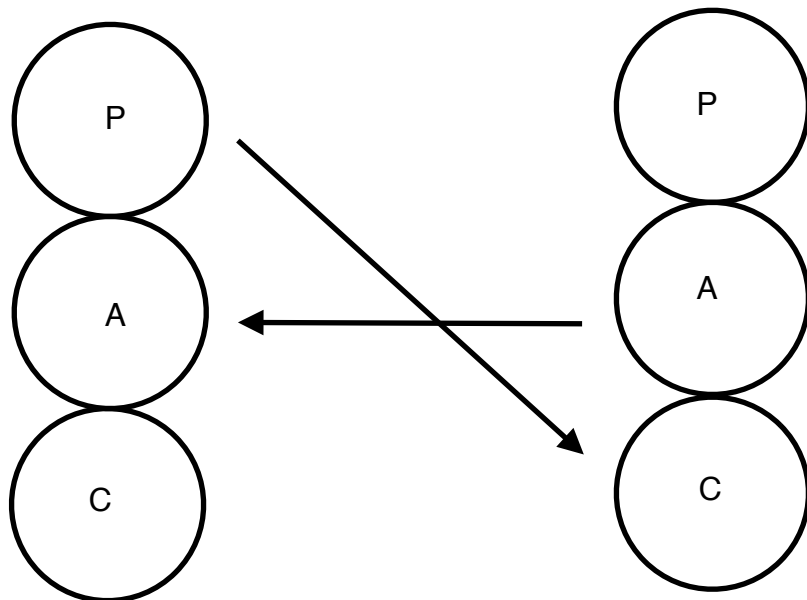


# The Book of Transactions:

## Part Three

The Monograph Series



Tony White

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# **The Book of Transactions:**

## **Part Three**

The Monograph Series

By

**TONY WHITE**

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## Chapter one

### Couple relationship transactions

One of the best ways couple relationships has been described is by Boyd and Boyd(1981). They have isolated three transactions in a relationship that can be used to diagnose any relationship difficulties. See figure 1.

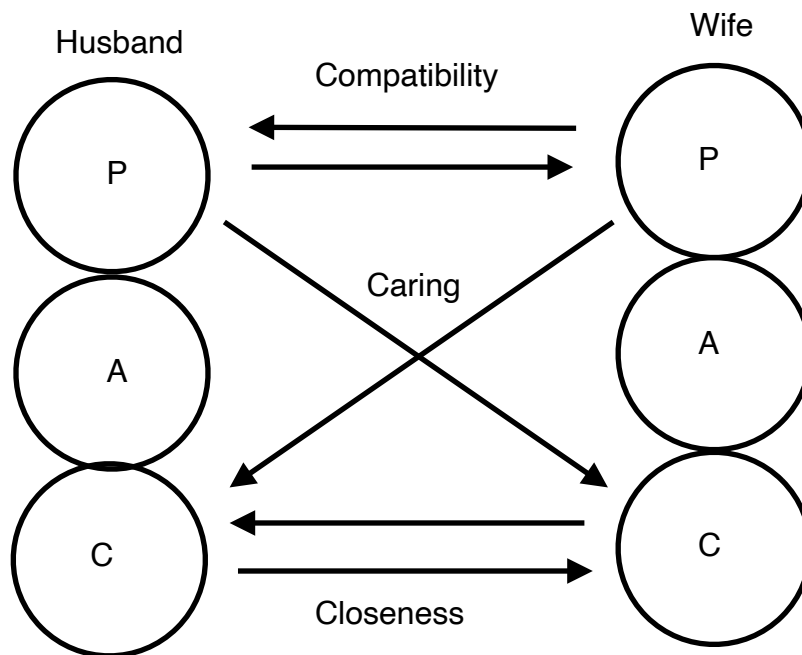


Figure 1. Relationship transactions

#### Compatibility

This is the degree to which the Parent ego state values of the two parties are compatible. This can be on anything such as work and play, house decorating, importance of birthdays. People values differ on each of these. The most common ongoing values disputes for couples are about money, in-laws, sex and child management or parenting. People can have very different values on these and it can lead to many disputes. This is often the hardest thing in a relationship to change and thus treat in couples counselling.

Sometimes these do not come obvious until the 'honeymoon period' ends. Both parties prior to that time may think "Oh I will be able to change that in them" or "We can live with that". This is a special concern for relationships that are of a different culture, racial group, socio-economic group because these different groups can have very different values. It can also be a problem for teenage marriages because people of that age have not usually developed their full value system which happens in later adulthood probably beginning around age twenty five.

One needs to distinguish values and preferences. For example one party may believe you have to save money for a rainy day and build the bank balance, whilst

the other may be much more agreeable to spending now on self and the family. This is a difference in values. Some couples may have agreeable values that spending is OK but may disagree on what to spend the money on. This is a difference in preference not value and is usually more readily resolvable.

### Caring

This does not come from a sense of duty but from respect and valuing the other and a desire to want to do something nice for the other party. Rarely is it in equal quantities but as long as the difference is not too great it does not matter. It is obviously a function of the Nurturing Parent ego state and depends on how much the person has access to that ego state. This comes from the Parent tapes that they have acquired during childhood. If there was a lot of nurturing in relationships in the original family then these would have been introjected as Parent ego state tapes. Thus Nurturing can be easily shown in adulthood.

The psychological effects of caring in a relationship has received considerable research, Sullivan, Pasch, Eldridge and Bradbury (1998) and Mueller (2006) and the positive effects on relationships are clear and pronounced. Doing 'random acts of kindness' in a relationship, is a very good idea as it fosters attachment building, a solidness in a relationship and a sense of wanting to be with the other person. When the Child ego state feels cared for one is taken back to a young time when they received the same from mother so in this way it can be seen to have a deep and primal effect on people.

If there is a large difference where one party does much more nurturing than the other then one is getting a symbiosis or the friendship is turning into a pseudo therapy relationship. What is an OK amount for two friends to engage in discussion of their own problems and seeking support and help from the other?

Some ask the question: "How much asking for help, giving emotional help and support in a friendship is reasonable?."

My answer is 10% - 20% each way.

The caring transaction in figure 1 is not fully accurate as it is actually a two way transaction as shown in figure 2. The Child ego state of one person asking for support and the Nurturing Parent of the other giving help and support. If both parties do this then the relationship is equal in this way. If it generally only happens one way and is more than 20% of the relationship then the friendship is changing into a therapy relationship where one friend is using the other as an unofficial therapist.

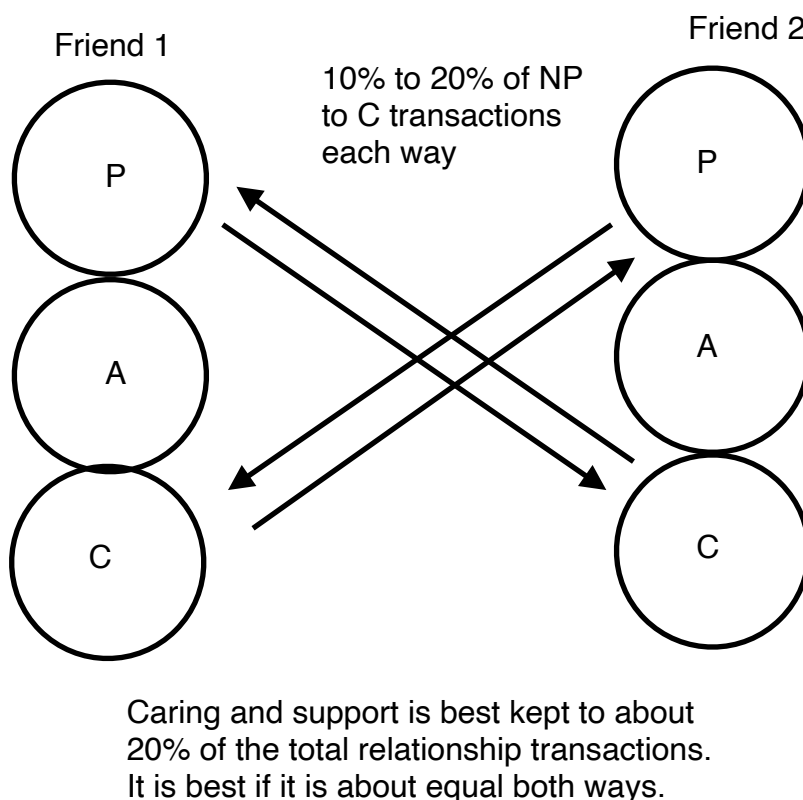


Figure 2. The caring transactions

Often the party who is giving all the support and getting little back complains that this is not fair. However it is also the safe position in the relationship. If one rarely asks for help then one is making self not vulnerable in the relationship which keeps them safe from being hurt. One does not have to confront their own issues with vulnerability, trust, dependence, neediness, powerlessness and so forth. All the main issues that most of us have fear. Being the caretaker in a relationship keeps us safe in this way.

### Closeness

This is the intimacy in the relationship. The sharing of feelings, tenderness, playing together, vulnerability and closeness. This is what leads to the bond or attachment. This is what gives the relationship that 'zing' or spark of specialness. Sometimes this can disappear over time and the two parties can become 'just' friends, or in a marriage 'just' flatmates. They fall out of love.

Sometimes people say that relationships take work to make them function. This means the Free Child closeness had gone. Relationships with Free Child are fun and enjoyable for each person and they want to be with the other. This does not feel like work, that occurs when the relationship has become a Parent contract for either party.

The caring transactions are a crucial set of transactions to occur if the Free Child closeness is to occur. The Free Child vulnerability will be very hesitant to appear if it does not sense a caring environment. This is one reason why long term relationships are counter productive to the ongoing use of Free Child closeness. Sooner or later both parties get angry at each other and can use things said by the

Free Child of the other at times of being vulnerable, to 'get' the other party. This then leads to the Free Child being reluctant to come out again because they know the information may be used at a later time when the other person is angry. This is why some people have experiences of being open and saying vulnerable things with strangers on planes as they know they are never going to see them again.

The complete relationship model

The Boyd's model shown in figure 1 has been criticised because it does not include the Adult ego states of both people. This is a reasonable criticism and is a clear flaw in this model. A more complete model has been presented by myself in figure 3.

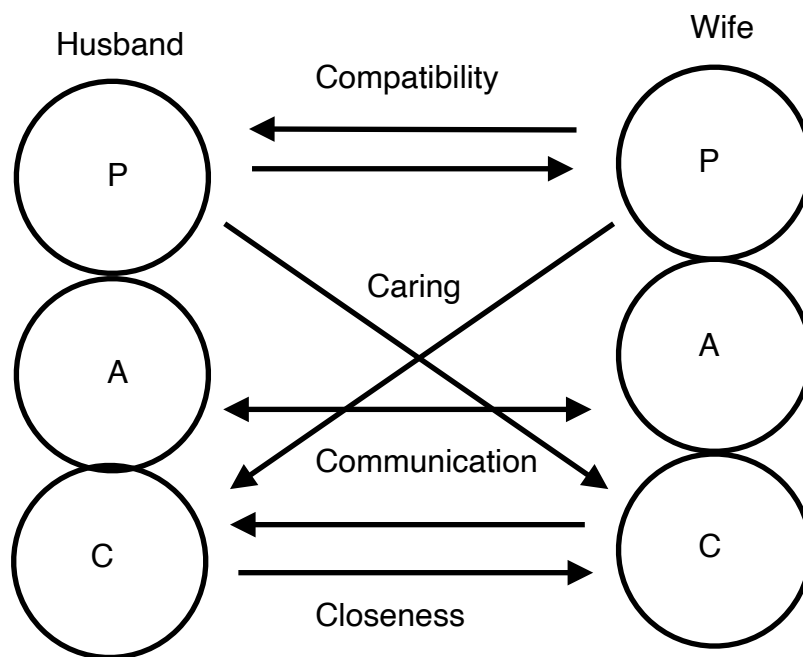


Figure 3. Complete relationship model

As one can see the Adult to Adult transactions of communication are included. Such communication is very useful and helpful to have in a relationship because it permits what are generally seen as the signs of emotional maturity:

The ability of the couple to put any feelings aside and communicate in an intellectual way to deal with problems.

To react to emotional situations objectively

To accept criticism without problem feelings developing

To face difficult or unpleasant situations

To keep the Child ego state emotions in check such that it does not excessively disrupt the Adult to Adult communication

If a couple can communicate like this, that is a very good thing for a marriage. They can have logical problem solving discussions between them. Some cannot



do this as the old feelings in the Child ego state get in the way and stop the mature Adult to Adult communications.

To develop such emotional maturity one needs to learn how to drop a feeling, as we say in psychotherapy. This is a good skill to have, both for one's relationships and for their own general psychological wellbeing.

Dropping a feeling is where you let the feeling go. It is not resolved by discussion with another person or by some cathartic release, one simply drops the feeling. There can be discussion and catharsis but these do not actually let the feeling go. That is primarily a cognitive exercise that the individual does with self.

It is the opposite of carrying a grudge which is not good in a marriage. Usually over time it gets easier to drop a feeling. The person has the emotional maturity for the angst or problem feeling to be let go from the Child ego state such that it no longer has any influence in the person's own psyche and their relating to others. As I said before, this is a very useful skill to have and any long term marriage or friendship cannot remain of a good quality unless both parties are capable of doing this at least to some degree.

Revenge, wanting justice to be done, to have my day in court or for things to be made fair are all wishes and desires that reduce one's ability to drop a feeling. To be able to let go of what one perceives as transgressions against them, by another, is a very good skill to have. If done the two parties are more able to have good problem solving discussions and planning which of course are crucial to any successful ongoing relationship. The stronger the Adult in both people, the better.

## Chapter two

## Wall of trivia transaction

In the previous chapter it was shown that the Child to Child transactions are about closeness. This is a source of much fear for many people - the fear of closeness is common place. As we get close and begin to experience intimacy with another then we are opening up and beginning to expose ourselves to the other person. As we do so we become more vulnerable and capable of getting hurt. We are exposing our soft sensitive side to another person and that is scary because the other person can then hurt us. This has happened at some point to most people so we all know what it feels like.

As soon as this does happen the Free Child in all of us will seek to protect its self from further hurt. This is unconscious and inevitable. We can't not do it. The Free Child will automatically seek to protect itself in the future. This then is a fear of intimacy that we all have in varying degrees because we have all been hurt in the past in this way.

One way to protect our selves and show our fear of intimacy is with the wall of trivia. This was originally created by Mary Goulding and discussed in Goulding and Goulding (1979), see figure 4.

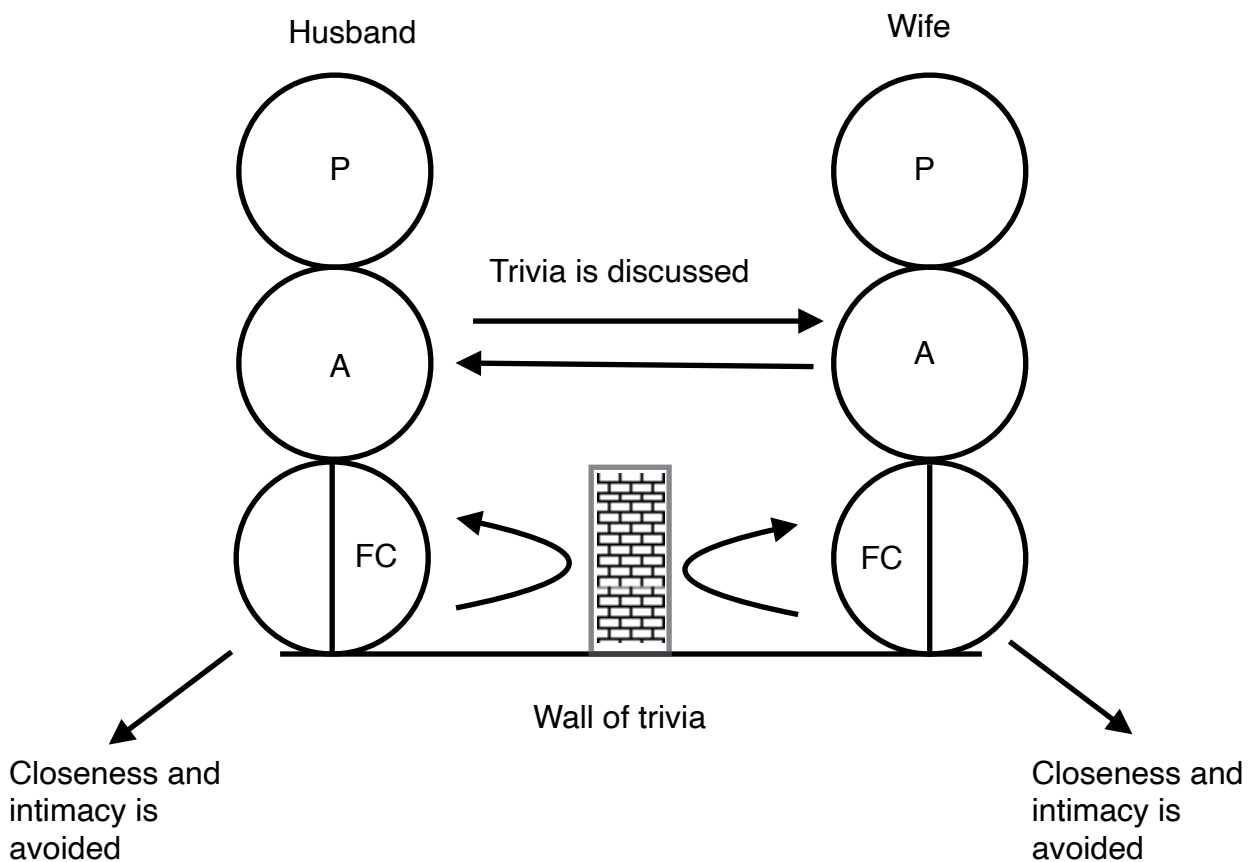


Figure 4. Wall of trivia transaction

The wall of trivia allows for two people to keep an emotional distance from each other by not allowing the Free Child of both parties to communicate with each other. So at least one person (or both) can avoid things like closeness, attachment, dependence and vulnerability. This is done in a non conflictual manner by couples who are not comfortable fighting and arguing.

The wall of trivia in essence uses the distraction technique. The couple avoid closeness or contact by distracting themselves. They talk about things other than the relationship and their feelings such as the children, the mortgage, work, sport, religion, home renovations, the garden and so forth

People want a wall of trivia in their relationship because of a fear of closeness as shown in the diagram. Or they may use it to avoid a particular issue such as talking about their marital problems or a possible divorce because it seems to daunting and big for them. As said before the wall of trivia is usually used by non conflictual couples. People can use anger to do the same to create an emotional distance in a relationship but some couples do not fight much so they use the wall of trivia instead.

A difficulty for the therapist is when the therapy becomes part of the wall of trivia for the couple. When this happens the therapy becomes part of the problem. The couple learn about things like their life scripts, unconscious motives and the games they play. They can attend many couples and relationship courses and get more and more information about why they do the things they do as a couple and individuals. They can discuss this together over and over but they never actually get to any intimacy or closeness between them. Of course the therapist needs to be alert to this.



For example in a more close and vulnerable time the husband told his wife that he is sensitive about his large nose. When she is angry at him she can call him “big nose” because she wants to hurt him. As soon as she does, his Free Child will withdraw from the relationship because it has been hurt and its trust has been violated. He told her that in confidence and she has now used it to try and hurt him when she is angry. The more intimate relationships get, the more we know the ‘sensitive spots’ of our partner. If we use that knowledge to hurt them then the Free Child will automatically withdraw from the relationship. It will automatically protect itself and you can’t not do it. So if one or both parties have a fear of intimacy then unfair fighting is a way to avoid that fear on a more permanent basis because it results in the Free Child withdrawing out of the relationship and therefore is more protected. The resulting problem is the same as with the wall of trivia, you end up in a loveless marriage or relationship. Then sooner or later the people will start looking for the emotional closeness elsewhere.

A list of some of the fair fighting rules are such as:

1. No name calling
2. No attacking a persons body image or things you know they are sensitive to.
3. No physical violence
4. Allowing both people to keep the physical distance they need to
5. No sarcasm
6. Work on small issues only
7. Agree that some issues are non negotiable
8. Agree that some issues are not to be discussed
9. No old movies
10. Negotiate a time limit
11. Don’t expect the partner to change
12. Don’t expect the fight to give a solution
13. When there is a big difference in verbal ability the lesser able person is given specific time to speak
14. Don’t threaten to abandon or leave during the course of the argument

If one sticks to these rules then the other person knows that you will fight fair when you are angry and the Free Child will not withdraw from the relationship. Some people are good at this and some are not. However if one or both parties have a fear of intimacy then one part of them will not want to stick to the rules.

## Chapter four

### Anger transactions

Anger is a very useful emotion as it allows people to achieve a variety of psychological goals. In the previous chapter it was shown that anger allows two people with a fear of intimacy to avoid intimacy. It allows them to do this without even having to acknowledging this to themselves, let alone anyone else. Couples who have repeated arguments can do this because unconsciously they have a fear of intimacy. So games like uproar are played between them and they are not aware of the unconscious motives behind the game.

### Anger transactions and separation

In the top diagram of figure 6 that illustrates the wife's experience of the relationship. She perceives herself to be intertwined and overly connected to the husband. Whilst this can initially give a sense of closeness and intimacy after time it will become smothering and the person will want to move away. At times we all want a sense of separation and a feeling of autonomy. After time the top part of the diagram will start to feel quite distressing for the wife and smothering for the husband. This happens to the wife because she never fully separated from her mother. Her original symbiosis with mother was never fully broken and resolved. Therefore as an adult she will develop the same kind of symbiotic relationships with others especially in emotionally significant relationships.

As mentioned in the previous chapter one of the uses for anger is that it pushes people apart so it becomes an integral part of the separation process between people. As the lack of separation with her husband continues eventually the wife will feel overwhelmed by that and seek to again separate out. One way to do that is by playing the game of uproar and having angry conflict with her husband such that they end up in the bottom diagram in figure 6. This will give her a sense of separation in the relationship and a feeling of autonomy which is what she craves. She will breathe a sigh of relief but as they make up after the uproar eventually she will again revert back to the top diagram in her marital relationship and the whole process begins again. If couples report a pattern of repetitive uproar followed by making up again then this may be what is happening in the relationship with at least one of them but possibly both.

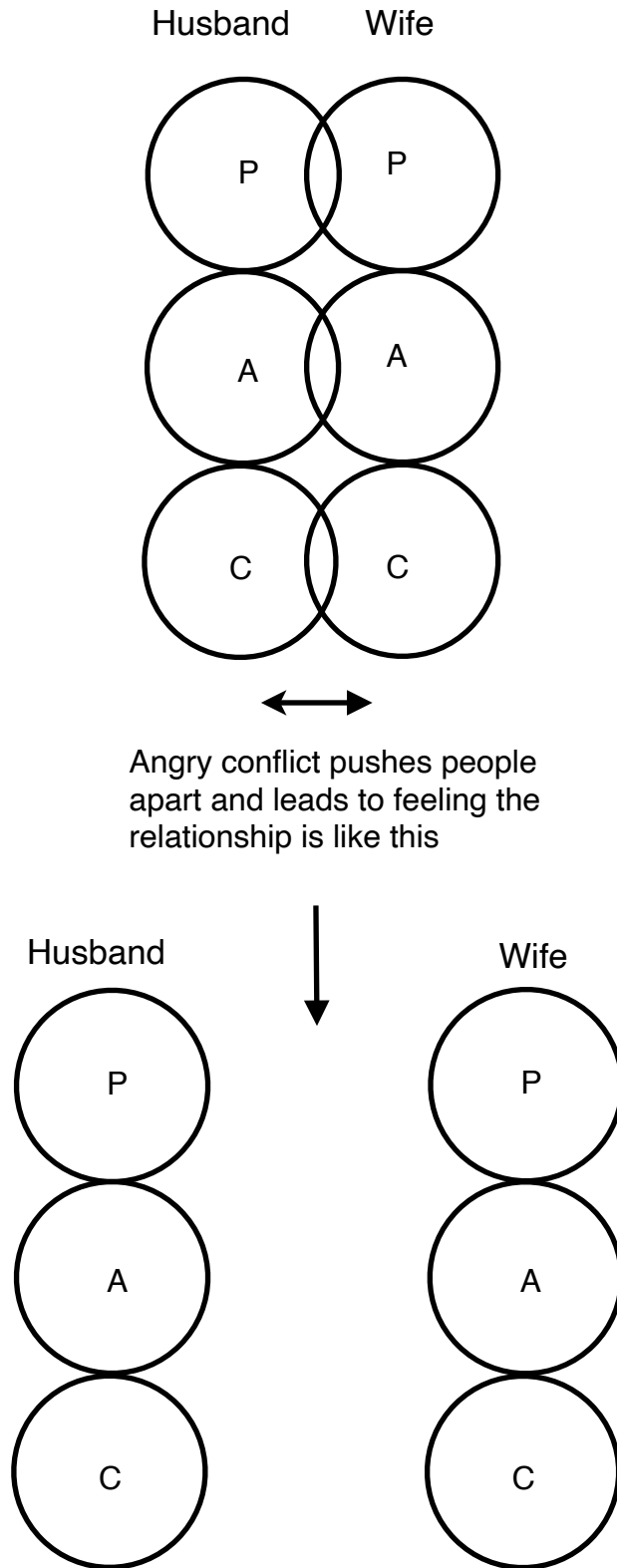


Figure 6. Anger used for psychological separation

### Anger transactions and a sense of identity

In the above transaction the process of psychological separation was discussed. This next transaction talks about the related process of individuation.

The DSM 5 discusses identity disorders and conditions where the person fails to experience a strong sense of who they are. Such as weak identity, depersonalisation, derealization, trance states, some types of amnesia or fugues, multiple personality and so forth. Some personality types can also have a weak sense of identity such as the borderline, the dependent personality, or the schizoid.

This can be drawn in ego state terms like the wife in the top diagram of figure 7. The borderline personality in particular can report this. They feel like their edges are fuzzy or blurry so there is poor sense of who am I. Thus the ego states are drawn as fuzzy lines.

What angry conflict with another person can do is give people a sense of clarity about who they are. As a result of the anger and conflict they get a sense of their boundaries becoming clearer as shown in the bottom diagram. By hitting up against another their sense of identity feels clearer and stronger which alleviates the significant distress for the person. Thus we can understand another reason why the borderline personality tends to have unstable and volatile relationships. The angry conflict gives them a clearer sense of identity but it is only temporary, so they have to keep doing it and one ends up with a volatile relationship over time.

One could say this process is not so much about separation but about individuation.  
 Separation is about what I am not  
 Individuation is about what I am

Once you separate from mother then one has to develop their own identity and people do this with varying degrees of success. One way to do this as figure 7 shows is by using anger in relationships. This is in essence a form of self harm. Many who self harm spontaneously discover that if they cut self then that affords them some kind of psychological benefit. That may be a feeling of relief from tension or the experience of feeling real.

In this situation the borderline personality may discover that if they have conflict with another person, like a therapist, then they get a feeling or sense of clarity about who they are. Their 'edges' feel more clear and concise. By doing the self destructive act of being destructive in the relationship they achieve a temporary psychological gain. In these cases self harming can develop an addictive quality because after the conflict, as the sense of clarity diminishes, over time they again feel the need to do more self harming to get it back.



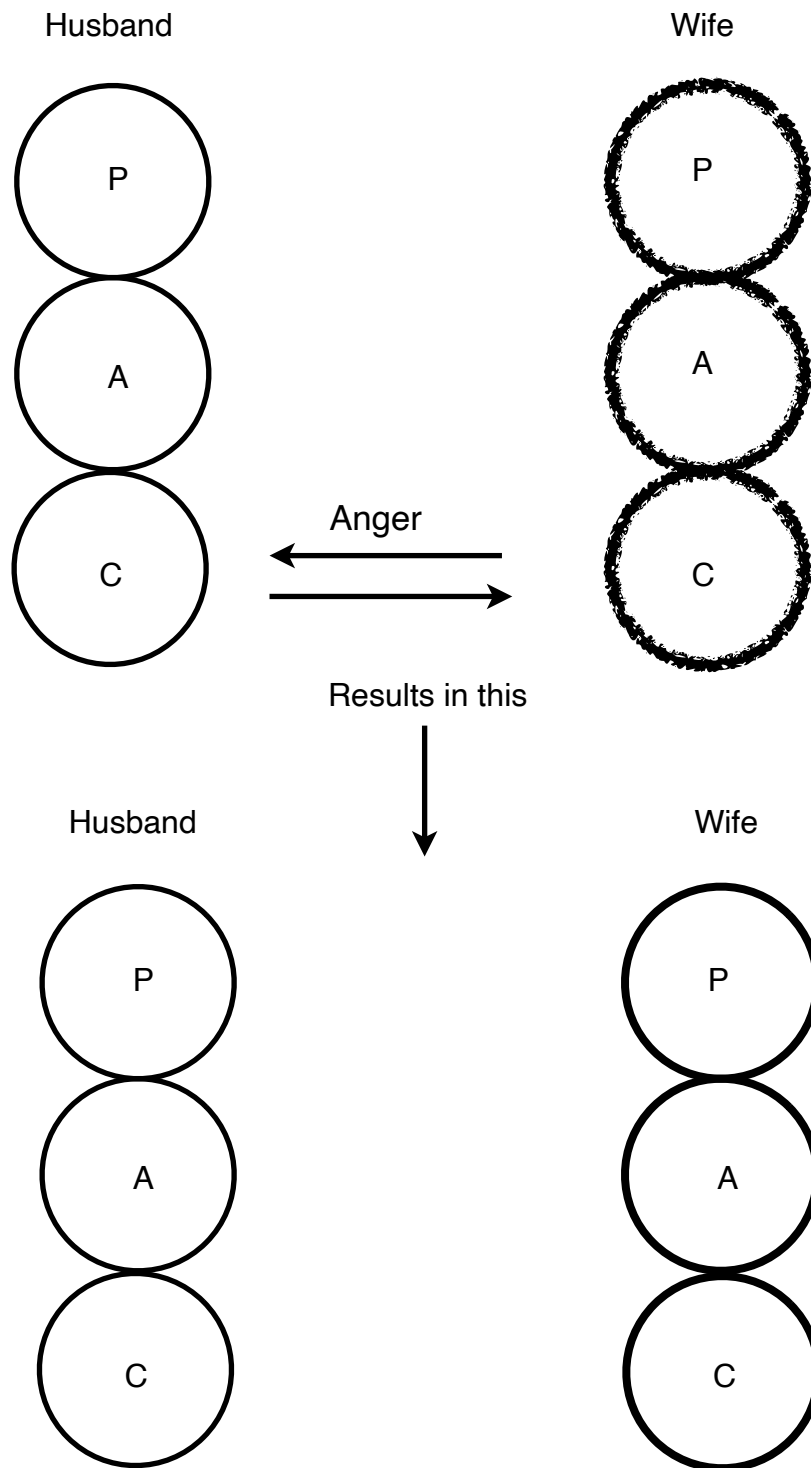


Figure 7. Anger used for individuation.

## Chapter 5

### Controlling anger transactions

Anger is unique amongst all the emotions because of the danger it poses to us. We are all genetically programmed to be alert to danger in our environments. The survival of the human species has included our ability to identify potential threats and to avoid them or nullify them. With anger there is always the danger of violence to us. Whereas when someone is sad they pose no threat to us or when they are scared there is no increased likelihood they might be dangerous or threatening.

Hitting or physically assaulting another person unfortunately is not foreign to the human psyche. One simply has to watch children interacting in a group. It is often not long before some child will hit, push, bite, pinch or shove another child when they get angry or frustrated. This is not uncommon behaviour for children to display when they are playing in groups. There can also be name calling, threats, intimidation, attempts to exclude people, humiliate or embarrass others. Generally speaking boys tend to use more physical expressions of their frustration and girls use more verbal or psychological expressions of their frustration.

This means children do not have to learn to hit, instead they have to learn how not to hit. It is natural for a child to use some kind of physical (or psychological) violence when it is frustrated or angry. In this sense it could be said that it is an expression of the Free Child ego state. It is natural to humans when they are in childhood. We all understand the link between anger and violence because we all did it in childhood in response to our own anger or frustration. This of course never leaves us as we grow up, we all have a Free Child ego state as adults but we have also developed the Parent and Adult ego states. It is this development of Adult and Parent ego states that is meant to control the expression of the Free Child frustration and aggression. See figure 8.

The Parent and Adult ego states are meant to stop the Child ego state from expressing its anger in anti social ways. Fortunately most of us develop the Parent and Adult to a degree where it can modify the expression of the Free Child anger. Of course in some that does not happen and in anger management courses the goal is to identify problems with the person's ego states in this way and then attempt to help them grow to a degree where they can be effective.

### Manipulation transactions

This hypervigilance to anger that all people have can sometimes be used manipulatively, especially by males in dealing with females. Some men learn that anger and the threat that it poses can be used to manipulate females. If there is a disagreement the man can begin to display some anger and then the woman will back down and give him what he wants. Often this is unconscious for one or both parties. See figure 9.

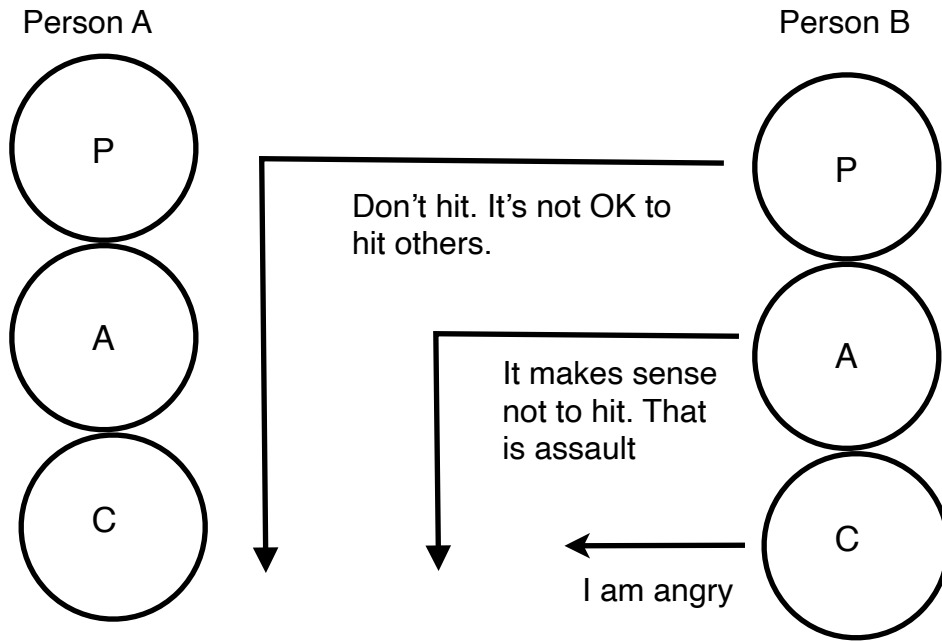


Figure 8. Controlled anger transaction

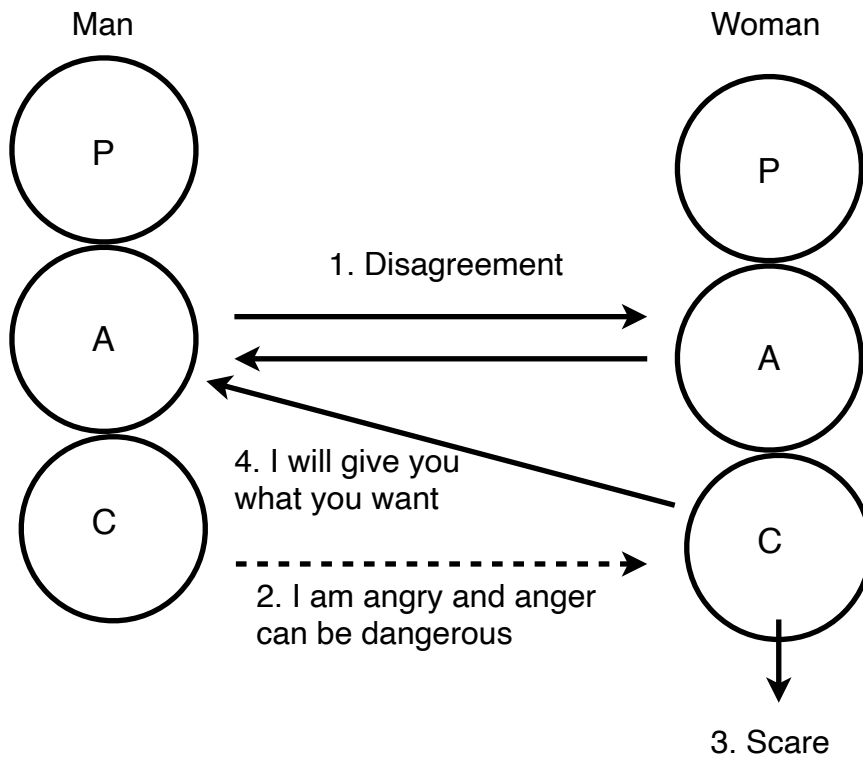


Figure 9. Anger manipulation transaction

It begins with some disagreement between the two people. Eventually the male starts to show some anger and that involves an ulterior transaction from his Child saying that this is dangerous for her. He is using his anger to seek the powerful position in the relationship. In response to this she feels scared, she moves into Adapted Child and then gives into his demand. As mentioned before this can be outside of awareness for either or both parties. All relationships have unwritten rules on how they will transact and communicate and this is one that can happen between males and females. Once it has happened multiple times it becomes well known and almost 'natural' for both.

There is however a corollary to this from the female side. See figure 10. Although she does not use anger to manipulate the male. It begins when the man and woman have some kind of disagreement. After a little time she starts to cry and this sends an ulterior transaction to the man that she is hurt and distressed by this dispute with him. If she is lucky he then feels with guilt or possibly compassion and empathy. If he does then he can switch ego states into his caring parent. If this happens then he gives into her demands in this dispute. The woman takes the power in the relationship from the Child ego state position.

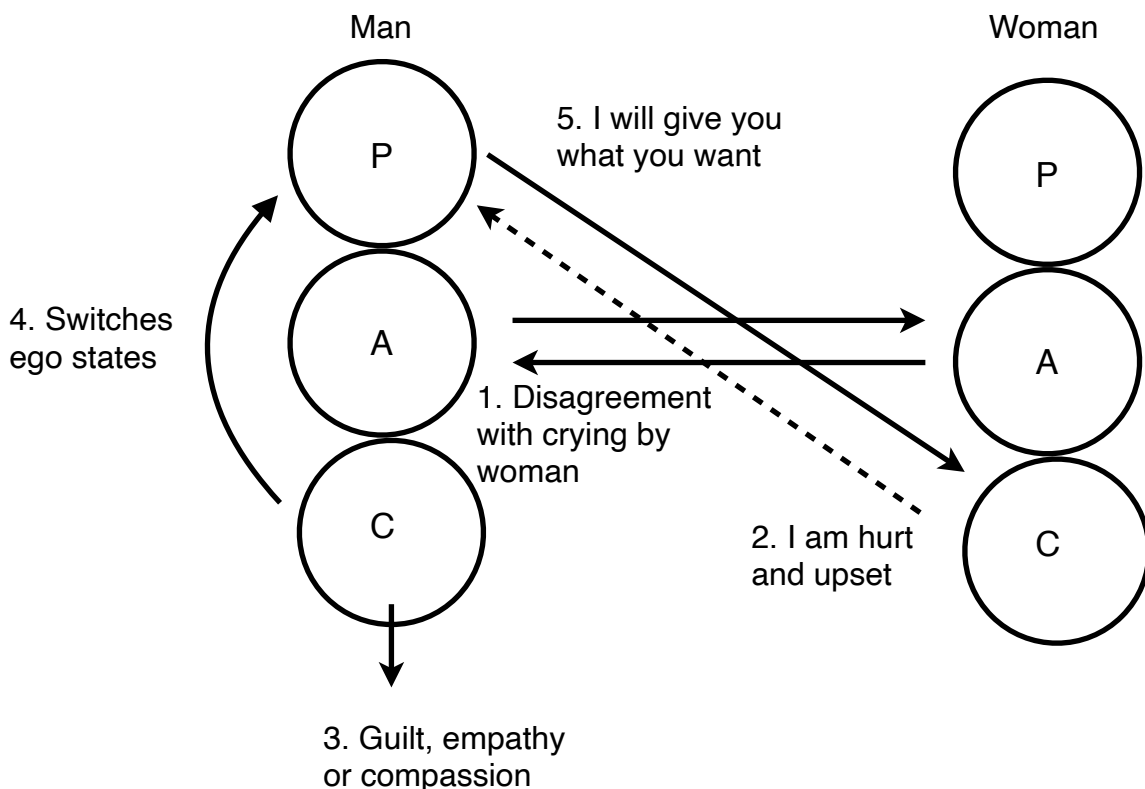


Figure 10. Sadness manipulation transaction

As I said previously once this has happened a few times it becomes almost automatic where both parties are not even aware they are doing it. All relationships have these unwritten rules on how to relate to each other and most of the time couples are not conscious of what they are doing.

Manipulation can also occur with a child's tantrum like anger. Sometimes children can overwhelm mother by making a very dramatic display of anger. This usually happens when the mother for some reason is a bit scared of or unable to correctly handle anger. She may herself have been subjected to dangerous or violent anger as a child. She may have seen anger in the household as a child, that was particularly frightening. Alternatively there may have never been any kind of anger shown at all in her original home so she simply does not know how to cope with an angry person.

Sometimes children have temper tantrums where the child makes a very loud and dramatic display of their anger. This is a primal type of anger as it is directionless anger. The child is consumed by its anger and lashes out at anybody or anything near to it with hitting, biting, scratching and so forth. Often the child can even direct the anger towards itself. This child is incapable of reason at that time and its anger goes in any direction. It has not learned yet to be able to identify what it is angry about and then direct its anger at that. So in this sense it is very childlike anger and the usual response is to simply physically restrain the child until it has calmed down and then it can be talked with.

It is possible that some of these gun rampages that we hear of from time to time where the person goes into public and simply shoots multiple people are this type of anger release as well. They often have little motive and no clear direct focus like in a tantrum. The shooting of the people is indiscriminate, directionless and seemingly has no point. The person may eventually even direct the shooting at self. This is similar in quality to a tantrum display of anger as shown in figure 11.

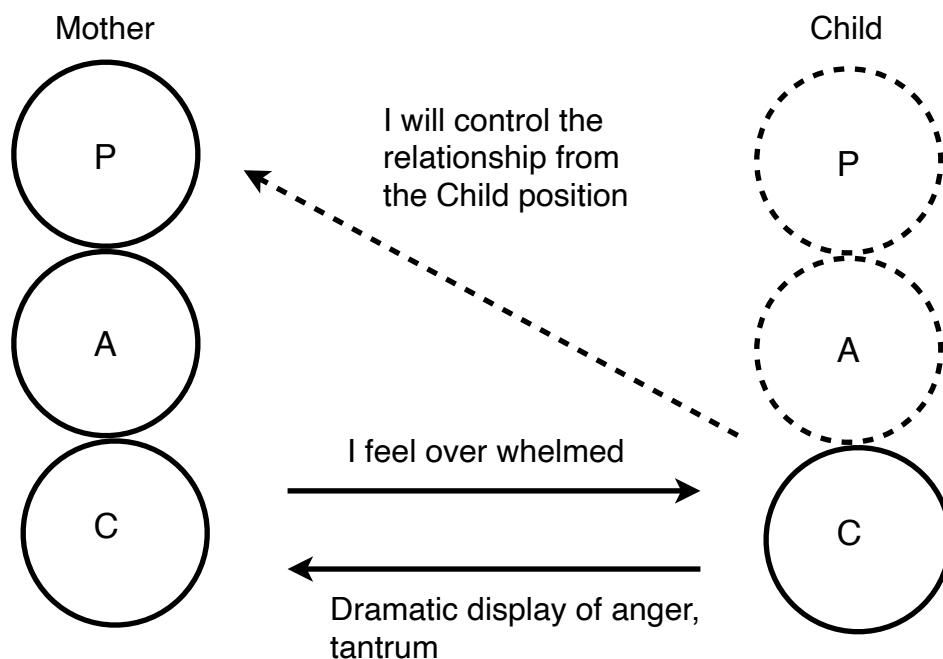


Figure 11. Temper tantrum anger manipulation

The young child has a poorly developed Adult and Parent ego state which gives the anger expression an immature quality. The child begins with a dramatic temper tantrum type of display of its anger. The mother then feels overwhelmed by this and gives into the child's demands at that time. The child sees that it gets what it wants by this display of anger and learns to control the relationship from the Child ego state position. The temper tantrums in the child then become repetitive when it wants something to which mother originally says "No", and the young child controls the relationship with the use of its anger. Mother is manipulated by the child overwhelming her with its anger.

#### Anger and assertion transaction

In child development it is said that the 3 year old is assentive whilst the 4 year old is assertive, where it learns that it has control over its boundaries. The 4 year old child knows that it is physically separate from mother and has a boundary between mother and self. The child at this stage wants to gain control of the boundary it senses and learn how to use it. Through his at times negative attitude the child is saying, "You can only come in, if I let you in". At this stage he is very aware of his personal space and practices exercising it. People with assertion problems may be fixated and never fully passed this stage of development.

A lack of assertion can be due to a problem at the behavioural level or at the personality level. Firstly, a person can simply lack assertion behavioural skills and assertion training courses are good in these instances. One simply learns about the the basic assertion skills like broken record and fogging and then can be more assertive. Assertion problems here are due to a lack of information and this is relatively easy to remedy.

This is not so for other unassertive people where the cause is more at a personality level. This lack of assertion is more ingrained in the personality and can be due to not successfully completing the 3 year old childhood stage of development. The child never fully learns about personal boundary control which is one of the main goals for the four year old child to achieve. He does this by trying out his power. His boastfulness reaches towering heights and he vigorously says 'I won't', "I'm mad", "You are bad", does name calling and so forth. He is exerting his personal boundary control and if dealt with correctly by the parents he will learn how to be assertive and have a sense of control over who comes into his personal space and who does not.

This is not just about assertion skills like broken record, instead it involves the use of anger. See figure 12

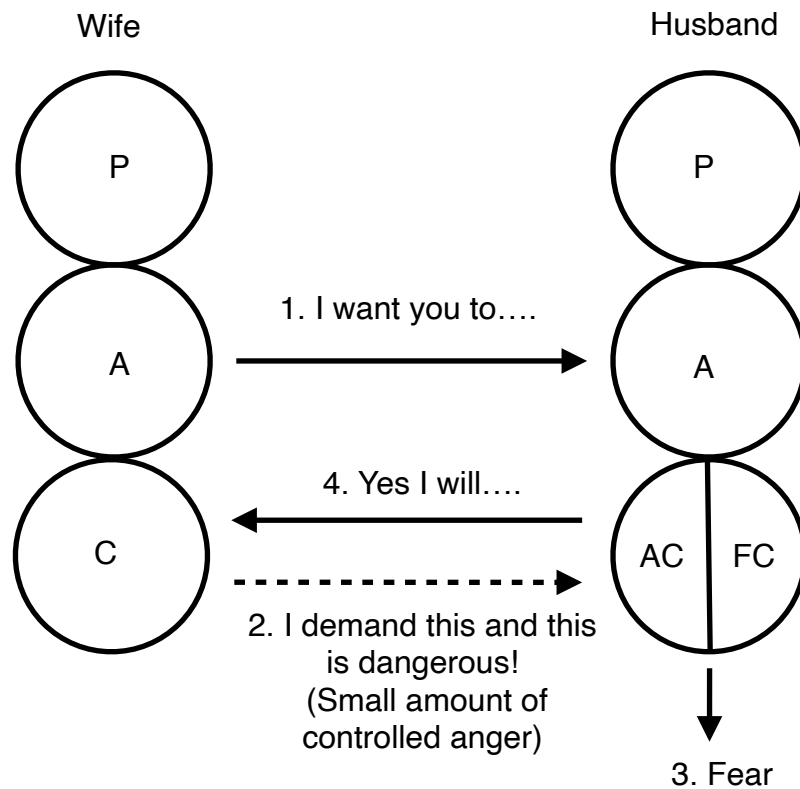


Figure 12. Assertion transaction

With assertion there is an Adult ego state request but underneath there is also an ulterior transaction that includes a small amount of goal directed anger. This turns the transaction from a request into an assertive demand. Without the angry ulterior transaction the other person will perceive it as a simple request which is not hard to respond to negatively. If however the person makes the request with an angry Child demand then the other person perceives it quite differently. At the beginning of this chapter I pointed out how anger is a unique emotion amongst all the feelings because it represents a personal threat to the person receiving it. People are very perceptive in picking up signs of potential danger and what the ulterior transaction is saying in figure 12 is, "This is a dangerous situation. My anger may increase". As a consequence the other person is more likely to move into Adapted Child ego state and respond affirmatively to the request.

In one way you could see this as a threat and an attempt to intimidate. Of course all the books on assertion like Fensterheim and Baer(1979) and Smith(1985) deny such a proposal. They respond to this by distinguishing between between assertion and aggression. They say that aggression is the negative one where the goal is to bully and intimidate the other person and assertion is the good one where there is a straight transaction with no bullying that avoids a win lose situation. I have my doubts about this and these people are just attempting to sanitise a transaction by psychologising it to make it end up sounding OK. By distinguishing it from aggression which we all know sounds like a bad thing.

Sometimes in life there are situations where two people want two different things. You have a toaster that is malfunctioning and want to return it to the shop where the shop assistant does not want to accept and tries to deflect you back to the manufacturer. Bringing anger into the situation as an ulterior transaction when you know that will induce anxiety in the other, as all people are genetically programmed

for that - How is that not a threat or intimidation? Whichever way you say it, it is still using fear in the other person to get what you want. Hopefully we can accept it for what it is, not a particularly pleasant form of human communication. But let's not lie to ourselves and others because we want to make human nature all nice and rosy.

As mentioned before the child learns to attach the angry ulterior transaction to their statements around the age of 3 or 4 years when they are exercising the boundaries of their own personal space. If the person does not learn this then their assertion problems in adulthood are more deeper than simply not knowing the assertiveness skills at a behavioural level. Unsuccessful completion of this stage can result in difficulties like the dependent personality disorder, pathological lack of assertion and a strong please me driver. The inability to separate out emotions between self and others can lead to all kinds of mood disorders, couvade syndrome, relationship difficulties where feelings get mixed up between the people in the relationship and this can included the borderline personality. Resolution of this pathological lack of assertiveness requires resolving the fixation at this stage of development. A longer and deeper psychological process is required for this.



## Chapter six

### The perfume transaction

There is significant evidence that smells can bias a person's perceptions, effect their thinking and behaviour all at the unconscious level (De Luca and Botelho (2019), Holland, Hendriks and Aarts (2005) and Li, Moallem, Paller and Gottfried (2007)). Indeed when people are conscious of the smell the effects are reduced. That is, the effects of smell work best and are most influential when the person is unaware of the odour and its effects on them.

In the storage of smell perceptions in the brain there is little verbal encoding or rehearsal which means odours are stored in a non verbal way and it is the right hemisphere of the brain that is dominant in the identification and retention of smells. The perception of smell is most often unconscious and non verbal according to Wassann and Stockhaus (2007). Right hemisphere, non verbal perceptions are a function of the Child ego state not the Adult. The Adult is usually associated with left brain hemisphere function and hence has little to do with scent perception or meaning.

Furthermore Walsh(2020) and Iravani et al (2021) note that associations of smell to events are learnt in childhood and are very resistant to change because smell and emotion are stored as one memory. Childhood tends to be the period in which you create the basis for smells you will like and hate for the rest of your life.

Some people report they wear perfume at least partly for their own benefit. Regardless of this perfume will also impact those people that pick up the scent on the woman and hence it can be seen as an ulterior transaction as shown in figure 13.

It is an attempt by the woman to invite the other into good feelings so it can be seen as a gift from her to the other. Furthermore, as stated above smells will quickly take people into their unconscious and make connections to childhood which most are not even aware of. Essentially the person is invited unconsciously into their Child ego state. So the person shifts from their Adult to Child. In addition the Adult is further destabilised because by sensing the scent the person is moved to the right side of their brain functioning (not the Adult side) and unconscious material is brought up for them. This will make the other more likely to be cooperative, amenable to suggestions and more open to communication.

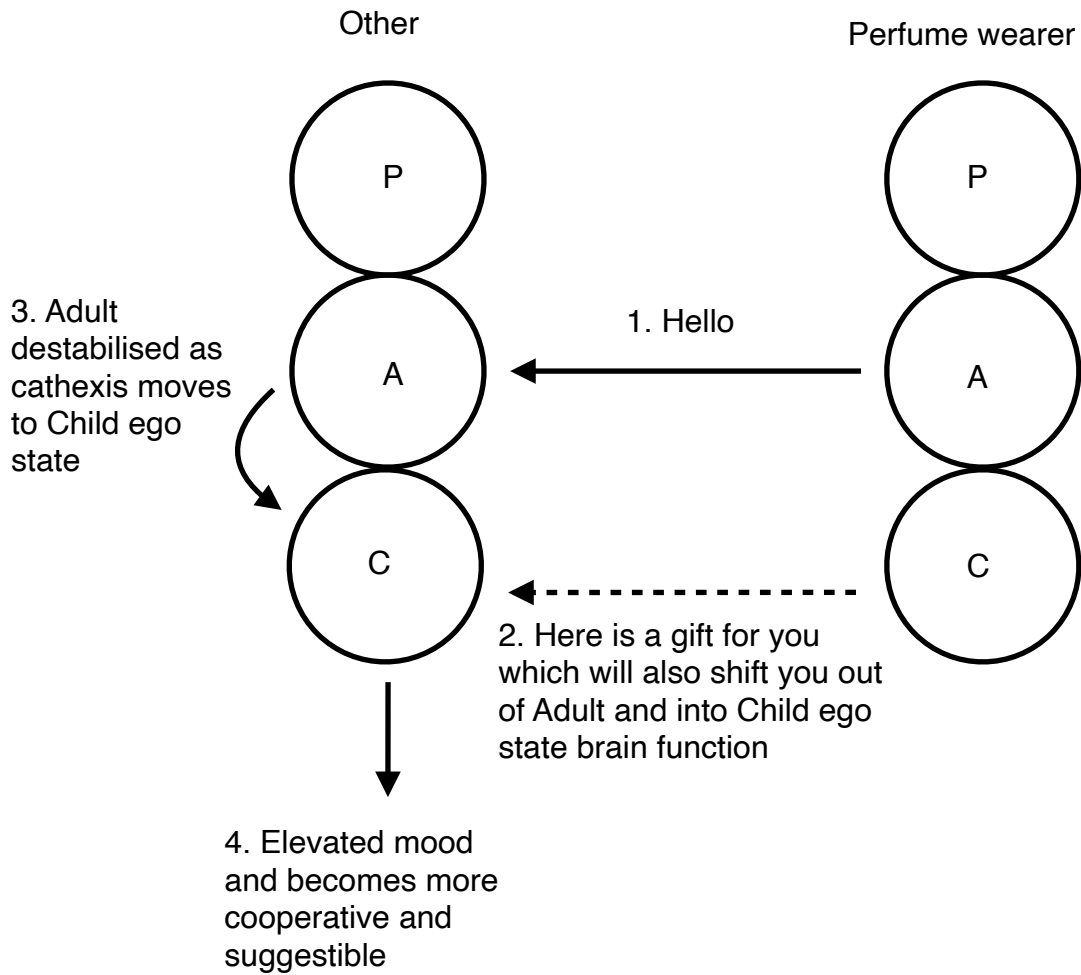


Figure 13. The perfume transaction

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