

[Two Quick Ways To Sort Out Your Hassles: Transactional Analysis and WHEE](#)

Transactional Analysis (TA) was developed by Eric Berne over 50 years ago. It still stands as one of the best maps for navigating the inner wellsprings and outer seas of the human condition.

Berne simplified the language of psychoanalysis so that everyone can understand it. He noted that we all have inner ego states (regardless of our age) that serve important functions in life.

- An inner Parent tells us what we should and shouldn't do. This ego state was programmed by our own parents, school teachers, religious teachers and authorities in our broader society. This inner Parent can speak with a supportive voice or a critical tone.

e.g. "You can do better!" vs. "You sure screwed up again, didn't you!"

- An inner Adult ego section computes the logical likelihood of our succeeding in getting what we want in life, taking into account our inner and outer awarenesses, needs, wishes and relationships

- An inner Child ego state wants to express whatever it feels and to have what it wants when it wants it. Our inner child may express itself in a simple, natural, unfettered way; it may adapt its expressions of feelings in order to be accepted/ not be rejected and to have approval of parents and other authority figures; or it may rebel in order to get its own way in the face of opposition or criticisms.

e.g. "I sure would like to eat a piece of that cake right now!" vs. "I know it's polite to wait till everyone else is having dessert too." vs. "The heck with it! I deserve a treat right now."

This is an extremely helpful map for self-healing. If you find yourself unhappy within yourself or in conflict with other people, and you listen to how they are speaking, to how you are speaking and to your own inner ego state voices, you may very quickly identify why there is unhappiness or friction in your life.

Fourteen year-old Tom was struggling with his math assignment. In frustration, he slammed his book on the floor and stormed towards the front door. Fran, his mother, was concerned that he might use poor judgment and get in trouble if he left the house in this state of mind. She yelled at him, "You come back here and finish your work before you go out!" A yelling match followed, in which both Fran and Tom shouted angry, hurtful words at each other. Tom stomped up the stairs and slammed the door to his room.

This, just one in a long series of such interchanges between Tom and his parents, led them to seek counseling.

Having a safe space in which to air their feelings was a big help to Tom and his parents. They had been arguing and fighting like that for several years, and all agreed they wanted to get along better but seemed stuck in patterns of frustration and anger.

WHEE was their first step towards sorting out their hassles. WHEE is Energy Psychology a rapidly effective self-healing affirmation technique for releasing stresses. Everyone was able to use WHEE to let go of a lot of their angers towards each other. This immediately improved the atmosphere between them and enabled them to listen better to each other and to identify the ego states that were contributing to their hassles.

Tom was able to let go of much of his self-criticisms over his struggles with math. He began to see that he had an overly-critical inner parent - that was belittling him and discounting his intelligence.

Fran released some of her frustrations over feeling inadequate to help Tom with school work that was stretching the limits of his patience. She, too, came to sense her inner critical parent voice was blaming her - for being a poor mom.

Bob, Tom's father, after lessening his own anger, promised to come home earlier from work so he could help with the homework. This was the first supportive-parent voice we identified in the family.

Tom and Fran came to see that they were having negative responses to each other. They were reacting critically to the tone of what was being said rather than to the content.

When Fran next saw Tom upset, she responded from Supportive Parent mode, "Goodness, that math is really frustrating you!" Tom responded from his natural child (hurt, frustrated and angry), "I don't know if I can handle this math!" The discussion that followed was one in which both looked at all the problem solving options.

It is extremely common to find that you and others respond more to the feeling tone of a message than to its content. So if you get upset or are on the receiving end of an upset response, you might ask yourself, "What feeling tones are stirring us here?" This may rapidly help you understand which ego voice you are coming from when you find yourself heading into conflicts. As you practice these methods, the alarm bells will go off when the hassles seem illogical relative to the content of your verbal exchanges and relative to your wishes and intents.

The second helpful aspect to this map is that it immediately suggests alternatives to the conflictual exchanges. You could change your tone of voice and feeling focus from Critical to Supportive Parent. When tensions are running high, a time out to reduce the stress levels with WHEE can then facilitate smoother, more harmonious interactions.

About the Author

I'm a holistic psychiatric psychotherapist, passionate to teach self-healing, bodymind approaches and personal spiritual awareness. I authored Healing Research, Vol. 1-3 and many articles on holistic healing; edit the [International Journal of Healing & Caring](#), a Founding Diplomate of the American Board of Holistic Medicine; and appear internationally on radio and TV.

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