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# IN THE FINAL ANALYSIS

Organisations are waking up to the value of Transactional Analysis as a valuable coaching tool. In this special report we take a look at an increasingly popular concept

By Julie Hay



Approaching a freelance Transactional Analysis (TA) consultant about potential work might be told that TA is not used or wanted within the organisation. Yet when the consultant talks about what the organisation does use, or meets the in-house trainers or potential participants, the following concepts often crop up: 'I'm OK – You're OK'. 'You're playing games with me'. 'Controlling, critical, nurturing parent'. 'Adult ego state'. 'Adapted, natural, free child'. 'Little professor'. 'Drivers' (hurry up, be perfect, and so on). And 'working styles'.

Interestingly, all of these familiar coaching terms actually have their origins in TA. They've now become embedded in our everyday language – so that we often use TA without even realising the source.

Increasingly, TA is being woven into coaching to help analyse what goes on between coach and client and as a tool for clients to analyse their own functioning.

## What is TA?

According to the ITAA (International TA Association) and EATA (European Association of TA), TA is a theory of human personality and social behaviour. It is a comprehensive system of psychotherapy founded in the late 1950s by Eric Berne (1910-70), author of the book *Games People Play*.

## TA – common myths

### • Isn't TA an outdated California hippy type of thing?

TA developed in California in the 1960s but has gone on to become a well-respected approach, with international, European and national professional associations throughout the world.

### • Isn't TA a therapy approach?

TA was developed within therapy settings but the theories relate to human functioning, so are just as relevant in any context, provided the approach is adjusted accordingly.

### • Isn't TA rather simplistic?

TA terminology is deliberately accessible, which sometimes creates a false impression. There is considerable depth in the theories, which may be overlooked if professionals rely on popular TA books rather than proper training.