

TRANSACTIONAL ANALYSIS

Transactional Analysis (TA) is a practical theory of personality, communication and systems. Through a comprehensive framework of concepts, TA serves as a guideline for effective intervention at the individual, group and organizational level. It is a powerful tool for professional and personal growth. The goal of transactional analysis is to increase awareness, spontaneity and the capacity for relationship.

Transactional analysis provides us with concepts to understand who we are and how to change our patterns of behavior. Some of the key concepts are:

- Ego states: an ego state is a set of related behaviors, thoughts and feelings. Within TA we say we manifest our personality through three ego states: Parent, Adult and Child.
- Transactions: the way we communicate can be represented as transactions, or units of recognition. A good understanding of parallel, crossed and ulterior transactions helps us communicate effectively.
- Script: a script is a life plan created outside of awareness ending in a well defined alternative. Awareness of our script decisions in the past facilitates change of our patterns of behavior here and now.
- Discounts, rackets and games: TA supplies us with concepts to analyze and change our patterns of miscommunication. Games people play was one of Berne's most popular books.

Transactional analysis is also specifically developed to intervene in groups and organizations. Some key concepts are:

- The distinction between the public structure, consisting of the organizational structure and employees, and the private structure, based on group imagoes, which determines behavior in organizations.
- The importance of the distinction of roles within organizations (leadership, membership, apparatus).
- The different types of boundaries (major external and internal, minor internal) and the various dysfunctions to analyze group dynamics.

Berne's book "Structure and dynamics of groups and organizations" is still a classic. Other transactional analysts have further developed ideas to make it one of the most powerful tools for individual and organizational change today.

