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The Art of Communicating with a Child

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Communication is a common and basic form of interpersonal contact. Every social situation is a meeting of at least two people, in which there is a mutual interaction between them. This interaction, to be effective, that is, to allow to meet the needs of persons who get in touch with each other, undoubtedly is an art and requires — like love, on which Erich Fromm wrote about in his book *The Art of Loving*[1] — and implies a knowledge of theory and practice. If effort is not made to deepen knowledge of what interpersonal communication is, and to practise it, we will be exposed to making mistakes, creating barriers which hinder or even prevent us from reaching agreement with others. The need to deepen self-awareness in the field of communicating with others is of particular importance in relation to children learning social behaviours — including ways to communicate with others. They do this first by imitation, identifying themselves with significant people, modelling their behaviours on others, and strengthening desired behaviours through a system of rewards and weakening them by the use of negative reinforcement, and finally in adolescence the process of internalisation of social and moral rules and standards is made. The child in all phases of childhood (early, middle and late — from birth to 11—12 years of age) needs to remain in close — both physical and mental — relationships with others. From the moment he begins to use words (the turn of the first and second years of age), he gradually asks more and more questions about the nature of phenomena, their cause,

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[1] E. Fromm: *O sztuce miłości*. Trans. L. Bogdański. Poznań 2006.

operation, effects. If he gets answers to spontaneous questions asked by him, he becomes richer not only in knowledge but also increases his self-esteem, a sense of belonging to certain social groups. Bonds with those who understand him become closer, deeper, and authentic and are based on mutual getting to know each other, trust, and respect. The child also experiences, however, such meetings with others that disrupt the process of building satisfactory interpersonal relationships. This is especially so when his needs are ignored, when he does not receive answers to his questions, when others avoid contact with him or when he meets with aggression — both physical and verbal — from people significant to him. Then he experiences a peculiar put down and restricts his activity not only with people behaving incorrectly to him, but his reactions become generalised, that is, he becomes generally less active. Here are two examples of adults' communication behaviours "incapacitating" the child. The first situation happens on the bus. Mother holds an approximately 4-year old son on her lap. The travel time is 45 minutes. The little boy's eyes are fixed at the window and he excitedly talks about what is going on outside, asking the mother to look out of the window. After a few minutes of the child's requests, the mother says to her son: "Calm down, let me rest." To the end of the journey the boy said nothing. The other situation I know from the story of a student who really looked forward to starting school. When he was finally in class he talked a lot to the teacher and peers enjoying the fact that he could now read and write. At some point he heard his teacher's words, "Shut up, you came here to learn and not to play the wise guy!" "I shut up — as he said to me — for 3 years. For 3 years I did not speak a word to my teacher!" You can imagine what a damage the boys presented in the above examples suffered, in the shaping of their self-esteem, building a relationship with the mother, the teacher, and peers. Many people sustain similarly difficult experiences in their childhood when dealing with others. I would like to mention also an example of positive interpersonal relations. In a family a 10-year-old boy from time to time hears adults from the family circle express negative opinions on his behaviour and encourage his mother to scold him more often by giving him a slap, which the mother is opposed to. One day he says to his mother: "How is it that you understand me and others do not?" The mother could not get a better reward from her child!

What, therefore, is effective, rewarding all the participants in the interaction, communication? The answer to this question requires understanding of the nature and model of communication.

The nature and model of communication

Communication is a process of information exchange between individuals. During interpersonal communication each of the participating people — the sender and the recipient — performs two types of activities: sends messages by selecting appropriate codes (symbols) and reproduces the content contained within. Communication model is illustrated below:
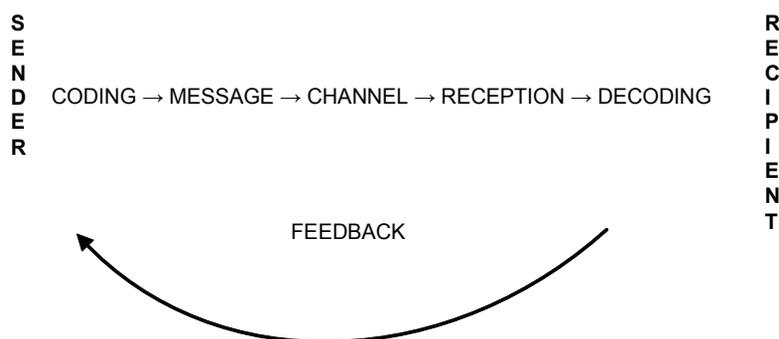
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S                                                                    R
E                                                                    E
N                                                                    C
D    CODING → MESSAGE → CHANNEL → RECEPTION → DECODING               I
E                                                                    P
R                                                                    I
                                                                     E
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                      FEEDBACK                                       T
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Figure 1. Model of communication

The sender has specific information, knowledge, skills, experience, competences, personality and his or her physicality. The beginning of making contact with the other person is feeling the need to communicate the information. People can communicate through systems of signs familiar to them, which are a kind of code containing a set of behaviours and of their associated meanings. The sender decides through what signs he will provide information. To these conventional characters certain meanings are assigned which can be read and interpreted by the recipient. The message is a physical form of encoded information that the sender forwards. It is something that can be heard, read, seen. The message is speech, writing, gesture. The contents transmitted take two basic forms, therefore: verbal and non-verbal, known as body language. The latter includes: facial expression, visual behaviour, spatial distance between individuals, the power of voice, its softness, the rate of speech, rhythm, vocal signals (laughing, yawning, swallowing), breath. Attention is drawn to extremely low participation of verbal messages (35%) compared to body language (65%) in the process communication.[2]

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[2] K. Balawajder: "Umiejętności interpersonalne w pracy menedżera." In: *Psychologia w pracy menedżera*. Ed. B. Kożusznik. Katowice 1994, pp. 76—119.

The recipient has the task to receive the signal, decode it, that is, to read its meaning and to inform the sender about his reactions to the received signal. Feedback is essentially a repetition by the recipient of the communication process with the reversal of the role of the sender and the recipient. It informs whether the message was understood and the attitude of the recipient towards the sender. The better people read messages transmitted by themselves and others, and thus more fully communicate, the greater the degree of verbal and non-verbal signals co-creating the message compatibility or complement. Assessment of the effectiveness of communication can also be made for the effectiveness of the implementation of joint activities: communication is all the more effective, the greater the degree goals realised thanks to co-operation. What happens in the event of discrepancies between the words uttered by speakers and the language of their bodies? The title of a song written by Agnieszka Osiecka is: "Can these eyes lie?" These words are repeated in the text: "Can these eyes lie? — I do not think so … Can these eyes lie? — Of course not!" They reflect the truth about the fact that body language is judged to be more credible as compared to words.

Usually interpersonal communication is seen as a two-way process. It happens, however, that the person transmitting information puts maximum effort in order to achieve the objective, to make the message clear, easy to read, that they can lose sight of the recipient, forget about the fact that at the other end of the communication process there is "another" person, someone who has their own goals, desires, troubles or worries.

It is important in communicating with others whether principles and rules of communication have been defined clearly and whether they are known to participants of the interaction. If so, they take certain actions during transmission and reception of information. The knowledge of rules and principles of communication is also the source of the formation of expectations towards a partner or partners of the interaction. Since the degree of fulfilment of these expectations depends largely on whether the people talking to each other will be satisfied with mutual relations, whether communication will be a road leading to growth of the perception of self-esteem of each of them.

The structure of personality as the source of communication with others

Seventy years ago Eric Berne[3] began research on transactional analysis — the theory of interpersonal behaviour. Transactional analysis is the analysis of human transactions external behaviours that are still under the influence of one of the personality's ego states. A dialogue between such states is also possible. The main desire of man is the need for social contact. There is a conflict between the significant force of this need and social requirements and norms that determine its satisfaction. The ability to solve this dilemma determines the harmony of the inner nature of man. If we manage to solve it, we feel we are *winners*, we experience the pleasure of being with others, of communicating with them. Partners of interaction also become winners. People winning in life are characterised by: authenticity, acceptance of themselves and others, orientation towards the development of innate predispositions, self-esteem adequate to their abilities, openness to others, empathy, loyalty, the ability to establish relationships with many people, brotherhood, the capacity for self-development, engaging in actions, sensitivity to the needs of others, implementation of respected values, responsibility for themselves and others. These people definitely deal more easily with meeting the need for contact compared to *losers*, that is, those who aspire to gain security either by adapting to social norms and rules and at the same time abandoning the desire to satisfy individual needs, which is accompanied by experiencing fear, guilt, and the conflict between the standards governing social behaviours and the needs of the inner nature, or by the dominance over others, gaining control over others, and sometimes even by aggressive behaviour towards others with whom they crave contact. However, the more they limit their freedom, the more they risk rejection by others and social isolation.

The basic components of interpersonal contacts are transactions consisting of successive stimuli (S), and responses (R). Interpersonal transactions may take the form of simple transaction consisting of one stimulus and one response (S—R) and complex ones constituting an entire sequence of successive alternating stimuli and responses. What is the source of these stimuli and responses? They are specific ego states of personality. At any point of social contact an individual is in one of the ego states: *Parent, Child* or *Adult* (Figure 2).

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[3] E. BERNE: *W co grają ludzie. Psychologia stosunków międzyludzkich*. Trans. P. IZDEBSKI. Warszawa 2012.
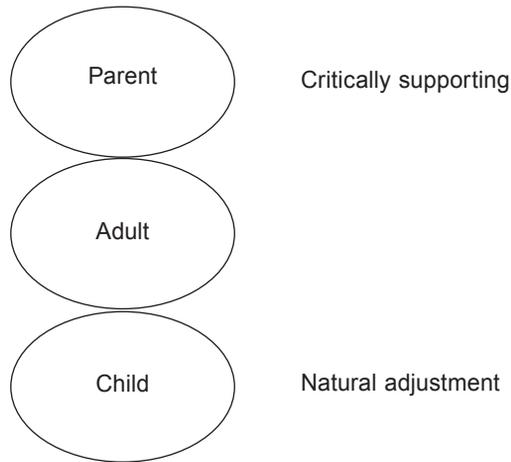
Figure 2. Diagram of ego states of personality and the corresponding life concepts

States *Parent* and *Child* are formed in the first five years of human life and are a record of the contents perceived and experienced by the child in relation to other people, usually parents or other caregivers. Ego state — *Parent* is responsible for the learned concept of life — acquired by the child without reservation from significant people. In ego state — *Child* emotions are formed which are reactions to the behaviour of significant people towards the child; this state determines the experienced concept of life. Ego state — *Adult* begins to develop around 10 months of age (!), when the child is able, owing to the acquisition of crawling skills, to intentionally make contact with others — physically get closer to them, create a direct, physical relation, and by developing pincer grip he can explore the surrounding reality. This reflects the cognised concept of life. Each of the states communicates with the environment through three channels: words, voice timbre, and extra-verbal behaviours.

In the *parental ego* responsible for the learned concept of life, all orders, prohibitions, instructions and parents' caring behaviours are recorded. In the *parental ego* there is *Critical Parent* — having a tendency to reprove the child and to punish, but also to transmit tradition, respect for universally accepted standards and rules of conduct and to react quickly to crisis situations. By activating *Critical Parent* we use imperative sentences, which prohibit something or order something, in which such words as: "you must, you should, always, never" are present. The voice is raised, reflecting the superiority over the child. Extra-verbal behaviour consists of the so-called body language indicating an advantage over another per-

son (e.g. raised eyebrows), a contemptuous smile, reaching for various objects to punish the other person. The other parental state is *Supporting Parent* responsible for caring, helping others, creating an atmosphere of safety and patient listening. For *Supporting Parent* words like: "I'll do it for you, do not overdo, rest" are characteristic. The voice is calm, affectionate, warm, and extra-verbal behaviours are helping another person, sometimes doing something for someone.

Ego state — *Child* also varies and is formed by *Natural Child* and *Adjusted Child. Natural Child* makes contact with others imbued with spontaneity, openness, his feelings, joy, emotion. The words coming out of this state are: "I'm glad, fabulous, I love you." *Natural Child* is loud, laughs, but also sometimes is whimsical, sad and tearful. His non-verbal behaviours are playing, eagerness to meet people, seeking new sensations, but also passivity, discouragement, showing little emotion, avoidance of others. For the state of *Adjusted Child* characteristics are words like: "I agree, I will do as you wish, if-questions" or such questions as: "Did I behave? Did I do my homework well?" Words uttered from the position of this state are quiet, and a desire to consent, to submit to the others is evident in extra-verbal behaviours.

Ego state — *Adult* is a thoughtful rational side of life. It allows to perceive the reality, ask questions, investigate the causes of various phenomena, reason logically, resolve conflicts cooperatively. It acts as a mediator between the other two ego states of personality, that is between *Parent* and *Child*, as well as in relations with others. Typical words from the the ego state — *Adult* include: "I can do this, I will consider, think, believe, suppose, in my opinion, hypothetically speaking, I believe […]." The voice of the person transmitting the message from the described state position is calm, composed, extra-verbal behaviours take the form of a face to face contact, eyes are focused on the partner of interaction expressing interest in him and being "here and now."

In dealing with others all the aforesaid states of personality can be activated. Particularly important for the development of personal identity, creativity, resourcefulness, coping with the challenges posed by everyday life, stress, and also for the proper development of relationships with others is strengthening of the ego state — *Adult*. Of course, each of the personality states requires effort to strengthen it when it is poorly shaped, or in case of its weakness, when a person has a tendency to react too often in relationships with others from a particular state position. It is essential that the formation of the ego states enables the activation of individual states adequately to the social situation in which at a time an individual is located. In particular, in the educational process the formation of the ego state *Adult* should be taken care of, so that it would not be dominated by any of the

other states. In relationship with the child from the earliest years of life it is good to communicate with him from the position of all three states of the personality, which will enable a harmonious development of his personality.

The type of transaction with others determines whether they will be a source of satisfaction, or perhaps will promote confusion, dissatisfaction with the contacts. The main types of transactions are simple and crossed transactions. Simple transactions occur when a stimulus sent by the person starting the transaction originates from a particular state of personality and a response is emitted by the state to which the stimulus was sent. If identical states of personality of the people involved in the interaction are activated, we have simple parallel transactions (Figure 3).
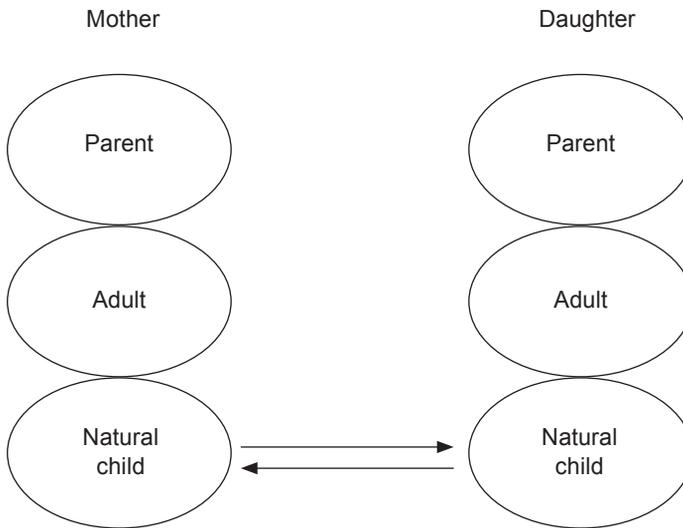

Figure 3. Simple parallel transaction

An example of such a transaction is the following situation:

Mother says to her daughter, "Today is such a beautiful, sunny day that I want to jump out of joy" (a stimulus comes from *Natural Child*);

The daughter responds, "I also feel very happy today!" (a response is also activated by the ego state *Natural Child*).

Simple complementary transactions occur when a stimulus coming from a particular ego state of the person starting the transaction is directed not to the state, which initiated it, and the person responds from the position of the state which the stimulus

reached and directs it toward the state, from which the stimulus came (Figure 4).
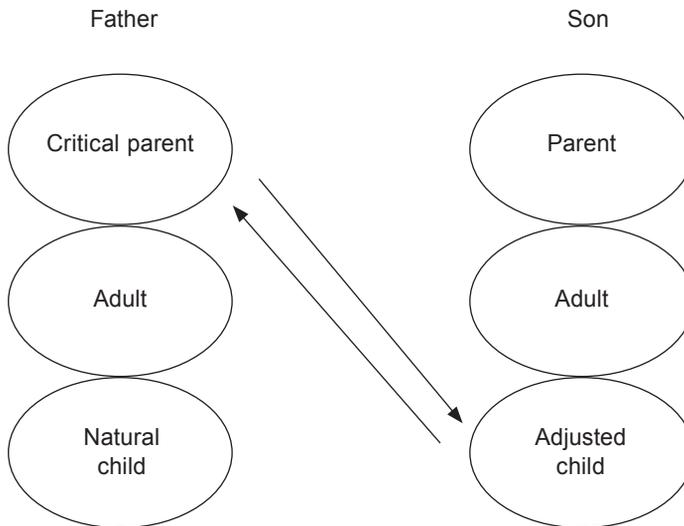
Father   Son

Figure 4. Simple complementary transaction

An example of a simple complimentary transaction:

Father directs a message to the son, "Do your homework immediately, you have been lingering over it too long." (a stimulus comes from the ego state *Critical Parent*);

The son says, "Dad, I will sit down at the desk at once and get down to doing the homework" (the reaction was initiated from the ego state *Adjusted Child*).

Simple transactions usually satisfy participants of interaction: they tend to continue the relationship. It happens differently in case of crossed transactions. They occur when a stimulus coming from a particular ego state of the person starting the transaction goes to any ego state of the person receiving the message, and the response comes either from the state, which got the message, but does not return to the state from which it was sent (Figure 5a) or not from the state to which the message is directed and goes to any state of ego of the person who initiated the inter-action (Figure 5b).
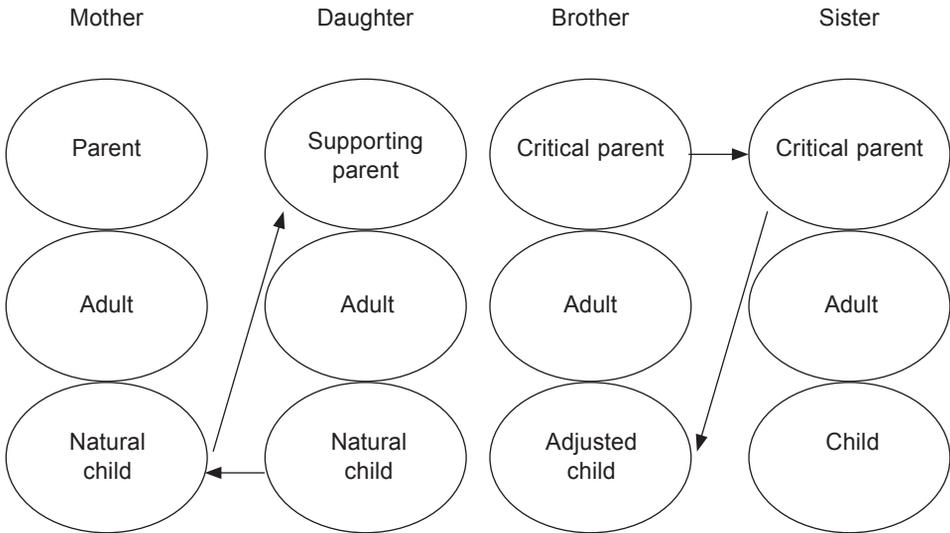
Figure 5a. Crossed transaction   **Figure 5b.** Crossed transaction

Examples of crossed transactions:

Mother says to her daughter, "Honey, I have a headache, I do not know what to do?" (a stimulus comes from mother's state of *Natural Child* and is directed to daughter's state of *Supporting Parent*);

Daughter says, "Mummy, let's go for ice cream, such beautiful weather today!" (a response comes from the daughter's state of *Natural Child* and is addressed to mother's state of *Natural Child*);

Brother says to his sister, "Parents never have time for us, they are horrible!" (a stimulus comes from brother's state of *Critical Parent* and is directed to the state of sister's *Critical Parent*);

Sister says, "How dare you say that, you are unfair to parents!" (a response comes from sister's state of *Critical Parent* and is directed to brother's state of *Adjusted Child*).

Crossed transactions cause discontent, disgust or a sense of misunderstanding and hence their result is either discontinuation of contact, or the appearance of conflicts or confrontational behaviours. If one of the people involved in the interaction at some point responds from the ego state *Adult*, he will break the escalation of the conflict, and thus reaching an agreement will become possible.

With the development of the child more mature behaviours are expected from him. But do his interlocutors direct to him messages in a manner conducive to achieving the balance between the different ego states of his personality? They usually behave according to the experiences acquired during their own childhood in the area of interpersonal behav-

iour and rarely subject them to rational assessment. It therefore seems reasonable they started from themselves training in sending and receiving messages from others, which will allow them and the people with whom they come in contact, to improve mutual communication and thus alleviate communication barriers.

Barriers of communication with the child

Thomas Gordon[4] distinguishes twelve categories of communication barriers, calling behaviours qualified to them barricades. These barriers are commonly used by parents, teachers and managers of organisations. These barriers take the form of "you" statements addressed to the participants of interaction; they include an assessment of their behaviour or are imbued with aggression. Senders of these statements are perceived by recipients as people towering over them, devoid of empathy, not understanding their needs, with a tendency to depreciate them and with no interest in them. Here are the twelve communication barriers distinguished by Thomas Gordon:

1. Commanding, managing, pushing around (e.g. a statement: "Stop telling on your brother");
2. Warning, reprimanding, threatening (e.g. "One more such a word, and you will walk out of the door");
3. Persuading, moralising (e.g. "You should give in to younger brother");
4. Dictating solutions, making proposals (e.g. "I suggest you turned to dad with this");
5. Reproaching, instructing, quoting logical arguments (e.g. "When I was your age, I had to do three times as much housework as you do");
6. Judging, criticising, blaming, opposing (e.g. "You are completely wrong");
7. Praising, approving (e.g. "Now I can see that you are a good boy");
8. Upbraiding, ridiculing, embarrassing (e.g. "You are crying like a baby");
9. Interpreting, analysing, giving diagnoses (e.g. "In fact, you do not believe yourself in what you are saying");

4 Th. GORDON: *Wychowanie bez porażek czyli Trening Skutecznego Rodzica*. Trans. A. MAKOWSKA, E. SUJAK. Warszawa 2014; Th. GORDON: *Wychowanie bez porażek w praktyce*. Trans. E. SUJAK. Warszawa 2007; Th. GORDON: *Wychowanie bez porażek w szkole*. Trans. D. SZAFRAŃSKA-PONIEWIERSKA. Warszawa 2000; Th. GORDON: *Wychowanie bez porażek szefów, liderów, przywódców*. Trans. A. MAKOWSKA. Warszawa 2000.

10. Soothing, comforting, showing compassion (e.g. "Tomorrow you will no longer think about it");
11. Asking, plying with questions (e.g., "Who has drummed this idea into your head?");
12. Drawing attention away, cheering up, entertaining (e.g. "Let's not talk about it, let's go to the cinema").

Other barriers to reaching full agreement could be:

— lack of focus on the interlocutor (dealing with something else during the speech, lack of focus on the speech),
— interrupting statements, showing impatience,
— changing the topic of conversation,
— inquisitiveness,
— assessing the person and not the arguments,
— talking only about what interests the message sender.

Characteristic statements of communication barriers in the perception of the child include more than one meaning or message. The child sees them not only as being directed at him, but also reads their hidden meaning. Friedemann Schulz von Thun distinguished four dimensions of statements: disclosure of oneself, that is, showing who I am; substantive content of speech, that is comprehensiveness and clarity of information about the current state of affairs; reciprocal relationship, that is, the method of treating the interlocutor; and the appeal, that is what the person wants to achieve by sending a specific message[5]. When, therefore, is such communication with the child possible in order to be beneficial for both the child and people who interact with him?

Conditions for effective communication with a child

Effective communication with a child requires the adoption of an attitude "towards the child," giving him the opportunity to establish a sustainable, free, true contact. The foreground condition for the adoption of such an approach is to feel the need to be with a child and communicate with him. In the wake of this the adoption of a child should follow, which means accepting him as he is, with his physicality, intellect, emotionality, desires, talents creating the opportunity to achieve success in some areas and limitations hindering the achievement of success in oth-

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[5] F. Schulz von Thun: *Sztuka rozmawiania. Część 1: Analiza zaburzeń*. Trans. P. Włodyga. Kraków 2007.

ers. According to Thomas Gordon, acceptance "is like fertile soil, which allows a fine seed to grow into a nice flower that was stuck in it in the bud. The soil only allows a seed to become a flower. It releases the seed capacity to grow, but the capacity lies only in the heart of the seed. Just as in the seed, the child's capacity to develop exists only in his body. Acceptance is like the soil — only allows the child to realise his own potential."[6]

People who accept children like them and are able to show it. They are satisfied with being with them, try to understand their needs and to satisfy them. They give children a sense of security and stimulate them to independence. In a transparent and open manner they show their position in situations when they cannot tolerate certain behaviours. Acceptance can be shown in different ways: with words, for example, "I'm glad that you're here," passive listening called tacit acceptance, extra-verbal behaviour, for instance hugging the child, and not interfering. Experiencing the feeling of being accepted by others is the basic source of self-acceptance.

An important factor of effective communication with the child is cooperation that gives an opportunity to get to know each other, reveal personal abilities and talents, formulate common goals and take responsibility for the joint implementation of tasks. Collaboration plays a considerable role in socio-moral development of the child encouraging him to take up helpful behaviours and sensitises him to the needs of others, so that later in life it becomes possible for him achieving autonomous morality — the highest level of human moral development. While cooperating with the child you should remember that he should have the right to free activity, to express himself and to make mistakes. In undertaking a joint activity with the child it is worth taking care of the atmosphere of seriousness in situations requiring it, but also of fun constituting — until he starts school — the basic form of activity.

Recognition of the rights of the child is another factor which supports experiencing satisfaction from the relationship. It consists in treating the child as an equal, adjusting to his present level of the development phase. People recognising the rights of the child help him to learn about the world by explaining, justifying and searching for arguments; they tend to base discipline on mutual arrangements.

For the proper course of interaction with the child, it is important to give him reasonable freedom appropriate for his age as an expression of trust in his ability to cope with challenges typical of his life phase, which

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[6] Th. GORDON: *Wychowanie bez porażek czyli Trening Skutecznego Rodzica…*, pp. 35—36.

will allow him to gain more and more autonomy and independence in later life.[7]

The described features of the attitude "towards the child" not only serve to develop the child but also to contribute to the personality development of the people disclosing these attitudes. These people have considerable standing with the child — but not formal, the source of which is, for example, parental or teachers' authority — but it is the authority which the child grants them by reason of their certain characteristics.

So how to educate effectively, that is not experiencing failures? Failures in education are the result of — according to Thomas Gordon — dominance of or submission to the child and are the consequence of the use of the previously discussed barriers. In such a relationship, in fact, no party derives satisfaction from the contact. So what is education without failures? Briefly speaking, meeting the mutual needs of the people interacting. The starting point is therefore the equality of people, that is, neither dominance nor submission of one person to another. The so-called principle of having a problem is important for the development of the relationship. Problem situations between the child and others may have a threefold form:

Firstly, a child as an interlocutor indicates his problem (e.g. after his return from kindergarten a 5-year-old boy in a tearful voice says to his mother, "Tomorrow I will not go to kindergarten, I hate going there.") A typical behaviour of the mother (and all other persons to whom the child would direct the statement) would be to run one or more of the ineffective behaviours distinguished by Thomas Gordon, for example: "You have to go to kindergarten, otherwise you stay at home alone tomorrow." This statement is in the form of "you." Mother's behaviour shows that she did not open up to the son's problem and did not understand his emotional state. An effective reaction requires listening — both passive, silent (gestures, body movements expressing involvement in the conversation) and active consisting in deciphering the emotional code hidden behind the child's verbal and extra-verbal reactions. Reflection of active listening could be mother's words to the son: "It is difficult to go to the kindergarten, which you do not like." Such wording provides an incentive for the child to say something more and makes him feel understood by his mother.

Secondly, the child's interlocutor has a problem with his interactions with the child, because for instance he or she does not accept the fact that

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     [7] S. Mielimąka, N. Lubszczyk: "Skuteczne porozumiewanie się rodziców z dziećmi." In: *Kontakty z ludźmi „Innymi" jako problem wychowania, opieki i resocjalizacji*. Eds. B. Kosek-Nita, D. Raś. Katowice 2007, pp. 31—50.

a child shouts while playing with his siblings and demands that they play according to his wishes. A common reaction of the parent in such situations is critical words directed towards the child, such as: "Stop behaving like that at once," "You're behaving like a baby," "Because of you there is never peace at home." These statements deprecate the person of the child, accusing, commanding. Thus we see that even in the situations where we have a problem with the child's behaviour, we use such an expression as "you." An effective parent would activate the message of "I" type. A full message of "I" type contains three elements: a description of unacceptable behaviour, a feeling experienced by the parent in the interaction with the child, the specific result of the child's behaviour that causes this feeling. Effective behaviour of the parent in the above-described situation might look like this: "When I hear these screams, I start to get angry. I am sad that I cannot hear joy in your play."

Thirdly, the problem may be common, that is, affect all members of the interaction. It appears in the case of divergent aspirations between the child and other participants in the contact. Often in such cases the needs of the child are not respected and he is forced to certain behaviours or vice versa, you give in to him and in this way resign from satisfying your own needs. Effective problem solving requires from all participants in the interaction the application of the method — called by Thomas Gordon the method without failures — consisting of six links: (1) identification of the problem, namely its recognition and naming; (2) possible solutions — while ideas; (3) critical assessment of the indicated solutions, but not of the people who gave them; (4) adoption of the solution accepted by all participants in the interaction; (5) application of the solution; (6) after a set time evaluation of the effectiveness of the adopted solution. If the result is not satisfactory for the participants of the interaction, return to step 2 and generate new ideas to solve a defined problem. It is important to listen to interlocutors and articulate expression of the "I" type in the next stages of problem solving. The method with no failures requires opening to the needs indicated by others, their values and limitations. It teaches us how to determine the boundaries of behaviours in mutual relations. Furthermore, this method requires something that is currently in deficit in relationships with others. That something is time. It is common to hear complaints about the lack of time, it is said that it flies quickly, that it is lost. Relations with others require a stop, involvement in the contact, patience and not looking at the watch: being here and now.

Furthermore, communication with the child requires self-awareness in terms of errors, imperfections and limitations on the side of people entering into contact with the child and courage and joy in making contact with him. It is worth, therefore, to discover the world of the child's

desires, his perception of the world — how different from adults' one, to share his fascination, be surprised with what surprises him and to communicate with him as we ourselves would like others to communicate with us.

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The Art of Communicating with a Child

Summary

The article discusses effective communication with the child, that is, giving satisfaction to all the participants of the interaction, which in the first place requires the knowledge of the components of the communication process. Messages sent by people entering into interaction with each other may take the form of specific stimuli and responses stemming from — according to Eric Berne — three states of ego personality: the ego state *Parent*, the ego state *Adult* and the ego state *Child*. These states are shaped from the early years of the child's life and determine the quality of communication of each person with other people over the whole course of life. They decide whether transactions with others

are simple, which generally promotes the continuation of the interaction, or crossed leading to a feeling of being not understood, or even to the interruption of the interaction. The article provides examples of simple and crossed transactions. Characteristics of the communication barriers have been given, named by Thomas Gordon the twelve typical ineffective behaviours of parents, teachers or bosses. The last part of the article indicated factors of effective communication with the child reflecting the adoption of the attitude "towards the child" including acceptance, passive and active listening, articulating statements of the "I" type, using the "method with no failures" in solving common problems, focusing on what is happening "here and now" in a relationship with the child.

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L'art de communiquer avec l'enfant

Résumé

L'article aborde la question d'une communication efficace avec l'enfant, donc, celle qui satisfait tous les participants d'une interaction. Cette capacité exige en premier lieu la connaissance des composants du procédé de communication. Les informations transmises par les personnes qui entrent en interaction peuvent prendre forme des stimulants concrets et des réactions dont la source — selon Éric Berne — sont trois états du Moi : Parent, Adulte, Enfant. Ces états se forment dès les premières années de la vie de l'enfant et déterminent la qualité de la communication de chaque homme avec d'autres personnes au cours de toute sa vie. Ils décident si les échanges avec les autres sont simples — ce qui facilite l'interaction — ou croisés et conduisant par conséquent à la sensation de ne pas être compris, ou voire à l'interruption de l'interaction. Dans l'article, on a présenté des exemples des transactions simples et croisées. On a caractérisé les obstacles à une communication appelés par Thomas Gordon les douze comportements inefficaces manifestés par les parents, les enseignants et les patrons. Dans la dernière partie de l'article, on a présenté les facteurs d'une communication réussie avec l'enfant reflétant la prise de position « envers l'enfant », comme par exemple : acceptation, écoute passive et active, articulation de l'énoncé du type « moi », application de « la méthode sans échecs » visant à résoudre les problèmes communs, concentration sur ce qui se passe « ici et maintenant » dans une relation avec l'enfant.

Mots clés : communication interpersonnelle, états du Moi, analyse transactionnelle, obstacles à une communication, conditions d'une communication efficace avec l'enfant

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L'arte della comunicazione con il bambino

Sommario

L'articolo parla del rapporto efficace di comunicazione con il bambino ossia un rapporto che dà soddisfazione a tutti i partecipanti a tale interazione. In primo luogo tale

capacità richiede la conoscenza dei componenti del processo della comunicazione. I messaggi inviati dalle persone che interagiscono possono assumere la forma di stimoli concreti e di reazioni, le cui fonti — secondo Eric Berne — sono tre stati dell'ego: lo stato io — Genitore, io — Adulto e io — Bambino. Tali stati si formano a partire dai primi anni di vita del bambino e determinano la qualità della comunicazione di ciascuna persona con gli altri lungo tutto il corso della vita. Decidono se le transazioni con gli altri sono semplici, cosa che favorisce essenzialmente la continuazione delle interazioni, o se sono incrociate e di conseguenza portano alla sensazione di essere incompreso o addirittura ad interrompere l'interazione. Nell'articolo sono stati indicati esempi di transazioni semplici e incrociate. Sono state analizzate le barriere della comunicazione chiamate da Thomas Gordon dodici tipici comportamenti inefficaci dei genitori, degli insegnanti o dei superiori. Nell'ultima parte dell'articolo sono stati indicati i fattori di comunicazione efficace con il bambino che riflettono l'accettazione del comportamento "verso il bambino", quali tra l'altro: l'accettazione, l'ascolto passivo e attivo, l'articolazione delle affermazioni tipo "io", l'applicazione nella risoluzione dei problemi comuni del "metodo senza perdenti", la concentrazione su cosa succede "qui e adesso" nelle relazioni con il bambino.

Parole chiave: comunicazione interpersonale, stati dell'ego, analisi delle transazioni, barriere della comunicazione, condizioni di comunicazione efficace con il bambino