



Deep Release Online
Professional Training for Counsellors

FIVE WAYS

of working with
Transactional Analysis



A Transaction...

...is an exchange between people

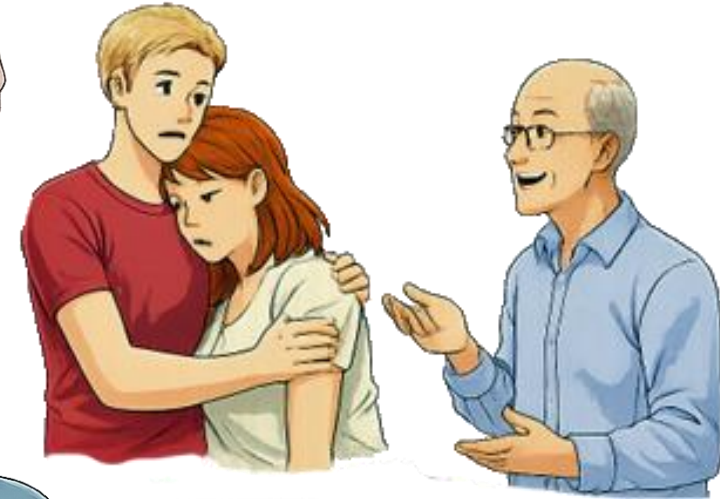
- * what I say
- * how you hear it
- * how you respond



Analysis...

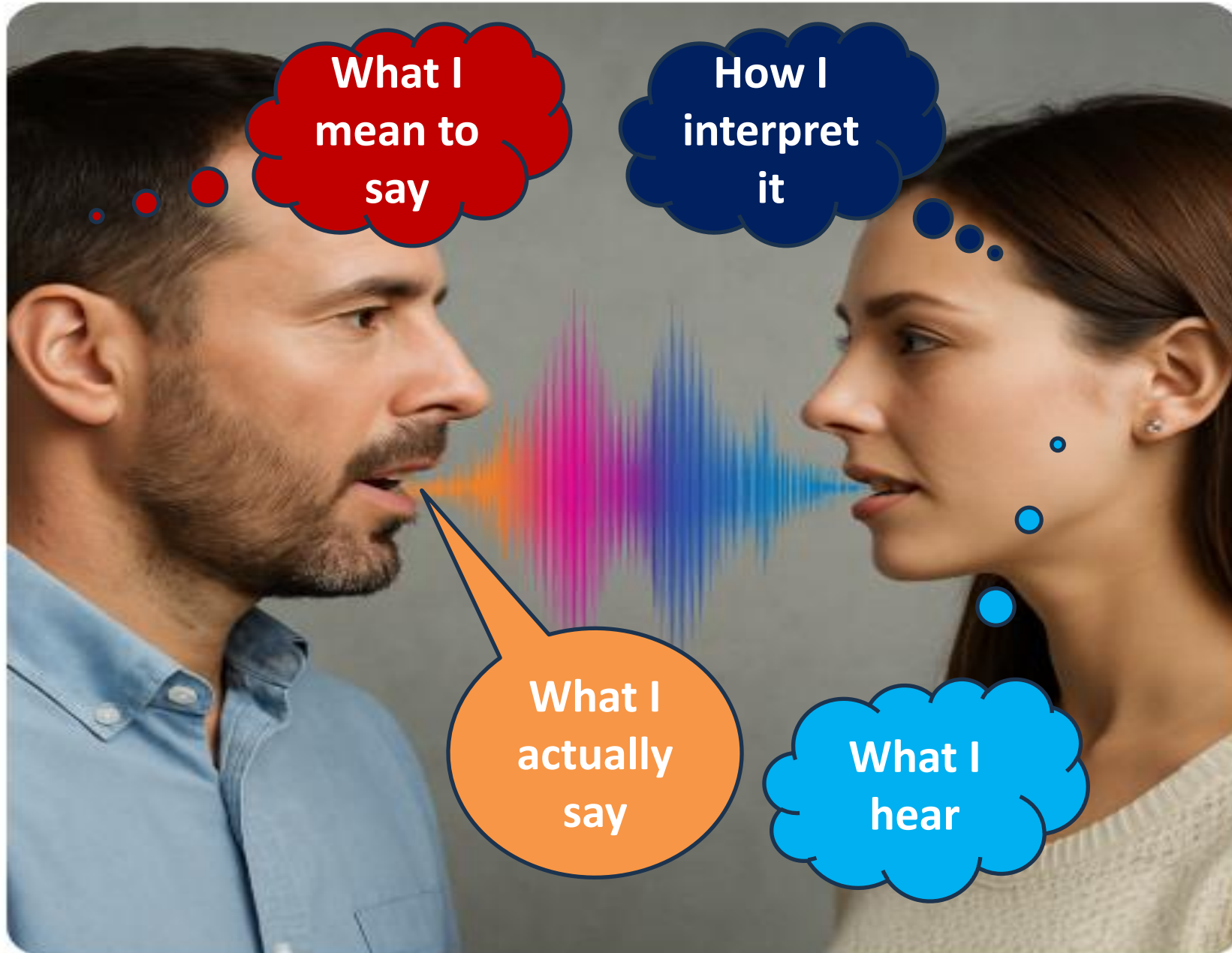
...means noticing and making sense of patterns

- * repeating ways of responding
- * familiar roles we slip into
- * patterns that once helped us cope



Transactional Analysis helps us understand what happens between people, and why it keeps happening

Lost in Translation



The ability to accurately assess a situation in the here and now so that we can respond as adults, not coloured by past experiences as a child

AWARENESS

AUTONOMY

The ability to do the things that you want to, without being held back by an inner critic or fearful voice

SPONTANEITY

CAPACITY FOR INTIMACY

Deep connection with another human being in a safe way

“A candid, game-free relationship, with mutual free giving and receiving without exploitation...” (Eric Berne)



Parent

The attitudes, rules, messages, and ways of responding that we absorbed from significant adults and authority figures. The original people become internalised voices in our head, affecting how we judge, guide, protect, criticise, soothe or control both ourselves and others.



Adult

Our capacity to be present, think clearly, notice what's actually happening now, and respond with choice. It integrates thinking, feeling and awareness, rather than reacting from old rules or survival strategies.

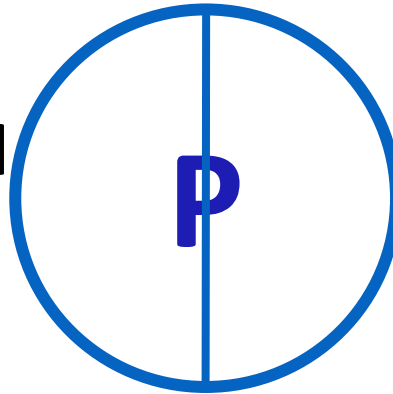


Child

Our feelings, needs, impulses, creativity, vulnerability and early ways of coping, including both spontaneous aliveness and learned adaptations.



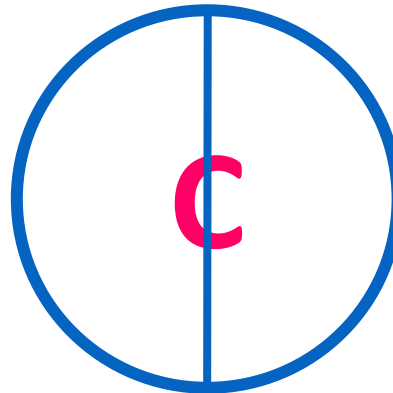
**Critical
Parent**



**Nurturing
Parent**



**Adapted
Child**



**Free
Child**



Inconsistent Parent

Critical, Controlling Abusive Parent



Spoiling Parent

OUT

OUT



**Structuring Parent
Socialised Child**



**Nurturing Parent
Free Child**

IN

**Adapted Child
Conditional Love**



Wild Rebel Child



Hurt Child

Hurt – Shame - Anger - Rebellion



5 Ways of Working with Transactional Analysis

Scripts and Injunctions

Drivers and Strokes

Permissions, Protection and Potency

Loneliness, Avoidance and Relational Patterns

TA Traps (and how to avoid them)

1 Scripts and Injunctions

A Script is the story we learned early on about who we are and how relationships work.

It tells us what we need to do to belong, stay safe and be loved.

It shapes what we expect, how we make sense of our experiences, and the patterns we repeat, especially in relationships.

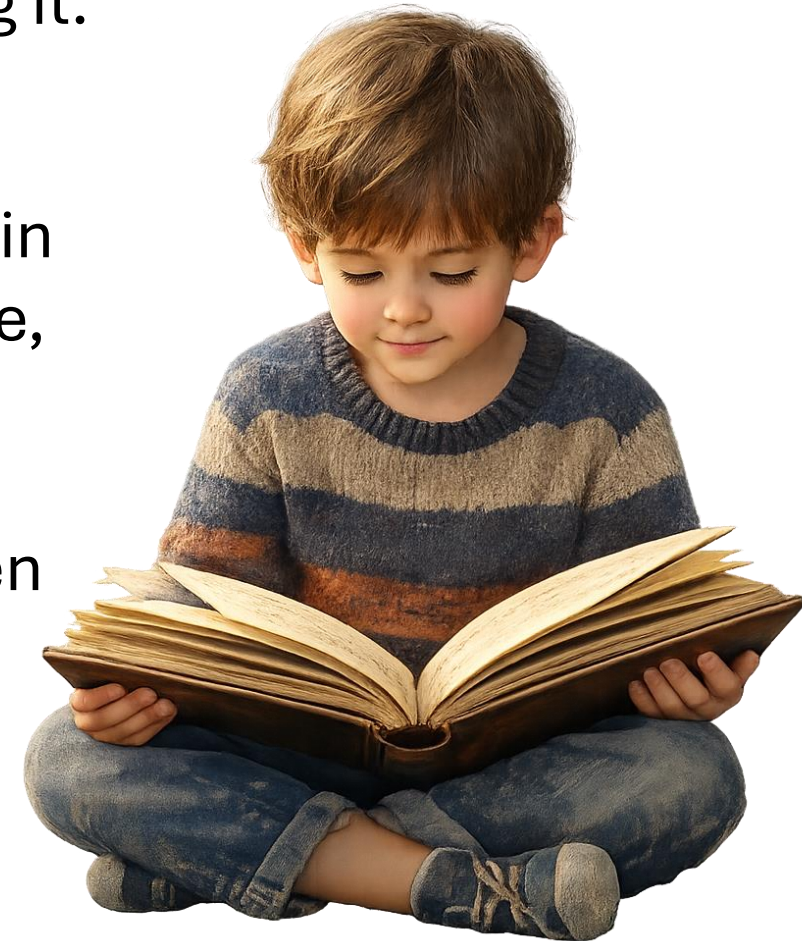


1 Scripts and Injunctions

The child didn't choose the book. It was written before they could read, by the people and the world around them. Their parents, carers, family culture and early experiences all had a hand in writing it.

As the book is read to the child again and again, they learn what kind of character they are supposed to be in this story – the good one, the quiet one, the strong one, the helper, the invisible one.

They learn what happens to characters like them when they make mistakes, need comfort or show anger.



1 Scripts and Injunctions

The child tends to accept the story as ‘normal’; it’s just how life works. And because the story once helped them survive, belong and stay connected, they keep reading it faithfully.

In the counselling room, as we begin to identify what lies in a client’s story book, we don’t ask them to throw it away.

We explore it with care.

We honour the strategies that used to work, helping them discover new chapters that can be written.



1 Scripts and Injunctions

Rescuer Roles
THE CARETAKER



My role is to take care of everyone and to clean up everyone else's mess.

Rescuer Roles
THE GOOD CHILD



My role is to be nice and compliant and keep everyone happy.

Rescuer Roles
MUMMY'S LITTLE HELPER




My role is always to understand my mother, take her side and never disappoint her.

Rescuer Roles
THE PEACEMAKER



I calm everyone down and stop any conflict, or disagreements.

Rescuer Roles
DADDY'S CHILD




My role is to follow in my father's footsteps, be big and strong like him... I must not disappoint him.

Rescuer Roles
THE RESCUER




I will always try and ease your pain – whether you want me to or not.

Performer Roles
THE ENTERTAINER




I make people laugh, stop them being angry or upset... I cheer everyone up.

Performer Roles
**SUPERSTAR/
SUPER-SPORTS-STAR**



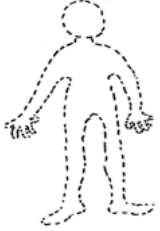
I am a high achiever, I get top grades/prizes and bring honour to the family name.

Performer Roles
STRONG

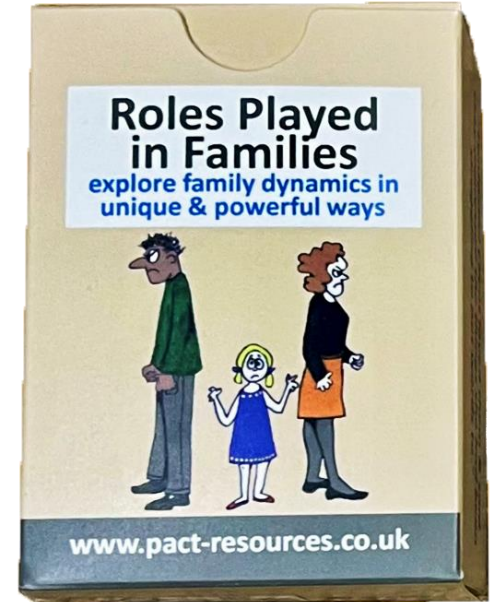


I never show feelings or express emotion as they are signs of weakness.

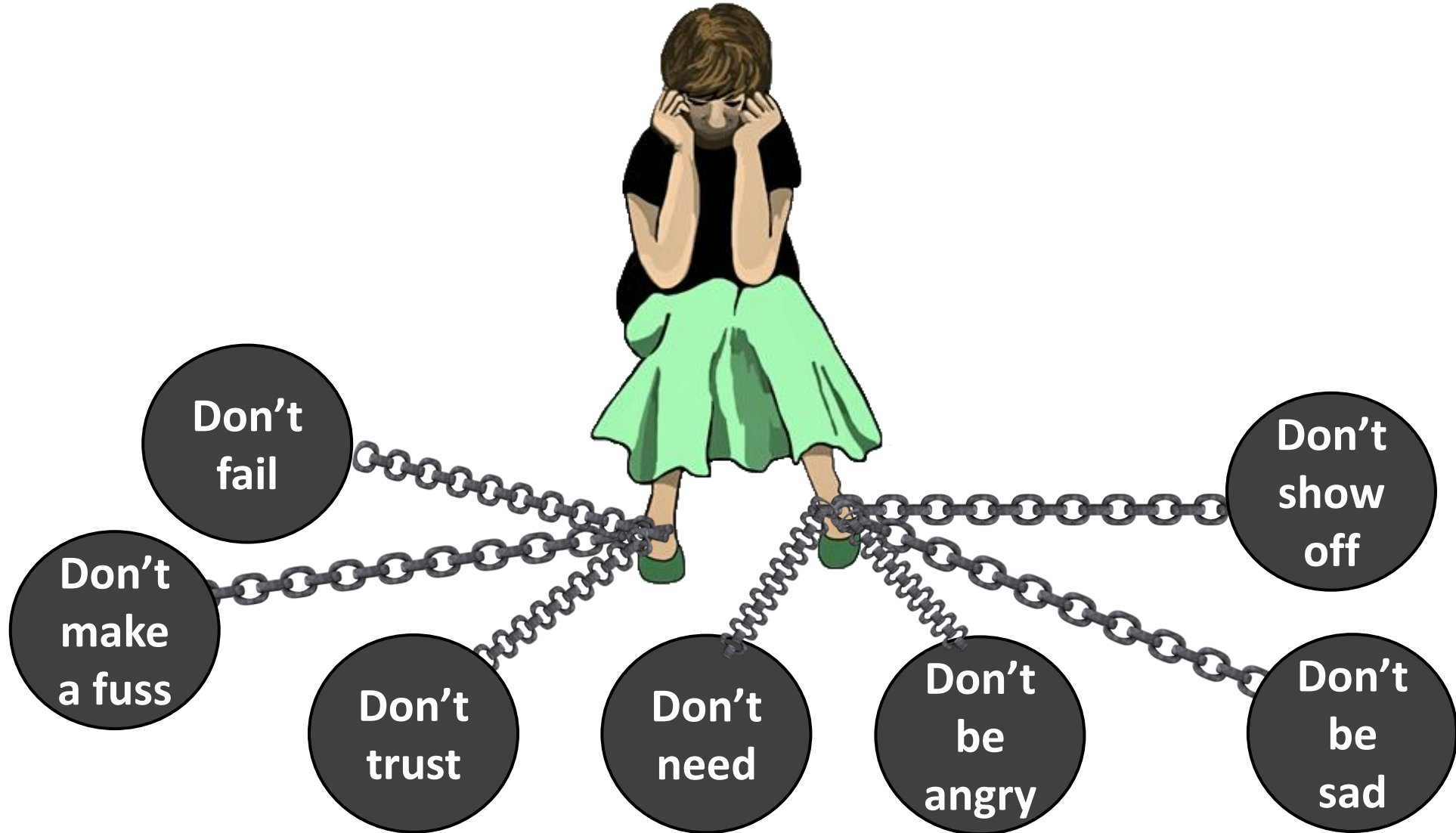
Helpless Roles
INVISIBLE



My role is not to be seen, not to speak, not to make myself noticeable.



1 Scripts and Injunctions



From an idea by Adrienne Lee
(The Drowning Man)

1

Scripts and Injunctions



Possible Ideas to share in Buddy Groups

- Share your experience of learning about TA – do you use it with clients?
- How easily can you identify your ‘story book’ scripts?

15 minutes



TAKE A BREAK

5:00



2

Drivers and Strokes

Counterinjunctions = Drivers

Please always!

Hurry up!

Be strong!

Injunctions

Try Harder!

Be perfect!

Don't fail

Don't show off

Don't make a fuss

Don't trust

Don't need

Don't be angry

Don't be sad



2

Drivers and Strokes

Counter-injunctions



Drivers are internal pressures that push us to behave in ways that will

- win approval
- keep us out of trouble
- help us to stay in relationship with people who matter to us

But at what price?

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs



2

Drivers and Strokes



Wifi
Battery



2

Drivers and Strokes

STRESS DRIVERS QUESTIONNAIRE

	YES	TO SOME EXTENT	NO
	1	½	0
1. Do you set yourself high standards and then criticise yourself for failing to meet them?			
2. Is it important to you to be right?			
3. Do you feel discomfort (annoyed/irritated) by small messes or discrepancies, eg a spot on a garment or wallpaper, an ornament or tool out of place, a disorderly presentation of work?			
4. Do you hate to be interrupted?			
5. Do you like to explain things in detail and precisely?			
TOTAL SCORE			
6. Do you do things (especially for others) that you don't really want to?			
7. Is it important for you to be liked?			
8. Are you easily persuaded?			
TOTAL SCORE			

Drivers in action in the counselling room

Clients may:

- Overexplain (Try Hard)
- Apologise excessively (Please Others)
- Minimise distress (Be Strong)
- Rush through feelings (Hurry Up)
- Fear getting it wrong (Be Perfect)

Counsellors may also operate from Drivers:

- Over-preparing (Be Perfect)
- Teaching too much (Try Hard)
- Staying “professional” (Be Strong)
- Filling silence (Hurry Up)
- Avoiding challenge (Please Others)


Pause for Reflection



A stroke is a unit of recognition

It's any way in which we notice, acknowledge or respond to another person, letting them know they exist and that they matter

Verbal strokes




I love the way I can laugh and cry with you.
It means so much to me.

Non-Verbal strokes



Self-affirmation



You did a great job!

Drivers and Strokes

Don't
show off!

Don't be
important!

You did a great job!

Don't be
proud!

Be
modest!

Embarrassment

Guilt

Shame

Many of us learned that giving positive strokes to ourselves was wrong, and self-affirmation can feel like breaking an old internal rule.



The Double Crush



I did do a great job!

**Finding
your Adult
self**



**Finding
your
Nurturing
Parent self**



2

Drivers and Strokes

Negative Strokes can be active or passive *but any stroke is better than none*

As humans, we all need recognition. When positive recognition isn't available, or feels unsafe, we often accept negative recognition.

Being noticed is better than being invisible.



Possible Ideas to share in Buddy Groups

- How did you get on with the Stress Drivers questionnaire?
- What strokes felt easiest or safer for you to receive growing up?
- How do you feel about positive strokes now?

15 minutes



TAKE A BREAK

5:00





**Questions
Comments
Discussion**

3 Permissions, Protection and Potency



What kind of messages did you grow up with?

What would it feel like to have **PERMISSION** to push the gate open and step through?

What would the other side of the gate look like for you?

3 Permissions, Protection and Potency

This kept me safe



3 Permissions, Protection and Potency

PROTECTION

The therapeutic frame that ensures that permission doesn't overwhelm, destabilise or retraumatise the client

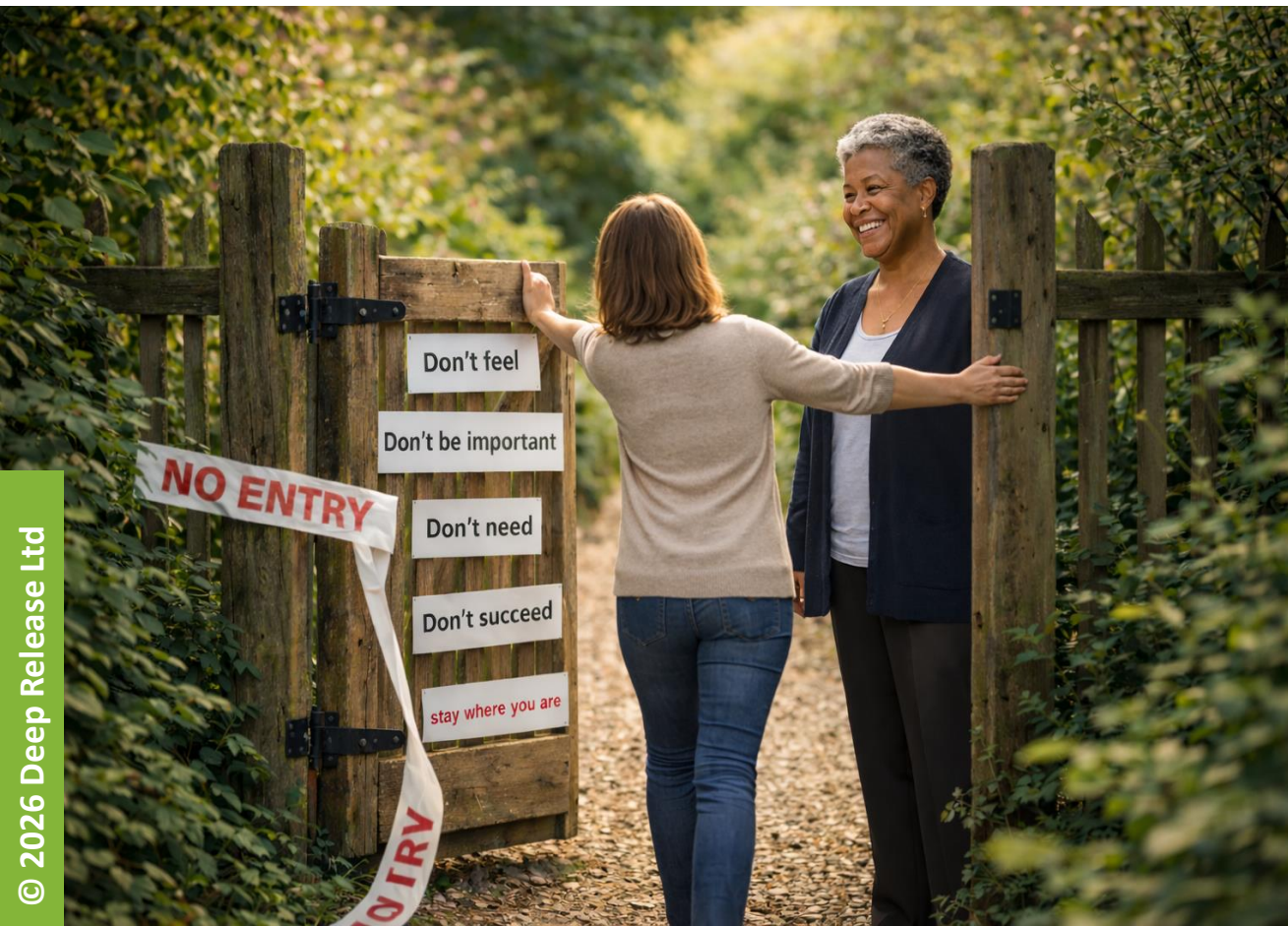
Will I be safe?
Will I lose everything
if I step through?
I feel like I'm stepping
off a cliff – who will
catch me?



3 Permissions, Protection and Potency

It isn't enough just to gain insight.

We may understand why we do what we do, but real change occurs when new possibilities are offered, and the client feels safe enough to take the risk and step out into them.



Feel the fear and
do it...

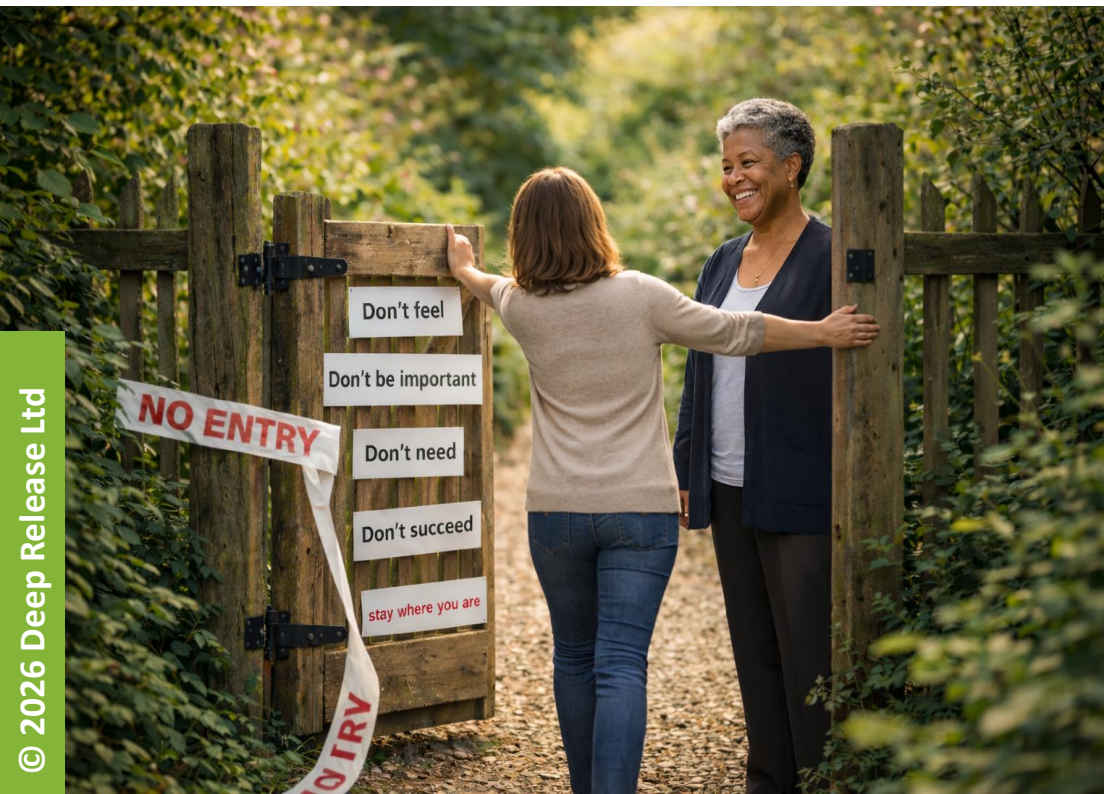
3 Permissions, Protection and Potency

One hand still on the gatepost → *the past*

The old injunctions, the protections that once kept her safe.

Leaning forward → *the present*

This is Adult energy: testing, choosing, sensing support. She's not being pushed through; she's *actively* moving.



POTENCY

Her other hand is reaching out to push the gate open → *the future*

Relationship, permission, possibility. She's not alone as she steps forward.

The therapist isn't pulling her through

She's steady, smiling, available. That's protection and potency without intrusion: *"I'm here when you're ready."*

3 Permissions, Protection and Potency

Permission to release your true feelings, and then take action, with support and encouragement



I'm ok when I...

- ... feel sad and express my sadness
- ... feel angry and express my anger
- ... express a need, and ask for it to be met
- ... feel joyful and release my joy
- ... say No ... say Yes
- ... ask for help and support
- ... take up space
- ... stop and rest
- ... make a major decision that impacts others

3 Permissions, Protection and Potency

In Summary

- **The Child ego state:** remembers why the gate existed
- **The Adult ego state:** decides how and when to open it and walk through it
- **The Nurturing Parent ego state:** offers safety, permission, and structure

Change happens when

- the past is honoured
- the present is supported
- the future is reachable



Pause for Reflection



4

Loneliness, Avoidance and Relational Patterns

A compassionate view

- We are wired for relationship, (mother and child in womb, Attachment theory)
- We will find ways to meet that need, even when the ways available to us are limited or painful (eg. games, negative strokes).
- But, if we don't have the moments of intimacy TA speaks of, we may not feel deeply known. We might feel lonely.

“But under the most adverse circumstances, they were striving to become. Life would not give up, even if it could not flourish.”



Carl Rogers on the potato plants in the cellar

4

Loneliness, Avoidance and Relational Patterns

What is Intimacy in TA terms?

- A spontaneous, sincere, sharing of awareness between two people (not just romantic relationships)
- Spontaneous - not scripted, not role-bound
- Sincere - no ulterior motive, no payoff
- Mutually aware - each person is emotionally present
- Game free - no manipulation, no hidden agenda

Different from:

- Emotional intensity
- Dependency or fusion
- Caretaking or rescuing
- Sex (when without the intimacy described above)
- Self disclosure (when it is used to control distance or closeness, e.g. “See how open I am?”, “If I tell you this you won’t leave.”, “Now we’re close.”)



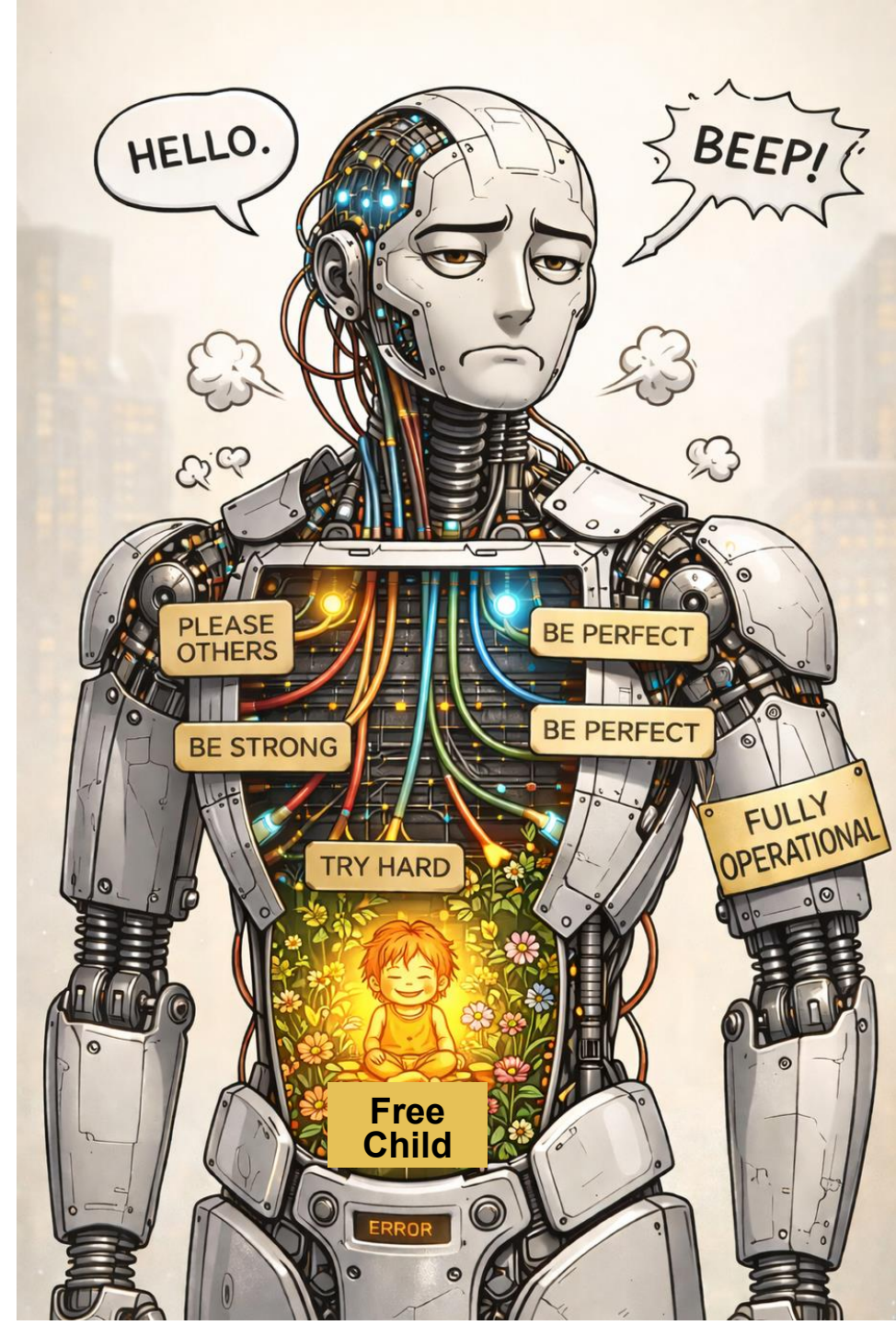
Not a permanent state. As with relational depth, it comes and goes

4

Loneliness, Avoidance and Relational Patterns

- We relate as well as we can with the resources we have
- No one is fully free from their script
- No one can remain open and undefended all the time
- Intimacy is intermittent
- Regression, games, and withdrawal are normal processes that help regulate us

Loneliness might be painful, but can still be preferable to feeling vulnerable or exposed



4

Loneliness, Avoidance and Relational Patterns

What stops intimacy?

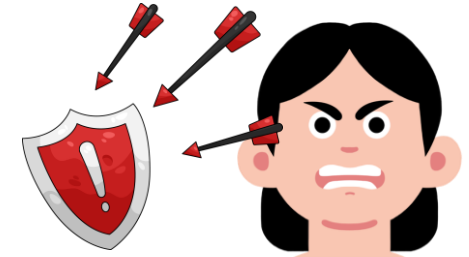
Intimacy requires safety, availability, and access to the Free Child - and any one of these may reasonably be absent in ourselves or the other person

If the other person:

- cannot tolerate mutual awareness (can't acknowledge impact of their behaviours or honour difference)
- collapses into dependency or attack
- uses vulnerability against us (they joke, minimise or intellectualise when we share)
- needs roles rather than equality (steps in quickly to fix, offers advice before understanding or feels uncomfortable when you're competent)

...then deciding not to offer intimacy on our part may well be sensible

We allow the Adult part of us to assess and form an appropriate boundary



4

Loneliness, Avoidance and Relational Patterns

When the Free Child is not present

We might:

- Relate extensively, function competently, be socially successful and still feel profoundly lonely because the part of us that **feels, wants, and responds** is not participating
- be avoidant of intimacy or feel ambivalent about it (Attachment styles)

The Free Child is constrained by:

- Injunctions (Don't Feel, Don't Want, Don't Be You)
- Drivers (Please Others, Be Strong, Be Perfect, Try Hard, Hurry Up)
- Only having experienced conditional love (I'll only be accepted if I act in certain ways)



4

Loneliness, Avoidance and Relational Patterns

The Free Child and the Adapted Child

In TA, the Free Child is the source of intimacy

Free Child

Spontaneous

Feeling-first

Expressive

Vulnerable

Alive

Risk

Intuitive



Adapted Child

Strategic

Rule book

Acceptable

‘Safe’

Shrinks

Dampened

4

Loneliness, Avoidance and Relational Patterns

Reclaiming and integrating the Free Child

TA aims to reintegrate Free Child expression within safe, conscious relationship.

- Clients may fear Free Child expression more than isolation
- Feeling lonely may be safer than risking spontaneous contact
- Loneliness may increase initially as the Free Child stirs

Autonomy (the freedom to choose how we respond) involves:

The **Adult** bringing awareness and discernment

The **Parent** offering permission and protection

The **Free Child** contributing vitality and spontaneity



***The Free Child isn't gone.
They are waiting to
wake up and take their
place***

4

Loneliness, Avoidance and Relational Patterns



Free Child Exercise



Possible Ideas to share in Buddy Groups

- How did you get on with the Stress Drivers questionnaire?
- What strokes felt easiest or safer for you to receive growing up?
- How do you feel about positive strokes now?

15 minutes



5 TA Traps (and how to avoid them)

When good intentions and helpful theory get in the way of the relationship

Trap 1 TA becomes reductive, resorting to labels

Trap 2 TA becomes overly 'clever', when the counsellor becomes 'the expert', knowing more than the client

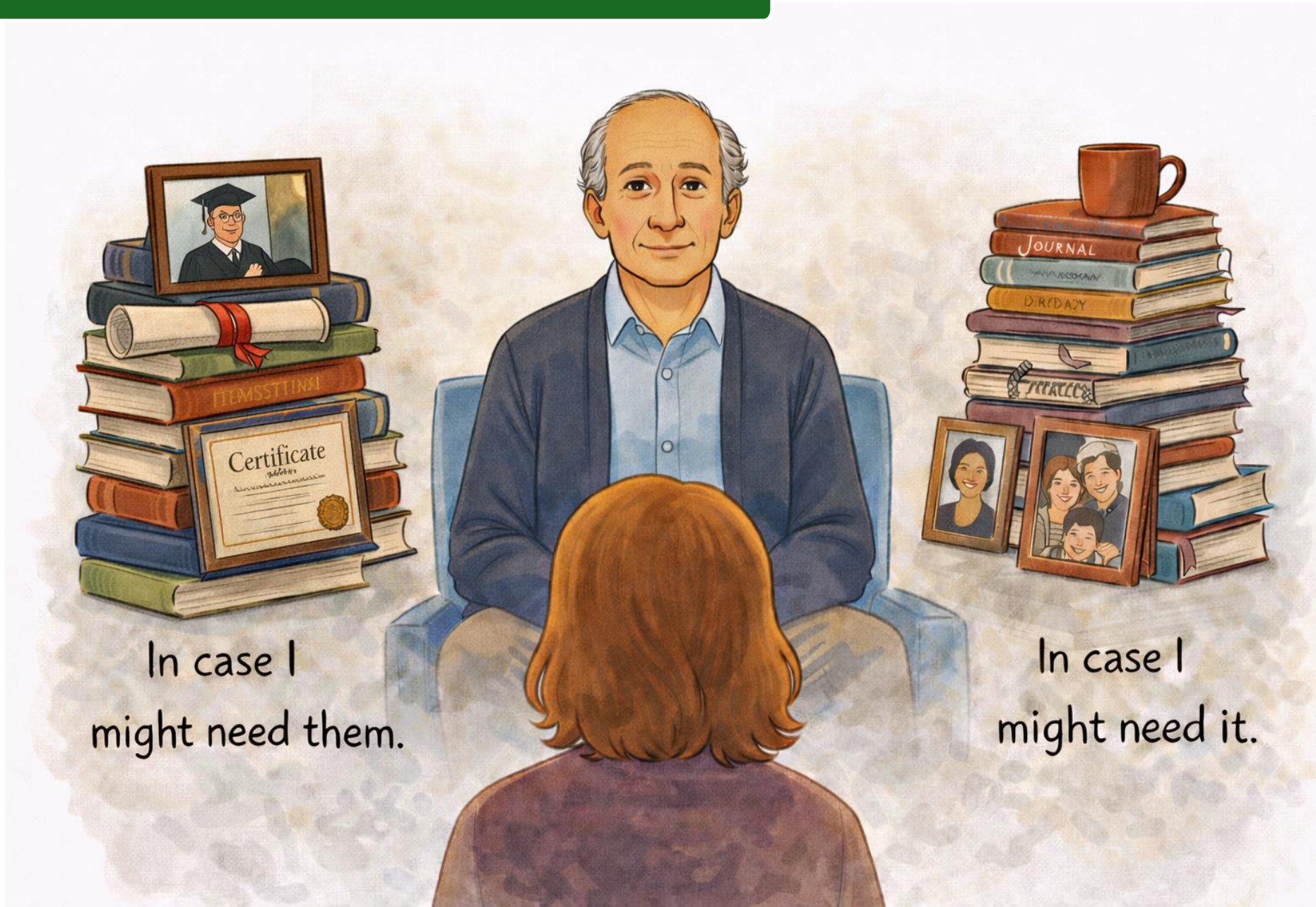
Trap 3 TA becomes subtly blaming

Trap 4 TA becomes too theory-led and focused more on content than the relationship



5 TA Traps (and how to avoid them)

Eugene Gendlin's Piles!



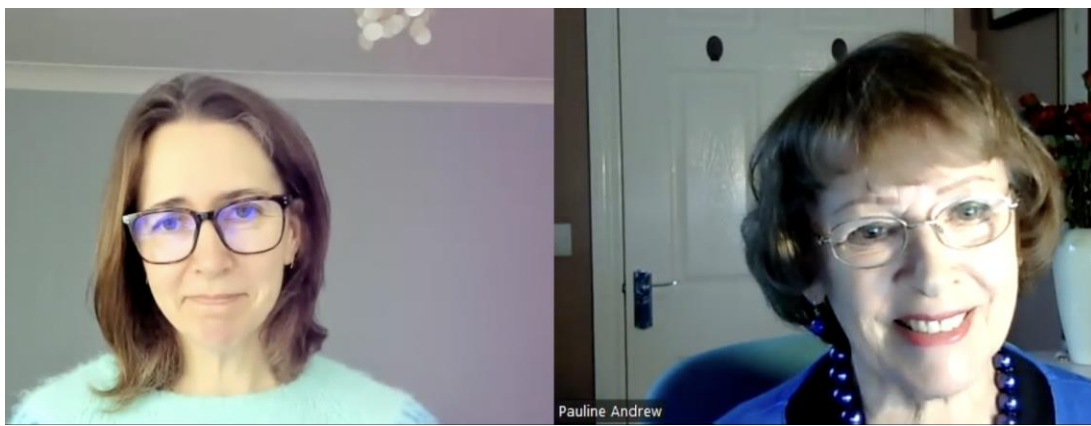
5 TA Traps (and how to avoid them)

When you feel knowledgeable and confident in a model, what happens to your listening?

Do you move closer to the client — or slightly ahead of them?

“The model should never be louder than the relationship.”

TA : HOW NOT TO!



TA : A GENTLER WAY



5 TA Traps (and how to avoid them)

Not so helpful	Better when...
<p>I so enjoyed teaching you about TA last week and was really glad you found it helpful <i>(Expert – focus on teaching)</i></p>	<p>I remember you saying last time that the TA ideas were helpful. How has that been this week? <i>(Invites the client to share – focus on feelings)</i></p>
<p>That would be your Adapted Child reacting to the injunctions <i>(Focus on theory – counsellor doesn't engage)</i></p>	<p>That sounds quite vulnerable? <i>(Counsellor stays relational, focusing on feelings)</i></p>
<p>Awareness can be uncomfortable at first <i>(Counsellor explains from Adult, stays in head)</i></p>	<p>How does it feel to say that? <i>(Adult ego state used to pace and protect)</i></p>
<p>Naming of scripts, drivers, patterns <i>(Counsellor interprets before the client finishes; tells the client what's going on)</i></p>	<p>Counsellor waits and follows the client's lead <i>(Meaning is cocreated between counsellor and client)</i></p>
<p>I feel like you understand it better than I do – <i>That's what I'm here for...</i> <i>(Counsellor takes the authority away from the client)</i></p>	<p>I feel like you understand it better than I do – <i>"I'm really glad you said that. Did it feel like I was getting ahead of you? Always tell me if I do that"</i> Rupture and repair</p>

What else did you notice?

Possible Ideas to share in Buddy Groups

- How did you get on with the Stress Drivers questionnaire?
- What strokes felt easiest or safer for you to receive growing up?
- How do you feel about positive strokes now?

15 minutes





**Questions
Comments
Discussion**

Final Buddy Group

- Say goodbye
- Share details if you wish to

5 minutes



FEB
26



(🔊) 9:30 am - 1:00 pm

Extreme Reactions: Working with Clients who Self-Injure

MAR
12



(🔊) 9:30 am - 1:00 pm

When Dreams Speak: Meeting the Self in Night-Time Stories

MAR
21



(🔊) 9:30 am - 1:00 pm

Spiritual Wounds and Spiritual Dimensions in the Counselling Room

APR
24



April 24 @ 4:00 pm - April 26 @ 3:00 pm

Conference: The Healing Dance: TA & Gestalt Together

The Healing Dance: TA & Gestalt Together

24-26 April 2026

A warm,
experiential
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Resources

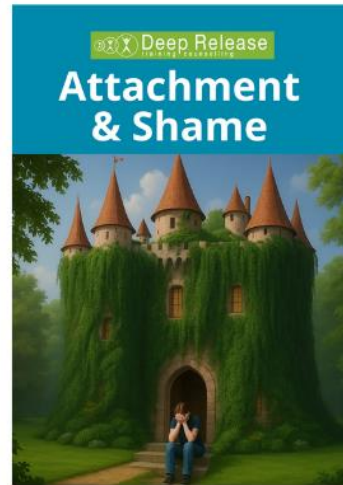
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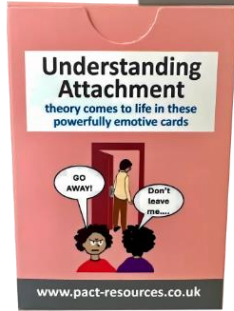
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Cards



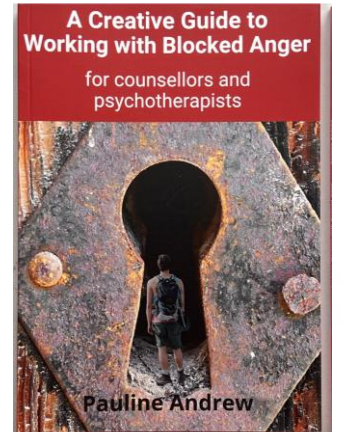
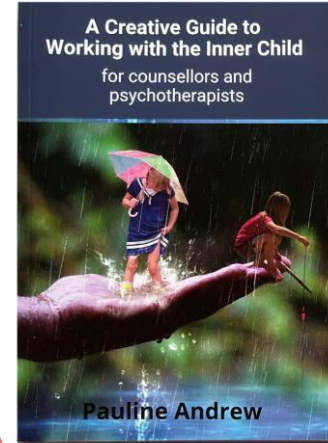
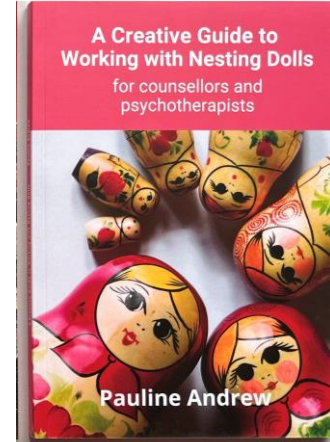
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Books



Also available on Kindle

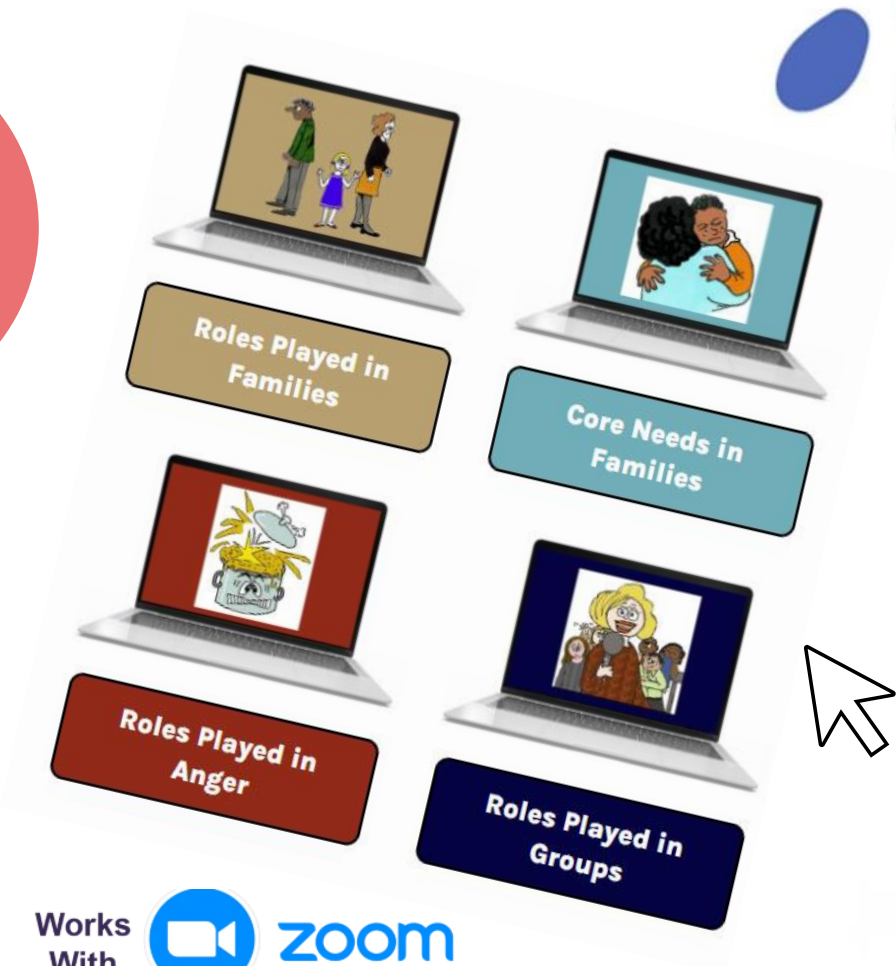
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**HARD
FEELINGS**

hardfeelingsc

Inspired by the song The Day I Tried to Live
by Soundgarden

Maybe?

- being in or 'with' the world feels difficult?
- it's hard to know what "normal" even means?
- connection feels out of reach, even when you try?
- everyone else seems to know how to do life, while you're left unsure?
- something else?

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I use the cards and find them an excellent tool. They enable clients to express emotions that they are unable to verbalise. – Peter, Counsellor

**HARD
FEELINGS**



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Private group · 4.4K members



Pauline Andrew Creative Counselling

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Choosing your Nesting Dolls



Working with aspects of self using nesting dolls



6 ways of working with plain nesting dolls in counselling



How to introduce creative interventions in counselling



How to paint and work with stones in counselling



How to work with animal figures in counselling

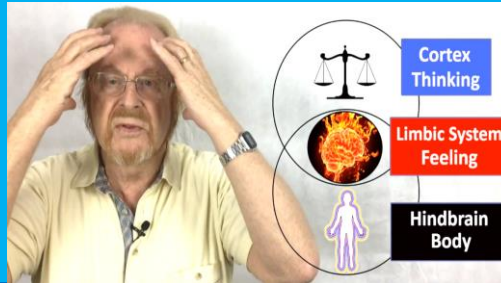


Brain Body & Beyond

Left and Right Brain



The Top Down Brain



Catch Up



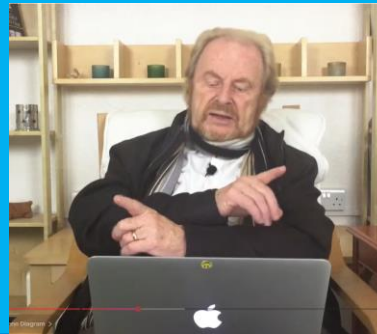
The Left and Right Axes

Sciences
Objective
Prose
Particular
Analyse
By the book
Hardware
Law
Quantitative
Zoom in

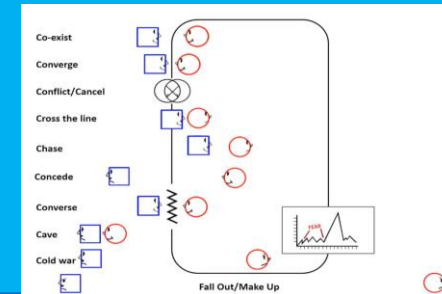


Arts
Subjective
Poetry
General
Synthesise
Extemporise
Software
Liberty
Qualitative
Zoom out

The Warzone



Fixing Broken Relationships Part 1



Fixing Broken Relationships Part 2



**Please send
us your
feedback!**



Thank you so much for joining us and supporting our work! If you have found the day helpful, please would like leave some feedback in the Deep Release Facebook group, or send us an email at info@deeprelease.org.uk. It would mean so much to us! 😊

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Thank you