



# TOUCHSTONE NARRATOR

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**Touchstone Counselling**  
Figuratively a touchstone provides a criterion to find the genuineness and value of something. We aid people in sorting out the gold and silver of their lives from the base metal as they reestablish their strengths and seek new initiatives.



**Janice Dowson**  
**SSW, Dip.**  
**Certified Teaching & Clinical Transactional Analysis Counsellor**

Janice Dowson uses the practical tools of Transactional Analysis to help people solve problems. She combines 25 years of counselling experience with her skills and knowledge to guide people as they strengthen their autonomy and seek new initiatives to accomplish their goals.

Janice has achieved Clinical certification and advanced Teaching Transactional Analyst levels of certification through the International Transactional Analysis (TA) Association's rigorous competency based training and certification program. She has held positions as President of British Columbia TA Association and TA Journal Editorial Board member. Locally Janice chairs the Board of Directors of Maple Ridge Family Education Centre. She has made presentations to international professional meetings and local groups and conferences in other provinces.

Janice synthesizes her roles as Transactional Analysis teacher and organizer with her passion for writing in this publication.

Here are some basic questions that you can ask when searching for a qualified therapist. These 10 questions can be used for thinking about what you want to know. You can add your own to better make an informed decision.

## **10 Questions to Ask a Therapist**

1. What is your training?(include all degrees, certification, areas of specialty, such as Masters Degree, PhD, RN, Transactional Analysis Clinical Certification). Specialties might include couples & family counselling, eating disorders, addictions).
2. How many years have you been practicing? Are you experienced in working with the issues and concerns for which I want to obtain help?
3. Are you registered with any governing bodies or professional associations? Which ones?
4. What therapeutic approaches and techniques do you most frequently use?
5. What do you see as the client's rights and responsibilities in the therapeutic relationship?
6. What are your primary ethics in counselling clients?
7. How do you address issues of equality and power between yourself and clients?
8. What is your understanding of touch/space boundaries with clients?
9. How will goals be established? Will there be an opportunity to review after a few sessions to assess how things are going and whether to continue?
10. What is your fee? Do you have a sliding scale? What length are sessions?

## **UPCOMING EVENTS**

### **Building Communication Bridges Using TA**

*Women's AM Breakfast April 13, 2006  
Fraserview Village, Maple Ridge 7am*

## **Specializing in Personal Care Counselling**

- Grief
- Stress
- Trauma
- Families
- Children



## **Questions to Ask When Searching for a Therapist**

Over the past year a number of folks have asked me what to ask when searching for a therapist. Choosing a counsellor can be confusing. I have noticed that my friends and neighbors ask more questions when selecting dining furniture and computers than they do in the selection of a counsellor.

## **Questions to Ask Yourself Before Talking to a Therapist**

What are my concerns for which I want to obtain help?

Which days and times work best for me?

## **Questions to Ask Yourself After Talking to a Therapist**

Did I feel a sense of confidence in this person?

Did I feel listened to?

Did his or her approach make sense to me?

*~Adapted from Voices Freyer & Gillespie.*

(Over)

When you select a counsellor, just as when we select a good suit or a good pair of shoes, the fit is important. Finding a good fit with a therapist involves using both the Adult Ego State - the thinking, reality-testing part of our personality, combined with "intuition" that Transactional Analysts generally locate in the Child Ego States. You can be prepared to make a successful selection when using both here and now Adult questions, and your intuition guided by your personal values.

Once you select a therapist to work with, developing a therapeutic relationship takes time. In building a good relationship, safety, respect and trust are important factors. The therapist is there to help you find your own answers, not to give you answers. The relationship between therapist and client must always maintain certain boundaries. Inquiring about these boundaries can be useful in your search.

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*Great writers over the centuries eloquently demonstrate their capacity for understanding the human psyche, crystallizing the human condition through their writing. Future Narrator issues will include such literary samplings. Keats' tribute fittingly leads the parade.*

And there shall be for thee all soft  
delight

That shadowy thought can win,  
A bright torch, and a casement ope  
at night  
To let the warm Love in!

*Taken from "Ode to Psyche"  
by John Keats (1819)*

## What is Transactional Analysis?

T.A. is a set of practical conceptual tools for personal growth and change, a social psychology developed by Eric Berne MD. According to Eric Berne, TA is a powerful tool for human well being that utilizes the "Adult", in both the client and the counselor to sort out thoughts and behaviors that result in personal difficulties.

TA counselors work directly on here and now problem-solving behaviors while establishing an equal working relationship to provide clients with day-to-day tools for finding constructive creative solutions.

## Key Concepts of Transactional Analysis Ego States

Eric Berne made complex interpersonal transactions understandable when he recognized that the human personality is made up of 3 "ego states", each of which is an entire system of thought, feeling, and behavior from which we interact with each other. The Parent, the Adult, and Child ego states and the interaction between them form the foundation of transactional analysis theory.

## Transactions

Transactions refer to the communication exchanges between people.

Transactional analysts are trained to recognize which ego states people are transacting from and to intervene in the interactions so that they can improve the quality and effectiveness of communication.

## "Games People Play"

Games are the outdated patterns of transacting from childhood that end up the same way over and over. As we reuse these outdated patterns they often have unpleasant, uncomfortable or painful outcomes. Game analysis offers people an opportunity to be aware of their game roles so they can choose new options and outcomes.

## Life Scripts

When Shakespeare says, "All the world's a stage" he suggests that we act out our roles on life's stage. The Life script is an unconscious life plan we compose in childhood for how we will live our lives. Each person is the star of his or her own play, writing the script from lines from parents and other players on our life stage.

~More on TA tools and concepts in upcoming newsletters.

## TA Trivia Quiz

Email your answers to [info@touchstonecounselling.ca](mailto:info@touchstonecounselling.ca) You could win a well-loved, rare book of the practical tools of Transactional Analysis if you get all 4 answers.

1. Who was the founder of Transactional Analysis?
2. Where was he born?
3. How can identifying which ego states we are transacting from affect communication?
4. Give an example of a transaction from a play, movie or sit-com?
5. Who composes a person's life script?

*Bonus Question:*

6. When someone transacts with another person in a behavior pattern that keeps happening over and over, he or she may be:

- a. Transacting
- b. Playing a Game
- c. In the Child Ego State