

# CONSCIOUSLY CALM COMMUNICATION

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CONVERSATIONS BETWEEN PEOPLE CAN LEAD TO VALUABLE INSIGHTS AND A WONDERFUL FEELING OF CONNECTEDNESS. THEY CAN ALSO TURN INTO SHOUTING MATCHES, DEADLY SILENCES OR A SITUATION THAT LEAVES ALL PARTIES FEELING MISUNDERSTOOD. WITH AN UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT IS HAPPENING BEHIND THE WORDS, YOU CAN LEARN TO CALMLY STEER CONVERSATIONS ONTO A MORE POSITIVE COURSE.

Do you know what it feels like to toss and turn around in bed at night, churning a conversation you had with someone round and round in your head where the only thing that happens is you become increasingly frustrated, angry, confused, irritated, and, of course, tired, since you are not getting any sleep?

Even if you decide to never speak to that person again, be aware that this, too, is communication.

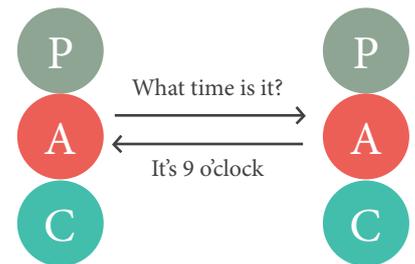
**You may be tempted to wait for someone to change in the hope that interaction can improve but a more promising option is to see what you can do to communicate more clearly, confidently and effectively.**

Transactional Analysis (TA) is an excellent model to improve communication. It's the theory of human development, personality and communication, developed by Eric Berne in the 1950s. It offers practical concepts to help shed light on the mysteries of human communication. Berne describes three ego-states that he believes all our behaviour and communication are based on. Briefly, these are the child, parent and adult ego-states.

In the child ego-state one behaves, thinks and feels as though a child. With the parent ego-state you behave, think and feel in ways you copied from your parents. An adult ego-state refers to behaving, thinking and feeling in ways that directly respond to the here and now and use all your grown-

up abilities. In every conversation we have, we start it from a specific ego-state (parent, adult, or child) and we address a specific ego-state in the other person.

For example, Anne may say to Bernie in a neutral tone: "What time is it?", and Bernie may reply: "It's 9 o'clock."



## did you know?

As human beings, we cannot not communicate (This was the first of Paul Watzlawick's five axioms of communication (1967). Unless you are living in complete isolation from other human beings, you are communicating all the time, whether you want to or not. Words provide neutral data. Body language and tone of voice add information about attitude and emotion.

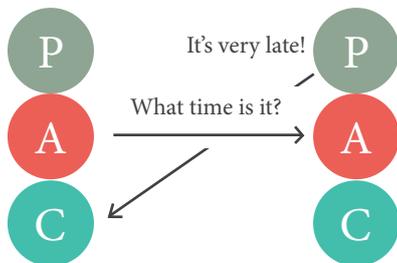


Anne and Bernie are both communicating from their adult ego-states.

Anne could also ask the same question in a stern tone, with a frown on her face. Her critical tone indicates that she is speaking from her parent ego-state, and addressing Bernie as a child. If he responds by saying: "I'm so sorry I'm late.", he is fulfilling Anne's expectation, accepting her 'invitation' to the child position and their communication may continue like this for a long time. People get into communication habits and roles very easily often without realising what they're doing.

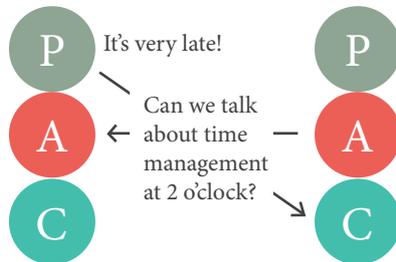
In a normal conversation sometimes things take a surprising turn. Without being totally sure why, we feel irritated and wonder: "What happened here?" This might happen if Bernie doesn't respond in the 'child position' as Anne might be expecting. (in TA-speak you would say that a transaction is being crossed).

Imagine Anne asks Bernie what the time is in a neutral tone, like in the first example, and he replies with an exasperated sigh and rolling his eyes: "It's very late!" This shifts the tone to parent mode, he is now taking a critical stance which invites Anne to respond from a child position.



There will surely be a pause in the conversation, with irritation on both parts. Bernie has taken the critical parent position and is inviting Anne to respond from a child position (either adapting to his expectations or being rebellious). If Anne unconsciously falls into the child position then she may feel compelled to explain, apologise and what may follow is a lecture on time management by Bernie. This may take up a valuable hour, an hour in which Anne had hoped to finish a presentation for a client. If Anne is aware of what is happening here, she can consciously decide whether she is going to go down that route. An alternative for her could be to address Bernie from the adult position again (despite the invitation to child) and say: "I am just busy with the final tweaks in this presentation, which has

to be ready at 11 o'clock. I'm almost done and would like to be sure how much time I have left to check that everything is where it should be. I realise we may need to talk about other time-related issues. Can we do this at 2pm, when the presentation is over?"



This kind of crossed transaction (deliberate and conscious) is an important and effective tool, which you can use to influence conversations positively. We all intuitively know how to cross transactions in difficult conversations.

Remember some of your conversations that have been really good for you and some of those that went horribly wrong. Do you recognise any of the patterns described here in those conversations?

Build on your intuitive communication skills by observing communication patterns and consciously deciding from which position to communicate. Remember that the goal in this is to free up energy for positive action and real human connection.

### THREE STEPS TO MORE CONSCIOUS COMMUNICATION:

1. Observe productive and unproductive patterns in conversations you witness.
2. Practice awareness of your own position and communication patterns.
3. Based on 1 and 2, decide how to enter into your next important conversation.

**i** As a consultant, trainer and coach, Dr. Layo Seriki uses Transactional Analysis concepts in her work. She is the Managing Director of CIELARKO – International Management Consultants ([www.cielarko.biz](http://www.cielarko.biz)), based in Cape Town. She serves on the board of the South African Transactional Analysis Association. You can learn more about TA through this organisation: [www.sataa.org.za](http://www.sataa.org.za).



## Are you ready for a journey of discovery in your relationship?

They say that travel is the one thing that you buy which makes you richer. The same can be said for investment in your relationship.

Allow Tiffany Stone to be your travel guide on a journey towards clearer communication, closeness and connection through emotional intimacy, allowing you to be both truly seen & heard in your relationship.

Tiffany will take you through a structured coaching journey introducing you to key areas of growth, whilst providing you tools and guidance to navigate the terrain towards conscious connection together.

### TRAVEL TOWARDS...

- ✓ Discovering calmer, healthier ways of dealing with stress and conflict.
- ✓ Having a greater understanding of self and other in communication.
- ✓ Defining your road map for your personal dream destination point in your relationship.
- ✓ Discovering solutions to dealing with challenges and diversity in relationships.
- ✓ Experiencing greater connection and physical intimacy through emotional bonding.

## THE ULTIMATE JOURNEY BEGINS WITH A SINGLE STEP

*"It is important for couples to do their own work and then their work together. An absolute must!" – Trevor*

*"Tiffany's approach is conscious and holistic, she helped us get very quickly to the root of some deep seated issues that were challenging our relationship. She also equipped us with tools to be able communicate and handle our own emotions more maturely and securely. Her input was sensitive, balanced, accepting and very insightful every time. Nearly every session saw us uncovering something major and taking a big step forward. Thank you for being there when we needed you." - Cordell*

*"I didn't have the emotional and relationship tools to stand in my strength and claim in my relationship what I was entitled to... but no more. In our sessions, I learned what many regard as common sense, but in my relationship was not common practice. It's as if you turned the lights on for me." - Brent*



Contact **Tiffany Stone** for a FREE introductory session and engage her as your personal travel guide on the journey to conscious connection in your relationship.

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