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Vitalizing TA Theory One Conversation at a Time

by Alexandra Gheorghe

Have you ever wondered about the people behind the articles or books you read? What drives them to write? How do they come up with the concepts or theories they conceive? What from their history led them to decide “I think I have something important to say?”

We often found ourselves wondering about these and similar questions, which is how “Conversations in TA”

was born 2 years ago: out of enthusiasm and curiosity. Transactional analysis theory has been enriched by so many talented practitioners since Eric Berne’s writing became appreciated around the world! We have been excited to meet and interview some of them ... with a twist.

Our project consists of a collection of video (and one audio) interviews with authors who have made significant con-



*Traian helps Marina with her microphone as she prepares to interview
Richard Erskine*



(From left) Marina, Diana, and Traian discussing the next interview

tributions to transactional analysis theory over the years. Under the motto “Vitalizing the Theory One Conversation at a Time,” our team has created a space for transactional analysis theory to come alive through unscripted conversations between readers and authors. Most of the videos focus on understanding the process behind the article or book and on knowing the person behind the concepts. We are looking to find out how their writing makes sense in the context of their person-

al and professional journey.

About the Team

The team is made up of four of us. Alexandra Gheorghie, Diana Deaconu, and Marina Vasile are Certified Transactional Analysts working in the psy-

chology and educational fields. which one can look at the world as opposed to a fundamental, unalterable truth that leaves no room for alternatives. Last, but not least, we believe that an attitude of curiosity and reflection tends to be effective when supported by interaction. Having companions makes the lifelong journey of discovering the world worthwhile.

Technicalities

In conducting the interviews, we are committed to a rigorous methodology that has evolved over time. First, we undertake in-depth research about the work published by an author we decide to interview. Second, we meet with and engage in a debate about the ideas we have come across in the author’s work. Third, we organize the outcome of this debate in the form of a set of questions that function as a suggest-

chotherapy and educational fields. Traian Bossenmayer is a Provisional Teaching and Supervising Transactional Analyst working in the organizational field. We all live and work in Bucharest, Romania, and are part of the Romanian transactional analysis community. Our team has created this project independent of any institution or organization. It has been self-funded and self-sustained, with all the details thought out and created together, including the website, the logo, and the format of the interviews.

Since 2015, “Conversations in TA” has developed into a coherent system that has its own etiquette, technicalities, and character.

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the SCRIPT

Newsletter of the International Transactional Analysis Association
5932 Corte Cerritos
Pleasanton, CA 94566-5880, USA
Fax: 925-600-8112
Email: info@itaaworld.org
Website: www.itaaworld.org

Editors: Laurie Hawkes and Steff Oates
Managing Editor: Robin Fryer
Desktop Publishing: lockwood design

Deadlines—15th of the month prior to the month of publication (e.g., 15 August for the September issue)

The Script (ISSN 0164-7393) is published monthly by the International Transactional Analysis Association. For information on membership, visit www.itaaworld.org or contact the ITAA at the above address. © 2017 International Transactional Analysis Association, Inc.

Etiquette

“Conversations in TA” rests on the assumption that diversity feeds growth, and, therefore, the focus is on making space for multiple perspectives both in terms of theoretical models and fields of application. Another of our core values is that knowledge is a dynamic process, not a static entity. It is continuously being created, transformed, modified, and adjusted to meet the challenges that life has to offer. Additionally, our approach to theory is that it is a pair of lenses through

ed framework for the conversation with the author. We do not follow these questions rigidly, however, but use them mostly as guidelines. Fourth, when filming the interview we work in teams of two: an interviewer and a cointerviewer. The interviewer is the one who facilitates the conversation, which is usually 60 to 90 minutes long. The cointerviewer’s job is to observe the process and make comments in case the conversation becomes stuck. She or he also keeps track of time and manages the technical aspects of the video



(From left) Traian, Alexandra, and Diana consulting on how to adjust the camera

making. Fifth, the filmed material is edited and transformed into two or three clips. These are arranged to last around 15 to 20 minutes. Each is then accompanied by a written summary of the main ideas discussed and a brief biography of the interviewee. Lastly, the text and the video material are uploaded online.

Character

“Conversations in TA” is a project that we are happy to share and make available to the worldwide transactional analysis community. It is accessible free of charge and is

an initiative that took off as a self-funded investment.

We take tremendous joy and satisfaction in working together as a team and reaching out to other transactional analysts around the globe. Our aspiration is to find our own way of belonging to a community that we highly value as

well as to do our share in creating the building blocks of this community.

Beginning in February 2017, these “Conversations In TA” have been available online for a worldwide audience at www.conversationsin-TA.com. So far we have had lively conversations with Bill Cornell, Anita Mountain, Jo Stuthridge, Julie Hay, Trudi Newton, Giles Barrow, and Richard Erskine in video format and an audio conversation with Fanita English. We have covered topics as diverse and complex as the phenomenology of writing, trans-

ference, resilience, the practitioner’s vulnerability, escape hatches, the distinction between different fields of transactional analysis, organizational transactional analysis, rebelliousness and resilience, models of education, Eric Berne, and much more.

We aim to continue talking with other influential writers of TA theory. Future plans also include organizing open conversations between authors coming from different schools of thought.

To learn more about the project or to help develop it, please visit www.conversationsinta.com. For questions and feedback, please contact the team at conversationsinta@gmail.com.

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Alert Regarding Missed TAJs

If you are missing an issue of the TAJ, please be aware that SAGE Publications will honor requests for back copies only for 6 months after the date of that journal. If you do not receive your copy, please check to make sure your address is correct in the ITAA database. If it is and your membership is current, you can contact Janet Chin at janet@itaaworld.org within 6 months and she will request that another copy be sent to you. After 6 months, you can still obtain a copy by purchasing it from SAGE: contact Shelly Monroe at shelly.monroe@sagepub.com or, if you are in India, you can order through the India office at journalsubs@sagepub.in.



(From left); Marina, Diana, Alexandra, and Traian at a team meeting