

Talk by Stephen Karpman on Receiving the Eric Berne Memorial Scientific Award for Options



Thank you for the recognition. I care a lot about the Eric Berne Memorial Scientific Award. It is an incentive award to provide stroking and recognition for the creative people in TA who are continuing in Eric's tradition as a scientist. Looking at a list of past winners, you can see how important their contributions have been to current TA theory.

1971 — Claude Steiner, *Script Matrix*

1972 — Steve Karpman, *Drama Triangle*

1973 — Jack Dusay, *Egograms*

1974 — Jacqui and Aaron Schiff, *Passivity and Four Discounts*

1975 — Bob and Mary Goulding, *Redecision and Twelve Injunctions*

1976 — Pat Crossman, *Protection*

1977 — Taibi Kahler, *Miniscript and Five Drivers*

1978 — Fanita English, *Rackets and Real Feelings: The Substitution Factor*

We owe much in current TA practice to those people who made break throughs in TA theory, some of which were later developed into whole new “schools” of TA treatment. There are many others of you out there who have developed, or are in the process of developing, ideas that are significant and which are eligible for the award. At the time of Eric's death, I suggested that the award be established based on Claude Steiner's prophecy that “if TA is to make it, it will make it as a science.” Strokes to you scientists and clinicians

who are keeping us aligned with our prime directive from Eric, “to cure patients faster.” And now, with our interest in Special Fields, “to cure organizations faster.”

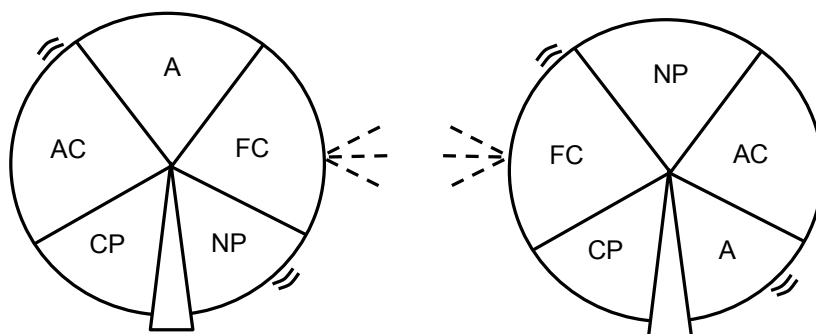
Traditionally, each year, the EBMSA winner describes how the idea for which he/she won the award was developed. In 1966 I started working on options in response to my patients’ need to know how to successfully respond to difficult transactions. Of course, in therapy, we analyzed the transaction, the script motives, and the patient’s responsibility in sending out hooks. However, after all that, the patients would still say, “What do I do about it? What do I say to this person?”

At the time, in TA game analysis, there was only the antithesis available as an answer, and most games did not describe the antithesis. Therefore, I had to come up with something new. To give my patients exactly what they asked for, namely what to say and how to say it, I first asked around the room to see how others would handle the situation. This was very popular and useful. Both therapist and patients recorded many funny lines, some of which I included in my January, 1971 *TAJ* article. However, this was not systematized enough to be teachable, nor was it TA, so the next step was to ask the group for Parent, Adult and Child options in handling the situation. Soon I changed that to using all five functional ego states to provide a greater range of responses. I then discovered that I was working on a positive use of crossed transactions that I could diagram on the board, as opposed to the negative use of crossed transactions described in the TA literature up to that point. In addition, I was doing more with the switches idea that I had developed in the Drama Triangle.

In group and in homework I had patients practice the flexibility of putting all five of their ego states to use, and the skill of being able to choose which of the five ego states in the other person to hook. By 1967, I was giving lectures and workshops on options, preceding the popularity of assertiveness training by some 5-10 years. By 1968, most of my patients were on ego state contracts to bring out of the closet those ego states that we found were unavailable to them socially.

I had left the “social control” era of TA and had gone into “social options” TA. Social control was not enough; people wanted social options.

From crossed transactions, I then extended the options work to the structure of the personality and to relationships and developed what I called the “personality pinwheel.” In the new diagram, two discs or pinwheels face each other like two people. They spin on a stalk and each is divided into five ego states, illustrating the potential for a “well-rounded” personality where all five sides of an individual are available in a relationship. Sometimes a



The Personality Pinwheel

graduating point in therapy occurred when a patient could effectively demonstrate the use of all five OK ego states to the point that others could experience them and be able to hook or bring out all five OK ego states in someone else. We used both the group setting and homework to practice this.

Other subsequent developments in options have included “stroking options,” where a person could learn to stroke and receive strokes in each of their five ego states, as well as choose what I called the “super stroke” in each of the five ego states in another person. I also developed what I called “inside options,” where a person could learn to cross transactions in their inner dialogue.

This options work was pretty much completed by 1971. I then went to the third stage of social level TA, namely, “social openness” TA, based on the four intimacy blocks I developed for the intimacy losers loop. This year I added to the intimacy work five trust contracts based on options—one for each ego state shared by couples: for CP, the no-collapse contract; for NP, the protection contract; for A, the openness contract; for FC, the pleasuring contract; and for AC, the flexibility contract. (This will be written up in the September 1979 Bulletin of the Eric Berne Seminar.)

Options has become part of my thinking now and I characteristically think of the five ego states and what is present and which is missing. I will probably continue to come up with more uses for it as I work for Eric’s stated goal, “to cure patients faster.” Thank you.