

# 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?

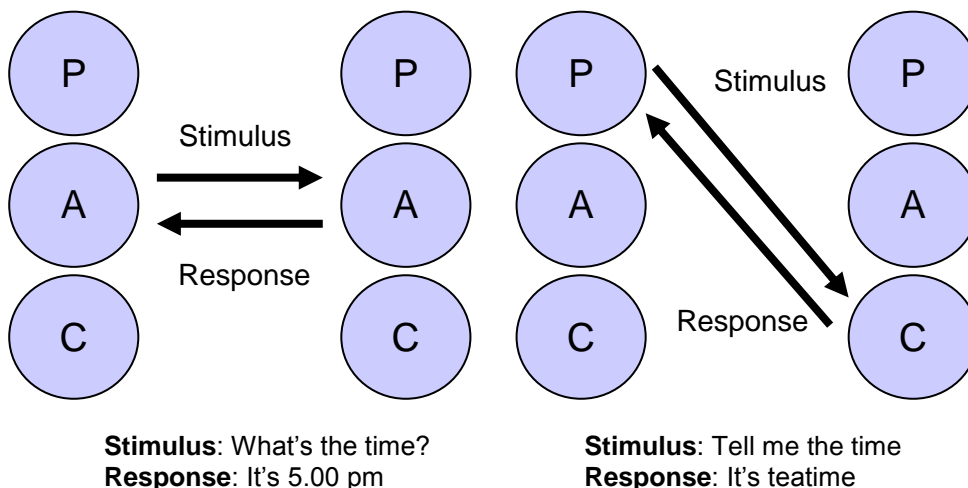
If you have, you have seen the three basic types of Transaction, which occur whenever two or more people communicate. The concept of 'Transactions' was pioneered by Eric Berne and describes the basic units of interaction between people. They are made up of words, tone and body language. Transactions 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 TRANSACTIONS

Berne's FIRST RULE of communications states that so long as Transactions remain Complimentary, the communication can continue indefinitely. The lines show parallel transactions and the Ego State addressed is the one that responds. You are 'in the groove' and the conversation flows. Use Adult to Adult to make decisions, by maintaining a clear focus on the task and the information to hand.

A Critical Parent transaction can HOOK you into an Adapted Child response, where for example you may feel anxious or sulky and respond accordingly. Although the transaction is Complimentary, the person on the receiving end may not feel OK about it.

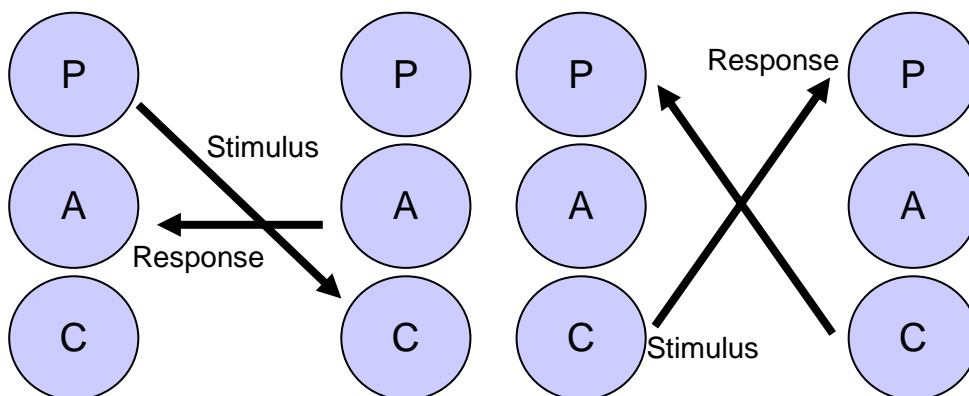


### 3. CROSSED TRANSACTIONS

The SECOND RULE of communications states that when a Transaction is crossed 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?

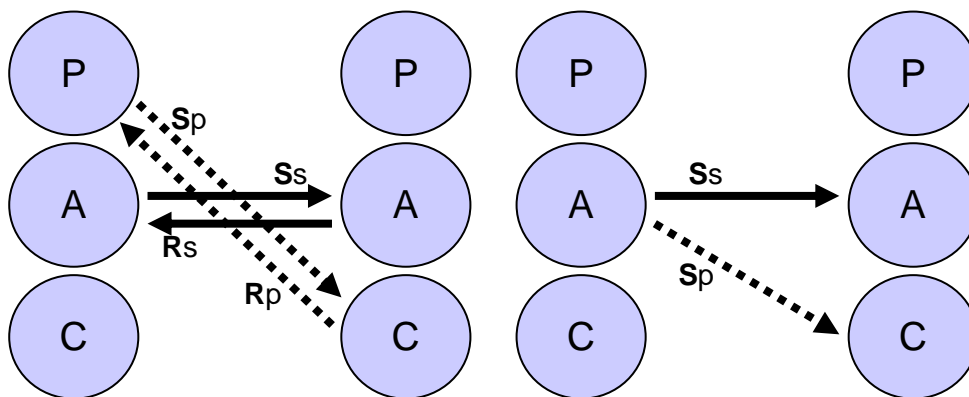


**Stimulus:** Do this for me!  
 (Looking for a 'Yes Dad' response)  
**Response:** I have no time!  
 (Objective fact)

**Stimulus:** Cook dinner for us please!  
 (Looking for some Nurturing Parent)  
**Response:** I'm too tired!  
 (Also looking for a Nurturing Parent)

#### 4. ULTERIOR TRANSACTIONS

The THIRD RULE of communications states that the behavioural outcome of an Ulterior Transaction is determined on a *psychological level*. Usually this takes the form of an apparently Adult – Adult conversation, which is actually being conducted as Parent – Child or Child – Parent at a psychological level. What you see is not what you get and people can feel not-OK after such transactions.



*What they are saying on a Social level*  
**Stimulus (Ss):** Would you do this for me?  
**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 saying on a Social level*  
**Stimulus (Ss):** It is top of the range Madam!

*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.