

Author: Brian A Martin MSc CTA MNCH MBACP

Counsellor, Couples Counsellor, Psychotherapist, Mediator and Life Skills Coach based in Hinckley, Leicestershire, UK. Registered with the United Kingdom Council for Psychotherapy [UKCP].

It was a eureka moment for me when I discovered Transactional Analysis [TA] in 2001. It struck me right away, as a brilliant way of understanding why we think, feel and behave as we do. I have written this book in easy read format for intelligent members of the general public so they can use TA ways of understanding themselves and each other to improve their life and relationships. I hope you will find TA as enlightening and helpful as I have.

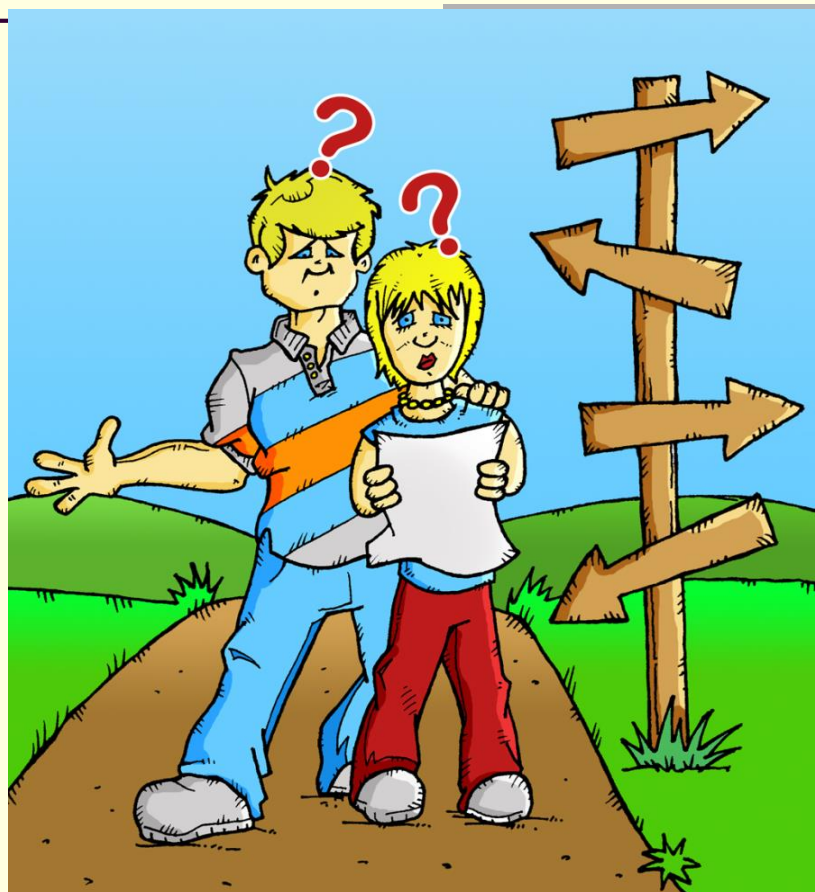


www.brianamartin.co.uk

The importance of self awareness and understanding others

It seems to me, that not having an understanding of the psychology of yourself and others, is being on life's journey without being equipped to overcome the obstacles , setbacks and crises we will inevitably meet in our relationships with others.

Transactional Analysis [TA] is a brilliant way of developing self- awareness and understanding of others. I found my training in TA [at The Berne Institute in Kegworth U.K.] life changing.



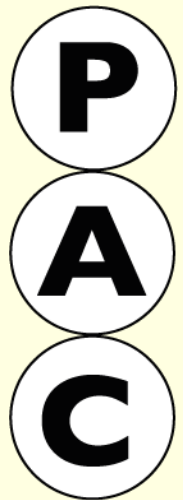
Illustrations by
Barry_Aldridge27@tiscali.co.uk

Personal development

There is much more to TA than I have been able to include in this book. I recommend further study of it if you are interested in personal development and in understanding why we think, feel and behave the way we do - even when it's very unhelpful!

If you would like to know more about TA, I suggest you visit 'The United Kingdom Association for Transactional Analysis [UKATA] at:
www.uktransactionalanalysis.co.uk

I can also recommend, as your next book on TA, 'TA Today' by Ian Stewart and Vann Joines



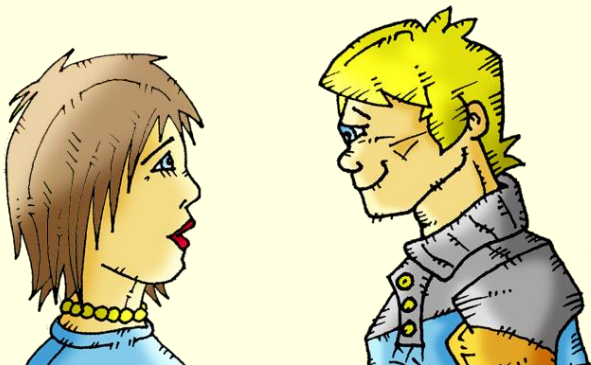
Part One: The TA way of understanding ourselves and others

- Transactional Analysis [TA] description. 6
- Ego States - our multiple 'personalities' 7 - 29
- Injunctions & Drivers; parental instructions still controlling us 14 -15
- I'm OK : You're OK - the philosophy at the heart of TA 31 -35
- Emotional Trading Stamps: how we store anger and hurt 36
- Rubber banding: how the past drives feelings in the present 37 - 38
- Psychological games we play 40 - 49
- Life Positions: our attitude to ourselves and others 49 - 53
- Contracting for change 54 - 55

Part Why we are not in the same world
Two as anyone else [page 56]

INDEX
Page 109

Three of the big ideas at the heart of Transactional Analysis [TA]



**I'M OK:
YOU'RE OK -**
The philosophy
at the heart of TA
[pages 31 - 35]



PARENT

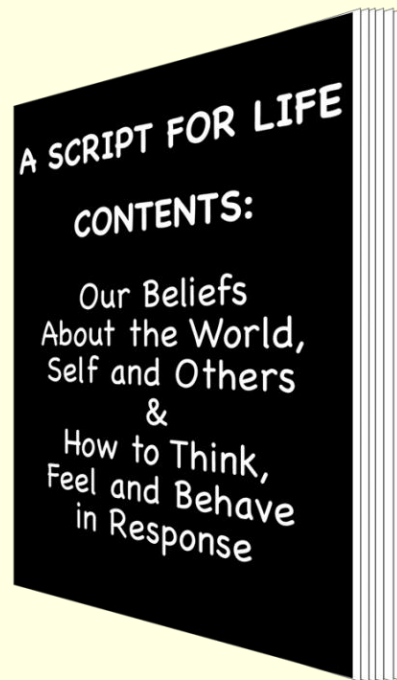


ADULT



CHILD

LIFE SCRIPT -
The script we've
constructed
to live our life by
[Page 66 - 70]



EGO STATES -
Our multiple 'personalities'
[Pages 7 -29]

What is 'Transactional Analysis'?

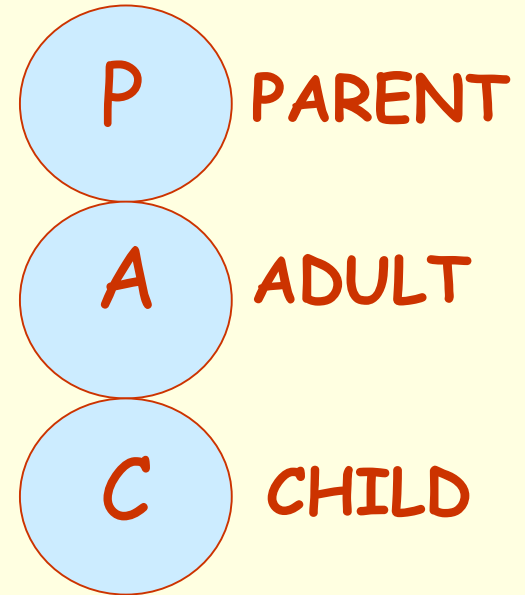
- A Transaction is simply a unit of communication. You say something to your partner who responds in some way, verbal or non-verbal. You have exchanged transactions. Or I nod and say 'Hello' and you nod and say 'Hello' back. We have exchanged transactions.
- Transactional Analysis is exactly that - an analysis of what is going on in the communication process between ourselves and others and internally between different parts of our own personality.
- Ego States A key part of Transactional Analysis, is the theory about different parts of our personality. This is a really helpful way of understanding what is going on between ourselves and others and inside our head between the different parts of our personality.

Ego States - our multiple 'personalities' - the brainchild of Eric Berne

- Eric Berne was a psychoanalyst and psychotherapist, the Canadian born son of a medical doctor. He practised in the U.S.A and died in 1970 at the age of 60, the author of nine books, including 'The Games People Play' which brought him international fame.
- Berne built on work by Paul Federn and Eduardo Weiss to develop a theory of personality which led to a new way of thinking about psychological processes and a whole new type of psychotherapy. He called his new approach 'Transactional Analysis', or TA for short.
- His theories have helped to change the lives of many people through the work of thousands of TA psychotherapists worldwide.

Ego States - our multiple 'personalities'

- Eric Berne, the mastermind behind Transactional Analysis [TA], identified different states of mind which he called Ego States.
- Berne described how we move rapidly and frequently between these different states of mind, these Ego States, depending on the situation we are in and who we are with.
- In many ways it's like having multiple personalities: which 'personality' we bring out depends on the situation we find ourselves in.

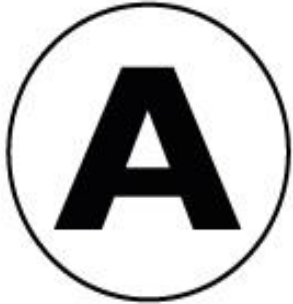


Berne identified three Ego States - Parent, Adult & Child

To learn more about Eric Berne read 'Eric Berne' by Ian Stewart.



P = Parent Ego State
Attitudes, thoughts and feelings 'swallowed whole' without question from parent figures



A = Adult Ego State

Behaviours, thoughts and feelings in direct response to here and now reality



C = Child Ego State
Behaviours, thoughts, and feelings replayed from childhood

We switch rapidly between being the Parent, Adult or Child in our head depending on the circumstances we find ourselves in at any moment

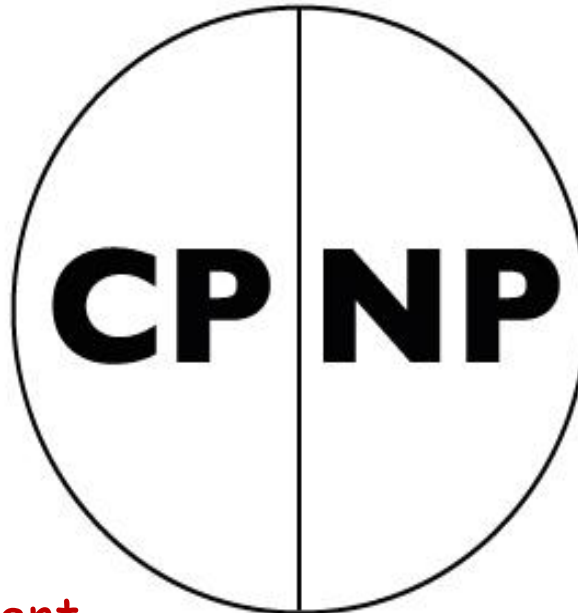
P
A
C

Two kinds of Parent Ego State



Critical/Controlling Parent

Always trying to impose on others their
'BIG BOOK OF RIGHT WAYS'.



Nurturing Parent

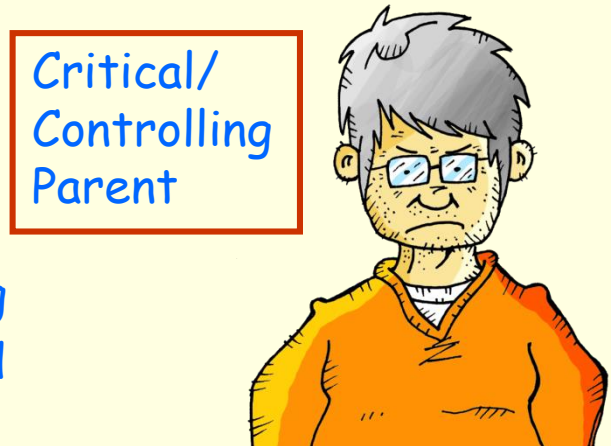
Caring, supportive,
forgiving.

Our Parent Ego State

- When we are in Parent Ego State we are replaying ways of thinking and behaving we have, out of awareness, copied from one or more parent influences - mum, dad, grandparents, teachers, etc.
- This way of thinking and behaving may, amongst many other things, include permission to be aggressive or permission to be prejudiced against some groups in society.
- When we are being critical and controlling we are in Critical Parent Ego State and handling the situation as one of our parent figures would have done.



Nurturing
Parent



Critical/
Controlling
Parent

In what situations do you become your mother or father?

Critical/ Controlling Parent won't work well in the long run



- The belief that children should obey parents without question, underpins the Critical/ Controlling Parent Ego State [Pages 12 - 15]
- The extreme consequences of over-controlling parenting is, on the one hand, breaking the child's spirit or, on the other hand, the child deciding not to be controlled and the onset of a struggle.
- The Critical/Controlling Parent may finish up with a model, well behaved, passive, child for the time being - but, will the passive child be able to get it's needs met in it's relationship with others? Will the child be able to 'stand up for itself' out there in the real world.
- And what will happen when the child becomes a teenager and discovers that parents can no longer supervise them most of the time?

Our Critical & Controlling Parent not only criticises and tries to control others.....

.....it also criticises and controls us!

- The Critical/Controlling Parent in our head demands that we think, feel and behave in certain ways. For example, we may **feel driven** to be perfect, try hard, be strong or please others.
- We may be **forbidden** by the Parent in our head to have fun, show off, think positive thoughts about ourselves, get our needs met, appear weak or vulnerable or let our feelings show.
- We may also be carrying Parent **permission** to be angry and aggressive in some situations or, conversely, be forbidden to show anger.
- What **prejudices** we have are more likely to be coming from our Parent Ego State than from personal experience in life.



How our parents of childhood days still control us

- In Transactional Analysis [TA] the instructions in our programming about what to do and what not to do are called 'DRIVERS' and 'INJUNCTIONS'.
- 'DRIVERS' may include instructions to Be Perfect, Try Hard, Be Strong and Please Others.
- When we disobey the Parent in our head and fail to Be Perfect, Try Hard, Be Strong or Please Others, we feel very anxious or guilty - just like a fearful disobedient child would feel.



The Child in Sam's grown up head who must still obey her parents instructions.

We also carry parental instructions from childhood about what we must not do

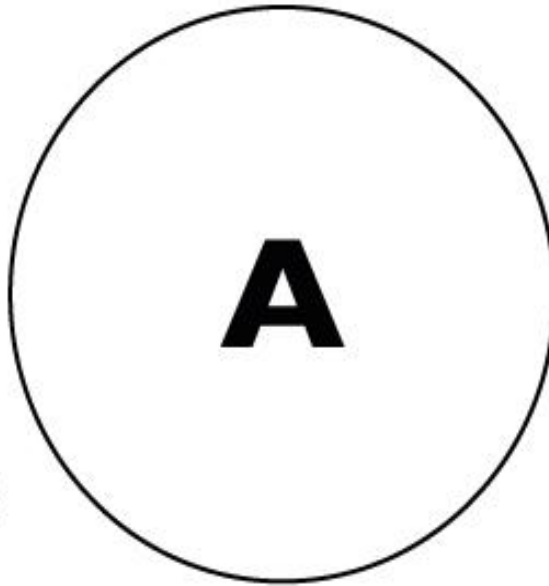
- The instructions in our programming about what we must not do are called 'INJUNCTIONS'.
- Our 'INJUNCTIONS' may forbid us to have fun, show off, think positive thoughts about ourselves, get our needs met, allow ourselves to accept help or express our feelings.
- Should we dare to disobey any of our 'INJUNCTIONS' we feel anxious.

Normally, we just do as we are told by the Parent in our head - anything rather than the acute anxiety which follows disobeying.



If the Parent in your head is making life difficult you should consider TA Psychotherapy

P
A
C



Adult Ego State

- Behaviours, thoughts and feelings in direct response to here and now reality.
- Factual, analytical, open-minded, reality-based, common sense approach.
- The Adult Ego State contains our accumulated wisdom based on our life experience and learning.

There are several kinds of Parent and Child Ego States but there is only one Adult Ego State.

Our Adult Ego State

- When we are in Adult Ego State we are fully present in the 'here and now', responding appropriately to the situation in the present.
- **For Example:** When we use the parenting skills we have learned from reading and personal experience, rather than those we have copied from our parents, we are in **Adult Ego State**.
- When we use parenting methods which we copied and swallowed whole from our parents without thinking about it, we are in **Parent Ego State**.



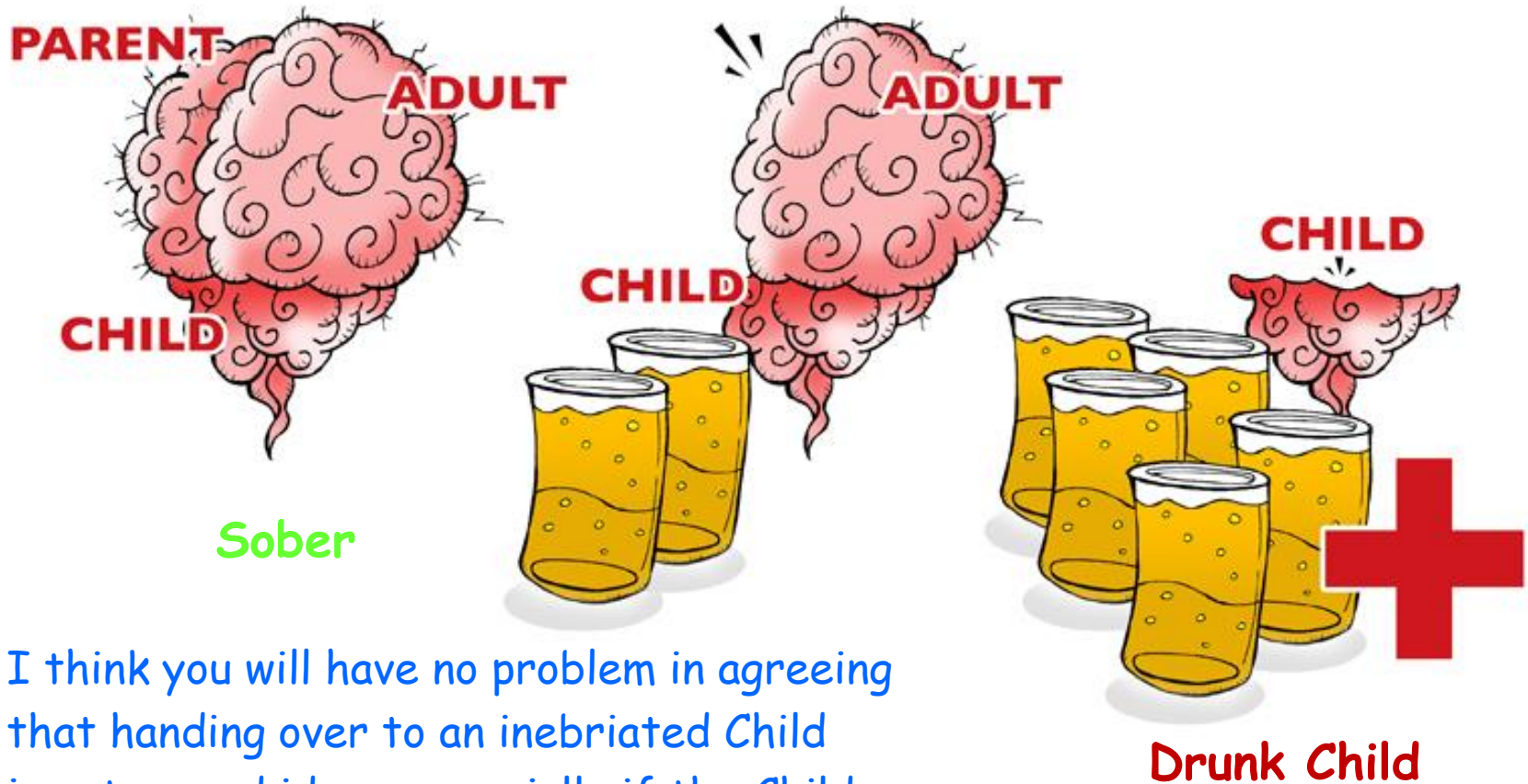
Alcohol switches off the Adult Ego State

- Excess alcohol switches off the Adult Ego State [page 16 - 19 & 28 - 29]
- Excess alcohol can often let loose a hurt and angry Child [pages 20 - 25] or destructive Critical Parent [pages 10 - 15].
- The first couple of drinks may switch off the Critical and Controlling Parent in your head, bringing temporary freedom from those guilt-inducing shoulds and shouldn'ts, musts and mustn'ts and other critical and controlling messages - what joy!

However....



.....if you drink too much you may switch off your Adult Ego State and be left with a drunken Child or Critical Parent in charge of your behaviour



I think you will have no problem in agreeing that handing over to an inebriated Child is not a good idea - especially if the Child has a collection of Anger Stamps [Page 36]

P
A
C

Different Child Ego States



FC = Free Child

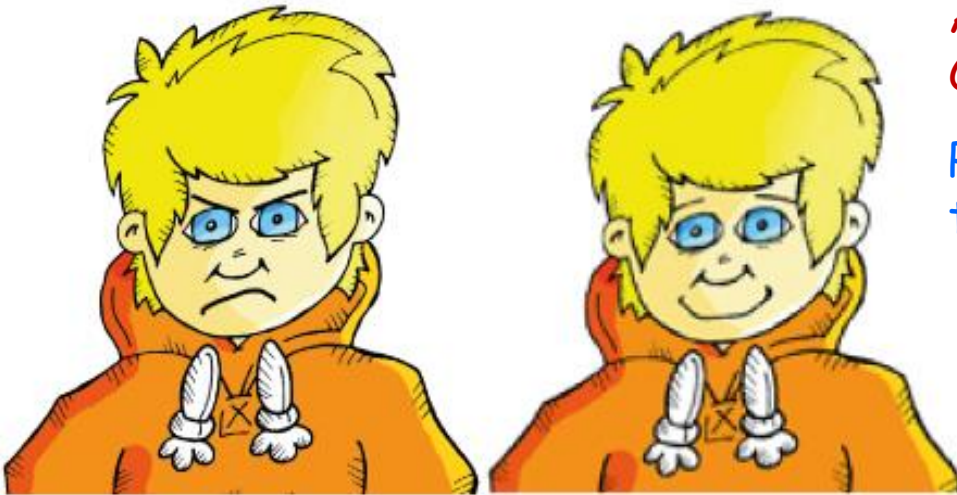
Fun loving,
spontaneous,
uninhibited

RC = Rebellious Child

Defiant, complaining,
obstructive

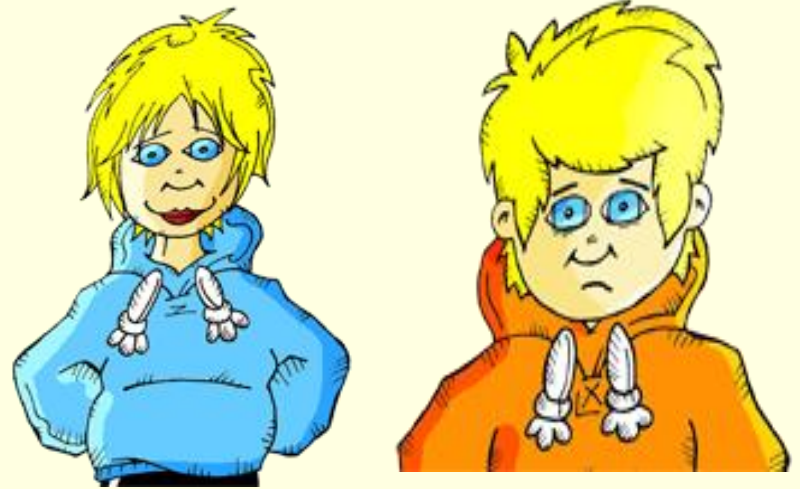
**AC = Adapted
Child**

Passive, tries
to please



Our Child Ego State

- We are in Child Ego State when we are thinking, feeling, and behaving as we would have done in childhood.
- Child Ego State is not the same as being 'childish'. When we are in Child Ego State we have regressed temporarily to being the child we used to be.
- Child Ego State includes our magical and irrational thoughts and feelings.



In whose company, and/or when, do you become a child again?

Example: If in the presence of an authority figure we feel inadequate or scared although there is no need, we are in Child Ego State. We are responding to that authority figure as we did to a parent, bullying teacher or stern grandfather. Also, when we have phobic level fears we have regressed temporarily to childhood and are responding like the child we were.



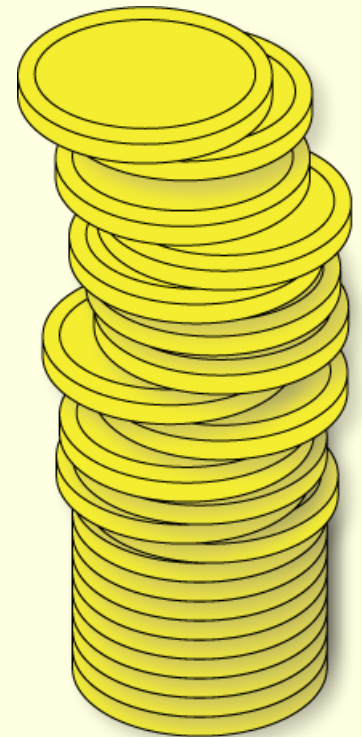
Children have Ego States too!



- As new born babies we have only one ego state - Child. At this point we are totally selfish little human animals concerned only with survival, being fed and being kept comfortable and safe.
- As we grow, the content of our Child Ego State develops and we learn how to be to get the right results from [manipulate] the adults around us, principally mum and dad. In healthy development we start to develop empathy skills and get what we want by pleasing others.
- We also start to learn practical stuff, like how to talk, read, write add up and solve puzzles. This is our emerging Adult Ego State.
- We start to copy parental behaviours, as can be seen when 4 year old 'big' sister plays with her younger brother and uses the same words and gestures which mum uses. This is the seedling Parent Ego State.

'Where did we go wrong?'

- Parents coming for help with the problem behaviour of their children often come with this nagging question, 'Where did we go wrong?'
- Eric Berne, the originator of TA, compared the development process of children to a pile of pennies. One out of line penny, one event, can skew the whole pile.
- Problem is, there are so many factors which can start things going wrong, not least that the child has had to interpret everything that happened, had to make sense of things and has constructed a private version of the truth about their childhood.
- The reality they experience and remember and which has shaped them, may bear little resemblance to what was intended by the parents, or how they remember it.



How interpretation can skew the development process

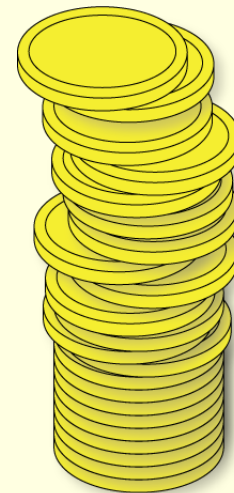
A small example; the child often complains of feeling ill. Mum thinks, 'she is just trying to get out of going to school' and takes her to school despite her protests.

How will the child interpret that?

If she decides 'Mummy doesn't really love me or she wouldn't send me to school when I am feeling ill', how will that 'Mummy doesn't really love me' decision affect her development?

She may then start to unconsciously filter [pages 74 - 80] all kinds of future events for further proof that she is not loved, may even develop an 'I am not loveable' filter and need therapy at some point

Don't worry how your relationship with your child got to where it is - just focus on getting it as right as you can now.



Same parents - different outcome

Even if two people had exactly the same experience of life [impossible] their programming would not be the same because they have had to interpret the meaning of their experience.

A story of twins: In psychotherapy circles, a story is often told of the mentally ill mother of twin boys. One day she told the children, 'Don't look down on me because of my illness - both of you will finish up in a psychiatric hospital'.

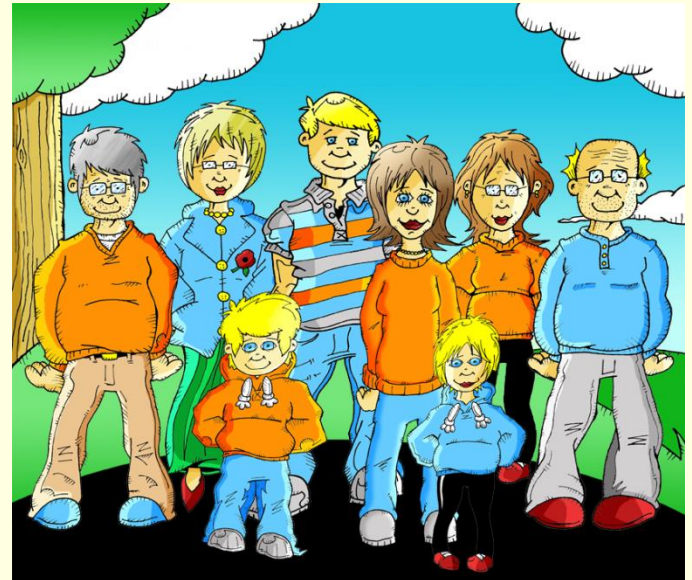
She was proved right, both boys did finish up in a psychiatric hospital. One as a patient, the other as a consultant psychiatrist!

This is a good example of how, even twins brought up together develop their own unique personality and programming.

Every conversation is a group discussion!

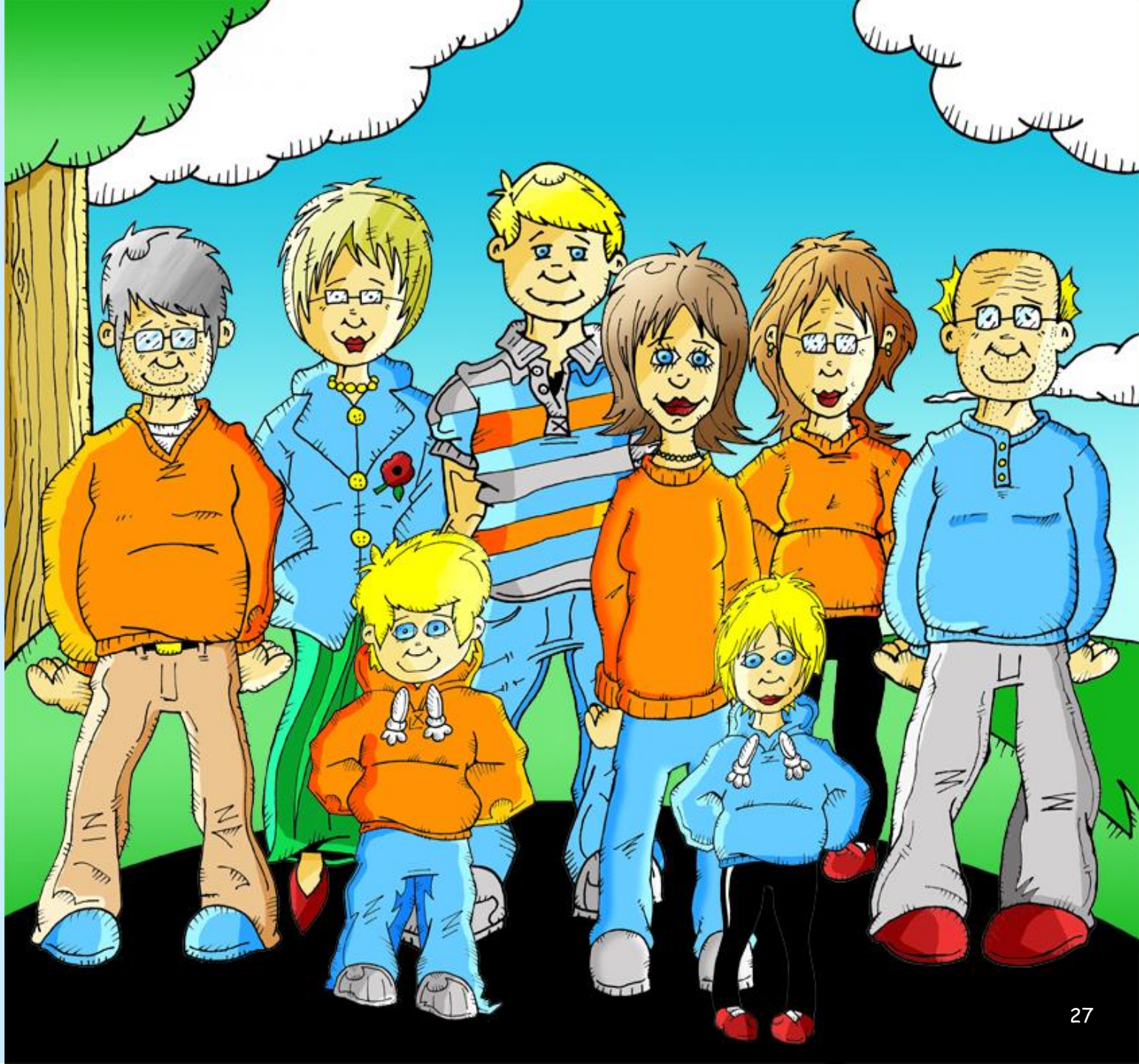
- Because we have multiple Ego States, when two people are in conversation, it's in some ways like a group discussion.
- The Parent Ego State of each person is around, as are the Child Ego State and Adult Ego State of both. As the two grown-ups attempt to engage in Adult discussion, their Child and Parent Ego States keep switching in and out, bringing in ways of thinking, feeling and behaving from the past.
- No wonder it's hard to have a simple discussion without things going wrong!

When Sam and Dan talk, their Parent and Child Ego States keep disrupting their attempts to stay in Adult.



Every
Conversation
is like having
a group
discussion!

When Sam &
Dan talk,
their Parent
and Child
Ego States
keep butting
in, frustrating
their attempts
to have a
conversation
in Adult.



The impact of different Ego States on our behaviour and our relationships

- I think you will easily agree how unhelpful it is when you or your partner behave like the child you used to be, or criticise and try to be controlling, in the way your mother or father might have done.
- It's far more helpful to be able to behave in rational, logical, common sense [Adult] ways which are appropriate to 'here and now' reality, rather than replaying Child or Parent behaviours from the past.
- Only when we are in Adult Ego State are we fully present in the 'here and now'. By being able to notice when we are in Child or Parent Ego State we can choose to switch into Adult Ego State and handle situations in more appropriate ways.

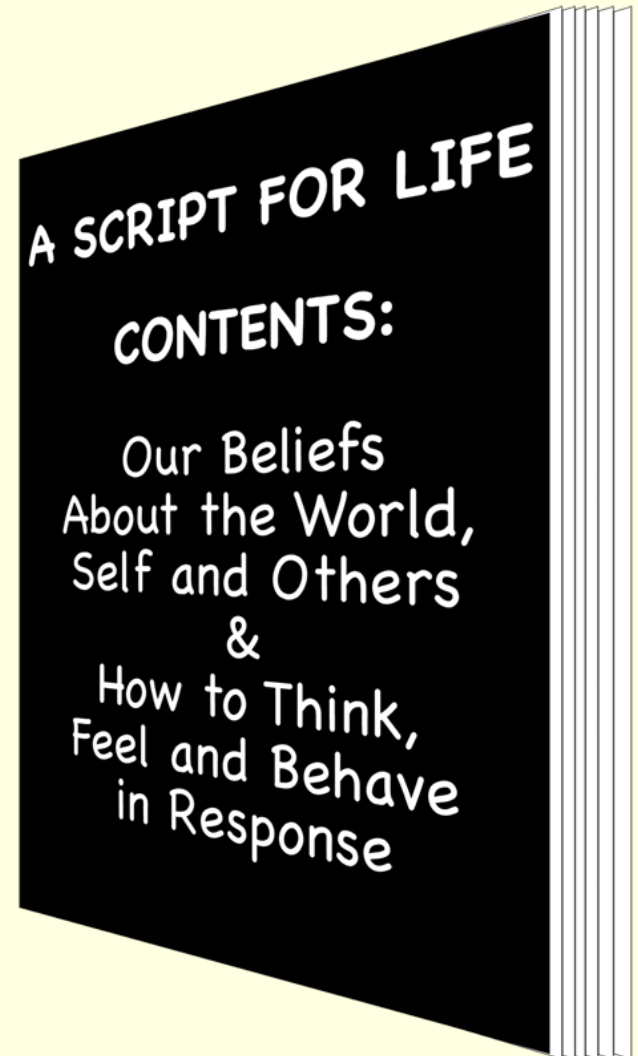
Using Ego State awareness

- The key is to learn to notice when you have moved out of rational, 'sensible' Adult and slipped into Parent or Child.
- Responses you make from your Parent or Child Ego States are much less likely to be appropriate to what is going on in the 'here and now' than those from your Adult Ego State.



The Life Script we have constructed in response to our 'Map of the World'

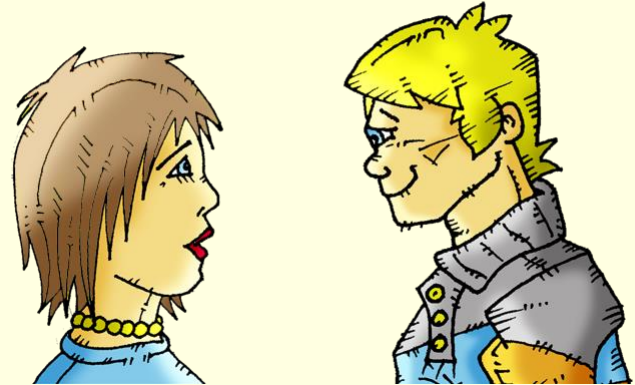
- Our Life Script is our programme of how to think, feel and behave when travelling on our journey through life.
- It was originally constructed, mainly unconsciously, in childhood, based on our experience of life.
- As a result of our Life Script, we tend to endlessly replay old patterns of thinking, feeling and behaving in specific situations.
- That's why personal change is so difficult: in trying to change the way we think, feel and behave we are trying to change our programming! [Pages 58 - 59]



'I'm OK, You're OK'

The basic philosophical position of TA

- This does not mean accepting 'not OK' behaviour, but it does mean valuing and accepting yourself and other people despite behaviour.
- It also means valuing and accepting ourselves, despite our flaws.
- You may not be able to fully accept this philosophy at the moment, but it's worth asking yourself whether someone whose behaviour you feel upset by is at heart an OK person who did something/s not OK, or a 'bad', 'not OK', person.
- If you can accept someone as an OK person who did some things not OK [rather than a 'bad' person] you will be able to handle things better .



'You are an OK person even though your behaviour is sometimes not OK'

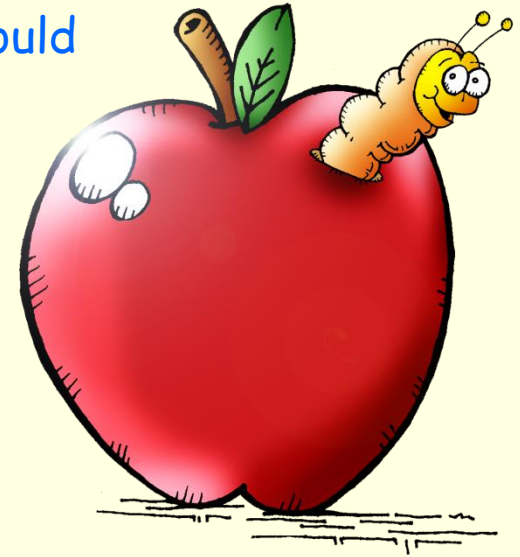
When we feel upset with people, we often forget temporarily that, although they have done things we are upset about, they are still OK people.



When you think about others whose behaviour you feel upset by, have you, without realising it, slipped into thinking of them as 'bad', rather than 'OK, at heart despite what they did'?

Bad apple or good apple with a blemish?

- Whenever I was working with a new group at the local college where I was visiting lecturer I used to take an apple into a session. The apple was always good - but not perfect - I deliberately chose an apple with a bruise or skin blemish. Without explanation, I would pass the apple round and ask each of the students to inspect it.
- When the apple eventually came back to me I would ask the students, 'What do you think of the apple?' They would have no trouble in agreeing it was a nice apple. I would then throw the apple into the litter bin without comment.



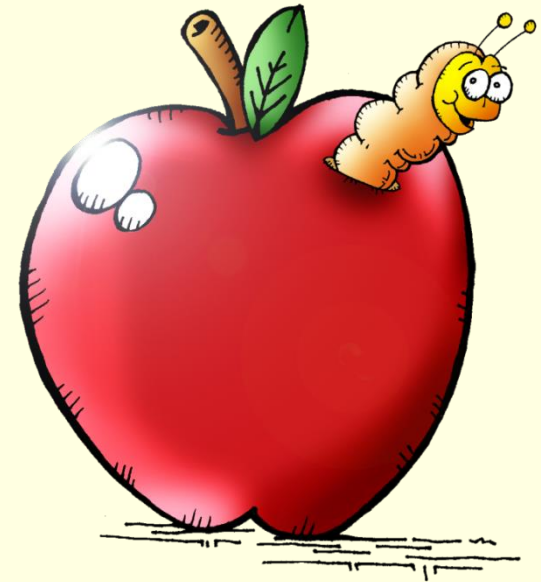
Not perfect - but good enough?

Eventually somebody would ask 'Why have you thrown it away - it's a good apple'. My reply? 'It's obviously no good, it's not perfect'.

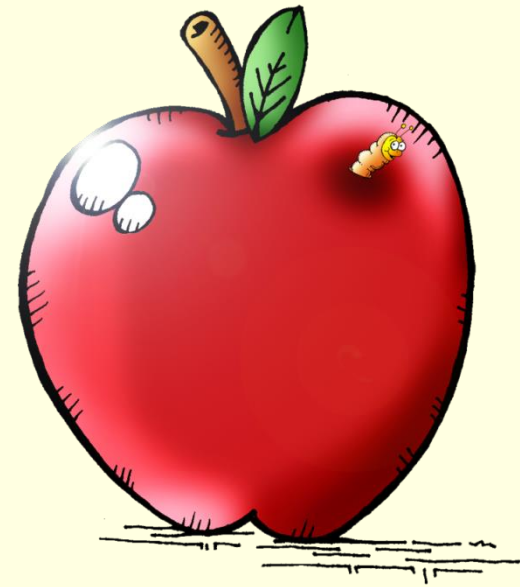
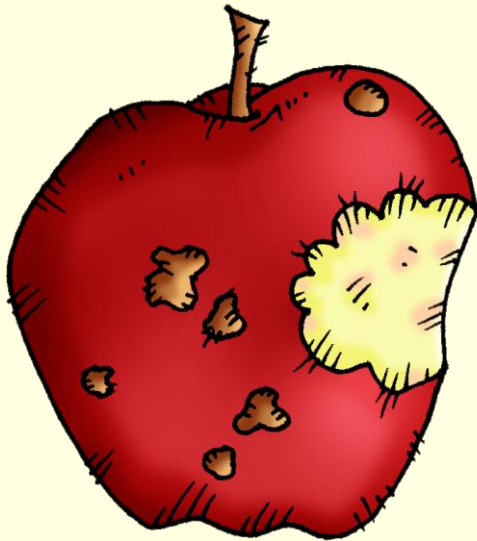
That was my way of demonstrating what we do with people too - we reject them because they are flawed [like us!].

People with low self-esteem do it all the time - reject themselves because of their flaws!

The person you feel upset by is imperfect, like you and me. The question is 'Is he/she an OK person or not?'



Good apple: bad behaviour? Or a bad apple?



If you can accept someone as an OK person who did something not OK [rather than a 'bad' person] you will be able to handle things better.

Emotional trading stamps

How we store anger and hurt

- When we store anger and hurt it's like collecting emotional trading stamps and cashing them in with 'over the top' reactions.
- Unresolved anger and hurt is a major factor in conflict and need to be released in ways that don't harm yourself or anyone else.
- How to do this is described in 'The Anger Management Programme'



www.angermangementprogramme.co.uk

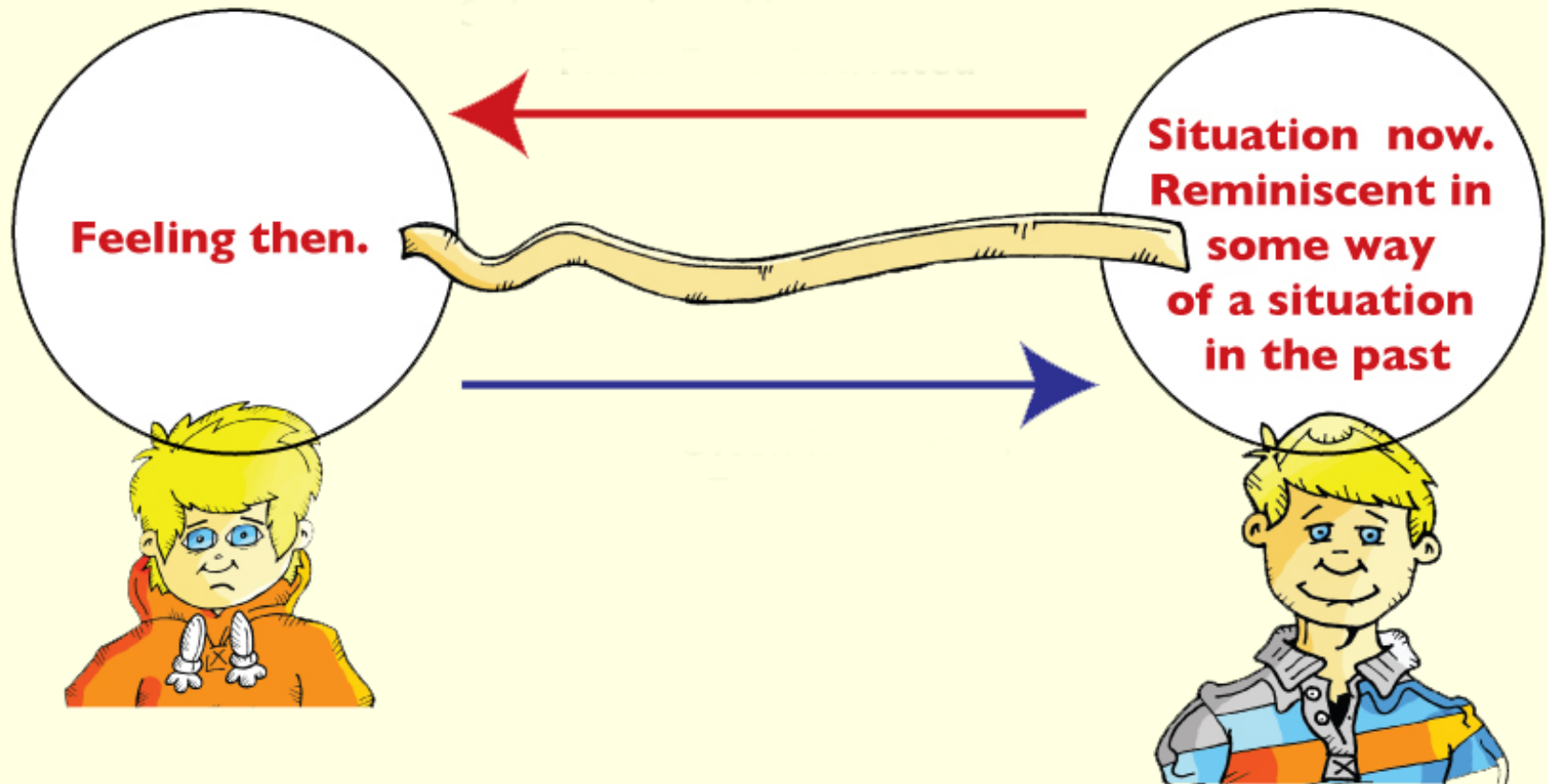
Rubber banding

How the past drives feelings in the present

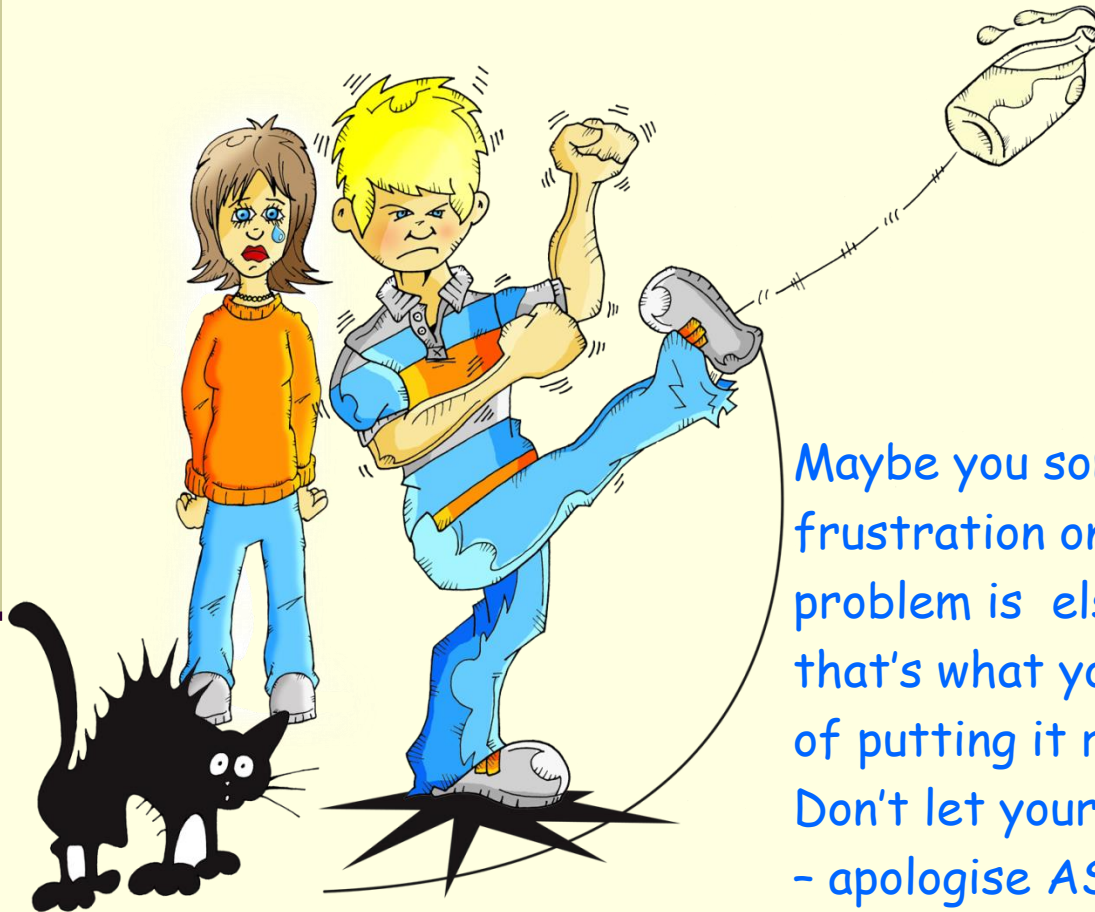
- Rubber Banding is a subconscious automatic process which causes us to re-experience feelings of hurt anger and other feelings from the past.
- When anything happening to us in the here and now reminds us, at a conscious or subconscious level, of something in the past, we get the same feeling now that we got then.
- If we are still angry or hurt about something in the past and anything in the present reminds us of it, we re-experience the 'there and then' emotion.
- We can find ourselves feeling angry, sad, afraid or guilty - sometimes without a clue why. Sometimes the Rubber Band is connected to 'forgotten' childhood experiences.



The rubber band which pulls past feelings into the present



Displacement - or 'kicking the cat', is when we take it out on the wrong person

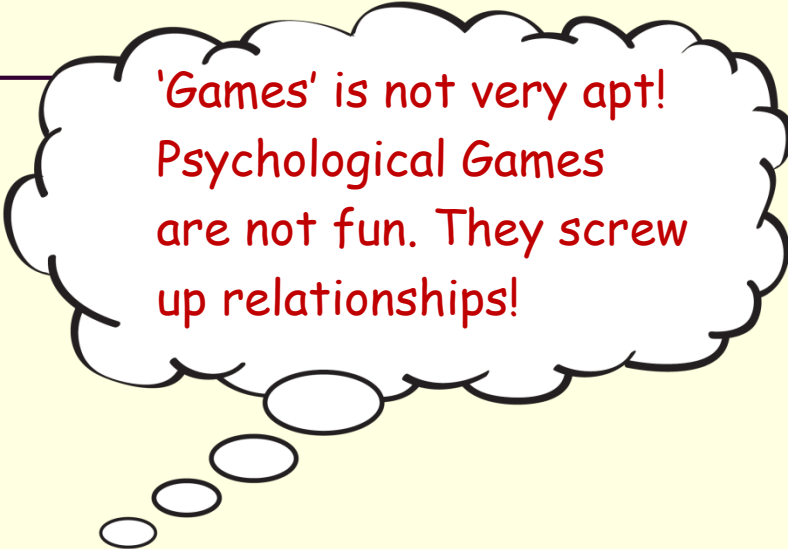


When we are angry or frustrated we may 'take it out' on people around us. Anger and frustration must be released, but not on the wrong person.

Maybe you sometimes take out your frustration on your partner when the real problem is elsewhere!? When you realise that's what you have done, find some way of putting it right as soon as possible. Don't let your pride stand in the way - apologise ASAP.

Psychological games we play

- Eric Berne, the founder of Transactional Analysis, initially achieved international recognition with his book 'The Games People Play'.
- He drew attention to the ways in which we attempt to manipulate each other. He described the 'invitations' we habitually issue when we try to get another person to 'play' and the steps we follow when 'playing'.

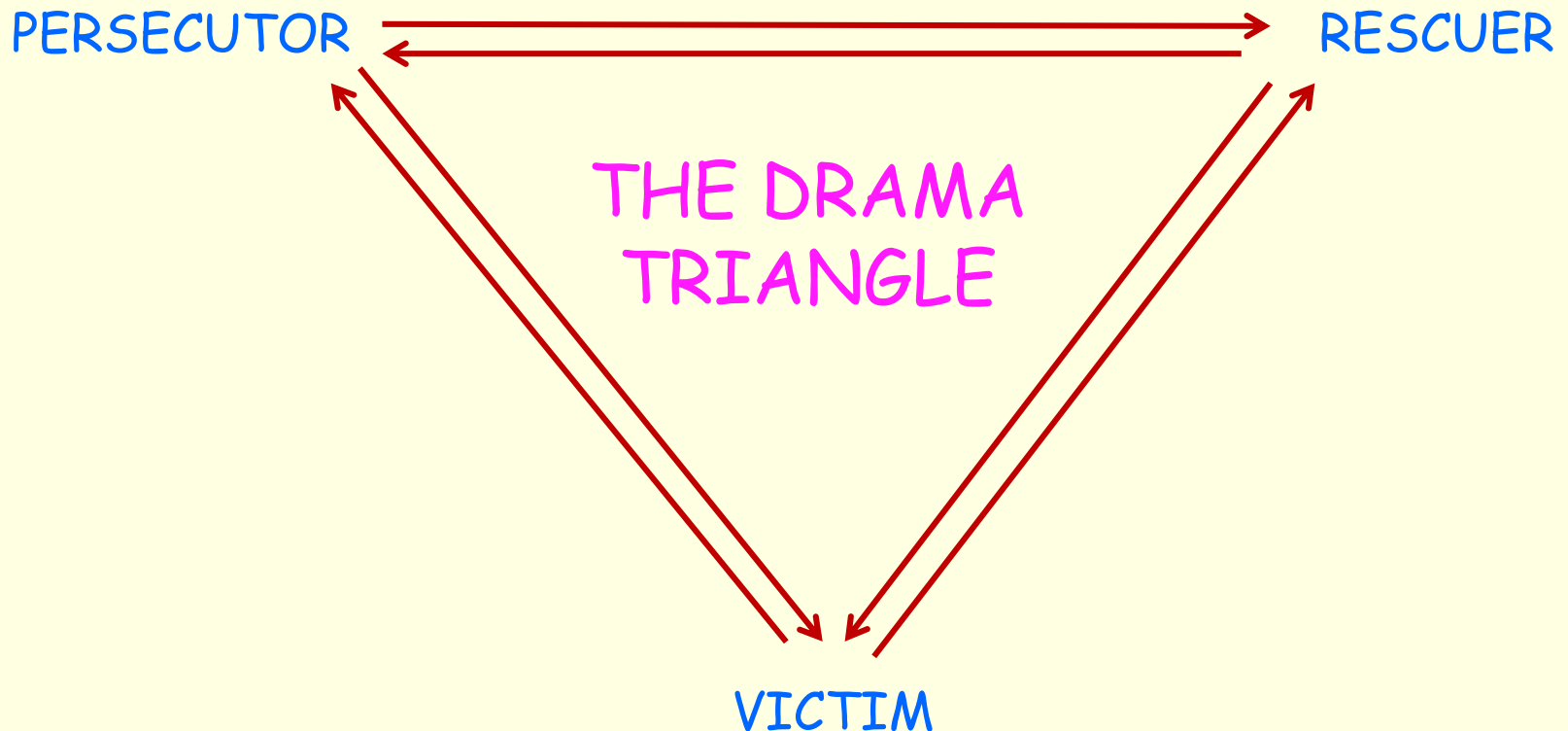


'Games' is not very apt!
Psychological Games
are not fun. They screw
up relationships!

Main games played by couples are:
Uproar, Archaeology, Payback, and
'You should know what I want'
[pages 40 - 49].

Games are usually played out of awareness and the parties involved do not realise they are game playing. Bringing a game into awareness helps stop it.

When we play psychological games we move around these positions



The positions on the Drama Triangle are interactive as a game unfolds

One party may see themselves as a Victim resulting from the behaviour of the other party. They retaliate by moving from Victim to Persecutor and punishing the Persecutor with passive aggressive or openly aggressive behaviour.

The other party may initially respond by taking up the Victim position, but then moves into Persecutor and counter-attacks.

From then on, until they get fed up of fighting, the parties alternate between the Victim and Persecutor positions in a psychological game of attacks and counter-attacks.

This is why relationship problems are never all the fault of one party or the other. Somebody caused the first hurt but, from then on, both parties play their part.

When the 'game' is over.....

'Games' is not really a good word because the games are anything but fun. The most serious 'games' can end up in court, hospital or the morgue.



We've done it again!

Why do we keep doing that?

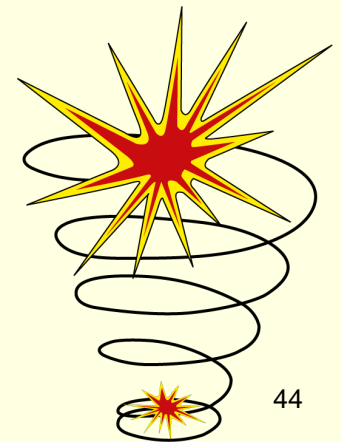
Psychological Games do not have positive outcomes and the players both feel bad when the game is over. In fact, that's how to tell you have been in a game with your partner, when both of you share a familiar bad feeling afterwards.



Couples favourite games.....

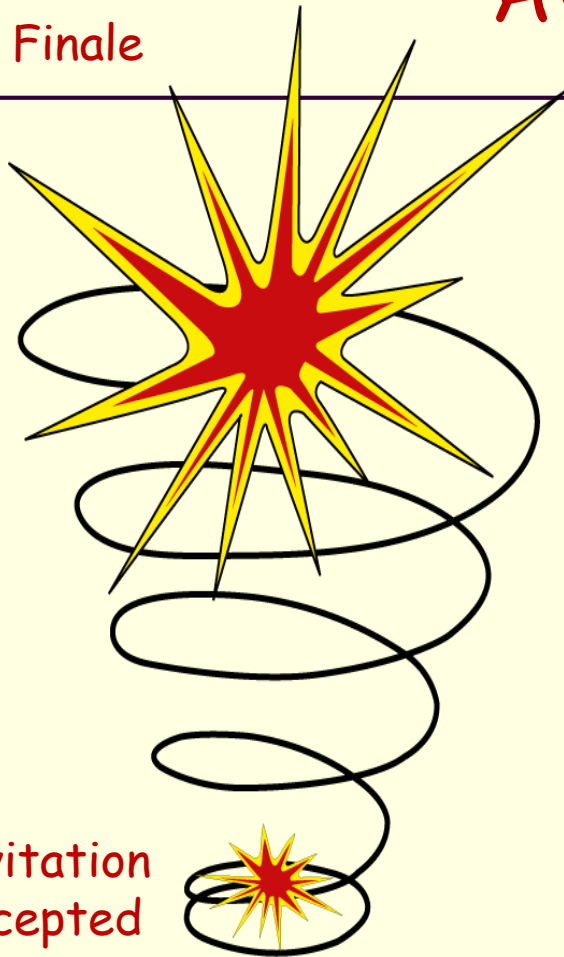
A favourite psychological game amongst couples is 'Uproar'.

1. Partner A says something likely to get an angry or hurt response from Partner B.
2. Partner B may initially decline the invitation by not responding in a hurt or aggressive way.
3. Partner A may then re-issue the invitation or issue another one.
4. This time, Partner B may take exception and respond accordingly.
5. Partner A now feels hurt or angry at the response and raises the stakes with a supplementary invitation.
6. **Game on! The anger spiral is triggered!**



Avoiding 'Uproar'

Finale



Invitation
Accepted

- The key to avoiding Uproar is to spot the invitation and refuse to accept it - not play. Instead, respond appropriately from Adult, or let it go.
- If you and your partner play Uproar, it's helpful to discuss the Uproar process and the invitations which you both use when you invite a game.
- Maybe you could **agree a coded message** which means 'let's not play'. How about 'sausages' or 'rumplestiltskin' or 'not now'?

Ban these uproar invitation words!

- You started it....No I didn't, you did!
- It's your fault - if you hadn't.....
- You need talk - how about when.....
- You always....you never.....
- Yes you did..... no I didn't!
- You saidno I didn't
- My life's harder than yours no it isn't
- The trouble with you is...

There are special words too - words which you have used to hurt each other in the past. It would be helpful to make a list of special hurtful words you agree to avoid using in future.



These expressions keep dialogue in a blaming loop which blocks constructive communication.

A few other games played by couples

NIGYSOB 'Now I've got you, you son of a bitch' Partner 'A' lets Partner 'B' dig themselves into a deeper and deeper hole, before launching a devastating attack, against which Partner 'B' has no defence.

Payback A passive aggressive game which is all about revenge, about getting even. It's a retaliation game which is often played over a long period - months or years.

'You should know what I want[without me saying]. A passive aggressive game where the lead player deliberately does not say what they want and gets upset when they don't get it.

'Yes, but.....' Probably the most played passive aggressive game. Whatever you suggest is not right. Remember, passive aggressive types don't know what they want, but they do know it's not what you want [pages 92 - 95].

Archaeology. This is constantly 'digging up the past', with both parties obsessively accusing the other of having done things in the past which are causing the present problems in the relationship.

The Archaeology Game - played often by couples in conflict



Life position and games

- The games we play derive from our outlook on the world, our feelings towards the other people involved, how we feel about ourselves and the situation at the time.
- Our feelings vary a lot from time to time and situation to situation, but we have a default way of feeling about ourselves and others to which we always return [unless we take steps to change it].
- In Transactional Analysis [TA] theory the main default feeling positions are called **life positions**.
- Eric Berne identified four life positions **which we all experience from time to time**, but one of which is likely to be our normal default position, the one we usually find ourselves feeling.

Berne identified four main life positions

- I'm OK, you're OK [I+U+]
- I'm OK, you're not OK [I+U-]
- I'm not OK, you're OK [I-U+]
- I'm not Ok, you're not OK [I-U-]

The aim of TA therapy and couples counselling is to help people adjust their attitude to themselves and others and move towards the emotionally healthy 'I'm OK, You're OK' position in their relationships.

The 'I'm OK' life positions

- I'm OK, you're OK [I+U+]

Berne identified this as the healthy position enabling people to relate successfully and to form healthy relationships. This position is relatively free of the more damaging games. It's achievement is the aim of TA therapy.

- I'm OK, you're not OK [I+U-]

People in this life position tend to be critical and mistrustful of others. Berne identified it as a position with paranoid tendency. People in conflict tend to be in this position when they first come to see me. In this position they alternate between the Persecutor and Victim roles on the Drama Triangle and are often in Critical Parent Ego State.

The 'I'm not OK' life positions

- **I'm not OK, you're OK [I-U+]**

People in this position tend to look to other for approval, undervalue themselves and are subject to depression.

They often come to therapy suffering low self -esteem and feelings of under achievement. In relationship they tend to be passive and build up a collection of anger stamps which, can and does, lead to relationship breakdown. [Page 36]

- **I'm not Ok, you're not OK [I-U-]**

People in this position are in a despairing position, unhappy with themselves, disillusioned with life, blaming themselves for being a failure and with negative feelings about others.

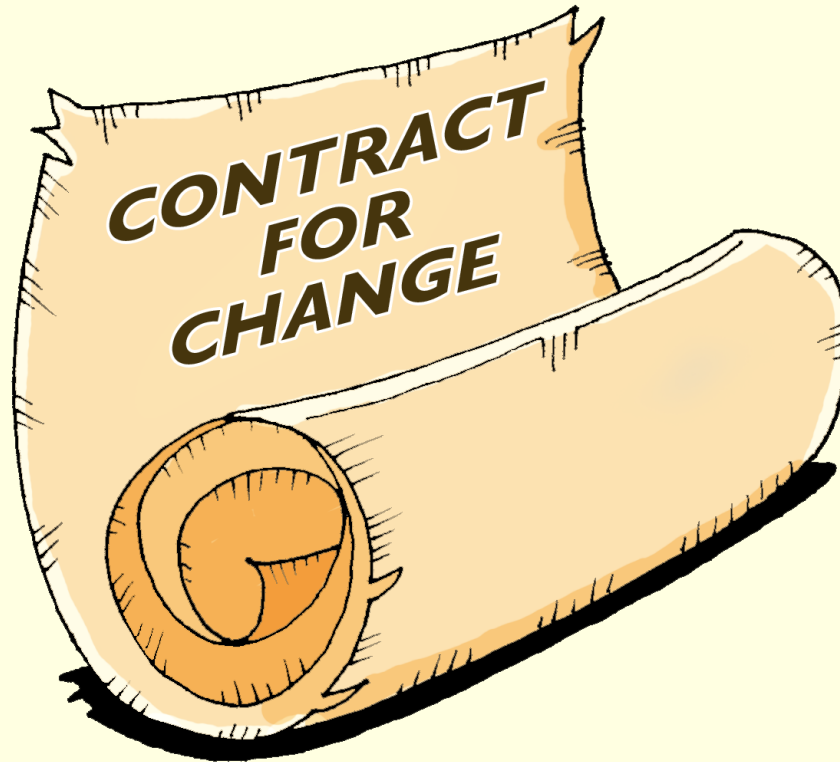
Ernst diagrammed Berne's ideas on life position.

He called his diagram 'The OK Corral'.

This diagram draws on the work of both Berne and Ernst.

<p>I- U+</p> <p>'I'm not OK: others are'. This is the low self confidence and low self esteem position. Prone to depression</p>	<p>I+ U+</p> <p>'I feel OK about me and about others too'. This is the healthy relationship position</p>
<p>I- U-</p> <p>'I'm don't feel OK about me or others'. Disillusioned with life. Feeling stuck in a hopeless position.</p>	<p>I+ U-</p> <p>'I feel OK about me but not about others'. Critical and mistrustful: prone to paranoia. Plays blaming/persecutor games.</p>

Next: No contract for change - no change!



If you want someone to change it's vital to first get their commitment to change, without which their attempts to change will fail.

And watch out for that word 'try' - it's leaving the door open to failure right at the start!



Contracting for change - essential for personal change

- In life we often want people to change something about the way they are - mainly parents, partner or children, but however hard we try to get them to change they don't! The problem is we start off on the wrong foot! When did your partner, mother, father, son or daughter agree they wanted your help in changing the way they are?

No contract for change - no change!

- Eric Berne said 'If there is no outcome contract [goals for treatment] you are not doing TA'. I explain to my clients that the outcome contract enables us to be clear what changes they want me to help them make. Often the client's ideas are initially unrealistic given the scale of desired change and the investment of time and money they are prepared to commit. We negotiate realistic outcomes before proceeding.
- In working with clients, I pursue clarity about the change to be made and commitment to it, as the first step in the change process.

Part Two

The unique
personal world
we have
constructed



Part Two: Why we are not in the same world as anyone else

- The programme in our brain that drives the way we are 58 - 59
- Our different 'realities' 60 - 70
- The Life Script which controls us. 30 66 - 70
- Our personal 'Big Book of Right Ways' 67
- Our personal 'Map of the world' 66 - 70
- Why conflict at times is inevitable 71 - 72
- How we unconsciously filter and distort things 74 - 80
- Psychological differences between male and female 81
- Personality & personality clash 82 - 95
- Hot and cold types of anger 96 - 98
- Empathy - key to overcoming difference 99 - 101
- Passivity - often at the root of relationship breakdown 102 - 106
- Further reading options 107 - 109

INDEX
Page 109

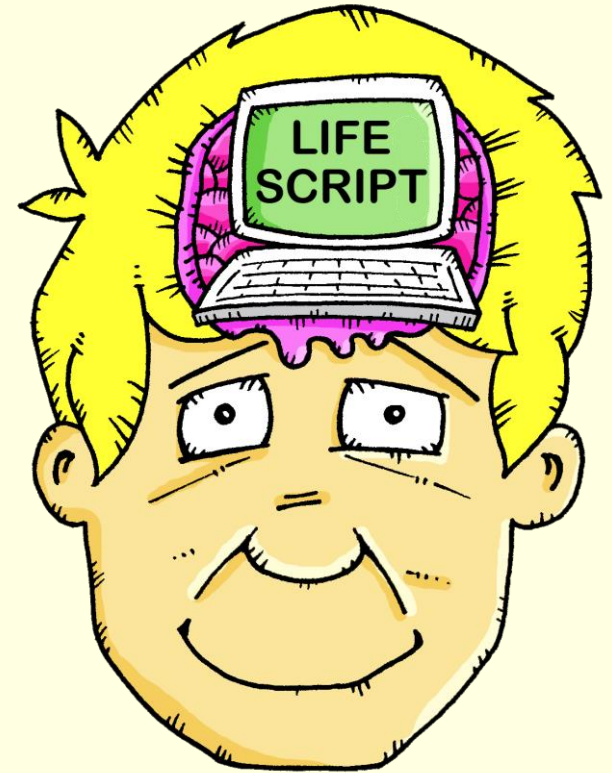
How we developed the programme which drives the way we are

- I guess you are already aware that the human brain is, in some respects, a super computer between our ears. Unlike computers, we also have feelings and emotions, experience pain and pleasure and can be spontaneous when we choose to let ourselves be.
- Our default programme, the programme of ways to think, feel and behave, that we naturally fall back on, has been developed from characteristics inherited from our parents and our experience of the world around us since the moment of birth [and maybe in womb too!].
- Unlike a computer, our programme gets modified by life's painful and pleasurable experiences. We can also, within limits, re-programme ourselves , learn new ways of thinking, feeling and behaving, by personal development work and therapy.

Four major control files held in the computer between our ears

Four major parts of our early life programming covered in this book are:

1. Characteristics copied from our parents [Parent Ego State [pages 10 - 15].
2. Ways of thinking, feeling and behaving which are a replay of our childhood selves [Child Ego State [pages 20 - 25].
3. Our personal 'Map of the World' [pages 66 - 70] which contains our beliefs about what is so and not so, real and not real, fact and fiction.
4. A 'Life Script' [pages 30 & 66 - 70] which is our response to our 'Map of the World' and is captured in a personal 'Book of Right Ways' [page 67] to think, feel and behave.



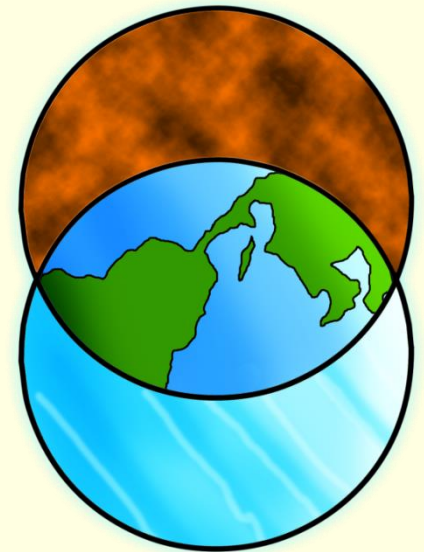
Misunderstanding, disagreement and conflict at times is inevitable.....

-because, in some ways, you and your partner are not on the same planet as each other or anyone else.
- Sam and Dan live in different worlds with some different beliefs about what's true or not true, what's fact or fiction, what's OK or not OK.
- On top of this, they view events and behaviour through their invisible distorting spectacles.
[pages 74 - 80] and interpret things differently.

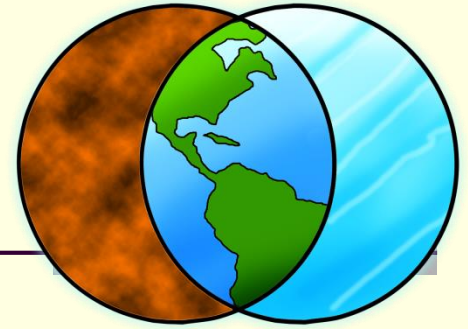


You and your partner are not 'on the same planet' sometimes

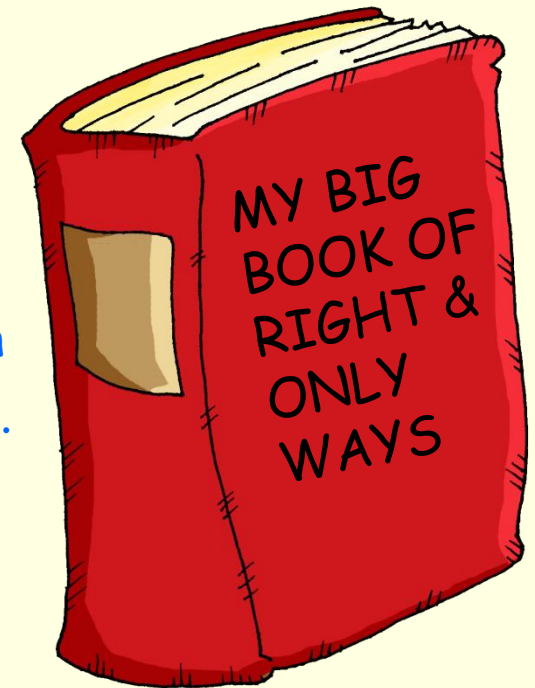
- No two people have all the same thoughts and beliefs about what's true or not true, what's fact or fiction, what's OK or not OK.
- As we have travelled through life, we have unconsciously assembled all of our life experiences into a unique set of beliefs about ourselves, others and the world.
- Without knowing it, we grew invisible distorting spectacles [pages 74 - 80] through which we view life, interpret events and form judgements.
- We have captured our view of the way things are and should be, in a 'Big Book of Right Ways' which we use to guide us and to judge the behaviour of others. [See also page 67]




Different realities



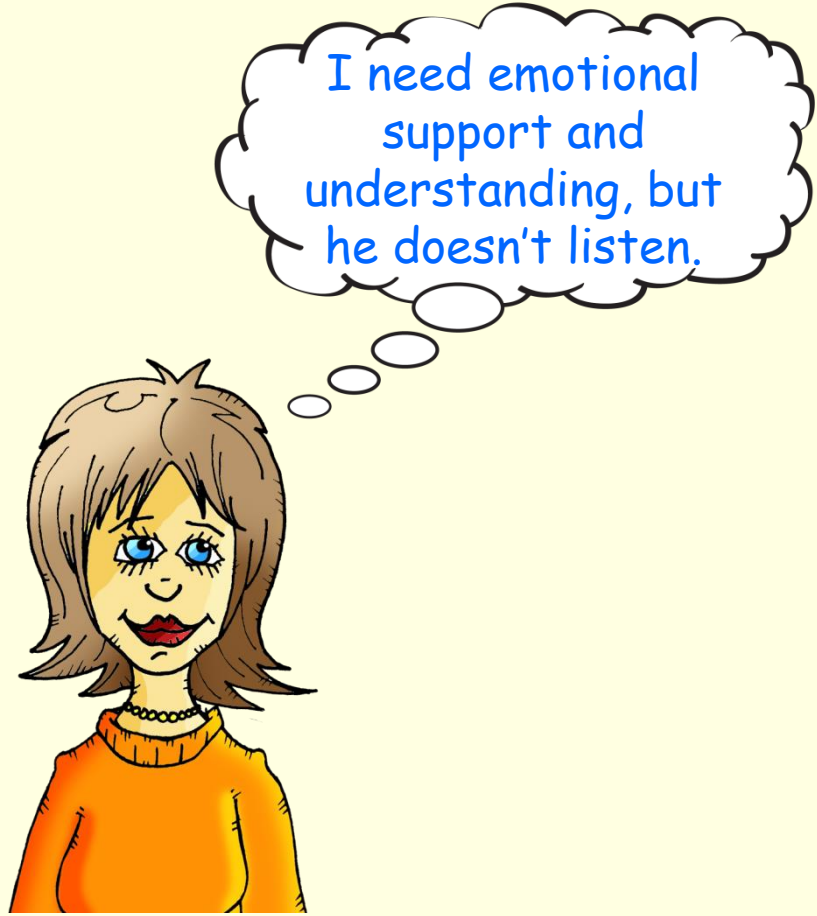
- Our different beliefs about what's 'real' and 'right' developed because we have had to interpret the meaning of everything that was said to us and happened to us, since our earliest childhood.
- We have been interpreting everything using our invisible distorting spectacles. [pages 74 - 80].
- As a result, we each now have a unique private 'reality' based on our accumulated interpretation of events [and ignorance - gaps in our knowledge].
- Much of what you think is right and factual depends on your experience of life and how you have interpreted your personal experience.



Different 'realities' 1



I do listen, but I don't know what she needs me to say.



I need emotional support and understanding, but he doesn't listen.

Different 'realities' 2

He doesn't do enough around the house to help me.



I work hard. It's her job to run the house and family.



Different 'realities' 3

It would be good to talk about our problems.



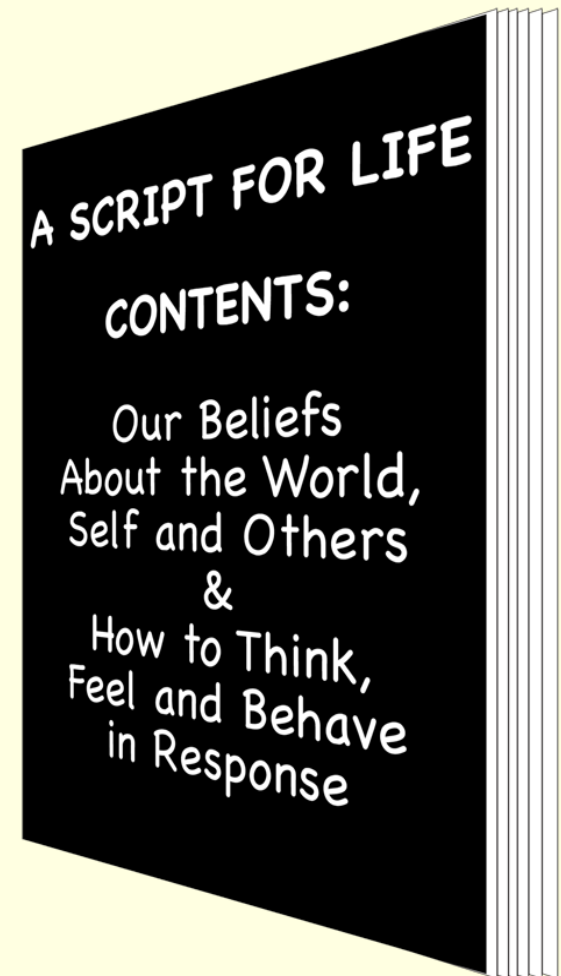
I have enough problems at work. I need to be able to switch off.



Your version of 'reality' is bound to be different to your partners

1. We have each developed a unique 'Map of the World', which we use to understand everything that happens to us and around us [pages 66 - 70].
2. We have also constructed a personal 'Life Script' # to live our life by, a way of thinking, feeling and behaving in response to our 'Map of the World' [pages 30 and 66 - 70].

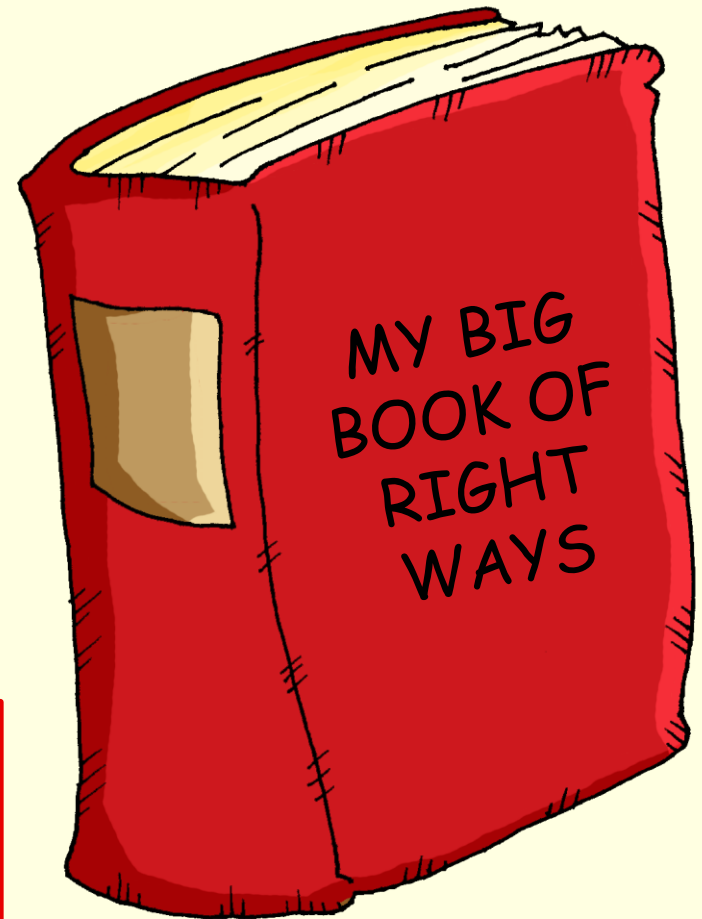
Suggested further reading
'Scripts People Live' by Claude Steiner



How we maintain our unique personal 'reality'

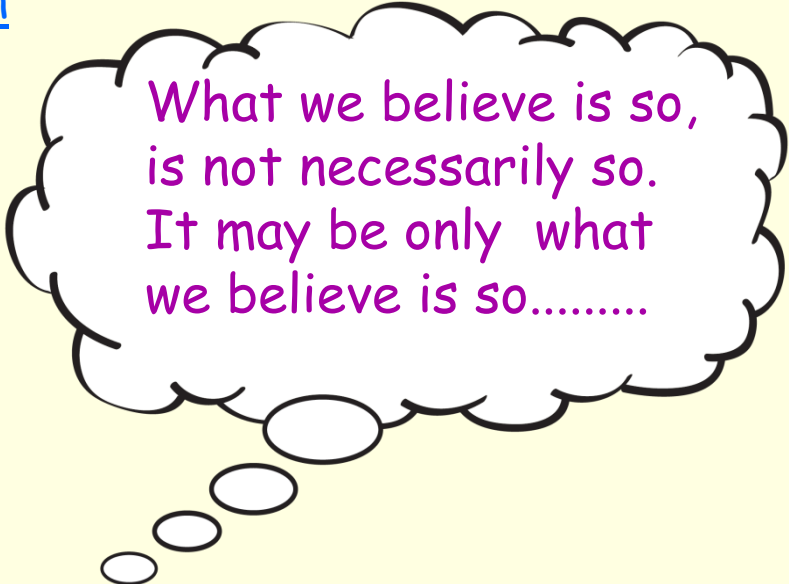
3. We have captured our Script in a 'Big Book of Right Ways' [page 67] to think, feel, and behave in response to our 'Map of the World'.
4. We unconsciously filter and distort everything that happens and fill in missing bits to make things fit our expectations [pages 74 - 80].

Since our 'Big Book of Right ways' is not in all respects the same as anyone else's, friction, conflict and disagreement is inevitable.



Our 'Map of the World' is not the same as anyone else's

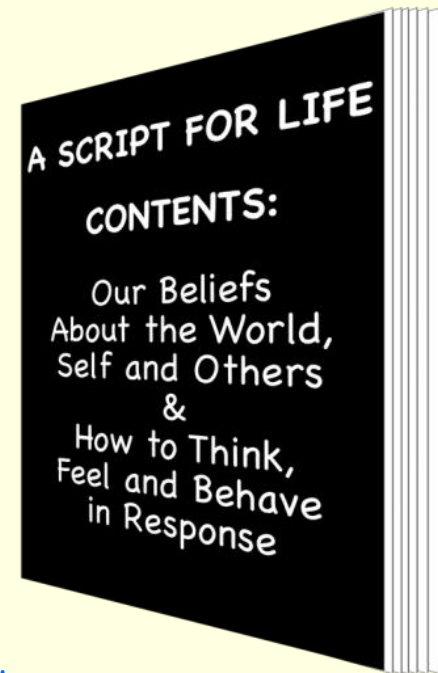
- Our 'Map of the World' is our perception of what is and isn't so, what is and isn't right, what is fact or fiction.
- It's our personal set of beliefs about ourselves, others and the world, but it's only our opinion based on our unique personal experience of life and isn't exactly the same as anyone else's map!
- Our map is bound to be more or less incorrect when you consider that no-one else's map is exactly the same as yours or mine. *Maybe you and me are the only ones who have got it 'right'. Maybe not!*



What we believe is so, is not necessarily so. It may be only what we believe is so.....

The Life Script we have constructed in response to our 'Map of the World'

- Our Life Script is our programme of how to think, feel and behave when travelling on our journey through life using our 'Map of the World'. It was originally constructed, mainly unconsciously, in childhood, as a result of childhood experience and observation of the behaviour of parents and others around us.
- As a result of our Life Script, we endlessly replay old patterns of thinking, feeling and behaving in specific situations.
- In other words, the way we are is habitual. We are destined by our script autopilot to endlessly repeat our ways of thinking, feeling and behaving until life experience and personal development work help us to become self aware and change the way we are, help us to 'put a new show on the road'.



Why aren't our maps all the same?

- Different personal belief systems develop because no event, behaviour or communication has a fixed meaning. Everything that happens, everything that is communicated and everything that is experienced, is capable of a range of possible interpretations and constructed meanings.
- As children we have to interpret everything that happens to us and around us to make sense of it. We have to decide what's true or not true about ourselves, the world and others.
- You have been constructing a personal belief system since childhood. Your 'Big Book of Right Ways' is based on thousands of day-to-day interpretations of what has happened to you and around you. So has mine and everyone else's!



Conflict at times is inevitable

- Conflict is inevitable when we try to get others to 'do it our way', to believe what we believe, to conform to what's in our 'Big Book' and to abandon what's in theirs.
- Successful relationships are about learning to manage difference.
- It's not difference that causes problems, it's our intolerance of difference and our attempts to change the other person.



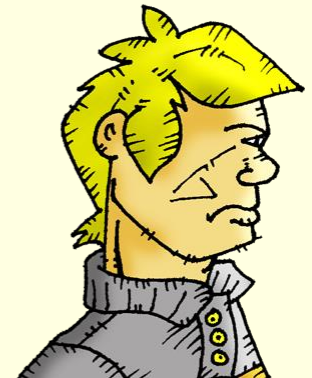
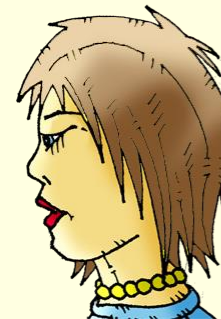
Other main causes of conflict

- Personality differences [pages 82 - 95].
- Evolutionary differences between the sexes [page 81].
- Stored anger and hurt [Anger Stamps: page 36].
- Filtering and distortion [page 74 - 80].



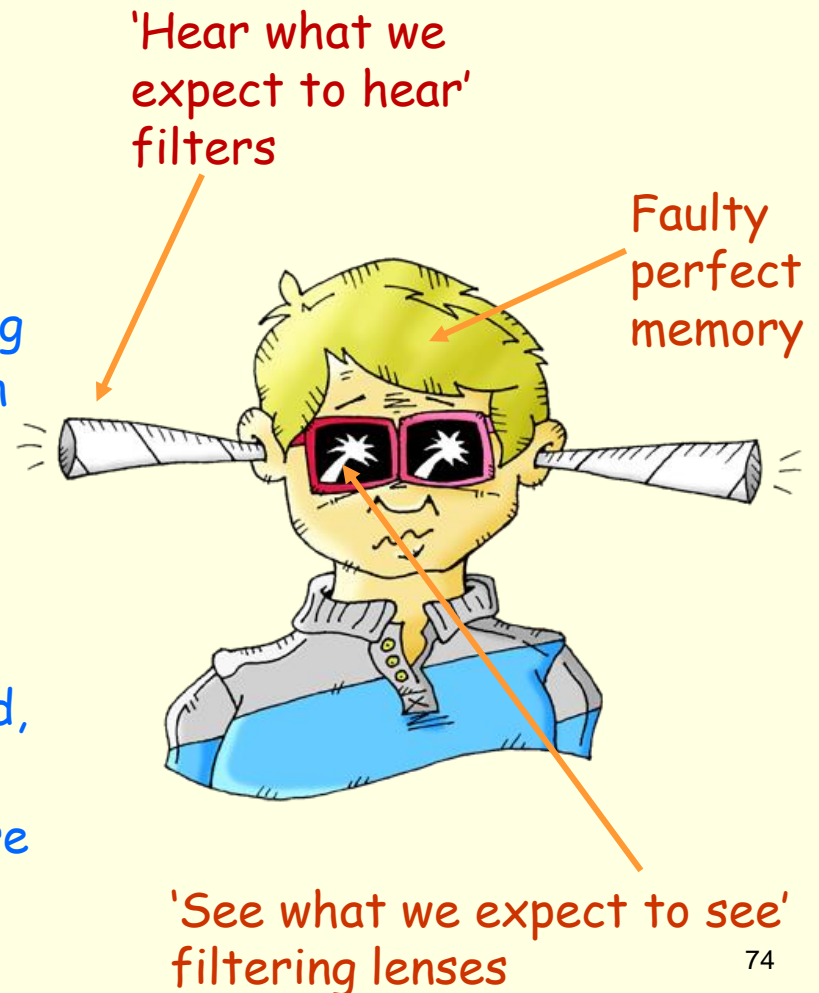
Faulty thinking and inappropriate behaviour - in whose opinion?

- So called 'faulty thinking and inappropriate behaviour' is essentially a clash between one 'Big Book of Right Ways' and another.
- The biggest books of right ways are religious and political, but everyone has their own unique 'Big Book'.
- Conflict results when we behave and express opinions which clash with the content of someone else's 'Big Book', or we try to impose stuff from our 'Big Book'.



We unconsciously filter and distort what happens to create our own 'facts'

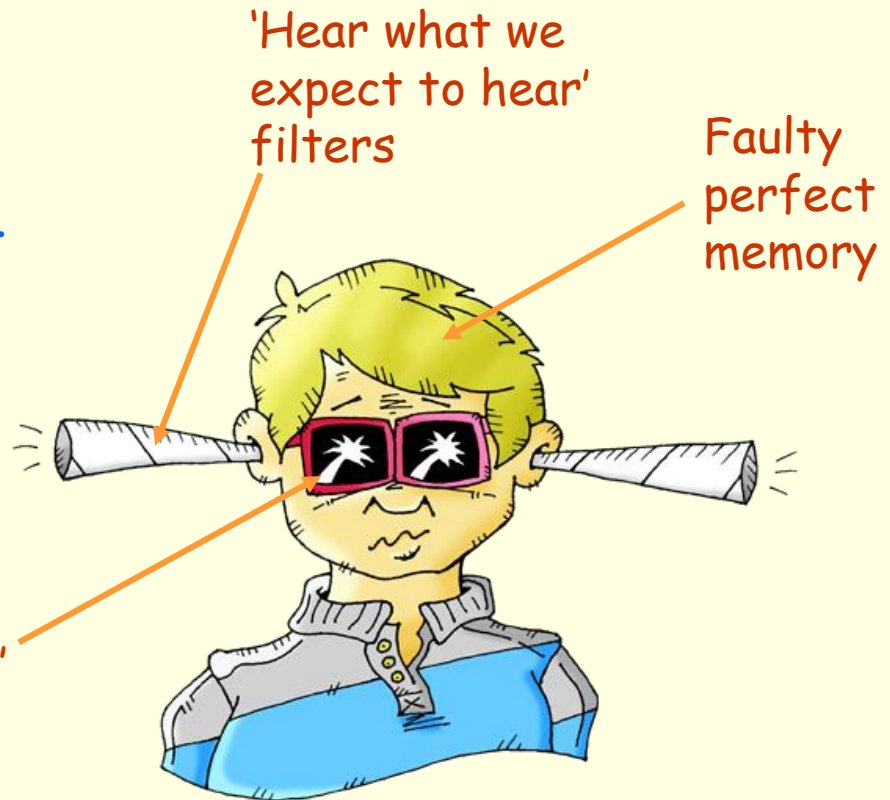
- To make things fit our expectations according to our 'Map of the World' we filter and distort what happens and make up missing bits.
- We often interpret things so they confirm what we expect, whilst being blind to any contrary evidence which might mean we have interpreted something incorrectly.
- **For example:** Someone not saying 'hello' can confirm our belief that they don't like us. On the other hand, it can confirm our belief that they are ignorant or a belief that they are shy. It's all about interpretation!



.....so they fit what we believe

- We often hear only what we expect to hear.....
-see what we expect to see.
-remember things in a way which fits our personal 'Map of the World'.

'See what we expect to see'
filtering lenses



We really, absolutely, believe our distorted version of what happened - which is often not the same as the other person's distorted version. We accept that we can get things wrong, but not that we did get it wrong on that occasion. ⁷⁵

How we fill in with bits of fantasy

We fill in missing bits of information by making it up, jumping to conclusions, interpreting. We then proceed as if what we have filled in is factual and disagree with others who have a different version.

At the college where I was a visiting lecturer we would read a story of an old lady who was jostled by a group of youths and dropped her handbag. One of the youths picked it up and ran off with it. A passer-by rugby tackled the youth and got the handbag back. Naturally the old lady was very grateful.

At the end of the story the students were asked questions about what had happened. One question was 'What colour was the lorry that went past?' Most students remembered the colour. Trouble was, they didn't remember the same colour. In fact, there was no lorry in the story. Their subconscious had invented the missing information!

We are all a bit paranoid and often distort what we hear and experience to make up pessimistic interpretations - thinking and believing the worst.

Filtering and distorting reality so it fits what we choose to believe

No action or communication has a fixed meaning!

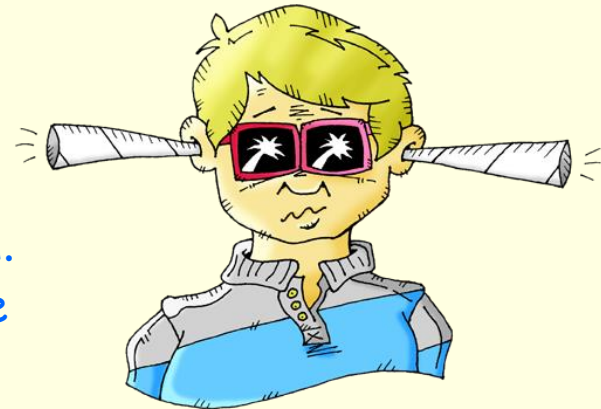
What some things mean can seem pretty obvious, but we still have to interpret what is meant. Obviously, we choose to interpret things in a way which makes most sense from our unique perspective.

When she took down their wedding photo,
what did it mean?

My client took down their wedding day photograph.
This coincided with her starting to take more care
of her appearance for the office.

What her partner thought it meant!

Her partner didn't discuss how what she had done was affecting him and used his jealousy filter [page 80] to conclude she was having an affair and was planning to leave him. He started to be horrible to her and obsessively jealous without saying why.





'Reality' can be very elusive!

What she thought her action actually meant for her

Her mother had recently died, which proved to be a wake up-call. She made the decision to take more of an interest in her career. She had replaced the original wedding photo on display with one which also had her mother and father in it. She was oblivious to the interpretation her partner might place on what she did.

What happened next

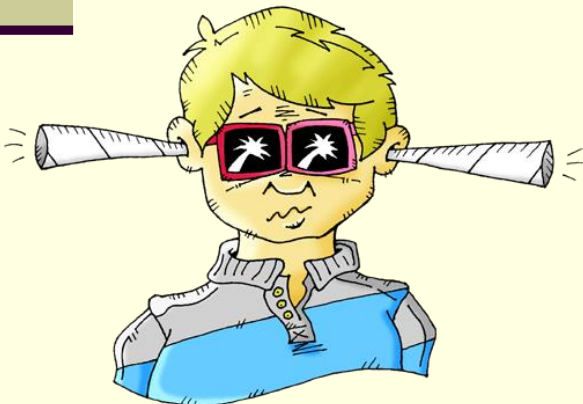
Her partner thought she was having an affair and began to treat her badly. She was previously content in the relationship, but gradually, her partner's horrible behaviour hardened her heart towards him. Their relationship eventually died!

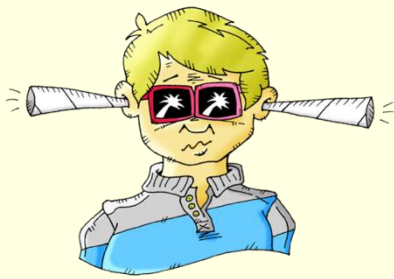
What was the reality behind her changing the photo?

Nobody knows! There's his interpretation, her interpretation, my interpretation and now your interpretation!

Why do we distort what we experience in ways which are often unhelpful to us?

- A constant problem for us human beings is that no words or behaviour have a fixed meaning! We have to decide, to interpret, what every word and behaviour means: decide what to think and how to feel about it.
- We instinctively react with an interpretation, but the interpretation is often inaccurate. Unfortunately, when we get it wrong, we are usually absolutely certain that we got it right.
- We really, absolutely, believe our distorted version of what happened - which is not the same as the other person's distorted version. We accept that we can get things wrong, but rarely believe that we did get it wrong.





A few of the filters which screw up relationships

- Big Book of Right Ways [I know best]
- Critical Parent filter [You never do anything right]
- Paranoid filter [You 're getting at me again]
- Narcissistic filter [I rarely get things wrong]
- Victim filter [I never get what I want]
- Blame filter [YOU are the problem]
- Jealousy filter [You are bound to leave me]
- Pessimism filter [The worst that can happen will happen]

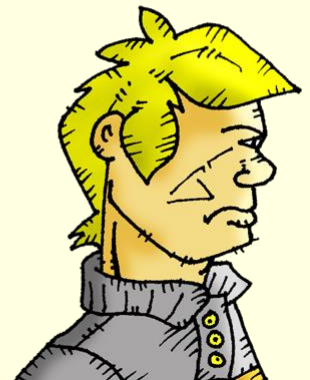
These are examples of filters we use to shape how we look at things.

The same event triggers a different 'reality' for different people depending on their filters.

Other filters include all the prejudices e.g. sexism: racism: homophobia religious intolerance and also dislike of some personality types e.g. 'I can't stand people like that'.

Evolutionary differences between male and female

- As a result of evolution , men and women have grown up with some fundamental personality differences. This is the topic of a widely read book by John Gray, 'Men Are From Mars, Women Are From Venus'.
- One profound difference is that when there is a problem in a relationship the stereotype woman will want to talk about it now, whereas the stereotype man will want to 'withdraw into his cave and try to avoid it or solve it on his own'.
- Many of the couples I have worked with experienced difficulties because the male [but not always the male] couldn't or wouldn't talk about issues.



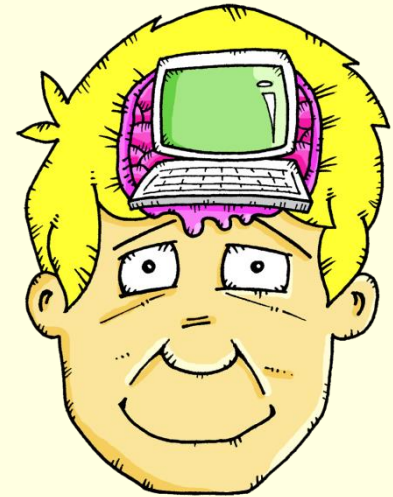
Personality and personality clash

- Personality clash occurs when one party has difficulty in relating to the other because their personality traits are different. For example: the partner who is expressive and open and likes to talk things through, sooner or later runs into problems with a partner who doesn't talk much or tends to withdraw when there are problems.
- When people are too alike it can also cause problems. For example: two people both tending to be controlling or emotional are prone to conflict.
- In contrast, when both partners in relationship are passive problems don't get resolved. The ever growing store of unresolved anger and hurt stamps [page 36] can eventually freeze the relationship to death.

The structure of personality

Our personality is shaped by

- Genetically inherited characteristics
- Our 'Map of the World' [pages 66 - 70]
- Our 'Life Script' [pages 66 - 70]
- Parental modeling: the content of our Parent Ego State [pages 10 - 15]
- The residual part of the child we were : our Child Ego State [pages 20 - 25]
- The extent to which our Adult Ego State [pages 16 - 19 & 28 - 29] is able regulate and control our Parent and Child Ego States.
- The resultant content of our 'Big Book of Right Ways' [page 67]



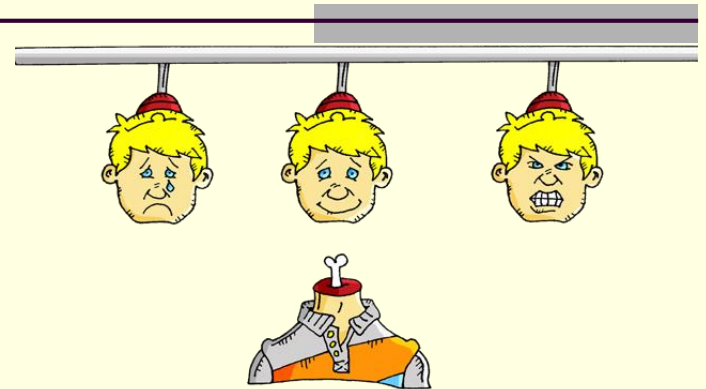
Personality Types

Personality - A Definition

'The combination of characteristics or qualities that form an individual's distinctive character'.

Although each of us is as unique as our fingerprints, we fall into personality groups with others with some similar characteristics and qualities. These different groups with similar characteristics and qualities are known as personality types [page 89].

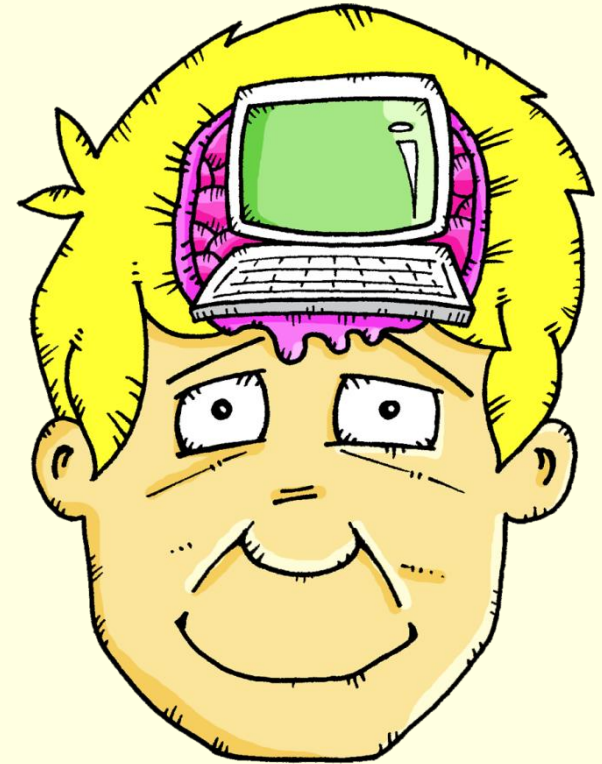
Behaviour change does not depend on personality change, but is much more difficult to maintain if it's not natural to the personality type.



Personality has a genetic element, but mainly develops early in childhood and is not easily modified in adulthood. Life Script [pages 66 - 70] is a very important part of personality which drives thinking, feeling and behaviour. Life Script can be modified in therapy.

Understanding Personality

- Personality derives from the complexity of human programming [pages 58- 59] and drives our way of thinking, feeling and behaving.
- There are many theories about personality types. I am most influenced in my personal views by the work of Ian Stewart and Vann Joines, who identify six basic types of personality. #
- None of the personality types is inherently good or bad - each type has both strengths and weaknesses.



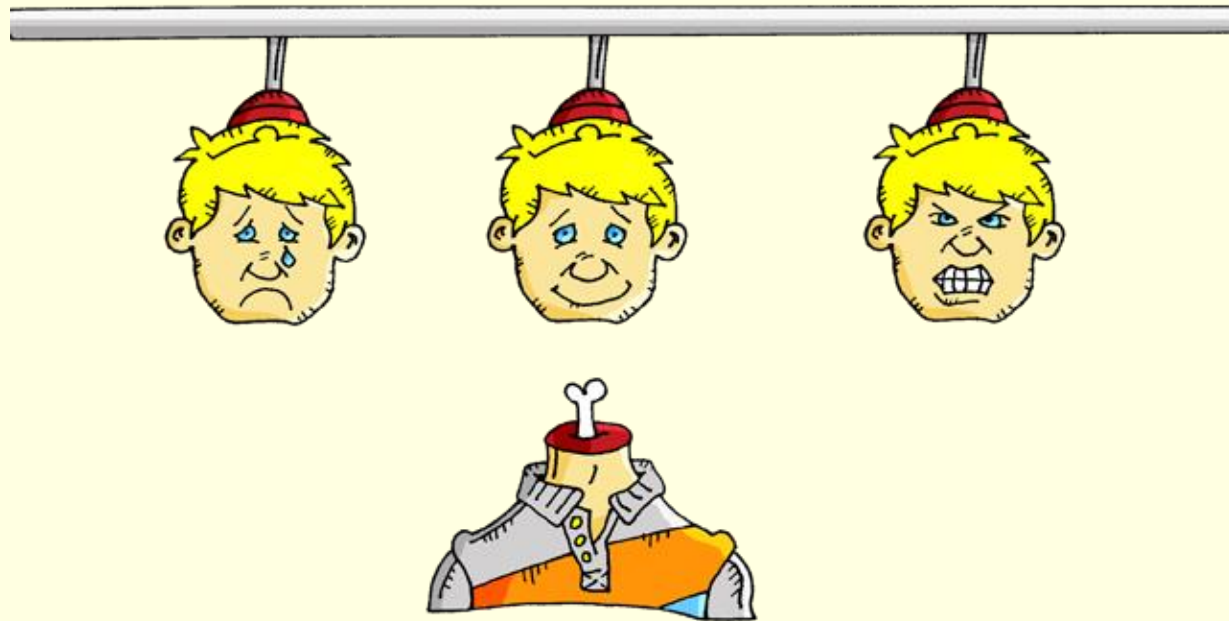
'Personality Adaptations' by Vann Joines & Ian Stewart

Want a personality transplant for your partner? Not possible, but.....

- Our personality is, in some respects, substantially 'hard wired', a personal development programme file which we can't easily edit.
- In the early years of a relationship, personality differences are less of a problem, tending to be obscured by the love and excitement of the honeymoon years. Early warning signs of possible personality clash and behavioural difficulties are ignored.
- As the relationship matures, the differences become much more evident and can become a source of incompatibility and conflict.

Although personality cannot be easily modified, if at all, behaviour can be changed with effort. It depends if the person has sufficient motivation and determination to change their behaviour.

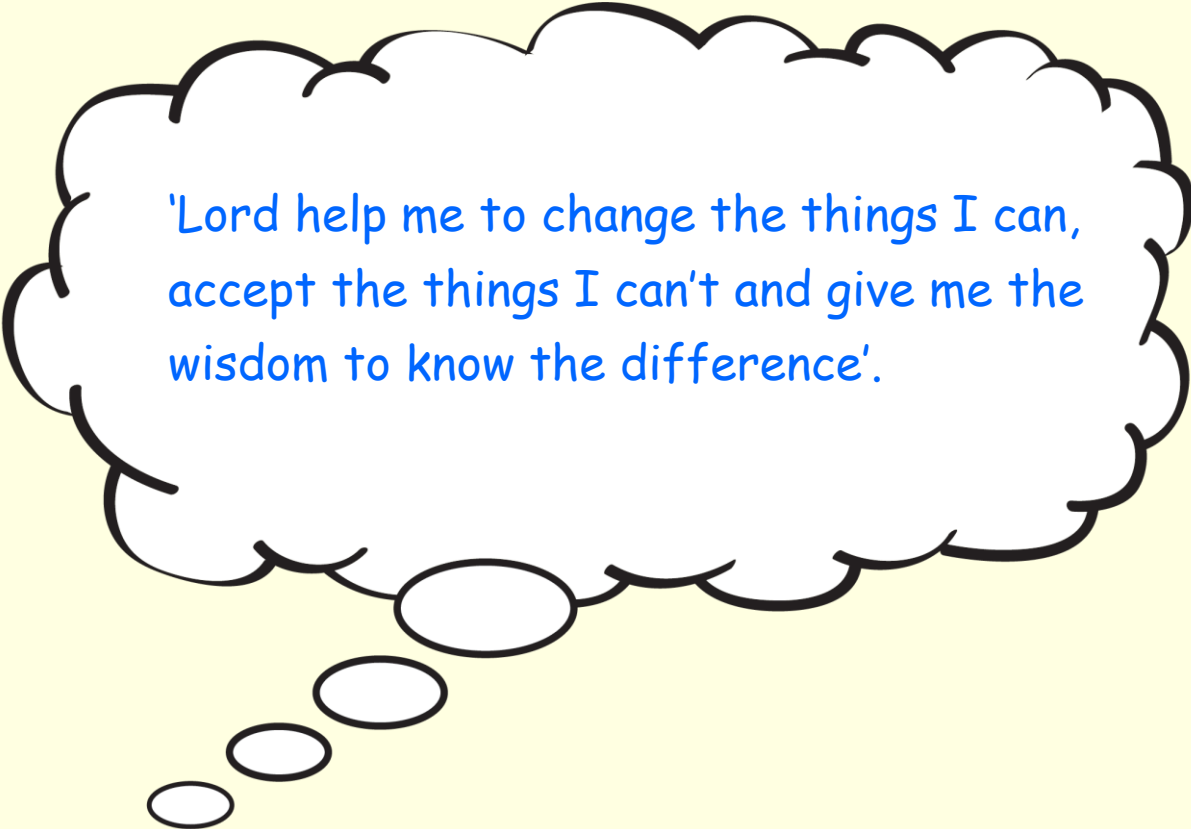
Personality cannot be changed much..... but behaviour can!



Personality type cannot be changed for a different personality type but, with sustained effort, some behaviour driven by personality factors can be changed - providing the person is committed to changing.

This is why the 'Contract for Change' is so important [pages 54 - 55].

This ancient wisdom applies to partners too!



'Lord help me to change the things I can,
accept the things I can't and give me the
wisdom to know the difference'.

Six types of personality - The negative and positive aspects of each

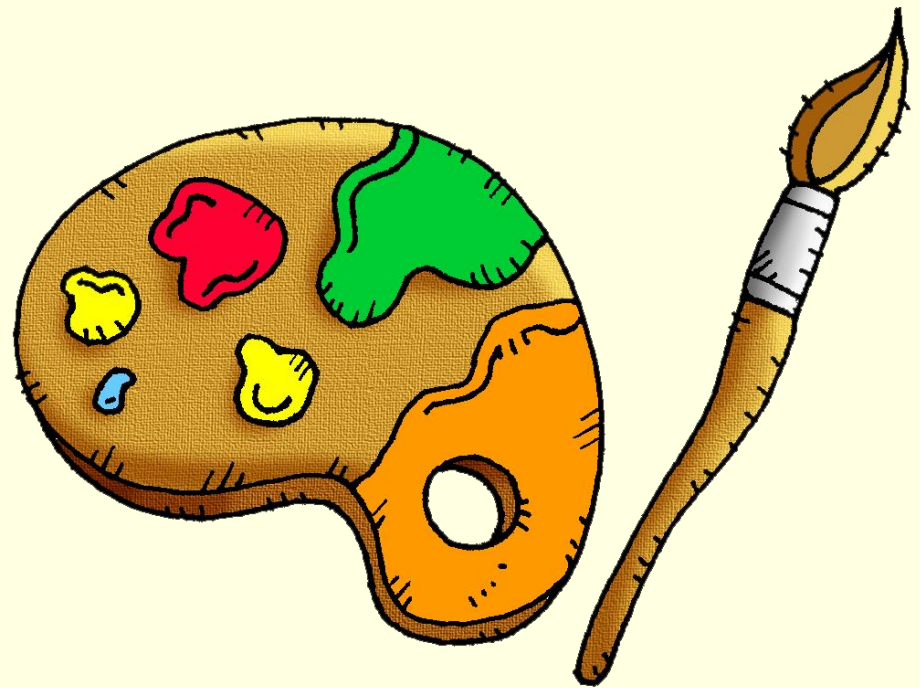
Negative Aspect	Type	Positive Aspect
Excitable/over emotional	A	Enthusiastic/sociable
Obsessive/ritualistic	B	Responsible/reliable
Paranoid/pessimistic	C	Sceptical/analytical
Withdrawn/not sociable	D	Creative/individualistic
Passive aggressive/stubborn	E	Careful/determined
Antisocial/self interested	F	Charming/persuasive

[The A B C D E F labels are mine i.e. not part of standard theory]

- Each of us tend to be mainly a mixture of one or two, at most three, of the above types. Mine are B C and D. Which are yours?
- Which are your partner's? Better get used to them 'cause they aren't going to change much!

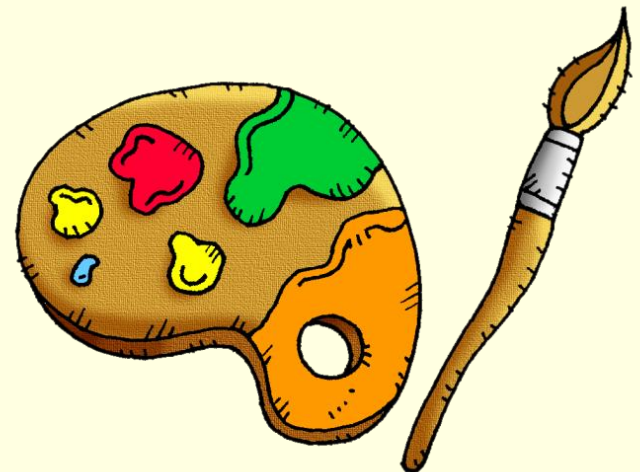
The unique colour of your personality

I think of each person's personality as being like a unique colour resulting from mixing a selection of common primary colours on the artist's palette - so much of this colour, so much of that colour, hardly any of that colour and so on. The end result is unique but derives mainly from only two or three of the original colours.



My way of thinking about Personality Types

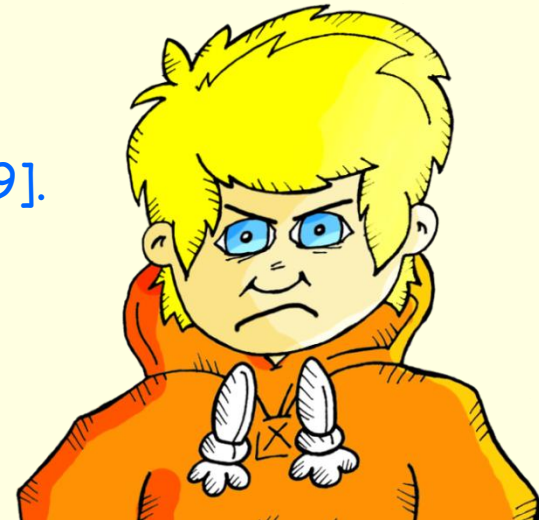
- Each person's personality is a unique blend of common personality traits.
- Two or three common personality traits tend to dominate an individual's personality even though their overall personality is unique.
- In this way, two or, at most, three of the personality traits on page 89 will be most evident within your overall unique personality.



Living with passive aggression

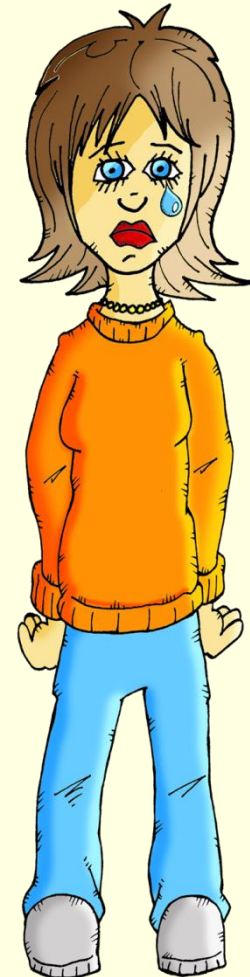
- Some people have more than average passive aggressive tendency. They tend to avoid solving problems assertively and often have a great secret collection of anger and hurt stamps [page 36].
- Passive Aggressive Personality Types can be stubborn and obstructive. Often, they don't know what they want, but know it's not what you want. 'YES BUT....' is their favourite psychological game [pages 40 - 49].
- In 'YES BUT' the lead player always has a reason why what's suggested won't work. They also play the 'You should know what I want without me saying' game.

Passive Aggression often comes from Child Ego State



Maybe the behaviour is rooted in unresolved anger and hurt- not personality

- Most often passive aggressive behaviours result from unresolved anger and hurt not from personality type. The person is getting even by being 'bloody minded'.
- Initially, anger and hurt release techniques should be attempted. There is a good selection of anger and hurt release techniques at: www.angermanagementprogramme.co.uk



Examples of passive aggressive behaviour

- Air of grievance/ chip on shoulder
- Cold freeze treatment
- Deliberate 'forgetfulness'
- Indecisiveness
- Obstruction [includes 'Yes but' game]
- Speaking quietly/mumbling
- Refusal to apologise
- Refusal to acknowledge partners point of view
- Refusing to explain why upset
- Stubbornness
- Not saying what they want to see whether they get it and being resentful if they don't.



Passive Aggressive Definition: Behaviour which impedes, or does nothing to help, problem resolution

The best way of getting on with Passive Aggressive personality types

Passive aggressive personality types are often reluctant to take the lead as this involves knowing what they want and being open about it. Yet when you try to take the lead they may launch into the 'Yes, but...' game. Using controlling behaviour with passive aggressive types will lead to unproductive struggles.

To read more about personality types, including Passive Aggressive, read 'Personality Adaptations' by Ian Stewart and Vann Joines.

If your partner has passive aggressive tendency:

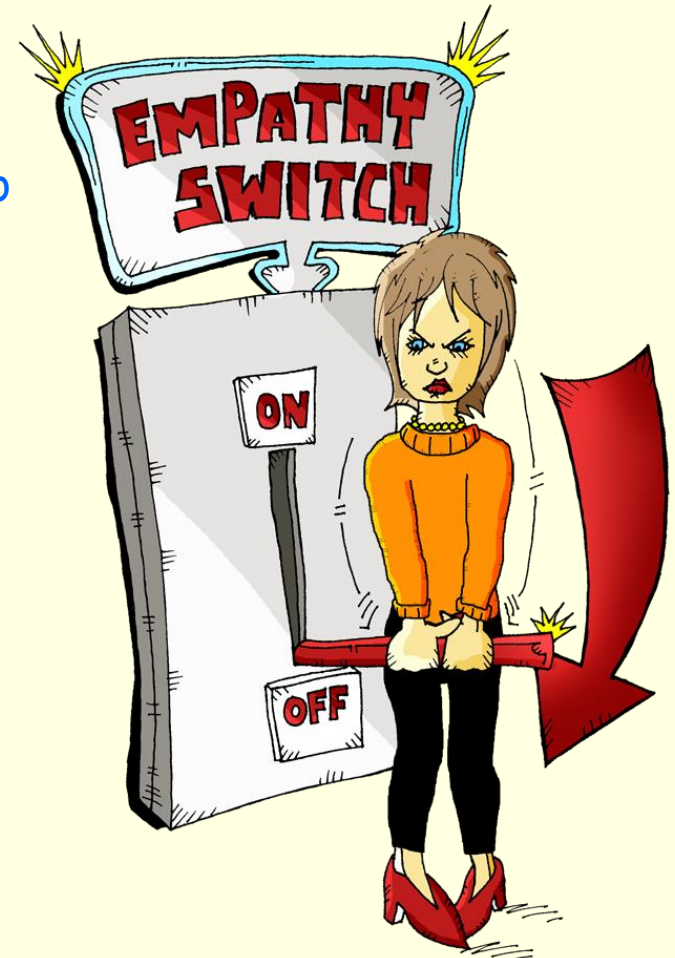
The secret is to nurture them, be playful and encourage them to express how they feel and what they want.

If you have passive aggressive tendency:

You need to decide to be more assertive [page 105], think about what you want and be prepared to ask for it.

Odds are, unresolved anger and hurt is at the root of relationship problems

- When we have unresolved anger and hurt our empathy switch is 'off'.
- That's what unresolved anger and hurt do - switch off our empathy switch and make us insensitive to the needs of the person we are angry with.
- They become angry and hurt by us and a situation develops where both parties have their empathy switch in the off position and are being insensitive to the needs of the other.
- A 'hot' or 'cold' war develops [next page] and communication breaks down.





How do you respond when angry or hurt?

HOT RESPONSE

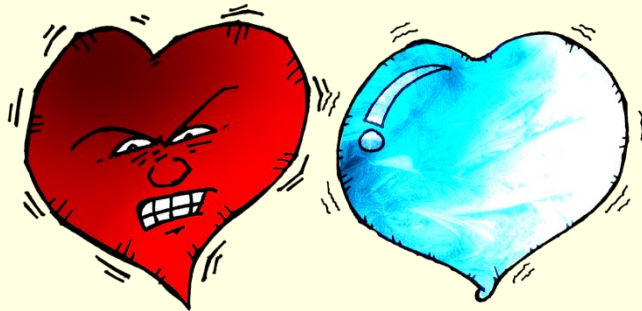
Aggressive, intimidating behaviour including verbally abusive rants



Your priority is to learn Impulse Control and how to be assertive instead of angry



Or a mixture of both?



COLD RESPONSE

Pushing hurt and anger down inside. Fighting back in passive aggressive ways including being icy cold with the other person without explaining why



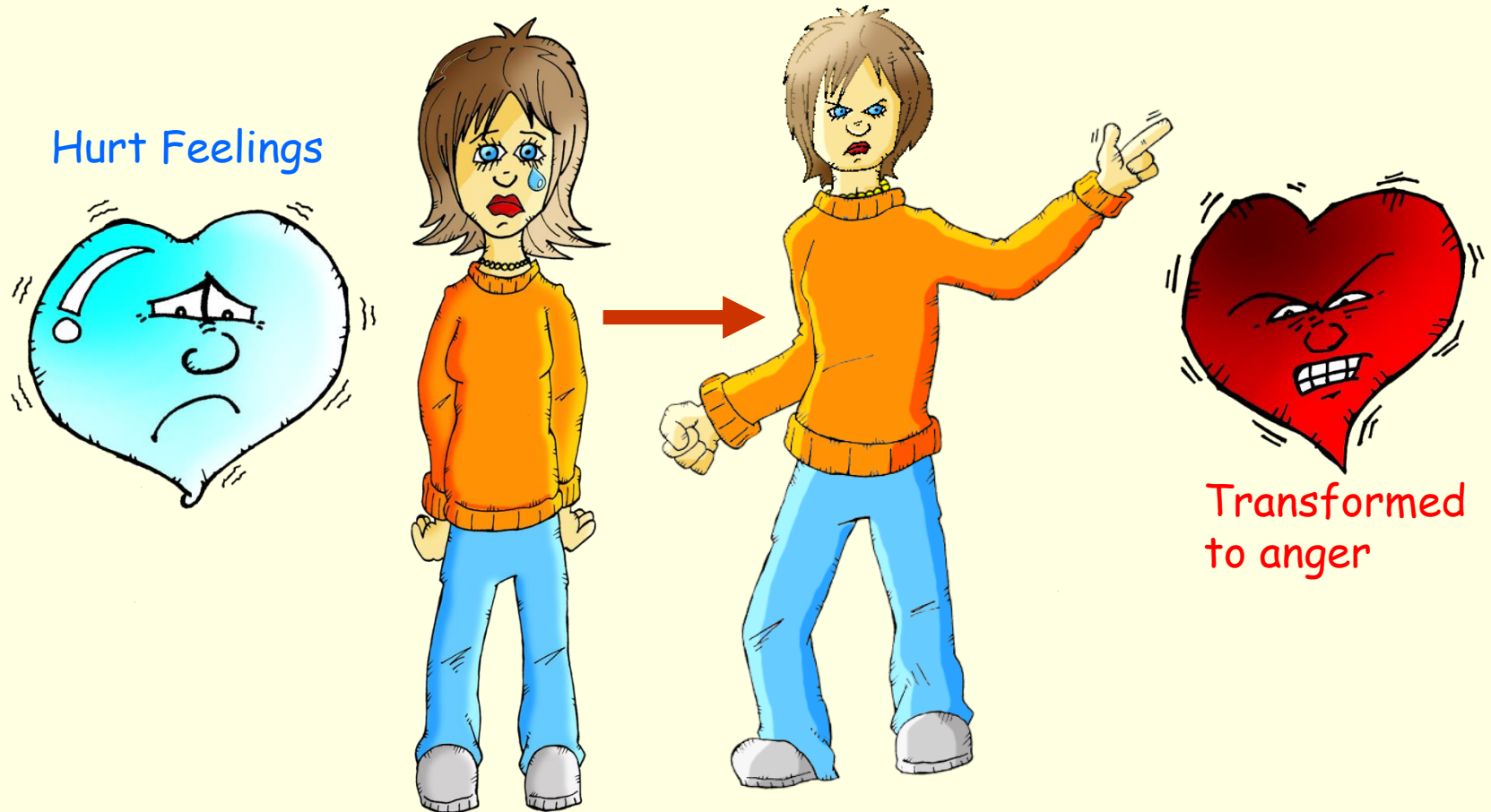
Your priority is to learn to be assertive instead



You need to learn to release anger safely and to use anger reduction techniques



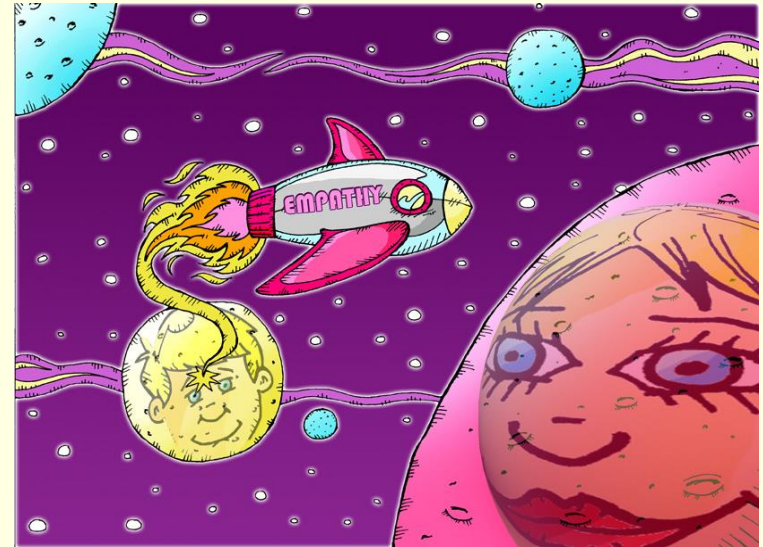
When dealing with anger look for the hurt behind the anger



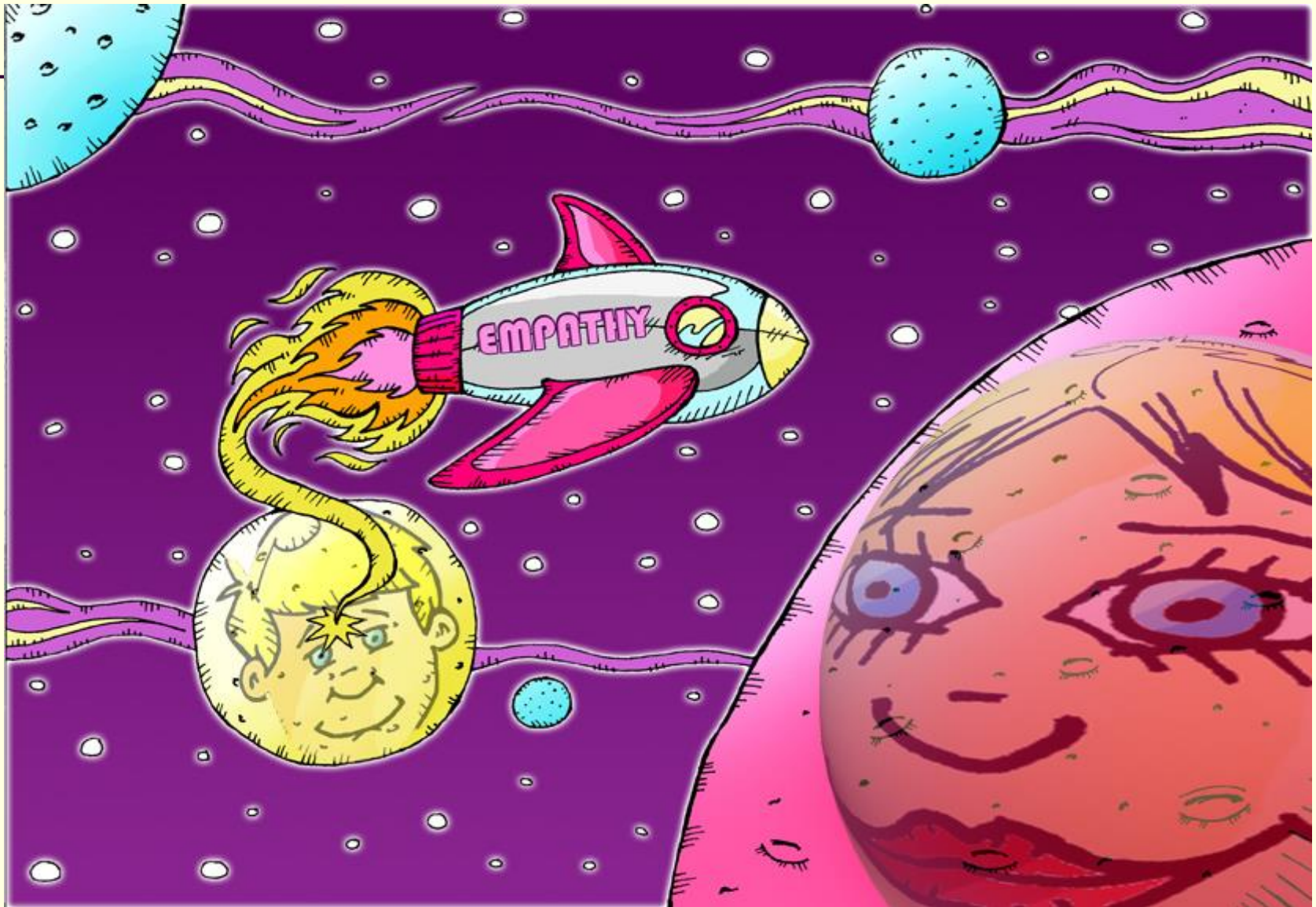
Empathy is how we travel between our world and the other person's world

We are not on the same planet as anyone else . We are each in a world of our own construction, [60 - 70] resulting from our own unique personal development path in life.

- We each have a unique way of looking at things and experiencing things.
- To understand things from another person's perspective you have to journey to the inside of their head on the 'Empathy Space Probe'.
- Empathy is about understanding the perspective and feelings of the other person, not about having to agree with it. If you agree with their perspective you are sympathetic. You can be empathic without being sympathetic.

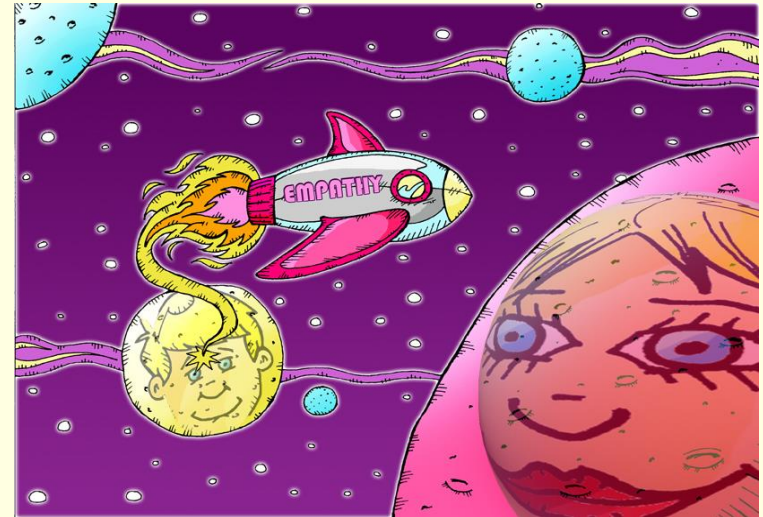


The Empathy Space Probe



Defining empathy

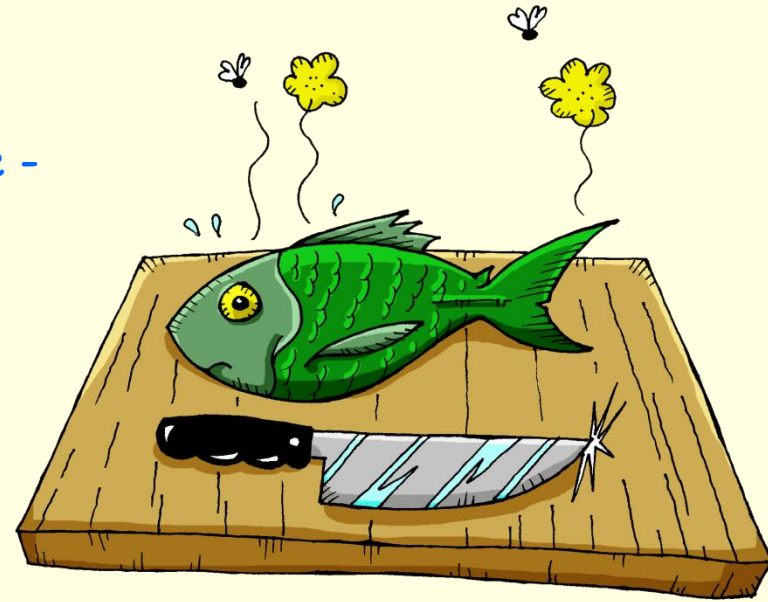
- The biggest misunderstanding about empathy is that to be empathic means that you have to agree with the way the other person is thinking, feeling and behaving. This completely untrue.
- Empathy does not mean you have to agree - it's about understanding the other person's perspective, not necessarily agreeing with it.
- Empathy is 'putting yourself in the other person's shoes' and trying to understand things from their point of view, even when you find it impossible to agree.



Empathy involves trying to get inside the other person's head, entering their internal world for a while and seeing things as they see them.

Passivity: why it can be a recipe for relationship breakdown

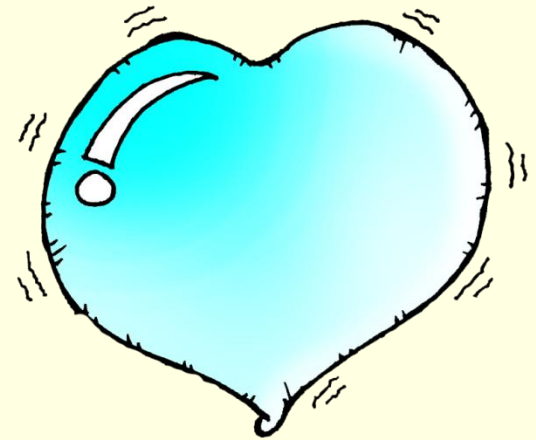
- Aggressive types are usually open about what they are unhappy about - the 'smelly fish', the problem, is on the table - not under it, out of sight.
- In contrast, passive partners tend to bottle up their issues because they don't know how to process them assertively. Problems fester, which often results in passive aggressive behaviour [pages 92 - 95], punctuated occasionally by 'over the top' explosions.
- Sometimes, however, the bottled-up anger simply results in the shutting down of loving feelings.



Assertiveness is often best, but it's also important to be able to let your anger show when justified [and safe!]

Passivity can result in the slow death of a relationship

- A passive person will tend to be dominated by others. The passive partner does not assertively express any dissatisfaction they may have, or gives up when they don't get quick resolution of the issues.
- Issues are not put to rest and accumulate as a collection of internal anger and hurt stamps [page 36] which act initially as a coolant on the relationship. The coolant effect of the anger and hurt stamps can eventually lead to a numbing out, a shutting down, of loving feelings by the passive partner.
- Passivity can be like putting your hand in a bucket of ice cold water! After a while, the pain and cold is replaced by numbness.



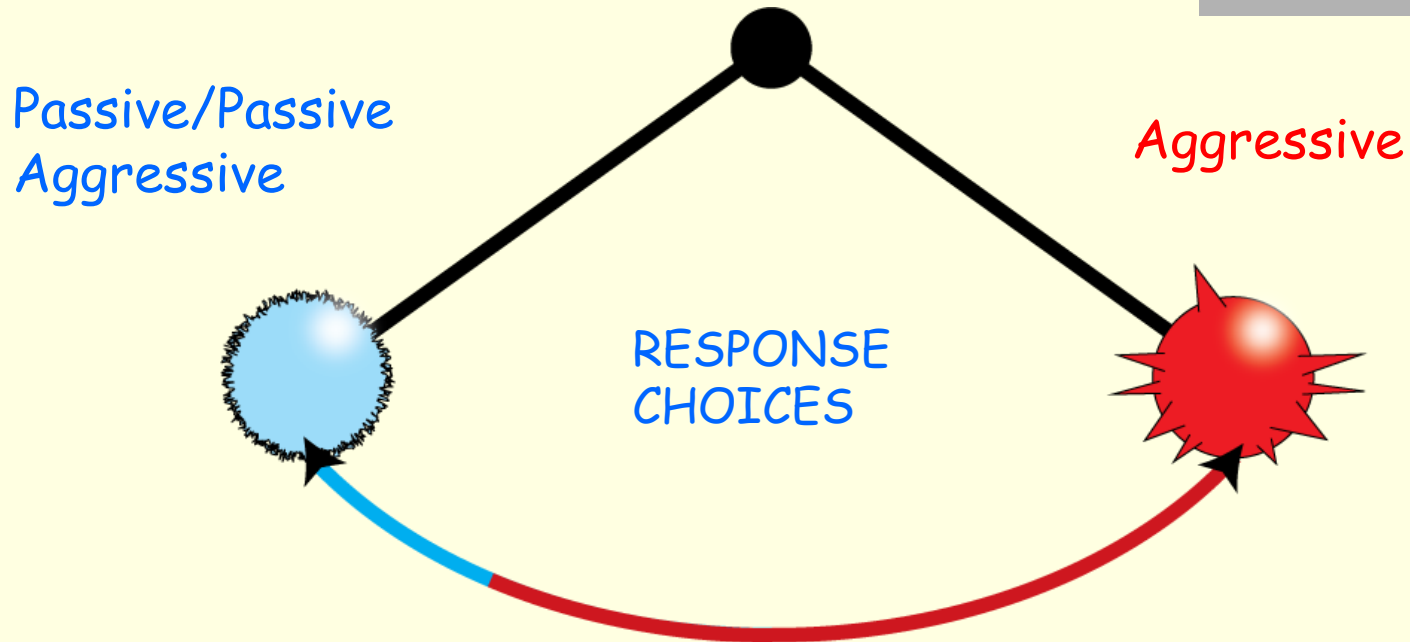
Lost that loving feeling? Unexpressed issues may be the cause

- Often the passive person who has lost that loving feeling can't explain why they have fallen out of love. They only know that they don't feel for their partner the way they used to.
- In therapy, the passive person who has shut down can be surprised to discover that the problem is accumulated anger and hurt. They may say 'But I don't 'do' anger', to which my reply is normally, 'I know, that may be the problem'.



If you think that you have lost that loving feeling, don't despair - it may only be in the fridge.
Start talking and consider professional help.

The Passive to Aggressive Pendulum

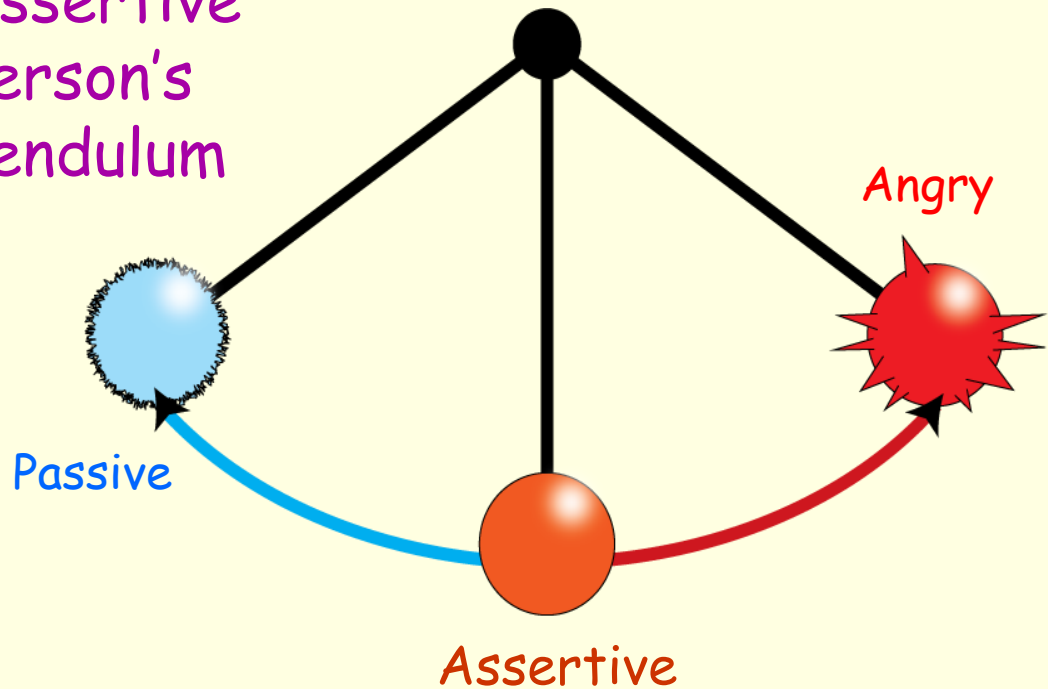


Passive people are often nursing deep unexpressed anger which they keep bottled up. Occasionally something will 'push them over the edge', which results in a rage and amazes their family, friends or colleagues at work, who are seeing an aspect of the person which seems totally out of character.

In successful relationships people discuss issues assertively and without anger

It's your assertive right to also be passive sometimes, even angry when appropriate.

Assertive person's pendulum



Notice that when you are assertive you don't need to be passive aggressive. Assertiveness means you can CHOOSE an appropriate response, passive, assertive or angry, depending on the situation.

My other books, cd's and downloads

To read about my other books, cd's and downloads please visit:
www.brianamartin.co.uk

Books [including cd and download versions]

- Healing Your Relationship
- The Anger Management Programme
- Relationship Advice For Couples

Cd's and downloads

- Deep Relaxation & Self Calming
- Deep Sleep Self Hypnosis
- Controlling Angry Impulses
- Thought Stopping Techniques
- Releasing The Powerful Inner You
- The NLP SWISH Self Confidence Technique



Free Optional Reading Online

If you would like to read more about:

- Listening Skills
- Empathy
- Assertiveness
- Conflict Resolution Skills

Please visit:

<http://selfhelp.brianamartin.co.uk>

OR know more about:

- Choosing a Therapist
- Personal Counselling
- Couples Counselling
- Psychotherapy
- Hypnotherapy

Please visit:

www.brianamartin.co.uk