

*What is TA? 'Transactional analysis is a *theory of personality* and systematic psychotherapy for personal growth and personal change'. As a theory of personality, TA gives us a picture of how people are structured psychologically. It also provides us with a *theory of communication* and a *theory of child development* which introduces the concept of life-scripts and explains how our present life patterns originated in childhood. Within this framework of life-script, TA develops explanations of how we may continue to re-play childhood strategies in grown up life, even when these produce results that are self-deating or painful. S6P19-1

What are the key ideas of TA? TA is based on the following ideas.

*Most basic of all is the *ego-state model*.

An ego-state is a set of related behaviors, thoughts and feeling
It is a way in which we manifest a part of our personality at a given time.

*There are three distinct ego-states in this model.

Adult ego-state, that in which behavior, thinking and feeling is
in response to what is going on in the here and now

Parent ego-state, ways of behavior, thinking and feeling that
copy the parent-figure in one's life

Child ego-state, that in which one returns to behavior, thinking
and feeling which was used as a child.

*This is known as the *P-A-C model*.³

**life-script*. -unaware life-story starts in the infant years and most of
our life-script is written by the age of seven - can be revised
further during adolescence. As adults, we are not usually
aware of the life-script that we have written for ourselves

*life-script and the PAC model are the center building blocks of TA

COUNTERSCRIPT

There are five commands in particular that play a role in forming one's own counterscript. They are:

Be Perfect

Be Strong

Try Hard

Please (people)

Hurry Up

These driver messages that we receive lead us to believe that we will be OK if we meet these commands. We all carry these messages somewhat in our head but some of them are stronger than others. If we can identify which drivers push our buttons and start becoming aware of our counterscript, then we can more effectively deal with our task of learning new behaviors, self-acceptance and self-esteem.

Counterjunctions, those stated above, are verbal. But what they lead to in individuals are **INJUNCTIONS** which are not necessarily heard as words in one's head. They are felt more as emotions and body sensations and get reflected in behavior.

Don't Be (Don't Exist)
Don't Be You
Don't Be A Child
Don't Grow Up
Don't Make It
Don't (Don't Do Anything)
Don't Be Important
Don't Belong
Don't Be Close
Don't Be Well (Don't Be Sane)
Don't Think
Don't Feel 7

Bodyscripts. There are bodily clues that signal when a person has moved into another script.

- *a strong "Please me" message in their upbringing may experience stomach aches and tightening in that area. They say to themselves that they are not good enough and refuse to believe that they ever will become good enough. They are the people who are always trying to work hard, they have rigid parent driven behavior. If they are not pleaseing then they often believe that they shouldn't exist, that they are not important.

- *the person who tries hard but feels that they should always **try hard** and harder carries with them the counterinjunction of "Don't Succeed". There is tension in the shoulders, a tight stomach and a furrowed brow indicating "I don't know if this is good enough" attitude. The "Thinker".

- *signals in our life of not getting to close to someone, we might have grown up in a hurried atmosphere.
 You can't **hurry** and be close at the same time.
 agitated and anxious.
 starts a piece of music but never really quite finishes it. There are always loose ends. Often late for a lesson.
 They jump to playing a phrase before the teacher has a chance to demonstrate all of the points that should be made, they tend to play too fast and shift from one position to another. The eyes will also shift a lot.

- *"**Be Perfect**" person will tend to be tense all over. They will keep saying, "it's not perfect yet" and make many excuses. You might even hear this person say, "yes, it's perfectly clear to me" scratching the head, grooming themselves, primping, or using words such as "obviously", "I think", and "clearly".

*counterinjunction "**Be Strong**". don't feel, don't get too close. S6P19-3

This person may appear to be numb and rigid.

They can't let people know who they really are, heaven forbid
people should know that they have weaknesses.

These people usually suffer from circulatory problems, things
concerning the heart and strokes.

words tend to run like, "No Comment", or "I don't care".

Sometimes they are almost like a computer communicator.

These are worksheets to fill out by pen - prepare ahead of time for small group discussion on-line conference call. (Dutch and Japanese languages will be grouped together.

EXERCISE

I. Identify the various elements of script in each of the anecdotes below.

1. Pat drinks excessively. His doctor advises him to stop because he is seriously impairing his health. With a big grin on his face, Pat tells the doctor that he will "someday soon" and "things will get better". He has become forgetful and confused at work, thus feeling more threatened than usual by the competence of his co-workers. He compensates for his mistakes by using his charm and wit, of which he has an abundance. His co-workers like him but get upset with him when he makes repetitive and easily avoidable mistakes. Pat responds by feeling hurt and inadequate then sneaking a drink as soon as he can.

(a) Injunctions

(b) Early Child Decision

(c) Existential Position

(d) Games and Rackets

(e) Life Course

(f) Script Payoff

EXERCISE

S6P19-5

2. Mary is viewed as flighty and easily excitable by her friends. She is outgoing and adapts readily to the wishes of others. As a consequence, she is popular socially. She responds poorly to pressure by invariable crying and saying "I can't stand it". Her friends tend to be very protective of her and "walk on eggs" around her when she's upset. They feel responsible for her feelings and believe if they are not careful she'll "freak out". They have a hard time knowing specifically what she's feeling because she gives the appearance of being overwhelmed with a conglomeration of feelings most of the time. Her father takes her hunting, fishing, and to the ball games. Otherwise he pays little attention to her.

The elements of Mary's script include the following:

- (a) Injunctions
- (b) Early Child Decision
- (c) Existential Position
- (d) Games and Rackets
- (e) Life Course
- (f) Script Payoff

I. Family Constellation

List all siblings in descending order, including the patient in his/her position. Give patient's age and add after each sibling the years of age difference with patient, with plus and minus sign. Include siblings now dead.

A. Description of Siblings

1. Who is most different from you? In what respect? (Ask patient to elaborate.) *(child in most competition)*
2. Who is most like you? In what respect?
3. What kind of kid were you?
4. Describe the other siblings. *very*

B. Ratings

List highest and lowest sibling for each attribute, and if patient is at neither extreme, give his/her position as to either.

1. Intelligence
2. Hardest worker
3. Best grades in school
4. Helping around the house
5. Conforming
6. Rebellious
7. Trying to please
8. Critical of others
9. Considerateness
10. Selfishness
11. Having own way
12. Sensitive - easy to hurt
13. Temper tantrum
14. Sense of humor
15. Idealistic
16. Materialistic
17. High standards (of achievement, behavior, morals, etc.)
18. Who was the most athletic? Strongest? Tallest? Prettiest? Most masculine, feminine?
19. Who was the most spoiled, by whom, how, and for what?
20. Who was punished most, by whom, how, and for what?
21. Who had the most friends? What kind of relationship - leader, exclusive, gregarious?

C. Sibling Interrelationships

1. Who took care of whom?
2. Who played with whom?
3. Who got along best with whom?
4. Which two fought and argued the most?
5. Who was father's favorite?
6. Who was mother's favorite?

D. Description of Parents

1. How old is father? mother?
2. What kind of person is father?
3. What kind of person is mother?
4. Which of the children is most like father?
In what way?
5. Which of the children is most like mother?
In what way?
6. What kind of relationship existed between mother and father?
 - a. Who was dominant, made decisions, etc.?
 - b. Did they agree or disagree on methods of raising children?
 - c. Did they quarrel openly? About what? How did these quarrels end?
 - d. How did you feel about these quarrels? Whose side did you take?
7. Who was more ambitious for the children?
In which way?
8. Did any other person (grandparent, uncle, aunt, roomer, etc.) influence you? Describe them and your relationship to them.

II. Early Recollections

How far back can you remember? (Obtain recollection of specific incidents, with as many details as possible, including the patient's reaction at the time. Make sure that this is a recollection and not a report. Childhood dreams are early recollections.)

III. Conclusions

The summary of the family constellation and of the early recollections permits the derivations of the basic mistaken assumptions on which the life style is based.

This questionnaire requires some discussion in order to clarify the meaning and significance of the questions asked.

Ask yourself these questions as you prepare to interview yourself regarding your own Life Script.

A LIFE SCRIPT QUESTIONNAIRE

FULL NAME _____

DATE _____

BIRTHDATE _____

INTERVIEWER _____

What did you call your father? _____ mother? _____

What did they call you? _____

Were there any other significant adults living with you? _____

1. Describe yourself briefly.

Basic Life Position
BP, D *Early Child Decision*

Is this something you like about yourself?

2. Describe your mother briefly.

Parental injunction
PI, CI *Counterinjunction*

Is this something you like about her? (use if indicated)

3. Describe your father briefly.

PI, CI

Is this something you like about him? (use if indicated)

4. What did your mother say when she complimented you as a youngster?

PI, CI, BP

5. What did she say when she criticized you? Any particular incident come to mind when you were a youngster?

PI, CI, BP

6. What was her main advice to you? What was your secret response to that advice or what did you say to yourself?

PI, CI, P

7. What did your father say when he complimented you as a youngster?

B
PI, CI, BP

8. What did he say when he criticized you? Any particular incident come mind when you were a youngster?

PI, CI, BP

9. What was his main advice to you? What was your secret response to that advice or what did you say to yourself?

PI, CI, BP

10. What nicknames have people called you? What do the names mean?

BP

11. At this point in your life, what are your goals? When you were a youngster what did you want to be?

D, C
Contract

Please interview yourself and write your answers in a story form on a separate page as a document form. This will be part of your reflection paper.

1

BP - Basic Life Position
D - Early Child Decision
PI - Parental Injunction
CI - Counterinjunction
C - Contract
P - Program or Script

12. What did your mother want you to be? PI, CI, BP
13. What did your father want you to be? PI, CI, BP
14. What do you like most about yourself? PI, CI, BP
15. What do you like least about yourself? PI, CI, BP
16. Do you ever feel that something might be wrong with you?
(If yes, ask what.) BP
17. Describe the bad feeling you have had most often in your
life. If you felt that way what would you do? R
18. When did you first feel this feeling? Any particular scene
come to mind? D, BP
19. What was your favorite child story? What do you remember
about it? Program
or script.
20. What was your favorite part of it? Which character did you
identify with? P
21. If you continued to go along the way you are going in your
life currently, what would you be doing five years from
today? D
22. If you follow through on what you are now planning for
yourself, what will you be doing five years from today?
C
23. How do you think you might die? At what age? P, D
24. What will it say on your tombstone? D
What would you put? what would others put?
25. What is the myth of your birth? What are the facts and what
were you told regarding it? Is that a story that you enjoy
telling? D
26. What do you wish your mother had done differently? C
27. What do you wish your father had done differently? C
28. Where do you fit in your family constellation?
29. If by magic you could change anything about yourself, what
would you change? Would it take magic to do those things?
D, C
30. What would "heaven on earth" be for you? D
31. What do you want most out of life? (In addition to that,
what do you want?) C

- 32. What is your biggest problem? C
- 33. What about yourself are you willing or do you want to change? (Give strokes for specificity.) C
- 34. What will you do to make those changes? C
- 35. How will you and I both know that you have reached your goals? C
- 36. How will you sabotage yourself from meeting your goal?

Are you willing not to sabotage yourself?

YOUR LIFE SCRIPT FORM

S6P19-11

Parental Injunction (message from parent's Child):

"Don't . . .

Counterinjunction (from parent's Parent):

Basic Position (of Child):

Racket:

Favorite Game:

Decision:

Program for Life Course (how to obey injunction):

Contract: (Agree only to goals you can see yourself reach.)