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Touchstone Counselling

Figuratively a touchstone provides a criterion to find the genuineness and value of something. We aid people in sorting out the gold and silver of their lives from the base metal as they reestablish their strengths and seek new initiatives.

Specializing in Personal Care Counselling

- Grief
- Stress
- Trauma
- Families
- Children



UPCOMING EVENTS

Games and Strokes:
Facilitators: Janice Dowson, TSTA
Tom Burton, CTA
October 25, 2007 6-8pm
Cost: \$75 per person
Family members/Couples \$140.

A Women's Evening of Relaxation
Cost \$30
Thursday October 18, 2007
7 pm - 8 pm
One Thursday evening/month
For more info call 604-878-8044



Janice Dowson

SSW. Certified Teaching & Clinical Transactional Analyst

Janice Dowson uses the practical tools of Transactional Analysis to help people solve problems. She combines 25 years of counselling experience with her skills and knowledge to guide people as they strengthen their autonomy and seek new initiatives to accomplish their goals.

Janice has achieved Clinical certification and advanced Teaching Transactional Analyst levels of certification through the International Transactional Analysis (ITAA) Association's rigorous competency based training and certification program. She has served in executive leadership positions in TA organizations provincially, nationally and internationally. Janice is invited to speak about TA at international professional conferences and to professional organizations across Canada.

Janice synthesizes her roles as Transactional Analysis teacher and therapist with her passion for writing as editor of this publication.

Dear Readers:
In this issue the Narrator begins a series on one of the principal practical tools of TA-- the concept that Eric Berne called psychological Games. When Berne's best selling book Games People Play was published, it outsold Lady Chatterley's Lover!
JD

"GAMES PEOPLE PLAY"

By Janice Dowson

Do you know someone who finds themselves in the same predictable situation that ends up the same predictable way over and over again? If you do, you may know people who are involved in what Eric Berne called Games.

Games are not like soccer or hockey or football! I am talking about psychological Games.

Berne defines games as "ongoing predictable series of complementary ulterior transactions [interactions between people] leading to predictable outcomes"(5).

A gargantuan number of games are described by Berne in Games People Play. Later Transactional Analysis authors, such as Jacqui Lee Schiff, Mary Goulding and John James have expanded on the definition of Games. Most authors agree that A Game includes

- A concealed motive that is often out of our awareness
- A surprise or "switch" in which one or both players switch positions and roles
- A feeling elicited from within the participants

Instead of discussing these definitions here, I will focus on three key elements that in my view, define Games.

1. Social interaction is the first key element that defines psychological Games. Games are social interactions played by 2 or more people. Games are not like Solitaire! Games are social interactions learned early in life. Most of what I learned about getting out of Games I learned from Eric Berne and Steve Karpman and an intervention diagram co-created by myself and Brian Stradling in 1975. I will write more about this tool for getting out of Games in another issue. (over)

But most of what I know about how to play games I learned from my father and mother, grandparents, and aunts and uncles. For example, my Mom has an interesting game that she plays where she becomes helpless and confused. My sister and I play complementary roles where we try to help her sort out her confusion. I usually end up more confused than Mom when I get into this game with her! This game can manifest in variations that Berne cleverly named "Wooden Leg", "Stupid", "Kick Me" or "I'm Only Trying to Help You". These names were not given as put downs to the participants, but as quick ways to remember and be aware of the Game.

2. A second key element of Games is that Games are repetitive. Gamey interactions have an over and over quality. My sister and I have been stepping into the helpless game with Mom for **over** 40 years!

The poet Anne Ware alludes to the repetitive nature of games when she writes, "the figure in the fabric does repeat". This metaphor refers to the repeating patterns of games in the tapestry of our lives.

3. Games are played out of awareness. This is the third defining element of psychological Games.

Mom isn't aware that she is playing us! My sister isn't aware that she's being played! I know about Games and sometimes play along until I become aware that I am more confused than Mom.

Awareness is key! In addition to the key elements that define Games, both Schiff and Goulding maintain that Games represent our attempts to solve old unresolved problems.

Now that I have described these defining elements of games--social interactions between 2 or more people, repetitiously played out of awareness in an attempt to meet old unmet needs--you can choose to recognize Games, you can play along--or you can sidestep games, to step out of the GAMES PEOPLE PLAY!

T.A. is a set of practical conceptual tools for personal growth and change, a social psychology developed by Eric Berne MD.

According to Eric Berne, TA is a powerful tool for human well being that utilizes the "Adult", in both the client and the counselor to sort out thoughts and behaviors that result in personal difficulties.

TA counselors work directly on here and now problem-solving behaviors while establishing an equal working relationship to provide clients with day-to-day tools for finding constructive creative solutions.

Key Concepts of Transactional Analysis

Ego States

Eric Berne made complex interpersonal transactions understandable when he recognized that the human personality is made up of 3 "ego states", each of which is an entire system of thought, feeling, and behavior from which we interact with each other. The Parent, the Adult, and Child ego states and the interaction between them form the foundation of transactional analysis theory.

Transactions

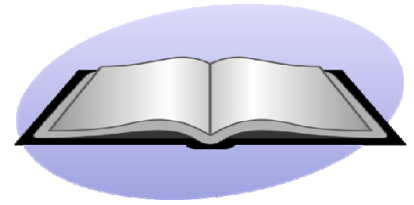
Transactions refer to the communication exchanges between people.

Transactional analysts are trained to recognize which ego states people are transacting from and to intervene in the interactions so that they can improve the quality and effectiveness of communication.

Life Scripts

When Shakespeare says, "All the world's a stage" he suggests that we act out our roles on life's stage. The Life script is an unconscious life plan we compose in childhood for how we will live our lives. Each person is the star of his or her own play, writing the script from lines from parents and other players on our life stage.

Literary Excerpt



Great writers over the centuries demonstrate their capacity for understanding the human psyche, crystallizing the human condition through their writing. In this season's issue, another of Keats' tributes, Ode To Autumn reminds us of nature's endless cycle of change while subtly linking the natural world with human nature's capacity for continuous growth and change. JD

*Season of mists and
mellow fruitfulness,
Close bosom-friend of
the maturing sun:
Conspiring with him
how to load and bless
With fruit the vines
that round the thatch-
eaves run;*

.....
*Then in a wailful choir
the the small gnats
mourn
Among the river
sallows, borne aloft
Or sinking as the light
wind lives or dies;
And full-grown lambs
loud bleat from hilly
bourn;...*

~ From "Ode to Autumn"

by John Keats (1819)

What is Transactional Analysis?

Information contained in this newsletter is in no way intended for specific individuals or their issues. This publication is intended for education purposes only.