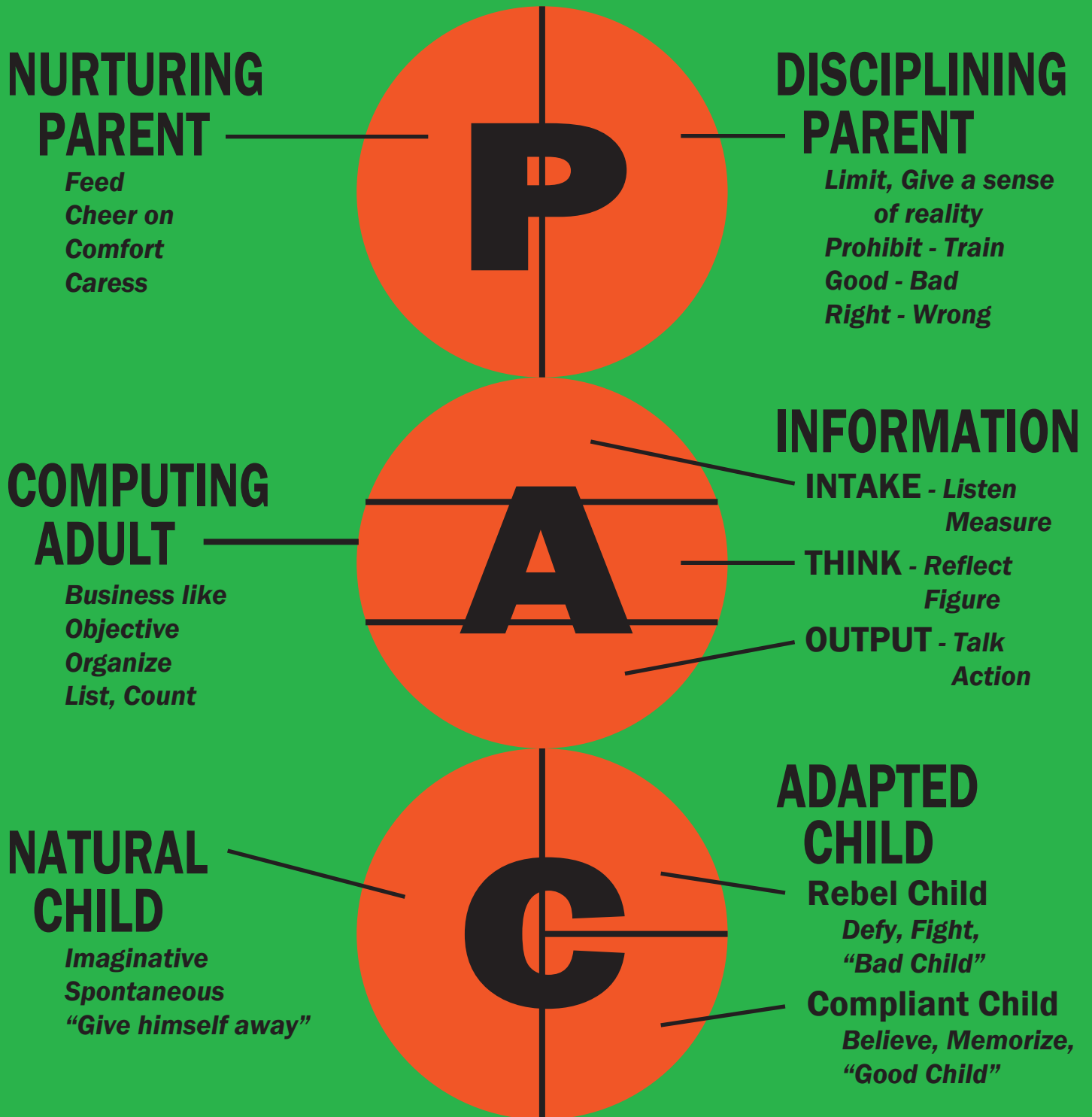


# PERSONALITY FUNCTIONS



## PARENT-ADULT-CHILD

*"Each person has the ability to reason. Each person has experienced childhood. Each person has had someone en loco parentis." Eric Berne, M.D.*

*"The natural Child is placed on the same side as the nurturing Parent, because it flowers under nurturing care. Compliant Child is placed below rebel Child, i.e. to show that compliance is the first adaptation and rebellion arises later." F.H. Ernst Jr., M.D.*

The PAC circles are used in the Personality Structure diagram to describe the structure, the component of the personality in use, i.e. the personality muscle from which a quality of behavior originates, comparable to the biceps muscle. The Personality Functions diagram, described in “The Encounterer” No. 2-33, is analogous to physiology, e.g. the biceps can contract or extend (relax). The Personality Operations diagram, described in “The Encounterer” No. 2-34, describes “Where am I going with this other person.” “What am I going to do with him and me for this NOW event?”

Starting about 1965 the adjective attached to limit setting, the disciplining aspect of the Parent began to be contaminated in Transactional Analysis publications. The Parent was variously called “critical” Parent, “prejudicial” and “prejudiced” Parent, “judgmental Parent” (TAJ 4:4, pg 22), “prohibitive Parent” (eg in TAJ 5:3), “controlling”, “firm” Parent (eg TAJ 10:4 and TAJ 11:2, pg 178). The favorite by those controlling the ITAA publications after Berne’s death was “critical Parent.” The classic disparagement of the Parent ego state is in the C. Steiner article in Transactional Analysis Journal Vol. 9:1, Jan. 1979, pg 26-37, “THE PIG PARENT.” It was published after being read and approved by an 18 member cadre of the ITAA Editorial Board, ie upper division (elitist?) members of 1978-1979 ITAA.

In his 1961 book “Transactional Analysis in Psychotherapy” Berne identified that limit setting function of the Parent as “prejudiced” (p 76) and “prohibitive” (p 240). In fact, however, during the many “Introductory Courses to Transactional Analysis” he taught at his Washington Street office in San Francisco, (three attended by writer), Berne regularly used the adjective “disciplining” when speaking of the limit setting function of the Parent, eg courses TA 101-A, TA 101-B, TA 101-L.

“Discipline” means training which develops self-control and orderly conduct. Discipline is the result of such training. The transitive verb “to discipline” means to correct, train (teach), control, to punish.

The real Parent inside people and the biologic (real) parents are both real humans. Disciplining includes teaching and correcting. If the parental or Parental disciplining result in altered conduct of the other person which is in compliance, then the subject of the discipline may expect to be able to get in the good graces of the discipliner, may expect to be able to get-on-with his discipliner.

“Critical” is an adjective derived from the transitive verb “to criticize.” Critical means to find fault, be censorious. A “critical” Parent is (solely?) concerned with finding fault, ie with censoring, putting down the behavior of another person. Almost by definition, a “critical” Parent is one with whom there is almost no chance of getting (back) into their good graces, no chance of having a mutual get-on-with experience.

A disciple is one who is learning, one who is being trained and taught by the “master.” This training includes being corrected and punished. Some punishment may be harsh verbal criticism, including hollering at the violator of a rule, eg a five year old darting into the street without looking first, or a two year old reaching for the handle of a steaming kettle on a stove. Some real disciplining by some biologic parents includes a spanking, a slap or more.

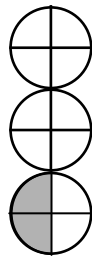
(Franklin H. Ernst Jr., M.D.)

The theory for getting well of a “not-OK Child” is (for the Adult and Parent) to decrease stroking the Child's not-OK behavior. Instead, stroke up the Child's own "I am OK" behavior and stroke up the Child's behavior of giving "You are OK" to others.

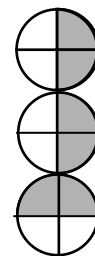
By contrast, trainers of the “not-OK Child” teach how to protect the “not-OK Child” and how a “not-OK Child” can become even more not-OK. The trainer (“not-OK Parent” and/or “not-OK Adult”) is interested in stroking (up) the not-OK (Child based) activity.

During the 1970’s there was much “training” by LCSW (Licensed Clinical Social Workers), teachers, PhD’s, M.D.’s, and “radicals” in the art of shrinking the Parent. At some of ‘those seminars’ that I attended with Dad (in Sacramento and Monterey) we actually witnessed “clinicians” talk about (and demonstrate) how to protect a Not-OK Child. Various techniques were taught that knocked the Parent, belittled the Parent, put the Parent down. These techniques of malice against the Parent are still being taught today. This nonsense (malice) provoked both Dad and I then, and I’ve seen it provoke good people since.

Particularly important in getting well of a "not-OK Child" is for the person’s Parent and the person’s Adult to keep their own "I am OK." This person will need more help (treatment) to keep his Child out of his own Adult; require his Child to stay out of his Adult on predictable occasions and at particular times. This is called decontaminating his Adult.



**This is the diagram of the  
“I Am a not-OK Child”**



**This is the diagram of the  
“Get well of being a not-OK Child”**

**Putting an OK Corral into each of the stacked circles.**

F. H. Ernst Jr., M.D.

Dad developed the following diagrams.

**Clean disciplining and clean nurturing**

FHE Jr, MD

When this real grown Parent is nurturing it will be by giving “You Are-OK” unconditional & free OK strokes.

“Dirty disciplining” comes about when the (usually toy) Parent is giving (only) “You Are-Not-OK” strokes to the Child: "You're stupid, You dumb shit, You moron, idiot," and other "put-down" epithets. The “toy Parent” comes from the parent (circle) in the Child of the person giving “dirty disciplining.” See the “Personality Structure” diagram.

"Dirty nurturing" takes place when the Parent is telling the Child that they, (his) Parent is Not-OK. "I treated you so bad (when you were a child)", "I feel so guilty for what I did to you (then)," "It hurts me more than it hurts you (before or while the punishment takes place)", and other similar Not-OK Parent exclamations or actions as a Parent.

What is described happening inside one set of stacked circles, one personality structure, can also be drawn out as transactional events between two people: one from his Parent, and the other one from his Child.

