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**Year One: Assignment One**

**Assignment:** Briefly define Transactional Analysis (TA) as you see it expressed in one of Eric Berne's books, giving reference to two examples to illustrate different ways TA can be used to bring about change.

Transactional Analysis was founded by Eric Berne in the 1950's, (i) it is one of the most accessible theories of modern psychology and is used within a wide range of applications; personal development, clinical, therapeutic and organisational to name but a few. Eric Berne developed his three ego state model **Parent, Adult, Child** from observing the human communication between two people, he called the speaker's part as the Transaction Stimulus (agent) and the receiver and responder's part as the Transaction Response (responder). In a therapeutic setting we analyse and examine this communication between ourselves (trainee psychotherapist) and the client. The same principle we apply to all conversations though to differing degrees we examine and analyse the conversation. TA became the method of examining the transaction wherein; 'I do something to you' and 'you do something back'. Eric Berne believed that each of us is made up of three ego states. (i)

**Parent:** This is our ingrained voice of authority and where we have been "taught" to behave through our parents, peers, teachers and people around us.

It is where our brain plays back typically embodied attitudes and phrases which we were taught in childhood such as "how to", "don't lie" and "never forget". For me the earliest taught behaviour I can recall is, "speak when only spoken to".

This ego state is more difficult to change, though change can happen.

**Adult;** The adult ego state is where we begin to think for ourselves, and determine what is the best decision for us thinking independently, though part of how we react is based on our "taught" behaviour.

(i) Eric Berne believed the adult state starts to form from around the age of

10 months old, and is where we start to keep the child and parent ego separated.

**Organisations;** TA is widely used within organisations. The Parent, Adult Child model is applied in business management, personal development. It brings added competitive advantage, it is a way of helping employees analyze and actualise their potential achievements. Likewise in business it can be used to solve problems, assess relationships, personnel departments use this model to assist in analysing the correct person for a certain post, mediating and offering support.

Example: Northern Guild applies this same principle to assist students to achieve their potential goal of achieving qualified status.

**Therapeutic;** When counselling a client we work using key TA foundations, "I'm ok and you're ok"<sup>(ii)</sup> which means that both the client and therapist is valued and have a shared responsibility in their work together. The therapist is no more "ok" than their client and vice versa. As a therapist we should not rescue the client and the client should not be seen as a victim. Each party has a right to be autonomous and take responsibility. Both the client and therapist have room to change through making decisions and experimenting changes through doing things in a new way. Change can be brought about through not holding onto the past.

Word count; 493

Referencing;

- (i) Berne, Eric. **Transactional Analysis in Psychotherapy**. New York: Grove, 1971.
- (ii) Berne, Eric **Games People Play**. 1964