



Mountains Into Molehills

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Mountains Into Molehills is a free internet book which aims to build understanding of self and others. It integrates relevant theory with practical step by step guides to coping with stressful situations, and handling difficult situations assertively.

Chapter Eleven

Understanding Transactional Analysis

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2. *What is TA*
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To visit Brian's home website page at www.brianamartin.co.uk simply click this link

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Why I prefer Transactional Analysis [TA] as my main approach in working with clients

There are many different approaches to Counselling and Psychotherapy; many different techniques and 'interventions'. However, research has consistently confirmed that successful therapy results when a) there is deep rapport and trust between the therapist and the client and b) the approach used by the therapist matches the presenting issues of the client.

The more flexible the therapist can be in fitting his or her approach to the client's personality and to the presenting issues, the more likely a successful outcome to the therapy. I chose to qualify in Transactional Analysis [TA] for a number of reasons and especially because it gives flexibility of approach to fit the unique needs of each client. These are my main reasons for preferring TA:-

- *Relationship* Although the TA approach incorporates many interventions to respond to specific aspects of thinking, feeling, and behaviour, at its heart is the relationship with the client. The development of a therapeutic alliance based on mutuality of purpose and upon empathy, and a positive non judgmental regard for the client, is central.
- *Flexibility* Transactional Analysis is 'integrative'. Apart from its own unique body of theory it draws on other approaches which complement the TA approach and can be understood in TA terms. e.g. NLP [Neuro Linguistic Programming], CBT [Cognitive Behavioural Therapy] and Rogerian Person Centred Counselling. This gives me flexibility of approach to respond to each individual client's uniqueness.
- *Teaching* Teaching the client enough TA theory to enable him or her to function as their own therapist during their work with the therapist, and subsequently, is an important aspect of TA work.
- *Diagnosis* Some approaches to therapy concentrate on symptom relief and do not attempt to identify the underlying causes of problems before deciding how to treat them. Work with clients in TA always involves diagnosis – identifying the underlying causes of the problems when it is not already obvious.
- *Contracting For Results* Working with clients is results focussed, using outcome contracting i.e. agreeing with the client at the outset what they want to achieve from their therapy.
- *Treatment Planning* Working with clients in TA involves joint treatment planning based on the diagnosis and outcome contract.

Those contemplating becoming a TA psychotherapist should beware that the training takes at least five years. However, it can be a superb personal development experience and a source of fulfilment in career.

What is Transactional Analysis?

'The aim of TA is to empower the client to establish and maintain *autonomy* – that is, the ability to feel, act and live appropriately to the here and now, free from restrictive and sometimes dysfunctional beliefs, feeling, and patterns established in earlier life. TA emphasises a contractual partnership between client and therapist in which both parties agree and clearly state the objectives and methods of therapy. Sharing theory and treatment planning in this way helps the client to take personal responsibility for the aims and outcomes of change'

The Berne Institute

TA can be used in any field where there is a need for understanding individuals, relationships, communications, and systems. TA is a tool for organisational analysis and a tool for training teachers. It is a theory about:

- Personality
- Communication
- Relationships
- Child Development
- Psychopathology

The Philosophy of TA

- I'm OK, You're OK
- Everyone has the capacity to think
- People can decide their own destiny
- People can change their decisions

The Goals of TA

- Autonomy
- Awareness
- Spontaneity
- Intimacy

Basic Principles

- Contractual method
- Open & equal communication
- Client taking responsibility

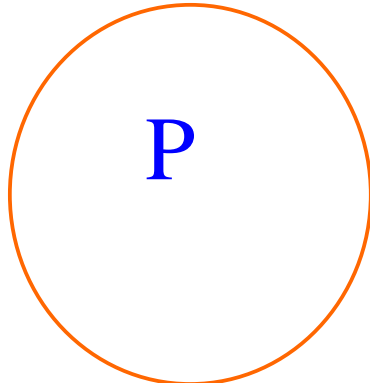
Major TA Schools and Approaches

- *Classical School* *Analysis of Ego States, games, scripts and transactions to develop awareness and understanding of self and others*
- *Cathexis* *Regression, Reparenting, using reactive environment to create a new Child & Parent ego state structure*
- *Redecision* *Resolving impasses [internal conflicts] and changing early life decisions.*
- *Constructivist* *Co-constructing a new reality in the present.*
- *Body* *Releasing the script held in the body*
- *Process Communication* *Working with different Personality adaptations and teaching clients about their own process*
- *Attachment* *Working to achieve an OK balance between attachment and separation*
- *Relational* *Provide a corrective experience [this approach has many similarities with the Person Centred approach]*
- *Developmental* *Giving developmentally needed affirmations and parenting*
- *Psychoanalytic* *Interpret unconscious process and deconfusing the Child.*
- *Spiritual* *Going beyond ego states including working with existential issues*

Some of the many techniques include:

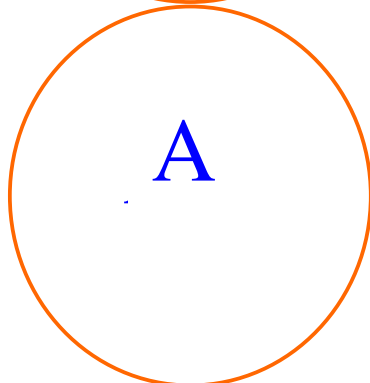
- *Cathartic release of sadness, anger, fear, guilt, and shame*
- *Changing unhelpful beliefs about self, others, and the world*
- *Two chair work, regression, visualisation, role play, psychodrama*
- *Cognitive Behavioural work including explanation, confrontation, illustration, and homework*

Ego States Our state of mind, our Ego State, changes rapidly according to who we are with, and what the situation is. Each of our Ego States has its own set of feelings, thoughts, and behaviours. Even when we are alone our Ego State is not fixed and the change from one Ego State to another impacts on moods, thoughts, and behaviours.



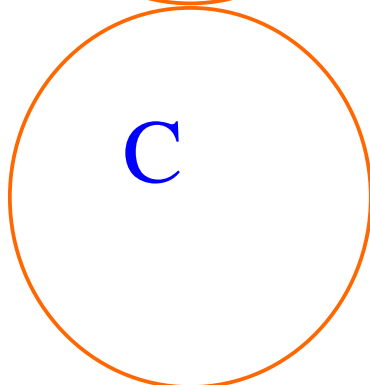
Parent Ego State

Behaviours, thoughts, and feelings copied or introjected from parent figures. That part of us which behaves in 'parental' ways



Adult Ego State

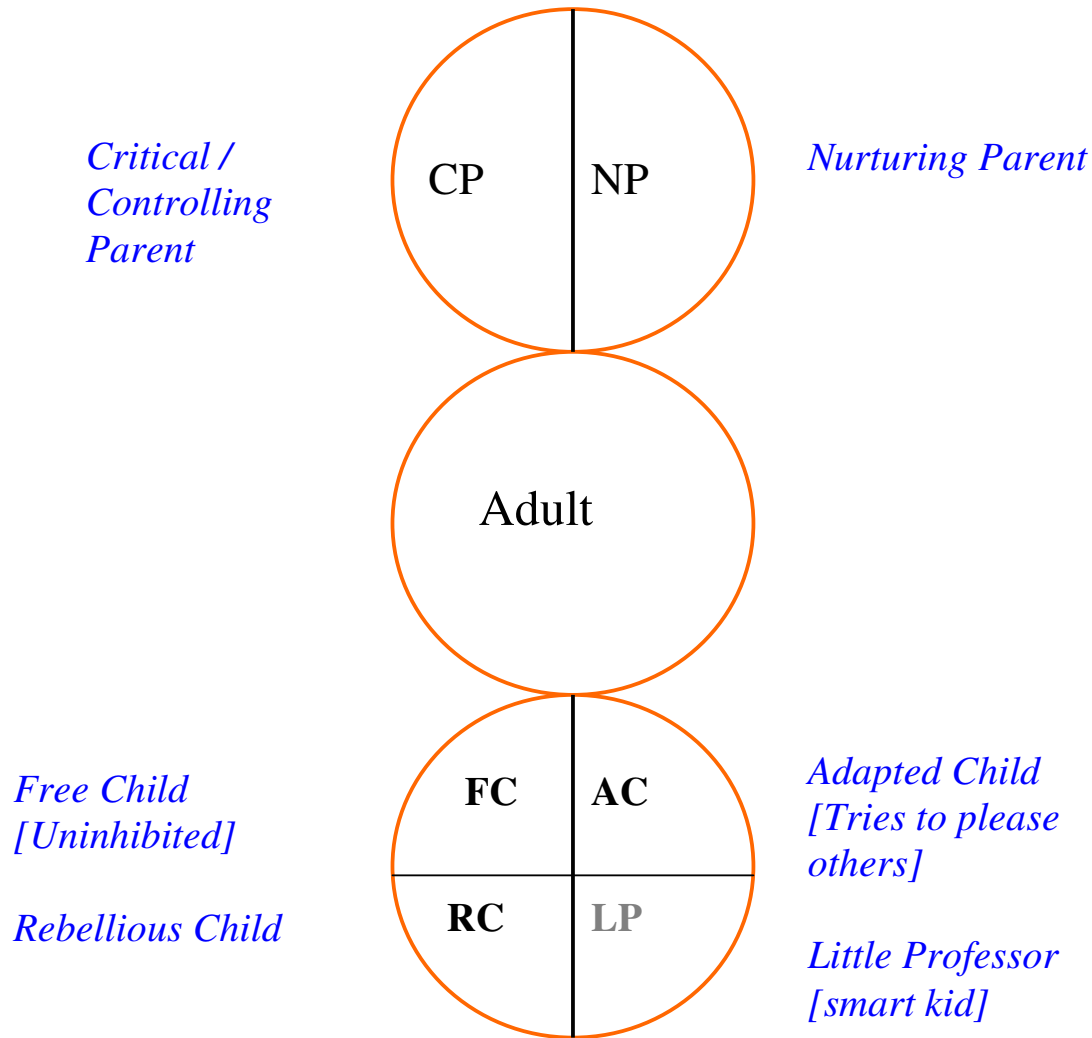
Behaviours, thoughts, and feelings which are in direct response to the 'here and now' The logical, matter of fact, part of us



Child Ego State

Archaic behaviours, thoughts, and feelings replayed from childhood. The part of us where we hold our most powerful feelings – sadness, anger, joy, fear, guilt, revulsion, disgust

Different Types Of Parent & Child Ego State



When we act on archaic messages and replay archaic patterns of behaviour the nature of the messages and behaviour would depend on the nature of the parenting and the way we experienced it. Parental messages could have been helpful and empowering or unhelpful and self limiting.

Our childhood learned response also varies e.g. a Controlling Parent might either result in child learning to please or in rebelling. Complications arise when the parenting is inconsistent e.g. a controlling mother and a nurturing father. Parental messages came from many sources - real parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, teachers, priests, or any influential figure in our childhood.

A Transaction

'A basic unit of social intercourse'

Eric Berne

A transaction consists of a transactional stimulus and a transactional response

Different Kinds Of Transaction

- *Crossed transactions*

A transaction in which the ego state addressed does not correspond to the one which responds e.g. I criticise you from my Critical Parent ego state. For there not to be in conflict you need to respond from your Adapted Child Ego-state. If you respond from your Rebellious Child or Your own Critical Parent there will be conflict.

- *Complementary transactions*

A transaction in which the transactional vectors are parallel and the ego-state addressed is the one which responds. In the example above the transaction would be complementary if you responded to my Critical Parent from Adapted Child

- *Ulterior transactions*

A transaction which is also carrying a covert message e.g. 'When is my dinner going to be ready' [open message] 'so we can fight if its not ready yet' [covert message and an invitation into a psychological game called 'Uproar']

All the Life Positions involve ulterior transactions- unspoken messages

Frame of Reference

'An overall perceptual, conceptual, affective and action set which is used to define the self, other people, and the world' 'A filter on reality'

Schiff

We assemble all of our early life experience into a unique set of beliefs about ourselves, others, and the world, a 'Frame of Reference'. The frame of reference is like a distorting lenses through which we view life and which gives us a unique personal concept of 'reality'. Our Frame of Reference guides us throughout life unless changed by developing awareness and making decisions to change what we believe.

Life Script

The life script is our response to our Frame Of Reference. It is an unconscious life pattern based on early decisions made, usually out of awareness, in childhood. It is effectively our programme of how to think, feel, and behave and results in our replaying archaic material instead of responding appropriately to the here and now.

*'An unconscious life plan,
made in childhood,
reinforced by parents,
justified by subsequent events,
and culminating in a chosen alternative'*

Berne

'A blue print for a life course'

Steiner

Personality Adaptations

'Personality Adaptations' by Ian Stewart and Vann Joines [2002] is a practical guide to understanding personality – a guide which transcends the theoretical boundaries of TA. Understanding someone's personality adaptation gives quick, reliable insight into:

- The persons typical mode of relating to others
- Their approach to problem solving
- The communication style they prefer
- Their preferred way of initial contact [thinking, feeling, or behaviour] to achieve rapport
- The typical life patterns that the person is likely to play out both long and short term
- The principle issues likely to arise for them in the process of personal change
- How therapists can most effectively work with them to achieve the changes they wish

Key ideas of the model

There are six basic personality adaptations that individuals develop as a result of their genetic programming and their early life experiences. These adaptations are universal in that everyone will possess some combination of them

Each person will possess at least one preferred 'surviving' adaptations developed as a means of taking care of oneself when trust in the environment breaks down e.g. when stressed. Each person will possess one preferred 'performing' adaptation initially developed in order to meet the expectations within their family.

Knowledge of these adaptations can guide the therapist to target interventions in the area likely to be most effective in producing change.

In 1983 Paul Ware gave adaptations a formal name drawn from traditional psychiatric practice. They are as follows [the positive aspect name added in recognition that every adaptation has both positive and negative aspects:

Negative Aspect

Hysteric
Obsessive Compulsive
Paranoid
Schizoid
Passive Aggressive
Antisocial

Positive Aspect

Enthusiastic Over reactor
Responsible Workaholic
Brilliant Sceptic
Creative Daydreamer
Playful Resister
Charming Manipulator

To understand yourself and others better read 'Personality Adaptations'.

Injunctions

Injunctions are messages which we introjected as children and are script building blocks. Injunctions are mainly not verbal messages and are what the child worked out for itself as a result of its experience of Parent figures.

Injunctions are programmed into the individual's unconscious thinking from where they drive script. 'Don't be close' for example, may be learned by the child from not being cuddled and held by his mum.

The Twelve Injunctions identified by Bob and Mary Golding

<i>Don't exist</i>	<i>Don't be you</i>	<i>Don't be important</i>
<i>Don't belong</i>	<i>Don't be close</i>	<i>Don't be well/ sane</i>
<i>Don't be a child</i>	<i>Don't grow up</i>	<i>Don't feel</i>
<i>Don't think</i>	<i>Don't succeed</i>	<i>Don't enjoy</i>

Drivers – 'I am OK if I....'

Drivers are a script driven behavioural sequence usually in response to Injunctions. So, for example, a child with a 'Don't exist' injunction may make the decision 'I am OK to exist so long as I'm perfect'. The driver decision is made out of awareness.

The five drivers are:

Please others Be perfect Be strong Try hard Hurry up

Because drivers are responses to an Injunction they are also called counter injunctions.

Game Analysis

Eric Berne's best selling book 'The Games People Play' [1964] brought him fame and projected Transactional Analysis into the national limelight in the USA. The main point about games is that until they are brought into our awareness we don't know they are going on. Whenever transactions give us bad feelings with which we are familiar we are probably involved in a psychological game.

'A game is a series of ulterior transactions leading to a well concealed but well defined payoff'

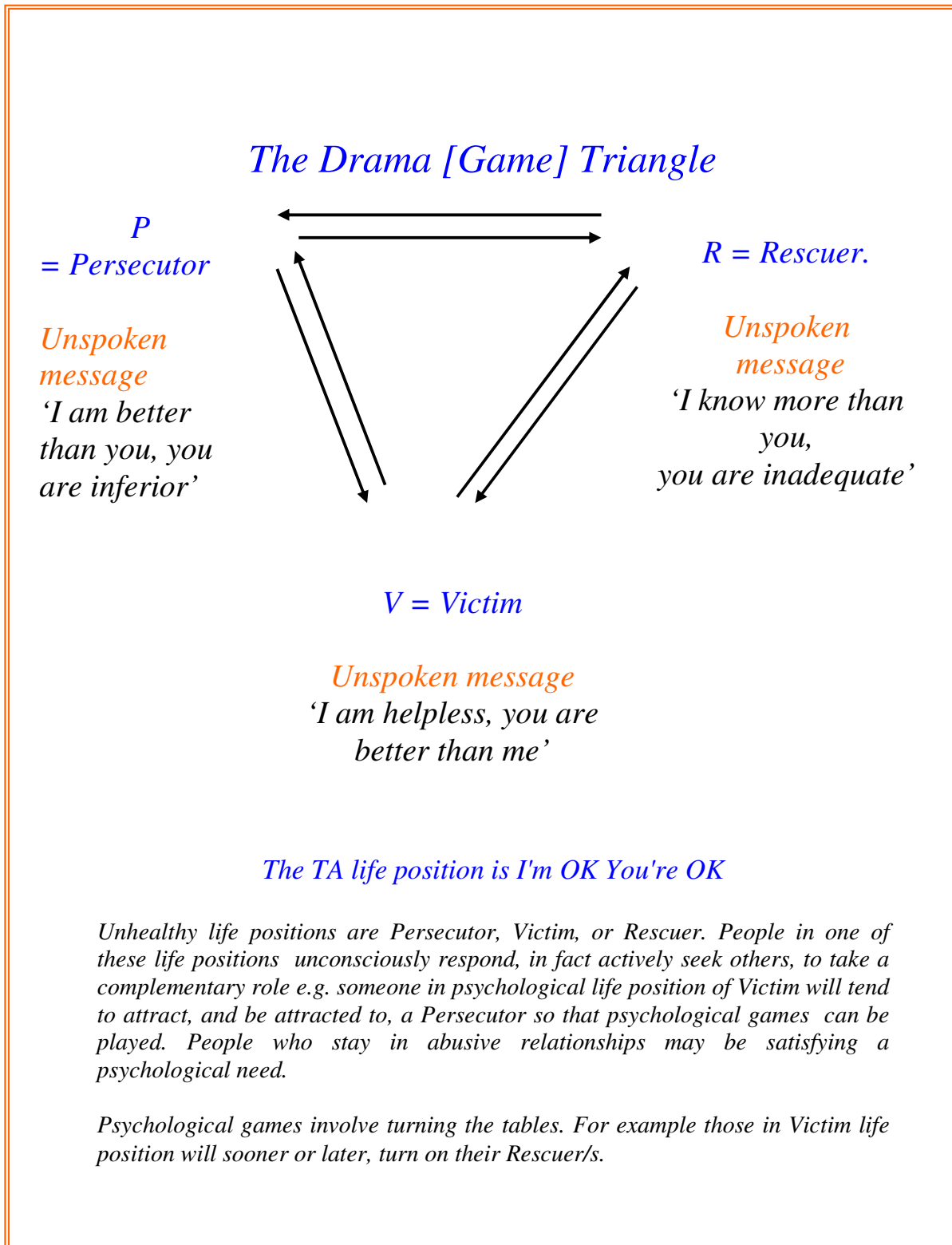
- *Games are played without Adult ego state awareness*
- *Games end up with players experiencing racket feelings*
 - *Games are played to reinforce script belief and confirm life position*

Typical games

<i>Ain't it awful</i>	<i>Cops and robbers</i>
<i>Corner</i>	<i>Do me something</i>
<i>If it weren't for you</i>	<i>I'm only trying to help</i>
<i>See what you made me do</i>	<i>Uproar</i>
<i>Yes but</i>	<i>Kick me</i>
<i>Now I've got you, you SOB</i>	<i>Wooden leg</i>
<i>[you son of a bitch]</i>	

To spot your games?

*What transactions keep happening to you over and over again
and leave you with a bad feeling?*



The Racket System

A self reinforcing, distorted system of feelings, thoughts and actions maintained by [life] script bound individuals. The racket system has three inter-related and interdependent components

- Script beliefs and feelings
 - Rackety displays – behaviours driven from script beliefs and feeling
- Reinforcing memories- used to validate and confirm script beliefs and feelings

Strokes 'A stroke is a unit of recognition that you exist'

Strokes can be:

- Verbal or non-verbal
- Positive or Negative
- Conditional - a stroke relating to what the individual does
- Unconditional - a stroke relating to what the individual is

Every transaction is an unavoidable exchange of strokes, even though there may be no verbal communication.. Widely quoted is that over 90% of all communication of information about emotions is non-verbal. Even to attempt not to communicate is a communication – a transaction.

Any stroke is better than no stroke 'Better to be insulted than ignored'.

One of the main reasons why individuals persist in unsocial behaviour – they are getting attention!

Eric Berne 1910 – 1970
Founder of Transactional Analysis

Born in Montreal – Eric Lennard Bernstein

Father a doctor

Qualified as a doctor in 1935

1943 Joined US Army Medical Core as Psychiatrist

1949 First articles on Ego States and Intuition

1956 Turned down by American Psychoanalytic Institute

1957 Presented TA Theory to American Psychotherapy Association

1964 The International TA Association Formed [ITAA]

1964 Founding of European Transactional Analysis Association [ETAA]

1964 The Games People Play published

1967 A contemporary publishes 'I'm Ok, You're OK'

1968 ITAA membership reaches 500

1970 Died of a heart attack 'What do you say after you say hello' at manuscript stage

Structure of TA & Accreditation

- Standards of Competence & Ethical Practice are set by ITA [Institute of Transactional Analysis – the British professional body of TA]
- ITA member organisation of United Kingdom Council For Psychotherapy [UKCP]
- Affiliated to European Transactional Analysis Association [EATA]
- European & American practitioners 10,000 plus
- Approved teaching establishments in UK 60 plus

Grades of qualification

1. TA 101 [Can be secured in one weekend]
2. Foundation Certificate [One year course]
3. Diploma/ Post graduate diploma [Three year course]
4. Certified Transactional Analyst [CTA] Masters Degree [Five years minimum]
5. Teaching and Supervising Member [TSTA] [Seven years minimum - Need CTA first]

Further Information

- If you want to know more about other approaches to counselling, including 'How to Choose a Counsellor' please read Chapter Ten of 'Mountains Into Molehills' - 'Understanding Counselling'.
- If you want to know more about Transactional Analysis you could read 'TA Today' and/ or 'Personality Adaptations' both by Ian Stewart & Vann Joines and published by Lifespace Publishing
- If you are interested in training in TA contact The Institute of Transactional Analysis [ITA] at admin@ita.org.uk
- If you choose to pursue TA training you might usefully consider 'The Berne Institute' at Kegworth in Leicestershire. The Berne is amongst the leading TA training organisations in Europe and holds weekend courses leading to full qualification as a TA Counsellor and Psychotherapist. Courses range from a certificated short introduction right through to a Masters Degree. Contact ta@theberne.com
- If you wish to choose a counsellor or psychotherapist using TA I would be very pleased to hear from you. Alternatively you can contact the ITA at the above address.

Brian A Martin

TRANSACTIONAL ANALYSIS READING LIST

Berne E	[1964]	Games People Play
Berne E	[1972]	What Do You Say After You Say Hello
Berne E	[1961]	Transactional Analysis In Psychotherapy
Clarkson P	[1992]	Transactional Analysis: An Integrated Approach
Erskine RG	[1997]	Theories and methods of an Integrative Transactional Analysis
Goulding R & M	[1979]	Changing Lives Through Redecision Therapy
Kahler T	[1974]	The Miniscript and Five Drivers [TAJ 4]
Karpman S	[1968]	Drama Triangle [TA Bulletin 7]
Schiff J L	[1975]	Cathexis Reader: Transactional Analysis Treatment of Psychosis
Sills & Hargaden	[2002]	Transactional Analysis: A Relational Perspective
Steiner C	[1974]	Scripts People Live
Stewart I	[1989]	Transactional Analysis Counselling in Action
Stewart & Joines	[1987]	TA Today
Stewart & Joines	[2002]	Personality Adaptations
Tilney A	[1998]	The Dictionary Of Transactional Analysis
Woollams & Brown	[1979]	TA The Total Handbook