Volume 6 Issue 3 Newsletter September 2011

Welcome to this issue and apologies for its late arrival—due partly to the Editor's travelling but mainly because we received so much great material to include—so much, in fact, that we've held some over until the next issue.

Lynda Tongue continues to provide really useful short articles, that are quick to read yet full of ideas.

And this time we have a new author, David Morley, who has provided a substantial account of a consultancy project using TA. David is an Australian currently living in France, who has joined IDTA as an Overseas Member. He is promising to keep writing!

Finally, we have the usual report from IDTA Council, which mentions the new MSc that is now running. Plus there are some advertisements from UK-based IDTA trainers who are part of the international team that is running the MSc in various locations.

As always, we welcome your comments, questions, feedback—and articles for future issues.

Contents

Report from IDTA Council

We are delighted to announce that Rosee Elliott passed her CTA (Educational) in Bilbao—and she has now been co-opted onto IDTA Council. We were very persuasive, explaining to he that she would now have spare time to fill!

Rosee plans to launch the EUROTAPACY in the school at which she is head teacher, so she gets some first hand experience, before hopefully taking a lead on this on behalf of Council.

(Continued on page 13)

Change Management Consulting with a Twist of TA

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The ability to understand and manage the need for structure and recognition hunger for both the consultant and client throughout an organisational change process can optimise results. This article provides a set of steps that enables the consultant to address these needs. These steps are designed to integrate with large scale classical change approaches to enhance outcomes. They can also be used as a stand alone approach for addressing group change on a smaller scale. This article does not address how to create new processes or procedures that result from change initiatives.

Consulting to the process of change on a relational level is probably one of the hardest aspects of change management consulting to both grasp and apply. There is a very good reason for this: as Eric Berne identified, two of our basic hungers as human beings are for structure and recognition (Berne, 1964). Their roots are grounded in our beliefs, values and conditioning. The simple facts are:

1. As a consultant to a change process we are responsible for providing structure for a group to safely examine its identity when we ourselves may be unsure of the foundations upon which we base this temporary framework for exploration.

2. As much as we want structure ourselves, sometimes the environment in which we are working is also devoid of a clear structure. This is unsettling for the consultant as much as the group.

3. We will have people in the group affected by the change process who are seeking recognition in different ways: recognition for surviving as long as they have in the group, recognition as a valuable member of the group, recognition that they will still be of value in the new world. At the same time, the consultant also wants recognition, this is natural. Recognition that they have the skills and knowledge to help the group, and recognition that their work is having the desired effect (e.g., through feedback). At the same time it is easy for the consultant to seek recognition in some unhealthy ways, like slipping into the role of the hero/ine, to fulfil some minor narcissistic needs by being seen as the person who led the group from a bad place to a good place.

How the consultant understands and manages the tensions that these hungers represent for both ourselves and our clients has a large impact on the outcome of the change process. This article suggests some simple steps that can help the consultant balance these needs and optimise them for both themselves and for their clients.

This article will be looking at how the consultant can help people in the organisation make it through change, no matter how great or small. The steps outlined in this paper can be carried out simultaneously with the overall transition management plan that may accompany a change initiative. What results from these change initiatives, is not the focus of this article.

Consulting works with what "is", with what can be seen and observed, with the hope that what can't be seen will or can be influenced. Change management consulting is the process of working with what isn't easily seen. My thinking in this area is influenced by van Beekum’s article, The Relational Consultant (2006) where he highlights and confirms what I was increasingly becoming aware of in my own work; that the role of the consultant is to help to bring about change by acting as an enabler for the organisation to connect and work with its own preconscious and unconscious to effect more genuine and long lasting surface level change. A key ingredient of this approach is the consultant's ability to understand their own personal process in response to the work, and using ttheir deep level of awareness to better use their potency in helping the organisation achieve a result. For example, understanding when projection or transference is occurring, and why, can help the consultant understand how s/he may be blocking the change process by becoming a substitute symbol for all that isn't working.

In experiencing the role of the consultant on this level, and having this level of self-awareness the consultant is in a position to create a strategy that enables change, and use themself as a tool and symbol for enabling change (van Beekum, op cit). At the same time though, if the consultant does not have the insight to understand the level they are working with, they can become a block to change through inappropriate role-modelling and reinforcing unhealthy messages. Worst of all, if they have an unhealthy life script (Berne, 1972). this can be reinforced and played out for all to see.

Structure…Getting from A to B in the middle of a Structural Vacuum!

Change management consulting is the process of working with a group when there are no clear parameters, and often when the desired goal is unclear. In these cases the consultant is asked to help determine the most appropriate end result based on their own best judgment, experiences and learning and guide the client group to that outcome. Whoever takes on the role of the consultant in this situation is responsible for providing an interim structure for a group when they perceive that there is none, and while they determine what the new world will look like. Importantly, this is also the first great temptation thrown in the path of the consultant. If the consultant plays out the role of Rescuer (Karpman, 1968), on a regular basis then this is an open invitation to lay out the 'answer' for the client group. An easy fix for the client and a quick Rescuing Parent fix for the consultant.

Therein lays a great challenge for a consultant who works with client groups who are in disarray. The consultant has the same need for recognition and structure as everyone else. Yet the best thing to do at this point is sit in the muck with the client group and absorb the atmosphere, without proposing a solution (and denying a quick hero/ine fix) and understanding from where the group is starting their journey. This is a challenge, for the consultant may feel the need to be 'seen' to be doing something, and the client will want the consultant to wave their wand and spell out the path. It requires clear and continuous communication, and the ability to establish rapport very quickly with the group.

At this point it's important to note that if you move too fast you risk losing the group. Clues that let you know you are moving too fast are when you hear things like "the consultant doesn't care" or "he/she is only in it for the money" as well as the classic failure of people to respond to calls, emails or meeting requests. If you move too slow, you'll lose them as well. However this becomes more an issue of credibility and you can hear things like 'they don't know what they're doing!'.

Whilst observing, and getting into pace

with your client, there is a set of simple steps that a consultant can adopt when working in this space that will help provide an interim structure or framework for the group to work in whilst they help the group achieve their goals. They are:

- Establish a Clear Contract
- Clarify the Primary task of the Group
- Get to Know the Client Group
- Visualize an Outcome
- Make the Journey

Establish a Clear Contract

When there is no, or very poor group structure, a contract, as defined by Berne (1966) and expanded by van Poelje (1994), can be the first step in realising a tangible structure for both parties to work with. The contract can be as simple as a verbal agreement between the client group and the consultant, or as robust as a three-cornered contract (English, 1975) that spells out responsibilities between each of the parties involved in the change process, the consultant, the leader or higher power of the client group and the body of the client group. Once agreed to, a contract can be used as a vehicle to keep the consulting and change process on track, as well as serve to protect all parties by spelling out clear boundaries within which the consultant and client group will work.

This element is critical in establishing a safe (Pat Crossman, 1966) framework within which the group will work. Depending on the group, I sometimes err on the side of caution and build in a 'safety' commitment for each side of the contract, e.g. "what will I do to ensure xxx feels comfortable to think outside the square".

Clarify the Primary Task of the Group/s

This is a critical step and without it the remaining steps are pointless. This step means sitting down with the leadership to clarify the primary task/s (Miller and Rice, 1967) of the groups involved. The primary task is the very reason that the group exists; for example the primary task of the executive leadership of a car manufacturing plant may be to ensure the efficient manufacture of safe and quality vehicles, whilst the primary task of the team working on the vehicle electronics may be to ensure all electronic systems are designed and implemented to specification.

The key points to be clarified and agreed upon include:

1. What is the primary task of this organisation?
2. What is the primary task of the division that this group belongs to in contributing to achievement of the primary task of the organisation?
3. In the context of the first two questions, what is the primary task of the Leadership of this group?
4. What are the primary tasks and roles required of the wider group in achieving the primary task of this group.

It is not surprising to get two or three different responses when asking the first three questions.

Importantly, when getting to a point of clarity around the primary task, many pieces come together for the leadership. Depending on the maturity of the group, it can quickly realise that the grand 'change' project they had envisioned isn't necessary. I have experienced situations where the leadership group has decided to adopt a significant change process because the wider group wasn't performing or achieving the desired results. On each of these occasions it became clear, very quickly, that there wasn't a shared view of the primary task (of either the organisation, division or their group) by the leadership group. This led to the realisation that given the lack of singular understanding of the primary task it was no wonder results were variable. When the primary task is vague, roles are not clear. People do not understand what they have to contribute, or perhaps that they can contribute. It is also common that they do not know how or who they should be relating to in achieving the primary task.

I once worked with a large manufacturing company that was managing a facility on behalf of the government. This site was consistently experiencing safety and quality issues, as well as poor customer feedback. When the leadership of the site were asked about the primary task of the site, the responses included:

- Manage the site for the government
- Produce quality material for our customers
- Have a zero harm site
- I don't know

Once we clarified the primary task of the site, the way ahead seemed to almost fall into place. There were some minor organisational design factors to manage, but this was due to positions being created to address issues that had arisen due to an unclear primary task.

Not all situations are as clear cut as this and there is more work to be done.

Get to Know the Client Group - Establish the First Reference Point

By considering that the group being worked with have their own collective set of ego states (Berne, 1966) that shape their behaviour in the 'as is' state, the diagnosis of the 'as is' can be based on the same factors used to diagnose ego states in a therapeutic setting.

Often, to this point the work has largely been with the leadership of the group; this step allows the dialogue to be extended to the wider group.

In many cases there isn't the time to get to know the client group as well as required; this can be due to the client not being able to afford the consultant for an extended period of time, or because the need for change is urgent. For this reason, the following aspects can be considered as a swift way of getting to know the client group with some measure of depth:

History: What is the history of the group? How long have they been working together? What is the purpose of the group?

Behaviour: What is the observable behaviour of individuals in the group? Are they performing effectively in their tasks?

Social: What are the relationships like in the group? Are they constructive or destructive? Are lines of communication continually being crossed or is there a seemingly complementary series of communications (either healthy of unhealthy)?

Feeling: How do people feel about the current situation compared to the past? Do people feel like they've been here before? Are there positive or negative feelings about the current situation?

Each of these analytical aspects will help the consultant establish a fairly solid basis from which they can help the group determine a way forward to being in a position to achieve the primary task. Simple interviews, focus groups or surveys can help to uncover this information.

This information can also help the leadership, and if necessary the wider group, understand the relationship between the lack of a clear primary task and the behaviours of the group. This is a very Adult process that serves to provide understanding but also create a sense of awareness that it is also possible to achieve something different with a primary task.

When interviewing and getting to know the employees of the manufacturing site (discussed in the previous step) in regards to what they thought of the Primary task of the site, and their role and responsibilities with regards to the Primary task, they were almost equally divided between the four tasks listed above.

To make a brief link with the broader change management initiative that this may be accompanying, I have conducted this phase, and these interviews at the same time as focus groups where we have explored the ‘as is’ and future state of the systems, processes and procedures. If carefully managed, this can save time, money and, for those engineers and technical people who rely on concrete thinking, can serve to perceptually make the ‘soft’ questions ‘hard’ simply because they were asked in the same forum.

Visualise an Outcome - Establish the Destination Reference Point

Once the consultant has spent some time with the wider client group getting to know their history, of how they came to be where they are, the consultant is in a position to help the group in identifying a possible destination.

When visualizing a future state, the consultant is helping the group to understand the possible ways of behaving and relating that will lead them to better results. Understanding the primary task makes this step much more practical and easier to digest. As suggested in the previous phase, engineers, scientists and many ‘blue collar’ workers are incredibly practical and concrete in their thinking. Without a primary task at the centre of this phase, it is easy to lose the audience.

The following steps provide a basic overview of how to lead the group through a basic visualisation process.

Find a quiet space to think uninterrupted. Have the group imagine themselves in the future when they are a high performing group and get them to answer the following questions:

- What do they look like?
- What is their behaviour?
- What are they saying?
- What words are they using?
- What are they wearing?
- How do they look?
- What does the workplace look like?
- How does the place feel? (happy, productive, high energy?)
- How are people relating? (positively, cohesively, supportively?)
- What results are they getting?
- What are other people saying about this group?

Visualising is about taking the blank canvass of the future and painting a desired outcome. This is the outcome in which the group will have absolute belief, as it is the direction that will guide the group. It is for this reason that the picture is to be as clear and three dimensional as possible, because:

- The leadership group has to believe it first before anyone else will. Most people want to ‘see’ results before they ‘believe’ new results are possible. The consultant must be able to draw on their broader change management tool box and provide examples of great leaders, or business case studies that support the opposite, of believing in what isn't yet there as if it already exists. Perhaps some transformational leadership skills training may support the application of this phase.

- If the leadership can clearly describe what they see, with passion, they will convince the majority of the group to come along for the ride.
- At this point, this is the only healthy structure that exists for anyone to grasp.

As you will see in the example shown at Annex A, information can be drawn from this exercise to create messaging for the wider group, making it easier for the leadership to sell the change initiative.

The example in Annex A is an extract from the visualisation process for the aforementioned manufacturing site. It contains some pre-amble, and then the high level picture of their future. Take notice of the 'results' as these become the concrete reasons 'why' the change initiative is being undertaken. For many managers, especially technical leaders, there is a struggle to verbalise in any depth as to why the change initiative is happening. This example shows how they create a shared understanding and language for the change that can be used in team leader meetings, tool box talks or to influence the overall communication plan that usually accompanies a significant change project.

It is natural for the consultant to want to get involved in this exploration of the future and not just facilitate the process, especially if they are driven by a strong functioning Rescuing Parent Ego state. It is vital that the consultant stay on the boundary (Fox, 1975) of this group, and manage this desire. It is possible for the future state to be tainted by the consultant's own values, experiences and biases, either positively or negatively. Most importantly though, is that intervention by the consultant will remove ownership of the solution from the group. Whilst the consultant may claim that they aren't owning the solution either, the solution will effectively be in 'no mans land'.

The role of the consultant in this phase is to facilitate a safe and factual approach to painting the canvass and bringing issues into the group consciousness for Adult analysis when the consultant suspects unhealthy influences may be driving the brush strokes .

Above is a good example of a high level canvass; as the consultant to this session I barely spoke. I provided a framework and sought agreement and the group filled in the details. My job was to provide the boundaries, clarify, stroke (Berne, 1966) and listen.

Making the Journey from the First Reference Point to the Second Reference Point

Getting the client group from one reference point to a second is a little easier now that there is a starting and finishing point established as the basis of structure. Rather than look at the change process in detail, I touch on what I believe are some key principles that underpin a healthy approach by the consultant in maintaining strong boundaries and can help the consultant balance the need for recognition themselves whilst giving healthy recognition to the group.

This comes down to three essential challenges for the consultant:

- The consultant has belief and ability.
- The consultant is flexible and has an open mind to any possibilities.
- The consultant is comfortable with not knowing all the answers.

The Consultant Has Belief and Ability

The belief of the consultant in their ability to support the group can often result in quasi-leadership behaviours that serve as a role model for what can be. For those leaders who struggle with their identity as a leader, or who have lower self-esteem, the consultant can create the perception that it is possible to do things differently. For those leaders who are already constructive in their approach, it is an opportunity for affirmation.

In both cases there is the chance to provide some much needed positive strokes that can fuel the speed of change in the group. For the aware and experienced consultant it is an opportunity to provide permissions to do things differently, though it is the belief that the consultant has in themselves, which is shown in their confident and nurturing body language, that provides the potency of the permissions.

It's also important that the consultant continue to 'sharpen the saw', as Covey (1989) would say, so that they continue to have the skills to hold the group in an implicit and intimate manner and intervene appropriately. When used together, belief and ability will ensure that progress is made.

Members of the client group will have varying degrees of self-belief and levels of ability, and so it becomes the role of the consultant to model the new ways of thinking and behaving. For this reason regular supervision, coaching and if necessary, therapy, for the consultant will ensure they remain open to the unconscious messaging they may be passing on to the group, either positively or negatively. It is this willingness to continually work on oneself that also reinforces the potency (of healthy messaging, role modelling) of the consultant, and ensures they have the belief and ability to contain the group through all stages and in all states. This leads into the next point.

Have an Open Mind and be Flexible to Possibilities

How the client group travel through their journey will also be dependent on the willingness of the consultant to promote the importance of being eclectic in the approach to seeking a solution and in identifying the journey to achieve the solution.

The great advantage of transactional analysis is that it complements and integrates with many different approaches to change, whether it be classical change models, Johari (Handy 2000) windows, the four-roomed apartment or the more recent approaches of the Eight Steps for Leading Change (Kotter, 1996).

I have integrated the steps outlined in this paper with 6 Hats methodology (de Bono, 1985) and with Kotter’s Eight Steps as well as Ellis’s principles of Rational Thinking (Ellis 1975) and the different elements of Group Relations thinking (Stokes, 1994).

Linked to the previous principle, and the next principle, is the importance of being eclectic. This isn’t only about using different methodologies; it is being open to the idea that the group will emerge and evolve in unexpected ways throughout the life of the project, and being able to hold and nurture this energy and output.

A consultant can maximise the efficiency of the change process by making the connection between having an open mind to new ideas and implementing them swiftly if they are appropriate. This also allows the client group to drive the change, and allows immediate and powerful reinforcement of group self-esteem when members of the client group suggest, analyse and implement ideas immediately.

The Consultant is Comfortable with Not Knowing All the Answers

A key trait of successful consultants, which is seldom spoken of, is the ability to be comfortable with not knowing an answer. If practised this can be a great leveller, creating credibility for the consultant and building rapport between the consultant and the client group.

Too often a process of change is railroaded when the consultant is drawn into rescuing, and they believe they must have the answers to everything. This can have a couple of negative effects. Firstly, the consultant places a large amount of unnecessary pressure on themself that can negatively affect their own performance. Secondly, the process of change becomes very disempowering for the client group which undermines one of the underlying drivers for sustainable change - ownership.

I have seen a couple of examples over the years where an over zealous consultant plays out their script and becomes the rescuer; the result is almost always the same. The group is usually polarized, and when the consultant becomes aware of the negative criticism of their approach they get their payoff. I recently heard "why can't I ever get this right?" as a response to such a situation, despite the advice and support given to him by his colleagues to adopt a different approach to facilitation.

Being comfortable with the discomfort of not knowing an answer becomes easier with experience. Related to this is being comfortable with silence and not being drawn into the games that a group may unwittingly be playing, especially in regards to looking for a hero/ine who will save them from their misery. It is not unusual for a client group to engage a consultant with surface appearances of wanting to improve, and yet the consultant wears the projections of the group and becomes the scapegoat (Wells Jnr, 1995).

In summary

Often, it seems that change management consulting has no clear process or structure. The process, as described in this article can be quite fluid, and the consultant in effect becomes a quasi-leader, modelling the structure, behaviours and thinking that can contribute to a successful outcome.

Ultimately though, change management consulting is all about providing a safe framework within which energies and different ways of thinking can come together in a collaborative and consultative manner, in a way that ensures true change and results rest with the client group.

This isn't always easy for two overriding reasons. The consultant to the process has to have trust in themself to the extent that they believe they can help the group move to a healthier place. Secondly, the consultant has to remain vigilant that they don't fall into the trap of being a rescuer, rather staying a nurturer that is growing the self-belief of the group.

I am reminded of a George Harrison song, and I think of a line from Alice in Wonderland that goes something like "If you don't know where you're going, any road will take you there". This is true. However I add something extra to this though . . . even when you do know where you're going, any road can take you there . . . and that's what makes change management consulting the wonderful process that it is.

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Annex A – High Level Future State at a Manufacturing Site

Background

The evolution of culture is a process of shifting the beliefs, attitudes and values of individuals and groups to the desired way of thinking and behaving to achieve different results. The process of change is most effective when, at a higher level, the leadership have a clear picture in their mind as to what they are moving their workforce towards. At our site, we went through this process of taking a blank canvas and describing in detail what the desired beliefs, behaviours and results are that would make up a healthy 'future state' for the people and identity of our site.

Simple to understand…Not necessarily easy to do . . .

Having a 'future state' means that as a group the higher leadership have a set of beliefs, feelings and behaviours to embrace and start to evolve within themselves. It's a simple concept…and if the people in the higher leadership group are open minded, it is fairly easy to do. It's about forming new habits, and patterns of behaviour. At the same time this is what makes it difficult.

Our Commitment To each Other Makes it Easier . . .

Forming new habits and behaviours is never easy to do. That's why we have the 3 Cornered Contract. The common theme in our contracts is feedback. Throughout the life of this project, and beyond, encouraging each other to try different approaches, and being supportive if we don't quite get it right, is essential. By bringing our 3 Cornered Contract to life, we also breathe life into the larger project, as we are demonstrating that it is 'OK' to try different things, and it is 'OK' to get it wrong – as long as you persevere.

This document, combined with our 3 Cornered Contracts, is the pulse of this project.

Our 'Future State'

Below are summaries of the Results (thisd page) and the desired, Beliefs, Feelings, Behaviours (overleaf).

How do we use this information?

- Embrace and display the thinking and behaviour . . . the most powerful change factor at our site is what we do – and why we do it
- To help shape your 'elevator speech' for the change process
- To paint a vision of the future for new and existing employees
- To help steer the training requirements of the site

Results

As a result of our behaviours our site will look

- Clean
- Professional
- Be open (no closed doors)
- Owned
- Alive
- Like people are interacting
- Vibrant
- Enthusiastic
- Friendly front end
- Energised (teams) Well cared despite age
- Well organised (housekeeping
- Like everyone's working/moving with purpose
- Secure (with fences in good order
- Like a managed security site
- Streamlined
- Modern (reception)
- Together (removed cattle grids)
- Operational and well used canteen
- Like a Visual Factory
- Like improvements are implemented

As a result of our behaviours we will

- Employ over 400 people
- Meet customer demands
- Be generating record sales and profit
- No recordable compliance issues/events
- Will always be better than the day before
- Exceeding internal and external goals
- Be working effectively in teams
- Be sharing and understanding information
- Be getting customer feedback
- Have improved efficiencies and waste reduction
- Have projects and activities under control
- Be united
- Know how well we are performing (individually and as a site)
- Be exceeding behavioural and operational KPI's

Think → Feel → Behave

Think

I believe…

- That we are on the right track
- We have clear and established goals
- I have a clear sense of purpose
- I feel proud and that we are achieving well
- I know what makes us a success
- There is a sense of team
- There is mutual respect
- Communication is effective
- I am open minded
- We are open minded
- This is more than a job
- This is a consistent place to work
- I can achieve
- Managers are leading the site
- I hear positive stories
- I have access to high quality information and communication
- I know how what I do contributes to the business
- We are on track and there are visible KPI's to let me know
- I know where I fit in the business
- I am part of *company name deleted*
- I can speak out freely
- This site is a safe place to work
- Things get done
- I'm a leader
- My manager knows me
- That managers are positive role models

Feel

I feel…

- Energised
- Focussed on continuous improvement
- Energetic
- Proactive
- Motivated
- Valued
- Recognised
- Passionate
- Proud
- Engaged
- Safe
- Confident in myself and others
- Empowered
- Respected

Behave

I/we…

- Respond to customer needs
- Are customer focussed
- Act as leaders
- Are disciplined
- Follow systems and rules
- Make right decisions using the right information
- Prioritise and act accordingly
- Act with urgency when required
- (managers) Listen
- Commitments are met
- Feedback is given
- Act safely
- (managers) inform
- Ensure information is communicated
- Are adaptable and resilient
- Are self-managed
- Do what we say we will do
- Meet delivery expectations
- Respect others
- Generate ideas
- Are happy and socially interactive
- Can ask questions and have them answered
- Don't tolerate inappropriate behaviour
- (managers) ensure communication is spread across the site
- Are accountable
- Forward thinking
- Innovative

(Continued from page 1)

From IDTA Council

Meanwhile, we have maintained a fairly low profile of Council meetings, opting to have these online so we save the considerable travel costs that these generate when we are coming from around the UK.

We continue to liaise with ITA about the possibility of a joint conference next year, so the dates to keep clear in your diary are sometime around 12-15 April 2012.

The new MSc Professional Development (Developmental TA), accredited by Middlesex University, that we announced in the previous newsletter, has now started. Students can join at any time as the trainers involved are running rolling, modular programmes. Anyone with a CTA in a developmental field already can also get credits.

The DTA Trainer Group continues to have Skype meetings and to keep Council informed of what they are doing. Recently they explored the webinar methodology that Bill Heasman is using to provide online training.

Finally, Council is planning the IDTA AGM. Without an event to link it to, we realise that few members will want to make a trip to this legally-required event. Voting members will soon receive an invitation, plus an assurance that plans have been made to deal with the anticipated lack of a quorum. We will run a 'repeat' AGM associated with a future event.

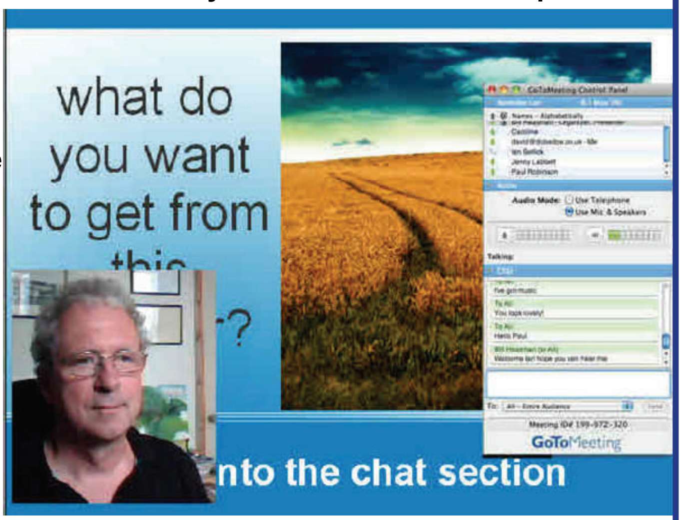
DTAweb.co.uk

At DTAweb Bill Heasman PTSTA (O) delivers online seminars (webinars) in Developmental Transactional Analysis (DTA) on the first and third Thursdays of each month at 7.00 p.m. GMT

Bill describes his webinars

" Each session lasts up to an hour and a half. I take a DTA topic, examine the idea or theory and then together with the online group explore applications of that theory.

"My regular webineers tell me that this is a great way to learn, focusing on a single idea and applying it to real examples in the virtual training room. As many are in training they tell me it is a useful way of experiencing another trainer and supervisor. **All without leaving your home."**



To join in all you need is a computer with an Internet link, a microphone and headphones.

The next webinar will be on 20 October starting at 19:00. The title is, How can we better Lead Change and Transition? In this webinar we will explore change, transition and cycles of development. Experience this webinar completely **free** by logging on to this link at 7.00 pm on the 20th. https://www1.gotomeeting.com/join/134195352

Visit www.dtaweb.co.uk for more information.

Parallel Process

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Ever since I started learning about Transactional Analysis (TA) models in depth, I have been fascinated by Parallel Process. I have an interest in how human beings communicate with each other at all levels, but particularly at the level of unconscious processes: we pass things back and forth without even realising that we are doing it.

The Parallel Process (PP) phenomenon is not a TA concept, but was highlighted by H F Searles in 1955. It has its origin in the psychoanalytic concepts of transference and countertransference, the transference happening when the counsellor, coach, trainer or therapist unconsciously recreates the client's problem and emotions within the supervisory relationship. The supervisor's job is to be on the look-out for this and to encourage the supervisee into the here-and-now in order to recognise it. However, what can happen is that the unaware supervisor can become caught up in the parallel process - and insight and resolution of the issue is not achieved, or is at least delayed.

So, awareness, as ever, is the key.

Trainers, therapists, coaches and counsellors need to be aware of their own issues and to be dealing with them through examination, insight and supervision in order not to get dragged into transferential relationships. Focussing on here-and-now functioning and keeping ourselves informed enables us to spot the invitations so that we can surface what is going on in the relationship.

Unconscious processes within one-to-one relationships as well as within teams lead to the possibility of games being played, symbiotic relationships developing and people staying "stuck" in an unhappy place. Fascinatingly, these processes can be "mirrored" along a chain of relationships - awareness helps us to break the link!

Petruska Clarkson (1991) said that Eric Berne "*showed an intuitive understanding of the interdependence of transference and counter-transference*". She talked of the "**interactional field**" we create between us when human beings are interacting, through stimulus response transactions. I see many people give their power away to those who willingly take it through not being aware of the ulterior transactions that pass in the space between people – and our rackets keep us stuck in a closed loop of ineffective behaviour.

Back to the "interactional field" – the space that we co-create with another. Berne 1977) encouraged therapists to use their **intuition** to sense a client's Child ego states, and Clarkson (op cit) elaborates on this as she identifies:

- What the client brings (pro-active transference)
- What the therapist brings (pro-active counter transference)
- What the therapist reacts to in the client (reactive counter transference)
- What the client reacts to as a result of what the therapist brings (client counter-transference or reactive transference)

Clarkson says that any of these may form the basis for facilitative or destructive psychotherapeutic outcomes. It is in this mix, this "dynamic field" that the potential for parallel process lies.

Sometimes, in my supervision practice, I notice the supervisee behaving in ways that mirror the issue with the client. So if a supervisee says their client is faltering in their progress and is stuck, and I see the supervisee frowning, maybe telling me they don't know what to do to support the client's growth (i.e. they are stuck too) I do my best to avoid also being stuck in the supervision!

The really interesting thing is that this process is **bi-directional** – not just client and therapist/coach, therapist/coach and supervisor but it works in the other direction too (Doehrmann (1976, cited in Moldawskwy 1980 p 132). That is, supervisor and therapist/coach and therapist/coach and client (see Figure 1)

Doehrmann points out that the process is not reflective alone – the supervisor can also stir the therapist, who then acts out a positive model with the client. But I would add *only* if the supervisor is aware of what is going on, can the supervisor invite the supervisee into the here-and-now and model positive behaviour, which goes back along the chain. This positive behaviour is then taken back into the coaching/therapy relationship, from which the client will benefit.

We can add another layer to our depth of understanding of this process.

Hypnotic inductions occur in our ordinary, everyday lives. Through our inner dialogue, and our dialogue with others, we hypnotise ourselves and others with the language we speak. **Projective identification** – projecting on to others our beliefs and relating to them in such a way as they alter their behaviour to bring about a self-fulfilling prophecy – keeps us locked into a closed loop of behaviour, feelings and thoughts.

Transactional Analysts understand from our knowledge of script development how we discount ourselves, our reality, other people – contaminations, life positions, rackets etc all serve to keep us stuck in our scripts. In that space between two human beings (Langs, 1976 called it the *bipersonal field*) it does not matter, for the purposes of understanding parallel process, who hypnotises whom; it is more important to understand what we can do about it, so that we do not pass it along the chain.

Clients may be responding to the coach's induced material – i.e. unconsciously, the coach works with clients who "match" the coach's issues. The therapist (unconsciously) attracts clients who give them an opportunity to work on their own (the therapist's)

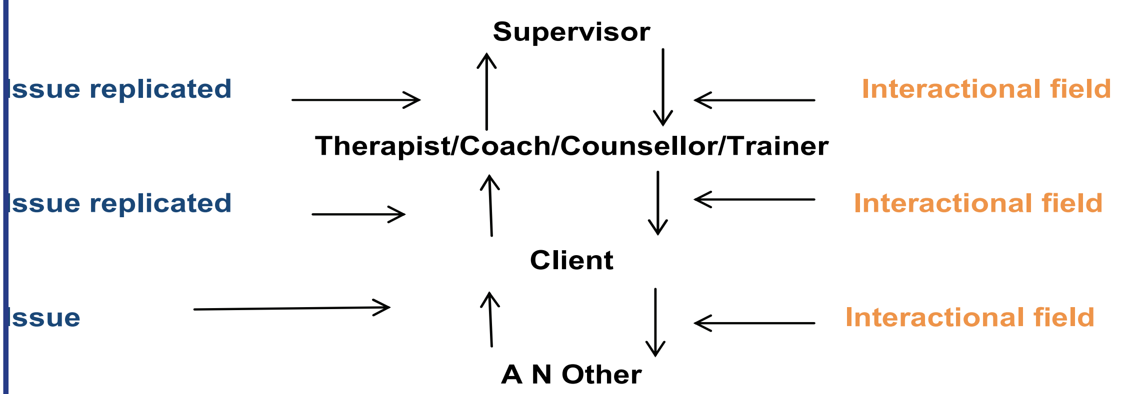

Figure 1

issues. The same thing can happen further along the chain between the supervisee and supervisor. As practitioners (coach, therapist, supervisor) we attract clients who present problems as if they are aware of the vulnerable areas of the practitioner. These clients, of course, are most useful for the practitioner's growth!

So if we are the practitioner, how do we know if the issue is ours, or the clients? The answer to that is to recognise where in the process can maximum change be achieved - the practitioner has 100% control over themselves so the best place to start is here.

Cleaning up our act enables us to transact cleanly, avoid the transference and game invitations and model positive behaviour.

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Triangle TA Academy
Developmental Transactional Analysis

New TA qualifications!

Triangle TA Group (TTAG) is run by Lynda Tongue (PTSTA – O) and is an open group based in Torquay, Devon. TTAG is a continuous professional development group for trainers, coaches, facilitators, consultants, teachers, parents, managers or anybody who is interested in a psychological approach to human development.

Certificate and Diploma in Developmental TA

This post-graduate set of qualifications stand alone, or are stages towards the full MSc.

MSc in Professional Development (Developmental TA)

A new qualification accredited through the PDF.net by Middlesex University. Attendance at workshops and submission of portfolios and accumulation of hours of application and supervision are required elements of the programme.

The MSc allows for different specialisms. Coaches (for example) can add their specialisation to the title of their award – MSc Professional Development (Developmental Transactional Analysis Coaching).

The **Coaching** option fulfils most of the requirements for the **EMCC** EIA (European Mentoring & Coaching Council European Individual Accreditation) at Master Practitioner Level. Practitioner Level accompanies the post graduate certificate that can be obtained by those not seeking the full MSc.

TTAG is run as a **multi-level experience** so can be attended whether you have a little or a lot of prior TA exposure. Students can also attend without any commitment to a qualification, and there is a lower-cost option of a certificate and diploma award from the ICDTA.

TA Coach programme

This 20 day programme conducted in two day modules held at weekends, is for participants with little or no coach training. The programme will teach you the fundamentals of the coaching relationship and will also introduce you to the tools of Transactional Analysis (TA).

TA 101 workshops

Please also note the following dates for the TA 101 workshop:

Torquay:	25 & 26 January 2012	18 & 19 July 2012
London :	29 & 30 November 2011	

Please visit www.trianglepartnership.com for more information and a booking form.

Going for Growth

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Developmental Transactional Analysis (DTA) is about growth and psychological strength, using our abilities and attributes in a way that promotes personal well-being and community cohesion, whether that community be a school, a neighbourhood or an organisation.

Organisations are made up of individuals and each individual has an impact on the system – personal change has a knock-on effect. So it is important that individuals realise their full potential, not only for themselves, but also for their wider community.

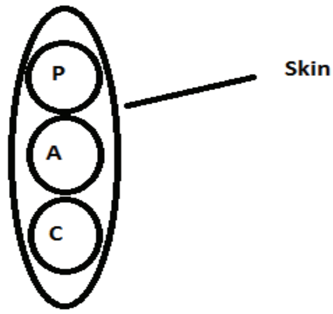
However, often people do not realise their full potential because they are unaware of the blocks and barriers they have put in their own way, the self-limiting beliefs they hold and the environmental restrictions imposed on them when they were young and developing.

Trainers, consultants, teachers, coaches or facilitators etc need to be aware of the knock-on effect that personal change in one individual can have on the system (organisation) in which that individual works. Being aware means they can support the individual to deal with likely outcomes, positive and negative, of any changes they make in their process.

Frame of Reference

> *"An individual's frame of reference is the structure of associated (conditioned) responses (neural pathways) which integrates the various ego states in response to specific stimuli. It provides the individual with an overall perceptual, conceptual, affective, and action set which is used to define the self, other people, and the world both structurally and dynamically"* (Schiff et al 1975)

Our Frame of reference is our own unique way of viewing the world. Jacqui Schiff draws a "skin" around the First Order Structural Model of Ego States to depict the way in which our frame of reference contains our personality – how we blend our ego states together as well as much more besides.



Frame of Reference (Schiff et al, 1975)

We build our frame of reference gradually from childhood as a "*composite of the decisions the child makes in responses to personal experiences and to family and culture*" (Clarke, 1988). At any one time many different responses are possible, and in order to survive children choose the responses which will keep them safe in their family of origin.

Our frame of reference is totally unique to us and we use this frame (into which we have built our own particular beliefs, values, attitudes - script) to make meaning of the world around us. It acts as a filter through which we interpret what is going on, and it influences our behaviour as a result. And it can cause real difficulties in communication when people with different frames are working together. If a person is unaware of their own frame of reference and works with another of a different frame, then problems can arise. The more aware we are of our own frame of reference, the easier and more effective we will be when working with others whose frame is different.

"*People can never get outside their own frames of reference*" (Schiff et al, 1975) – and while this is understandable, we can of course learn to understand our motivations, we can explore our cultural (family, national, race etc) influences and make accounting decisions from an Integrated Adult (Berne 1961) place.

Jean Illsley-Clarke (1996) makes the point that if it is important for us to change and develop, and if that value is in our frame, then it will be easier for us to learn new things, be willing to change our point of view etc. However, if we have an attitude of "you can't teach an old dog new tricks" – we will need to change *that* assumption before we can free our energy for needed growth.

Clarke built on the work of Schiff et al (op cit) by delineating the influences as deep (holding the frame together), medium, light and open.

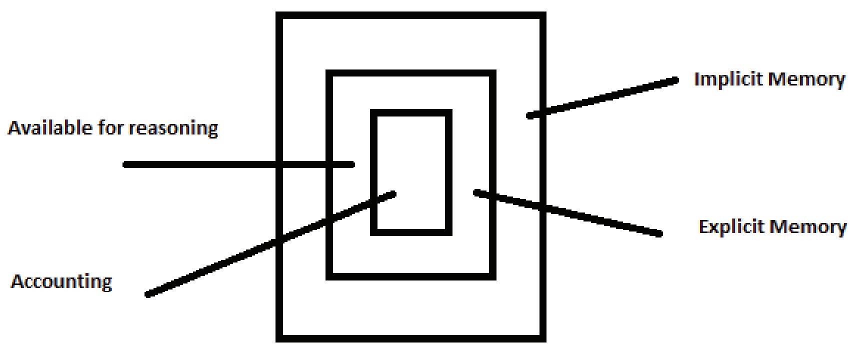
We can develop Clarke's work further by recognising not only the influences impacting on our make-up, but also the decisions we made in response. I have re-labelled the levels:

- Deep influence: Implicit memory
- Medium influence: Explicit memory
- Light influence: Available for reasoning
- Open: Accounting

Deep influence: Implicit memory

Race, religion, family culture, birth order, health, geography are all influences at such a deep level, our responses based on these influences are often outside of our awareness. Also here are the decisions we have made under the influence of our primary caregivers – injunctions we have picked up, attributions and permissions. Contaminations, rackets, stroke filters started their development here, at this deep level.

The decisions we made were based on our Little Professor sense of what was going on in our environment, even though we were at a pre-verbal age. Clarke says these survival decisions, when made, were at the time a matter of life and death, and that a child cannot be blamed for finding strategies for staying alive. We need to remember this with love, not pass harsh judgement on ourselves or other people for building those Frames as we did.



Frame of Reference: What's in your frame?

Medium influence: explicit memory

In this next level, we have more accessible influences – assumptions made about ourselves and the world which are more available for examination. Our drivers – when first introduced to this topic people can usually see the behaviours in parents (or primary care givers) that set the standard for the infant's behaviour. The infant then behaves in ways which get them strokes so they do more of that behaviour. Issues around scarcity or abundance, rackets and contaminations are further developed here. Situations in the explicit memory are more available, with some reflecting and support to the individual wanting to explore their frame of reference.

Light influence: Available for reasoning

Here is where we hold values and beliefs but are open to debate about them, to making decisions having gathered information and we may change our minds according to what the updated information tells us. I may have voted for a particular political party all my adult life, but may change my allegiance if I feel for instance, that the party has not performed well in an area that is important to me.

Open area: Accounting

"*The capacity to incorporate new information without trying to alter or deflect it*" (Clarke 1996). Autonomous behaviour, based on Integrated Adult and accounting from an I'm OK, You're OK standpoint. When two people are communicating from this place with each other, there are opportunities for intimacy, authenticity, proactivity and productivity.

So examining our Frame of Reference, understanding its make-up, why we built it the way we did, what we still need to deal with and what we can give thanks for – this in-depth examination supports an on-going developmental pathway. And when we can hold on to our own frame of reference, and enter into those of others, we will work more effectively together and harvest all the benefits that brings.

As a trainer and coach working in organisations, I am aware that changes made at the individual level will also have an effect on the immediate and wider team. Systems theory tells us that organisations are living systems, and every living system is essentially an open system, in continuous exchange with its environment. Change in one element brings about simultaneous change in other elements.

When supporting individuals to do this level of development, the helping professional needs to be aware of the wider systems in which the individual is situated: family, team, organisation, community etc and a couple of points present themselves:

- 'Re-entry' – going home from a training course, having had insights and wanting to share them with partners etc who have not been part of the course. Preparing the individual to introduce the concepts carefully, appropriately and respectfully is a supportive thing to do.
- Working from the Accounting, open window means that we also need to account for political and economic realities: clients need to be encouraged to think through the consequences of authentic behaviour for instance. Telling the boss that he has body odour may not get you your next promotion!

We need to be aware of our own Frame of Reference as we work with clients.

Organisations are made up of individuals – supporting an individual to examine and make changes to their Frame of Reference can have a far-reaching effect.

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- TA status of author as designated in EATA handbook or IDTA membership categories
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Next issue copy dates

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IDTA aims to provide networking and professional development opportunities to practitioners applying developmental transactional analysis. The purpose of this newsletter is to update members and to invite and encourage participation in the institute and to enhance the application of developmental TA generally. Views expressed in this newsletter are those of contributors and do not necessarily reflect the official policy of the IDTA.

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