

Transactional Analysis

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It has always been my belief that if we each take responsibility for our impact and are honest enough to hear feedback then we can grow as people. Transactional Analysis helps us to understand our responses to the communication and behaviours of others and to reflect on why we respond the way that we do. We can all get hooked by the communication and behaviours of others, especially if they reconnect with old tapes and patterns of behaviour. Leaders need to minimise the impact of the assumptions that they have about others, maximise listening, and importantly maximise the impact of leadership communication.

In the early 1950s Dr Eric Berne developed a theory about personality development tied to communication, which he called 'transactional analysis' (TA). It is a very useful and fascinating framework for analysing the behaviour of both ourselves and other people.

Complete the following questionnaire to learn more.

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Personal Styles Questionnaire

The personal styles questionnaire begins to give you some insight into how values and beliefs and the associated thinking and behaviour patterns have an impact on your communication preference. This is an overview only and it is important to realise that there are advantages and limitations to **all** the preferences.

Please approach this in your “work” frame of mind, especially how you are with colleagues, people you lead and your leader. For each statement allocate a score to show how much the behaviour is like the way you behave - go with your gut reaction and enjoy it!

Scoring Guidance

0 = Not true for me

1 = Sometimes true for me

2 = Generally true for me

3 = Nearly always true for me

1. I am firm in terms of behaviour that I consider acceptable/unacceptable
2. I tend think things through thoroughly before contributing or taking action
3. I believe that I should do as I am asked
4. I behave sympathetically towards people with problems
5. I really enjoy being with other people
6. I enjoy taking care of people
7. I enjoy solving problems in a systematic and logical way
8. I am comfortable telling people what to do
9. I let people know how I really feel without embarrassment
10. I follow social norms in terms of expected behaviours
11. I can sometimes be unpredictable
12. I frequently find myself supporting new people or people new to a role
13. I can stay calm in a crisis
14. When I know I'm right I insist that others listen to me
15. I ask a lot of questions
16. I am passionate and excited about my work
17. People seem to expect me to know the answer
18. I pride myself that it is my role to take care of my people

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19. I am uncomfortable with upset or conflict
20. I keep on thinking logically even under pressure
21. My working style is systematic, methodical and organised
22. It is important to me that I fit in
23. I will often do things myself, rather than taking the time helping others to learn
24. I can quote my previous experience when problems occur
25. People tell me I'm creative and inventive
26. I prefer to take control rather than follow someone else's lead
27. I can get over involved with people's personal lives
28. I'm over-emotional compared to others around me
29. I expect my manager to set my terms of reference
30. I take all points of view into account when making a decision
31. I encourage people to test their own capabilities
32. People complain I'm bossy
33. I spend time enjoying myself
34. I will go out of my way to look for what's good in people
35. I'm noted for my even temper and balanced comments
36. I need people to understand how I am feeling to gain reassurance
37. I have taken on the work of others
38. I often over analyse and get absorbed in detail
39. People do as I tell them
40. I have agreed to and followed through on things that I didn't agree with

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Scoring the Questionnaire

Transfer your scores to the table below against the appropriate question numbers.

Q	Score	Q	Score	Q	Score	Q	Score	Q	Score
1		4		2		3		5	
8		6		7		10		9	
14		12		13		11		15	
17		18		20		19		16	
24		23		21		22		25	
26		27		30		29		28	
32		31		35		34		33	
39		37		38		40		36	
TOTALS									
	Controlling Parent CP		Nurturing Parent NP		Adult A		Adapted Child AC		Natural Child NC

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Berne identified that we communicate from 3 places, he called them ego states.

PARENT *life as it was taught* communicating in a way we were communicated with by grown-ups around us when we were young.

ADULT *life as it was experienced* communicating in way that we have learned for ourselves from our experience, independent of parental/child influences.

CHILD *life as it was felt* communicating in a way that connects to emotions and feelings we first experienced in childhood.

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Parent State

The parent in TA is the set of recordings in a person's mind of imposed, unquestioned, external events perceived between birth and age 5 years. They are derived mostly from parents' (or parental figures') speech and behaviour - admonitions, punishments, cuddles, encouragement.

The parent state can be broken down into two aspects: **controlling and nurturing parent**.

Positive Controlling Parent - communicates the message **You're OK**. This is the boundary setting mode, offering constructive criticism, whilst being caring but firm.

Negative Controlling Parent - communicates a **You're not OK** message and is punitive.

Positive Nurturing Parent - communicates the message **You're OK**. When in this mode the person is caring and affirming.

Negative Nurturing Parent - communicates a **You're not OK** message. When in this mode the person will often do things for others which they can do for themselves. When in this mode the person is engulfing and overprotective.

The types of behaviour we display when we are operating in our parent state are:

Controlling Parent (CP)		As a Nurturing Parent (NP)	
Behaviours Sets limits/boundaries Disciplines Keeps traditions Judges Criticises Makes rules	Words should always never ought must	Behaviours Gives advice Coaches/develops Protects Comforts Encourages Nurtures	Words let me don't worry it will all be fine what do you need? I can show you how to...
How do these behaviours and language relate to your communication?		How do these behaviours and language relate to your communication?	
What does it look like when it works?		What does it look like when it works?	
What does it look like when it doesn't work?		What does it look like when it doesn't work?	
What do you want to change, to improve your communication impact?			

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Child State

The child in TA consists of recordings of *internal* events (feelings) experienced in the first five years of life. When behaving in our child state we think, feel, do as we did when we were small; we are *free/natural*, creative, experimental, joyful, playful; we are obedient, rebellious, insecure, anxious, scared - **adaptive** so our needs are met.

The child state can be broken down into two aspects: **natural and adapted child**.

Positive Adapted Child - communicates an *I'm OK* message. From this mode we learn the rules to help us live with others.

Negative Adapted Child - expresses an *I'm not OK* message. When in this mode the person over-adapts to others and may experience such emotions as depression, unrealistic fear, and anxiety.

Positive Natural Child - communicates an *I'm OK* message. This is the creative, fun loving, curious and energetic mode.

Negative Natural Child - in this mode the person runs wild with no restrictions or boundaries. In this mode they express a *You're not OK* message.

The types of behaviour can display when we are operating in our child state are:

Adapted Child (AC)		Natural Child (NC)	
Behaviours Obedient Conditioned/conventional responses Insecure Anxious/scared Sullen/rebellious	Words No chance/I'll try Please/thank you Sorry/I don't care! I can't do that/I won't do that I'm only a... The organisation says...	Behaviours Asks questions Natural/free Creative/Innovative Experimental Joyful Lacks boundaries Selfish	Words I'm wondering? I'm curious? I want to mine won't scared fantastic
How do these behaviours and language relate to your communication?		How do these behaviours and language relate to your communication?	
What does it look like when it works?		What does it look like when it works?	
What does it look like when it doesn't work?		What does it look like when it doesn't work?	
What do you want to change, to improve your communication impact?			

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Adult

The third state, adult, is the last one to develop, beginning at around 10 months of age. It is formed from data acquired and computed through exploring, thinking out and testing ideas. We store that learning in the adult ego state. When behaving in our adult state we operate in the 'here and now' and are rational and unemotional. We seek information, respect other people, and are assertive and considered in our communication.

Adult Accounting mode – communicates We're OK messages.

The Adult can assess reality in the here and now. It's the Assertive place 'off the emotional seesaw of the Parent/Child transactions. In Adult mode it is possible to choose which of the other effective modes to go into, dependent on the situation. When stable in this mode we are then able to respond appropriately, rather than flipping into archaic or historic ways of being, thinking and behaving which could be inappropriate and unhelpful.

However, the Adult can also be viewed as cold and detached and lacking emotional intelligence that is so critical in relationships and organisational life.

As an Adult	
<p>Behaviours</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Asking questions to gather data/information Analytical Rational and logical Non-judgemental Unemotional Detached 	<p>Words</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> When/where/what Who/why Facts/alternatives Results/reasons Check it Solutions
How do these behaviours and language relate to your communication?	
What does it look like when it works?	
What does it look like when it doesn't work?	
What do you want to change, to improve your communication impact?	