

With Gratitude and Memories

by Rickie Moore

Gazing at a lovely gold pin honoring 30 years of membership in the ITAA, I was filled with gratitude. Reflecting on the past 3 decades brought amazing memories.

I remember, long ago and far away, back in the late 1970s, as a graduate student at the Fielding Institute, I stumbled on Eric Berne's (1976) message in *Beyond Games and Scripts*. This one-volume collection of his writings (thanks to Claude Steiner) nurtured my soul as a fledgling psychologist. John Gladfelter and Bob and Mary Goulding had convinced me that transactional analysis was a valuable method for simplifying the terribly complicated task of growing up . . . sane. They made it clear that TA's invaluable concepts are comprehensible and user-friendly.

Simultaneously, Alexander Lowen taught me bioenergetics, and I discovered that the combination worked well: Transactional analysis gave me a map into the psyche, and bioenergetics helped me understand the mind/body connection. Kundalini yoga and a shaman in Peru convinced me that I needed to awaken the spirit too. These influences, coupled with Berne's words, strengthened my determination to link body interventions and spiritual practices with my use of transactional analysis.

I was intrigued by Berne's wonderful discussion of intuition, first published in 1947. "Intuition is subconscious knowledge without words, based on subconscious observations without words, and under the right circumstances it is more reliable and accurate than conscious knowledge based on conscious observation" (Berne, 1976, p. 35). I figured that if a genius like Eric Berne could trust his intuition to the extent he obviously did, I could trust mine. I began leading "Playshops": large therapeutic groups that helped people find inner peace through personal work, building community, and experiencing the wonder of nature.

Berne gave me a clue about how to proceed when he wrote, "For certain fortunate people there is something which transcends all classifications of behavior, and that is awareness; something which rises above the programming of the past, and that is spontaneity; and something that is more rewarding than games, and that is intimacy" (Berne, 1964/1968, p. 162). That statement gave me permission to use a variety of methods to foster awareness, spontaneity, and intimacy. I turned to transactional analysis, bioenergetics, and gestalt, mixed them together

with yoga, mantras, meditations, and a dash of shamanism. The mixture brewed into what I call "Tri-Energetics." It provides a simple structure into which a variety of approaches can be incorporated.

Here is a brief example of how transactional analysis was used in Playshops and how it came to be taught in Tri-Energetic counseling courses. Tri-Energetics offers the attitudes of flexibility, tolerance, and curiosity as guideposts for healthy relationships and focuses on needs, wants, and intentions. Transactional analysis emphasizes which ego state a person is in during a transaction. Clarifying which ego state someone is in when he or she wants something helps the person reconcile incompatibilities of needs and intentions. For example, someone says, "I want that job but I want to sleep late." Perhaps the Critical Parent ego state says, "You'd better take that job, or else." This forces the Rebellious Child to say, "I'd rather sleep in." Understanding the conflict gives the Adult ego state a chance to process the data and decide whether or not to take a job that requires getting up early. By discovering what the needs of each ego state are, we can more easily discover our patterns, develop clear intentions, and make way for change.

Transactional analysis allows a Tri-Energetic therapist/counselor to focus on the needs, wants, and intentions of the Parent, Adult, and Child ego states. That is precisely why for problem solving, self-awareness, and emotional issues, we teach the concepts, theories, and practical applications of transactional analysis. In the late 1980s, after years of leading Playshops with my husband, psychologist Henry Marshall, we moved to The Netherlands and began teaching a holistic 3-year course in "how to counsel" to students throughout Europe. Our students in the Tri-Energetic Counselor Training were talented adults with little or no background in mental health who had the courage to pursue personal growth as a path to helping others. The course was a smorgasbord and transactional analysis was the entrée.

The broad application of transactional analysis to therapeutic, educational, and business contexts was a big support to my dream of including professionals and lay people in a helping network. To design a course that would empower people to be therapeutic helpers—no matter what profession they practiced for a living—and to begin leading large groups I desperately needed support to follow my intuition. So I followed Berne's pointers. "Further study of intuition from the point of view of Transactional Analysis

indicates that this faculty belongs to the Child ego state. If the Child is left free of influences from the Adult and Parent ego states intuition is at its best" (Berne, 1976, p. 36). In all our groups we enhance intuition through activation of the Child ego state by sitting in circles on cushions on the floor. "The advantages of social contact revolve around somatic and psychic equilibrium. They are related to the following factors: (1) the relief of tension, (2) the avoidance of noxious situations, (3) the procurement of stroking, and (4) the maintenance of an established equilibrium" (Berne, 1976, p. 59). I created ways for people to release their tensions through laughing, screaming, dancing, chanting mantras, and so on. We established a "no gossip" rule, ensuring psychological safety. Hugging became integral to daily activities, and five hugs a day were suggested. We established and preserved a wonderful equilibrium of openness, expressiveness, and trust.

We use tape recordings (often video, as well) to help students learn by listening to (and watching) themselves in action. But once again, Berne's wisdom has been a good guide, this time to soothe the otherwise worried technician. "The rule for listening to tape recordings is: If you can't hear what the patient is saying, don't worry about it, because usually he isn't saying anything. When he has something to say, you'll hear him, no matter how noisy or poor the recording is" (Berne, 1976, p. 258).

On my quest of the past 20 years to integrate simple methods that both nonprofessionals and professionals could use effectively, two intentions have guided me: first, to raise the visibility and perceived value of counseling for solving the more basic, common problems facing Western culture today, and second, to make it easier for students to understand and overcome problems, discover simple ways to resolve conflicts, learn more about human behavior, develop intuition, and become more peaceful. As a teacher of people whose mother languages were French, German, Dutch, and Flemish, Berne's simple clarity sustained my intention to simplify the art and science of counseling and to pass on to my students the best of what I had learned.

I have drawn strength from Berne in fulfilling my other intentions as well. These include creating a supportive community of people dedicated to reaching their own potential while helping others; offering exposure to interventions in the somatic, psychic, and spiritual domains; and emphasizing the importance of humor, play, community, and service. According to Steiner



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(2007), "The beginnings of transactional analysis, firmly grounded in Berne's pragmatic interest in science, were arguably overly invested in Adult-centered, rational theories and relatively disinterested in people's bodily and emotional aspects" (p. 309). I have found guidance from Berne-the-intuitive, whose words spoke to me between the lines written by Berne-the-scientist. Like Berne, I dared to follow my intuition and taught meditation, mindfulness, yoga, mantras, and the unity of the soma, psyche, and soul.

Eric Berne gave me permission to follow my heart and the courage to develop Tri-Energetics and Playshops. They became realities in part because of his encouragement. As a therapist working in an amazingly unpredictable world, I take his words to heart: "For the group therapist to be the master of his own destiny requires a commitment which misses no opportunity to learn, uses every legitimate method to win, and permits no rest until every loss has been thoroughly analyzed so that no mistake will ever be repeated" (Berne, 1976, p. 318). I remain grateful to Eric Berne and transactional analysts everywhere.

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