

Advance Course in Social Psychology

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Lecture 55: Interactive Behaviour -Part III

Welcome back students. Let us continue with our discussion. In the previous discussion I have talked about two concepts of transaction analysis that is ego states and transactions which is a unit of social interaction. Coming to the third concept of TA that is strokes, it is a unit of recognition that may be positive or negative in any social interaction. It recognizes the person who is engaged in the transaction or in the communication. It is a unit of recognition that may be positive or negative.

This recognition identifying the person's an individual's presence in a communication. This can be exchanged whenever two persons interact with each other and can be defined as any act implying recognition of another's presence. Two or three people who are engaged in any form of communication and we tend to identify each other in that communication. What if any one person is not identified in that communication, the person will get the idea and indication that I am not being liked by the other two members.

This is strokes that in what manner it can be verbal or non-verbal, what kind of identification we receive based on a presence that is a stroke, a unit of recognition in any communication. Strokes can be positive, negative or both and people tend to desire for that stroke so that they give them a complete understanding and feedback about where they stand in that transaction or communication. If we talk about positive strokes, it gives a positive indication. For instance, you did a great job, please join us for the dinner. This is a positive stroke where the person's performance has been acknowledged identified in a communication.

If I say why you are here, you were supposed to be at work, please go and continue with your job. Now, whenever this kind of recognition is there for any person, it is a negative stroke which gives an understanding that he has been recognized in the communication where he is not required, the presence was not required. This is a negative stroke. If it is both negative and positive, it is something that you did a great job in spite of your less work experience in the field. This gives an understanding to the person that although I have performed well, but I need to improve in my area.

This is both positive and negative and most of the time the person is craving for positive and negative strokes because that completes the transaction with all the hidden messages in that transaction and how that transaction can help him to enhance the relationship and improve his behavior. This is strokes. So, strokes can simply imply all types of recognition such as physical, verbal and nonverbal between persons. For instance, if I go by the positive and negative stroke that you did a great job in spite of your less work experience in the field. Now, in this communication, transaction is there because the message is there.

At the same time when the boss pats the back of the same employee that lets hope for more better performance next time with the same statement, then it is a recognition of an individual's performance with some more and improvement. This is a stroke, a unit of recognition that may be positive or negative in any transaction where you are made feel, your presence is been made felt and your presence is not to be made felt. This is strokes. Without strokes, the transaction can be incomplete because without strokes you will not be able to get that real message, the hidden message that is the covert message or the very much direct message on your face. And the next aspect is life positions which is another concept of one given in transitional analysis and is very much based on an individual's psychological position that a person holds, a profound psychological position that a person holds and makes his life operational based on that condition.

According to one, there are four life positions that a person can hold and those life positions are completely based on an individual's past experiences. The way he or she has been nurtured, the role of culture, the role of family, the role of society and how previous relationships or interactions have created a situation in which the person is holding on to and is operating his life on that position itself. So, it is a process of growing up. People make basic assumptions of the self-worth or self-esteem based on the psychological conditions. The person establish his own self-worth that what he is capable of based on his competencies and as well as people make assumptions about their self-worth as well as about the worth of significant others.

It is not only about himself, about others as well. Based on his psychological condition, we tend to create our own self-worth and the self-worth of the other person. This assumption about oneself and others is life position which is completely based on life experiences or past experiences and these positions are permanent because a person permanently operationalize his life on those foundations itself and has described that position in terms of okayness because a person has accepted that position, a profound psychological position as okay for him and he has accepted and adjusted his self-worth in terms of okayness to that profound situation. So, these positions are stated as I am okay, you are okay, I am okay and you are not okay, I am not okay, you are okay and I am not okay and you are not okay. So, these four psychological positions are created by an individual itself which are permanent based on his past experiences and based on these experiences the person also try to evaluate the self-worth of the other person at the same time.

But what are these positions deal with? So let us deal with the first situation like script or position that is I am okay, you are okay. This is the most optimal and healthiest position of an individual's life where the person feels good about himself and others. He has high self-worth from himself and others and he considers himself and others to be highly competent. The evaluation of oneself and others is very high. People occupy this position and hold the belief that people are innately worthy and valuable.

Since their life experiences based on childhood experiences as well they tend to create their own self-worth and in this kind of position I am okay, you are okay the perception about oneself and others is innately worthy and valuable and this position is characterized by attitude of openness, honesty and trust and people occupy this position, who occupy this position are highly collaborative and accepting of themselves and others. Since they are receptive, they have high self-worth for oneself and others, they are more of collaborative in nature and more acceptable about people in their life because that environment that has been created by him or for him is very much fulfilling and flourishing. This is the most healthy and optimum life position of any individual where he identifies his self-worth as I am okay and you are okay. It is based on the acceptability. Next is I am okay and you are not okay.

This if a child is treated badly or abused this may result in him or her feeling helpless, powerless and in an angry position. Any child who has been belittled, abused or treated badly by his parents or by the society, he develops his self-worth to be very low. Now this self-worth to be very low has been identified by the person but he tries to overcome this low self-worth by blaming on the other person or finding fault in the other person that I am okay and you are not okay. So in this kind of life script or position the person may feel powerless, full of anger and helplessness but he may build up this position and but tries to overcome by feeling good about oneself and incompetent or bad or low self-worth for the other person and tries continuously, tries to prove himself to be more superior than the other person while putting the other person in the more inferior state. So in this kind of life position people in this position project their difficulties on to others and they may blame and they try to be critical of others.

So this is the pattern, this is the life position in which an individual tries to operate his life into today basis. So transactional games that reinforce this position involve a self-styled superior because I am okay that is and who projects anger, disgust and disdain on to designated inferior or scapegoating that is you are not okay. So this is about you have developed an individual has developed a low self-worth for himself but he tries to cope with that low self-worth or esteem by finding faults into others and putting himself in a more self-styled designated superior state. This is I am okay and you are not okay. The other is the third is I am not okay and you are okay.

Again if a child is treated badly or abused and receives messages that decreases his or reduces his self-worth then the child moves into the position where the person finds himself to be a weak person or a weak partner in any relationship and others in life and definitely try and evaluate the other person in a better position. The person who holds this position will unconsciously accept abuse as okay. This is a very negative situation which can damage the other person's orientation a lot. But when a person is operating at this position the person experiences low self-esteem and at the same time the person also accept all the ill treatment that he or she has received as okay as accepting and people occupy this position may discount their needs. Since they have a low self-esteem they tend to discount their needs or what they deserve or what they do not deserve and ultimately they try to favor the other person with this idea that the other person has higher self-esteem and he deserves better than me.

This is I am not okay and you are okay. The person puts himself in a state of victimization. This is another psychological state that is I am not okay you are not okay. Now the difference is that in the previous situation also that I am okay you are not okay abuse was there ill treatment is there but how that person has perceived himself with lower self-esteem and the how person is managing to cope or operate at those positions that is the more concern. Now in all these situations the person will also communicate will engage in any kind of transaction based on these positions itself because these positions are permanent.

So one can understand very easily that any person who is operating in any particular life position then what can be the communication or transaction that will take between this person and the other person and the other is I am not okay and you are not okay. It is a position of hopelessness futility and frustration it is a situation of complete despair this is the worst situation and a person believes that he or she is in a state of despair and the rest of the world is bad. The perception is absolutely negative and consequently this may result in self-destructive or violent behavior. This is I am not okay you are not okay where the life position and the person find great difficulty in seeing good in anyone and has trouble having any hope for the future. Now the point is that whenever we are talking about these life positions what kind of relationships does a person establish? If it is I am okay and you are okay then the relationship established between two people is full of trust, worth and respect whereas if it is about I am okay you are not okay and I am not okay and you are not okay the person finds lot of difficulty in forming trusting and lasting relationship with other people.

And in last that is fourth that is I am not okay and you are not okay the person find difficulty or trouble in any hope for the future because the transaction will be something which has no outcome it becomes futile exercise is there but futile. So these are the life positions with which the person on which the person stands on permanently and operate his life based on these positions. Now these positions are completely nurtured by an individual's past experiences, childhood experiences, the way the child has been nurtured by his parents, parental care, societal factors and

cultural factors when all factors come all together the person is building his own life position or life script through which the person establish his future relationships. If life positions are positive then conflict is less, if life positions are negative then definitely there is more presence of conflict in an individual's day to day life. Next comes benefits of transactional analysis it provides better understanding how people relate to each other so that they may develop improved communication and interpersonal relationship.

It provides fresh insights into the psychological makeup of the individual concerned. Now here the psychological makeup is based on ego states, based on transactions, based on strokes and based on life positions. It fosters group activities such as brainstorming and conflict resolution for instance I am okay you are not okay and I am not okay you are okay. Whenever any individual is working on these life positions then there can be some group discussions based on brainstorming and conflict resolution and people can shift the life position from a better situation. TA helps in categorizing individual patterns of behavior, feelings in way they think which can be functional that is beneficial or productive or dysfunctional or counterproductive negative.

So based on the life positions and transactions and ego states when all the information is compiled based on these aspects of TA an individual can be categorized in different kind of categories based on their functional behavior and dysfunctional behavior. Dysfunctional means counterproductive behavior for example that I am not okay I am okay you are not okay. The person can engage in any kind of dysfunctional behavior or vice versa. TA concentrates on the content of people's interactions and helps in solving emotional problems that is but sure because the ego states will define their emotional states and people who are operating with adult ego states definitely they can enhance the relationship while improving the transactions between two people. TA considers how individuals interact with one another and how the ego states affect each of the transactions.

Unproductive or counterproductive transactions were considered to be signs of ego state problems and analyzing these persons individual development history would enable person to get better based on brainstorming and counseling sessions. TA offers to study deviance, distress and dysfunctional patterns of behavior. As I discussed in the initial stage of transaction analysis that transaction analysis based on unconscious minds and states ego states the person can easily identify the deviances in the behavior the deformities or distress in the human behavior and dysfunctionality or dysfunctional patterns of behavior that can help a person to overcome these problems. So, these are the benefits of transaction analysis which is considered as one of the most popular information processing tool in organizations and group behavior. So, we are through with the discussion of advanced course in social psychology.

I hope the discussion will be fruitful for every student who has enrolled for this course and wish you all the best. Thank you so much.