



Transactional Musings



Third Circle / the Parent - Part 5

Third Circle -The Diagrammed Parent: Eric Berne's Most Significant Contribution
by F.H. Ernst Jr., M.D.
Part 5

"When a person with a strong disciplining Parent can access his other behavior options, he can for example, ask a rebel student or an acquaintance: "which part of you is trying to stimulate which part of me?"

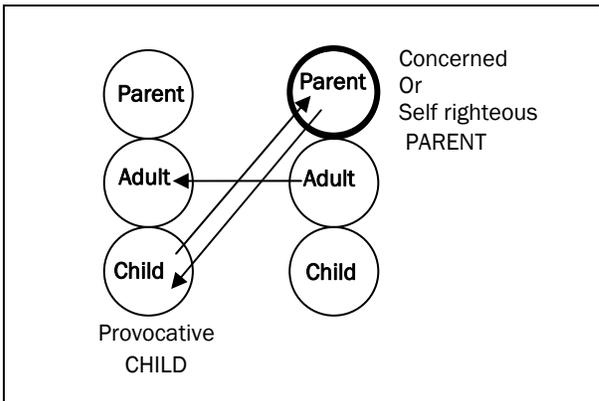
"The person asking the question can draw a diagram for everyone to see showing the sequence of transactions of the two involved. For example (by using the definition of and the diagram for the Parent ego state) those persons with "authority problems" who object to 'authoritarian people' can be classified more readily and are seen more clearly as hooked by and becoming more easily involved in provoking the disciplining Parent of other people."(See Diagram)

" 'An authority problem' is now more simply and clearly classified (for group purposes) as a disciplining Parent and a rebel Child hunting for each other in order to transact with each other (play complementary games with each other)."

"Once provoked, such a Parent becomes enmeshed in the childhood (games) organized around the advantages of the Child's rebelliousness."

"Now however, the group leader has a new alternative (separation of his Par-

ent and his Adult circles) with the invention of the diagrammed Parent. Although angry verbal 'confrontations' may continue in groups, a group leader/teacher now has options whereby he can handle occasional attempts of a rebellious group member engaging in verbal strong arming, verbal hijacking, verbal rapping, loud mouthing, and fast-tonguing. The rebel Child of a patient (or student) who intends to provoke the disciplining



OK Corral: Grid for What's Happening

Transactional Analysis in the OK CORRAL: Grid for What's Happening. This is the diagram, artwork that shows a way for classifying the outcomes of the events in your life:

Get-On-With,
Get-Away-From,
Get-Nowhere-With, or
Get-Rid-Of

One person's get-on-with is also the other person's get-on-with.

One person's get-away-from is the other person's get-rid-of AND vice versa.

One person's get-nowhere-with is the other person's get-nowhere-with.

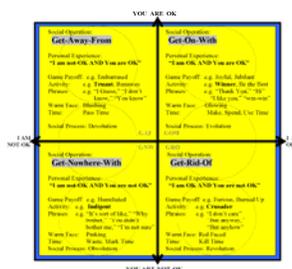
Transactions of games are built on combinations of the four kinds of strokes: they will usually include more than one stroking (dynamic) arrow in the transactions given and received.

SOCIAL PROCESS is the long range trend of a person's or a group's life.

The strokes a person exchanges during his/her encounters with others

(encounter by encounter) have consequences.

TRANSACTIONAL ANALYSIS in the OK CORRAL: Grid for What's Happening



Volume 1, Issue 8

August 12, 2010

Special points of Interest:

- Third Circle - "To have a defined and diagrammed Parent ego state is to keep it and to use it for the advantages to self and others. And getting-well involves having a Parent."
- OK Corral: Grid for What's Happening. The strokes a person exchanges during his/her encounters with others (encounter by encounter) have consequences.
- Judgment, Alternatives, Compromise
- "Termites" diagram - "the holes-in-the-head" Parent circle
- "You know" (enunciated "Ya know"). With any frequency of use, this high-speed phrase means "You know what I mean, don't you?" Or it can mean "You know what I mean, don't you!" Either one often stirs the other party to nod their head back affirmatively. It is not a request to deny knowing what the "Ya know" is talking about.

Inside this issue:

- Third Circle - cont 2
- Personality Functions diagram 2
- Other Diagrams Showing the Parent 3
- Formulation 3
- "You Know," Follow the \$money 4

Third Circle / the Parent - Part 5 cont.

Parent of the teacher, group leader, or therapist now has to deal with a person able to manage himself."

"The second circle (Adult ego-state) enables a teacher or therapist to decide more easily which path he will take to get his job done, instead of grandstanding and playing "Court-Room."

"A group therapist of a prison group for example had a new set of options with the invention of the diagrammed Parent. For example when dealing with an angry outburst by a group member (who 'doesn't like authoritarian people') tried to engage the group leader in a verbal strong arming or conversational hijacking, the leader could instead of grandstanding, playing 'Court Room', could now side-step the use of his own disciplining Parent by going to a blackboard in the room, draw a picture of three stacked circles and ask "which part of you (Parent, Adult, or Child) is trying to invite me to be an 'authoritarian' person with you?" With his fellow group members participating there would be little problem in showing the rebel Child's invitations and his pushing on the disciplining Parent of the therapist to (please) come out and 'exercise' with him. After the actions were diagrammed as Child to Parent, stories of previous fights with father, teachers,

policemen, etc. often tumbled out from the particular person."

"These kinds of (Adult) actions by therapist-teacher have had the effect of increasing the efficiency of the treatment and/or teaching process and use of that particular time. Therefore more patients got well faster."

"True! And these events became less entertaining to the group therapist."

CONCLUSION:

"To have a *defined* and *diagrammed* Parent ego state is to keep it and to use it for the advantages to self and others. And getting-well involves having a Parent. **What quality of responses would be the most suitable, most appropriate** when you see a two-year-old child reaching up toward the top of the stove and the handle of a hot-steaming-boiling kettle (in which hot food is cooking) to see what is making all the bubbling noises and steam? Similarly, **what would be the most appropriate quality of response when a four-year-old** starts to run across the street darting from between two parked cars into the lanes of traffic towards an ice cream truck? Children who live through childhood have experienced an instant screaming piercing 'NO!' which has had the effect on the child's muscular apparatus of causing a freez-

-ing of movement. This (traumatic?) "freezing" might very well have saved the two or four-year-old's life."

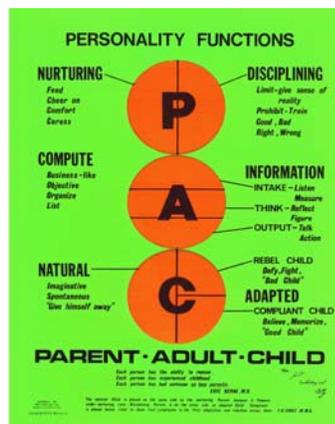
"Should and shouldn't, good and bad, right and wrong; these yes-no, instantly available, hi-speed responses are the quality of responses, are a part of what make home for a person; home being a place where protection is provided as increasing permission is secured or wrested in order to engage in an ever-widening scope of social activities."

"Author has not dwelled here at all on the other aspect of a person's Parent. Nurturing and the nurturing Parent have received more than adequate attention both in writing and in other media. Saying this here is to assure the reader that nurturing, both feeding and caring for the Child ego states are also critically important to a person growing to adulthood AND afterward, too!"

For the full text of [Third Circle: The Diagrammed Parent: Eric Berne's Most Significant Contribution](#) by F.H. Ernst Jr., M.D. go to www.ListeningActivity.com and click on Third Circle.

When Dr. Berne separated the Parent from the Adult ego state then, pontifications of the schools of psychotherapy, the dogmas and indoctrinations of the castles of psychopathology could be recognized for what they were, fixed opinions.

Personality Functions



The Personality Functions "poster" (artwork) shows the three ego-states: Parent-Adult-Child.

The Parent preserves and protects. The Parent nurtures (feeds, cheers on, comforts, caress) and disciplines (sets limits and gives a sense of reality, prohibits-trains, teaches good-bad, right-wrong.)

The Adult computes: (is business-like, objective, organizer,

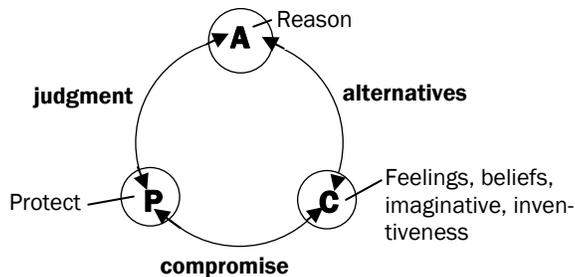
lists) . The Adult gathers information: listens, measures, thinks (reflects, figures" , talks, takes action.) The Adult is level-headed.

The Child is Natural (imaginative, spontaneous, "gives himself away"). The Child has the ability to adapt. The Rebel Child that defies, fights" is a "bad child." The Compliant Child believes, memorizes, "Good Child."

Other Diagrams showing Parent

Since Berne discovered the "Third Circle" **two more diagrams using the Parent circle have been created** that represent behavior. These two diagrams are:

a. The **Trilog** Diagram as developed by Art Rissman. This latter diagram shows aspects of behavior with their functions (the three circles) more precisely defined; Adult "think", Child "play-invent", and Parent "protect." It further defines the different results coming from the internal dialogs and then resulting in decisions between (1) Parent and Adult (judgment behavior), (2) Parent and Child (compromising behavior), (3) Adult and Child (alternatives behavior).



b. The second major diagram developed after the Parent circle discovery was **"the holes-in-the-head" Parent** circle shown here. (See writings by Franklin H. Ernst Jr., M.D.) In the colloquial this diagram is called the "Termite Diagram." It represents the person who has no conscience, has no personal loyalties that can be counted on, the person without personal values. As someone once commented "this diagram looks like and shows how a Communist is put together." Writer does not know what a Communist is, but did not forget what the precocious Child of a friend told him.



A "Termite" person has become adept at keeping his Parent turned off. The holes in the Parent circle show that the ego state boundary of the Parent has been ruptured, the person "got a lobotomy" on his Parent.

Formulation from "The Encounterer" Vol. 1, No. 4

FORMULATION: Efficiency in wanting is measurable.

* One lifetime has a finite number of seconds.

* It may be that not all of an individual's desired objectives are attainable in such a finite interval of time even with the most efficient of sequential programming and use of this (allotted life-) time.

Efficiency in wanting involves, therefore, a selective, discriminatory utilization by the individual of:

1. The (personal) resources at his disposal: eg physical, intellectual capacities, time interval required to accomplish an objective (funding is a function of time value), period of life in which an objective is considered, (an estimate of the personal) value of the objective, the satisfactions to come from

the practicing of the activity itself (i.e. the time spent in working toward the end result), etc.; and

2. The (life) opportunities which occur, those opportunities which the person can place himself in the way of; to then take hold of, in order to get-on-with (accomplish) the particular selected shorter and longer range life goals.

There are a maximal, a finite number of "now-moments" in which an individual can participate in the opportunities, the events surrounding his life.

Any activity, any accomplishment, any event of new living, any "change-in behavior" will be done within a "now-experience," -- "JUST AIN'T NO GETTING AROUND IT! -- THAT'S LIFE!" The accomplished person is a practiced, a practicing one who

has selected to devote many living seconds of lifetime to one selected activity instead of others. The quality of a "gifted-accomplished person" may have something to do with his genetic makeup but this factor is diminishing as studies in genetics evolve (Science News, page 555, Nov 30, 1968).

How many hours of lifetime did Mickey Mantle spend day-dreaming of, plus, in fact, throwing and batting a baseball during his first 500 million seconds of life-time (15 years). Then when the opportunity came for him to stand before assembled throngs to demonstrate his accomplishments, he performed—including the home runs and the (ignominious) strikeouts with the accompanying sneers or jeers.



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"Mastery of the universe is proportional to the symbols man has by which to represent his universe."

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"You Know," Follow the \$money

Economic discussions are mostly going nowhere these days. Listening to a recent city council meeting where the topic dipped into the investments of the sanitation and flood control district, the use of the phrase "you know" was numerous. An elected official was asking questions of staff/consultants about the district's investment portfolio worth millions of \$dollars that had been wiped out in the financial meltdown in the fall of 2008.

As if nobody wanted to talk about these losses and as if they wanted to get-away-from the discussion the "you knows" frequency was rapid. The elected official admitted not knowing a lot about investing; expressed a regard for investing today comparable to gambling. The elected official continued with about 5 "you knows." Staff got into the presentation whereby he used the "you know" phrase about 20 times describing the eight points of his report. After the report there were approximately 23-30 more "you knows" spoken by the two parties for the other elected officials, staff and viewing public to hear.

In another setting, a recent audio discussion available on the internet concerning "da boyz" manipulating currencies, securities, gold values was marked by high frequency of "you know" phrases. I started counting the "you knows."

Yesterday, all day, on business t.v. CNBC several "guests," performers used the phrase "you know" many, many times. Even commentators were using the phrase often. I wondered if the behind the scenes directors, producers, coaches were paying attention, You Know.

There have been many other instances of "you know" economic discussions recently.

FED representatives and "academics" have a little different approach. They have typically been answering statements, enquiries with a "so

then" phrase.

There is much "information" about government and monetary policy, even with a less than transparent central (for profit?) bank. FED policy (as the FED says) is to maintain their independence, the consequence of which are unknown, and to keep everyone guessing. To get your Adult tuned in, start counting the "you know" and "so then" phrases.

On page 82 of "[Handbook of Listening, Transactional Analysis of the Listening Activity](#)" FH Ernst Jr, MD writes about the "you know" phrase.

Talker Maneuvers Intended to Angle (Influence) the Listener

1. Delaying of being dismissed by the other party

A. "I know, I know!" (what-I'm-talking-about, what-you're-getting-at), said rapidly, within one second, fending off an interruption, or an (expected) accusation of ineptness, and/or shutting off the other person's vocal demonstration.

B. "You know" (enunciated "Ya know"). With any frequency of use, this high-speed phrase means "You know what I mean, don't you?" Or it can mean "You know what I mean, don't you!" Either one often stirs the other party to nod their head back affirmatively. It is not a request to deny knowing what the "Ya know" is talking about.

"You-know-that-I-know-what-I'm-talking-about, DON'T-YOU?" This conveys the paradox of a desperate player intending to secure an affirmative head-nodding back to himself, e.g. that the other party "understands," knows what "desperate" means. At the same time "Ya know" is said, the intent is to keep the affirmative nodder from adding any responsive words or otherwise interrupting the talker: I-have-my-point-I-have-to-get-across-(to the nodder)-and-I-haven't-finished-getting-

it-across-yet,-you-know!..." If the "Ya know" player is interrupted, he may get confused, lose track of what he is saying, or not be able to understand what the interrupter is talking about, etc. The amount of desperateness of the particular party for being credited by the other party, as being understandable, is proportional to the frequency of his use of "you know."

When "Ya know" has "Man" attached to it, as "Ya know, Man..." or "Man, ya know, man..." the listener best take heed that the talker is at the moment, betting, at the least, a large stake, a sizeable chunk of his own life in the particular game he is playing at the moment. When "man" is spoken in a hard voice, tight-throated, deeper-pitch, "Ya know, man. Ya just gotta listen to me, man, and you know, man, ya better do it, man; ya know, man, you can bet your life on it, man! Ya know, man?" "Ya know, man?" has a much more ominous portent than the phrase "ya know" alone.

This phrase "Ya know!" is often used by brinkmanship players. The expectation of dismissal comes from the anticipation by the party that he may be told that "you don't know what you're talking about." To be told this may be equated to "you don't deserve any recognition (and/or respect) for being you."

There is another form of "You know", often said "As you know." At the first of a sentence or fitted in mid-sentence, it is slowly spoken, clearly enunciated, used by Parent ego state in "Ya-gotta-listen-to-me" and in "IOTTHY" (I'm Only Trying to Help) and "WAHM" (Why's this Always Happening to Me). It may mean "obviously", "as-you-recall (and-if-you-don't, you-are-demented)", or "if-you-don't-know, you're-stupid!"