

# COMMUNICATION SKILLS

This is a pack of communication skills handouts that I have written, adapting both original source material and my own experience. Transactional Analysis contains useful concepts, such as Ego States and Transactions, which can be used to map, understand and improve how we communicate, both at work and at home.

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Richard Maun  
Managing Director  
**Primary People Ltd**  
2009

# EGO STATES

## UNDERSTANDING BEHAVIOUR

### 1. BACKGROUND

- Do you know anyone who points an accusing finger at others just as his father did?
- Do you know anyone who works hard at taking care of others just as her mother did?
- Do you know anyone who collects facts, thinks things through and acts rationally?
- Do you know anyone who throws temper tantrums as he did at age 3?
- Do you know anyone who learned as a child to be seen and not heard?

If so, you have a... contains useful... key model... problem s...

### 2. THE S...

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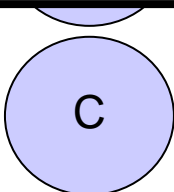


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**“in our Child”**  
Old (archaic) Behaviour  
 Feelings, thoughts and behaviours  
**replayed** from childhood.  
*Stress tends to take us here.*



*we are task focused and seeking information.*

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### 3. IDENTIFYING EGO STATES

Ego States are unique to each individual because our past experiences and the decisions we made are ours and ours alone. For example, two sisters may have quite different ways of showing fear or anxiety, or they may have quite different ways of looking after people, or showing affection. Therefore, we need to be careful when trying to interpret styles of behaviour, as we could easily misread people.

We constantly switch between Ego States as we interact with people and situations around us. We can find out which Ego State we (or others) are in by using **two** or more of the following methods:

- a) **Behaviour.** How does someone behave when they are 'worrying' or 'looking after' or 'ordering'?
- b) **Social environment.** What this 'hooks' in others. For example; '*your* Child hooks *my* Parent'.
- c) **Historical clues.** What we copied. For example; banging a fist, because that's what Father did.
- d) **Felt sense.** When it feels as though it's happening again. For example; when we are 'right back there in front of our teacher, being shouted at'.

#### 4. THE FUNCTIONAL MODEL – behaviour seen EXTERNALLY

The Structural Model shows us **what** is contained within our personality, whereas the Functional Model suggests **how** it operates. In the Functional Model the Child is divided into the **Adapted Child** and the **Free (or Natural) Child**. These two 'Functional Ego States' have both positive and negative sub-divisions. We are **positive** when we use table manners, we are **negative** when we are over-trained (and feel awkward). The **Adapted Child** is the **positive** side of the **Child** is the **negative** side. The **Free (or Natural) Child** is the **positive** side of the **Child** is the **negative** side. The **Adapted Child** is the **positive** side of the **Child** is the **negative** side. The **Free (or Natural) Child** is the **positive** side of the **Child** is the **negative** side.

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Thank you.

**The Adult Ego-State** is not sub-divided and is about problem solving, data gathering, planning, strategising and/or rational decision making. Using Adult is about asking questions, seeking facts and figures and checking assumptions. Over use can sometimes make us appear 'cold'.

**Take away message:** *The Parent takes responsibility. The Adult seeks objective evidence. The Child uses intuition. Where do you invest your energy?*

# EGO STATES IN ACTION

## CHOOSING THE RIGHT APPROACH

**Parent** You are in your Parent when you use language and behaviour copied from your parents, guardians or parental figures.

**Adult** You are in your Adult when you react to the 'here and now' by objectively evaluating the situation and using adult language and behaviour to move forwards.

**Child** You are in your Child when you react to the 'here and now' by using language and behaviour that was used during

A rounded occasion.

Think about

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Thank you.

### 1. PARENT

#### Sample words

I think, disagree, you, would you, don't ask dearie, ok

You are: horrible, a

Try, don't be something to make

suit the

help, said so, honey,

yet,

here's

#### Gestures and postures

Pointing an accusing or threatening finger / a pat on the back / consoling touch / pounding on the table / rolling eyes upwards in disgust / tapping feet in impatience / wringing hands in impatience / shaking head to imply 'no no' or 'OK!' / arms folded across chest with chin set / face tilted up looking down nose / holding onto someone or rocking them

#### Tone of voice

Smearing, punitive, condescending, encouraging, supportive, sympathetic

#### Facial expression

Scowl / encouraging nod / furrowed brow / set jaw / angry / sympathetic / proud eyes / smile / frown / loving / hostile / disapproving

## 2. ADULT

### Sample words and phrases

Would you, "I feel...", how, when, where, what, why, who, probability, alternative, result, yes, no, what are the facts, this is not proven but opinion, check it out, what has been done to correct it so far, it's 4.30pm, what are the reasons, what are the other options, have you tried this, mix two parts with one part, this is how, according to the statistics, ... it

### Gestures

Straight  
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head

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ling your

### Tone

Clear

g questions

### Facial

Thought

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## 3. CHILD

### Sample

Gosh,  
mine,  
nobody  
yours  
hope

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it for me,  
er than  
more treats, I

### Gestures

Slumped  
posture  
hand

hilarated  
/ raising

### Tone

Giggling,  
teasing,

fulness,  
ud, playfulness

### Facial expressions

Teary eyed, pouting, eyes looking upwards expectantly or pleading, downcast eyes, joyfulness, excited, curious, lips pursed tightly, tilted head, flirty, looking innocent, looking wide-eyed, lost lamb, helplessness, admiration

**Take away message:** *Think about where you need to invest your energy for the best outcome.*

## EGO STATES & PERSUASION

The following guide will help to structure a persuasive argument. However to deliver it successfully it can be useful to consider the Ego State you are using. Think about what you say, what body language you use and the tone of your voice.

<b>STRUCTURING A CASE FOR ACTION</b>	<b>THINK ABOUT YOUR STYLE OF DELIVERY</b>
<p><b>A) Preparation</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Define the problem or need which you are trying to solve.</li> <li>2. Think about why this problem or need is worth solving</li> <li>3. Outline the benefits to a client and write them up</li> <li>4. Think about the importance of the problem</li> </ol> <p><b>B) Invitation</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Avoid making assumptions</li> <li>6. Agree on the outline of the presentation</li> </ol> <p><b>C) Delivery</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7. Think about what you are going to talk about and what you are going to say quickly</li> <li>8. Remember to do what you said you would do</li> <li>9. If possible consider the client's needs and have a checklist</li> <li>10. Use constructive language – <i>and if</i> and <i>yes and</i> instead of <i>no but</i>.</li> </ol>	<p>Q1 Which Ego State(s) would not be helpful when presenting your case?</p> <div style="border: 2px solid black; border-radius: 50%; padding: 40px; text-align: center; margin: 20px auto; width: 80%;"> <p>This is a sample only.</p> <p>Please purchase this product to see the rest of the detail.</p> <p>Thank you.</p> </div>

# TYPES OF COMMUNICATOR

## SPOILING YOUR MESSAGE

### DIFFERENT PEOPLE

The most important message about effective communications is this:

*It is the **responsibility** of the person **giving** the message to ensure it is given **clearly**.*

It is not up to the listener to have to interpret it. Look at the list of people below and see if you know someone for each category.

TYPE	DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLES
1) Know-All	An answer for everything and always goes one better	Who do you know does this?
2) Interrupter		
3) Bo		
4) So		
5) Eg		
6) Du		
7) Fa		
8) Wh		
9) Jo		
10) M		
How o yo		erently?



# TRANSACTIONS

## COMMUNICATING EFFECTIVELY

### 1. THE TRANSACTIONS PEOPLE USE

- Do you know people who when they talk to others seem to be on the same wavelength?
- Do you know people who when they talk to others seem to shut off the conversation?
- Do you know people who do not talk straight, who say one thing but mean another?

If you have, you have seen the three basic types of Transaction, which occur whenever two or more people communicate. The concept of 'Transactions' was pioneered by Eric Berne and describes the basic units of interaction between people. They are made up of words, tone and body language. Transactions can be either Complimentary, or Crossed or Ulterior. People *transact* from the Ego State they are currently in.

The response you receive tends to be influenced by the Ego State you are transacting from, so therefore, to communicate effectively it is important to consider which Ego State you are really in and the consequence of transacting from it.

### 2. COMPLIMENTARY

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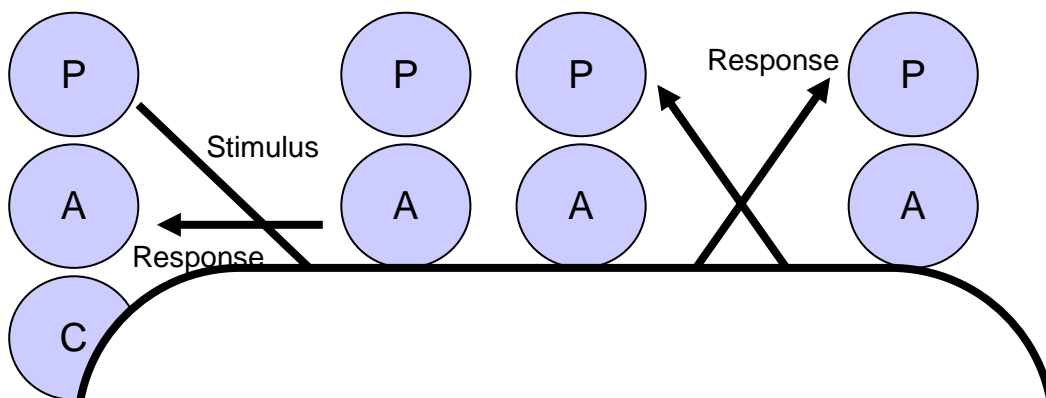
Thank you.

### 3. CROSSED

The SECOND type of Transaction is a break in communication results. Crossed Transactions usually leave you feeling 'not OK'. One or both individuals will need to shift Ego States in order to re-establish communication.

If you feel you need to Cross a Transaction to exit a conversation then think carefully about the likely 'fallout'. Crossing a Transaction always involves some emotional upheaval, so be prepared to move into positive Nurturing Parent to reassure their anxious Adapted Child.

If you respond from a different ego-state to the one the other person was expecting, how do you think they will feel? What might they say to you, or do next?



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**4. ULTERIOR**

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Thank you.

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What th  
**Social lev**  
**Stimulus (Ss)**  
**Response (Rs):** Yes I will.

What they are really saying at a  
**Psychological level**  
**Stimulus (Sp):** I want this done Son!  
**Response (Rp):** Ok Dad!

What they are really saying at a  
**Psychological level**  
**Stimulus (Sp):** Can you really afford this?

The example on the right shows how an apparently Adult question can hook your Child into a reckless and spontaneous response: "Yes – I'll buy it". How do feel later on? How else could you have replied?

**Take away message:** Think about where you are transacting from and to.

# REPORT WRITING

## GETTING YOUR POINT ACROSS

### 1. REPORT STRUCTURE

Reports can take a variety of forms and the best tip is to check with the person requesting it as to their required structure and length. However the following is often used for formal business reports:

SECTION	CONTENTS	GUIDELINES
Title Page	Include a title, issue date, your name, issue number and company name.	Avoid flashy graphics and stick with one font. A picture or clip art can make the report more inviting to read.
Content		for short reports.
E S		ly section do it well! en write the back and fine mary.
S		e relevant. For ed to outline a ext two years.'
In		e appropriate. e information ne limitations
R		ased on the d guesswork ents. Include o make the igestible.
C		you include ased on fact. esent new this is not a section.
Recommendations	like to see, how you can make practical use of the information.	quantify suggestions where appropriate. Prioritise ideas, to show the reader which items will have the greatest benefit.
Appendix	Include supporting details, charts, graphs or tables in here to avoid clouding the body of the report with too much detail.	Reference items in the appendix. For example, 'please see the graph in the appendix, page 35.'



## 2. REPORT DELIVERY

A report must be *read* to have any value. A surprising amount of reports are either not read or are just skimmed. Think about the following tips when you are next producing a report:

- 1) **Write it to be read**
  - a. Keep the reader in your mind when you are typing.
  - b. Use language they will understand and if in doubt keep it simple.
  - c. Imagine you are having a conversation with the reader as you write the report.
  - d. To keep people interested it can help to include rhetorical questions.
  - e. Or it can help to pose dilemmas. For example: we needed to find out whether to sell up, buy more or move on.
- 2) **Contract with the reader** – how long they expect to read it, how long they expect to read it, how
- 3) **Avoid inclusions** – reader will not read it, how
- 4) **Be on time** – decision
- 5) **Check scope**
- 6) **Make numbers** – quantify
- 7) **Label the** – measure
- 8) **Use bullet points**
  - ✓
  - ✓
  - ✓
- 9) **Include a footer** – in
- 10) **Give your name** – one, because this request



## 3. TWO TIPS TO AVOID

Don't edit the words as you write them. Write them quickly to get them out of your head. Polish them later.

Put down your true feelings first, to release the energy inside you. Then only edit them when you have captured them all.

## Email Exercises

An email is an electronic conversation. The same rules of behaviour apply to emails. Do you want to make the right impact or do you want to annoy people?

Please read through the following examples and have a go at the questions.

<b>NUMBER 1 - Attention!</b>	<b>NUMBER 2 - Bad News</b>
<p>To: The Team Leader Cc: - From: The Manager Ref: MEETING NOW!</p> <p>GET TO MY OFFICE NOW FOR AN IMPORTANT MEETING. BRING THE CUSTOMER LIST WITH YOU.</p>	<p>To: The Team Leader Cc: The Team, The Managing Director, The Personnel Assistant From: Nigella Ref: confidential</p> <p>Hi. You need to improve your performance. I think you could do a bit better. I've been told that the manager is sitting at his desk near your desk.</p>
<p>BILL SHAKESPEARE</p>	<p>that you come for lunch.</p>
<p>Q1) How do you think the manager would react to this email?</p>	<p>you would</p>
<p>Q2) What do you think the manager would say to you?</p>	<p>you do</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">This is a sample only.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Please purchase this product to see the rest of the detail.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Thank you.</p>	

# TEAM BRIEFING

## INFORMING & MOTIVATING PEOPLE

Please read through the following tips and use the suggested format to keep briefings concise, relevant and informative.

<b>TEAM BRIEF TIPS</b>	<b>TEAM BRIEF FORMAT – 2 mins</b>
1. Aim to have them regularly, every week or every month.	<b>A) INTRODUCTION</b>
2. Keep them short and interesting.	1. Thank people for coming. 2. Outline what you are going to be talking about.
3. Cherry pick useful content, don't cram in everything.	<b>B) PAST PERFORMANCE</b>
4. Allow quality	output / sales /
5.	issues or
6.	effort.
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8.	things you
9.	issues they
10.	in Past
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	firm – thank

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Thank you.

# TELEPHONE SKILLS

## RESPECTING OTHER PEOPLE

Please read through the following comments and have a go at answering the questions.

POOR TECHNIQUE INVOLVES	TELEPHONE TECHNIQUE SURVEY
1. Holding mou	chniques –
2. N	
3. N	
4. N c	people
5. N	rtant by
6. N lis	a
7. A yc	
b. <i>both heard the same thing.</i>	
8. Not being precise in what you are saying. a. <i>Telephone calls tire people quickly so avoid waffle.</i>	