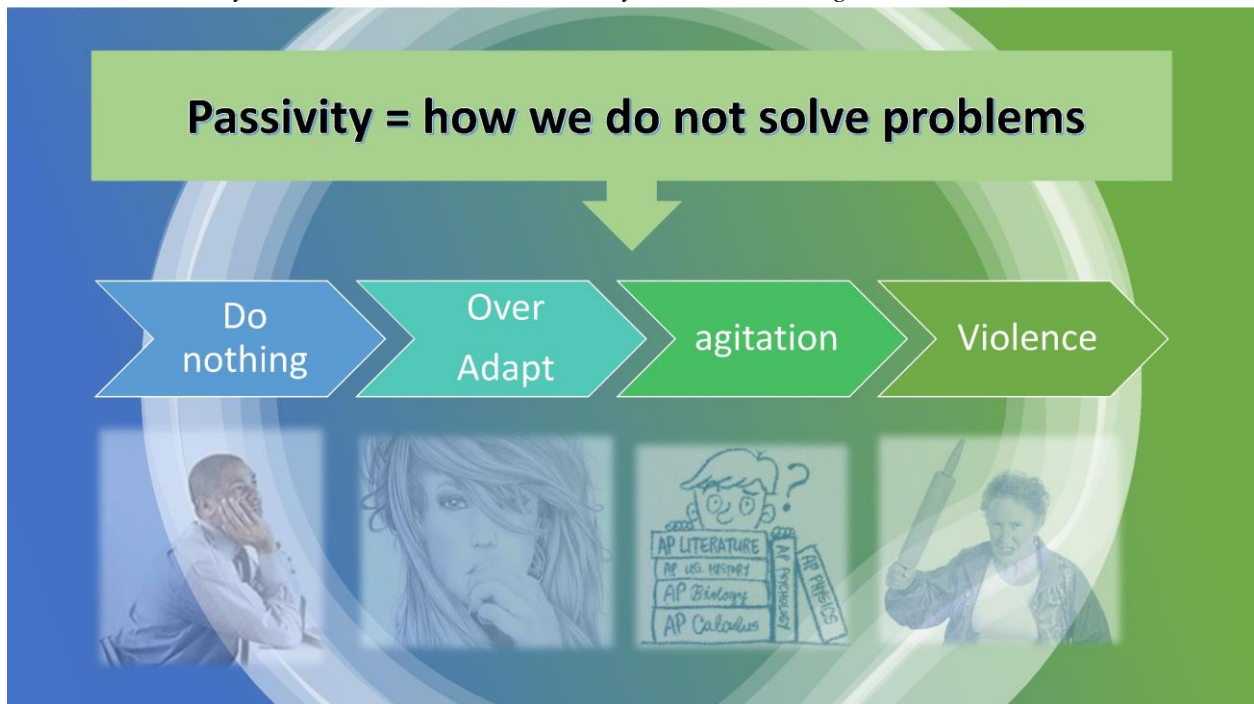


The Cathexis School of TA*Do you remember when I was 8 and you were 9 and together, we were 17?*

Emotional disorders are learned behaviours based on childhood decisions which represent the child's compromise between satisfying their own needs and getting along with parent figures. Minimising discomfort and maximising pleasure.

Jackie Schiff made very significant and influential contributions to TA theory and practice, which I describe here. The models she developed remain highly important and significant in the practice of TA. However, there were also problems which developed and here I make no effort to defend or explain the many issues that evolved as a result of Jackie Schiff's work her approach to psychotherapy. I would refer to the 1994 TAJ article by Alan Jacobs – "Theory as ideology; Reparenting and thought reform" which is referred to at the end of these notes along with other TAJ articles. In November 2002 and following her death there was a description by Ken Mellor of his experiences with Jackie alongside a challenging article by Pat Crossman in the ITAA's newsletter "The script": [MyTimeWithJacqui](#) – Ken Mellor, states: "My hope is that her passing will stimulate a celebration of her contribution to transactional analysis and to the treatment of people with severe disorders".

The Cathexis model: Developed by Jackie Schiff et al including Ken Mellor. The emphasis was based upon Reparenting, Passivity and caring confrontation. The model was developed while working with

severely disturbed / psychotic client group. The assumptions in the cathexis school are that clients with sever disorder present with the following experiences:

Ego state presentations:

Parent: You are not OK - The world is a bad place - My needs come first

Adult: is miss or uninformed

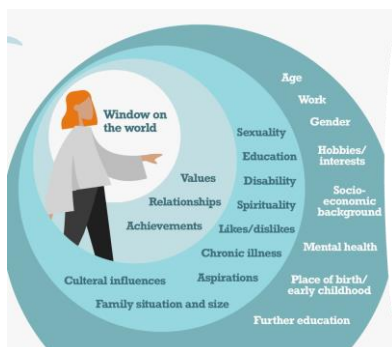
Child: I am not Ok... (ha ha) - I am scared of the world / life - Parents needs come first

Presenting Problems: Symptoms and presenting problems are an attempt to enter into symbiosis through discounting, passivity, redefining, restricted frames of reference and thought disorders. The clients use “Passive Behaviours”: Do nothing, agitation, over adaptation, violence / incapacitation in order to maintain the symbiosis.

Treatment methods: Re-scripting: with a parent value system which has a non-competitive frame of reference. Adult information challenging old Parent frame of reference. Free Child needs, feelings and problems are dealt with.

Techniques / tools: The psychotherapist provides new responses to old behaviours while passivity is caringly confronted. Jackie used regression actively, while offering “radical reparenting” for some and an experience of reparenting for others. Radical reparenting is describing the process in which the client becomes the child of the therapist, and in a few instances the client was even adopted by the therapist. However, this practice was never widespread, and even in situations which reparenting was used the client and therapist made a contract in which the therapist overtly offered to parent the client for a specific period of time. See the TAJ articles by Jenny Robinson in which she describes the use of these ideas within a therapeutic community which was still operational in the 90’s and which I visited on one occasion. Generally, the treatment environment was both very supportive while also being confrontative of passive behaviours. With the belief that the early the passivity is confronted the less harm will be experienced.

Goals: Autonomy: Development and incorporation of new and functional thinking, feeling and acting and problem-solving adaptations determined by Child. Enabling the client to function without the symbiotic structure.



Frame of reference: Jackie Schiff used the term frame of reference to describe a person’s world view – their window to the world.

In my view, that is within my frame of reference the term frame of reference can be used interchangeably with script, although in the early days of TA they were seen as different.

Cathexis: Is about energy; to cathect an ego state is to energise that ego state. In the discussion regarding the real self being experienced as the ego state which has the free energy cathected the cathexis theory disagreed with Berne's notion that any ego state can be experienced in this way. They argue that the major source of a person's energy is the Child ego state, which interestingly was also how the Goulding's present their theories, in which they say that the power for change is in the Child ego state.

The cathexis school states that Child is in executive, (Woollams and Brown p33) and is always running the show, and is therefore the real self, even when the person is apparently in Adult or Parent ego state which is then experienced as the real self. In such situations the Child ego state may in fact be experienced as ego dystonic. I think I should comment at this point, that I disagree with them at this point, and that there appears to be a confusion in their presentation of ego state theory and takes no account that the structural model of ego states which defines the Child ego state as being an echo of the younger self. My view is that the real self is in the here and now Adult functioning, in which the Adult is integrating experiences and assimilating earlier experiences in order to live in the here and now, to be Autonomous.

Symbiosis: The concept of symbiosis is important and central to understanding and TA practicing today even without resolving the theoretical inconsistencies regarding ego states. I often say to trainees – the simple idea, the simple picture of symbiosis and what the idea conveys is too good to abandon just because it does not fit with our desire for a consistent and coherent theory.

Emotional disturbances, including games and rackets are learned behaviours which are resulting from unresolved symbiotic relationships in infancy and early childhood. A symbiosis is occurring when two or more individuals behave as though they are one person. Neither person is cathecting a full complement of ego states. The formation of the symbiosis maintains the frame of reference and the sense of safety and familiarity, even in unhealthy and toxic situations.

Normal dependency is described as when there is a natural symbiosis occurring between children and parents...

(Note - recent research into child – mother dyads there is convincing and clear evidence that the child is always experiencing themselves as separate – see my notes on child development and also my notes on trauma).

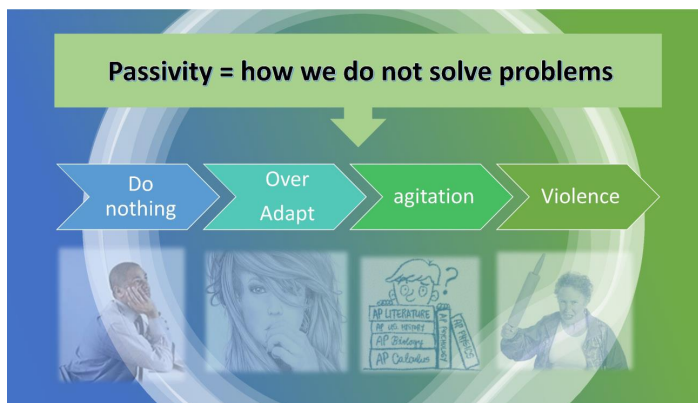


Discounts: Discounts are an internal mechanism by which people minimise or maximise an aspect of reality, themselves or others. In other words, they are not accounting for the reality of themselves or others or the situation. The king and his friends were discounting when in reality "The King really was in the altogether!"

Discounting involves thinking which is inconsistent and distorts reality. In structural terms the ego states involved will be either Parent or Child. Disturbed / psychotic people are discounting more severely, with Jackie saying that if over 80% of transactions being discounted may well mean that the person is psychotic.

MANIFESTATIONS OF DISCOUNTING... As discounts are an internal process, they can only be 'seen' as it were by their external manifestations.

1. Ulterior transactions within games.
2. Redefining transactions where the reply does not match the stimulus, for example: Q - What time is it? Answered with "It is snowing".



3. Passive behaviours.

There is a high amount of energy used and expressed, however they are they are passive in the sense that they will never solve the problem!

Passive behaviours are: Doing nothing - Over adaptation – Agitation - Violence towards self or others.

Whereas strokes are essential to life, discounts are life destructive. Games and Rackets start with and are maintained by discounts, therefore if you stop the discount, you stop the Game or the Racket.

Levels of discounting, and using the discount matrix:

There are 4 "levels of discounting":

- The existence of a problem: a baby cries and the parents go to sleep.
- The significance of a problem "Oh the baby always cries at this time".
- The change possibility: "The baby will never be satisfied".
- The personal ability to actually carry out the change: "You could but I can't change the nappy".

At each level the discount can be of three types:

- 1) The stimulus can be discounted.

- 2) The problem can be discounted.
- 3) The options can be discounted.

The Discount Matrix was developed. by Mellor and Schiff and described in the TAJ July 1975.

Starting at the top corner in the box labelled “t1” and then t2 – t6, the matrix is explored one layer by layer.

MODE	TYPE		
EXISTENCE	T ₁ Stimuli	T ₂ Problems	T ₃ Options
SIGNIFICANCE	T ₂ Significance of stimuli	T ₃ Significance of problems	T ₄ Significance of options
CHANGE POSSIBILITIES	T ₃ Changeability of stimuli	T ₄ Solvability of problems	T ₅ Viability of options
PERSONAL ABILITIES	T ₄ Person's ability to react differently	T ₅ Person's ability to solve problems	T ₆ Person's ability to act on options

An example of working through the discount matrix:

- ▣ Is there a noise?
- ▣ Yes, there is a baby crying.
- ▣ Does that mean there is a problem?
- ▣ Does that mean the stimulus is significant?
- ▣ Yes...>
- ▣ Are there any options?
- ▣ Is the problem significant?
- ▣ Is it possible to change the stimulus?
- ▣ Yes...>
- ▣ Can you react differently?

- ▣ Is it possible to change the problem?
- ▣ Are the options significant?
- ▣ Yes...>
- ▣ Can you solve the problem?
- ▣ Are the options viable?
- ▣ Yes...>
- ▣ Will you act to solve the problem?
- ▣ Yes...> there is no discount....

Wherever the answer is no... is the area in which the discount is occurring, and that area which must be addressed before the later levels in therapy. Clearly the earlier the no occurs the more serious the discount and the greater the difficulties in functioning in relationships and life.

TAJ Articles

1. Reparenting Schizophrenics J Schiff TAB 1969

This method of treatment was developed by Morris and Jacqui Schiff, both psychiatric social workers, through attempting to respond to the needs of schizophrenic patients. The patients participated in a very active and enthusiastic way in planning and criticizing methods, and the Washington D.C. Transactional Analysis Seminar provided much assistance and support.

2. Passivity; Schiff and Schiff TAJ 1971 no 1

This paper represents the culmination of several years research on passivity carried on at the Schiff Rehabilitation Project. In the past we have failed with certain patients when, even with very concerted effort, we were unable to interrupt a pattern of passive behaviour; for some time, we have been aware that we must in some way be supporting or reinforcing the passivity. In the summer of 1969, we witnessed a dramatic resolution to psychosis in a hebephrenic patient; what Eric Berne described as "a flip-in." Much of our investigation since that time has focused on the several hebephrenic patients who have been available to us. The findings have been confirmed as consistent with pathology as demonstrated in paranoia, undifferentiated schizophrenia, manic-depressive psychosis, depressions, hysteria, and other psycho-neurotic disorders where passive-aggressive or passive-dependent behaviours are significantly present. We have not yet established these findings as significant with catatonic, character-disordered, or obsessive-compulsive patients due to the lack of patients with these diagnoses in our program.

3. Frames of reference; Schiff, Schiff, Schiff, 1975 n0; 3

Using the concepts of Parent, Adult and Child ego states it is customary to divide a person's behavior, thinking and feeling into three characteristic types. However, the Parent, Adult and Child are connected structurally and integrated functionally into a whole which is characteristic of the overall person. "Frame of reference" refers to this overall structural and functional matrix. An individual's frame of reference is the structure of associated (conditioned) responses (neural pathways) which integrates the various ego states in response to specific stimuli. It provides the individual with an overall perceptual, conceptual, affective, and action set which is used to define the self, other people, and the world both structurally and

dynamically. In particular it is the framework within which the individual answers such questions as: "How do I know I exist?" and "Who am I?" It can be thought of as the skin that surrounds the ego states, binding them together and acting as a filter on reality (figure 1). Script options are defined by the frame of reference which is initially learned from the parents and determines the structure of thinking, problem-solving, and other adaptive behaviour.

4. Discounting; Mellor and Eric Schiff TAJ 1975 no: 3

Since the publication of Aaron and Jacqui Schiff's "Passivity several significant developments have been made in the understanding and confrontation of discounting in treatment. The purpose of this article is to present these developments. The person who discounts believes or acts as though some aspect of the self, other people, or reality is less significant than it actually is. Impact is reduced, usually purposefully, to maintain a frame of reference, to play games, to further script, and to attempt to enforce or confirm symbiotic relationships with others.

5. Redefining; Mellor and Eric Schiff TAJ 1975 no: 3

The concept of redefining grew out of experiences we had when using the passivity material developed by Aaron Schiff and Jacqui Schiff. The material presented in this paper is an extension of their work and links the "symbiotic basis" of people's patterns of thinking, perceiving, feeling and action to their games and script. Redefining refers to the mechanism people use to maintain their established view of themselves, other people and the world in order to advance their scripts. It is the means by which people defend themselves against stimuli which are inconsistent with their frames of reference and redefine the stimuli to fit into the frames. Several generalizations about redefinition have emerged from the work so far.

6. Suicide, killing and being killed; Mellor TAJ 1979 no: 3

To help suicidal people stay alive one must be aware of the three aspects of the act of self-destruction. These aspects are - being killed, killing and dying.

The degrees to which each suicidal person is motivated and/or committed to each facet of their own deaths need to be identified. Their motivations and commitments are then dealt with in the process of making "no suicide," "no homicide-of self" and "life" decisions. A four-step process helps ensure that all points are covered and a final integration achieved. Contracts with each ego state may need to be negotiated as part of the process until corresponding redecisions are made. Suicide is a killing in which the victim is the murderer and the murdered. It is also a death. Karl Menninger (Menninger, 1938) thoroughly analyses related motivations: the wish to be killed, the wish to kill, and the wish to die. He claims that all three are present in varying intensities in the suicidal or potentially suicidal person. My work with over 50 such people in the last few years has borne this out. It has also added the further perspective that suicidal people, whatever the level of their motivation, are variably committed to each of these courses. How can these three aspects to suicidal people's motivation and commitment be dealt with so their suicide is prevented? This article answers the question by indicating that there is the potential need in any suicidal person to make three different types of re-decisions before their continued life is assured. They are "no suicide," "no homicide-of self," and "life" decisions.

7. Reparenting the parent in support of redecisions: Ken Mellor, Graham Andrewartha TAJ 1980 no: 3

Reparenting techniques are employed during Parent interviews (J. McNeel) to reparent the Parent ego state in order to provide support for redecisions made by the Child. Parent needs, wants, and feelings are identified and experienced to ensure that appropriate attention will be paid to them during the reparenting process. An annotated example of Parent reparenting is provided. Specific indications and examples of appropriate circumstances for the use of Parent reparenting are included. We separately discovered the frequent value of using a reparenting orientation when conducting Parent interviews (McNeel, 1976) from early on in our use of that technique. We also separately decided to write about our experiences, "accidentally" told each other of our plans and decided to pool resources: hence this article.

8. Impasses a developmental and structural understanding TAJ 1980 no: 3

The three degrees of impasse developed by R. and M. Goulding are defined in development terms which relate to such factors as age, verbal and motor skills, discrimination, consciousness, etc. These terms integrate contributions from Primal Therapy, Reichian, and neo-Reichian approaches to the understanding of impasses. A specific locus of resolution for each degree of impasse is suggested. Several advantages are proposed for the employment of this formulation. Examples of clinical applications are included. Bob and Mary developed the notion of three degrees of impasses which result from decisions made while people grow up (Goulding & Goulding, 1978). I learned quickly from them the value of helping people resolve their impasses through making redecisions, while they reexperienced "in their guts" the scenes involved in their genesis.

9. Reframing and the integrated use of redeciding and Reparenting TAJ 1980 n: 3

Reframing, designed to effect modification of the individual's frame of reference (J. Schiff), incorporates the reparenting approach of J. Schiff, and the redecision approach of the Gouldings. Specific steps of the reparenting approach and of the redecision approach are identified. Guidelines for the employment of reparenting and redecision within the reframing context are included. Examples of both the effective application and the non-effective application of reframing are provided. As a PTM I had the very good fortune to be sponsored by Jacqui Schiff and Bob and Mary Goulding. In this unique position, I benefitted enormously from intensive exposure to the theory and practice of both the reparenting and redecision schools.

10. Theory as ideology; Reparenting and thought reform: Alan Jacobs 1994 no 1

This article suggests that the potential for the misuse or abuse of power lies not only in the personalities of individuals who are in positions of power, but also in the theories on which they base their behavior. The concepts of symbiotic transference and thought reform are described in relation to the theory and practice of psychotherapy, and these ideas are then applied to an examination of the school of transactional analysis known as "reparenting." A brief history of the development of reparenting is provided, and then the specific form of reparenting associated with Schiff and her co-workers is examined from the point of view of Lifton's (1961/1989) eight criteria for evaluating ideological totalism. The article concludes that Schiffian reparenting theory, particularly the concepts of passivity and passivity

confrontation, provides an example of how theory can become ideology and thus be used to support and promote totalism, thought reform, and the misuse and abuse of power.

2002 - "The script": [MyTimeWithJacqui](#) – Ken Mellor, states: "My hope is that her passing will stimulate a celebration of her contribution to transactional analysis and to the treatment of people with severe disorders".