

Locate yourself in the socio-political context & share your journey of learnings, insight, growth, challenges, Script through TA lens?

To locate myself within a socio-political context and evaluate my life journey through the Transactional Analysis lens, my intention here is to trace my learning, insights, growth, and challenges through a few significant experiences that have shaped my life. Rather than seeing these as singular incidents, I am looking at how these moments — across different stages and circumstances — contributed to the formation of my script, my way of being, both as an individual and within the systems I was part of.

I grew up in a very conservative Christian family in a very low economic environment. When I look back now, one of the strongest memories I carry from my childhood is not hatred — it was invisibility.

People didn't actively dislike me...  
it often felt like they simply did not see me.

Unless there was something to do.

Washing vessels. Cooking. Cleaning. Helping around the house.

I remember this very distinctly —  
my name would be called... but almost always from the kitchen.

That became my way of existing in the world.

And somewhere, very quietly, I began to understand something:  
usefulness got me attention... service got me acknowledgement.

Today, when I reflect through a Transactional Analysis lens, I realise — this was my early experience of strokes.

I realised that the strokes available to me were conditional.  
I was not seen for who I was, but for what I could do.

And without even realising it, I began to connect love, visibility, and worth with helping people.

Another turning point came when I was around ten. My parents converted from Catholicism to Protestant Christianity. At the time, I was studying in a very traditional Catholic school.

So now, along with poverty, came a new label.

“Converted Christian.”

I still remember the way it was said —

not loudly, but enough for me to feel it.

I remember standing on the sidelines during school activities...  
watching others participate, knowing I wasn't really part of it.

I remember conversations lowering when I walked in...  
and the slow distancing that followed, not just in school but even within extended family.

At that time, I didn't have the language for it.

But today, I can name it.

I realised that this was exclusion —  
not just personal, but shaped by social and religious systems.

And that exclusion did not just stay outside me...  
it slowly began to shape how I saw myself.

There is one memory that has stayed with me very vividly.

At a cousin's birthday, I was doing what I always did — helping in the kitchen, serving,  
cleaning. Plate after plate went out. Guests were being served.

After everyone had been served, there was one piece of cake left on the plate.

I remember picking it up — almost instinctively.

And just as I did that, two more guests walked in.

In that moment, my aunt turned to me and said,  
“Why did you take it? What was the hurry?”

I froze.

I remember the feeling — not just of being questioned,  
but of being *seen at the wrong moment*.

I turned to my mother, almost looking for support.

And her response stayed with me for years.

“Jesus never thought about himself first. We must think of others before ourselves.”

That day, I didn't understand theology.

But I internalised something much deeper:

☞ Thinking of myself first is selfish.

☞ My needs come last.

Today, I realise —  
this was an injunction.

I realised that this was the “Don't be important” injunction.  
And alongside it, the “Please Others” driver was quietly taking root.

I didn't question it... I became it.

Around the same time, another experience left a deep imprint on me.

My cousin sister, just two years older than me, was battling stage-three cancer.

I remember the house during those days —  
people coming in and out, prayers being said, hope being spoken loudly... fear sitting quietly underneath.

Pastors would come home to pray.  
And one day, one of them declared that she had been healed.

I remember the shift in the room —  
relief, belief, surrender.

And then came the instruction:  
stop the medication.

Because continuing it meant a lack of faith.

The medication was stopped.  
The cancer returned.  
We lost her.

As a child, I didn't have the language to question what I was witnessing.

But I remember the confusion...  
something inside me knew this didn't feel right.

Today, I can see it differently.

I realised that this was not just a family decision —  
this was the intersection of belief, authority, fear, and socio-political systems.

I realised how power can override personal judgment.  
How systems can make decisions through people.

That was my first silent exposure to how deeply systems shape lives.

For a long time, I didn't question any of this.

Poverty... religion... exclusion...  
all of it became normal.

And then life moved me into survival.

I had to stop school around Grade 8 or 9 because we couldn't afford it.

At fifteen, I started working as an emcee to support myself.

And ironically,  
the voice that had no space in my childhood

became the voice that opened doors for me.

But even here, the pattern did not change —  
it simply evolved.

As I began to earn — for myself and my family — I was judged.

“How can a young girl make this much money?”

“Good girls don’t stay out late.”

“Girls with character don’t work at night.”

I remember coming back home late after events...  
carrying both money and questions I didn’t have answers to.

Once again, I found myself negotiating identity, shame, and control.

But this time, I wasn’t just responding to the world —  
I was surviving it.

There was no space to be weak.  
Holding everything together became necessary.  
Keeping people comfortable reduced conflict.  
Saying what others needed to hear kept things stable.

Looking back now, I can see this very clearly:

I realised that my “Be Strong” driver had taken charge.  
I realised that my “Please Others” driver was being reinforced in real time.

What had begun as adaptation in childhood  
had now become my way of functioning in the world.

Because being good... being helpful... being needed...  
had always given me strokes.

So I adapted more.  
Gave more.  
Adjusted more.

And over time, this stopped being something I did...  
it became who I was.

I realised that I was earning strokes through performance, through adjustment, through  
holding everything together.

And somewhere within me, a belief had formed:

“If I fall apart, there will be no one to hold me.”

And that my stability came from keeping everyone around me okay.

Years later, when I began my psychotherapy training, something shifted.

For the first time, I started seeing my life not just as experiences... but as patterns.

And that's when I could see how deeply my script had formed.

I realised that my identity had become closely tied to being a caregiver.

Helping others wasn't just kindness —

it was how I experienced worth.

Being needed gave me purpose.

It gave me a voice.

And I saw this play out in one of the most important decisions of my life.

When I met my partner, he was very clear — he did not want to get married.

I remember that conversation.

It wasn't dramatic.

It was quiet.

Honest.

He said he did not want to be a burden.

But I insisted.

I chose that life — fully aware of what it could bring.

At that time, I experienced it as love.

As commitment.

As strength.

But today, I can see something more.

I realised that this decision did not feel overwhelming to me...

because my life had already prepared me for it.

Holding pain.

Carrying responsibility.

Being the strong one.

Adjusting.

Staying.

Giving.

This was familiar.

And that's when something became very clear.

I realised that my "Be Strong" driver was not just helping me cope —

it was leading my choices.

I realised that my "Please Others" driver was not just shaping behaviour —

it was shaping relationships.

And for the first time, I could see this as script behaviour.

Caregiving was not just something I did.

It had become my way of being... and a way of building my identity.

The biggest shift came during my residential psychotherapy training.

That was the first time I was introduced to socio-political mental health.

Initially, I resisted it.

I believed people make their own choices.

Society had not influence on a individual's life

But that understanding began to shift.

For the first time, I could see how class, religion, patriarchy, poverty, and social systems had shaped so many of my choices — without my awareness.

And once I saw it, I couldn't unsee it.

Today, I hold this understanding differently.

I realise that we are not just individuals making choices —  
we are individuals shaped by systems.

And through this lens, I also hold another truth:

We are often both —  
the oppressed and the oppressor.

The same systems that silenced me  
can also live through me in ways I may not notice.

So today, my journey is not just about healing.

It is about awareness.

Awareness of where I was silenced.

Awareness of where I may silence others.

Awareness of the strokes I seek.

Awareness of the drivers I operate from.

Awareness of the injunctions I carry.

Awareness of the systems I survived... and the systems I may still sustain.

And perhaps my biggest learning is this:

Life stops feeling like a personal story  
when you begin to see it in context.

It becomes a story of  
systems,  
survival,  
identity,  
and consciousness.

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**Part 2 Pick a work situation or a therapy client/community. Describe the work itself as a practitioner through the TA lens. What was the presenting problem? How did you diagnose? What is the demography of the work? What did you observe happening? What was your intervention? What worked? What did not work?**

**Client Introduction**

The client was a male professional in his late twenties working in a startup technology company. The population of the company mainly consisted of young professionals between the late twenties and early thirties. The work environment was fast-paced and performance-driven, with heavy reliance on multitasking, communication speed, and accountability.

The client was recently married and was trying to balance increasing professional responsibilities along with transitions in his personal life. The organizational culture demanded employees remain fast, responsive, adaptable, and constantly available. In such a context, sustainable functioning depended heavily on time structuring, prioritization, and healthy interpersonal boundaries.

However, the client appeared to struggle significantly with emotional and practical boundaries, which gradually affected both workplace functioning and personal relationships. The demands of the startup ecosystem further intensified already existing patterns of over-accommodation, self-doubt, emotional over-responsibility, and exhaustion.

**Presenting Problem**

The client demonstrated low self-worth and persistent self-doubt regarding his professional and personal life. He felt inadequate to take on his role professionally. These fears had already resulted in the client resigning from previous jobs for similar reasons. At the beginning of therapy, the client was uncertain whether he should continue pursuing a career in the same field or discontinue altogether.

The client reported chronic stress, emotional exhaustion, and difficulty managing workload. He consistently exceeded his capacity and found it extremely difficult to refuse requests from coworkers, supervisors, and authority figures. Despite working long hours, he continued feeling inefficient and emotionally overwhelmed. He also described increasing stress within his marriage, as his partner experienced him as emotionally unavailable and excessively occupied with work.

Initially, the client understood these struggles as a lack of confidence and professional inadequacy. However, as therapy progressed, it became evident that the workplace difficulties

were deeply connected to unresolved relational patterns, emotional approval-seeking, and script beliefs rooted in developmental experiences.

## **Diagnosis**

As the therapeutic process progressed, several Transactional Analysis concepts became visible through the client's narratives, emotional responses, workplace behaviours, relational dynamics, and interactions within the therapy room.

One of the strongest patterns observed was the presence of a significant "Please Me" driver. The client repeatedly over-accommodated others at the cost of his own emotional and physical wellbeing. He struggled to refuse requests or establish healthy limits regardless of workload or exhaustion. This pattern appeared less connected to generosity and more connected to fear of disappointing others or losing approval. The client experienced accommodation as emotionally necessary in order to maintain connection, acceptance, and belonging.

This driver pattern also became visible within the therapy room through transference dynamics. Whenever session timings were discussed, the client consistently avoided expressing his own preferences. His repeated response to scheduling was:

"Whatever works for you."

Even when encouraged to choose timings convenient for himself, the client appeared more concerned with adjusting to the therapist's comfort and availability. He frequently reorganized his own schedule to accommodate therapy instead of identifying what genuinely worked for him.

The therapeutic relationship also activated countertransference responses within me as the practitioner. Since I also identify aspects of a people-pleasing driver within myself, I observed frustration, irritation, and judgment emerging during certain interactions with the client. Internally, I found myself questioning:

"Why is he unable to make a decision for himself?"

"Why does he continuously need to keep others happy?"

Recognising these countertransference responses became clinically important because they reflected the intensity of the client's accommodation patterns within relationships.

From a TA perspective, the client appeared to function predominantly from an Adapted Child ego state in professional and relational contexts. His decisions were often organised around gaining approval rather than Adult assessment of workload, capacity, or personal needs.

Further exploration revealed that the client appeared to function primarily from the life position:

"I'm Not OK, You're OK."

This became visible through the client's repeated tendency to internalise blame and automatically assume fault before objectively assessing situations. For instance, during one workplace incident, a colleague stated that an important email had not been received. Before

verifying facts, the client immediately apologised and assumed he had made an error, despite later discovering that the email had in fact been sent correctly.

This pattern repeatedly appeared through statements such as:

- “Maybe I forgot.”
- “I’ll do it again.”
- “It must be my mistake.”

Over time, the client unconsciously became the psychological holder of blame within the organisational system. Colleagues gradually began associating delays or incomplete work with him, even when tasks had already been completed and passed forward.

As therapy progressed, strong transference dynamics also emerged between the client and workplace authority figures, particularly his boss. The client unconsciously experienced the boss through the lens of an internalised Critical Parent. Feedback, correction, or even ordinary workplace interactions became emotionally charged experiences connected to approval and rejection rather than professional communication alone.

Further exploration of the client’s childhood experiences revealed inconsistent access to stable parental figures and limited emotional containment during developmental years. Moments of visibility and acknowledgment appeared closely connected to performance, accommodation, or doing something “good enough” to receive attention.

This appeared to contribute to script beliefs such as:

“I am valued only when I perform.”

and

“If I stop accommodating others, I will be abandoned.”

The client’s unconscious fantasy appeared deeply connected to fear of rejection, loneliness, and abandonment. As a result, workplace relationships unconsciously became spaces where he repeatedly attempted to gain emotional validation and approval.

The client also demonstrated significant racket feelings. While anger, frustration, helplessness, and lack of confidence appeared most visible externally, deeper exploration suggested these emotions functioned as substitute feelings masking more vulnerable underlying experiences such as:

- fear of abandonment,
- loneliness,
- grief,
- inadequacy,
- and fear of not being lovable without performance.

Another important diagnostic area emerged around structure hunger and time structuring. The client described growing up without consistent boundaries, discipline, or stable adult

containment. Over time, functioning within emotional and practical chaos appeared psychologically normalised.

From a TA perspective, this appeared connected to limited development of a Structuring Parent ego state. As an adult, the client struggled to organise time effectively, maintain interpersonal boundaries, and differentiate emotional urgency from practical importance.

This became highly visible within the workplace. Large portions of the client's time and emotional energy were directed toward accommodating others, monitoring relationships, and anticipating criticism rather than consistently focusing on task completion.

A considerable amount of emotional energy was spent in withdrawal through:

- overthinking,
- self-monitoring,
- replaying conversations,
- emotional rehearsing,
- and anticipating rejection.

Thoughts such as:

- “Did I disappoint someone?”
  - “What if my boss thinks I’m incompetent?”
  - “What if people stop valuing me?”
- dominated much of his internal experience.

As a result, the client's functioning became organised more around relational survival than Adult-directed productivity.

As therapy progressed further, a significant impasse also became visible. Although the client intellectually understood how emotionally exhausting his patterns were, a deeper Child ego state continued holding onto the hope that approval, belonging, and emotional safety could eventually be earned through performance and accommodation.

This impasse appeared deeply connected to unresolved parental dynamics. One parent continued functioning relationally as a Critical Parent figure, while the loss of the other parent left unresolved grief and an incomplete longing for acknowledgment, affirmation, and emotional closure.

From a TA perspective, the client's workplace struggles appeared not merely as professional difficulties, but as the re-enactment of unresolved childhood adaptations within adult relational and organisational systems.

## **Observation**

Throughout the therapeutic process, I observed repetitive patterns of self-blame, emotional over-responsibility, and accommodation. The client consistently minimised his own needs while prioritising others' comfort and expectations.

He frequently apologised even in situations where responsibility remained unclear. He appeared hypervigilant toward others' reactions and spent significant emotional energy monitoring whether he had disappointed someone. The client struggled to make independent decisions and repeatedly sought external reassurance before trusting his own judgment.

Within the workplace, the client's inability to establish boundaries resulted in chronic overwork, exhaustion, and confusion around accountability. Although work was often completed, his communication patterns unintentionally reinforced the perception that tasks remained incomplete or delayed at his level.

In personal relationships, the client struggled to create emotional availability and quality relational time because much of his internal world remained occupied by work-related anxiety, approval-seeking, and anticipatory stress.

Within the therapy room, the client repeatedly positioned himself in accommodating roles and appeared uncomfortable occupying emotional or relational space for himself. This reinforced the understanding that his relational style was deeply embedded and not limited only to workplace functioning.

## **Intervention**

From early in the therapeutic process, the work focused on building awareness around the client's relational patterns, driver behaviours, and emotional responses within both workplace and personal contexts.

Interventions included:

- identifying the client's "Please Me" driver,
- exploring self-blame patterns,
- strengthening Adult ego state awareness,
- identifying transference dynamics with authority figures,
- differentiating performance from self-worth,
- and exploring the emotional needs underlying the client's people-pleasing behaviour.

The therapy process also helped the client recognise how workplace interactions were unconsciously connected to unresolved childhood approval-seeking patterns. Work focused on differentiating responsibility from over-responsibility.

The client was encouraged to reality-test situations from an Adult ego state rather than automatically responding through Adapted Child responses organised around guilt, fear, or accommodation.

Work was also done around:

- emotional boundaries,
- time structuring,
- recognising withdrawal patterns,
- and identifying how overthinking and emotional monitoring consumed large amounts of psychological energy.

As therapy progressed, the client's relational patterns also began emerging within the therapy room through transference dynamics. The client frequently attempted to accommodate the therapist's needs while minimising his own preferences. Alongside this, countertransference responses such as frustration and irritation emerged within me as the practitioner. Bringing gentle awareness to these relational dynamics became an important part of the therapeutic process.

### **What Worked?**

One of the most significant shifts in therapy was the client's growing awareness of his people-pleasing and self-blaming tendencies. The client gradually recognised how strongly his relationships were organised around approval and accommodation rather than healthy boundaries.

The client also began recognising that the issue was not merely lack of professional competence, but unresolved emotional needs rooted in earlier relational experiences. Identifying transference dynamics with authority figures helped the client begin separating present workplace experiences from past relational patterns.

The client became increasingly aware of how much emotional energy was spent on overthinking, monitoring relationships, and seeking approval. This awareness created moments of Adult reflection and reduced automatic self-blaming responses in certain situations.

The therapeutic work also helped the client begin understanding the impact these patterns were having on his personal relationships, emotional wellbeing, and exhaustion levels.

### **What Did Not Work?**

The client demonstrated extreme emotional attachment to gaining approval and validation from authority figures, which was a crucial difficulty in therapy. While the client intellectually understood how draining his patterns were, he kept hoping that through constant performance, accommodation, and self-sacrifice, he would eventually achieve acceptance, acknowledgement, and emotional security. This created a significant impasse within the therapeutic process. At an Adult level, the client identified the need for healthier boundaries and autonomy. But at a deeper Child ego state level, relinquishing people-pleasing behaviours felt emotionally perilous: they were grounded in survival, belonging, and fear of abandonment.

The unresolved parental dynamics remained emotionally potent as well. One parent continued functioning relationally as a Critical Parent figure, while the loss of the other parent left unresolved grief and an incomplete longing for emotional closure. As a result, the client's struggle toward self-worth remained unfulfilled. The need to finally receive emotional recognition in his script system was deep-rooted. This emotional struggle rendered sustained behavioural changes highly emotionally difficult, even through improved insight and awareness.