

## Deconfusion

*Julie Hay 25 Jan 2012 as response to question on LinkedIn Transactional Analysis Group about the origins of the term deconfusion*

Deconfusion – some quotes of what Berne wrote:

In *Transactional Analysis in Psychotherapy* (1961) he wrote of four possible goals in the psychotherapy of neuroses: 1 symptomatic control, 2 symptomatic relief 3 transference cure, and 4 psychoanalytic cure. He then wrote that psychoanalytic cure "in structural terms means the confusion of the Child with a largely decontaminated Adult as a therapeutic ally." He went on to explain that the Adult needs to be decontaminated so that it can be enlisted alongside the Adult of the therapist so that there are two Adults against a Parent and Child, evening the odds.

Later in the same book, he wrote "the "physiological" phase is concerned with redistribution of cathexis through selective planned activation of specific ego states in specific ways with the goal of establishing the hegemony of the Adult through social control. Reorganisation generally features reclamation of the Child, with emendation or replacement of the Parent. Following this dynamic phase of reorganisation, there is a secondary analytic phase which is an attempt to deconfuse the Child."

Then in *Principles of Group Treatment* (1966) he uses the subheading of 'Deconfusing the Child' and writes "Once the patient is convinced that the other alternatives are less profitable, he (sic) starts to get well. It may take anywhere from two weeks to 2 years to reach this point, depending on the patient's ability to give up the gratifications yielded by his games. All the material previously gathered may then be used for analytic work in order to stabilise and promote the recovery by deconfusing the Child."

Soon after, he writes ". . . the patient can get better first and explore his sexual conflicts later, thus gaining in some cases several years of productive living, which under the conventional approach might have to be postponed until after the analytic phase was over."

I interpret the above to mean that we can work in a more cognitive style of TA to decontaminate Adult i.e. stop Adult being contaminated by Parent and/or Child – and after that we may move into what is now labelled as a relational style of TA which is closer to analytic where we pay attention to transference/countertransference and use our awareness of this in order to help the client resolve repressed conflicts within Child. When I look at the latest research about the brain, I tend to think of this as working with the issues that will have been stored in the limbic brain as emotions without the benefit of the thinking that we will have begun to do once we were about three years old and our neo-cortex began to function. So for script we have feelings in the limbic brain, thoughts in the neo-cortex, all swirling around like a jigsaw puzzle – then we hear a story and the pieces of the jigsaw fall into place and we have found our script!

Looking forward to comments, other interpretations of what Berne wrote, etc.

By the way - Christine - you said this in just a few words but I think it works the other way round - we feel and then we think - or as I saw recently "I feel and then I think I am." Have a look at Tomkins Affect Theory - our body has sensations and then we become aware, or unconsciously act to repress.