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Theme: Boundaries in Relationships

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EDITORIAL SECTION

Editors' Note

Welcome to the fifth issue of the SAJTA (formerly SAATA Journal). We apologize for not publishing the previous issue, owing to insufficient content and tight schedules of the editorial team. It was a hard decision to do so.

As the first publication of SAJTA, we have combined two issues - Aug 2017 & Jan 2018.

We, as part of the editorial team, believe that the success of SAJTA is best seen when the journal is used for academic discussions and promotion of Transactional Analysis in other professions. With this objective, we appeal to all the readers to share this journal with your training groups, initiate conversations to discuss the articles, critique and share your thoughts with the author and journal team. This will help us realize one of our objectives. To meet our second objective, we have decided to invite articles from non-Transactional Analysis authors relevant to mental health, organizations and education fields. We want to be an inclusive journal that helps promote the value of the theory in the South Asian region.

We are happy to introduce Nisha Rao, the newest member of our editorial board. Nisha is an advanced trainee in the field of Education, who brings in fresh energy to the team. We welcome Nisha who has contributed to this issue, not just in reviewing the articles, but also in the final publishing.

At SAATA, the new year began with the ritualistic MLL (Multi-Level Learning), a weekend of excitement and stimulation, where TA trainees and trainers across the country and from overseas met to co-create the learning process. This year's MLL theme was "Boundaries -

Building walls and bridges”. The same theme flows into this issue of the journal “Boundaries in Relationships.” We have an interesting mix of articles, which dive into various elements and layers of this theme.

The first article by Annie Cariapa, throws light on the different attachment patterns that children develop as a result of the caregiving they receive at an early age and how this impacts the boundaries they establish in their relationships as adults. Annie illustrates her writing through two brief, yet interesting, case studies on how she used the concept of script and life positions to diagnose and connect to the attachment styles. What is particularly interesting is to understand how Episcrits (Fanita,1969) can create unhealthy boundaries in a parent – child relationship and how then, working with the client using the modality of ‘family constellations’, proved effective.

The next article that could invite a lot of curiosity and discussions for further research! Tony White’s article on Projective Identification - a Rebuttal, is a new take on the explanation of how game pairing occurs. He negates projective identification as a way to understand game pairing and instead introduces the idea of Occam’s razor, as a simpler explanation on how individuals enter into psychological games.

Sailaja Manacha’s article is on Respect and Value in Relationships. Sai goes deep into the origin of how we develop healthy or unhealthy boundaries and effectively connects it to the concept of Script and Drama triangle. The highlight of the article is the inclusion of reflective exercises and some guidelines to work towards building healthy boundaries.

Our next article by Srinath Nadathur has a different flavor. Srinath is an Agile coach working with software professionals. Agile coaches and teams work in a collaborative way with open communication and transparency as their main tenets. Srinath, in his easy and free flowing

style of writing, reveals how he has set up contracts in his working relationships to help clarify the boundaries and responsibilities among various roles and relationships.

Last and surely not least, is the article by C Suriyaprakash on “Ethical dilemma” is the third in his series of articles on Ethics. As Transactional Analysts we follow the ITAA/EATA code of ethics – statements and the ethics matrix, guided by the five universal principles. Suriya, in his article, provides the framework of the Bess model (Robinson, 2003), especially in the organizational context when dealing with ethical dilemmas. The model emphasizes on synergy; not necessarily choosing between one or the other but considering both and using values as the guiding force in making our choices when in dilemma. Suriya brings a fitting finale to his writing by comparing ‘Dharma’ to Berne’s concept of Physis, which ensures welfare of human beings and which eternally strives to grow!

We hope you enjoy reading the articles as much as we did putting it all together.

We appreciate the authors, who were swift in their response to our review team’s comments.

Happy reading!

Deepak Dhananjaya, Managing Editor, SAJTA

Ragini Rao, Co-Editor (SAJTA) and VP – Research & Development (SAATA)

Guidelines from the Editorial Board

From our experience in editing the SAATA journal thus far, we have put together some guidelines for contributors to future editions of the journal:

- Write on topics – experiences, opinions, research - which can be explained primarily using transactional analysis concepts.
- Keep sentences short and precise. Where there are multiple ideas, construct them as two or more sentences.
- Use simple and easy-to-understand words. Remember that your audience may not be transactional analysis literate or even use English as their first language.
- Avoid the use of casual phrases, expressions and slangs unless quoting verbatim.
- Follow APA style of formatting, references, citations and bibliography (<http://www.apastyle.org/>).
- Review the paper for redundancy where the same idea is expressed multiple times.
- Double-check transactional analysis terminologies and their definitions, e.g. names of games, components of script, drivers, injunctions etc.
- Quote the original authors of the concepts.
- Provide English translations to any vernacular quotation that are made in the article.
- Total word count should be less than 2000 words.
- The article should not be published anywhere before.
- Figures should be grouped as one image. Label figures and tables.

- Submit the article in word format.
- As part of our learning, we have now decided to only accept single part articles that align to the theme of the issue. Multi-part series will only be considered on a case-by-case basis, depending on the relevance and timeliness of the topic.

We hope this is useful as you all contemplate contributing to the journal.

For queries, feedback and suggestions, write to us at journal@saata.org.

Theme for July 2018 Issue

“Impact of Culture”

-on individuals, communities and organisations

Deadline for submissions: June 15th 2018.

Email : journal@saata.org

Please follow the [guidelines](#) before you submit.

Editorial Board

Volume 4, Number 1, January 2018

Deepak Dhananjaya, Managing Editor

Nisha Rao, Co-Editor

Ragini Rao TSTA (Psychotherapy), Co-Editor

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TRANSACTIONAL ANALYSIS IN PROFESSIONAL CONTEXT

I Here.. You There: Separate & Connected

Annie Cariapa

Abstract:

Human development takes places between the polarities of symbiotic needs and the desire for autonomy. In this article, I explore the early relationship in the mother-child dyad that lays the foundation of the Script and is the basis for some of the adult patterns in human relationships. I explore boundaries in the context of Life Positions. I also give 2 case studies and a brief summary of using a systemic methodology for working with a client through their boundary issues.

The last 50 years have seen the accumulation of studies supporting the idea that the emotional quality of our earliest attachment experience is perhaps the single most important influence on human development and human relationships. John Bowlby took into account the actual relational environment that shapes the earliest stages of human consciousness. The Relational approach in Transactional Analysis stresses the importance of understanding the relationships and the relational aspects in human bonding.

Ainsworth (1971, 1978) developed the Strange Situation procedure as a way of going beyond measures of simple infant behaviors to capture qualities of the mother-child relationship. She noted that attunement, or sensitivity, requires that the caregiver perceive, make sense of, and respond in a timely and effective manner to the actual moment-to-moment signals sent by the child.

Further research on adult attachment shows that the same motivation system that gives rise to the close emotional bond between parents and their children, is responsible for the bond that develops between adults in emotionally intimate relationships. Berne (Berne, 1972, p. 446) defined the Script as “a life plan made in early childhood, reinforced by the parents, justified by subsequent events, and culminating in a chosen alternative.” Transactional Analysts know that people can get ‘lost in familiar places’ as they continually recreate their earliest patterns of interactions across the lifespan.

In her landmark development of the Strange Situation Protocol study, Ainsworth was able to capture qualities of the mother-child relationship. She distinguished between secure and anxious attachment. Some secure infants strongly seek physical contact, are reassured by it and return to play, while others warmly greet their attachment figure. But what they all have in common is that they are active in initiating renewed engagement with the caregiver. By contrast, those with "anxious attachment" either actively avoid their caregivers upon reunion or fail to be comforted by them. Early attachments with caregivers lay the foundation for the capacity to individuate and have healthy relationships. (*fig 1*)

Children with **secure attachment** patterns feel confident that the attachment figure will be available to meet their needs. They use the attachment figure as a safe base to explore the environment and seek the attachment figure in times of distress.

Someone with secure attachment basically says, “I’m worthy of being seen, my emotions are reliable and I can have needs that will be respected.”

With secure attachment there is a propensity to healthy integration of both attuned and mis-attuned experiences.

People with a history of secure attachments tend to operate mostly from a position of I+U+

(fig 2)

They have a clear sense of self with spaces between self-other boundaries. They don't do things to hurt others nor do they allow others to do hurtful things to them. They tend to have more attuned interactions with others.

(Figure 1, adapted from Kaplan, Capace, & Clyde, 1984, p. 116)
 (Figure 2, Vann Joines, 1988, p.186)

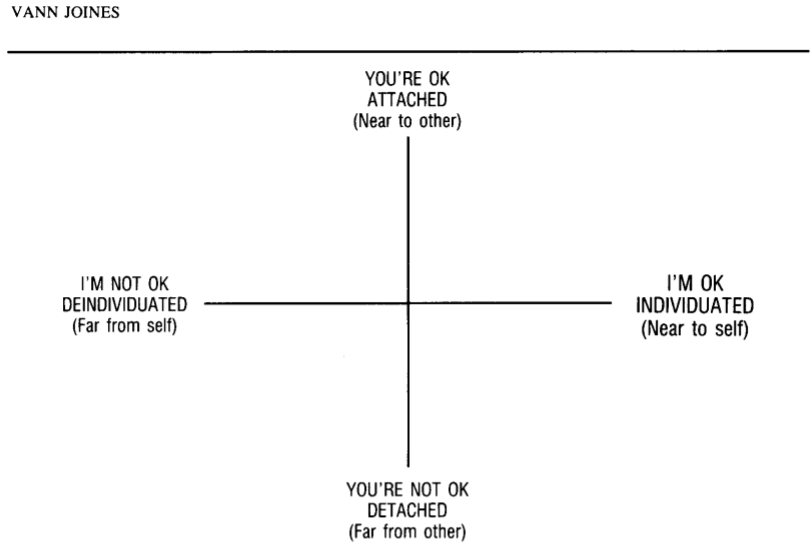
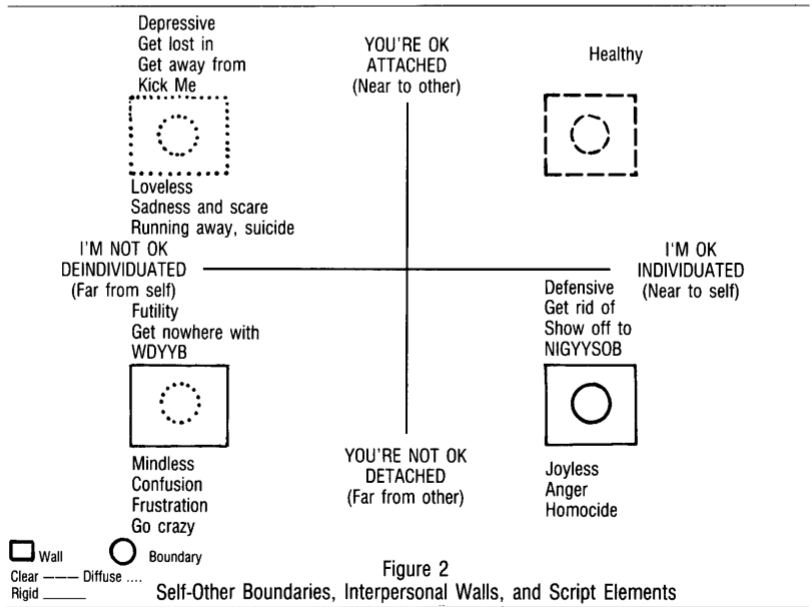


Figure 1
 A Bidimensional View of Interpersonal Distance Superimposed Upon a Unidimensional One
 (Adapted from Kaplan, Capace, & Clyde, 1984, p. 115)



Children with **insecure avoidant** patterns are very independent of the attachment figure both physically and emotionally (Behrens, Hesse, & Main, 2007). They do not seek contact with the attachment figure when distressed. Such children are likely to have a caregiver who is insensitive and rejecting of their needs. The attachment figure may withdraw from helping and is often unavailable during times of emotional distress.

Someone with avoidant attachment says, “I haven’t got what I need from people who take care of me, so I am going to survive by not needing anything from anybody.”

People with avoidant attachment patterns may operate mostly from the defensive position of I+U- (fig 2). They have relationships where they may say, “I am OK, absolutely” or “I don’t need her.” They are closed about themselves, and internal boundaries around sense of self and external boundaries around them and others tend to be more rigid in order to keep people at a distance. However, the other person can feel pushed away and develop a coldness in the relationship. This justifies the script that “others are not there for me”. ‘Getting rid of’ is the position that is taken here. In I+U- position, people tend to get angry and they look for and find the blemishes of the other.

The third attachment style that was identified was **insecure ambivalent** (also called insecure resistant). This behavior results from an inconsistent level of response to their needs from the primary caregiver. Here, children adopt an ambivalent behavioral style towards the attachment figure. The child will commonly exhibit clingy and dependent behavior, but will be rejecting of the attachment figure when they engage in interaction.

A person with insecure ambivalent attachment patterns tends to operate from a depressive position of I-U+ and often don't feel safe in their relationships (*fig 2*). They have diffused internal and external boundaries. At the same time they find it difficult to move away from the relationship. According to Kaplan, Capace, and Clyde (1984) their typical pattern is to initially "get lost in" the other and then when they feel abused to "get away from." In I-U+ position, people tend to get sad and afraid. They may also move into a position of I-U- when they sometimes feel overwhelmed by feelings of confusion and stuckness.

Disorganised attachment was added as a fourth classification by Mary Main (1990), and indicated a disruption or flooding of the attachment system (e.g. by fear). People with disorganised/disoriented attachment patterns have overt displays of fear, contradictory behaviours or emotions occurring simultaneously or sequentially, sometimes going into a freezing mode or dissociated.

It was noted that caregivers of people with disorganised attachment were often threatening to their child's safety. In times of distress the child wanted to turn to a safe figure but it was the very figures that were supposed to protect them that were threatening to them. The child did not have anyone to turn to for safety.

I think that people with disorganised attachment tend to operate mostly from a stuck position of I-U- (*fig 2*). They have diffused boundaries around their sense of self. They look to others for confirmation of OKness but as others are seen as not okay they reject what the others offer.

Typically they would say, "I can't be OK and neither can you". (Vann Joines, 1988). In I-U- position, people have a sense of futility, frustration and confusion. With disorganised attachment

patterns, I have noted in my work as a therapist, that people also move to I-U+ as they are unsure about themselves and try to copy others. They can also be highly critical of themselves.

The four attachment styles are seen as overlapping in people, although one style of attachment may have predominance.

Working with boundary issues in therapy:

One of the very effective ways that I work with boundary issues is with the methodology of Family constellation work, developed by Bert Hellinger (1993). Family constellation is a systemic psychology and we can clearly see how relationships and boundary problems play out in the current scenario and the trans-generational script patterns that it follows. The facilitator holds a fine balance of working with energy, order and facts. The final resolution of “I here..You there” is one which allows the client to individuate and stand in a space that is both separate and connected to the other with healthy internal and external boundaries.

Case 1: Working with the Episcrypt (English, 1969)

In one constellation, it was seen that the mother of the client had injunctions of ‘don’t belong’ and ‘don’t be you’ and tended to feel helpless and powerless. The episcrypt was apparent as the mother had made unconscious invitations to her daughter (the client as a child), to take care of her. In an unconscious movement in her childhood, the client took on the responsibility of parenting the parent. Even as an adult, the client was no longer free to be herself. The needs of her mother and her own needs were blurred, as there was no clear separation in the boundaries of self and other. The client experienced unexpressed stuckness, rage and guilt with the mother, moving back and forth from positions of I-U+ and I-U-.

Through the process of family constellation work, “I here..You there” was an important movement to I+U+ for the client as she relinquished her role and bigness as a parent to her parent, become the right size as the daughter to her mother, and moved out of the episcrypt. Moving out of the symbioses helped the client to feel liberated and free.

Case 2: Moving out of entanglement in the parents’ relationship

In another case, the client felt angry with the father and couldn’t connect to him. Through constellation work, her loyalty to mother became apparent. The client’s parents had a conflicted relationship in the marriage and, even as a child, the client was often pulled in to taking sides. The client sided with her mother. As she grew up, she longed to have a close relationship with her father and yet felt the guilt of betraying her mother. The father, feeling hurt at the rejection of his daughter also withdrew any demonstration of affection toward her.

Both diffused boundaries with mother (I-U+ /I-U-) and rigid boundaries with father (I+U-) were apparent in the family relationships. Family Constellation methodology helped the client to move out of the triadic and entangled relationship with her mother and her father without guilt. She was able to integrate a healthy internal image of mother and father in her psyche (I+U+).

In constellation work, we see how, due to their own traumatic injuries, parents are sometimes unable to form healthy relationships with their children. This results in attachment disorders between parents and child.

Psychological and emotional illness can arise in the context of more than one generation, and these can be transmitted trans-generationally (Noriega 2010). Attachment disorders can hinder the development of healthy individuation and they increase the risk of the person

concerned finding themselves in either merged (Winnicott, 1960) and symbiotic relationships or being disassociated from themselves and others.

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Projective Identification - A Rebuttal

Tony White

Introduction

This paper looks at boundaries in relationships in game behaviour. In the theory of projective identification, boundaries merge considerably between the two game players. One party projects their psychological material onto the other who not only ‘agrees’ to the projection but identifies with it and takes it on as their own material. The boundaries are merged quite considerably. This paper does a rebuttal to the concept of projective identification and in the process demonstrates a model for game playing where there are clear boundaries in relationships, there is no need for the merging of boundaries.

Pairing in game playing

The problem is very real. For a game to proceed you need at least two people to co-operate. They need to have two life scripts that interconnect in the right way. In the formula G the two people must have a Con and a Gimmick that fit properly for each other or a game will not proceed.

The connection must be made when both people don’t even know they are looking for each other. Games by their very nature are unconscious. For a game to proceed there must be a psychological pairing between two people done in a completely unconscious way. Unlike dating websites one cannot put out an advertisement for a fellow game player

For example the games of Kick me and NIGYSOB often complement each other. The Kick me player often has the life position of I-U+ and the NIGYSOB player has the life position of I+U-. These two people have to find each other by an unconscious process. If two Kick me players should cross paths then no games will proceed and indeed if two NIGYSOB players meet that will not be a correct pairing either.

How can one explain how this is done? It would seem like quite a difficult pairing to make. It is difficult enough for two people to find each other and to enter into a romantic relationship and this can be consciously done, actively involving Adult ego state decision-making.

However this seemingly difficult task of unconscious pairing in games is achieved with surprising regularity and by each and every one of us. We all play games, some of us do so often, which means we all find others who fit for our games and we fit for their games. We all unconsciously find those people who we play games with, those people who are right for our life scripts and we can further our life scripts along by playing the corresponding games. How this pairing is achieved is a perplexing question indeed.

Projective identification

In recent times in the Transactional Analysis literature one answer to this question is provided by the concept of projective identification. This has received much discussion over quite a period of time, such as Heath and Oates (2015), Woods (1996), Massey (1996) and Little (2012).

In projective identification the initiator or the projector projects onto the other person the unwanted part of self. They then act in such a way that the recipient of the projection will identify with the projected part and act it out in the relationship with the other. The recipient

experiences himself or herself as that projected part. This is of course all done at an unconscious or unlanguage level, out of the awareness of both parties. If successfully done then a game or enactment can proceed between the two people. Indeed Heath and Oates (2015) see projective identification as, "...comparable to the first part of Berne's game formula: Con + Gimmick = Response." (p. 98).

Projective identification is saying the two parties must have the right psychological material for a game to occur. They both must be psychologically compatible in this way. Berne's formula G says the same with the Con and the Gimmick in Formula G, Berne, (1972) "Since an ulterior transaction means that the agent pretends to be doing one thing while he is really doing something else, all games involve a con. But a con only works if there is a weakness it can hook into, a handle or "gimmick" to get hold of in the respondent, such as fear, greed, sentimentality, or irritability. After the "mark" is hooked, the player pulls some sort of switch in order to get his payoff." (p.23)

Trial and error in game player pairing

Eric Berne (1972) was a proponent of Occam's Razor which states that the simplest explanation for some phenomenon is more likely to be accurate than more complicated explanations. Following this guideline one can seek a more simple explanation for how two people manage the unconscious pairing required for a game to proceed.

This pairing could be done by the process of projective identification or it may just be the process of random trial and error. In this explanation many people are sampled over a long period of time to find the person who holds the correct matching psychological material for a game.

In childhood the weakness in people is formed, in adolescence they are beginning to establish the psychologically important people in life and this continues throughout adulthood. Many, many others are auditioned by each of us and a few pass the audition. They then become our social group who become the basis of our game-playing group.

When two people meet the auditioning begins. Their intuition from the A1 or Little Professor ego state is unconsciously assessing the other for the compatible weak spot. Various game like transactions are tried out between the two and if they fit then a game pairing has been made. There is no need for projection and there is no need for introjection because the potential projected part is already in the other party. They do not need to identify with it because it's already there and has been since it was developed in childhood. As Little (2012) says of projective identification, "One person disowns his feelings and manipulatively induces the other into experiencing them" (p.261). The random trial and error explanation for game pairing suggests there is no need to disown any feelings or manipulate the other into experiencing them because they are already there in the other. The other formed them in childhood as he or she was creating the building blocks of their life script, which Berne (1972) says happens by the time the child is six years old.

People can increase their chances of game pairing again by other intuitive means. People who have the weakness of being a rescuer in games will intuitively be attracted to professions like a psychotherapist, nurse or social worker because they know in those professions one is more likely to come across people who have the weakness of being a victim and thus the game pairing is more likely to occur. Likewise those with the weakness of being a victim will tend to gravitate towards those professions where rescuers are more likely to be found.

Conclusion

This paper provides a rebuttal to the concept of projective identification as an explanation of how game pairing occurs. Using the idea of Occam's Razor one can find a much simpler explanation for how game pairing occurs. Two people meet and intuitively assess each other for the right weaknesses in other's psyche. If it is found then they can move to testing each other out with game like transactions. If it is not found then game pairing does not occur in that instance. Over one's life she or he are auditing many others for game pairing simply by trial and error. This affords a much less complex and to my mind plausible explanation, for how game pairing can occur.

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Tony White is a qualified psychologist and TSTA (ITAA) with 35 years experience working in psychotherapy and training. He has written over 100 journal articles and magazine articles in many different publications. He has written 11 books with the two most recent ones being:

2011. Working with suicidal individuals. Jessica Kingsley.

2012. Working with drug and alcohol users: Jessica Kingsley.

He received a high commendation in the category of psychiatry for his book (Working with suicidal individuals) at the 2011 British Medical Association Book Awards.

His book on suicide has already been translated into Korean and Russian. A French translation is also being done on parts of the book. It is also in over 200 university libraries and counselling training program libraries around the world. His book on drugs and alcohol has been translated into Serbian. Tony's Email: agbw@bigpond.com

Respect and Value in Relationships

Sailaja Manacha

Boundaries are essential to healthy relationships and a healthy life. Setting and sustaining boundaries is a relationship skill. This may be challenging for some of us, as we may not have grown up in families that role modeled it. This article is an attempt to understand and learn this skill.

This article is divided in two parts – the first part is to understand the origins of development of unhealthy boundaries, and in the second part, I share some techniques to strengthen the Adult ego state, which helps in developing healthy boundaries.

There are many concepts in Transactional Analysis, which explain the origins and ways to build healthy boundaries. I choose Life script (Berne, 1961) and Drama triangle (Karpman, 1968).

Life Scripts are limiting patterns that are formed early in our childhood and reinforced by our early environment. These patterns provide the child a reference of how to live, including the unhealthy patterns in the environment. Life script develops by the age of 8 and becomes the origin of unhealthy boundaries. Significant events like abuse or trauma also impact boundaries, which we will not discuss in this article. One of the ways unhealthy boundaries manifest in adulthood is the way we are in relationships. Karpman explains different unhealthy roles we take

up in relationships. It is essential to understand these manifestations of unhealthy boundaries.

Below are few of the ways:

- I am often pleasing others
- I feel guilty when you say no
- I am fine with others making choices for me, most often this is what happens.
- I give a lot in relationship, at times more than I can afford to
- I wish others did what I needed without always needing to ask them
- I normally don't protest when others treat me poorly
- I sometimes end up sharing too much with people I may not know so well

Boundaries and Early Family Life

Not knowing boundaries is often the result of being raised in a family where the child's needs were insignificant and where the individuation process was not encouraged and supported in a healthy way. The unmet needs of parents or other adults took over and as a result, the child may have been ignored, abandoned, overwhelmed with discipline or only given strokes for compliance. These approaches are not healthy, respectful or fulfilling of the younger person's needs. These are experienced and introjected by the child as limiting messages about self, others and world, based on which he/she forms a decision to exist in the world accordingly. E.g. An abandoned child is likely to build "I am not important" belief about self, "others are not trustable" belief about others and "world is scary" belief about world and may decide "I will be nice to exist in the world".

I provide two clients below (names and personal information altered to preserve confidentiality).

Example 1. Imagine parents who scream at their children or become physically, verbally or emotionally abusive with them as a way of dealing with their own stored up frustrations. Gia, my client, had an alcoholic father who was without work for long periods of time. His insecurities and frustrations meant abusive behaviors displayed towards his wife and kids, who helplessly put up with him. Gia learnt to ignore her needs, be the peacemaker and people pleaser as these behaviors allowed her to belong in that group and receive care from others. She formed her identity around serving others while her own needs were ignored. Her Life script messages were “I am not important”, “Others needs are important” and decided “I will be nice to everyone around me to exist in this world”.

Example 2. Dinesh’s mother was in grief at the loss of her husband but did not acknowledge it. Instead she became an angry person who was upset with her husband for dying, angry with the world for her struggles and overwhelmed with her life. Mother was emotionally unavailable. This translated into unrealistic expectations from Dinesh to step up and be big, take on home responsibilities and be the man of the house. Dinesh could not be the teenager he was and took on the role of emotionally caring for his mother while also taking care of his siblings. He grew up to be over responsible, a demanding perfectionist and not in touch with his own feelings. He took charge of his life and made decisions for others, as that is what he had learnt to do to manage his home situation

What happens when unmet adult needs are imposed on a child?

Unmet needs in an adult often show up as demands on their children - demands that children are not equipped to handle as they are still growing. The child’s own needs for care,

safety, security, respect and comfort get relegated to second place or in some cases may be met marginally. Kids have inadequate life skills and more than anything, they wish to keep their family environment happy and peaceful so they can receive love and experience belonging. In order to get approval and care, the child does what it believes will keep the environment happy. Here begins formation of the script. The struggle is managing unmet needs while doing what will get them to survive in the environment.

Sometimes caretakers have learnt poor ideas on childcare from their families of origin. Parents too carry limiting script beliefs, which they are not aware of, and these influences their parenting styles, resulting in passing on of unhelpful messages to the child. At times these beliefs get passed on from one generation to another like unrealistic ideas about family loyalty, giving up your own needs to fit and belong, beliefs on discipline and on rigid gender roles within a family. All these influence the patterns of behavior in a growing child.

What children are likely to learn in these families is that boundaries don't matter. This starts the formation of a psychological sense, an attitude in the child about oneself, others and the world. To manage themselves they may intrude on the boundaries of other people just as they saw their parents model for them. Sometimes they don't know where theirs end and the others' begins. They are unable to differentiate between their needs and others needs. Children carry script messages like "I am not worthy of care", "I am not lovable", "Others needs are more important than mine", "I will sacrifice my needs and be loved", "I will be quiet and helpful" and so on. They attempt to build worthiness by being useful to others and serving others at their own cost. This reinforces their script and they stay at 'I am not OK' in relationship to others. Some

learn to become bullies and demand from others. These attitudes, beliefs and behaviors get woven into their personal narrative and identity.

Manifestation of script in relationships: Victim-Rescuer-Persecutor Roles

One of the manifestations of script in relationships and its impact on boundaries can be understood through psychological "games", where we play different roles in our relationships with others. The therapeutic tool I find of value is the Drama Triangle, developed by Steven Karpman.

In the Drama Triangle, there are three roles: *Persecutor*, *Rescuer* and *Victim*. We play each of these roles in different relationships and different situations in life. We start our interaction in one role and switch to another role, which causes confusions, upsets and breakdowns. When we are playing any of these roles we are being inauthentic and not in touch with many aspects of reality, our feelings and others' experience of us.

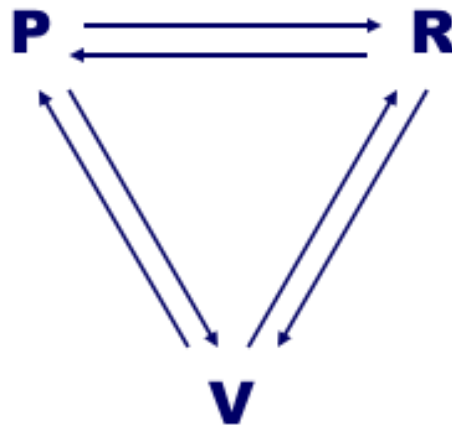


Figure 1: Drama Triangle (Karpman, 1968)

In the **Victim role**, we feel discounted, hurt, oppressed, ignored or taken advantage of. We say to ourselves "poor me!" or "look what others do to me". Sometimes in search of acceptance and friendship we may play this role, allowing others to violate our boundaries. Gia often felt like a Victim.

To move out of the Victim role, one can:

- Start thinking about your boundaries with others. Are they too flexible and fragile?
- Ask yourself how to get what you need? Value your needs as important.
- Tell the other to stop being hurtful.
- Put an end to a toxic relationship if laying boundaries did not work.
- Associate with people who are supportive and respectful.
- Learn skills on expressing yourself clearly and directly.

In making some of these changes, Gia felt stronger. Asking herself these reflective questions allowed her to free her Adult ego state from her limiting script beliefs. She gave herself full permission to be important and speak up. She took on a helpful updated belief that "I am as important as others" and "It is Ok for me to say what I want to".

The **Rescuer** tends to advise and step in to do things for others even when not asked. The Rescuer may often think that if they help others enough, they will be appreciated and thought of as a 'giving' person. In doing so they don't factor in another's abilities and resources. "Here, let me do it for you" is the mode they are in. The hidden message in this 'help' is that they know

better than you about what you need! In this way they transgress boundaries by being overly helpful, but from a superior place.

To move out of the Rescuer's role:

- Acknowledge and respect the other's responsibility for their own life and their choices.
- Respect others' capabilities and their personal resources - their thinking is valid!
- Offer help when asked and if you are willing to give it.
- Ask yourself what you were trying to get through rescuing and find direct ways to get it.

Many of us hate to think of ourselves as being in the **Persecutor** role. Some of us even justify that we are harsh for the other's own good! The Persecutor's behaviours convey to others "You're not good enough" or "I'm better than you". Some of us are physically abusive; others are verbally or emotionally abrasive. Persecutors oppress others with their rigidity, irrational limit setting, superiority and blame. Dinesh identified himself sometimes as Rescuer and many a time as Persecutor.

To move out of the Persecutor role:

- Question yourself about what you firmly believe to be 'true'. Could another view be valid too? Become aware of where you learnt this 'rigidity'.
- Set clear guidelines for how you will respect others and how you will speak to others.
- Be willing and open to negotiate with others - their needs are valid too!
- Ask questions to enquire with the other rather than enforce your view.
- Listen with openness and respect.

The goal is to move out of the Drama triangle, to be aware of our power to protect ourselves and to respect others too. This is what healthy boundaries are about.

An Exercise for reflection and practice:

I believe it is through awareness and reflection, that one can strengthen their Adult ego state and support themselves in developing healthy boundaries. In this regard, I have developed an exercise that the reader can use as a reflective process.

Think of a situation where you want to change your boundaries with another. Ask yourself the following questions.

What am I not doing? (This is a tough one to spot!)

What do I need to do? How will it help the other and me?

Who am I taking responsibility for? Is another becoming responsible for me?

Am I helping without being asked? Am I doing this most of the time?

Am I helping another who is capable of taking care of their needs?

Is the other doing their part of the work?

Who has more power in this situation? What evidence do I have of that?

Have I agreed to more than I want to and can afford to at this time?

Am I taking care of myself properly? Am I attending to my needs?

If I am angry or upset, is how I am expressing it appropriate?

Am I using my feelings to set boundaries and take responsibility for myself and my actions?

What boundaries do I need to set up?

At work, at home or with friends I offer some other ideas for building effective boundaries and maintaining them.

1. Develop Self-awareness

Being aware of your feelings, thoughts and behaviors helps. Notice your bodily responses in situations you find difficult. Notice your inner chatter. Think through your options and what other ways could exist to handle a situation.

2. Account for your personal history

Our personal history shapes who we are and the lens through which we see the world. Is your personal history one of domination or were you given strokes for being a helpful person? Who modeled for you how to set healthy boundaries or to ignore one's needs to please others? Was there a healthy give and take in your family? Being aware of our history helps us to support our change process, so we update personal beliefs for what is relevant to us in the now.

3. Give yourself permission to feel all your feelings

Be aware if you are feeling violated, resentful, angry, hurt, anxious. Being aware of our feelings gives us a cue of boundaries being transgressed. It gives us a clue for what action we need to take.

4. Be direct when needed

With some people, maintaining healthy boundaries doesn't require much - our actions will define it. But in some relationships, people may be oblivious of their impact on you. Being direct can be helpful and healthy.

5. You are important

Give yourself permission to put yourself first. This supports our inner motivation to set healthy boundaries. It is for your healthy life and self-confidence.

6. Seek support

Seek support through counseling, therapy or a good conversation with a friend. Having a new pair of eyes to look at a situation will give you some distance and objectivity to decide what boundaries are important for you.

Conclusion

Establishing internal and external boundaries is vital for a healthy relationship with self and others. The concept of Script in Transactional Analysis provides a deeper awareness of our intra-psychic process and what our internal boundaries are. The Drama Triangle provides an effective way to understand our external boundaries. Through establishing healthy boundaries the individual can experience real contact, relationship, space and protection for self and others.

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Boundaries in Agile Coaching Contracts

Srinath Nadathur

Contracting has been the most significant TA concept that has helped me bring to conscious awareness, the boundaries that help build and maintain healthy relationships. I work as an Agile Coach, and in this essay, I explore some ways in which I set up contracts in my working relationships that help clarify the boundaries and responsibilities among the various interacting roles and relationships.

Agile refers to a people-centric way of working in the software industry (Agile Manifesto, 2001), in which teams produce working software in an iterative, incremental fashion. The main focus of Agile teams is to work collaboratively towards short-term goals with a great emphasis on quick response to changing customer needs and market conditions while maintaining a high quality of the product or service delivered. Clear role boundaries, open communication, transparency, inspection and adaptation are some of the key tenets of the Agile way of working. Contracting thus becomes an invaluable tool in creating an Agile work environment.

Stewart and Joines (1987) noted that “Claude Steiner has set out four requirements for sound contract-making. They were derived from the practice of contract-making in legal settings.

(1)*Mutual consent*. This means that both parties must agree to the contract.

- (2) *Valid consideration.* In TA settings, the consideration will usually be in the form of money paid by the client to the practitioner.
- (3) *Competency.* Both the practitioner and client must be competent to carry out what has been agreed upon in the contract.
- (4) *Lawful object.* The goals and conditions of the contract must be in conformity with the law.”

In my work as an Agile Coach, I’m called upon by sponsors/managers of teams to uncover solutions for people-and-process issues. These sponsors/managers and teams might be new to the Agile way of working, or might have been practicing it for some time and facing challenges. I start by first asking what the goals of the engagement are, and what the sponsor’s expectations are from me. Having listened to their expectations, I proceed to share my areas of expertise and relevant work results from the past. I also share with them my approach and call out any unrealistic expectations they have, upfront. Some questions that have helped me in satisfying

Steiner’s requirements of mutual consent and competency are:

1. What are your expectations from me? – This question leads to negotiating the expectations with my client based on what is realistic for both of us.
2. What is/are the goal(s) of this engagement?
3. How will we know that the goal(s) has/have been achieved?
4. How would you express your discomfort if things aren’t going well?

Question 4 helps detail how each participant will respond if / when boundaries are violated. I've found that this question sometimes elicits surprise and discomfort from the participants, which could either be an indicator that their current work environment doesn't encourage free expression of discomfort, or that there's an 'accepted' way of expressing discomfort which is not questioned. As a coach I enjoy the challenge of holding the space for the participants to wrestle with such questions and explore workable options.

There are standard billing rates set by the organization that I'm part of for my services, and these determine the valid consideration of my contracts at work. As a self-contract, celebrations for achieving progress is one example of a valid consideration that I use to keep myself motivated through the ups and downs of the engagement. To be a lawful object, the contract must be within the boundaries of the law of the place. I usually take care of this by bringing relevant organizational policies to the client's awareness during the contracting process. For e.g., any customized organizational frameworks related to Agile ways of working are intellectual property of the organization, and the participants (including me) are made aware that they cannot share these outside the organization.

In a therapy context, Berne (1966) mentions the importance of contracting between the therapist and the organization that brings the therapist and client together. Fanita English (1975) expanded this concept to other professional uses of TA through what she called a three-cornered contract, to include the organizers who arrange for transactional analysts to deliver workshops or lectures to a selected audience. I've found this tool to be very useful in an organizational context where sponsors/managers (the organizers, aka "great powers") hire me to work with their teams

(the participants). I make it a point to contract across all 3 levels (administrative, professional and psychological) with both parties.

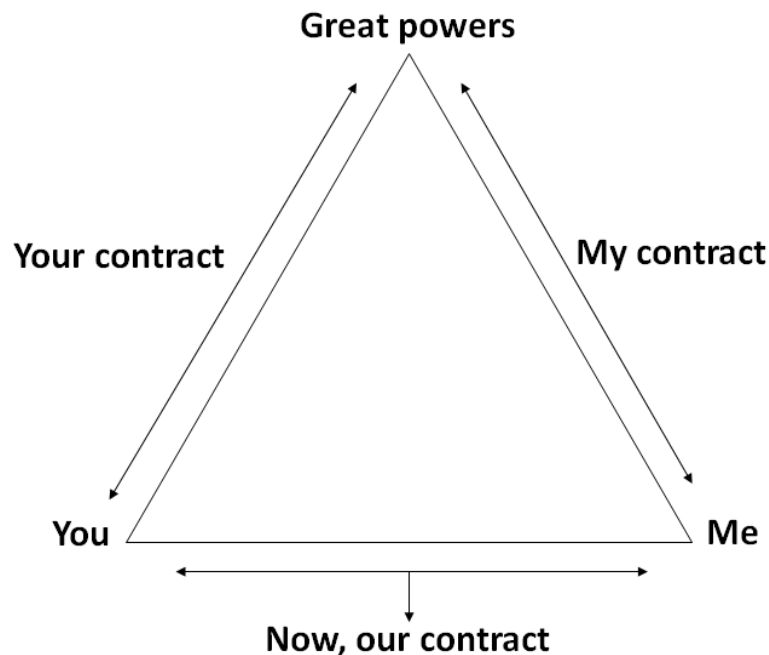


Figure: Fanita English's (1975) three-cornered contract (p. 383)

When “Great powers” summon me as an Agile Coach, they usually expect a ‘transformation’ of their current way of working. Starting with the goals of the transformation and how we will know the goals are achieved, we are able to identify the steps required to reach the goal. Based on my experience, the following common aspects emerge in such projects:

- (1) Train identified teams and managers in Agile ways of working – imparting knowledge on what is Agile, why Agile, history of Agile, various frameworks in Agile, the benefits and promises of the Agile way of working etc.
- (2) Suggest an Agile framework for adoption, or coach identified leaders to choose and customize a framework based on their context

(3) Radiate progress to the sponsors on the status of the transformation on a pre-determined frequency and level of detail (can be adjusted later on)

(4) Coach all team members and managers during their daily work on “being Agile”, i.e., how to imbibe Agile ways of working, after having been trained

Most of the needs in (1), (2) and (3) are easily discovered, as they’re more at the overt level of the Administrative and Professional contract. However, there are covert elements as well, especially in (4). In an attempt to make the covert assumptions overt, I make it a point to ask exploratory questions to unravel the psychological contract in such a context. For e.g.

- “How will you know that your teams and managers are being agile?”
- “What are some observable behaviors that will tell you that your teams are being agile?”
- “How will you as a leader demonstrate being agile, so you can be a role-model for your teams?”
- “What support do you need from me to make this happen?”

I’ve found great value in explicitly asking these questions at the beginning, as they help in clarifying the boundaries not only in the relationships, but also in the scope of work (what’s included and what’s not). I’ve also found that sometimes the sponsors are not ready to change their ways of working, but expect me, the coach to come and change the way their teams work. It is through these questions then, that I’m able to bring to light that some “transformations” will be possible only if the sponsors also change. When offered such open communication, some sponsors choose to involve themselves in the transformation, while yet others choose to stick to a “train the teams” contract. In either case, thanks to the contracting conversations, the expected

outcomes, roles and boundaries are clear, reducing the possibilities of games (Berne, 1964) being played.

Once “My contract” with the “Great Powers” has been fleshed out, I endeavor to bring them together along with all the participants of the project, to flesh out “Your contract” and “Our contract”. In cases where the teams are large (50+ people), I ask for representatives from each team to join this discussion, where the mutual expectations are openly discussed. This creates

	Team	Manager	Coach	Sponsor
Team		Team's expectations from the manager	Team's expectations from the coach	Team's expectations from the sponsor
Manager	Manager's expectations from the team		Manager's expectations from the coach	Manager's expectations from the sponsor?
Coach	Coach's expectations from the team	Coach's expectations from the manager		Coach's expectations from the sponsor
Sponsor	Sponsor's expectations from the team	Sponsor's expectations from the manager	Sponsor's expectations from the coach	

alignment on the goal for the project, and the boundaries between the various roles involved, which can be collaboratively built like in the sample shown below:

Sometimes one person performs multiple roles, for e.g., sponsor and manager. In such a scenario, I ask the person to don the two different roles, one at a time and share their expectations with the other roles. Setting up the working relationships clearly like this at the beginning creates a platform for everyone to work together towards a shared goal. This way, creating contracts to establish clear boundaries in working relationships has helped me achieve successful outcomes as an Agile Coach.

Another key aspect of establishing and maintaining healthy boundaries is to be open to re-contract at any stage. Even after setting up the contracts well at the beginning, I've encountered situations where for some reason, the participants don't want to adhere to the original contract. One such common situation is the adherence to the duration of the engagement agreed at the beginning. Since the contracts here are about transforming the way of working, the duration agreed upon at the beginning is only an estimate of how long it would take. And as the engagement progresses, there comes a time when participants realize that the pace of the transformation could be different from what was originally anticipated. In such situations, as a group we re-visit the goals of the engagement and use them as guidelines to prioritize the transformation tasks and alter the timelines. The discussion about expressing one's discomfort helps as everyone re-adjusts to new realities through re-contracting.

In another instance, after 2 months since the start of the engagement, the sponsor was upset with me that no accolades were yet received from their customer regarding the transformation work happening within the teams. I was surprised since this wasn't part of the original contract. I took supervision on the topic and understood that the psychological contract wasn't fully fleshed

out in the beginning with the sponsor. While the overt contract was to “enhance the team’s agility”, the covert agenda was to showcase improvements to the teams’ customer in a bid to win more projects. However, it wasn’t clear to anyone as to how the covert agenda would be satisfied and who will do what to make it happen. Once this came to light, we found that there was another group that had to be involved in order to showcase the improvements to the customer and follow-up on those to win more projects.

Such experiences have helped me learn that though the initial contracting helps a great deal in setting everyone up for success, the openness to re-contract when under stress during the engagement really determines how the boundaries and working relationships are constantly redrawn and improved.

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Ethical Dilemma

Suriyaprakash C

This is a third and last part of the series article. Previous two parts can be read in the Volume 3, Number 1 and Volume 2, Number 2 issues of SAJTA (formerly titled “SAATA Journal”).

A consultant walks out happy after a daylong training in an organisation as part of a team-building exercise. While he walks into the HR manager’s cabin for a discussion on the project the latter jumps up with a loud question, ‘who do you think is the sharpest of them all and the most prospective to become the leader of the team?’ The consultant has built a collegial working relationship with the manager and is tempted to give him his opinion. However, his professional ethics do not permit him to discuss individual members with the management, which is not contracted for. What would he do? Should he or should he not?

A counsellor just heard from a client that he was having an extra marital affair while the same counsellor who is working his wife as well knows that the wife trusts the husband blindly. The counsellor is in a dilemma – should he inform the wife of the affair or keep her in the dark, as that’s what the husband wants?

Don’t these scenarios sound familiar? These are just a sample of ethical dilemmas that we grapple with as part of our professional practice. So how do we resolve such dilemma?

The ITAA ethical framework discussed in the previous episode of this series in the last issue of the journal provides one of the ways to resolve an ethical dilemma. For example, a HR consultant found that he had to recommend to his client to layoff one of his employees.

But he knew that the employee would be fit to take up the role if she had some more time. The dilemma was obvious to the client – should they give the employee more time or should they ask her to leave immediately?

Robinson (2003) offers another framework to use in organisational contexts where the ethical dilemma is clearly defined, as in the cases mentioned above. Called the Business Ethics Synergy Star, shortly BESS the framework offers a model to build an ethical dilemma by specifying its components and it offers a way to balance the conflicting values of such business decisions.

The BESS model has the following steps:

1. Define the objective
2. Define the professional outcome
3. Define the ethical outcome
4. Define response options which are polarized and apparently mutually exclusive
5. Find creative options for action by finding synergy between seemingly opposing combinations of action and outcome

The BESS is schematically presented in figure 1.

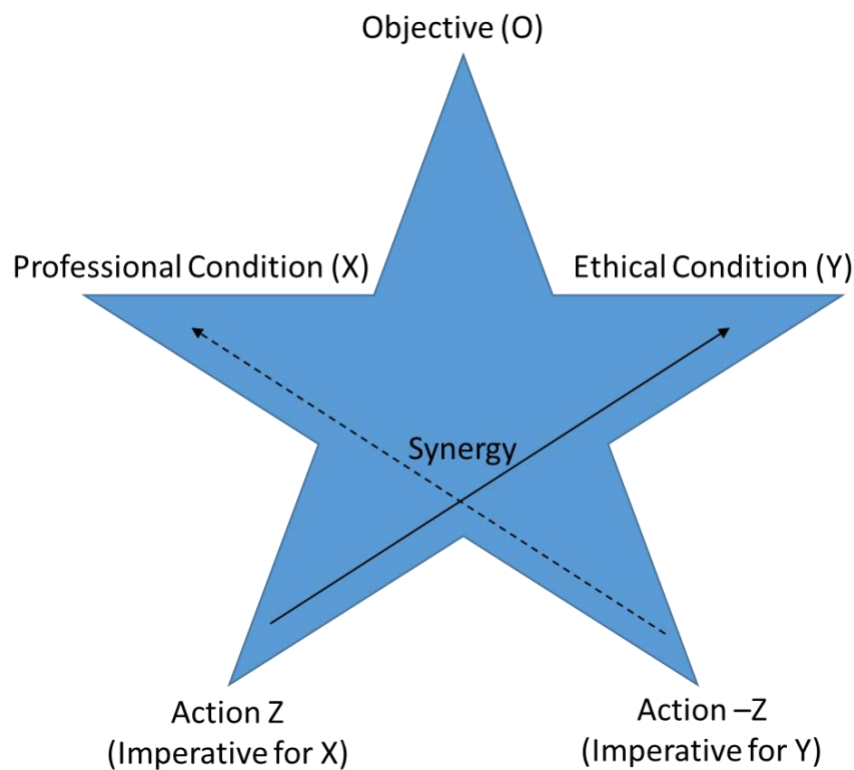


Figure 1: Business Ethics Synergy Star (Adapted from Robinson, 2003)

Ethical dilemma defined

According to Robinson (2003), “any decision where moral considerations are relevant can potentially give rise to an ethical dilemma

- A decision that requires a choice between rules
- A decision where there is no rule, precedent or example to follow
- A decision that morally requires two or more courses of action, which are in practice incompatible with each other.
- A decision that should be taken in one’s self-interest, but which appears to violate a moral principle that you support.

It is the imperative to act, combined with the uncertainty of which action to take, that causes a dilemma.“

An ethical dilemma can be defined in the format given in Figure 1. Professional situations have an objective (O). For example in the situation faced by the consultant in the opening scenario, his overall objective is to establish a successful consultancy profession. To achieve O, one need both X and Y – the professional condition and ethical condition. In this case, to establish a successful consultancy profession the consultant’s professional condition would be to maintain a favourable rapport with the manager and the ethical condition would be to maintain reputation of being a professional with integrity. Action Z is imperative to achieve X, while the opposite of Z would be imperative to achieve Y. For example, the consultant would have to reveal the participants’ details to be in the manager’s favour, while he should not reveal the details to be in integrity. This conflicting demand by the professional and ethical conditions makes the dilemma an ethical dilemma.

The synergy

The proposed resolution to such dilemma is to find synergy between the seemingly impossible conditions, namely to look up for creative options where Z and Y can co-exist or/and –Z and X can co-exist. Which translates into:

1. Are there ways in which the consultant can reveal the details and yet stay in integrity?
2. What would the consultant do whereby he does not reveal the details and yet be in the good books of the manager?

One such option would be to tell the manager that he would share the details after seeking permission of the participants. This would either discourage the manager from further wanting

the details or the participants might permit the consultant to share their details. In either case, both X and Y are achieved without violating the ethical principles.

Even though BESS was proposed as a model to solve ethical dilemmas in business contexts, it can be widely used in other contexts too with some liberty to define its elements in those contexts. But is it sufficient to deal with ethical dilemmas of all kind?

The complex world of values

Not all ethical issues are as clearly defined as in the referred scenarios. Most ethical dilemmas are complex. For example, the global economic crisis brought out by the bankers in 2008 was the result of a complex conundrum of ethical compromises flagrant violation of ethical norms. In such scenarios how do we face these ethical dilemmas? As noted by Das (2010) ‘harmony and happiness come to a society only through behaviour based on dharma – a complex word that means variously virtue, duty and law, but is chiefly concerned with doing the right thing.’ How do we know what our dharma is?

The Mahabharata delves into this extensively. Bhishma says “It is most difficult to define Dharma. Dharma has been explained to be that which helps the upliftment of living beings. Therefore, that which ensures the welfare of living beings is surely Dharma. The learned rishis have declared that which sustains is Dharma. (Shanti Parva - 109-9-11). Therefore, it might sound beyond the reach of the common people. But Berne (1968) gave a working model of dharma in the concept of physis. He said physis is “force of Nature, which eternally strives to make things grow and to make growing things more perfect”.

How do we access our physis? Sharma (2014) provides a practical tool for that even though she developed her model in a different context outside the transactional analysis world.

Resolving ethical complex dilemmas require that we are grounded in our ‘inner wisdom’ or our ‘wisdom source’ which is the “inner capacities and wisdom and is based on embodying universal values such as dignity, compassion, fairness and courage”. The values we embody and bring into all that we are and all that we do, wherever we are act as the guiding post when we are facing an ethical dilemma and all other tools and models do not help us arrive at a decision because “dharma is subtle”.

Conclusion

Resolving an ethical dilemma does not mean finding the right answer to an ethical question. It is developing a set of values and principles and frameworks that we could use to deftly navigate the landscape of ethics to make our own choices.

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