



## Using transactional analysis as a psychotherapist: how to use TA in clinical situations

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**Abstract.** This presentation will begin with six basic personality adaptations: schizoid, paranoid, antisocial, passive-aggressive, obsessive-compulsive and histrionic. The colloquial titles are creative daydreamer, brilliant skeptic, charming manipulator, playful resistor, responsible workaholic, and enthusiastic over reactor. A technique for closing escape hatches is based on the OK coral and Berne's four basic life positions. Contracting for change about a psychosomatic illness is presented using Muriel James' questions. During the contracting cons are identified while early and present symptoms reveal injunctions and driver behavior. Being the illness and giving voice to the illness will reveal the early decision at which time a redecision can be facilitated. As a psychotherapist the issue then becomes anchoring the new decision so that support, celebrations and practice may occur.  
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The presentation includes the six personality adaptations, closing escape hatches, contracting for change, cons, injunctions, drivers, early decisions and redecisions.

Information about personality adaptations gives immediate ways to engage my client. **Creative Daydreamers** are individuals who are artists, musicians, and authors. These individuals are the true stoics in the world. They need to learn to ask for what they want, knowing that there is plenty of time, love, and attention for everyone. In extreme pathological situations creative daydreamers will be diagnosed schizoid. I engage these individuals looking at the behaviors and when change occurs in therapy, their feeling

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will be different. **Brilliant Skeptics** are individuals who make good attorneys, and accountants; they pay attention to every detail. These individuals in no way want to be surprised or “blind sided”. In extreme pathological circumstances brilliant skeptics are known as paranoid. I engage these individuals by thinking with them. When change occurs in therapy, their behavior will be different. **Charming Manipulators** can be found in positions as CEO’s, politicians, or sales. These individuals are the anti-socials in extreme pathological instances. Contact is made by addressing their behavior in a playful manner. At an early age charming manipulators decided not to trust and so will show off to others or show them up; that is, they will attempt to influence by charm (seduction) or intimidation. When change occurs in therapy, their thinking will be different. **Playful Resisters** make good investigative reporters, and policeman. In extreme pathological instances these individuals are the passive–aggressive. Contact is made by playfully confronting the behaviors which demonstrate that life is a struggle. It is all or nothing, black or white, either/or thinking. Playful resisters are learning there are always more than two choices. When change occurs in therapy, their thinking will be different. **Enthusiastic Over-Reactors** are individuals who are good at meeting people; you will find them in front office personal positions, they make wonderful hosts and hostesses. Only with this type personality is contact made through validating feelings. Enthusiastic over-reactors believe that if they feel something then it must be true. In pathological circumstances these individuals are the histrionics. When change occurs in therapy, their behaviors will be different. Contact is made with **Responsible Workaholics** through thinking. These individuals make great employees because one knows that they can be counted on to complete a task to the best of their ability and they do not need close supervision. Responsible workaholics are learning they have worth and value for simply being and not just doing. In extreme pathology cases, these are the obsessive–compulsives. As change occurs in therapy, their behaviors will be different. ([6], Joines and Stewart, 2002).

Frank Ernst’s OK Coral ([2], Ernst, 1971) is used to introduce the basic life positions of Eric Berne.

The **1st** is **I+**, **Y+**, and is the position to **GET ON WITH** where the potential is unlimited.

The **2nd** is **I–**, **Y+**, and is the position to **GET AWAY FROM**; the feelings most often experienced are sad, scared, confused.

This is a defensive position and the escape is **SUICIDE**.

I ask the individual to make the statement “I will not accidentally or on purpose kill myself now or in the future”.

I follow with a series of questions as we talk about the *decision statement*—I may want to kill myself and I will not ([1], Boyd and Boyd, 1980).

I ask:

Are you willing for that to be true for you?

Is it true that you will not kill yourself on purpose or accidentally?

Are there any exceptions?

Is it ok to “feel like” doing it and not?

In your own words what is your decision.

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