

The Analysis of Transactional Analysis

Based on
I'M OK - YOR'RE OK
By
Thomas A. Harris, M.D.

Anshul Goel (71)
Soft Skills & Personality
Development (HSS401A)

22 June, 2016

Contents

Why This Book.....	3
Transactional Analysis.....	4
Parent, Adult, Child.....	5
The Four Life Positions.....	11
We Can Change.....	16
Analysing the Transaction.....	18
How to Stay in Adult.....	31
My Analysis.....	32
References.....	34

Why This Book?

When it came to choosing a book for my project, I was literally dumb. Each book I went through was too good to be left. So, what led me to decide this book? As a part of the course curriculum, we were acquainted with the concept of Win-Win, Synergise and Self-Actualisation. Though I was able to digest self-actualisation, it was hard to agree to the former two. While glancing through this book, I realised that this book offers a new perspective to all these, which was quite apt to me. So, there it is.

There is a legend about a wise man who was sitting outside his village. A traveller came up and asked him, “What kind of people live in this village, because I am looking to move from my present one?” The wise man asked, “What kind of people lives where you want to move from?” The man said, “They are mean, cruel, and rude.” The wise man replied, “The same kind of people lives in this village too.” After some time another traveller came by and asked the same question and the wise man asked him, “What kind of people live where you want to move from?” And the traveller replied, “The people are very kind, courteous, polite and good.” The wise man said, “You will find the same kind of people here too.”

[You Can Win, Shiv Khera]

The essence of this book cannot be mimicked in just a single tale or quote, but the above one is very close to that. The book cannot be called a personality development book. It would be severe injustice on its part to bluntly reduce it to a self-help book which works on superficial elements or give some nail-biting tic-tacks. It offers a complete vision and way of life, if not equivalent to Holy Bible but none less than its contemporary.

We have specialists - doctors, scientist, astronauts, psychologists and we have common masses, both of which are cut apart from each other due to technical barriers. The fundamental contribution of Sigmund Freud, the concept of Id, Ego and Superego, is unquestionably of paramount importance. But, do common masses are able to understand these technical jargons, and even if it is understood, does it offer a solution to their problem? The answer to this dilemma is provided by the author, Thomas A. Harris, with the concept of Transactional Analysis around which the whole book revolves.

Apart from this, the book offers answers to many interesting questions:

- When is a baby psychologically born?
- Is there an ‘Adult’ in an infant?
- When does this ‘Adult’ come into picture?
- What was the clash between Adler and Freud?
- What are the games in ‘Games People Play’ by Eric Berne? Are they ‘Good’?

Transactional Analysis

The concept of Transactional Analysis was originated by Eric Berne [author of the best seller, Games People Play]. He defined this basic scientific unit:

“The unit of social intercourse is called a transaction. If two or more people encounter each other ... sooner or later one of them will speak, or give some other indication of acknowledging the presence of the

others. This is called the transactional stimulus. Another person will then say or do something which is in some way related to the stimulus, and that is called the transactional response.”

Transactional Analysis is the way of analysing this transaction and determine which part of multiple nature human is activated – ‘Parent’, ‘Adult’ or ‘Child’. (The meaning of ‘Parent’, ‘Adult’ and ‘Child’ is different from their meaning in general and everywhere in this project, these terms start with capital letter to signify this.) It involves getting information from the words said. But an acute problem arises, the words people say are biased according to their behaviour, we say “He’s an obsessive fielder” when talking about a fielder in baseball. Though the problem persists, still the Transactional Analysis claims to have found some of the regularities, a new language of psychology, language of Parent, Adult, Child, Ok, Not Ok, Games, which holds great promises by getting closest to the secret of human behaviour than ever before.

Parent, Adult, Child

We often find instantaneous changes in behaviour of people. There are changes in the facial expressions, the posture, body language, tone and gestures. These abrupt changes are observed in people of all age groups: the little child face gets flushed on not able to make a toy, the face of father ‘turns to stone’ when his daughter/son disagrees with him. We all have experienced these things at least once in our lifetime, the sudden changes from one state to next.

Berne figured these states and classified these into Parent, Adult and Child. An important point to note is that these are not just concepts like Id, Ego or Superego but are psychological realities, and all these states exist in each human being.

The Parent

It is the recording of all events, rules, laws and data imposed on the child in first five years of life, without any modification as he is unable to construct meaning out of the words. The laws told are recorded as truths whether they these are actually good or bad. It becomes important for a child to please and obey her/his parents. These children suffer from a strange condition – the insecurity of the two feet tall from the six feet tall person. Though the Parent may seem as largely negative, but it is also the lifesaving, the knowledge that species passes over the generations for survival. The following excerpt from the book will pinpoint the fact:

In the Parent is the recording, 'Don't touch that knife!' It is a thunderous directive. The threat to the little person, as he sees it, is that his mother will spank him or otherwise show disapproval. The greater threat is that he can cut himself and bleed to death. He cannot perceive this. He does not have adequate data. The recording of parental dictates, then, is an indispensable aid to survival, in both the physical and the social sense.

A characteristic problem with the Parent is the fidelity of the recordings with inconsistency. When parents say one thing and do another, for example, “Don’t lie” but tell lies, “Smoking is bad” but smokes, “Follow religious ethics” but don’t follow them. Other thing is that if the parents are not harmonious, that is, there are recordings of ‘good’ mother and ‘bad’ father or vice-versa, the Parent as a whole is weakened because the data from one parent is not in accordance with other and causes anxiety. Then, the role of Parent is not influential.

The Parent data also comprises of ‘how to’ - how to hit a nail, how to eat soup, how to blow your nose, how to shake hands, or how to fold the bath towels. These are learnt by watching or imitating the parents

and reside in Parent (perfected by Adult). The sources of Parent are not only physical parents, but any external situation in which the little person feels himself to be dependent to the extent that he is not free to question or explore the data stored in Parent. Thus, Television programmes and elder siblings are also the sources.

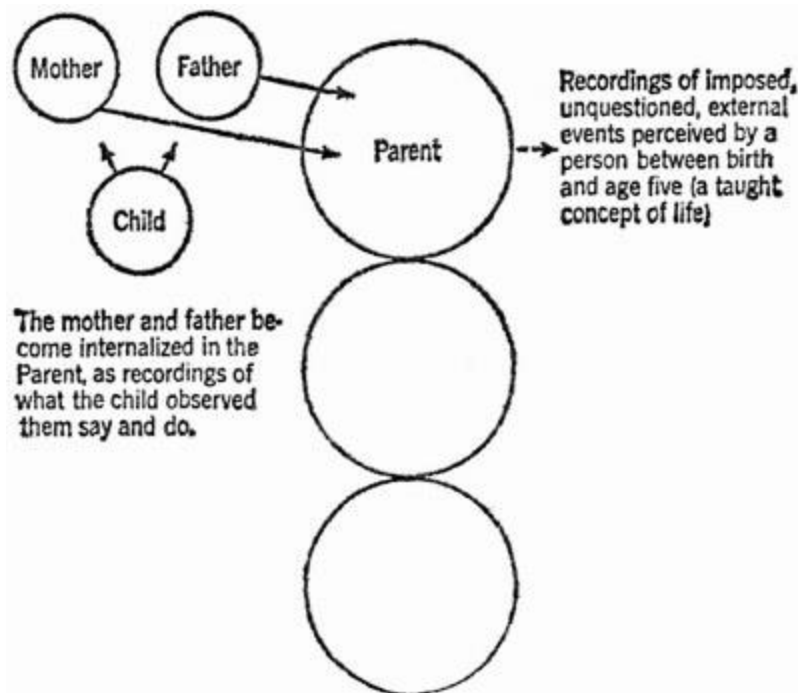


Figure 1. The Parent

The Child

The Child is the storehouse of emotions, responses of the little child to what s/he hears, sees and feels. Whenever the Child is hooked on, the person feels the same emotions again, which were originally produced in her/him and the same interpretations of right or wrong which were experienced at the first place. Since the little person has no vocabulary during the years of gaining all these emotions, most of her/his store comprises of feelings as reactions.

Many a times the demand for approval of parents is contradicted due to certain acts of little child, the urges to empty her/his bowels ad lib, to bang, to crush the things. The child is not able to made connexion

between cause and effects which leads to the negative feelings. Accumulation of these feelings over a period of time comes out as Not Ok feelings, 'I am not Ok - You are OK'. This is the situation of childhood and not the intentions of parents. This is recorded permanently in mind and can't be erased.

But, the Child is a store of positive things too. The Child constitutes creativity, curiosity, desire to explore, and also the record of peak moments, the experiences of 'first in the lifetime'. These things lead to Ok condition in Child but still the Not Ok feeling dominates.

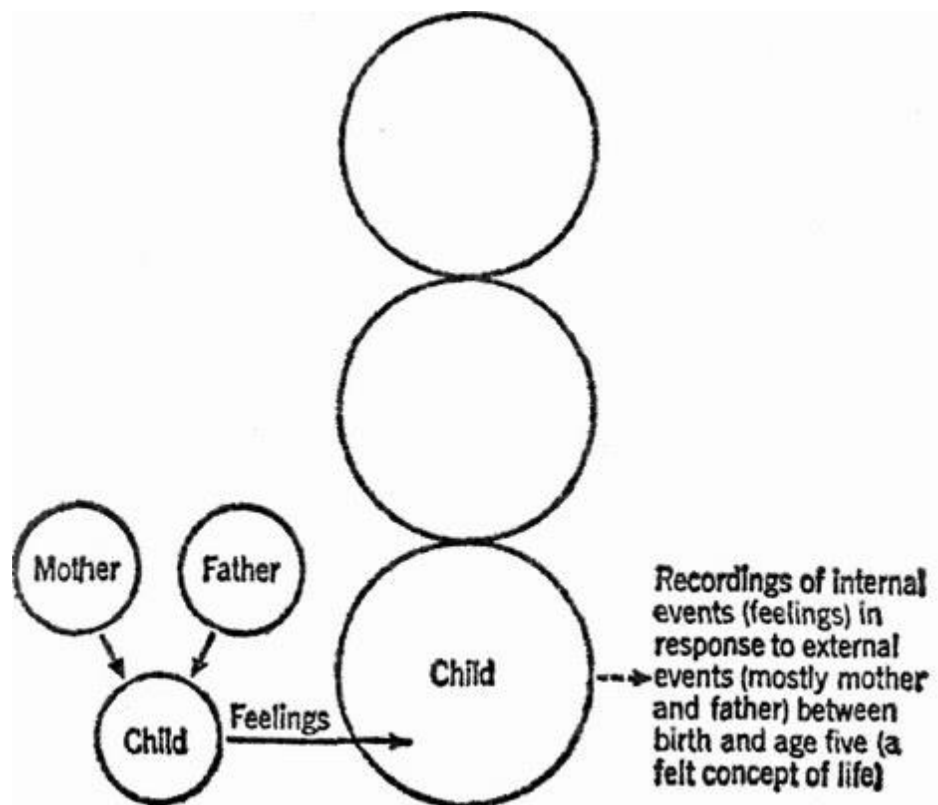


Figure 2. The Child

Talking about the age by which both the Child and Parent stop recording, the author believes that by the age of five or going to kindergarten (the first independent social experience), s/he has got acquainted to all the feelings and emotions. So, it can be safely regarded as the finishing of the recording, and a predominant

expression of Parent in the early years. As Brian Tracy said, “Whatever is expressed is impressed”.

The Adult

In the start, two questions were stated – “Is there an ‘Adult’ in an infant?” and “When does this ‘Adult’ come into picture?” . The answer to these questions is present in this section. By the age of ten months, a little child gets the power of locomotion. Now, he has got the ability to change the things and choose his own responses. The ten months old realises that he has his own awareness and thought process. This “self-actualisation” is the beginning of the Adult. Remember, one of the most self-actualised people is children. They are able to accept their environment as it, their spontaneity and simplicity, their problem centric approach, peak experiences, all pointing to self-actualisation. However, some traits are not even developed to be talked about. So, the answer to the first question is yes, and Adult comes into picture as early as ten months.

With the advent of Adult, child starts to test the validity of the data of Parent and Child and the result of this goes to this is stored as data of Adult. As said by author, “Through the Adult the little person can begin to tell the difference between life as it was taught and demonstrated to him (Parent), life as he felt it or wished it or fantasized it (Child), and life as he figures it out by himself (Adult).”

But, it is important to point out that the verification of Parent data cannot erase the Not Ok recordings in the Child. ‘We cannot erase the recordings, but we can choose to turn them off.’

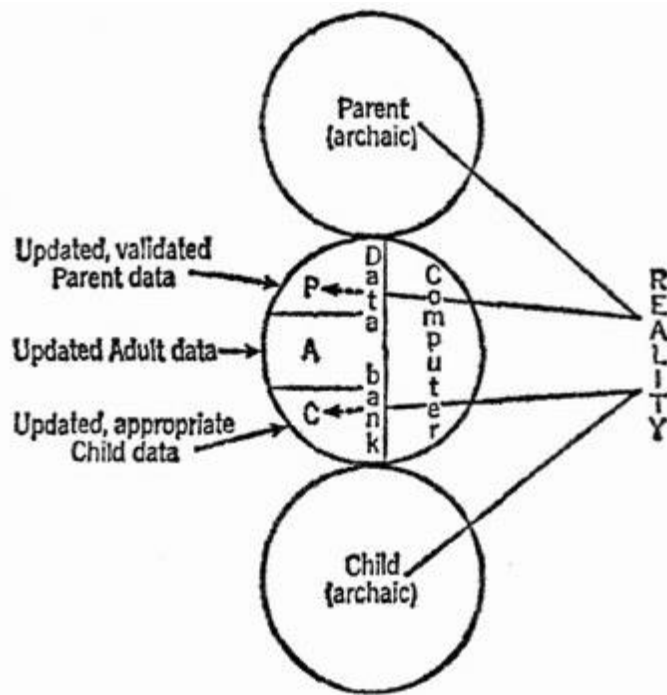


Figure 3. The updating function of the Adult through reality testing

The Adult within the Adult in figure 3 refers to the updated reality, for example, the evidence once states that space travel is impossible, but now it is a reality. Apart from the task of validating previous data and feelings, and gathering new data, another function of Adult is ‘probability estimating’ – estimating the outcomes in various situations – either to eat spinach or go without ice-cream. This process is quite slow in the children owing to the lack of knowledge of forthcoming incidents. But, if the Adult is alert to the possibility of the trouble, through probability estimating, it can also devise solutions to meet the trouble if and when it comes. This is the reason why sign boards are installed by Highway Authorities to let your Adult know of the certain troubles possible.

The concept of creativity goes hand-in-hand with Child and Adult. The Child provides the ‘want to’ and the Adult provides the ‘how to’. I recall a recent example from class. When sir asked the possible solutions to the problem of our fellow classmate who was not able to arrange the book that the solutions were coming based on two factors – the want to solve the problem (Child) and the solutions provided

(Adult). One more thing to note is that only two or three students provided the solution. Either their Adult confronted them from answering, “Why to make fun of guy and tease him (a more on the side of self-guarding than morality)” or the Child part was absent, “I am just not interested”. Same reasoning can be extended to that fellow student too who originally had the problem. There is a misconception that an undisciplined child, hampered by limits, is more creative than the child whose parents set limits. Actually, the whole argument is independent of ‘discipline’ and depends solely on how much time the Adult brain can spare out of its activity of verifying the older data. Thus, more creative is the child whose parent data matches close to the reality, “They told me the truth”. Their parent data is reliable.

The Four Life Positions

The author states four positions (personalities) possible in human life based on the transactional analysis, namely:

1. I’m Not Ok – You’re OK.
2. I’m Not Ok – You’re Not Ok.
3. I’m Ok – You are Not Ok.
4. I’m Ok – You’re Ok.

By the age of three, one of the positions is opted. For most people, first position persists but some unfortunately lands up in second or third. A basic difference exists between first three and last position. While the first three positions are a matter of circumstances (majorly the parents), the position is a matter of choice. The first three are the unconsciously adopted based on feelings but the last one is based on the conscious and verbal decision based on thought, faith and the wager of action. Since first three positions are based on experience of

infancy, it is important to first understand the birth and strokes which lead to these positions.

Birth & Strokes

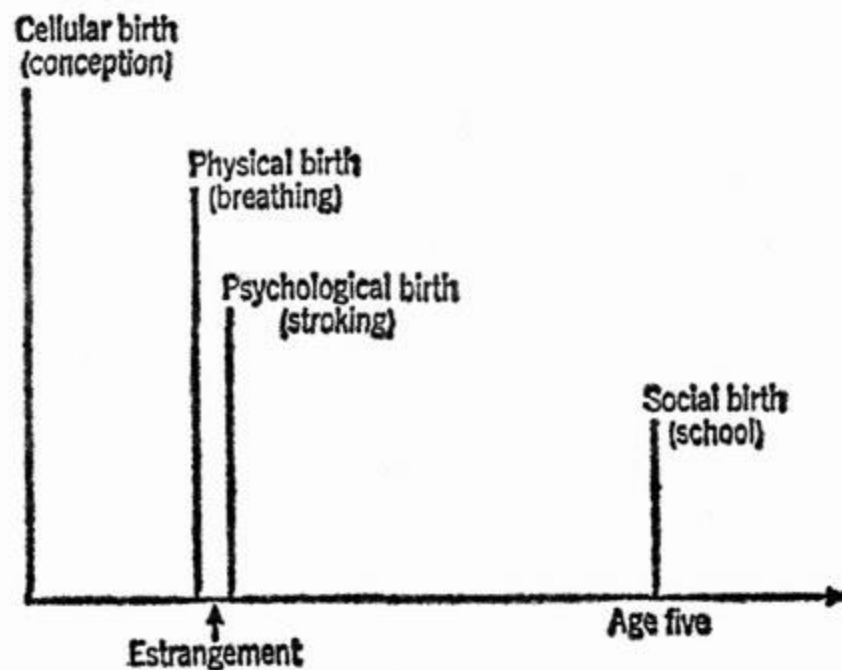


Figure 4. Births of the individual from conception to age five

Let's figure out the whole process with the help of figure 4. The first block of time between conception and biological birth, spanning over nine months, provides the most ideal environment a human being may ever experience. Then, there comes the stage of biological birth. The infant is pushed out to catastrophic conditions – cold, roughness, brightness, separation, and abandonment. Many theories support the idea that these experiences are recorded and are stored in the brain, supported by a large number of incidents of being 'swept out of a drainage pipe' in dreams. Sigmund Freud believed that these overwhelming, unpleasant stimulations and experiences stand as a model for all later anxiety. Within moments the infant is 'rescued' by a person who wraps her/him and begins the comforting act of 'Stroking'. This is the Psychological birth. Now, this answers the question raised in starting. Why I used the word "rescued"? Because

the infant need reconciliation that life is not that bad, and stroking or bodily touches thus provide psychological aid in survival of infant.

During the first two years, an infant do not have ‘thinking tool’-the words to construct an explanation of uncertainties of the world. But, he is continuously recording the feelings growing between her/him and others, primarily mother and these feelings are related to stroking and non-stroking. Whoever provides the stroking is Ok. Her/his inability to understand the ‘cause and effect’ relation and continuous needs for strokes produces negative feelings and during the third year, convinces her/him I’m Not OK – You’re OK.

But situation may turn worse which leads some to the path of second and third position. Fourth position is clearly a matter of choice. To understand about these positions, let’s see each position separately.

I’m Not Ok – You’re Ok

The constant need for stroking during infancy stores up negative feeling about her/him. This accumulation of negative feelings makes infant concludes that s/he is Not Ok. The other person is providing strokes, though not constantly. It is the dependence of infant on others that makes other people Ok.

The infant chooses one of the three ways to live out of this position. First is living the life of withdrawal, accepting Not OK and thus finding it difficult to live with Ok people. Thus, showcasing the Not Ok in her/him to deliberately get the stroking. Second approach is that of ‘bad little girl/boy’, consisting of fraudulent integrity and just another way, though negative to get the stroking. Still, I’m Not OK – You’re OK. The resolution of this is giving up this approach or suicide. The third strategy which is commonly followed is getting strokes by being eager, willing and compliant to people with big Parent to give big strokes. These are the people who work for

approvals, which though provide happiness but is short lived. They don't work to get a lasting sense of happiness because the position is still I'm Not Ok – You're OK.

I'm Not Ok – You're Not Ok

This condition arises if after the first comfortable year of stroking, the stroking is drastically reduced or the punishments become harder. If this state of abandonment and difficulty continues without relief through the second year of life, the child concludes I'm Not Ok – You're Not Ok. The Adult stops developing because the stroking is ceased. There is no hope. A person gives up. The person may end up in a mental institution longing to get back to the life of first year. Even when stroking is present by other person, the person refuses to accept it owing to the interpretations made by her/his integrity.

In the case of autistic child, this condition may be the first rather than secondary. The autistic child is one who did not feel himself rescued. Either there was no stroking or the stroking was unregistered due to some physiological factors. This barrier may be overcome by vigorous stroking.

I'm Ok – You're Not Ok

This can be called the worst or criminal position. This occurs when the infant was brutally beaten by parents. The question arises, where does this Ok-ness come from? Is it from self-stroking? The author feels that this self-stroking occurs when the person is healing. S/he concludes that s/he is Ok by alone. Understanding the pain and agony of these 'battered' kids is hard, suffering from broken ribs, fractured bones and injured kidneys. Whenever they meet their parents again, they are horrified. "You are Not OK" – I am ok by myself – I'm Ok – You're Not Ok.

Early history of many psychopath criminals sings the same tale. They develop an instinct of survival. I survived, so I will survive. They refuse to give up. Their Parent allows them to be cruel and brutal. There is no conscience development. They are unable to take any shot of fact, since they are Ok. As there are no good people according to them, hence no good stroke. The more they are praised, the more evil they become. Their ultimate aim is “Come close so I can let you have it.”

I'm Ok – You're Ok

As discussed earlier, it is the position decided by person rather than circumstances. The first three have to do with why. The fourth has to do with why not. In the words of author “Our understanding of ok is not bound to our own personal experiences, because we can transcend them into an abstraction of ultimate purpose for all men.”

Author says that most common position shared by ‘successful’ and ‘unsuccessful people is I'm Not Ok – You're Ok. The most common way to tackle this is playing of games.

Berne defines a game as

... an ongoing series of complementary ulterior transactions progressing to a well-defined, predictable outcome. Descriptively it is a recurring set of transactions, often repetitious, superficially plausible, with a concealed motivation; or, more colloquially, a series of moves with a snare, or 'gimmick'.

In easy terms, the games are focussed on a concealed motivation that is completely opposite to what is shown. A present World condition will help in describing this. Russia's Head, Putin is constantly warning other nations to give due concern to the great nuclear power

– Russia. This clearly shows the inner anxiety and problems faced by Russia, which is shovelled off by these types of warnings. Similarly, the games played like ‘Mine is better than yours’ with inner position of I’m Not Ok – You’re Ok provides the same relief to the person as may be that to Putin! Adults (persons) are indulged in a similar game of ‘Mine is better than yours’ by getting temporary relief by getting a bigger TV or house than their neighbour’s or other useless fancies, which ultimately push them to trouble.

The aim of this book is to establish that the only way people get well or become Ok is to expose the childhood predicament underlying the first three positions and prove how current behaviour perpetuates the positions.

It is important to realise that I’m Ok – You’re Ok is a position not a feeling. The Not Ok recordings cannot be erased. The data has to be recorded for the fourth position. The reason I’m Ok – You’re Ok works is that instant joys and tranquillity was not expected. One will not get instant results or relief but it brings happiness in long run.

We Can Change

In the very start, it is clear that the aim of the book and Transactional Analysis itself is to provide the explanation and also the solution. The role of the languages and positions discussed is in decision making. We, generally, as humans avoid taking decisions. The essentials difficulties seen in decision making are “I will take a wrong decision” which is with the person whose decisions generally turn out bad for her/him and “I keep going over and over the same thing” which is the problem faced by the people who are not able to complete the task of data verification (of Parent and Child). Though we have discussed Discussion Making in our course class, still the given way is quite

commendable and if dug deeply, is essentially the same and even more elaborate.

The first step towards decision making is to identify that there would be three sets of data, each from Parent, Child and Adult. These data have to be evaluated by the Adult. The Adult has to examine the data of the Parent with respect to present context and evaluate whether it matches with the reality or not. Even more important will be to ask whether her/his parents still believe the same things today. Then the data from the Child is inspected. The most distracting feeling among all is the fear. We have to inspect whether the fear is valid in the present scenario, especially the fear from parents which makes the person prejudiced, caused due to the contamination of Adult by Parent (figure 5). Now, the adult can process the new data and is ready to take the necessary decision. (In fact, the computer analogy may be used of processing data, freeing up time for processing and so on.) To summarise this with the saying of Socrates, “The unexamined life is not worth living” or more effective quote by Steve Jobs, “Don’t live the life of others”.

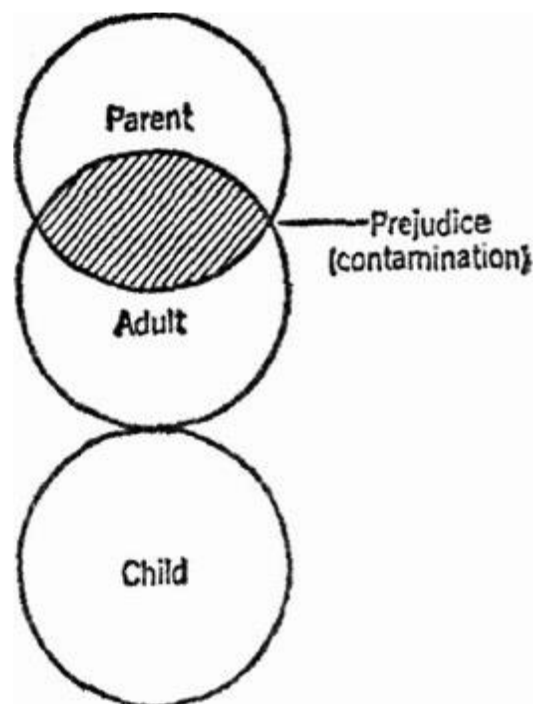


Figure 5. Prejudice

The very goal of Transactional Analysis is an emancipated Adult, restoration of freedom of the Adult by understanding our Child and Parent and checking the viability of the content in the present context. It requires persistent exploration of the fields known and unknown. The Child likes certainty. Probability estimation is an important component of Adult. With data of Child and Adult, outputs are certain but are they worth it? Marriages, elections and many other things require probability estimation and thus these things work with the Adult at work. I would like to add that it is quite pertinent to use your Adult while casting the votes as elections are designed on the Adult basis only.

The next thing about change is what makes people want to change. People change in three conditions. Firstly, if they are badly hurt. Secondly, if they are bored or the present procedure is slow. Thirdly, when they come to know that they can.

The final question that occurs in making a change is “Does a man have a free will?” Though the reality of cause and effect cannot be defined, but still we as humans are far freer to choose as compared to billiard balls. The Freud’s theory which says that past has to do with the present happenings, the concept of conditioning, all are acceptable upto a level but it will be a blunder to ignore the fact that human’s decision is based not solely on past but also on the future prospects. As Elton Trueblood said, “Man has the ability to contemplate the future.”

On summing note, it can be said that we can change and it is the Adult who will and must lead the change. Adult is the place where the action is, where hope resides, and where the change is possible.

Analysing the Transaction

Now, as we have learnt the language of Parent, Adult and Child, it is the time to apply it to the Transactional Analysis. As studied in the class, major part of communication comprises of non-verbal communication. Hence, we will also be focussing on non-verbal communication as well as verbal communication. The same limitation of non-verbal communication apply here also that these can't be blindly followed and one has to take care of the three C's – Context, Cluster, Change. Let's see clues for each state.

Parent

Non-Verbal: Physical: Furrowed brow, pursed lips, the pointing index finger, head wagging, the 'horrified look', foot-tapping, hands on hips, arms folded across chest, wringing hands, tongue-clicking, sighing, patting another on the head. These are typical Parent gestures. However, there may be other Parent gestures peculiar to one's own Parent. For instance, if your father had a habit of clearing his throat and looking skyward each time he was to make a pronouncement about your bad behaviour, this mannerism undoubtedly would be apparent as your own prelude to a Parent statement, even though this might not be generally seen as Parent in most people. Also, there are cultural differences. For instance, in the United States people exhale as they sigh, whereas in Sweden they inhale as they sigh.

Verbal: I am going to put a stop to this once and for all; I can't for the life of me ...; Now always remember ... ('always' and 'never' are almost always Parent words, which reveal the limitations of an archaic system closed to new data); How many times have I told you? If I were you...Some words which come out automatically are also an

indication of the Parent. These are: stupid, naughty, ridiculous, disgusting, shocking, asinine, lazy, nonsense, absurd, poor thing, poor dear, no! no! , How dare you? , cute, there there, now what? , Not again!

Child

Non-Verbal: Since the Child's earliest responses to the external world were nonverbal, the most readily apparent Child clues are seen in physical expressions. Any of the following signal the involvement of the Child in a transaction: tears; the quivering lip; pouting; temper tantrums; the high-pitched, whining voice; rolling eyes; shrugging shoulders; downcast eyes; teasing; delight; laughter; hand-raising for permission to speak; nail-biting; nose-thumbing; squirming; and giggling.

Verbal: Many words, in addition to baby talk, identify the Child: I wish, I want, I dunno, I gonna, I don't care, I guess, when I grow up, bigger, biggest, better, best (many superlatives originate in the Child as 'playing pieces' in the 'Mine Is Better' game). In the same spirit as 'Look, Ma, no hands', they are stated to impress the Parent and to overcome the Not Ok. Though the words like why, what, when, where, whom, how are spoken by small kids but they will come under Adult.

Adult

Non-Verbal: Ernst describes that “listening with the Adult is identified by continual movement - of the face, the eyes, the body- with an eye blink every three to five seconds. Non-movement signifies non-listening. The Adult face is straight-forward. If the head is tilted, the person is listening with an angle in mind. The Adult also allows the curious, excited Child to show its face.

Verbal: The basic vocabulary of the Adult consists of why, what, where, when, who, and how. Other words are: how much, in what way, comparative, true, false, probable, possible, unknown, objective, I think, I see, it is my opinion, etc. These words all indicate Adult data processing. In the phrase 'it is my opinion', the opinion may be derived from the Parent, but the statement is Adult in that it is identified as an opinion and not as fact. 'It is my opinion that high school students should have the vote' is not the same as the statement 'High school students should have the vote'.

Now we will see several social situations/transactions and identify the respective Parent, Adult and Child.

Parent-Parent

Lady 1: (Looks at her watch, winds it, mumbles, catches the eye of the lady next to her, sighs wearily.)

Lady 2: (Sighs back, shifts uncomfortably, looks at her watch.)

Lady 1: Looks like we're going to be late again.

Lady 2: Never fails.

Lady 1: You ever see a bus on time-ever?

Lady 2: Never have.

Lady 1: Just like I was saying to Herbert this morning - you just don't get service any more like you used to.

Lady 2: You're absolutely right. It's a sign of the times.

Lady 1: It costs you, though. You can count on that!

These ladies in their game of 'Ain't It Awful' [Games People Play] proceed without the benefit of reality data because of the good feeling that comes from blaming and finding fault. When we blame and find fault, we replay the early blaming and fault-finding which is recorded in the Parent, and this makes us feel ok, because the Parent is ok, and we are coming on Parent. Finding someone to agree with you, and play the game, produces a feeling well-nigh omnipotent.

Lady 1 made the first move. Lady 2 could have stopped the game had she responded, at any point, with an Adult statement I to any of Lady 1's statements:

Lady 1: (Looks at her watch, winds it, mumbles, catches the eye of the lady next to her, sighs wearily.)

Adult Response Possibilities:

1. Non-acknowledgement of sigh, by looking away.
2. A simple smile.
3. (If Lady 1 were sufficiently distressed): 'Are you all right?'

Lady 1: Looks like we're going to be late again.

Adult Response Possibilities:

- 1: What time is it now?
2. This bus is usually on time.
3. Have you been late before?
4. I'll ask.

Lady 1: You ever seen a bus on time - ever?

Adult Response Possibilities:

1. Yes.
2. I don't usually ride the bus.
3. I've never thought about it.

Lady 1: Just like I was saying to Herbert this morning - you just don't get service any more like you used to.

Adult Response Possibilities:

- 1: I can't agree with that.
2. What kind of service do you mean?
3. The standard of living is as high as ever, the way I see it.
4. I can't complain.

Someone who is enjoying a game of 'Ain't It Awful' does not welcome the intrusion of facts. If the neighbour girls enjoy an every-morning session of 'Husbands Are Stupid', they will not welcome the new girl who announces brightly that her husband is a jewel.

This brings us to the first rule of communication in Transactional Analysis. When stimulus and response on the P-A-C transactional diagram make parallel lines (figure 6), the transaction is complementary and can go on indefinitely. It does not matter which way the vectors go (Parent-Parent, Adult-Adult, Child-Child, Parent-Child, Child-Adult) if they are parallel.

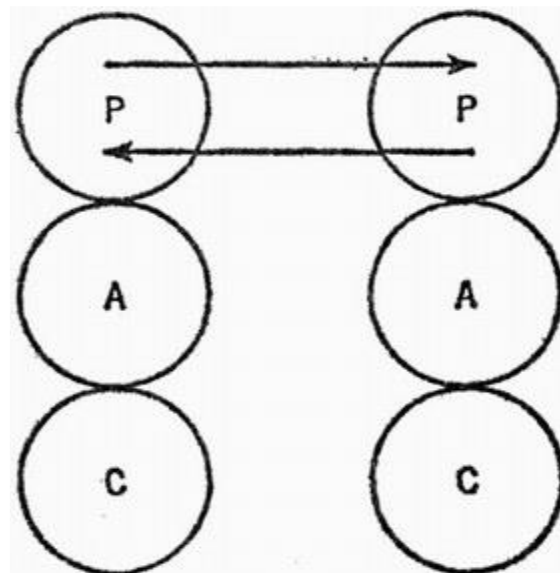


Figure 6. Parent-Parent Transaction

Child-Child

There are very few game-free complementary Child- Child transactions. This is because the Child is a get-stroke rather than a give-stroke creature. People have transactions to get stroking. Without Adult involvement in the transaction, no stroking accrues to anyone, and the relationship becomes uncomplimentary, or dies of boredom.

Girl 1 (Child): I'll be the mamma and you be the little girl.

Girl 2 (Child): I always have to be the little girl.

Girl 1 (Adult): Well, let's take turns; you be the mamma first, and then next time I'll be the mamma.

This exchange is not Child-Child because of the Adult input (problem solving) apparent in the last statement. Also, many of the transactions of small children are Adult-Adult, although they may seem 'childish' because of data deficiency:

Little Girl: Emergency, Emergency! Buzzy [the cat] lost a tooth.

Sister: Does the good fairy bring money to cats?

Complementary Child-Child transactions can more readily be observed in what persons do together than in what they say to each other - as is true of very small children. A couple holding on to each other for dear life and screaming at the top of their lungs in the middle of a roller coaster ride are having a Child-Child transaction. Yet the Adult made the arrangements for these happy experiences. It took money to ride the roller coaster. A relationship between people cannot last very long without the Adult. Thus we may say that complementary Child-Child transactions exist with the permission and supervision of the Adult. (figure 7)

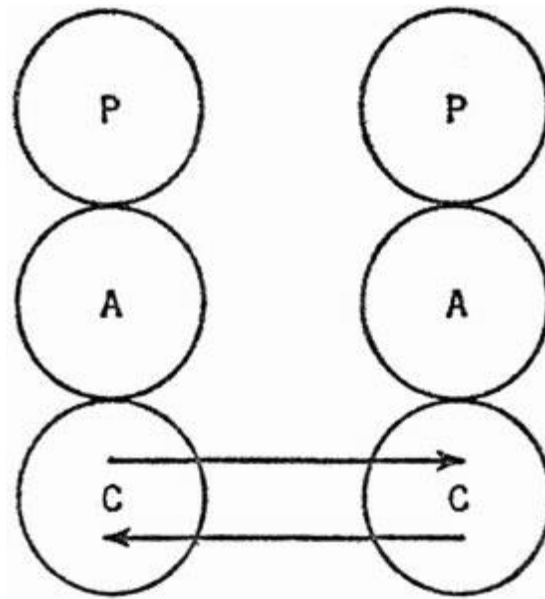


Figure 7. Child-Child transaction

Adult-Adult

Consider the same incidence of ladies talking, who were intrigued by the Adult-Adult talk of a fellow passenger and driver.

Passenger: Will we be in Berkley on time?

Driver: Yes, at 11:15.

It was a direct answer to a direct request for information. There was no Parent component (How are our chances of getting to Berkeley on time for a change?) and no Child component (I don't know why I always manage to get on the slowest bus). It was a dispassionate exchange. This kind of transaction gets the facts. (figure 8)

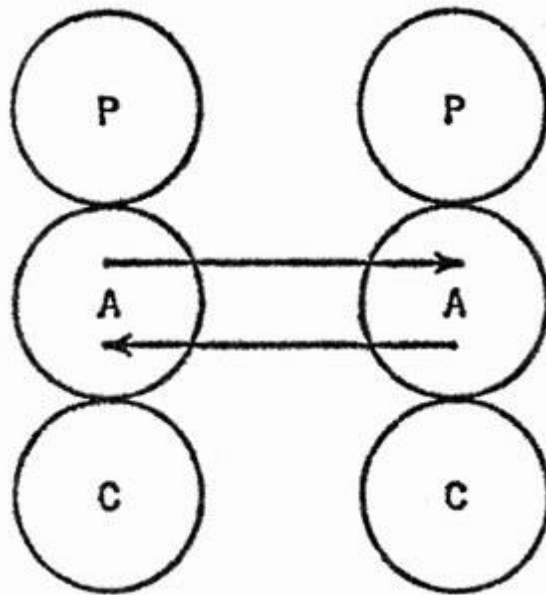


Figure 8. Adult-Adult transaction

Parent-Child

Another type of complementary transaction is one between Parent and Child (Figure 9). The husband (Child) is sick, has a fever, and wants attention. The wife (Parent) knows how ill he feels and is willing to mother him. This can go on in a satisfactory way indefinitely as long as the wife is willing to be mothering.

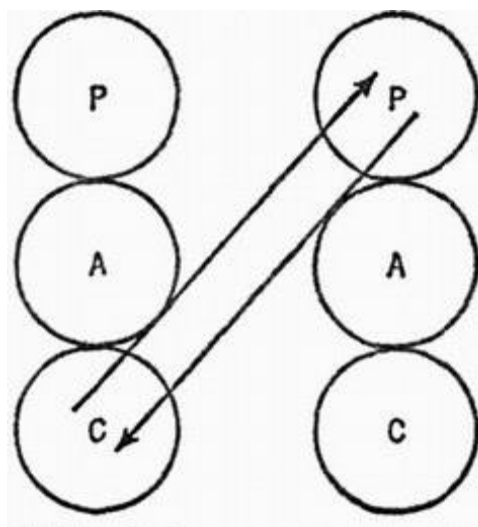


Figure 9. Child-Parent transaction

Child-Adult

A husband may fear an upcoming business encounter, which a promotion depends on. Even though he is qualified in every respect, he has an overload of Child data coming into his computer: I'm not going to make it! So he says to his wife, I'm not going to make it', hoping for her recount of the reality reasons why he can make it if he doesn't let his not ok Child ruin his chances. He knows she has a good Adult and 'borrows it' when his own is impaired. Her response is different from a Parent response, which might be reassuring even if reality data were not present or which might simply deny the Child feelings: 'Of course you'll make it; don't be stupid!' (figure 10)

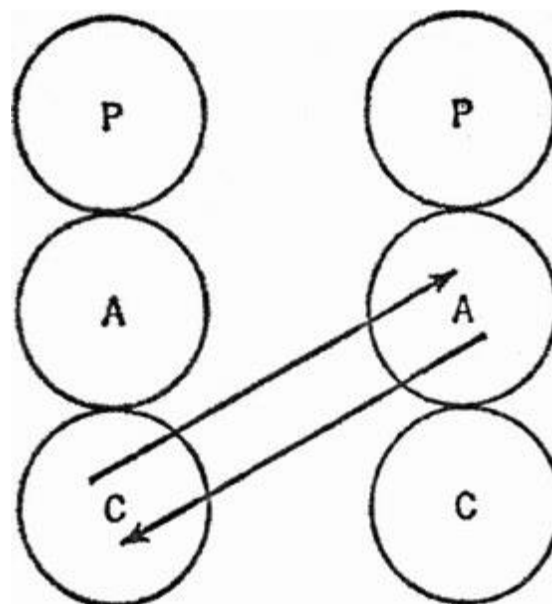


Figure 10. Child-Adult transaction

Adult-Parent

A man who wants to quit smoking. He has adequate Adult data as to why this is important to his health. Despite this, he asks his wife to play the Parent, to destroy his cigarettes when she finds them, to react strongly if he lights one. This transaction has very good game possibilities. As soon as he turns the responsibility over to his wife's Parent, the husband can be a naughty little boy and play 'If It Weren't for You I Could' or 'Try and Catch Me'. (figure 11)

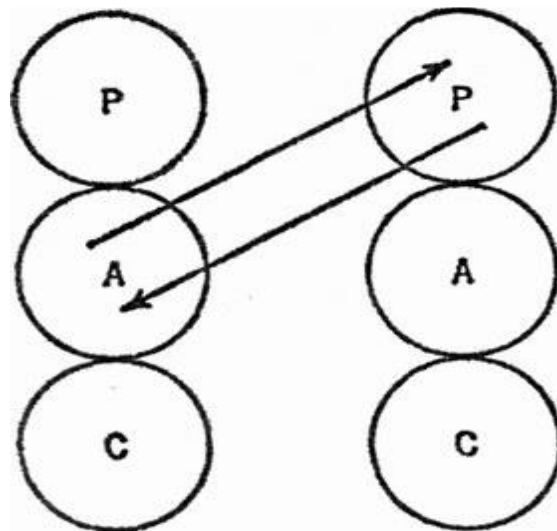


Figure 11. Adult-Parent transaction

Uncomplimentary or Crossed, Transactions

These types of interactions occur with crossed states, not parallel and sooner the communication starts. This brings us to the second rule of communication in Transactional Analysis. When the stimulus and response cross on the P-A-C diagram, communication stops.

Adult-Adult V/S Parent-Child

Patient (A): I would like to work in a hospital like this.

Nurse (P): You can't cope with your own problems. (figure 12)

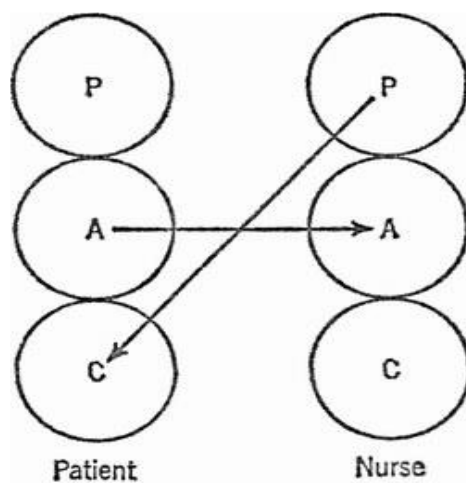


Figure 12

Parent-Child V/S Parent-Child

Mother (P): Go clear up your room.

Daughter (P): You can't tell me what to do. You're not the boss around here. Dad's the boss! (figure 13)

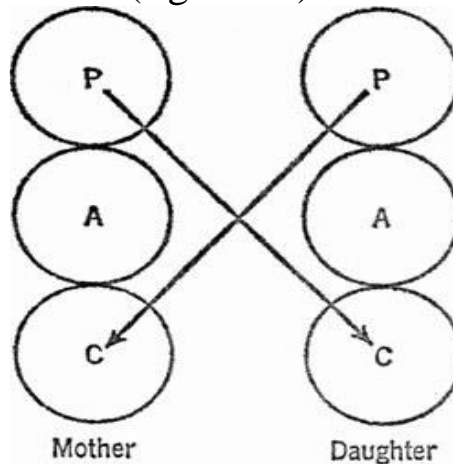


Figure 13

Other Transactions

These types of transactions involve stimulus and response at more than one level.

Adult-Adult + Parent-Child

Husband (to wife): Where did you hide the can opener?

The main stimulus is Adult and in that it seeks objective information. But there is a secondary communication in the word hide. This is Parent. It is a thinly veiled criticism. The progress of this transaction depends on which stimulus the wife wishes to respond to. She can choose to reply as Adult and taking the suggestions of her husband. 'I hid it next to the tablespoons, darling'. However, if her not ok Child is hooked, her primary response will be to the word hide, and she may

respond along the lines of, 'So what's the matter with you - you blind or something?' (Figure 14)

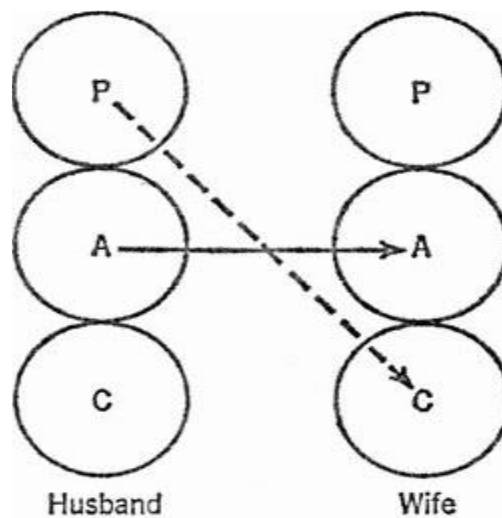


Figure 14

Adult-Adult + Parent-Child + Child-Parent

A man comes home and writes 'I love you' in the dust on the coffee table. The Adult is in command of the situation, although both his Parent and Child are involved (figure 15). The Parent says, 'Why don't you ever clean this place up?' The Child says, 'Please don't get mad at me if I criticize you'. However, Adult takes the charge. He doesn't allow his Child or Parent to come into the picture. His intention is to tell her to keep the house nice but not by infuriating her, thus seeking the response of her Adult. If the Adult of wife takes the charge, she will clean the home and will appreciate her husband's love. However, if she can't do this, her Parent will probably retort, 'When was the last time you cleaned the garage' or her Child will send her out on the town to run up the charge accounts.

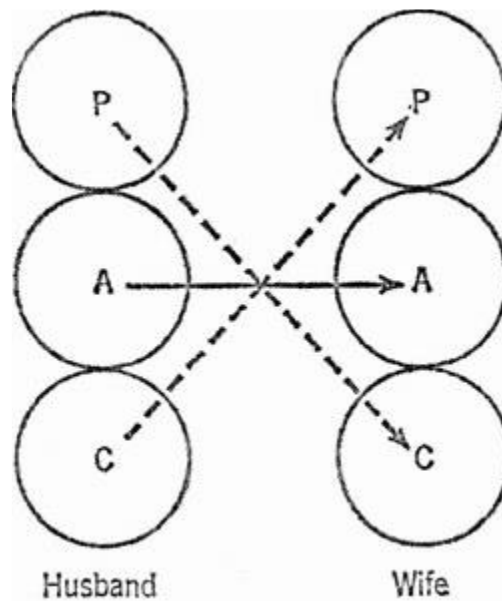


Figure 15

How to Stay in the Adult

A strong Adult is built in the following ways:

1. Learn to recognize your Child, its vulnerabilities, its fears, its principal methods of expressing these feelings.
2. Learn to recognize your Parent, its admonitions, injunctions, fixed positions, and principal ways of expressing these admonitions, injunctions, and positions.
3. Be sensitive to the Child in others, talk to that Child, stroke that Child, protect that Child, and appreciate its need for creative expression as well as the not ok burden it carries about.
4. Count to ten, if necessary, in order to give the Adult time to process the data coming into the computer, to sort out Parent and Child from reality.
5. When in doubt, leave it out. You can't be attacked for what you didn't say.

6. Work out a system of values. You can't make decisions without an ethical framework.

My Analysis

With the in-depth study of the complete book, I am able to contemplate almost everything studied in the course or its basic essence from the book. Though the book focuses on Transactional Analysis, but the author has been able to give a wholesome of all the virtues and teachings in a book. My analysis is broadly based on the depth and innate relation of the knowledge in the book with what is pursued in the course, along with the concepts' application and comparison with the concepts being contradicted.

The title 'I'M OK – YOU'RE OK' is very appealing. In addition to this, it gives a very portrait description of the Win-Win theory. Although, the concept of Win-Win is quite wide, but still the book (even the title) conveys the idea very well upto interpersonal transaction basis. The concept of Adult highlights the first habit of Stephen Covey's 7 habits. It explains the freedom to choose the response, which was beautifully depicted with the story of Viktor Frankl (7 Habits of Highly Effective People). The application of the concepts mentioned also helps a lot in achieving many key qualities of self-actualised – the quality of acceptance of others and reality, problem centric approach, autonomy, peak experiences (because the Child is allowed to express under the supervision of Adult), and creativeness. Though it may seem a philosophical or self-help book, it offers the solution to many communication barriers – solution to the problem of positions, prejudice, understanding the psychology of person by identifying the right state among the P-A-C. This P-A-C also helped in overcoming emotional interferences. The professional topics like non-verbal and verbal communication are also highlighted in the clues of different states. The theory of Transactional Analysis

provides far more active approach to control our mind as compared to Freud's Id, Ego and Superego. The biggest contribution is in the domain of problem solving and conflict resolution, by helping with the emotional side of problems and conflicts. Thus, it covers a part less taken care of, and of utmost importance.

Coming to the criticism, not many could be found and they are my personal opinions which may contradict with others. I don't agree with the idea of Central Emotional Position by Kubie which says "Whenever the central emotional position is painful, the individual may spend his whole life defending herself/himself against it, again using conscious, preconscious, and unconscious devices whose aim it is to avoid this pain-filled central position." [Given in The Four Life Positions] The author himself said that these might be turned off. The idea of Not Ok is defined as quite painful and negative. A more positive reasoning could be made on the basis of Taoism – the concept of pooh (unchanged), which projects what is carved on it, and is natural.

Though I have read the entire book, I decided to sum up my project upto the chapter five of book 'Analysing the Transaction'. I want everyone to be delved in the greatness of the book and it becomes impossible not to read. I personally feel that reading this book will help you shoot out to the next dimension of success and acceptance.

Gratias Tibi Ago....

References

☯ **I'M OK – YOU ARE OK, Thomas A. Harris**

☯ **YOU CAN WIN, Shiv Khera**

☯ **The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People, Stephen R. Covey**

☯ **Everything learnt from the course (including Eat That Frog, Brian Tracy)**