutors, real rescuers, and real victims in the world, and too often I have heard the phrase "Don't Rescue!" used to stifle human empathy and covertly encourage the persecutor.

Reparenting and passivity confrontation is, of course, the most troubling. Following the death of Jacqui Schiff in 2002, I published a letter in *The Script* in which I challenged three basic assumptions supporting her theories and procedures. First, schizophrenia is not caused by negative parental injunctions; current medical opinion suggests that it is a brain disease, often amenable to medication. Schizophrenics are not by definition homicidal; they are frightened by the bizarre nature of the world they experience and often hear voices. They do not do well with heavy confrontation, and family involvement is encouraged. Second, schizophrenia cannot be cured by regressing patients back to an imaginary infantile state. The biological clock cannot be turned back. Ego states are not historical entities, residing somewhere in the cerebral cortex, that can be cathected and decathected, although people can be intimidated or hypnotized into simulating regression. The videotape model for human memory is just not true. Penfield's famous flashbacks were not historical memories but merely brief hallucinations and of little significance (see Neisser, 1988; Rosenfield, 1988). Third, the theory of passivity confrontation, which is a euphemism for a policy of cruel and degrading punishment, has been justified by reference to experiments with laboratory rats (Schiff et al., 1990)!

Nevertheless, all the models and theories I have just mentioned are revered by some as "essential truths" that must be defended at all cost, even if it means discounting and denying evidence that might challenge the integrity of the belief in question and thus bring down the whole house of cards.

I accepted my award for permission and protection in 1976 and I returned it in 1979, stating at that time that it was in no way a scientific paper and that if accepted blindly could lead to complicated transference and countertransference confusion. Eric Berne had sought to avoid this problem by keeping the information flow between therapist and client Adult to Adult.

In 1994, the silence about problems related to reparenting was broken by Alan Jacob's courageous *TAJ* article entitled "Theory as Ideology: Reparenting and Thought Reform." In it he raised the question as to whether the abuse that occurred in the Cathexis system resulted from the theory itself, in particular the concepts of passivity and passivity confrontation. However, Jacobs's paper received little attention within the organization. Then, in 1999 the ITAA addressed the whole reparenting problem with an entire issue of the *Journal*, which included articles from happy reparented kids who now were members of the ITAA and some suggestion about the possibility of sadism coming up in countertransference situations. But the message was clear: "Mistakes were made, but we don't do that anymore." There was regret for the pain caused to the organization but not a word of apology to the victims or their families, and no evaluation of theory. This is amazing considering the media coverage and the fact that Dr. Margaret Singer devoted a chapter of her book *Crazy Therapies* (Singer & Lalach, 1996) to the subject. But a closed system is like a house without windows!

As Eric observed, the Little Fascist is rooted in people but usually kept in check by compassion and empathy. Given the right conditions, however—a subservient population, relative permission and assumed protection, and a sense of entitlement—anything goes.

The Hippocratic oath stipulates, "Above all, do no harm." Harm has been done that cannot be undone, and as transactional analysis in its current unregulated and unexamined state spreads across the world, more harm will be done.

This is not the way transactional analysis started, nor is it how I remember it from 1965 when I joined Eric's seminar. In those days, transactional analysis was compared to a Model T Ford: inexpensive, reliable, and safe enough to carry the average family to health and happiness. It was a challenge and a reaction to the rigid control of the psychoanalytic establishment, which had become—guess what—a closed system! The problem was that the vehicle had no brakes!

I understand that this letter may be disquieting to some, but I hope that it also gets a few people thinking again.

Patricia Crossman,
Kensington, California, USA

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Dear Pat:

Thank you for your letter to *The Script*. We are indebted to you for helping us open up transactional analysis and further its development.

While I think no one can deny Berne's brilliance, it has been half a century since he was elaborating his ideas. Consequently, we need to reexamine them and their effects in different contexts and in the light of later findings. It seems to me that this involves identifying with his creativity, not internalizing him. Many of us, including you, are in the process of doing that, but I especially want to thank you for reminding us of the need to do so, and to make sure that transactional analysis does not become a closed system.

We may assess how successful these efforts have been differently, and that is fine as this is not an area in which to expect agreement. The important things, I believe, are that we be engaged in the process, that people not be harmed, and that people be provided the best care we can provide—and that this be demonstrated, to the degree possible, by well-designed outcome studies. In the early days, we did not have these, and, as you note, concepts were taken "on faith" or were said to have "scientific" backing when they really did not have the backing we would accept today. Recently, however, we have begun to see outcome studies such as those of Novey (2002) and Thunnissen, Duivenvoorden, and Trijsburg (2001), and, with new connections between training institutes and universities in some countries, tests of some of our basic concepts (e.g., Temple, 2004). In all areas of care, the time has come for evidence-based practice—at least to the degree that current methodology permits. When it does not, we need to be clear that we are working with what we hope are useful ideas, but that our interventions, however well-intentioned, are best considered experimental.

Today, we also are beginning to enjoy a harvest of benefits coming from the explosion of research in the neurosciences during the last 20 years. As a result, as you point out, many of the ideas accepted as "fact" 40 years ago are no longer tenable: "psychic energy" and the "tape recorder" model of memory, for example. However, we need to keep in mind that the ideas we entertain today may also look quaint by the year 2025.

Hopefully, we can learn from the mistakes of the past. However, some of our practices, even those based on questionable theoretical underpinnings, may still be useful. Indeed, I think many are supported by newer understandings from neurophysiology and so should not be discarded just because of their original justifications. To reject them outright is, I believe, akin to throwing out the proverbial baby with the dirty bath water. Rather, we need constantly to reassess them in light of new knowledge.

It is important to be as pragmatic as we can be; to look at the effects of our interventions, to make serious efforts to check distortions created by our constructions of such ideas as "reality," "health," "pathology," and "cure"; and to be sensitive to contexts in which our constructions do not fit or may actually be destructive. As you point out, there are real victims of real oppression in the world!

It is a misfortune when the papers that won the Eric Berne Award are regarded as "essential truths" rather than as significant developments in their particular contexts. Surely, the goal of intellectual endeavors is to further the conversation, not end it.

Today, I think we see in the transactional analysis community a growing consensus that it is important to have a free flow of information, a questioning attitude, and a willingness to reevaluate our work and to correct course when that seems appropriate. For your efforts to keep us going in this direction, thank you. The world certainly does not need another vehicle without brakes!

So, I draw different and much more optimistic conclusions than you do about transactional analysis today. It seems to me that it has made and can make significant contributions to three areas that today are very much research- and evidence-based: cognitive-behavioral therapy; the emerging new positive psychology approaches; and what I expect will be a major emphasis for the next generation: mentalizing or psychological mindedness. Even within more traditional transactional analysis, however, we are witnessing the emergence of several "flavors"—the most recent being constructivist and relational—that seem to me quite different from some of the "schools" as Barnes described them many years ago in the sense of being more open, more willing to incorporate other ideas, and less convinced of possessing The Truth. Let us hope so!

Jim Allen, ITAA President,
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, USA

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Can You Help Us Find These People?

We are trying to locate the following people, all of whom wrote one or more articles for the *Transactional Analysis Journal* between 1971 and January 1993. If you know where they are and can supply postal and/or email addresses or phone and/or fax numbers, please contact Lisa Rosenstreich at the ITAA office at lisar@itaa-net.org or by phone at 510-625-7720 or fax at 510-625-7725. *Time is of the essence, so we would be grateful to have any information you can offer as soon as possible.*

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Liberate the Spirit

continued from page 1

about strokes, ego states, life positions, transactions, scripts, and games.

We live at a time when many people have low self-esteem. Poor self-image has been described as the malaise of our time. Many are unhappy with who they are, how they look, and how they function. Let me tell you a story about "The Troll's Mirror," my version of part of an old Hans Christian Andersen fairy tale. Once upon a time, there was a mirror that, when a person looked into it, reflected back all that was bad. Anything flawed, ugly, undesirable, or unbecoming was exaggerated, while anything nice, pure, good, or beautiful was diminished until it virtually disappeared. One day the troll's mirror shattered, and many people got a tiny sliver of it in their eye, so small that they did not know that it was there. But from that day forward, they went around seeing the worst in people and finding fault with everything and everyone, especially themselves.

All of us were reared in a house of mirrors with as many distortions as a fairground house of mirrors. We all look into the troll's mirror and see ourselves, not as we are, but as we believe ourselves to be.

"We are beings in whom the sacred and the secular, the physical and the spiritual, the human and the divine are wonderfully intertwined. All our therapy is a spiritual endeavor."

For example, a tall woman who came to see me sat with her feet tucked awkwardly under her chair. I told her she looked uncomfortable. She replied that she always sat that way because she did not want anyone to see her feet. When I asked why, she replied that they were big and ugly. I asked her to put her feet out where I could see them. They looked perfectly ordinary to me. When I asked her what size shoe she wore, she said eight. Obviously, as a tall woman, she did not have big feet. When I asked her where she learned that she had big feet, she told me her father always called her "Big Foot George." At a time in her life when she was gangly and awkward, her father would remark, "Here comes Big Foot George." And because the man who loved her said she had big feet, she continued to believe it. Surely, we think, this woman must know every time she buys a pair of shoes that she does not have big feet. We think that way because we think a fact will change a belief. Not so; the belief will persist even when the facts contradict it. We think that we live in a rational world. Seeing is believing is our credo. But as Marshall McLuhan is reported to have said, "I wouldn't have seen it if I hadn't believed it." We will see what we believe and swear to it.

Quinton Reynolds (1950/1999, pp. 201-202), in his biography of judge Samuel Lebowitz, recounted how upon retiring from the bench, the judge was feted at a dinner attended by judges, police chiefs, lawyers, and prosecutors. During the evening, a police chief described how when there was a crime, the first thing the police did was to look for an eyewitness, but in the courtroom, Judge Lebowitz gave little credence to such testimony. The chief wondered aloud why that was. Judge Lebowitz responded by asking those in the audience who smoked Camel cigarettes to write down on slips of paper where in the illustration on the Camel box the Arab camel driver was: leading the camel or sitting on it. After writing down their answers, Judge Lebowitz read them aloud: Only one person recalled that there was no camel driver on the package. Lebowitz pointed out that they only "saw" one because he suggested there was one, a striking

example of the failure of eyewitness testimony, even among those who are well trained and not in a stressful situation.

All of us, daily, look into the troll's mirror. We do not see our actual image. We see and believe the early critical messages we heard about ourselves. We recall the early scenes and the damning words, so much so that we believe the worst about ourselves—not only about how we look, but how we are as persons, including our abilities, our place in the world, and the attitude of others toward us.

"The beauty and strength of transactional analysis is that it deals with the whole person and respects the ability of people to make their own decisions and take charge of their lives."

This is bad stuff. How many eating difficulties have their roots in the troll's mirror? A woman weighs 79 pounds and is badly undernourished, yet she is on a diet; I ask her what her goal is: "I want to lose 6 pounds." When she looks in a mirror and does not like what she sees, the troll's voice is saying, "If you were 6 pounds less, kid, you'd look great," but he did not say less than what.

Because of the troll's mirror, many people are trying to change how they are and how they look. It is a futile pursuit. They have bought into conditional OKness: I'm only OK if. . . I'll be OK when. . . Instead of seeing it as our birthright, something we were born with, they believe that OKness, like God's love, must be earned or deserved.

I remember being at Mount Madonna for training with Mary and Bob Goulding. Michael Conant was the visiting faculty, and I decided to do some work with him. I knew what I wanted to do: I wanted to feel wanted. I was born into poverty. One story is that my father fainted twice at his work. The doctor said, "The man's starving. He is working too hard and eating too little. He is giving his children the milk to drink while he drinks water." It was into this milieu that I was born, my mother at her wit's end. Another child was the last thing she needed or wanted, and she has told me many tales of her rejection of me. In the workshop with Michael, he had me lie on a mattress and flail and make sounds like a baby; I did so reluctantly. I did not want to relive that rejection. Soon I began to laugh. My laughter and that of the rest of the trainees who joined in filled the room. Michael asked me what I had discovered. I discovered in a new way something I have believed and preached about for years: I am a child of God, and my mother was a human being with all the frailties of our kind. She was in a desperate situation, but it was not my mother who determined my worth. I am a child of God.

Our birthright—our OKness—is not something conferred upon us, it is not even something that can be conferred. No matter how loving our parents are, they are always inadequate. In fact, the human baby is far too wonderful for parents to meet all of its needs. We parents can do our best, and I trust we will, but to paraphrase Lawrence Le Shan: We are gardeners, not mechanics. We do not have control over our children's growth and development; we are not mechanics who can create then modify and fine-tune their creation. We are more like gardeners who choose the environment with care, who plant the seed, who make sure there is proper nutrition, shelter, the best conditions, and protection from the elements, but we cannot do the growing. The growing is the child's business and God's.

Because we do not like who we are, we adapt to what we think we ought to be. We pretend we are different from who we really are: We wear masks, we put up false fronts, we are afraid to let

people see us as we are, and we wonder, "If you really knew me, would you still love me?" And, of course, we suspect, "No, you wouldn't."

Modern society does not look kindly on our façades and masks. If an artist were to draw a picture of our false fronts, he would probably draw a beautiful southern mansion with pillared entrance and red-carpeted steps, with stained glass windows and walls glistening white in the afternoon sun, while round the back, propping the whole thing up, is a tacky little shack. That is the common belief and that is the big lie. The truth is that the front we put up is not nearly as beautiful and acceptable and wonderful as the person behind it. It never is.

Each person is much better—more able, more capable, more beautiful, and more lovable—than he or she believes himself or herself to be. The beauty of therapy is that it enables folks to find, see, and own that inner world of the spirit—the authentic self—and to be congruent with it. Carl Rogers (1961) said, "When we find out about ourselves, the facts are always friendly" (p. 25). That statement is an article of faith with me. I do therapy because I believe that people are always, invariably, better than they believe. I believe that behind the façade there is a person of real worth. I have no hesitation in taking people on that inward journey. I do so with confidence, for I know that the results will be rewarding. To use a metaphor, the kingdom of God is within you. If this were not so, I would not do therapy for one more day. What would be the point if people were to learn that their greatest fears are true and they are unlovable? As therapists, we help them to discover the truth about who they are, as the wonderful Biblical saying goes, "You shall know the truth and the truth will make you free."

"Our birthright—our OKness—is not something conferred upon us, it is not even something that can be conferred. No matter how loving our parents are, they are always inadequate."

No child of God is unlovable. The art of therapy is to call forth the true person within every created individual. I believe that people are born OK. If they do not see themselves that way, they are looking into the troll's mirror and have come to us to learn the truth. When we free people from their hindering adaptations and scripts and help them to be the persons they were meant to be—and indeed, already are—we liberate the spirit, and what a joyful privilege it is to be part of that wonderful process.

I also believe that people are aware that they are not leading the lives they could be living. My son, Dave, who works with people who have developmental difficulties, is tremendously successful. I think the reason is that he works on the principle that every human being, even if brain damaged, has the ability to determine what is quality of life for him or her. And if we can help the person to attain that quality of life, his or her misbehavior will stop. For example, a man would not get out of bed or go to work, and at night he would trash the kitchen. He had "psychotic episodes" and was on heavy medication, sedated up to his eyeballs. After a year, he was still belligerent and violent. Then Dave took over. In a matter of weeks, the fellow was getting up, taking care of his hygiene, making his breakfast and lunch, and Dave drove him to work. They went to ball games, he did his banking, and his medication was reduced to a puffer once a day. A complete transformation. The former staff said, "But you drive him to work when he could take the bus." Yes, that man had decided that quality of life for him was to be driven to work, a small price to pay to see him happy and productive. It was not that simple, of course; a great deal of patience, skill, and caring were required. And yet it was, in another way, indeed that simple.

Everyone has the ability to discern what constitutes quality of life for him or her and is restless until it is achieved. What a marvelous profession we are in! We are the ones to whom people come because they are not as happy as they think they ought to be; they recruit us to assist them in their quest, and how wonderful it is to see people claim their OKness, their spirituality, and their power.

To be clear, it is not our role to help them to be the person they think they ought to be; that is a fruitless pursuit, probably an adaptation. Our role is to help them to be who they are, to be their full integrated, authentic selves, body, mind and spirit (Erskine & Moursund, 1988). It is my hope that we all learn to be liberators of the spirit, for then, as the ancient Prophet said 3 centuries ago, "Those who liberate their spiritual selves shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, and wonders of all wonders—they shall walk, and not be afraid" (my paraphrase of Isaiah 40:31).

Alex Lawson, a coal miner in Scotland, came to Canada as a bagpiper. He was ordained into the United Church of Canada and is now retired. When in Saskatchewan, he founded the Moose Jaw Family Life Education Centre and transactional analysis training center. His work there was the subject of an hour-long National Film Board documentary. He was awarded an honorary doctorate for his model of ministry integrating transactional analysis and pastoral ministry. Alex can be reached at 1249 4 Ave. N., Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada T1H 0K7, or by email at alexlawson@shaw.ca .

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KEEPING IN TOUCH

Latin American Region

Jim Allen attended the **Congresso Brasileiro Análise Transaccional** in Bento Gonçalves, Brazil, 26-28 May 2005 and is pleased to report that transactional analysis is thriving there. He presented a preconference institute on neuroconstructivist transactional analysis, which was enthusiastically received (photo at right). Jim also reports that the Latin American Transactional Analysis Association (ALAT) is alive and well; they recently had a meeting in Lima, Peru. The next meeting of ALAT will be 7-9 September 2006 in Bahia, Brazil.



Jim Allen with some of the participants who attended his institute at the Brazilian Transactional Analysis Conference

Asian and Pacific Region

Jessica Leong presented a TA 101 in Hong Kong organized by the University of Hong Kong master's of social sciences (counseling) program in the Department of Social Work and Social Administration in conjunction with the Hong Kong Professional Counselling Association. It was held on 20-22 January 2005, and the participants included social workers, clinical psychologists, teachers, medical/paramedical personnel, and counselors (photo below).



Participants from the ERTAA seminar (standing left to right): Peg Schumann, Angelus Croce, Fred Clark, Art Hohmuth, Marian Weisberg, Sharon Massey, and Ravi Sethi; (below) Tom Nissley and Dianne Maki

North American Region

Jim McKenna writes, "Hello to all my friends in the ITAA. I have been enjoying semiretirement and 6-day weekends, doing only individual or family therapy and no groups or training for the last 6 years. Instead, I use my 6 days 'off' to write and do poker research. The result is a regular column in *Poker Player* magazine (Gambling Times) and a book about how poker players live their lives the way they play poker. It's titled *Beyond Tells: Power Poker Psychology*. Eric Berne knew what he was saying when he said, 'You can tell a person's script by the way he plays poker.'" (See Jim's article on page 3 of this issue.)

The annual seminar of the **Eastern Regional Transactional Analysis Association (ERTAA)** was held this year in Princeton New Jersey, from 30 April to 1 May 2005. Lynn Taska, PhD, presented her research on methods of both identifying childhood victims of sexual abuse and treatment interventions. Her research is probably the only long-term follow-up study of abused children and the effects of particular cognitive treatment interventions. The theme of her talk emphasized that shame and attribution

(i.e., what meaning the victim makes of the event) are enduring aftereffects of childhood sexual abuse. The presentation included considerable discussion about shame, guilt, resilience in victims, methods to help children make sense of the experience of abuse, and the importance of being able to talk about the violation, especially to an adult. Effective intervention strategies with this population were demonstrated. Lynn offered a number of handouts with ques-

tionnaires, and the seminar group had ample opportunity to process reactions to the material as well as discuss clinical experiences and perspectives on this complicated topic (photo above).

In addition, an educational workshop on "Transactional Analysis in the 21st Century: Transforming Lives and Systems" was offered on 29 April prior to the seminar. Twelve people attended the class, which was given by Marian

Weisberg TSTA, Fred Clark, TSTA, and Tom Nissley, CTA. The intent of the workshop was to revisit transactional analysis concepts and teach some theory as well as to demonstrate practice. During the course of the workshop, contracts, ego states, games, rackets, transactions, and script theory were taught and demonstrated through exercises and lecture. Team teaching by the three instructors worked well, as the leaders were able to spell each other throughout the day. Participants reported that it was a lively and rich educational experience.

The next major gathering of transactional analysis enthusiasts in the United States will be at the USATAA conference in Nashville, Tennessee, 27-29 October 2005 (see the ad on page 4 of this issue or visit www.usataaconference.org for details). As Dianne Maki, USATAA General Coordinator, writes, "You are warmly invited to join us in Nashville, whether you come from the United States or elsewhere. See you there!"

All Regions

Bahman Dagostar writes, "I have worked with transactional analysis in Iran for about 18 years. I was trained under the supervision of Ms. Coburn in Michigan in 1974-75 and have translated into Farsi or Persian two books by Muriel James and *TA Today* by Ian Stewart and Vann Joines. Books, journals, and materials about transactional analysis are much in demand and hard to obtain in Iran. If anyone has materials they would be willing to donate, please contact me through the following: Bahman Dagostar, PhD, 11171 Oakwood Drive, Loma Linda, California, 92354, USA. I will receive anything, including books and other materials, sent through this address."

Monographs Available: Because of periodic requests for copies of the monograph series of the Midwest Institute of Human Understanding, published in 1974, Bill Holloway has made them available as MS Word documents in a compressed file. They can be downloaded from www.billholloway.com/mihu.zip. In addition, he writes that he will soon be putting up the booklet on use of the life script questionnaire.

The Third International Panic Attacks Conference on the theme of "Diversity, Considerations and Treatments" will be held 15-16 October 2005 at the Hilton Garden Inn, Philadelphia Center City, USA. For details see <http://anxiety-panic.com/conference>. The online deadline for program proposals is 1 August 2005 (see www.psyedu.com/panicabstracts3a.htm).



Jessica Leong, TSTA (C) (center) with participants of the TA 101 she gave in Hong Kong. On her left is Dr. Ng Ho Yee, program director, MSocSc (counseling), the University of Hong Kong. On her right is Ms. Kong Yam Yin King, Maria, Honorary Treasurer, Council, the Hong Kong Professional Counselling Association. Jessica is holding a "golden fish" presented by Dr. Ng Ho Yee for good luck, prosperity, and a smooth journey.