

Driver Behaviour (2016)

There are a number of different perspectives on 'driver' behaviour.

Mountain Associates use a model based upon Dr Taibi Kahler's observations of clients in distress. Dr Kahler noticed five sets of mutually exclusive behavioural cues. Subsequently, for this discovery Dr Kahler received the 1977 Eric Berne Memorial Scientific Award.

Drivers in this context are behaviours that we move into when we start to be distressed. Each driver is associated with a 'personality type'.

Kahler noted that there were two variants for each driver:

- Be Perfect for me
- Be Perfect for you
- Be Strong for me
- Be Strong for you
- Try hard for you
- Please for you

When we notice the driver in ourselves or others, we can recognise that we are in the early stages of distress. This will mean that we need to address our psychological needs so that we return to a 'here-and-now' mindful process.

Time structuring

The way in which we structure time is likely to reflect the different hungers. We all structure time in a variety of ways:

- Withdrawal
- Rituals
- Pastiming
- Activities
- Games
- Intimacy

Obtaining balance means ensuring that we have sufficient time for play and intimacy and if this does not occur then it would be beneficial to explore what we might be avoiding.

Games

I am sure that every one of us must have been in the situation where we have said, "Why does this always keep happening to me" or "I always keep meeting people who hurt me and then go off and leave me". Sometimes it may be that we like to help people and then it goes wrong as the person we were trying to help says that we didn't do it well enough and that we got it wrong. We might think "Well, I was only trying to help" and feel got at.

When similar situations keep happening over and over again then the term Transactional Analysis uses for this is a game. A game is a familiar pattern of behaviour with a predictable outcome. Games are played outside Adult awareness and they are our best attempt to get our needs met - although of course we don't.

Games are learned patterns of behaviour, and most people play a small number of favourite games with a range of different people and in varying intensities.

First Degree games are played in social circles generally lead to mild upsets not major traumas.

Second Degree games occur when the stakes may be higher. This usually occurs in more intimate circles and ends up with an even greater negative payoff.

Third Degree games involve tissue damage and may end up in the jail, hospital or morgue. Chris Davidson (2002) has argued that world politics can involve fourth degree games - where the outcomes involve whole communities, countries or even the world.

Games vary in the length of time that passes while they are being played. Some can take seconds or minutes while others take weeks months or even years. People play games for these reasons:

- to structure time
- to acquire strokes
- to maintain the substitute feeling and the system of thinking, beliefs and actions that go with it
- to confirm parental injunctions and further the life script
- to maintain the person's life position by "proving" that self/others are not OK
- to provide a high level of stroke exchange while blocking intimacy and maintaining distance
- to make people predictable.

Dealing with games

There are various ways to stop a game, including the use of different options than the one automatically used. We can:

- cross the transaction by responding from a different ego state than the one the stimulus is designed to hook.
- pick up the ulterior rather than the social message e.g. when a person says "I can't do this, I'm useless". Rather than saying, "Let me do this for you," instead say, "It sounds like you have a problem. What do you want me to do about it?" (said from the Adult ego state)
- the opening message to the game always entails a discount. There are further discounts at each stage of the game. By detecting discounts, we can identify game invitations and defuse them with options. (A discount is when we minimise, maximise, or ignore some aspect of a problem which would assist us in resolving it. Such as saying in a whiny voice "This is too difficult for me to do", so we automatically help them).
- replace the game strokes. Loss of strokes to the Child ego state means a threat to survival. We get a great many strokes from games, even if they are negative. However, if we don't obtain sufficient positive strokes, or give ourselves positive strokes, we will go for quantity rather than quality of strokes and play games to get them. This loss of strokes is also a loss of excitement that the game has generated.

Another way to think about this is to consider the game role we or the other person is likely to take. One way to discover this is to ask the following questions:

1. What keeps happening over and over again
2. How does it start?
3. What happens next?
4. And then what happens?
5. How does it end?
6. How do feel after it ends? (John James, 1973)

We can then consider the reason we might have taken up a particular role, where we might switch to, and then consider how to do things differently. We need to consider what our own responsibility is in this - if the situation is too violent for us to get involved what options do we have? We could call for help, get others to come with us to intervene and so on. We need to choose the appropriate assistance and take the action required.