

Enjoying As a Couple to Achieve Well-Being

Julio Silva^{1*}

¹Psychologist. An Associate Professor of Psychology and Humanities Faculty. UNIFE, Peru

***Corresponding Author:** Julio Silva, Psychologist. An Associate Professor of Psychology and Humanities Faculty. UNIFE, Peru.

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Abstract

Throughout these years I have witnessed how Transactional Analysis which is a personality theory and a psychological intervention system for personal growth and development, it has helped people in their relationships because it allows them to learn how to interact more healthily. Our ability to ENJOY is very important among the several key elements in order to manage our lives as a couple.

Keywords: *Transactional Analysis is a humanistic psychotherapeutic model... Enjoy is the ability to get in touch with our authentic emotions.*

Introduction

The couple's relationship is a type of link with particular characteristics that deserve special attention. The fact that establish a marital relationship with another person is one of the most important transitions in life. It is an indicator of entry into adulthood and it brings to mind the parental models of both spouses. Due to this reason, throughout their relationship sometimes appearances some problems such us: mistrust, jealousy, disputes, infidelity, crises, etc.

Throughout these years, I have witnessed how Transactional Analysis has helped people in their relationships because it allows learning to relate in a healthier way. The TA is a personality theory and a psychological intervention system focused in personal growth development Noriega (2013). This studies human behavior in easily understood structures (analysis) focused on the exchange of communication (transactions). Couples' relationships are analyzed as a form of interaction that is how they relate to each other and it is focuses more on the interpersonal interaction, Junchaya (1985).

This intervention model considers people since they born, from birth they record experiences during early childhood that will mark the rest of their lives and that therefore they need to be redirected if in case they are harmful to them. People record and store them in their brains in order to use them later in that way people can built a lifestyle (a script or a plot).

When these experiences are harmful, they need to be redirected.

One of the main goals of TA is to provide people the opportunity to direct and take charge of their own lives. People can understand the influences, which form their personality and the conflicts that people, live with (according to their unconscious scripts). In that way when people become aware of transactions and that, these could be constructive or destructive a person can recognize the power he has to determine the purposes of his life. The person who recognized itself as the director of his own life is autonomous, Stewart and Joines (2007).

As human beings, we all have individual and social needs. So, everybody needs to feel autonomous and independents at some level thus some way we feel related and linked to others. Throughout the different stages of life these needs arise and manifest themselves in several different ways

There are several ways to handle the needs of closeness and separation and the conflicts that are generated between the spouses. Problems arise when their distance and proximity needs are not met. If a person needs to distance itself at a certain time and the other spouse experiences this separation as a loss then attempts to reduce that distance often lead to conflicts, Silva (2017).

I find that several couples who attend in therapy suffer because they have not learned to manage their bonding needs and they complicate themselves

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because sometimes they establish relationships that are based on dependency. For example, nowadays couples send each other photos in order to spouse couples even send photos so that the other person really confirms what they are saying.

Another particularly and relevant aspect is the fact that many couples establish their relationship based on false conceptions due to they get married with impossible dreams and unrealistic expectations. There are several marriages that must deal with impossible dreams and many different expectations that have faced very different expectations and notorious incompatibilities only after getting married. As Arnold Lazarus (1990) says there is no marriage license that guarantees people are found suitable to marry. If couples explained, what they expect to give and receive from the other person and if everyone knew this before the engagement, they could at least know what to expect and avoid many frustrated hopes.

Regarding this I find that a large number of the demands in couples are not made explicit and are held as an assumption: **John supposes that Mary and Mary supposes that John... It is hard for us to make agreements...** That is due to we have not grown as adults and we have difficulty to share our love and affection with autonomy.

Why cannot we sustain a marital relationship over time? It is a fact that that the percentage of separations, divorces, etc., has been increased. On various occasions when I have attended couples and have had the opportunity to see how they relate, I can understand why they give up having relationships. Despite this whatever the circumstances most of us prefer to live as a couple rather than live alone.

Marriage is probably the most complicated of all human relationships. Few relationships can lead to such extreme emotions or can move so quickly from positions of maximum happiness to hatred.

In our current society where, more and more people tend to live together before marriage, sometimes-deep contradictions appear on time that can help us to resolve the situation. However, this is not inevitable. I have dealt with couples who lived together who then got married and only later, they discover insurmountable differences they had not taken into account.

There are circumstances in which a romantic and false concept of marriage is formed like of movies. Most people who get married are based on assumptions and expect these assumptions to be fulfilled in the marriage. However, it is not enough for

two people to love each other so it would be synonymous of understanding in a couple relationship.

As we understand it in the TA it is in Child nature to confuse disappointment with disaster, Stewart and Joines (2007). Few experiences are really a tragedy however many couples in marriage often see as a tragedy something that is a problem. **Most troubled marriages view love only as something they feel and not as something, we do ourselves.** Many times, big problems are not the ones that have no solution but small ones so we need to learn how to handle them.

It is known that marriage is recognized as successful when the spouses come from similar backgrounds and have similar "real" interests. Marriages that tend to have problems in their relationship often ignore important discrepancies and a marriage contract based on such insufficient similarities as "we both love to dance", or "we both like the same things" is unrealistic.

I must emphasize that there is not just one type of couple relationship, so there are several that the couple decides to have. Therefore, there is no stereotype of a perfect couple because that is not real so couple exists as it is. Differences should be recognized before marriage but rarely so. The young couple is in love, the bride and groom sometimes participate in a pre-marriage course and they board on the idea of becoming a happy marriage.

Sometimes people do not think about on their marriage until they see a divorce coming. Then comparative difficulties begin to appear and the two spouses begin to understand the nature of the situation they are facing.

It is difficult to get over differences and reach a compromise but it is also difficult to decide on marriage dissolution.

If both spouses are interested in arranging their marriage the TA give them tools to learn how to handle difficulties. Once they have learned TA language, they can examine the marriage contract itself, which is usually not real.

Marriages that undergo therapy can do so they "learn something new". The importance of bonds in couple's relationship and how they interact is a powerful resource for therapy, Llanos (1991).

When one of the spouse behaviors changes it is necessary that the other spouse have conceptual tools such as structural analysis, functional analysis, transactions, psychological games, etcetera. In order to understand what is going on and to understand its

own problem this allow them faced reality that there are two people joined together in a relationship called marriage.

Each spouse must be willing to acknowledge his or her responsibility of the marriage difficulties. "It's all your fault" is a fallacious statement. No one is responsible for me but myself. If husband has behaved in a humiliating way for years and the wife has tolerated it, it can be said that the wife in her own way has participated in the relationship. **Let us bear in mind that in order to dance as a couple you need two people.** Without recognition of "my lever of responsibility of our problems", the TA can simply become another way of expressing hatred. As we see the problems that may arise, we begin to understand the importance of approaching them with respect and understanding.

Generally, we think about changing the other. The husband talks about his wife, not him, and the wife talks about the husband not her.

The hardest part is to understand that it's me who has to change. People who attend in couples' therapy are not very willing to change and this I usually relate to lose weight diets that I hear in office. Therefore, they prefer self-help books. Changing is not easy and not all couples are willing to do in order to achieve well-being. For this reason, many times they remain as they are even if it is not so pleasant because it is perhaps safer.

It is difficult to reach an agreement on decisions without setting marriage goals. Either a new course is established or is followed to the drift despite of lots of information, Rivas (2014).

In order to spouses set their marriage goals, they have to assess what they consider important. What is best for them? "What is best for us?" This question can be asked in several ways within marriage context.

The question is: Why are we a couple?

Many times, I have thought about where lies in the success of a couple relationship and I usually answer myself that in part lies in each one lets himself be, where there is mine and yours, without ceasing to exist ours and where they relate each other with autonomy. Nevertheless, when we expect the other become the way I want it to be then it is like to ask him to stop being the way he is. **That is why anyone who expects something from someone he will always get frustrated because it will never be as if I would like it to be, Silva (2006).**

Therefore, in a couple relationships we look for, we need to learn to meet other's needs as an individual

who conforms them, and the needs of both people as a couple. In addition, leading to your own, what is mine and what is ours, where what is yours does not nullify what is mine and what is mine does not nullify what is yours or what is ours.

How is the well-being in the couple relationship? In my opinion, achievements without well-being are meaningless. People in general try very hard to have achievements and little in seeking well-being.

Happiness is to enjoy moments of pleasure and learn with moments of pain that are lessons. I hear people complaining themselves because they not have lived true love for lack of courage. In order to succeed you have to establish goals, but in order to be happy you have to learn to be happy with what you have on the here and now.

Couples therapy not only makes it easier for a couple to be congruent with their nature, but essentially also with their own reality. In this way, the option is that technically elaborated psychotherapy ensures that a couple can think about the proper meaning of their lives.

The fact of doing it leads them to a situation in which they feed and establish their being, this reflected essentially in the way they do things, and how they meet their own needs.

It is important to identify when a couple has well-being and they can decide if they will continue with this couple or not. How is couple Well-being? Various theoretical approaches link well-being with happiness. Thus, the couple is happy because they have well-being. We can identify well-being in couples through:

- Couples enjoy ability. Enjoy is to get in touch with pleasure, with a full and satisfying attitude, in the here and now, that is in the present.
- Maturity to cope with the vicissitudes that will arise in life that means favorable and unfavorable situations throughout life. What enables a couple with well-being that they have the maturity to seek, in a rational way, new options. Moreover, carry them out autonomously to overcome the difficulty.

According to this, many times couples who have difficulties to enjoy themselves boycott themselves so they avoid feeling pleasure. Instead of living the present which is very important and instead of getting in touch with the here and now, they begin to compare what happened or what could happen, so in that way they do not enjoy.

What is interesting is when we put ourselves in situations that happened in past and in situations that

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will happen the future, so what we do is nothing more than relive situations that often are connect to decisions we made especially in our childhood and that make us relive primary images and judgments that we learned and did not enjoy.

When a couple faces a difficulty, they need to adapt themselves to this new situation and solve it through some action, in order to reconsider the possibility of having control of their own life in an autonomous way. For this, they use their reason; their emotions and they execute some actions.

Indeed, painful situations are painful. On the one hand, to live the pain, to feel that pain, to cry that pain; many times, is a very important element to strengthen one's own being but to sustain this pain throughout time it is truly a foolishness. Therefore, that it is to create a discomfort for my whole life.

For example, if couple considers that the goal is the most important thing instead of the way, they prevent so many things that they find so justified that they are capable of enormous sacrifices, so that this will happen one day.

What is interesting is that this attitude generates a discomfort situation, not well-being. Does this goal have actually a real basis? For our benefit, or rather it is an emotional response. Many of the things that we see in the failure of our couples goals are because there is simply more emotional content than real content.

Anyway, every goal is an option to have a favorable result but it is also a possibility to have an unfavorable result. Sometimes, we do not think of it that way. It is true that when I achieve my goal it will be very satisfying for me and it will allow me to have more resources in order to continue throughout my life. However, if I do not, I might think with failure my life is over. When we set a goal, we will not only consider what we are going to achieve later and how we are going to continue, but also what I am going to do, what options I have and if it does not work out.

Among the several key elements to manage our lives as a couple, our ability to ENJOY is important. The meaning of our life is nothing more than to enjoy life; so, in order to enjoy life, I have to affirm it: the meaning of my life is to enjoy. When I enjoy my life, I give sense to it. This ability to enjoy is very important because it indicates a reason for the meaning of my life, Junchaya (2009).

In order to achieve it, autonomy is a very important element. If people do not have autonomy, they cannot have the option to enjoy. Therefore, they always live in a situation of their own internal criticism and their

own internal criticism related to unresolved situations, so the only thing that will allow them is not to be in well-being.

According to TA of Berne (2004), a truly autonomous person is the one who demonstrates the liberation or recovery of three capacities: consciousness, spontaneity, intimacy.

- A conscious person knows himself and he knows his past, but is not obliged to repeat it, so he uses his senses to be in tune on what is happening now and he has the ability to distinguish reality from fantasy.
- A spontaneous person has alternatives. He has freedom to choose his own behavior from any state of self and he can choose from past what is constructive and discards the destructive. He has freely the ability to choose to express his own feelings and his needs to act.
- A person with intimacy shall be open and authentic to himself and to others. He is not afraid to be transparent, he can experience the moments of tenderness, and he has care and affection for others that constitute the capacity for intimacy. In addition, he has the ability to open up to the other and to be authentic with the other in reciprocity.

All this with ethics or the ability to act in each context respecting the own assumed values.

We can suggest that AUTONOMY is defined as a behavior; thought or feeling that is a response to the here and now, rather than a response to the beliefs of the script, Berne (2004).

So, Does Autonomous means being all time an Adult?

The answer is "No". We have already seen how a spontaneous person can choose to respond according to here and now and he can move to the states of the Child or Father self. In Autonomy, this choice is made freely in response to the present situation. In contrast, when a person is on his own script, he will change his own self because of his own childhood self-limiting decisions about the world and his script beliefs.

Thus, autonomy does not mean being constantly in adult, it means processing all the data that comes regarding the world through the adult state of the Self then maintaining adult consciousness while deciding from which state of the self to respond. Like any other new ability, this may seem odd at first. Autonomy always offers more options than the script. Intimacy may well seem more uncomfortable initially than

entering into games or emotional blackmail because intimacy is less predictable. However, the autonomous choice of self-status becomes easier with practice. It can become so fast and natural that it is almost as if the adult state of the person has self-had incorporated positive qualities of the Child and the Father.

We can say that an autonomous person is dedicated to solve problems instead of waiting passively. Solving problems does not just mean looking for a solution; it also means taking action to achieve it.

If people established their relationships based on Autonomy as AT is understood, they would surely enjoy more their love and affection. However, if they only think about what he or she has or should be or do in this or that way, then they will not be able to enjoy that love. For this reason, the AT considers autonomy as fundamental.

Autonomy is the cornerstone of good couple relationships which could be developed when each of two with their separate existence and personal needs establish a relationship, recognize and allow the difference between them, Berne (1985).

Nowadays couples therapy not only serves to treat partner problems because they are wrong. Therefore, more and more couples go to therapy because they want to grow up. In particular, I believe that the most important thing in their couple relationship is well-being in its broadest sense. As a couple strengthens their being of each, they can learn to take the different options to grow and thus evaluate what they need to have to live.

Finally paraphrasing Eric Berne, he believed that the person is born free but one of the first things he learns is to do what he is told and then spends the rest of his life doing it. He believed that his first enslavement is at the hands of his parents. Then, a person follows his instructions forever and ever retaining the right to decide only in some cases.

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