

Listening, Learning, and Accountability: Three Rules of Openness, Three Rules of Accountability, and the Adult Scales, Listening Scales, and Listener's Loops

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Abstract

This article presents eight original unpublished transactional analysis theories and diagrams as used in workshops on effective communication. Complex communication processes have been simplified into ready-made teaching tools that can be used for solving listening, communication, and accountability problems in our relationships at work and at home. The tools are created to be easily applicable to all four areas of transactional analysis interest: the psychotherapy, counseling, organizational, and educational fields.

Learning from Mistakes

We can learn from mistakes in two ways: by reflection within ourselves (intrapersonal) or by reflecting on the responses we elicit, including feedback from others (interpersonal). In this article, I focus primarily on the transactional interpersonal approach to listening and learning from others. The tools and models have been reworked over time for appeal, simplicity, and teachability by using Occam's Razor, the Law of Scientific Parsimony, as used in the transactional analysis scientific framework set down by Eric Berne (Berne, 1964; Karpman, 1972).

Article Outline

Organization. This article is organized into eight sections as they are used in weekend relationship workshops, each one presenting an original transactional analysis concept in communication and learning. A complete training course includes all eight models. All of them have been tested extensively in training for 30 years for business coaches and consultants and in the counseling and psychotherapy fields. They apply equally to a psychotherapist's self-monitoring work as well as the monitoring of

the client in treatment and also used as tools by the client and others for self-monitoring.

Practice. The sections that follow can be read separately or studied and practiced as a workbook over time. As an experiment, readers are asked to apply each idea to their lives and their work while they are reading them and then return to the paper to study them again from time to time. Practice and time are needed. Some methods may seem useful now, others may only prove useful over time. As Shakespeare said, "If you can look into the seeds of time, and say which grain will grow and which will not, speak then unto me" (Macbeth I: 3, lines 58-60; see Coursen, 1997).

Workshop #1: The Three Rules of Openness

The overarching concept for this paper, "The Three Rules of Openness," is the centerpiece of communication and the primary contract to be completed in any relationship work, namely, asking partners to learn how to safely and successfully "Bring It Up, Talk It Up, and Wrap It Up" on each issue. This gives people the tools to reflect on and solve their problems for themselves, with friends, and at work in coaching situations.

The Three Rules of Openness. To openly solve problems, each partner may bring one or more of three skills to the relationship: to "Bring It Up, or Talk It Up, or Wrap It Up." Some partners will need to give up their previous pattern of "Save It Up, Blow It Up, Mop It Up." The theoretical position here is that (1) all three steps are needed for problem solving, (2) each of the three requires a separate skill, and (3) rarely will one person have all three skills.

For example, a spontaneous person in touch with his or her inner feelings may be able to impulsively Bring It Up but may be too excitable to Talk It Up well and will put too many

subjects on the table for anyone to Wrap It Up. Conversely, a more inwardly controlled person may keep things inside and rarely Bring It Up, but once someone else does, he or she will be able to calmly talk it through in the Talk It Up phase but then may not have the collaborative creativity needed to come up with a satisfactory Wrap It Up solution. Let's look at the three.

1. *Bring It Up*: Some partners are best at this, others are shy and lack the skills and permissions needed. Some are afraid of being wrong or being punished; some avoid discussion of their mistakes. Some prefer solving things themselves. Some may first need several weeks of quiet "Think It Up" time. Some quiet personalities may expect "mind reading" by the other person and wait for the other to bring up the problem.

In the therapy context, the therapist may be too passive and not bring up a needed interpretation. Or a patient may be too passive out of transference fears and not bring up issues that might otherwise prove to be a turning point in treatment.

Not bringing things up can be a costly problem in business where employees could fear reprisals if they speak up and when insecure managers bury problems that need to be addressed. This hesitation could also be seen in dysfunctional families in which "breaking the family secret" would bring on dire consequences. One older sister discussing her family bluntly explained her reluctance to Bring It Up: "If I complained to Mom, she would beat up the kids."

The "ABCDEF"s of Bring It Up: Ideally, mistakes can be brought up in a considerate way that gets the other person wanting to talk about it. However, they can be brought up in a toxic "worst possible way" at home or in the office. The "ABCDEF" (Figure 1) offers six ways. The initials refer to a descending order of approaches that are: Accusatory, Blunt, Considerate, Deferential, Evasive, or Fail to bring it up at all—in degrees from hard, unacceptable confrontation (A = Accusatory, as in "You always refuse to help me, you rat!!") through C = "Considerate" ("Honey, can I ask you something?") to doing it so meekly that it is only hinted at (E = Evasively) or (F = Fail) to be spoken at all.

In a couples or business workshop, the partners will practice all six ways to bring up an agreed upon issue and get feedback on the effectiveness. Then they practice the Considerate words that work, then they discuss it. Figure 1a illustrates for teaching purposes the (A) Accusatory person and the (F) Fail person, both making a new decision to practice the Bring-It-Up in a (C) Considerate way. Figure 1b shows the first attempt to (1) Bring It Up in a Considerate way but that quickly turns into an (2) Accusatory fight.



Figure 1a
Mutual Decision to Be Considerate



Figure 1b
Quick Regression from
Considerate to Accusatory

2. *Talk It Up*: When a subject is brought up for discussion, it is hoped that the point is made and heard and the talk progresses smoothly on to a fair solution. But to talk a subject all the way through satisfactorily, partners need to avoid getting sidetracked into crossed transactions and common transactional analysis games, such as "Blemish," "If It Weren't For You," and "Archaeology" (Berne, 1964) or by drama triangle switches (Karpman, 1968, 2007) or blocking any successful communication with the four Condescending, Abrupt, Secretive, and Evasive intimacy blocks (Karpman, 1997, 2009).

Fightmakers and arguments: That discussion will escalate into an argument when the six H.M.E.L.T.S Fightmakers are brought into play (Karpman, 1979). The initials represent Hundred Percentiles, Mindreading, Excitability,

Labels, Threats, and Subjects (too many), a selected six that almost always, for their own reasons, will bring on a defensive fighting response. Pairings of partners in therapy or in workshops are asked to role play all six of these wrong ways (noticing which comes most easily and which “presses their buttons”) so that they can learn from their mistakes and spot them during arguments and subsequently “not play those cards.” The initials can be remembered as “Happiness Melts.”

Childhood origins: In this Talk It Up stage, Social Level discussions can quickly become Psychological Level arguments when many old and buried childhood issues take over. Transactional analysis combines many treatment methods that deal with whatever difficulty has emerged from the past. These include the redecision 12 injunctions (Goulding & Goulding, 1976); discounts and passivities (Schiff & Schiff, 1971); the relational transference and countertransference work (Erskine, 1991; Hargaden & Sills, 2002); and the process therapy model (PTM) six personality types of Believer, Feeler, Doer, Thinker, Funster, and Dreamer, each with separate unmet needs (Kahler, 2008). The balanced approach of transactional analysis deals with one’s inner reality, one’s childhood reality, and the social reality.

Will there be a Wrap It Up? Some subjects are talked out over and over until they are “talked to death” but never taken to the next Wrap It Up stage. For example, in the therapy relationship, a therapist or patient with a “Try hard” driver will keep going over and over the same material but not complete the treatment contract if he or she is able to make one. Of the six PTM personality types (Kahler, 2008), for instance, the Believer type covers his or her fears with drivers by demanding that someone confirm his or her convictions, preventing any original discussion and solution. In an example of this in therapy, the underlying issue eventually surfaces that this rigid need to “have all the answers” was traced back to a man’s underlying fear of not having all the answers to save his alcoholic family.

In an organizational context, a modern boss holds weekly staff meetings for teamwork bonding in which workplace problems are aired over

and over but never result in any action plan or follow-up for closure because just bonding alone was the hidden “pocket contract,” not the creative solution of problems. In that situation there is a plausible Bring It Up and Talk It Up but no Wrap It Up.

3. *Wrap It Up:* This third skill requires a simple three-part Wrap It Up formula: Collaboration + Creativity = Closure. Here partners can put their heads together to Collaborate and come up with a Creative agreement that puts the issue to rest with Closure. But most people do not know the choices to get to Closure and need to see a checklist of possibilities, as in the “20Cs” presented shortly in this article.

Some arguments may end quickly in “Up-roar.” Others can end quickly if someone admits to being “guilty as charged” and play his or her three ABC cards: Admit It, Believe It, and Change It, which would Wrap It Up.

Sometimes the Wrap It Up comes a week later, after time to think about it. In therapy, making a redecision, or completing a measurable transactional analysis contract, can Wrap It Up. The antithesis to a game can be the Wrap It Up. Many deeper Wrap It Ups are provided later in this article in the sections where Accountability is required.

Twenty Ways to Wrap It Up. One way that is offered is to scan the “20 Cs of Wrap It Up” presented here. This is a proven list to choose from that has evolved over time offering satisfactory solutions in couples’ therapy. Of course, these 20 can apply to any dispute resolution situation: in courtrooms, boardrooms, or counseling rooms. They all start with Cs for easier remembering, and originally most of them were based on the Latin roots “Com” and “Con,” for easier translation into some other languages.

These 20 Wrap It Ups, in no particular order, differ significantly from one another, although it may not appear that way at first glance. Readers are invited to do an experiential exercise by considering an unresolved situation of their own as they read through each one of these 20 to see how each, one by one, might work to resolve the issue. Couples do this in planned exercises, discussing the possibility of each option. The list looks long, but each one is effective in a different way for a different situation.

A List of 20Cs to Wrap It Up: Catharsis, Clarification, Contracts, Choices, Changes, Compromises, Commitment, Closure, Concessions, Compensations, Consensus, Confession, Capitulation, Confirmation, Completeness, Compassion, Congratulations, Composure, Civility, and Cheerfulness.

Examples. A therapist thinks he made an interpretation mistake. With personal reflection he gets the satisfactory Clarification he needs. He reinforces this learning by getting a validating Confirmation with a supervisor. Then the therapist makes a tangible Commitment to make a Change and sees the successful new results in therapy. He agrees to a new treatment Contract with the patient. Then he makes personal Congratulations to himself (and from his supervisor) for final Closure.

Another therapist had successfully treated an arguing couple in short-term therapy. They each demanded a Confession and Capitulation from their partner with new Concessions and Compromises, and this was the basis for a new Contract, which would give them Closure.

A legal arbitrator or personal friend may get two people to resolve their differences by a Clarification of the Choices and get a Consensus on whatever Compromises and Compensations would result in a sense of Completeness for them.

Charting Openness Skills

There are situations in which a more graphic, three-part diagram of the three openness skills might get the point across better: that each of the three skills are separate and can be learned separately. These diagrams were put on the blackboard (Figures 2a and 2b) to help members of a couple with their treatment plan for their partner and for themselves. This communication helped them both learn from their mistakes.

Case Example. Figures 2a and 2b illustrate that the three skills are separate between the partner on the left and the partner on the right. The woman Partner 1 in Figure 2a had the "Feel It" spontaneity skills (B/up = Bring It up) that Partner 2 did not, but the man Partner 2 in Figure 2b had the better "Fix It" skills at problem resolution (W/up = Wrap It Up). They each

had similar T/up Talk It Up skills. In therapy, they both improved on their lowest skill sets, and more issues could be discussed to the Wrap It Up stage

In theory, the sequence could also represent the standard psychological sequence of Feeling, Thinking, and Action. The use of a psychoeducational graph is similar to the use of the transactional analysis egogram, which charts the observable display of the five ego states (Dusay, 1972) and Karpman's (2010b, pp. 230-231) five Intimacy Scale choices graph.

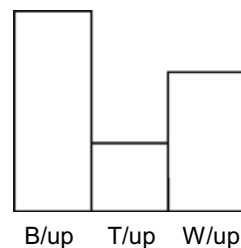


Figure 2a
Partner 1 Skill Set

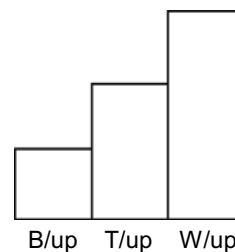


Figure 2b
Partner 2 Skill Set

Workshop #2: The Adult Scales

The Adult Scales. This diagram is drawn in workshops to initiate self-revelation about the role of self-confidence as it leads to change. It is taught as an intrapersonal method for self-reflection on one's mistakes from an OK perspective facilitating change and to teach awareness interpersonally of accepting one's positives and negatives as they directly affect the person's capacity to listen and learn from others without defensiveness.

The Adult Scales (Figures 3a and 3b) illustrate the healthy balance in the number of positive strokes and negative strokes incorporated into Adult awareness (Figures 3a and 3b). With self-acceptance, one is more willing to listen to suggestions from others and to be able to correct one's mistakes.

The permission implied in this teaching model is that it does not expect someone to be all positives with no negatives. The drawing is dynamic and proactive to illustrate directions to take in personal growth, namely, to routinely gather more positive strokes and to know yourself well enough so that you can accept your negatives gracefully, with or without a need to change them. The rule of thumb is to get the positives outnumbering the negatives by more than two to one. The higher the positives, the greater the self-esteem.



Figure 3a:
The Adult Scales (Before Meditation)



Figure 3b
The Adult Scales (After meditation)

The intrapersonal example illustrated in Figures 3a and 3b is of a before-and-after meditation series in which one acquires the peace to

make change. It is a plan for positive growth by bringing Figure 3a over to Figure 3b. In the workshop, self-disclosure lists are made and then discussed in personal sharings using the drawing model for safe structure.

Discussion. These diagrams have several uses, for example:

1. They conceptualize the ongoing cocreative process in therapy with the start of therapy shown in Figure 3a and the positive completion of the therapy contract in Figure 3b. They can also be used for emphasizing the progress of private or professional partners working to resolve their stack of differences over a time period.
2. In organizations, a multiple-person example can be used as an illustration during coaching in an office situation in which an effective "house cleaning" consultant facilitates the transformation of the negative unproductive people of Figure 3a into positive productive people in Figure 3b by supporting management to make changes in staff. The model can be used as a logo.

The Self-Acceptance Hypothesis:

1. When a confidently aware person has accepted and consolidated his or her good traits in his or her Adult, he or she is not easily embarrassed and surprised by positive strokes from others and more likely to gather them in. When a confidently aware person knows his or her bad traits and has accepted those faults, he or she is not easily surprised and defensive when he or she hears criticism.
2. When the greater weight proportionally is on the positive self-image side of the scale, the greater is the confidence, allowing a person to stay in his or her Adult and learn from his or her mistakes. If the stack of remembered negatives is the highest of the two stacks, the person will be more defensive and less open to hearing about any more of his or her mistakes.

Workshop #3: The Listening Scales

Continuing with the theme of learning to be open to change, the Listening Scale is a useful model that grades with "X" marks, on a scale of 0 to 100, a person's apparent interest in and

ability to listen to help from others and to learn from his or her mistakes. It is an intuitive reading by observers in workshops and groups that measures someone's responsiveness to what has just been said to him or her. It charts on paper how ready a person is to "learn from mistakes."

Advantages. In a group setting, for the person being "read," a group consensus wakes him or her up to work on his or her listening skills, resistances, and transferences. For the persons doing the intuitive reading, comparing notes with the group provides group validation of one's private sense of intuition, encouraging trust in their intuition skills.

The importance of this sort of intuition with social training is the possibility of becoming more accurate in people-reading and in reducing transference mistakes. Improved intuition can eventually become second nature to people and help in all their future connections to others, professional communicators can fine tune and analyze the ulterior messages of what might be going wrong in communications to be better able to fix the problem, and the intuitive process is diagrammatically quantified for teaching and research purposes. These scales continue the legacy of Eric Berne's early studies in intuition, which were central to the origins of transactional analysis.



Figure 4
The Listening Scale

A case example in group therapy: The Listening Scale was used immediately after a particular patient was given good support and suggestions from the members of the group. He seemed not to care and repeatedly interrupted and contradicted them instead. The group was then asked to give feedback on the person's listening skills, using a rating with chalk "X" marks on the blackboard scales, regarding their intuitive sense if they were listened to or not.

The question was asked of the group, "How well did Joe listen to you, and how much of it do you think he will use in the coming week?" Figure 5a shows the recorded reaction of five group members to this unwilling listener. The very low score was a shock to him and eventually a motivation for him to look into his game, script, and transference reasons for his defensive "tuning out" of others. After several months of work in the group, there was marked improvement in the new group evaluation of his listening, which coincided with improvement in therapy (Figure 5b).

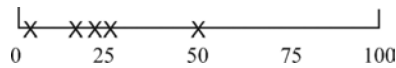


Figure 5a
Group Listening Scales (Before)

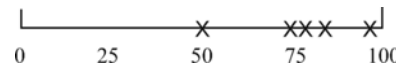


Figure 5b
Group Listening Scales (After)

A case example in an organization (Figure 5a): During a business coaching consultation there was a "glass ceiling" situation at work. The employees felt that management did not care, listen, or change on all listening scales when they offered suggestions for improvements. The overall listening rating on the main boss averaged 25, with only one 50 for the supervisor. Employee consensus was confirmed on a graph.

The Three Listening Scales

1. *The Listener's Scales.* In Figure 6a we see the main Listening Scale subdivided into three intuitive readings in listening, all of which can be quite different and can help deepen the understanding of a transaction. They attempt to clarify and quantify whether the person seemed to (a) care about you, who you are, what you feel,

what you say to him or her, or why you say it; (b) listen carefully to you and pay sufficient attention to hearing what you had to say; and then (c) seem willing to learn and demonstrate to you he or she wants to change based on what you say.

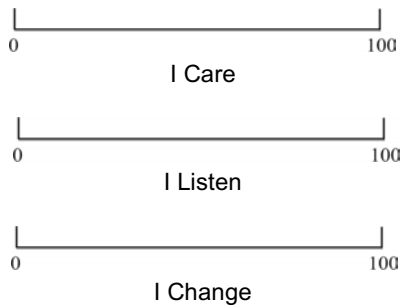


Figure 6a
Three Listener's Scales

2. *The Speaker's Scales.* Following that, to evaluate fairly both sides of the listening transaction, are the Speaker's Scales (Figure 6b), in which one now evaluates one's own contribution to being unheard through (a) exaggerated Expectations, (b) unusually low Satisfaction reaction, or (c) quality of Presentation, including both giving strokes and reassurance so that the other person is "set up" to want to listen and to have clarity in making his or her point.

3. *The Difficulty and Situational Scales.* If your listening scores run discouragingly low, consider that this is common, and they may be low for most people in most situations. A vital factor is that there may be difficult topics in busy circumstances and challenging situations that affect someone's attention to listening well and/or to speaking freely. So, two further readings address both the stress of the topic to discuss and the stress of the surrounding situation.

On the Difficulty/Easiness Scale, a relatively easy topic to discuss can register a favorable 100% (e.g., exchanging strokes or making exciting dinner plans). But if you try to talk a hostile person into changing his or her mistakes, it could register well below 50%.

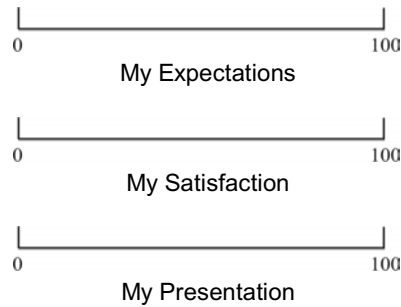


Figure 6b
Three Speakers Scales

On the Situational Scale, a favorable situation can register nearly 100% (e.g., a couple's anniversary dinner or a trusted therapy situation). But demanding a private discussion about mistakes in a crowded workplace could register below 50%.

These two additional scales, the Difficulty Scale and the Situational Scale (Figure 6c), are used for these intuitive readings on the ease and possibility of anyone's success in that particular setting with that particular topic.

A work example can illustrate a combination of the two. The subordinates were not supposed to speak up in meetings (Situational), and the topic they introduced was unwelcome criticism (Difficulty).

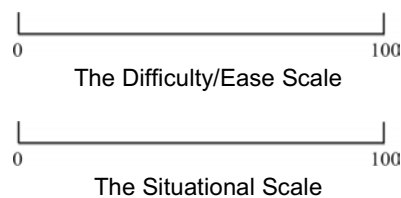


Figure 6c
The Difficulty/Easiness and Situational Scales

The Support Circle

Workshop Listening Exercises: The Support Circles (Figure 7). All of the eight scales listed so far are practiced thoroughly in listening and learning workshops. The most popular exercise

is called the “Support Circles.” There the (P) Presenter (Speaker) asks for support in a Support Circle that includes the roles of three styles of “therapists”: (F) = the Feeling Therapist (gives sympathy), (A) = the Action Therapist (gives directions), and (T) = the Thinking Therapist (gives interpretations). Sometimes a fourth role of (O) Observer is added to keep each therapist within his or her assigned role. This diagram is put on the board as a guideline to help keep the boundaries clear in each assigned role.

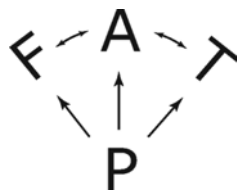


Figure 7
The Support Circle

In the process that follows, each “therapist” in turn gives their separate help. On prepared worksheets, they then grade the Speaker on how well the Speaker accepts each of their feedback, one by one, then hands the sheet to the Speaker. On receiving each page, the Speaker then grades their success on how well they got their point across. There is then discussion time.

With the intuition training, everyone gains a keener ear for what happens during a learning transaction, skills they can practice later until intuition becomes automatic and helpful in learning from one’s mistakes.

Workshop #4: Internal and External Blocks to Listening

Now that we have established that some people are not listening carefully to you (or you are not listening carefully to them), let us look at what may be going on inside the listener. Consider when you are talking to someone that he or she may be preoccupied inwardly and not hear you at all and will be tuning you out or twisting your words as quickly as you say them. No one can learn from his or her mistakes with

their mind preoccupied with what Berne called “skull games” during Withdrawal. And the same will apply to you if you do not want to hear of your mistakes as told by others.

1. *The Preoccupied Listener’s Drama Triangle* (Figure 8—Internal Blocking). Then imagine a triangular “firewall” rotating in someone’s head with every point keeping you out. They are playing games in their head while you are talking about important things. Hidden from you will be the person’s hidden (a) Agendas as Persecutor (silent aggressive energy awaiting his or her turn to defeat you and your words) or his or her hidden (b) Defenses that Rescue them (silently protecting themselves inwardly from any impact you can make that could damage their beliefs and homeostasis), or they are (c) Victims (silently, deep within their own confusing thought processes, misinterpretation, and Error).

In the drama triangle, all three roles usually are in play at once. If someone is good at pretending to listen, you may think you are communicating effectively yet not know that any resistance is going on. And you too could be doing the same thing to keep people’s complaints about you from being heard.

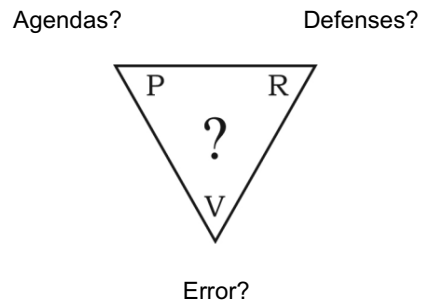


Figure 8
The Preoccupied Listener’s Drama Triangle

2. *The Intimacy Blocking Loop* (Figure 9—External Blocking). Then, on the direct socially observed transactional level, you may notice, and even comment to the person that he or she is blocking you off with the closed loop of the four basic intimacy blocks of Condescending, Abrupt, Secretive, and Evasive behaviors (Karpman, 2009).

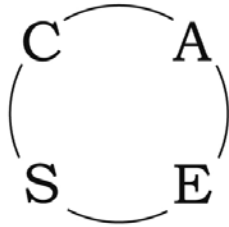


Figure 9
The Intimacy Blocking Loop
(Condescending, Abrupt, Secretive, and
Evasive Behaviors)

3. *The Two Nonlistener Sweatshirts* (Figures 10a and 10b). A third way of confirming that someone is tuning you out is to practice your intuition by looking for the transactional analysis “Sweatshirt” that summarizes someone’s demeanor and the Thesis of the game. The “Aha” is when you realize what the sweatshirt has been saying all along, and this becomes your



Figure 10a
Nonlistener Sweatshirt Type 1

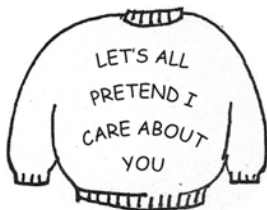


Figure 10b
Nonlistener Sweatshirt Type 2

escape from the game. If you look at the ulterior message on the person’s Sweatshirt (Berne, 1972, pp. 176-182) and apply these two new basic templates for solving games (Karpman, 2010b, pp. 231-232), you will read on the front that there is a visual ulterior behavioral message, one of the two basic templates: “Try And Make Me . . . (Listen) . . . If You Can” or the second option, “Let’s All Pretend . . . (I Care About You).” These template formats can be used to figure someone out and solve any game situation but almost always after the game is over. Their Switch and Payoff would be on the back of the Sweatshirt, and your surprise reaction to that is the game Crossup.

On the theme topic of “mistakes,” this, of course, could apply to you, and you could be signaling to others that you do not want their feedback, particularly the constructive feedback that would ask you to change. Another mistake would be to not develop your intuition and not know when games are being played.

Workshop #5: Missing the Point, The Iceberg Diagrams

Another communication problem arises when you realize someone has “missed the point” of what you just said to them, as illustrated by the arrow glancing off the “point” of the Iceberg diagram (Figure 11).

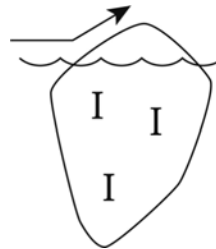


Figure 11
The I’sBerg (Iceberg)

Or, perhaps with a “Hurry up” or “Try hard” driver, the person is not aware that you had reasons beneath the surface of the point you were trying to make. It may take an effort by you to

get them to go back and hear the rest of what you have to say.

Remember, it could be that he or she “misses your point” because you have not made it clearly enough so they could see the tip of the iceberg. Furthermore, you may not have shown any hint of additional depth to what you said. The person would not suspect there was more to your words if you kept your additional information hidden “under water.” And the opposite applies too. You might have missed someone else’s point and compounded it by never asking for the rest of the reasons and the richness in what he or she said.

Hide-and-Seek Games. People may disguise the Importance, Implications, and Intent of their words by assuming others are not interested in who they are and what they have to say. Other people can hide meanings to prove that others do not care. Schiff often said hysterics act as if the other person does not have reasons. Discounting theory is a core concept in transactional analysis literature (Schiff & Schiff, 1971).

1. *The I’sBerg* (Figure 11). The sunken “I’sBerg (“Iceberg”) shown in Figure 11 illustrates that the careless listener only sees the surface of what is said (top of the iceberg) and bounces off it to some other topic, discounting and redefining the significance of what may be beneath the surface, which would be revealed if a longer conversation were allowed. The three letter “I’s” below the surface of the water level represent the Importance, Implications, and Intent of what is discounted during superficial listening, and originally gave it the name “I’sBerg.”

Examples in treatment—countertransference: It may be you, the therapist, who is missing the point. You may be oblivious or tuned out to your patient and not hear the Implications of his or her feedback or treat it hurriedly as not Important information for your treatment plan, or you may question the patient’s Intent as personal criticism whereas it actually may be well-meaning and useful to you and your goal to lessen your countertransferences and be a better therapist. Alternatively, a therapist may make the “mistake” of disregarding the depths of where a patient is leading him or her deep below the

water surface to unconscious Memories, Defenses, and Impulses. That would read as “M-D-I” below the surface if a Freudian Iceberg Diagram is drawn.

2. *The Underwater Compassion Triangle* (Figure 12). Another similar iceberg diagram in Figure 12 uses an inverted sunken Compassion Triangle with its theory that three positive motivations are always hidden from consideration in a game (Karpman, 2009). In transactional games, a partner may wrongly assume a Persecutor point is attacking him or her and quickly skip up away from it but misses looking deeper and appreciating the others’ hidden OK Rescuer attempts to help and the OK Victim’s sympathetic position of being involved in an unwanted game. They may miss the point of their own Persecutor responsibility in continuing the game.

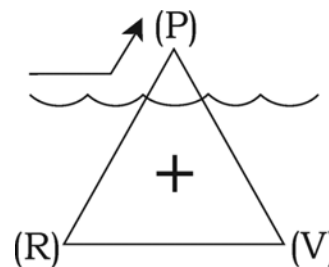


Figure 12
The Underwater Compassion Triangle

All of these mistakes are an opportunity for learning and change. Iceberg models illustrate that there is a tip, a point, to what is said, and there are convincing reasons to back it up that lie under the surface if they are searched for or the information volunteered. Careful listening accompanied by curiosity and inquiry is required, and a statement such as, “I was really surprised you said/did that. What was going on for you at the time?” can transform the outcome. Workshops use role-playing exercises to practice searching for reasons by hiding them and then revealing them.

Workshop #6: The Listener’s Loops

A Listening Theory. People are born with an innate ability to listen and change, but that can

be buried under acquired psychological games. Resistance to social listening can be known, explained, corrected, and treated.

The four skills necessary for good listening are reducible to two simple diagrams for teaching purposes: the Listener's Loop and the Intimacy Winner's Loop (Figures 13 and 14). The letters are linked in a loop to demonstrate that they are a theoretically complete set and that they are easier to remember and use with a simpler visual diagram. Also, this behavior can be scientifically defined and tested. Learning from mistakes comes not only from within but also depends on how honestly a person listens to complaints about himself or herself from others.

1. *The Listener's Loop* (Figure 13). This loop is comprehensive in theory by condensing the four directions of desirable listening. It has been researched and practiced for over 30 years. It teaches people the four social needs to include when listening to others. It has been used to analyze what is missing during couples' arguments. It is used as a model to ask whether one feels heard and what one would like better from a partner or associate. It is a blueprint and a checklist to work from for future improvement.

First, we need to explain the completeness of the four positions of the Listener's Loop or S.E.V.F.: (S) Strokes preserve the relationship, (E) Encouragement preserves the channel, (V) Validation preserves the point, and (F) Follow-through preserves the purpose.

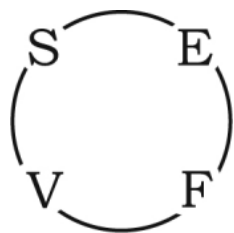


Figure 13
The Listener's Loop
(Strokes, Encouragement, Validation,
Follow-Through)

Practice exercises: Share something important with someone, then watch to see what happens. (1) Does he or she give you Strokes as a person to show that he or she likes you no matter what you said? (2) Does he or she Encourage you to speak by putting into words the permission that your communications are always welcome and encouraged and that there is a clearly stated "open door" policy with him or her? Are his or her words matched by inviting body language? (3) Do you get Validation from him or her of what you are saying and why? Does he or she name the specifics of what he or she agreed with or liked the most (even if it follows the minimum 10% rule, that is, that there is at least 10% truth in anything a person in good faith says to you)? (4) Do you get a tangible Follow-through on your point to fulfill the purpose and goal of what you said?

2. *The Intimacy Winner's Loop* (see Figure 14 below). To avoid exhibiting the negative Intimacy Evasive Loop (the four Condescending, Abrupt, Secretive, and Evasive transactional blocks) (Karpman, 2009), one can demonstrate the exact OK positive opposites with the same initial C.A.S.E. letters: (1) Caring—You are Caring about the other person and he or she feels it and trusts you; (2) Approachable—You are seen as an open and approachable person people can come up to and immediately feel welcome with; (3) Sharing—You will be Sharing with him or her whatever information you

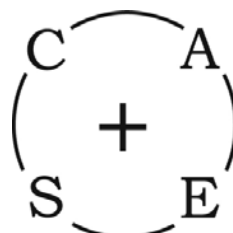


Figure 14
The Intimacy Winner's Loop
(Caring, Approachable,
Sharing, Engaged)

you have that the other person needs in order to solve his or her issue; and (4) Engaged—You will willingly stay Engaged on his or her chosen subject until it is talked out and resolved. All these models are used to evaluate OK listening attitudes in others and particularly in yourself.

Practice. Both Figures 13 and 14—the positive Listener’s Loop and the negative and positive Intimacy Loops—are practiced in workshops and groups. A person learns directly what his or her tendencies are in his or her communication mistakes and how to correct them.

Readers are also encouraged to apply and practice these using personal examples as they read along in this article and as they would in a weekend workshop. That continuing practice would complete the Follow-Through or Wrap It Up to this section, that is, when the didactic is followed by the experiential and then the application.

Workshop #7. The Three Rules of Accountability

The two original accountability loops presented next take listening and learning a step further when there is a requirement that someone demonstrate openly that he or she will listen, learn, and change something. The A.I.R. and the A.B.C. accountability loops are drawn as closed loops, again, to theoretically demonstrate core scientific completeness that can satisfy the professional Parent and Adult ego states. The visual memory of the simple model can satisfy the Child, a diagrammatic “bull’s-eye.” Other therapists and trainers may choose to teach these loops as a checklist or as steps, without the diagram. These as shown in Figures 15 and 16 are picked here because they are easiest to remember and yet they are theoretically complete. The problems to be accountable for may range from first-, second-, and third-degree games in severity.

In a workshop setting, an example of a problem is offered, and then the full checklists are covered to get the practice needed for each. Then partners switch sides and discuss it to face their denials and realize their tendencies and how to correct them.

In the A.I.R. loop (Figure 15), the letters are in a specific sequence representing Apology, Insight, and Responsibility. It is easily remem-

bered and referred to when spoken of as the “AIRing out” of a problem. If you want yourself or someone to be convincing, expect all three A.I.R. steps to be followed convincingly. The second loop presented will be the ABCs of Accountability. The letters represent the three steps of Admit it, Believe it, Change it. As with the other series mentioned earlier in this article, each step requires a different social skill and may be avoided in a game or hide a script problem underneath.

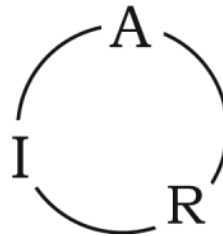


Figure 15
A.I.R. Accountability Loop
(Apology, Insight, Responsibility)

1. *The A.I.R. of Accountability* (Figure 15).

A = Apology. In easy situations of simple mistakes, a simple apology is all that is needed, and the issue is dropped with something like, “Thanks, you’re right. Sorry.” But an apology can ring hollow in many ways, for example, if it seems hurried and dismissive or casual and insufficient for the gravity and frequency of the action. Equally, an apology is unconvincing when it turns into a blaming justification, such as, “I apologize, but it was because you . . . or he . . .” or if the person seems not really to understand what he or she is apologizing for. You may then have to address the empty apology in a new “Bring It Up, Talk It Up, and Wrap It Up” session as discussed earlier in this article. A true apology includes sincere *Acknowledgment* that you can repeat the point and have it heard, *Agreement* with the point, and *Acceptance* of Responsibility and of the Need to *Apologize*.

If you are not certain if the apology was a sincere one, use an old gestalt exercise and spontaneously say to yourself or to the person with

each try, “I feel it” or “I don’t feel it.” Sometimes we hear an apology in the media as coached by a lawyer and read aloud, such as, “I am truly sorry for what I have done, I was in error, it is not the me I want to be, and I will cooperate with the investigation and make full restitution to the victims.” In treating legal cases for accountability, or in a parole hearing, the interviewer may ask further, “Do you believe that this law is a good law and why?”

I = Insight. If an apology seems insincere, demonstrable proof of insight is then needed or else there is no guarantee that the same problem will not return over and over again. Full insight requires transparency. For some examples, if the major issue was addiction, oppression, or infidelity, all three of the following must be demonstrated.

(1) *Insight into oneself:* Do you know and accept your own psychological reasons for doing this? Is it a long-standing problem? Give three examples. Ask someone else about the problem: “Coach me on how I can spot the warning signals in advance.” Ask further, “What was your intention and why couldn’t that ever work? Was there self-delusion or a rationalized positive intent to the act? Are you willing to offer your personal insights for others?”

(2) *Insight into others:* Do you or they know and are they remorseful for what the effects were on the other persons? Is there empathy for the feelings of betrayal and hurt in the other? How was that rationalized? Is someone blaming the system or other people? Demonstrate the insight into why others consider it wrong and why the rules had to be established.

(3) *Inquiry into the problem:* Are you or the other person actively seeking additional information in order to get a deeper understanding of the problem and bring about deeper change? Have enough of the right questions been asked? Was there in play any of the Condescending, Abrupt, Secretive, or Evasive blocks (Figure 14) to discourage further inquiry?

R = Responsibility. Take responsibility for having done it and for guaranteeing that it will not happen again, and if it does, show how to contain it and make amends. Put a name on what you did. Give people Reassurance that satisfies them. The R’s can include the phrase “Reassur-

ance, Repair, and Results gain Respect.” Agree to an open-door policy that allows an easy Bring-It-Up again in the future if it reoccurs. An addict can take responsibility for preventing a “slip” by not frequenting “slippery places and slippery people.” Relapse Prevention Therapy keeps the subject on the table to be discussed again and again whenever necessary, without games or gaming the system.

2. *The ABCs of Accountability* (Figure 16). The ABCs stand for “Admit it, Believe it, Change it”—simple but complete. In a group workshop exercise, a trainee was asked to write down what the ABCs meant to her. She wrote, “For some people the Herculean task of Admitting something that is problematic requires great strength. This formidable responsibility, once accomplished, leads one to Believe in one’s ability to recognize the problem and Believe it to be changeable. With this new belief in ourselves and that the others were right and the problem admitted, Change can now occur.”

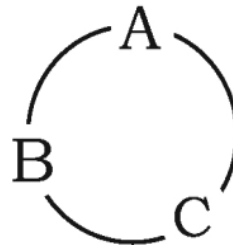


Figure 16
ABCs Accountability Loop
(Admit It, Believe It, Change It)

Other Listening Loops. As an aside, I will mention four additional listening loops, favorites of mine that I have used and collected over time. They all approach the problem from a different perspective and appeal to different people. They are self-explanatory, and due to space considerations I will not elaborate or include the loop drawings here. The reader is invited to try each one out with the approach of “Let It In, Let It Matter, and Let It Work.”

Three steps separate good task management, that is, a story, or a paragraph, has a beginning,

middle, and end, and most models in this article follow that pattern.

- C.C.C. Cooperation, Contrition, Change
- F.F.F. Feel It, Face It, Fix It
- S.S.S. Sense It, Solve It, Speak It
- L.L.L. Let It In, Let It Matter, Let It Work

Workshop #8: The Seven Ps of Accountability

The Accountability Process. A longer sequence and a necessarily more complete accountability process will go farther to satisfy a skeptic of someone’s promised change of behavior, particularly applicable to second- and third-degree games. The Seven Ps of Accountability is the consecutive progression of seven steps that addresses the loopholes in the empty promises of people who “promise” to “learn from their mistakes” but never do. The process is: Problem → Promise → Plan → Penalties → Progress → Proof → Praise. It is helpful in setting boundaries and keeping track of changes. It increases awareness of the large number of possible loopholes for people who “fall between the cracks” and escape accountability.

Case example: An alcoholic, after much suffering, loss, and embarrassment, was trying to regain respectability and trust with his family, friends, and employers. The Accountability Process was needed. First, in the order just described, others needed to know that he deeply understood his Problem with drunken binges, then hear from him a believable Promise that he wanted to change. Next, it was important to know he actually had a convincing Relapse Prevention Plan (rehab, psychotherapy, daily Antabuse, daily Alcoholic Anonymous or AA meetings, a sponsor, and AA sobriety chips). They told him what the Penalties would be if he backed out, and he agreed that they were fair. Boundaries were set. But they needed him to demonstrate tangible Progress by openly revealing the work he was doing on his AA 12 Steps and in counseling, taking Antabuse under observation, and even presenting signed daily AA attendance sheets as Proof to them as well as exhibiting a stable sobriety free of emotional games over a set period of time. For behavioral reinforcement, the change is then followed by Praise.

For people wanting to make their own lists, you can trim down any list to the bare essentials. Some interesting words here were dropped, such as Preparation, Perseverance, Probation, Penitence, and Payoff. Also, if impressive change occurred at the workplace, the seventh step, Praise, could be followed by Pride, Prestige, and Promotion.

Motivation for Change

A person may ask, “Why should I change for you?” A transactional analysis ego state diagram (Figure 17) shows five social motivations for change, whether applied to a therapist, a couple, or a business partner. People may decide to change out of (CP) Pride to be a better person for themselves and to be seen favorably by others. (NP) Caring about the suffering, losses, confusion, and unhappiness caused to another can be the catalyst for change. (A) Reasons can eventually become convincing enough for someone to decide to change. (FC) Advantages will follow in the form of personal success, love from others, and peace of mind for oneself if the change is made. (AC) Consequences would continue, whether it be mounting losses, social humiliation, or physical damage, and that can serve as a motivation for change.

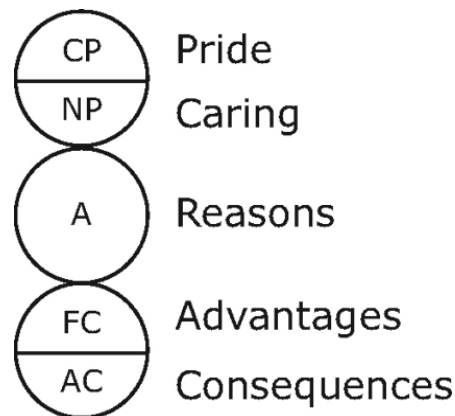


Figure 17
Five Motivations for Change

Business Accountability: Access, Responsiveness, Transparency, and Accountability. These four represent the level of accountability desired for business openness and are called the “Four Principles of Representation” (Karpman, 2010a). These principles can serve as a model for access and transparency in any progressive organization considering members’ or employees’ needs and patients’ rights.

1. *Access* means that there is an unobstructed path to getting information, requests, and questions answered in both directions up or down the corporate ladder.

2. *Responsiveness* means that one can expect a timely and courteous reply, observing the openness principles described in this article and receiving follow-up notice for the implementation of the ideas considered.

3. *Transparency* means that everyone is allowed to find how and why unusual things are happening and receive information about what is going on.

4. *Accountability* means that there is a name of a responsible person to make changes and that the results can be made widely known.

Theory Discussion

These workshops and this accompanying article intend to expand the cognitive-behavioral theory reach of transactional analysis to demonstrate how effective “listening for learning” can be an acquired process through Adult training and practicing, just as previous articles on the “intimacy trilogy” showed how intimacy can be a learned process through Adult training (Karpman, 2009, 2010b), where Communication is offered as bridging the gap between Games and Intimacy on Berne’s (1966) Time Structuring list (Karpman, 2009, pp. 230-232).

The ideas in this article are more effective and proven to work quicker because they were composed over many years by strictly following Berne’s basic rules for theory:

1. “Don’t say anything you can’t diagram.” Diagrams are the scientific base of transactional analysis. In our San Francisco 202 Seminar meetings, if a person would exude “Love is everywhere,” Berne would say, “Go to the blackboard and diagram that” and “What is your measurable treatment contract?” Berne, a social-

behavioral scientist, often taught that “Reality is something you can photograph and tape record,” which promoted a new evidence-base social reality for the field of psychology at the time.

Diagrams, including those I have used in this article, have many uses, from demonstrating to a thinker how to simplify his or her thinking to its core truths or for the quantifying of intuition for research purposes or to appeal to the Child on the visual level, particularly in coaching and educational settings.

2. Adhere to the principles of Occam’s Razor, which says that psychological ideas should be trimmed to their basic truths and into layman’s language with a succinct treatment contract in pursuit of Berne’s vision for transactional analysis to “cure patients faster.” Occam’s Razor is attributed to the fourteenth-century English logician, theologian, and Franciscan friar Father William of Ockham.

3. “The Child is the most important ego state, and all the other ego states are set up to protect it.” Berne’s writing style was to invent useful concepts that were accurate, simple, and accessible to the Child. In this article, many concepts are simplified and appreciated by participants in weekend workshops.

In Berne’s time, an analyst friend once critiqued transactional analysis by saying, “Yours is oversimplified,” to which Berne quipped back, “Yours is overcomplicated.”

Berne (1972) addressed this outsider view of the popularity of transactional analysis in his last book, *What Do You Say After You Say Hello*, when he wrote in the preface,

This has led to charges of “popularization” and “oversimplification.” . . . Given the choice between the arcane and the open, between over-complication and simplicity, I have thrown in with the “people,” tossing in a big word now and then as a sort of hamburger to distract the watchdogs of the academies, while I slip in through the basement doors and say Hello to my friends. (p. xv)

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Supervising Transactional Analyst (psychotherapy), was twice ITAA vice president, and served 11 years on the board of trustees. He was the first ongoing editor of the Transactional Analysis Journal and has 35 transactional analysis publications. He was the winner of the 1972 (drama triangle) and 1979 (Options) Eric Berne Memorial Scientific Awards. He is an assistant clinical professor at the University of California, San Francisco, and also has a private practice in San Francisco. For 40 years he has traveled widely conducting training workshops in transactional analysis. Dr. Karpman can be reached for feedback at egostates@aol.com or at his Web site: <http://www.karpmandramatriangle.com> (where his articles are available). Graphics by Eric Karpman at www.EricsGraphics.com.

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