

wanting to change have to experience. It's that linking between feeling and thinking that I think is Transactional Analysis' strong point.

(This is a shortened version of a 45 minute interview, held in London on 13th May 1977.)

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On the OK road as a T. A. trainee

Looking back to beginnings is a useful way for me to measure the distance travelled and so I welcome this chance to retrace my route on the road to becoming an advanced member of TA.

The beginning began in New York at Pace University where I, a thirty-eight year old 'Freshperson' was enrolled in the BA psychology course. Several members of the department were involved with TA in one way or another and in the Psychology course TA played a major part in the teaching of Child Psychology, Psychology of Human Relations, Group Dynamics and Interviewing and Therapeutic Techniques.

Even so I stayed uninvolved, content to listen with some amusement to the TA jargon which was the 'lingua franca' of many members of staff and students. My reaction was to hear this as coming from Adapted Child in response to a Critical Parent that said 'You are not OK unless you are saying the 'right' 'in' things'. At special gatherings the pastimes were 'who's playing 'Rapo' with whom.' 'What's your script?' and 'Me and my Therapist.'

It was the last week of my last term at Pace University. The last session of the course on Group Dynamics was drawing to a close. The two TA orientated female professors had asked for critical feedback and the room was full of the cooing of students well into a game of 'Gee you're wonderful Professors'. Naively I took the women at their word and gave them critical feedback that produced 'I'm OK - You're OK' mutterings from behind clenched teeth. The hostile glares of the other students were beamed in my direction as I brought logical, reason and judgement to my dissertation. At the end of it the session was brought to a swift close and as the classroom emptied one of the lecturers took me firmly by the arm and started asking probing questions about my hostilities to women in general and to mothers in particular. As my relationship with my mother had been a stormy one she was able to show me, to her satisfaction, that she was OK and that I was most certainly not and therefore my critical evaluation counted for naught.

I was confused, angry and feeling thoroughly manipulated - amongst other 'racketty' feelings - and decided to find out what the hell was going on. Later that day, still in a state of disequilibrium, I told the story to another lecturer, a Clinical trainee in TA. She grinned at me and with a hug suggested that people in green-houses shouldn't throw stones or they are likely to get cut up!

Clearly, I needed to understand more about how I functioned and to recognise what was going on around me. This situation was a familiar one with familiar feelings - familiar? Familial? Very likely! 'Tell the truth and shame the Devil'. 'Your smart mouth will get you into trouble', and at the same time lots of strokes for making adults laugh by my precocious sayings. No wonder I was confusing myself.

There was no time to start in serious pursuit of my scripting as I was involved in moving four children, two dogs, two cats and eight rooms of furniture across the Atlantic to London. Getting us settled into a flat and English life and myself into the Psychology Department at University College London, occupied me for the next year; However, I did write to the International Transactional Analysis Association headquarters in California for the names and addresses of TA people in London.

Margaret Turpin was one of the two on the list they sent and it was she who brought the TA scene into focus for me sending the *Bulletin* and information about 'One-O-Ones' and the London Seminars she runs. The other person on the list was Mike Reddy. then a P.T.M.; (Professional Teaching Member) He was on one of his many journeys at that time so I didn't meet him until some months later.

At University College London I became aware that TA was virtually unheard of in that bastion of experimental psychology and this was, for me, an ideal opportunity to check TA theories against the 'standard' psychology theories. I talked to English students about TA; a general response was that, though the concepts were valid and exciting the 'Americanese' 'turned them off'. Harris' 'I'm OK - You're OK' message was obscured for some by the way in which it was written. I made some sort of history in the department by offering as an essay a discussion on the scripts of famous people according to the theory of Eric Berne. 'How can you prove any of this?' was the response. I couldn't, though it sounded right on target to me.

And then I went to the 1st European TA summer conference to be held in Switzerland. That was a week of warmth and fun such as I had not remembered experiencing before. Surrounded by the mountains, enjoying daily swims in the saline pool and soaking up lots of strokes from caring people I grew bold in my sense of 'OKness'. When Val Garfield, from California suggested that, should I want to train as a Clinical Member she would be willing to work with me as my supervisor, I decided that that was what I would do.

These were the people I want to be one of; the standards of creative, constructive thinking combined with sound psychological theory as demonstrated in the papers

which had been presented, impressed me; the life and vitality of the organization promised growth and expansion to all parts of the world.

Full of enthusiasm I returned to London and faced the sobering facts of life such as a family to care for, a part-time lectureship and a Ph.D. research programme. How and when could I do TA?

I decided to obey the Parental message given to me by a Methodist Church poster 'Go as far as you can see and then see how far you can go'. Right. So move one was to take the introductory course; this I did with Margaret, on a Friday night and Saturday, together with my elder daughter who wanted to know what it was all about. Move two was to write the open book exam and send it to Val.

In January of 1976 I received my training contract from I.T.A.A. duly signed and settled. Now came the job of gathering together people for the groups. An ad in *Time-Out* brought one or two calls but it was three ads and four weeks before I had the ten I needed to start.

Before accepting people for groups I had an initial interview with them to see what was going on and to give them and me a chance to see if we had the skills they needed.

On the night of the first group, armed with a tape recorder, I went to the Head Master's office I had rented and there the eleven of us did what we had learned to do when we were in anxiety producing situations. Some chattered away about anything to avoid silences, more than one had arms and legs tightly crossed and others made polite exploratory gestures while I put on my 'cool as a cucumber' face. Before the group was half-way through the member that I had not recognised as being very disturbed began her first game of 'Uproar', and I knew that this was not going to be easy. By our third group we had relaxed and had moved to my dining room where we have been meeting weekly ever since - barring holidays.

From the start I used a tape recorder and taped every one-to-one interview and group, sending the tapes to Val for Analysis. She returned them with messages of advice, praise, encouragement and caution. Her reinforcement of the good work I did and non-critical analysis of my less useful interventions lowered the scare which was implicit in undertaking something new for someone with my big 'Be Perfect' driver.

I read *Gestalt Verbatim* by Fritz Perls and took to using some of the techniques together with the straight TA. This I found to be very productive but oh, how green I was in those early days. Some nights I went into the group as if entering a bear pit, fortunately unaware of how little I knew and equally fortunately open and hungry for any new insight, skill or learning available. After a group I would walk my dog around the streets pondering, worrying, and at times afraid of what I was getting into.

As I worked with the group my needs to work on myself became increasingly apparent to me - to find out about why I scared myself, why I 'hurried up' often asking a

question before the previous one was answered, why I was so needing those in the group to like me.

Going to Mike Reddy's monthly workshops was one way I did this; attending Margaret's Peer group meetings and seminars was another - then of course there was Val, intuitive and able to sense and understand what was going on with the group and with me from often indistinct tapes. Gradually I was able to relax and let some of myself show to the group members. There was more physical contact between us and the tapes recorded laughter and mutual rejoicings.

By the Summer of '76 I was ready for more conferences and being blessed with the necessary financial backing I went to the Pan Americal Conference in Guadalupe and to the 2nd European Conference at Enschede, Holland. Again there was the warmth, fun and learning which happens when TA'ers get together.

Full of new ideas and new awareness of myself I returned to London to begin the last stage of training. I started preparation by attending workshops given by visiting U.S. theorists and became involved with a study group. I made the back numbers of the TA Journals my constant companions on my many Tube journeys and, through working with the study group, became more aware of the intricacies of the theoretical side of TA. Val was telling me that I still needed to get a 'gut' feeling about games and contracts making was still a place where I needed to do more work so I settled down to that. The big bogey for me, however, was the final open-book written exam of thirty-five questions. Worse than writing the exam was the confusion around when it was due to arrive in California. I had the first eight questions written when I was given the 'definite' information that the whole thing, diagrams and all, was due there in three days. So I sat down at eight p.m. and kept on writing until 9 a.m. emerging weary and triumphant - to learn later that day that I had another forty five days!

Though the means of getting a C.M. (Clinical Membership) may sometimes be confusing there is no confusion about the determination of people in TA to develop a body of well trained capable therapists and Special Fields Members. I salute those who nurture the growth of this body and I am happy to be a part of it.

NB Corinne passed the exam in July 1977 and is now Clinical Member of the I.T.A.A. Congratulations, Corinne.
