

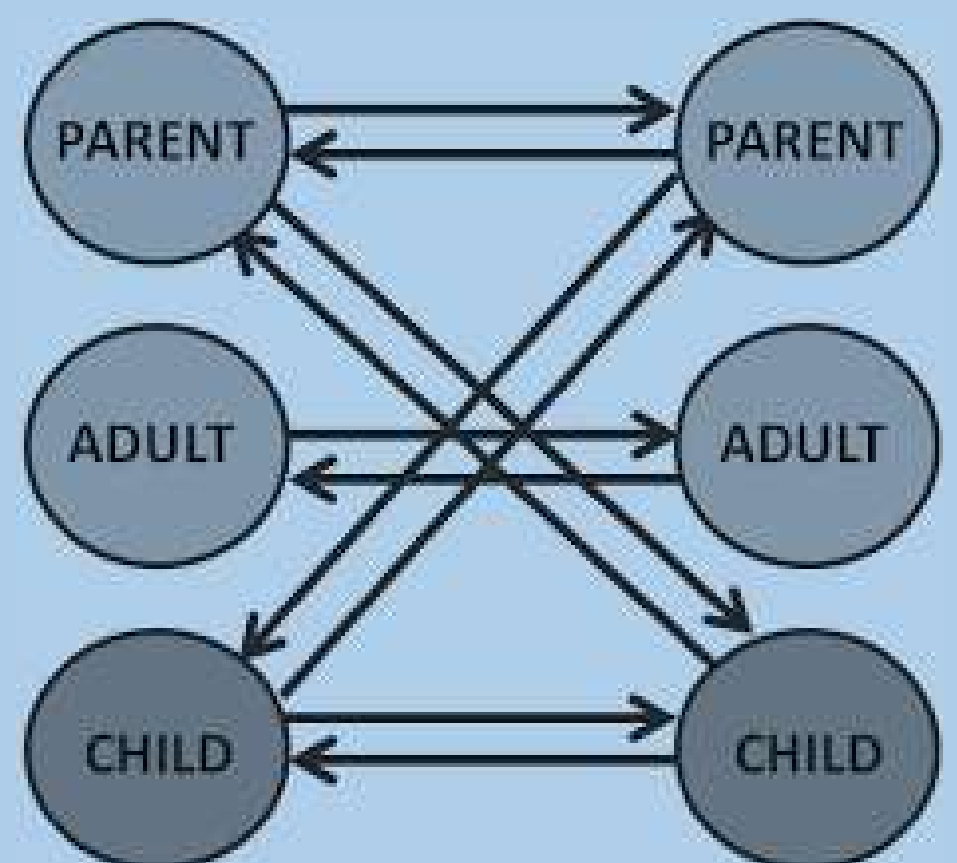
TRANSACTIONAL ANALYSIS

for Coaches, SUPERvisors, Leaders...

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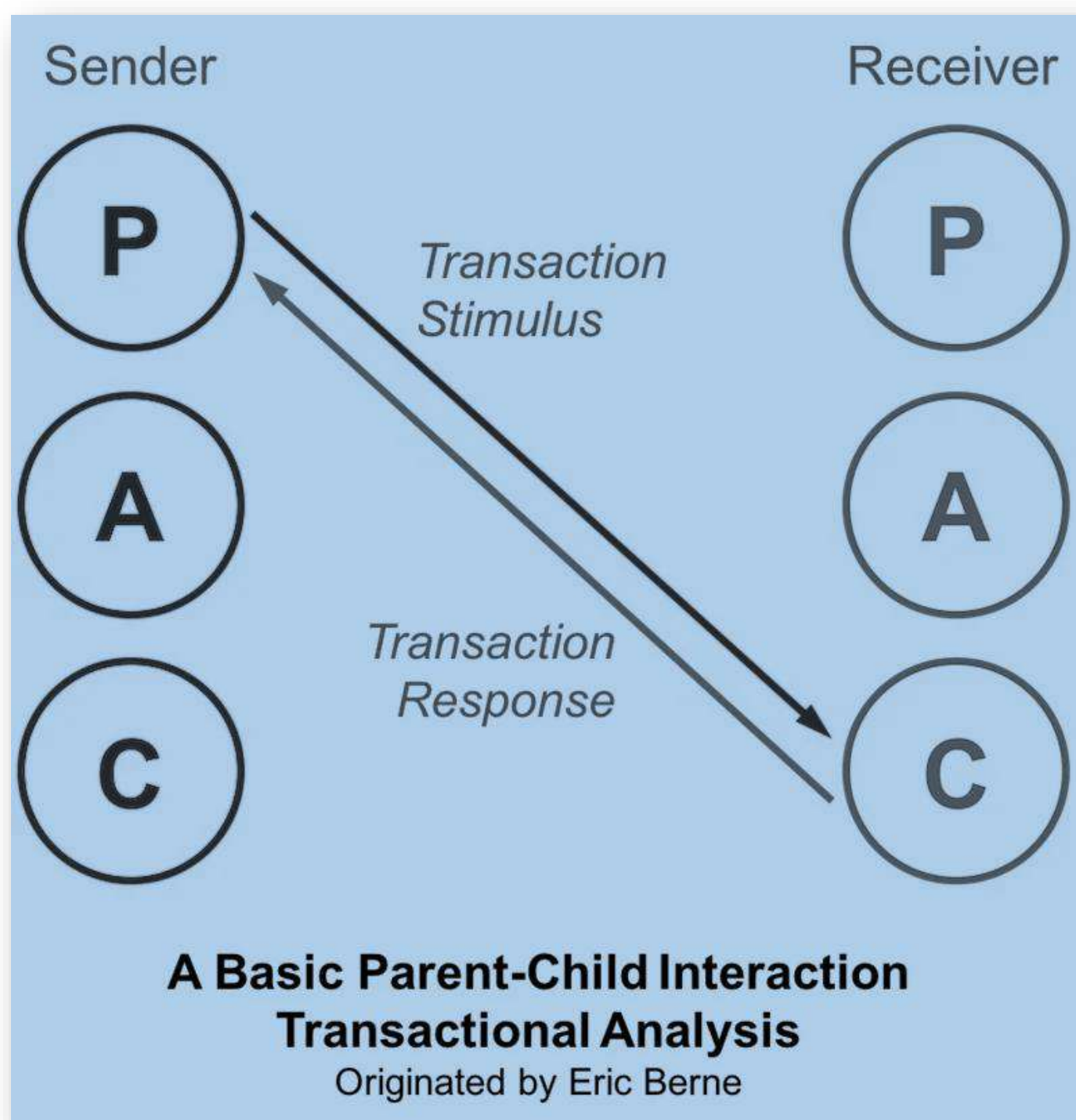
KEY LEARNING

- Understand and be able to use Transactional Analysis in interactions
- Move conversations and relationships to an Adult-to-Adult position
- Use TA to consider what is going on in conversations and interactions



Transactional Analysis Theory for Coaches, SUPERvisors & Leaders

Transactional Analysis (TA) is a psychological theory developed by Eric Berne, in the 1950s, that examines interactions between people as transactions. It categorizes people's behavior into three ego states: Parent, Adult, and Child. These ego states influence how we interact with others, and understanding them can help improve communication and resolve conflicts. TA coaching uses this model to analyze and change unproductive behavior patterns by helping individuals recognize their ego states during interactions. The goal is to foster healthier communication and relationships.



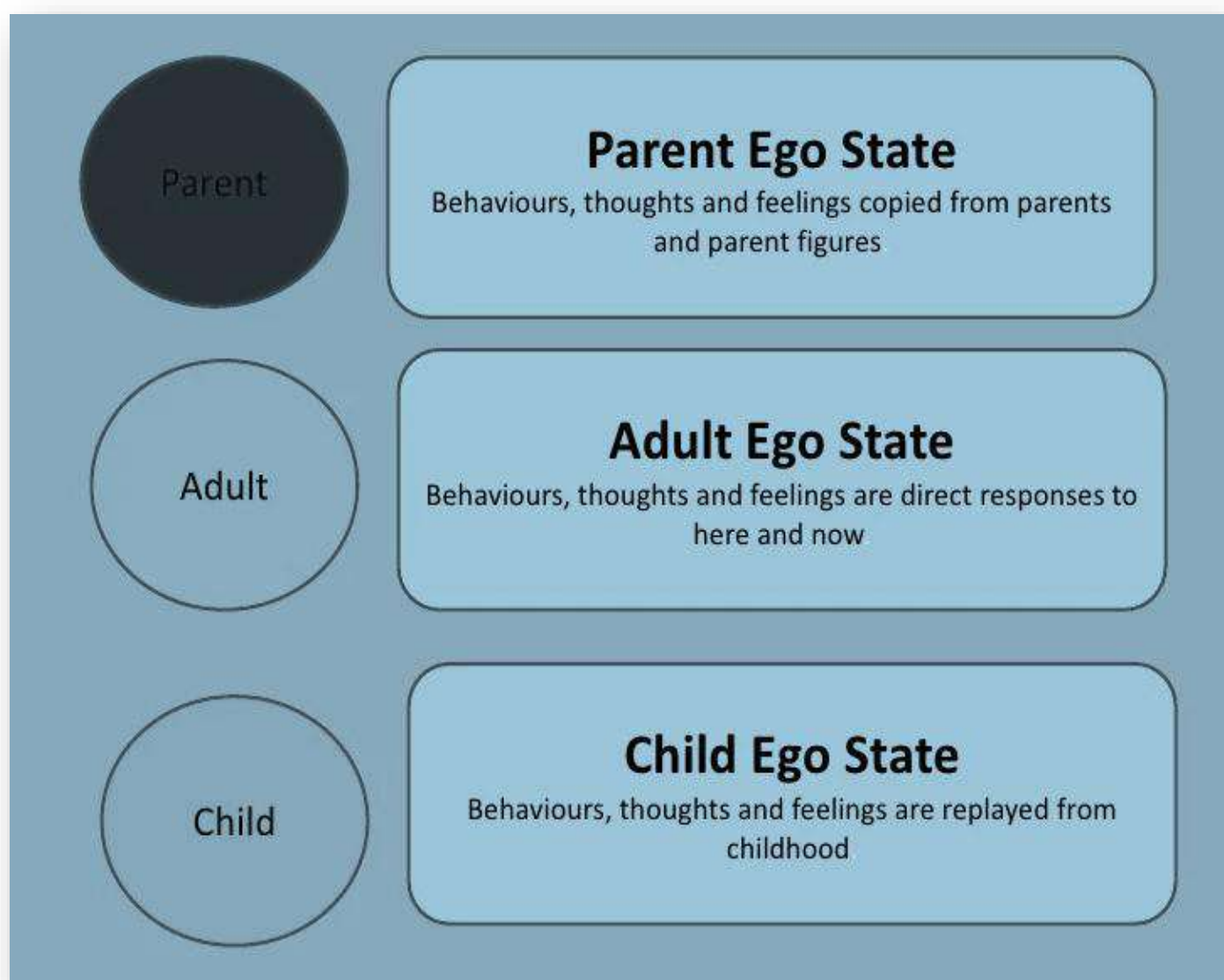
Transactional analysts are trained to identify the ego states individuals are communicating from and to trace these interactions. By understanding these sequences, they can intervene to enhance communication effectiveness and quality.

How Was it Developed?

Berne's concepts for Transactional Analysis (TA) evolved from Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory, which emphasizes that childhood experiences significantly shape our adult lives. These early experiences are fundamental in forming our personalities and can contribute to psychological or emotional challenges later in life.

Eric Berne suggested that dysfunctional behavior stems from self-limiting decisions made during childhood for survival, leading to the creation of a "life script" - a subconscious life plan that directs one's behavior. The goal of transactional analysis is to consider and shift life script. In broader applications, such as within organizations or societies, the aim is to replace harmful, violent patterns with cooperative, non-violent behavior.

Since Eric Berne introduced TA, other psychologists and psychotherapists, such as Thomas Harris and Claude Steiner, have expanded upon his work. They have further developed the theory and its therapeutic applications, contributing to its evolution and adaptation in various contexts.



The Ego States

TA posits that during interactions, we operate from one of three distinct ego states: the Child, the Parent, or the Adult (Berne, 1957). These states represent different ways of thinking, feeling, and behaving – experiencing - each influencing how we communicate with others.

Child State: The Child ego state is divided into two subcategories: the Adapted Child and the Free Child. The Adapted Child responds based on past conditioning, conforming to please others but may become rebellious when facing conflict, leading to resistance and emotional reactivity. The Free Child, on the other hand, is creative, spontaneous, and playful, driven by a desire for enjoyment. These states are shaped by the reinforcements we received in childhood, influencing our current interactions and behaviors.

Parent State: The parent ego state is divided into two main subcategories: the critical parent and the nurturing parent. These represent behavior and thought patterns we have absorbed from our interactions with authority figures like our parents, teachers, and grandparents.

According to Berne, our early experiences, particularly during the first five years of life, shape the parent ego state. This state is characterized by a strong presence of judgments and rigid 'shoulds' and 'should nots' about how things should be.

When people react automatically to situations based on past conditioning, they are operating from this parent ego state. They tend to mimic the responses and attitudes of their parents or other authority figures, rather than evaluating situations independently in the present moment.

The critical parent mode manifests as a harsh and possibly aggressive form of disapproval, using a voice of authority. On the other hand, the nurturing parent mode involves a more rescuing approach, attempting to comfort and soothe, which can sometimes be inappropriate when dealing with adults rather than children.

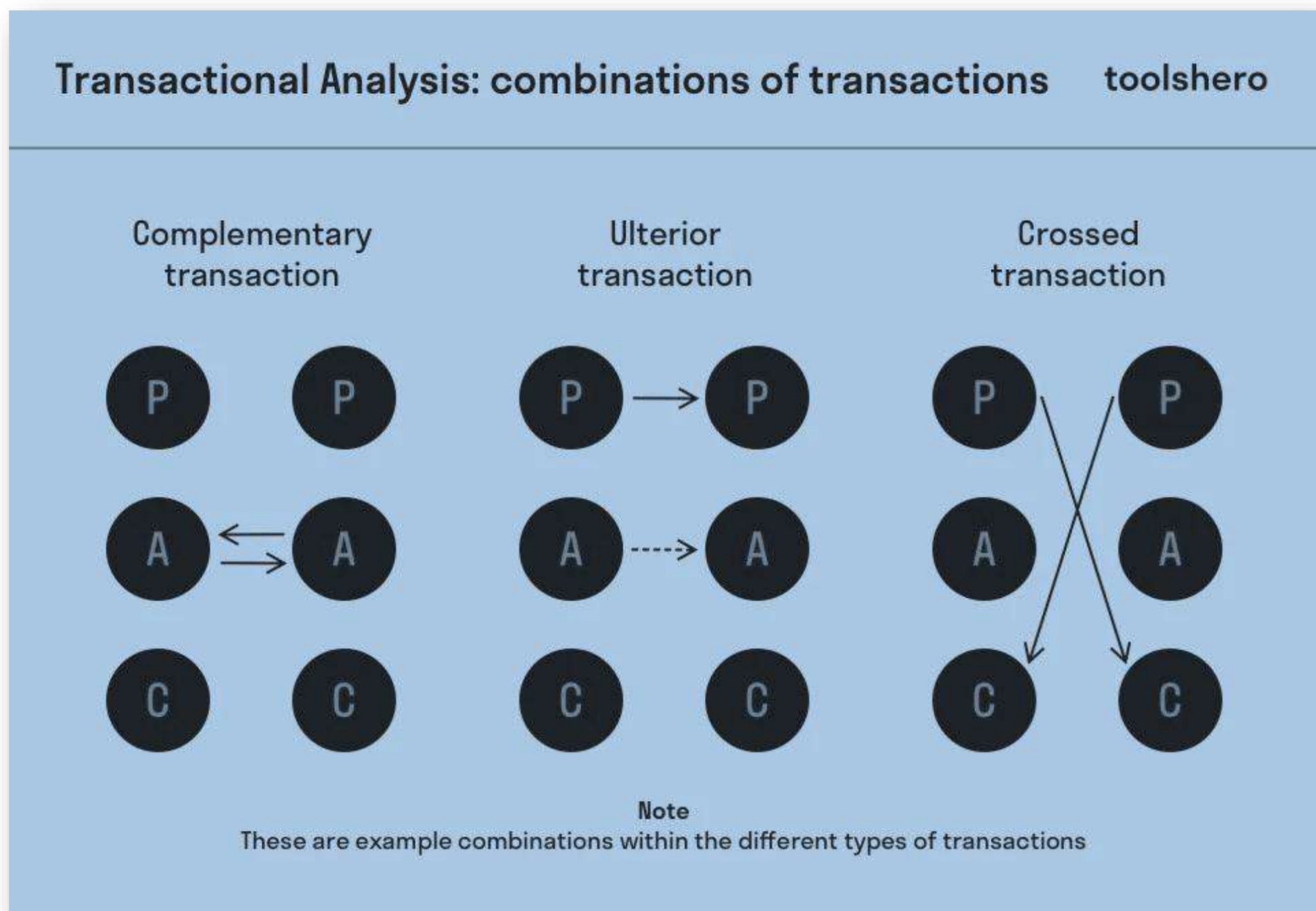
Adult state: Unlike the parent ego state, the adult state has no subdivisions. It engages with people and the environment based on the present moment, free from past conditioning or external influences.

This state is characterized by openness, rationality, and a tendency to avoid snap judgments about people or situations.

When we communicate from the adult state, we are more likely to be respectful, willing to compromise, attentive to others, and capable of fostering healthier social interactions.

Interaction Between the Ego States

Berne observed that people need "strokes," or units of interpersonal recognition, to thrive and maintain emotional well-being. Understanding how individuals give and receive both positive and negative strokes, and addressing unhealthy patterns of stroking, are crucial elements in transactional analysis.



Complementary transactions: Occurs when the sender's and receiver's ego states align and run parallel to each other.

This means that the sender's communication effectively reaches the desired ego state of the receiver, prompting a response that complements rather than challenges the sender's ego state. When this alignment occurs between adult ego states, it is considered the most effective form of communication because it fosters respect and minimizes conflict.

Similarly, if a transaction occurs from a child ego state and is met with a response from a nurturing parent ego state, it can reduce conflicts and promote harmony. However, this approach might not be ideal in a professional setting where interactions between adults typically benefit from a more balanced and equal exchange.

For instance, in a marriage, if one partner is anxious about an upcoming event, the other might respond from a nurturing parent ego state to provide comfort and support. While this can be helpful, relying predominantly on this dynamic over time could lead to strain and emotional fatigue.

Crossed transactions: Occur when the ego states of two people involved in an interaction do not align. Specifically, the sender's message does not reach the intended ego state of the receiver, leading to a conflicting or unexpected response (as illustrated by the crossed arrows in the diagram). In such cases, effective communication often requires one or both individuals to shift their ego states to realign and facilitate a productive exchange.

For example, if a customer approaches you with a complaint about their recent purchase, using harsh language and accusing you of deliberate wrongdoing while threatening to report you, they are communicating from their critical parent state. They expect you to respond from your child ego state, perhaps by being overly apologetic, pleading with them not to report you, and reinforcing their sense of authority.

If you respond instead from your adult or parent state, this creates a crossed transaction, as your response does not align with their expected ego state. To continue the conversation effectively, one or both parties would need to shift their ego states.

Transactional Analysis suggests that if you respond from your adult state, it is more likely that the customer will also shift to their adult state, facilitating a more respectful and productive dialogue between adults.

Ulterior transactions: Occur when a sender outwardly communicates in a way that appears to be from their adult ego state to the receiver's adult ego state. However, beneath this apparent adult-to-adult exchange, there is a subtle message originating from the sender's child or parent ego state, intended for the receiver's child or parent ego state. This results in two simultaneous messages being conveyed, which can happen either consciously or unconsciously.

This concept is illustrated by the dashed line in the diagram. For example, if a teacher or friend says, "You can choose to study subjects that lead to becoming a doctor; however, it is very hard and requires lots of intelligence," the message seems to be a straightforward, respectful adult-to-adult communication. Yet, the underlying intent might be to provoke the receiver's rebellious child ego state, leading them to think, "I'll prove my intelligence and become a doctor," thereby motivating them to study harder.

Using Transactional Analysis

The primary goal of TA coaching is to enhance the client's adult ego state. This is achieved by employing skillful questioning and tools to identify what triggers shifts into the parent or child ego states. The coach or SUPERvisor then helps the client develop strategies to maintain their adult state in these situations (Berne, 1958).

This process is known as script analysis, scripts are unconscious beliefs and perceptions about ourselves, others, and the world, developed from early experiences and interactions to make sense of our internal and external environments.

During script analysis, the focus is on exploring both positive and negative reinforcements we received as children, which shaped our behaviors. This includes examining life messages we absorbed, such as "only lucky people become rich" or "you have to suffer to succeed."

The analysis also involves investigating whether we are imitating the behaviors of our parents and other authority figures. Additionally, more subtle influences, known as injunctions, are explored. For instance, if you were often told to be quiet when your parents spoke to friends, you might have internalized beliefs like "no one wants to hear me" or "what I say doesn't matter." These are examined in coaching to understand their impact on your current interactions.

The parent, adult, and child diagram, or "structural diagram" as Berne called it, is a valuable tool used by TA practitioners to help clients visualize and understand the three ego states within themselves.

TA can be applied in both short-term, results-focused conversations and more extensive, long-term and developmental conversations. It provides insights into our unconscious processes, improves relationships, and reduces conflict. TA's versatility means it can be used with teams too and, in fact, in any relational system for professionals such as nurses, teachers, and those in business or sales training. TA can offering valuable strategies for enhancing work with clients and colleagues.

What About the Workplace?

In an ideal world, leaders and managers would be trained to recognise the ego state they and others are in at any given time, so they can adapt and choose healthier ways to interact.

For example, if you find yourself slipping into parent mode often with members of your team, having an awareness of the ego state you're operating from will stop you from doing so and you'll become a more effective and respected leader.

Sometimes things happen in the workplace that may trigger us. In these circumstances, it can be very easy to become a hostile child or a critical parent. This can lead to colleagues feeling aggrieved as they are being told what to do. Or they feel you are having a tantrum with them.

Managers often resort to parent ego. This is detrimental to the business as then you find employees lose the ability to show initiative and to think for themselves. A sign of this can be when the manager is absent and the tasks that need doing, fail to be achieved. Another sign is when managers do the task rather than delegate.

It all comes down to having awareness when you're interacting with others and taking that pause to think about *what needs to happen here so that we communicate well?*

We all play a role in all of our interactions. which do you play, and how does it impact on your team?

Advantages	Disadvantages
<p>Straightforward Concepts:</p> <p>Berne designed TA to be simple and easy to understand, allowing lay people to grasp the theory and its impact on social interactions.</p> <p>Enhanced Self-Awareness:</p> <p>TA provides individuals with deeper insight into their own behaviors, reactions, thoughts, and emotions, fostering greater self-awareness.</p> <p>Improved Communication & Relationships:</p> <p>Research supports that TA enhances communication skills, improves relationships, and reduces conflicts.</p> <p>Versatile Application:</p> <p>TA is applicable across various social settings and relationships, including work environments, educational contexts, romantic relationships, family dynamics, and interactions with clients, making it a highly adaptable theory.</p>	<p>Requires Self-Awareness:</p> <p>TA demands a high level of self-awareness and the ability to observe one's own behavior, emotions, and thought patterns, which some clients may lack.</p> <p>Need for Motivation:</p> <p>Effective use of TA requires clients to be willing and motivated to take responsibility for their problems and behaviors, making it unsuitable for everyone.</p> <p>Increased Complexity:</p> <p>Although Berne initially designed TA to be simple and accessible, subsequent additions by psychotherapists and psychologists have made the theory more complex, moving away from its original simplicity.</p>

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