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A Reality Therapy Group Counseling Program as An Internet Addiction Recovery Method for College Students in Korea

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ABSTRACT

College students worldwide are vulnerable to Internet addiction because the Internet is becoming more easily accessible with colleges, and a majority of college students now use the Internet as part of their educational tools. In Korea, college students are the highest level of Internet addictive users.

Glasser (1985) has used Choice Theory to explain addiction. Recently, Lewis & Carlson (2003) and Howatt (2003) have taken advantage of Reality Therapy for a core addiction recovery tool. In this way, Reality Therapy can be used widely as a treatment for addictive disorders such as drugs, sex, food, and work as well as Internet.

Group counseling appears to be the predominant modality for treating addiction (Fisher & Harrison, 1997). The support, confrontation, and insight gained from other individuals experiencing similar cognition and emotions facilitate therapeutic recovery.

Thus, this article explores the application of Choice Theory and Reality Therapy as an Internet addiction recovery vehicle, and develops a group counseling program that group counselors can use when working with college students with Internet addictive disorders.

INTRODUCTION

The prevalence of Internet use worldwide has increased markedly during the few years. Along with all the benefits the Internet brings, problems of excessive Internet use are becoming apparent. There are also some clinical observations that some people ‘get hooked’, and develop an Internet addiction.

The Internet is becoming more easily accessible with schools, colleges, and public libraries all going online. Many college students now use the Internet as part of their educational tools. In addition, the cost of computers is becoming more affordable so the number of home computers is on the rise. With such ease of access, the Internet has become an integral part of our lives (Huang & Alessi, 1997; Griffiths, 2000). With these changes, it is anticipated that the number of those who excessively use the Internet will also continue to increase in Korea. Typical Internet behaviors among excessive users included participating in chat rooms, checking e-mail, scanning messages on Usenet groups, and playing multi-user games (Young, 1997).

The Korean Ministry of Information and Communication conducted a survey of cyber addiction. They recruited 2600 ranging from elementary level to adults. Of these, 4.8% were classed as Internet addiction disorder. Of Internet users, 7.9% were college students, the highest level. Lee (2002) surveyed 3000 ranging from elementary school to college students. Nearly 4.8% of the participants were Internet addiction disorder. Of those who exhibited Internet addiction disorder, college students were 36.7%, the highest level as well.

Internet addiction is described as an impulse control disorder that does not involve use of an intoxicating drug and is very similar to pathological gambling. Internet addiction is called an Addiction Disorder, Pathological Internet Use, Excessive Internet Use, and Compulsive Internet Use.

Young (1996a) conducted the earliest empirical research on excessive Internet use. According to Young (1999), Internet Addiction is a broad term covering a wide variety of behaviors and impulse control problems. This is categorized by five specific subtypes of Internet addiction:

• Cyber-sexual Addiction: Compulsive use of adult chat rooms or cyberporn.
• Cyber-relationship Addiction: Over-involvement in online relationships.
• Net Compulsions: Compulsive online gambling, shopping, and obsessive online trading.
• Information Overload: Compulsive web surfing or database searches.
• Computer Addiction: Obsessive computer game playing (e.g., Doom, Myst, Solitaire etc.).

A number of other studies have highlighted the danger that excessive Internet use may pose to college students as a population group. This population is deemed to be vulnerable and at risk given the accessibility of the Internet and the flexibility of their schedules (Moore, 1995). College students are vulnerable to Internet addiction because of many factors, including difficulty adapting to life away from home and underlying psychological problems, such as depression or social anxiety. School is a training ground for adulthood and individuals must be responsible for themselves. But there are students spend-
ing way too much time on-line, probably to the detriment of their school work and other activities.

It is important that counselors recognize the signs and symptoms of Internet addiction. This includes not only determining the amount of time spent on the Internet, but also whether Internet usage has negatively disrupted any major areas of the client's life, including recreational, social, occupational, legal, financial, and physical or mental. Also, counselors and therapists need to be familiar with the signs of Internet addiction and some of the emerging treatment strategies.

Reality therapy has been used widely as a treatment for addictive disorders such as drugs, sex, food, work and so forth. Glasser (1985) has used Choice Theory to explain addiction. Lewis & Carlson (2003) has recently taken advantage of Reality Therapy for a core addiction recovery tool. Howatt (2003) developed a core addiction recovery tool based on Choice Theory, figuring out that Choice Theory can serve as a core addiction recovery tool.

Reality therapy is designed to help individuals control their behavior and make a choice of new and difficult one in their lives. It is based on choice theory, which assumes that people are responsible for their lives and for what they do, feel, and think.

It is difficult to directly change our feeling or physiology separately from our doing or thinking. We, however, are able to change what we do or think regardless of how we feel. Thus, the key to change behavior lies in choosing to change our acting and thinking.

By having clients commit to changing their Internet addiction and to explore their total behavior, the counselor could bring about changes in their Internet abuse and stick to those plans. In doing so, he would not accept excuses from clients. Rather, he works hard to help them take control over their Internet addiction behavior.

Reality therapy seems to be of value for counselors who deal with persons with Internet addiction. Regardless of the kind of addiction, a universal variable is that persons who display addiction behavior should make the rational choice to achieve their wants. Thus, Choice Theory in Reality Therapy can be used as an Internet addiction recovery method and provide a pathway to make an effective choice.

Group counseling appears to be the predominant modality for treating addiction (Fisher & Harrison, 1997). The support, confrontation, and insight gained from other individuals experiencing similar cognition and emotions facilitate therapeutic recovery. Millions of recovering addicts have experienced success from attending 12-step support groups. for example. Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, Overeaters Anonymous, etc. Internet addicts may experience similar success in attending a group designed specifically for individuals excessively using the Internet. A number of these support groups have already been established in the United States.

Recently, as a method of prevention and treatment for Internet addiction behaviors, a few of these support group and treatment programs have been developed in Korea. However, a group counseling program based on Choice Theory or Reality Therapy for Internet addiction treatment is rare. The purpose of this study focuses on development of a group counseling program as a core recovery vehicle for Internet addicted college students. This program would be based on Reality Therapy, including such things as control theory, five basic needs, total behavior, friendly involvement, and making a plan. In addition, this program includes cognitive-behavioral approaches such as time management techniques, and the reminder cards suggested by Young (1996).

A Reality Therapy Group Counseling Program

1. Some guidelines for application of this program

A group leader must be flexible and know when it is advisable to deviate from the proposed session plan. Time is frequently the enemy of the group leader. Group sessions have a time limitation in terms of both the length of time for a session and the number of planned sessions. Thus, the group leader should not try to plan for more topics than could be covered in a group session. The size of group and the quality of interaction often suggest the number of topics that can be discussed in a given session.

The group preparation can be divided into four sections:

1. State what the session is expected to accomplish, namely, purpose, or objectives

2. Check the material that will be used and what needs to be collected prior to the session. Materials, including blank paper, topic-oriented games, posters, construction paper, a chalkboard and chalk, crayons, scissors, or an overhead projector or a video, might be used during the sessions.

3. Detail the strategies, including what the group leader plans to say to the group, group activities, topics for discussion, homework assignments, and a brief summary of what was accomplished.

4. Evaluate the group experience both in terms of individual growth and the extent to which the group, as a whole, accomplished its objective.

2. The descriptions of a reality therapy group counseling program

What follows is a plan for ten group sessions dealing with Internet addiction college students. This program was evaluated and supervised by specialists certificated by the Korea Counseling Association. Each session takes 60 to 90 minutes in length. Constructions of each session were preceded as the procedure of introduction of session goal.
teaching, activities, homework assignment, and sharing.

Although each session has been carefully planned, circumstances from the previous session or issues that could arise might suggest to the group leaders that the plan should be altered. Group leaders need to be flexible.

Session 1
Objectives

1. To enable the group to get to know each other
2. To set goals for the group
3. To plan an icebreaker to encourage members to feel comfortable with each other
4. To agree upon the group rules and sign a rules contract

Specific strategies

1. Members are asked to
   • introduce themselves to the group
   • state one reason they are in the group
   • state one thing they would like to gain from being in the group
2. Reiterate the purpose of the group and set some goals for the group
3. A counselor in reality therapy group makes a sincere effort to establish a friendly relationship with clients that will sustain itself during the treatment. In doing so, group members are able to meet a basic need for the feeling of belonging. The group leader should show that he cares about clients in group work and is willing to talk about anything that both clients and the counselor think worth changing. Rules such as no eating, drinking, or smoking during sessions, attendance and no attacking of others in a pleasant and positive manner. After group members have brainstormed the rules they feel are important, be sure the concept of confidentiality has been cited as a rule and ask the group why “what we say in the group stays in the group” is so important.

4. Divide the group into pairs. Members of each pair interview their partners. They should know the name, likes and dislikes of their partner, two words that describe their partner, and one thing they have in common with their partner, like a favorite season, food, sport, singer, book, hobby, movie, TV program, etc. After ten minutes, partners introduce their partners to the whole group.

5. Determine the time/day schedule for the remaining sessions.
6. Encourage them to return next week
7. Summarize the session

Session 2
Objectives

1. To help the group understand more about the Internet addiction.
2. To introduce five basic needs to the group.
3. To administer Internet Addiction Checklist to the group.

Specific strategies

1. Briefly restate the purpose of the group and review the group rules.
2. Explain five basic needs and explore what kind of needs have been missed. We develop pictures in our heads to satisfy basic needs and the pictures are stored in what Glasser (1985) refers to as the quality world. It contains our expectations, our core belief, and opportunities to fulfill our needs. According to Glasser (1996), we have four basic psychological needs including belonging, power, freedom, and fun as well as the need for survival. All of these needs are met through our pictures, namely, quality world, in our heads. If you are an Internet addictive user, what kind of needs do you miss?

3. Complete the Internet Addiction checklist

Direction: on the Addiction Checklist below, Please respond to these questions

• Do you feel preoccupied with the Internet (think about previous online activity or anticipation of next online session)? Yes No
• Do you feel the need to use the Internet with increasing amounts of time in order to achieve satisfaction? Yes No
• Have you repeatedly made unsuccessful efforts to control, cut back, or stop Internet use? Yes No
• Do you feel restless, moody, depressed, or irritable when attempting to cut down or stop Internet use? Yes No
• Do you use the Internet as a way of escaping from problems or of relieving a dysphonic mood (e.g., feelings of helplessness, guilt, anxiety, depression)? Yes No
• Have you jeopardized or risked the loss of a significant relationship, job, and educational or career opportunity because of the Internet? Yes No
• Have you lied to family members, therapist, or others to conceal the extent of involvement with the Internet? Yes No
• Do you stay online longer than originally intended? Yes No

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4. Share factors of the Internet addiction as time permits.
5. Summarize the session to the group.

Session 3
Objectives
1. To introduce choice theory to the group.
2. To explain time-management techniques.

Specific strategies
1. Quickly review the group rules.
2. Explain choice theory to the group and practice to talk to oneself in terms of choice theory.

Glasser (1996) describes that people do not become sad; rather, they choose to be sad. For instance, if you use Internet excessively, you can't control Internet use and may feel helpless and hopeless. When people say “I am choosing to be addictive rather than I become an addict”, you are less likely to choose to abuse Internet.

3. Teach the group to use time-management techniques.

If you stay online longer than initially intended, incorporate planned Internet time into your weekly schedule. Internet addiction does not require that a person go ‘cold turkey’ and quit all usage. Measure your time intentionally by setting into your schedule specific starting and stopping times. Set a reasonable goal, perhaps 10 hours a week on-line if you currently devote 30 hours. Instead of “One day at a time”, practice “One time a day.”

Probably, if this is not effective because you ignore the above, you can also use a real alarm clock to be set when you need to end the session. Keep it a few steps from the computer so you have to get up to shut it off.

4. Homework assignment: Apply things learned in this session to the real life.
5. Review the session.

Session 4
Objectives
1. To help the group understand ‘Total behavior’.
2. To help the group improve alternative activities.

Materials needed
Toy cars, copies of car picture drawing acting and thinking in front wheels, feeling, and physiology in rear wheels.

Specific strategies
1. Briefly review group rules, if needed.
2. Follow up on the homework assignment. Ask the group to share their implementation of time-management techniques learned in previous session.
3. Explain ‘Total Behavior’.

Acting, thinking, feeling, and physiology make up ‘total behavior’. The rear wheels are feeling and physiology, whereas the front wheels are acting and thinking. According to choice theory, it is difficult to directly change our feeling or physiology separately from our acting or thinking. We are able to change what we act or think regardless of how we feel. Thus, the key to change behavior lies in choosing to change our acting and thinking.

4. Encourage the group to establish an alternative acting. Establish an alternative activity. Think of a hobby or activity that you have always wanted to try and commit to doing it in place of some of the hours spent currently on the Internet. The more fun things you have in your life every day, the less you will miss the constant Internet buzz and give in to the craving to go back to it.
5. Present clients’ alternative acting to the group.
6. Homework assignment: Apply things learned in this session to the real world.
7. Summarize the session.

Session 5
Objectives
1. To introduce WDEP to the group.
2. To help the group ask oneself for the Internet addiction behaviors.

Specific strategies
1. Briefly review group rules, especially confidentiality.
2. Follow up on the homework assignment.
3. Explain WDEP to the group and practice the process of WDEP. WDEP refers to W=wants, D=direction and doing, E=evaluation, and P=planning. As mentioned earlier, total behavior consists of doing, thinking, feeling, and physiology. Change in one’s life or control over one’s life occurs through doing. For example, if you use the Internet excessively, it is helpful to ask specific questions, like “what am I doing?”, “Does my behavior help me or hurt me?”, and “By doing what I’m doing, am I getting what I want?” These questions help clarify client’s pictures or perception of what I am doing. It’s a good idea to focus on planning that involves doing behavior that meets the clients’ basic needs. This can bring about changes in your pictures or perceptions or beliefs, as well as feeling.

4. To encourage the group to use these questions in the situation of Internet abuse.
   • Does my behavior help me or hurt me?
   • Are your wants realistic and attainable?
   • By doing what I’m doing, am I getting what I want?
• How does it help to look at it like that?

You spent too much time on-line to the detriment of your school works and other activities. By following this question up, it can help you consider whether Internet addiction can help you or hurt you. These questions, also, help you specifically evaluate your behaviors and see if they are really worthwhile.

5. Share their experiences of Internet abuse as time permits.

6. Homework assignment: Apply things learned in this session to the real world.

7. Summarize the session.

Session 6
Objectives

1. To help the group recognize Internet usage pattern.
2. To help the group recognize their addictive triggers.

Specific strategies

1. Quickly restate the purpose of the group and review the group rules.
2. Follow up on the homework assignment.
3. Identify your usage pattern. To begin to shake the habit, practice the opposite.
   • What days of the week do you typically log on-line?
   • What time of day do you usually begin?
   • How long do you stay on during a typical session?
   • Where do you usually use the computer?
4. Recognize your addictive triggers.
   • Ponder your own feelings when you head for the computer. Complete the following sentence: Before I turn to the Internet, I feel ____________. Some typical answers are bored, lonely, miserable, depressed, anxious, angry, and stressed. It is important to raise awareness about the fingerprints of these individual feelings because they prompt your addictive response.
   • Next complete this sentence: When I am engaged in my favorite Internet activity, I feel ____________. Typical responses include relaxed, excited, happy, confident, competent, fulfilled, respected, calm, loved, supported, sexy, and hopeful.
   • Recognizing these two feeling states: how you feel before you go on-line and how you feel when you’re using the Internet.
   • Allow you to see what you are running away from and tune in to what you hope to gain on-line. Each time you decide to use the Internet as a response to these triggers, you face a choice point.
   • As you get more into your recovery efforts, these choice points are crucial for altering cognitive and behavioral patterns.
5. Share Internet addictive triggers as time permits.
6. Homework assignment: Apply things learned in this session to the real world.
7. Review the session.

Session 7
Objectives

1. To help the group make a concrete plan to do better.

Materials needed
Copies of time plan form

Specific strategies

1. Briefly review the group rules.
2. Follow up on the homework assignment.
3. Make concrete plans to do better.

To recover from any addiction, one must have a concrete plan of acting and steps to accomplish each point on the plan. The key word is concrete. If you are not getting any sleep, discipline yourself to turn off the computer at 11 p.m. instead of 2 a.m. and go to sleep. Change your schedule so that the changing behaviors will be easier to initiate. If you need a job, pick up the phone and set appointments for consultations or visit a job board on campus or revise your resume and distribute it to 5 places that you think might have potential for the type of work you prefer. The main objective of this recovery step is to act in your own behalf.

4. Complete time plan form.
5. Present it to the whole group.
6. Summarize the session.

Session 8
Objectives

1. To make a verbal or written contract.
2. To help the group commitment to plans.

Materials needed
Copies of a written contract form

Specific strategies

1. Briefly review the group rules, if needed.
2. Make a verbal or written contract. When making a commitment to plans, it is important that the plan be feasible to carry out. It’s a good idea to use a verbal or written contract to ensure commitment. You guys and I can develop a written contract. The contract is a few sentences on a piece of paper written toward commitment to plans.
3. Encourage the group to commit to plans.
   • Transfer positive qualities that you discovered or developed on the Internet to "real world" experiences. Don’t limit your social life. Look for the support and affection from people that you can see and touch. If you were witty, caring and intelligent on the Internet, likewise you can be so in real life. Visualize yourself acting with the same positive qualities in a typical social situation you might face at work, school or at the grocery store.
   • Change your situation. Look at the circumstances of your life and how they may be contributing to your loneliness. Take positive action in your own behalf and change your real life for the better.
   • Explore the difficult feelings. If you turned to the Internet because a sudden accident or illness left you homebound, you’ve probably got some strong emotions stirring inside you. You may have turned to the Internet at a transition time in your life: between jobs, relationships, and levels of education. What ever the feelings you are having, the only true way through them is to talk about them to someone you trust, write about them, let go of some of the intensity of them and then move on beyond them. Although exploring difficult feelings may feel traumatic at first, eventually most people find it therapeutic and helpful in getting themselves 'unstuck' from a pattern of thought and behavior that is destructive and addictive.

3. Homework assignment: Post a written contract on the place where can easily see in your room and Practice with patience.

4. Remind the group that there are only two more sessions.

5. Review the session

Session 9
Objectives
1. To allow the group to make positive reminder cards.
2. To encourage the group to practically use positive reminder cards.

Materials needed
Copies of 3-by-5-inch-index cards

Specific strategies
1. Quickly review the group rules and the purpose.
2. Follow up on the homework assignment.
3. Make positive reminder cards and encourage the group to use in his real life.
   • Make a list of the five major problems caused by your addiction to the Internet.
   • Make a separate list of the five major benefits of cutting down your Internet use.
   • Transfer the two lists onto a 3-by-5inch-index card and keep it in your pocket, purse, or wallet.
   • When you hit a choice point where you would be tempted to use the Internet instead of doing something more productive or healthy, take out your index card as a reminder of what you want to avoid and what you want to do for yourself.

4. Discuss examples of Internet problems and examples of major benefits of reducing on-line time. Examples of Internet problems could be no job-hunting, lost sleep, ignoring real-life friends, not facing causes of anxiety or secrecy with a loved one. Examples of major benefits of reducing on-line time could be pursue job leads, better rested, time to devote to real-life relationships, and finding new ways to relieve stress.

5. Homework assignment: Apply things learned in this session to the real world.

6. Remind the group that the next session will be the last meeting.

7. Review the session

Session 10
Objectives
1. To review the critical learning from all previous sessions.
2. To cite the goals and extent to which they have been achieved.
3. To recommend to the group what still needs to be done and make suggestions about how these things can be accomplished.
4. To compliment the group for their accomplishments and hard work.
5. To have a group celebration.

Materials Needed
Copies of an evaluation survey

Specific Strategies
1. Review significant accomplishments of the group.
2. Follow up on the homework assignment.
3. Circle whip
   • How does each member of the group feel about the ending of the group?
   • What did each member of the group learn from the experience and what are the members doing differently now as a result of what they learned?
4. Thank the group for the hard work they did and its cooperation.

5. Ask the group to complete a group evaluation sheet.

Please respond to these questions

- I found this group experience to be worthwhile. Yes No
- I would recommend being in a group to my friends. Yes No
- The group made progress in accomplishing its goal. Yes No
- What I liked most about this group was
- What I liked least about this group was
- To improve the group I would suggest

6. Remind the group that even though the group experience has ended, confidentiality is still expected and is still important.

7. A light, healthy refreshment can be offered to end the group session

CONCLUSION

Internet usage has tripled in the last three years with continuing growth is expected. University students can easily access to Internet in colleges, a boarding house, public libraries, as well as at home. Counselors and therapists need to be familiar with the signs of Internet addiction and some of the emerging treatment strategies. Treatments for Internet addiction are beginning to emerge. Traditionally, counselors who specialized in the treatment of addictions integrate individual, group, and family counseling with a heavy emphasis on the rational choice. Some research has been proved that Group counseling was the predominant modality for treating addictions.

Thus, the purpose of this study is to develop a group counseling program on an Internet addiction treatment vehicle of college students. This program is based on Reality Therapy including control theory, five basic needs, total behavior, friendly involvement, and making a plan. In addition, this program includes cognitive-behavioral approach such as time management technique, using the reminder cards. The core instructions of choice theory underlying rationale that drives reality therapy (Wubbolding, 2000) are very useful in helping clients to establish a healthy recovery by exploring them how they can meet their basic needs by questioning their doing, wants, self-evaluation, and plans as well as choosing more effective behaviors. Future research should focus on further defining the phenomenon of Internet addiction in terms of relating it to genetic, biologic and psychosocial variables. In addition, further research is needed to prove the effectiveness of this program.

REFERENCES


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IS IT OK TO COERCE?

Diane Gossen

We must come together in ways that respect the solitude of the soul, that avoid the unconscious violence we do when we try to save each other, that evoke our capacity to hold another life without dishonoring its mystery, never trying to coerce the other into meeting our own needs. — Parker J. Palmer

Is it okay to coerce people for their own good? What will they remember years later—their success or the feeling of being coerced? I have had two experiences that caused me to reflect on this. The first was a conversation with a former staff member from Radius, the longest continuously running Reality Therapy-based program in the world. Several years ago we had a staff reunion. On this occasion a former teacher remarked to me, “When you were my director, I loved you and I hated you.” I was a bit caught off guard and asked why she would say that. She responded, “Well, you always thought I could do more than I thought I could do.” I said to her, “Well, you did it, didn’t you?” She said, “Yes, but it was so uncomfortable.” The moment passed and we moved on to laugh and share our friendship.

The next day I reflected seriously on this. I remembered that I often asked her to take on the more difficult students because she had had a rough upbringing herself and I knew she could relate to them. Sometimes she objected, saying she was overloaded with aggressive kids. I believe that at this point I praised her, extolling her skills. If she demurred again, I would say, “If you don’t take this student, who’s going to help him?” At this point, because of guilt, she complied with my request. She was always successful, but thirty years later she remembers feeling uncomfortable.

I also thought about the question of coercion when I was asked by a childcare worker in Quebec, “Is it okay to force the kids in the halfway houses to do on-the-job training? You know it strengthens them.” I answered, “You’re right, but the question is, What will they remember—their success in the program or the fact that they were forced to participate?”

Now I ask you. How many of you reading this book were forced to practice a musical instrument or to play a sport? Did having to attend church or temple make you a spiritual person? Can you think of a time when you complied, but dropped an activity as soon as the pressure was off? Were you forced to dress or act a certain way, but you changed as soon as you were out of sight? Think of a recent time you showed affection. Did you do so to avoid a conflict or did you do it because you felt it? The act is the same. The result is very different.

In working with a new group each week over the past year, I have had plenty of opportunities to hear answers to these questions. A common response is, “Yes, it’s okay to coerce for safety—for example, to prevent a small child from going on the road.” People feel that age is a factor and youth don’t understand the possible consequences of their actions. People also speak of the need to exert force if someone is going to hurt him- or herself or another. On the other hand, there are very diverse opinions about practicing the piano. Many report they were made to practice. Some are grateful; others never touch the piano today. One person reports loving to play another instrument now but not the piano. Several express the wish that their parents had forced them to practice.

People ask so many important questions about coercion. Who decides what is good for another? Who really knows? Whose needs are being met? What really is coercion? If we define it as pressure, it can be positive or negative. What’s the difference between encouraging and persuading? Where is the line between guiding and coercing? What is challenging and what is forcing? When do inspiration and motivation become coercion? What’s the difference between a gift and a bribe? Is daring a person to do something coercive? When I ask people, “Do you have a feeling that tells you when you are being coerced?” they nod vigorously in affirmation and answer. “When we feel we have no choice.”

Some groups take a global view. One group said the conformity of communism was comfortable for people in Russia, but the price was freedom and independence. Another said that Japan is stronger on conformity than on creativity. North American Native Indian participants express their view that it is disrespectful to pressure a person. They even espouse a principle of non-interference to give people a chance to make up their own minds. Someone said, “We can coerce people in Iraq, but the minute we leave, they’ll go back to being the way they want to be.”

CONTINGENT ON YOUR COMPLIANCE?

Another significant question comes from the work of Alfie Kohn: Is it okay to take what people want and need
and make the receipt of it contingent on their compliance? What does it do to the relationship? I ask you, as you read this, to think about your friendships and your intimate relationships. Would your friends still be your friends if you withheld approval from them in order to control them? What would happen if your loved one withheld affection in order to get you to do something for him or her? Does coercing a person to comply show lack of optimism and belief in their innate goodness, their deep desire to love and to learn, and their internal motivation to achieve?

Do you let yourself be more coerced by those you admire? Can you avoid being influenced by those you love? Is it easy to resist coercion if you have no respect for the person who uses it? One person said, “My mother did everything for me. It was a burden after awhile. I left home to rebel. I didn’t even leave a phone number.” Do people say, “Thanks for making me do that”? What about marriage? Does a person choose marriage for rules and consequences? Do you say, “Let’s get married so we can control each other?” Do you accept a job for the joy of being monitored and rewarded? Why do you choose your profession and who do you want to be? A lot of people say coercion is part of life, so just get used to it. Many note that the education system is based on coercion. Others feel any organization has the right to coerce an individual.

Sometimes in my workshops I say that a compliment feels good the first time and okay the second time. Then I ask how it feels the third time, and everyone intones, “What do they want from me?” It’s not the compliment that is the problem. It is our habit of giving compliments to induce others to behave in a certain manner to meet our own needs, not their needs.

It is not bubble gum itself that is the problem, nor money, nor love and attention. The rewards themselves are in some cases innocuous and in other cases indispensable. What concerns me is the practice of using these things as rewards. To take what people want or need and offer it on a contingent basis in order to control how they act—this is where the trouble lies. (Kohn, 1993)

This is not to suggest that we stop expressing pleasure to others. If a compliment is heartfelt and spontaneous, it does not have a dangerous side. Our pleasure may also be revealed non-verbally with a nod or a hug. It is important to cue people to the impact of their actions on us. They can then decide how to behave in relation to us. If our delight is genuine and an integrated part of our behavior, our goal is not coercion.

Unfortunately, stimulus-response teaching has urged us to synthesize and simulate pleasure in order to impact others and control them. This is particularly true with regard to children. I could pull off my shelf at random a dozen books on education and self-help. If they were written in the last half of the twentieth century, there is a good chance they will contain sections on positive reinforcement. Parents will be encouraged to mete out praise.

Teachers will be exhorted to single out high performers for recognition. Lovers are encouraged to do acts of service to gain their partner’s approval. Behavior problems will be dealt with by rewarding people for being good. The examples are endless.

This can also be found in any teen magazine for girls. Such titles as Seventeen urge girls to adopt certain wiles to attract the opposite sex. To be honest, I can remember having similar conversations with my daughters and advising them how to attract someone by giving compliments and feigning interest in what the other person liked. However, now I would say, “Be the person you want to be and see who loves you.” Otherwise, people seeking dates package themselves to please the object of their affection. As the relationship progresses, their true self will eventually be revealed. When this occurs, their partner will feel disappointed that the person is not what he or she seemed to be; the relationship fails.

If people are in touch with who they really are, they may attract fewer people initially, but those they attract will stay because of the authenticity of the first contact. I had a conversation with my niece in which she revealed that she had gone through a conflict in her junior year as to whether she should be what others wanted her to be or be herself. She chose the latter and reported that she had even more friends and, as a result of being genuine, was chosen class president. Whether we’re talking about a marriage, a friendship, or a teacher-student relationship, unless the individual we engage feels free and independent, he or she will gravitate away from us to other settings that offer more freedom.

**WHAT GIVES US THE RIGHT?**

This brings us to reflect on another basic principle. What gives us the right to evaluate another person’s behavior? Why do we think it is our responsibility? Have we considered that any evaluation may be disruptive? I have noticed that even when I am giving a person a positive observation, my comment disrupts their focus. As they continue their task, they now have two things to pay attention to—the initial goal and my opinion of their performance. They may even be distracted from a creative choice in order to provide me with more of what I want to see. This is especially true if I am a significant other or in a position of authority.

I have not even touched on the concept of rewards. Much has been written on this. It is not only the rewards themselves that pose a problem, but the fact that we withhold them to assert influence. I have a saying: We make the place for them to feel bad. We do this by customizing them to a certain level of reward or praise or even encouragement, then suddenly removing it. My brother opens a present and smiles and everyone knows he likes it. I open a present, smile and say something about the present that
I like or how I plan to use it. My sister opens a present, and if she doesn’t say she loves it three times, we ask her what’s wrong. She has accustomed us to that level of positive response. How is it in your family? What about the family you married into? Is there a difference for men and women? Is there a geographic difference? A cultural difference?

CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

I noticed a big difference between Maine and North Carolina when I worked in these states. Positive reinforcement was not as common in Maine as in North Carolina. A Japanese-born woman who married an American sailor and moved to Seattle told me that the most difficult thing for her to learn was giving compliments. She said she felt it was disrespectful to comment on another person’s performance but forced herself to do it so they would know their hospitality to her was appreciated. Another example is when nine Australians attended an international conference in Los Angeles. The conference was three days long, so they designated three people each day to give compliments so the hosts would know that their efforts were admired. The Australians told me that the need for such reinforcement was necessary in America, but because it would be considered “over the top” in Australia, they were uncomfortable performing their task.

My friend who comes from Norwegian Lutheran stock also provided me with insight. She told me compliments were very rare in her family because of the emphasis on personal humility. She said that when she and her siblings did well, it was viewed as doing what was expected. Therefore, there was no need for a comment. However, when a performance was not up to par, they experienced a silence sometimes laced with guilt or disappointment. How was it for you?

My husband’s family was Scottish. He never heard compliments and was not expected to give them. When I married him, I expected lots of positive reinforcement because that was how I had been raised. When I didn’t hear it, I felt pain. I even felt unloved. When I hinted for it, I’m sure at least half the time my spouse missed the cue. The other half, he may have felt coerced to do something that was not natural to him. I was only nineteen. I didn’t know better.

Why do we do what we do? An interesting question. We try to receive input from the world that matches the expectation we set for ourselves. Different cultural filters result in different expectations. In one culture commenting on a person is considered ill mannered. In another, the same behavior is interpreted as concern. In another, such commentary is a gauntlet thrown down for a verbal duel challenging us to marshal our defenses. It is not so much what we say or do but why we say or do it that needs to be examined to gain self-understanding.

WHY DO PEOPLE BEHAVE?

Every time something is not the way we want it to be, we behave to change it. How do we behave? We act, we think, we feel, and our body responds. Why do we behave? This is a more difficult question. Do we behave because forces in our environment shape us? Sometimes we seem to behave to avoid pain, but if we didn’t care about safety, we might not notice pain. Why else might someone behave? Well, we seem to behave to get something we want. Do you agree? Do you behave to get a smile, a paycheck, a reward? Why else might a person behave? James Wilson in The Moral Sense suggests these three reasons.

Three Reasons People Behave

Level One – To avoid pain

Level Two – For respect or reward from one another

Level Three – For respect of self

You can identify why each person is behaving by the questions they ask. If they ask, “What happens if I don’t do it?” they are behaving to avoid pain due to the disruption of a need, physical or psychological. If they ask, “What do I get if I do it?” they are behaving for respect of self, to become the person they aspire to be.

Have you ever been in a situation where you deliberately did something that actually caused you pain or interfered with approval or reward from others? Have you spoken out in favor of an unpopular cause or defended someone under attack? Why would you do this when the result appears to be pain, social censure, or perhaps financial loss? Why did you behave this way? What belief were you protecting? What kind of person were you being? Think about yourself. You are reading this book right now. Why are you reading it? Are you reading it because something unpleasant could happen if you don’t? Perhaps you could be called upon to summarize its contents. Are you behaving because a significant other has asked you to read it and you wanted to please that person? Perhaps you will look good if you can quote recent literature. Or are you reading this for yourself? Are you reading to evaluate whether it will be useful in helping you become the teacher, parent, friend, or person you want to become?

Stop and self-evaluate for a minute. Perhaps your motivation for reading this is a combination of all three reasons we behave. It would not be unusual to behave initially to avoid discomfort, then to see how doing it could have a pay off. Finally, you could be engaged in quality understanding because you see how an idea can be useful and exciting to your becoming the person you want to be.
What is your family belief?
What do you believe?
What does it say about you if you do it?
Will it help you to be loving, powerful, free, and playful?
Why would you want to do this?
Who are you becoming?

CHANGE THE WAY YOU THINK ABOUT IT!

If you want to change an unpleasant activity for yourself, experiment with shifting your perception. If you go to an event you are dreading, decide in advance if you are going to do it to avoid discomfort, to please someone else, or to be the person you want to be—caring, responsible, committed. An onerous social occasion, a bottle drive for your young child, a visit to a senior citizens’ home, or studying for exams to please your parents can take on new significance. If you tie your actions to the approval of any of the recipients, you will be bereft and at a loss if they do not thank you. If you do it just to avoid pain, you will feel an energy leak manifested as fatigue or resentment. If you do it to be the person you want to be, you will be energized and fulfilled. The experience will be exactly the same. The experience can be significantly different. Only in the final position will you gain internal strength.

I had an aunt whom I visited at the old folks’ home. I had been feeling guilty, telling myself I should go and visit her. I went to avoid pain [Level One]. Sometimes I’d go because I thought she’d be happy to see me. But she didn’t always recognize me. When I went for her approval and she didn’t recognize me, I felt bereft. I thought, Why did I make the effort? It doesn’t make a difference to her. There’s no payoff in it for me! [Level Two]

I intentionally tried to shift my thinking to the third level. I asked myself, What do we believe in our family about taking care of older people? How do I want to be treated when I am this age? What does it say about me if I care for her? Who will I be if I do it? This is internal motivation.

By moving myself to the third level, I was able to self-evaluate at the highest level of moral reasoning, and I always felt satisfied. I noticed I stopped telling people I was going to visit her, as if I had been doing it to avoid their censure. If she was asleep, I just sat with her and didn’t feel disappointed because my satisfaction was not dependent on her acceptance of my gesture. I was doing it for myself, to strengthen myself and to grow.

Another example occurred on a night several years ago when I phoned home and spoke to my spouse. In response to my asking what he was doing, he answered, “I’m watering your plants.” He said it in a grudging tone, so I suspected he was doing it to avoid pain. [Level One]. A sweeter tone might have indicated to me that he was doing it to please me. [Level Two] This position might have been all right for him as long as I expressed appreciation for his efforts. If I didn’t, he would have felt ripped off. That’s the problem with Level Two, the need for respect or reward from others. At this level feeling good depends on the other’s response. I asked him, “Why don’t you do it for yourself? You like the plants.” [Level Three] When I got home, I asked him one other question: “Did you think about what I said about the plants?” He said, “It wasn’t as significant to me as it was to you.” Hmm.

When I returned home on another occasion, my son complained, “Mom, you check the plants even before you say ‘Hi’ to me,” and he was right! What do you think I found when I checked the plants? Dry? No, soaking wet. And when had they been watered? Probably as I was being driven from the airport. And what do you think my son was feeling? Resentment? Fear? Guilt? Probably some negative feeling because that is the legacy of doing things from the Level One position. It’s remotely possible he might have been joyously watering, but based on the dry buds in the pots, I doubt it.

To finish this story, I want to say that after these brief conversations with my family, the plants started to look better. When I came home, they were damp, not wet. When we moved the gardenia tree to the front porch, my spouse said, “Don’t put it there; it doesn’t like that much light.” Was he now resonating with them, playing them music, talking to them? I doubt it, but I’ll bet he felt more satisfaction as he watered the plants. It took him the same amount of time but the result was strengthening, rather than being an energy leak.

When a friend of mine heard teachings about the three reasons people behave, she realized that she dreaded making supper. She said she was going into the grocery store and slamming food into the cart. She knew when there was a bad feeling, she was doing it to avoid pain. So she said she sat in the parking lot before she went into the store and asked herself, Why do I want to make this supper anyway? I could buy it, or I could let everyone make their own. Next she thought, I could do this for the family, to please them. Then she thought that if they didn’t say thanks, she’d feel unsatisfied because she would be doing it for the reward. Then she asked herself, Why is it important to me for the family to have supper together? Why is it important to make it with my own hands? She answered herself from her core beliefs. She had heard that a family who always ate supper together stayed together, and she had wanted this picture for herself. Now when she goes to the grocery store, instead of experiencing anger, she feels with every item she puts in her grocery cart that she is being more of the wife and mother she wants to be. Instead of her energy being depleted, she is strengthening herself.
Choose something you are dreading doing in the next week—perhaps an onerous social engagement, a demanding activity with a child, a clean-up, or a difficult confrontation. Think about why you are dreading it. Most likely you want to avoid pain. This is Level One. Try now to move yourself to Level Three by reflecting on your beliefs. You may find Level Three encompasses Level Two. For example, the person I want to be is also a person who helps others meet their needs. Level Three is not a selfish position. See if you can feel the shift in motivation and energy!

What Do the People in Your Life Say?
To Avoid Pain.
“What will happen if I don’t do it?”
For respect or reward from others.
“What do I get if I do it?”
For Respect from self.
“What will I be if I do it?”

Questions to Think About
1. Think of something you were forced to do as a child. How did you feel? What has been the long-term result?
2. Think of a friend or spouse. Have they tried to coerce you to do what they want? How did they do it—positive or negative pressure? What was the outcome for you?
3. Think of something you want to change in another person. What influence are you using—persuasion, silence, disapproval, rewards, consequences? Why do you do this? Do you have confidence in the inner wisdom of this other person?
4. Think of something you love to do. How did you learn it? How do you feel when you do it?

RSD IS ROOTED IN ABORIGINAL PRACTICES

Much of what I learned and put into RSD is rooted in aboriginal practices. Independence is encouraged rather than conformity. There is a strong group built by the adults and children through shared beliefs. Elder Bill McLean of the Stony People talked about traditional child rearing. He said that when he was in residential school and the supervisors tried to scare kids into compliance, there were always some students who would not give in, even if they were punished, because deep inside they knew it was not the right thing to do. They were very courageous and strong in their values at a young age. They could not be bullied or threatened into hurting another person. They were behaving to be the people they wanted to be.

Ernie Phillips, an elder at Salmon Arm, BC, came to a RSD training. He asked to speak. He talked about how he was hurt as a child when he went to school and how he learned to hate white people. As a man he healed himself and now is back to his early sense of being connected with all human beings. Many of you reading this have heard similar stories. Western discipline based on punishment does not strengthen youth. It shames them and weakens their resolve to do the right thing. It alienates them. Punishment is aimed at breaking the group apart, rather than using the strength of the group for healing.

People sometimes look at a child, a loved one, a street person, or even a politician and say, “He is bad.” As we become more educated, we learn to say, “His behavior is bad,” judging not the individual but his acts. Psychology classes teach us to separate the person from his behavior, but they never question the wisdom of our judging others. Aboriginal people learn something different. They learn that it is disrespectful to evaluate others. One can only give information about how one feels. They choose not to identify the source of the problem with the other person, but rather create conditions for that person to be vulnerable and to own responsibility for what has happened. If you ask an elder to comment on a community, the worst thing they would ever say is that the people are having a hard time helping each other.

The Principle of Non-Interference

Many a time I have heard an aboriginal person say, “I’m not going back because it doesn’t feel good there.” They act for themselves, and they are taught that it is undesirable to draw conclusions about another’s motives. Sometimes we misread this as indifference when parents confronted with their child’s behavior say, “It’s up to him,” rather than passing judgment. This is the respectful principle of non-interference with another’s behavior.

Justice Rupert Ross, a Canadian judge, was funded to travel Northern Canada for two years to study First Nations justice practices. He says, “I have come to see traditional child rearing as a three-legged stool, where two of the legs—teaching children responsibilities to the group and developing their personal attributes and skills—made it possible to allow for a third leg of almost complete independence to make particular choices.” The principle of non-interference works well in a stable, respectful society where children look around and see adults exemplifying their values. It doesn’t work in a society where television is a stronger teacher than the family or where adults are abusive, where adults aren’t modeling their values. As tribal communities are impacted by the dominant society, it becomes harder to retain these principles. Martin Brokenleg and Larry Brendtro’s Reclaiming Youth Seminars do a very good job teaching First Nations beliefs to people who work with troubled youth.
The Concept of Blame

The concept of blame in aboriginal culture differs from that of European culture. In the non-aboriginal culture, forgiveness involves a precept that the offender should have been responsible and not done the initial harm. Among native people, because they don’t seek to find fault in the first place, there is no need to forgive. Acceptance of human frailty is a basic premise. A person’s offense is viewed as the result of outside forces not always under control. This view is not to promote excuse making or to excuse the person from responsibility. It is, however, consistent with a view of behavior which advocates looking at the whole person, not just his or her offense. We need to look at what’s going on in the environment and community. What are the outside influencing factors? Do the youth have easy access to alcohol? Have the sports facilities been closed down? Does this person have family to help them?

Ross gives us these words from the Sandy Lake Band of North Western Ontario:

Probably one of the most serious gaps in the system is the different perception of wrongdoing and how to treat it. In the non-native society, committing a crime seems to mean that the individual is a bad person and must be punished. . . . The Indian communities view wrongdoing as a misbehavior which requires teaching or an illness which requires healing.

My friend raised on The Pas Reserve in Manitoba helped me learn this concept. I asked her how she was disciplined as a child. I knew at home they didn’t speak English, only Cree. She said what I have heard from other aboriginal people, “It’s hard to find the words in English.” When pressed she said, “The direct translation would be, ‘The right thing, you’re not doing it.’” I asked if she meant right as in right or wrong. She said, “No, the right thing meaning the moral thing, the way of our people.” Then I asked her if the adults told her what to do to fix a mistake. She said, “They never told us. We had to look around and figure it out for ourselves.” I said, “What if your snowshoes were on backwards? Did they say they were on the wrong way?” She said, “They’d say that they’re on backwards; then we would have to decide what to do.” I asked what her grandmother would do if she spilled something. My friend said, “She’d just throw me a rag.” Then she said, “No, if my Kookum thought I could fix it on my own, she would pretend not to notice because it was too embarrassing for me.”

How different, I thought, from how most of us had been raised. Our mistakes would have been pointed out to us maybe with impatience, but more likely with a light guilt. Our parents and I myself thought it was our duty to correct the children in our family. Mistakes were seen as bad. They were not viewed as opportunities to learn and to correct oneself. We thought children had to be made to fix things. We didn’t understand that everyone has the desire to make things right if given a chance.

When I worked for Brandon University in Northern Manitoba at Cross Lake, Island Lake, and Oxford House, I was impressed by the dignity of the five-year-old children who came to school. They had no television at that time. They had little English, and they had been raised in a traditional manner to be independent and to think of the effect of their actions on others. When I sat in the one-room airport, toddlers were not whining, having tantrums or banging on the candy machine. They were calm. Their needs were met. They observed and they were patient. When in Cross Lake, I observed in Jennifer Thomas’s class as she taught in Cree. The primary children listened and wanted to cooperate with each other. They were very self-disciplined. I started to pay attention and to learn this way of working with children. Many of the ideas in my book Restitution: Restructuring School Discipline were learned through these teachings. For example, I included the story from Island Lake of the boy who was independently drawing until a teacher from the city inadvertently created a dependence by complimenting him. This practice was unusual in an aboriginal culture. To comment on another was considered disrespectful. When she commented on his picture, he first looked surprised; then he looked pleased because the teacher smiling at him was an important person. The next day he began to watch for the teacher and to hold up his picture for praise. His independence had shifted to dependence. Then when he didn’t want to draw and she withdrew her praise, he experienced a loss. He behaved in a variety of ways. Sometimes he started drawing to please her. Sometimes he scrunched up his paper. Other times he put his head down and wouldn’t work. Each time he was looking outside for the teacher’s response, rather than looking inside for the joy of drawing. In one week he had gone from an internal to an external focus.

Thinking about this incident, I asked myself What right have I to evaluate another, either positively or negatively? Is it true that positive comments disrupt a person’s locus of control? I wondered if I have an obligation to comment on others as a parent, teacher, and counselor. Could compliments interfere with another’s autonomy? Could compliments deprive others of ownership of their achievements? If so, in what way would this happen? How could I give information and own it as only my perception? What gives me the right to comment on others? Would it be called arrogance to do so or would it be named caring? I told myself to think about the long-term results of my comments.

The main cultural difference I observed was that aboriginal people asked children to look inside to know if they were doing the right thing. When an elder was asked, “Am I doing the right thing?” she would say, “Look inside yourself and you will know the answer.” My culture taught children to look outside for rewards or to avoid consequences. Aboriginal values taught independent thinking and self-discipline. When Louis Bear was sent to the residential school, his grandfather told him, “Never
forget who you are, and don’t let your feelings be a problem to other people.” In the schools in which I was raised, children had to be supervised all the time to see if they were meeting expectations. The teachers were responsible for discipline, and students would behave only when adults were there to monitor them.

**THE RESTITUTION TRIANGLE**

The Restitution Triangle process, which you will recognize throughout this book, reflects the concepts I observed in aboriginal culture as well as the ideas of control theory and reality therapy. RSD focuses on using the Restitution Triangle. On Side 1 of the triangle we stabilize the youth, moving him or her from fear and anger and failure so that learning can take place. From brain research we have learned to focus on safety and learning. We say, “It’s okay to make a mistake. You’re not the only one. Your mistake is a small part of a big life. We want you to be part of our group. We can solve this together. You are not alone.”

Side 2 of the Restitution Triangle embodies the art of RSD. It is based on the principle that at any moment, given the context and given the way one is perceiving the world, a person is doing the best he or she can. There are two corollaries to this thesis: (1) the person didn’t make the worst possible choice at the moment, and (2) the person could be doing worse. It also follows that if there is a worse option, there may also be a better one. We explore two worse options to discover what the person could have done that would have been either more aggressive or what the person could have done that would have been more passive (usually inaction or not caring). This process will be covered in detail further on in this book.

Let me share a common example. If a youth is teased about his family and he fights back, a worse option for him would be to not care about protecting his family. Not caring is the more passive option he is avoiding. Fighting is his aggressive choice. What would be more aggressive would be to fight with us and to not listen. We can ensure this will happen if we castigate him. However if we ask, “Could you have done worse?” we engage the youth and he can begin to understand his motivation. We can validate his family loyalty and ask him to stick up for himself without violence.

If a child lies or cheats, we consider this a passive behavior because it involves hiding, a secretive behavior. What worse thing is the child avoiding? Most likely failure and punishment. Could he be doing worse? A more passive option would be to not care about coming to school at all. A more aggressive option would be to rip up the paper and swear at the teacher. The underlying answer to “Could you have done worse?” is always “Yes, not meet my needs.”

Side 3 of the Restitution Triangle taps into internal ideal pictures and shared values. On this side we tell the youth, “Think about the kind of person you want to be”. We also refer to the agreements the group has made. These may be family, class, or team beliefs. It is crucial that our questions here are asked in a calm tone rather than being guilting or confrontational. The goal is for the youth to tap into his or her moral sense. You may have done work with your class on character education or virtues. If this work has been rooted in children’s self-reflections, rather than being externally promoted, you have one of the groundwork pieces of RSD in place. If not, open discussion must be initiated in a non-judgmental, non-persuasive fashion. If you have a solid relationship with the person you are helping, you can move right into Side 3. With my own children I will probably begin here on Side 3, asking about their family beliefs and asking them if they are the kind of people they want to be and how they can solve their problems. With a guilty child, I’ll go to Side 1 of the triangle to help them understand that we all make mistakes and harmony can be restored. With an aggressive person, I always go first to Side 2 to seek to understand their motivation.
Asking the Restitution Triangle questions of the youth uncovers the other options they have considered and discarded. Our questions accomplish five positive ends. First, the child feels a sense of relief as she realizes she didn’t do the worst thing. Second, the child is able to recognize the personal value she was protecting by her behavior. Third, the child begins to have a sense of hope. Fourth, the child will exhibit absolutely no desire to lie to us. Fifth, the child will spontaneously move toward creating a solution. The final outcome of using the Restitution Triangle is greater self-understanding for the child and a strengthened relationship with us.

SUMMARY QUESTIONS

1. Do I believe that children are born with goodness in them?
2. Do I ask them to look inside to find the answers?
3. Do I believe they are doing the best they can to meet their needs, even at the moment of their misbehavior?
4. Am I willing to share my own foibles with those I guide and teach?
5. Have I helped my students and my own children to identify their beliefs and to think about who they want to be and how they want to treat others?

REFERENCES


Appraising Performance Appraisals: A Critical Look at an External Control Management Technique

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ABSTRACT

Despite the fact that managers in most businesses and public institutions have learned and embraced management principles and techniques consistent with internal control psychology, the vast majority still carry out some form of regular employee performance appraisals. This article illustrates how performance appraisals are a relic of external-control boss-management, and explains why the performance appraisal process is generally disliked by both the appraiser and the employee being appraised. The goals and underlying assumptions held by managers and human resources personnel are discussed, and some of the counterproductive aspects of performance appraisals are identified. Finally, alternatives to performance appraisals are explored, focusing on workplace relationships and communication.

INTRODUCTION

Performance appraisal systems have been a common element in the workforce since 1914, when Lord and Taylor Co. instituted a formal performance evaluation system in which they started rating their employees annually against pre-established performance objectives (Markle, 2000). Whether they are called performance reviews, annual reviews, performance appraisals, merit ratings, performance ratings, employee ratings, or some other title, these performance appraisal systems have been a staple of business and public sector management ever since. Since the flourishing of the Management-by-Objectives (MBO) movement, performance appraisals have become an almost universal element in management.

In more recent decades, MBO has gradually given way to more relationship-focused, team-building management styles. This more modern approach to management uses concepts such as “leadership” and “coaching” instead of “bossing” or “managing” (c.f. Glasser, 1994; Scholtes, 1998). This movement towards building relationships and establishing open, two-way communication reflects the ideas of internal control psychology. One element of the old-school, external control psychology approach to management persists, however: the continued use of performance appraisals. In 1995, William Mercer Inc. surveyed 218 companies, and determined that almost all management and technical/knowledge workers received annual performance evaluations (Markle, 2000).

Coens and Jenkins (2002, pp. 13-14) identify five elements common to almost all performance appraisal systems: 1) the performance, behaviors or traits of individuals (not teams, groups, or departments) are rated or judged by someone else; 2) these ratings/judgments are scheduled (usually annually or quarterly) as opposed to being tied to completion of particular tasks or projects; 3) such ratings and judgments are not applied to selected individuals, but rather are systematically undertaken with all employees of a particular department or organizational unit; 4) the process is either strictly mandatory or tied to some reward system (such as pay raises or promotions); 5) information is recorded and kept in the employee’s file by the employer.

Why do employers go to considerable effort and expense to undertake this system of performance appraisals? In a nutshell, it is because they believe that it increases productivity and profitability. Companies identify a number of purposes for conducting performance appraisals. Beyond measuring individual performance, other objectives include: providing feedback to employees; improving individual performance; providing motivation and recognition; determining pay raises and promotions; coaching, mentoring and counselling; determining training and development needs; making decisions pertaining to downsizing or layoffs; and finally, to have proper documentation for legal purposes, such as employee litigation. (Coens and Jenkins, 2002, p. 15).

PROBLEMS WITH PERFORMANCE APPRAISALS

A review of the literature on performance appraisals finds it littered with criticisms of the performance appraisal process. Indeed, it may be more accurate to use the word condemnations rather than criticisms. W. Edwards Deming identified performance appraisals as one of the “Seven Deadly Diseases” destructive to organizations (Deming, 2000, p. 98), and has called them “…the most powerful inhibitor to quality and productivity in the Western world” (Kohn, 1999, p. 129). Not one to mince his words, Deming wrote:

“In practice, annual ratings are a disease, annihilating long-term planning, demobilizing teamwork, nourishing rivalry and politics, leaving people bitter, crushed, bruised, battered, desolate, despondent, unfit for work for weeks after receipt of rating, unable to comprehend why they are inferi-
or. It is unfair, as it ascribes to the people in a group differences that may be caused totally by the system that they work in." (Deming, 2000, p. 102).

Deming was by no means alone in his condemnation of the practice. Appraisals have been said to "...inspire hatred and distrust among employees..." (Lee, 2006, p. 21). Human resource (HR) professionals, who are responsible for the design and implementation of their companies' performance appraisal systems, are not much more enamored of these systems than the managers who carry out the appraisals or the employees being appraised. A survey reported that only five percent of HR professionals were "very satisfied" with their own systems (Markle, 2000).

If firms and organizations establish and undertake regular performance appraisals for seemingly worthy purposes, why are they almost universally despised by both the employee and the manager doing the appraising? According to Scholtes (1998), the range of problems with performance appraisals is largely due to the fact that performance appraisal systems are based on a set of widely held, invalid assumptions. Many of these false assumptions relate to the process of the evaluations themselves. For instance, the following are taken as given: inter-evaluator consistency; intra-evaluator consistency; reasonable and achievable work standards; work standards directly relevant to the business and its clients; identical work processes; stable work systems capable of delivering the expected results; evaluations lead to improvements in individual performance; individual performance can be identified separate from system factors; and the employee has control over the results. (Scholtes, 1998). Many of these assumptions have questionable validity. In many cases, performance appraisals have been instituted primarily in an attempt to motivate employees, despite the fact that "...appraisals were never designed to improve performance, only to measure and rate it" (Lee, 2006, p. 19).

One issue relating to performance management in particular raised the ire of W. Edwards Deming. As the early proponent of Total Quality Management, Deming advocated for the application of statistical control methods in industry, and an awareness of the interrelated systems involved in any medium or large scale organization. According to Deming, as much as 94% of the variance in performance in organizations is due to the systems in place rather than the individual employees. Statistically, half of the remaining percentage overperformed, and half underperformed. Deming felt that it was unfair and unproductive to assign credit or blame to individual employees, unless management could determine whether an employee's variances were due to personal or systemic reasons: "...apparent differences between people arise almost entirely from action of the system that they work in, not from the people themselves" (Deming, 2000, p.110). Scholtes (1993) adds that not only do appraisals not account for such variability in a system, they can, in fact, increase the variability.

A similar problem is that performance appraisals do not account for teamwork. In fact, in trying to apportion credit or blame to individual members of a team, the appraisal process undermines teamwork substantially. Individuals are torn between actions that would benefit the team and its goals, and actions which might place the employee in good light for the appraiser. As Scholtes points out, there is a difference between teams and teamwork: "It is relatively easy for a leader to set up teams. But creating and sustaining an environment of teamwork is vastly more important and enormously more difficult." (Scholtes, 1998, p. 175). Teamwork depends on relationships, and an environment must be established that cultivates relationships. Performance appraisals have no place in such an environment.

EVALUATIONS AS EXTERNAL CONTROL

However there is a more fundamental problem inherent to performance appraisals. At the core of the problem with performance appraisals lies a set of outdated assumptions about human nature and motivation. Douglas McGregor's classic examination of management theory identified the predominant assumptions about human nature and motivation held by managers in the 1950's. McGregor labelled this approach Theory X, and suggested a more effective alternative which he labelled Theory Y (McGregor, 1960). According to McGregor, Theory X thinking assumed: 1) that the majority of employees held an inherent disdain for work and would avoid it if possible; 2) as a result of this tendency to avoid work, employees must be coerced, controlled, threatened and punished in order to put out a reasonable effort; and 3) the average person prefers to be directed, shuns taking on responsibility, and has little ambition. In contrast to this perspective, McGregor proposed Theory Y, based significantly on Maslow's (1968) hierarchy of needs. Theory Y held that: 1) the average individual does not dislike work, and can in fact take much satisfaction from work, under the right conditions; 2) there are alternatives to coercion and the threat of punishment as a means to elicit work; 3) under proper conditions the average individual will accept and seek further responsibility; 4) individuals will be committed to corporate objectives when their job satisfies their ego and self-actualization needs; 5) most people are naturally curious, imaginative and creative; 6) modern (i.e.: mid 20th century) industrial work greatly underutilized the intellectual potential of the labor force (McGregor, 1960, pp. 33-49).

McGregor's Theory X and Theory Y management styles closely coincide with William Glasser's concepts of Boss-Management and Lead-Management (Glasser, 1994). According to Glasser, there are four main elements to Boss-Management. A boss-manager: 1) sets the tasks and work standards with little or no consultation with workers; 2) tells how work should be done, rather than showing how;
3) directly or through a designate, evaluates the employees' work; and 4) uses coercion in an attempt to have the worker perform in a manner deemed suitable by the boss (Glasser, 1994, p.11). In contrast to Boss-Management, Glasser proposed as an alternative an approach he called Lead-Management, which paralleled McGregor's Theory Y. In contrast to Boss-Management, a Lead-Manager: 1) engages workers in a two-way discussion about tasks and work quality; 2) models explicitly how a job is to be done; 3) encourages workers to evaluate themselves the quality of their own work; and 4) works as a facilitator, providing appropriate training, learning opportunities and an environment which allows and encourages constant improvement (Glasser, 1994, pp. 13-14).

The problem at the heart of performance evaluations is that they represent a form of external control. Indeed, it has been suggested that the world of work represents our predominant external control environment, based on the theory of rewards and punishment (Wubbolding, 1996). As employees, we dislike performance evaluations because, as human beings, we are hard-wired to resist external control. For the most part, managers dislike doing appraisals because they damage their relationships with the employees. Ironically, there is considerable evidence that even a positive evaluation can be de-motivating (cf. Kohn, 1999; Deci & Ryan, 1985), because it is still perceived by the employee as controlling. Additionally, positive feedback in a performance evaluation can end up being demoralizing if it is less flattering than either a previous appraisal or the appraisal of a co-worker (Coens & Jenkins, 2002, p.130).

Hooten (1997, p. 53) demonstrated that being faced with evaluating someone can lead the evaluator to experience such physiological responses as “...increased anxietizing, increased heart rate, worrisome thinking, and mild fidgeting.” These responses reflect the evaluator’s discomfort with the external control nature of the evaluation process, as evidenced by more comfortable physiological responses when offered an alternative: to conduct an interview focusing on the work, goals, effectiveness, and areas for future improvement. With this conversation-oriented scenario, the interviewer reported a very different physiological state: “...she would feel excited, her body would be relaxed, she would be thinking how pleasant the experience would be...” (Hooten, 1997, p. 53). This small experiment demonstrates that our “gut level” responses are typically very reliable indicators of attempts at external control, for both the evaluator and the individual being evaluated. The stress-inducing nature of external control management can therefore negatively affect both psychological and physiological health. Kobasa and Pucetti (1983), for example, found that employees of supportive, less-controlling bosses reported fewer illnesses and generally superior overall health than those employees who worked for a manager with a more controlling orientation.

One writer used Eric Berne’s concept of ego-states to illustrate the degree to which external control management limits the development of the employee. External control boss-management “...locks the manager and the subordinate in a parent-child relationship” (Scholtes, 1998, p. 39). In the role of parent, the manager becomes judging and controlling, while the “child” becomes rebellious and spiteful. Using Berne’s concepts, it is clear that the more appropriate work relationship than Parent-to-Child is that of Adult-to-Adult (Berne, 1964). Otherwise, managers run the risk of creating a self-fulfilling prophecy: if management views workers as untrustworthy, then they will create external control systems, policies and procedures, which eventually lead to an alienated, untrustworthy workforce.

The external control elements of performance evaluations are myriad. Typically, performance evaluations are mandatory procedures, scheduled by the manager rather than the employee. While the meetings may vary from system to system and evaluator to evaluator, they typically follow a format pre-established by management. The evaluations deal with issues (problems) identified by the manager, and relate to goals or standards largely set by the manager. The manager, or evaluation team, in essence sits in judgment of the employee, who usually is alone. Typically, the focus is on the employees’ past efforts, actions and decisions. Finally, appraisals are very often tied to decisions by management about salary, bonuses, advancement, and layoffs. The discrepancy in power in these situations is palpable.

Many performance evaluations are tied directly or indirectly to financial rewards, in the form of merit pay, bonuses, or career advancement. This represents the “carrot” in carrot-and-the-stick external control boss management. The “stick” in such an approach includes reductions in salary, withholding of pay raises, or even termination of employment. Critics of performance evaluations suggest that this can lead to inter-employee jealousy, hostility and competition. It also reduces the likelihood of employees developing professional creativity, as employees get locked-in to focusing on meeting specified goals in the conventional manner. Appraisals linked to reward systems can lead some employees to intentionally create “solvable problems” so that senior staff can take note of the effective manner in which the employees deal with these situations. They have recognized the irony that effective management work habits which eliminate problems before they occur often goes unnoticed by senior management. Additionally, some employees or their managers will intentionally establish achievable performance goals in order to ensure a positive appraisal. Thus the existence of appraisal systems might lead to systemic erosions in performance over time (Nickols, 1997).

It should be noted that typically performance appraisal systems are expensive to run. Nickols reports that these
ineffective systems frequently cost in the area of $2,000 per employee per year. One large corporation conservatively estimated the costs of its performance appraisal system at $100,000,000 annually (Nickols, 1997).

ALTERNATIVES TO PERFORMANCE APPRAISALS

W. Edwards Deming is considered to have been one of the most influential thinkers in the management field, and is revered in Japan as the person most responsible for the phenomenal development of industry in that country following World War II. Deming is also perhaps the most famous critic of performance appraisals, and advocated abolishing appraisals as a key step in moving an organization towards quality. When asked what an organization should do in place of performance appraisals, Deming is reported to have replied: "If your performance evaluation system does more harm than good, just quit doing it. You don't have to have an alternative to make an improvement." (Markle, 2000). Deming's answer reflects a starting point for a discussion on alternatives to the current human resources practice of carrying out performance appraisals.

One of the difficulties managers and bureaucrats have in following Deming's advice is that performance evaluations are so entrenched in the administrative mindset that it is inconceivable to eliminate them. It appears that managers, like nature itself, abhor a vacuum. They want to replace the current system with a new system, because they have trouble conceiving in the way Deming did, of there simply being no system at all. Instead, many management professionals suggest that the solution is to create better appraisal programs, or alternatively to consider the information from appraisals within a wider context, along with other sources of information (Brinkerhoff & Kanter, 1980). As a result, companies frequently revamp their performance appraisal systems. One study revealed that over seventy percent of companies surveyed had either changed their system in the last two years, or intended to do so in the future, and reported that companies often restructure the performance appraisal systems two or three times a decade (Markle, 2000). Some companies have recognized the destructive and non-productive nature of their performance appraisal systems and have stopped the practice. Unfortunately, most of those companies that have decided to give up individual performance appraisals have replaced them with alternatives that still reflect external-control psychology. For example, evaluating the performance of work groups or teams rather than individual employees (Lawler, 1994) still represents a top-down, judgmental management style. Negative group ratings not only might demotivate individual employees in the group, but there is also the possibility that such ratings might initiate a pattern of blaming or competition within the group, thus breaking down the sense of teamwork managers hoped to encourage. Similarly, some have reverted to the old practice of gift-giving in place of their evaluation-based merit systems. Reward systems are still a form of external control, and fail to motivate individuals, as research has amply demonstrated (Kohn, 1999).

As far back as 1957, before introducing the concepts of Theory X and Theory Y, Douglas McGregor published a critique of performance appraisals, and offered an alternative approach. This essentially involved a paradigm shift, in that McGregor called for self-appraisal by an employee, rather than external evaluation by a superior (McGregor, 1957). In essence, McGregor's approach flies in the face of the predominant school of psychological thought of that era, behaviorism, identified first and foremost with B.F. Skinner. Instead, McGregor's thinking reflected an underlying, nascent, internal control psychology, similar to William Glasser's Choice Theory (Glasser, 1998). For example, consider the following statement by McGregor:

"Effective development...calls for creating a relationship within which a man can take responsibility for developing his own potentialities, plan for himself, and learn from putting his plan into action. In the process, he can gain a genuine sense of satisfaction, for he is utilizing his own capabilities to achieve simultaneously both his objectives and those of the organization." (McGregor, 1957, p. ?).

As discussed earlier, both McGregor's Theory Y and Glasser's Lead Management provide a different approach to external control management, offering a substantially different type of relationship between managers and employees. The open communication and trusting relationship obviates the need for formal performance evaluations. Other writers have proposed management approaches similar to McGregor's Theory Y and Glasser's Lead-Management. Markle (2000) used the term catalytic coaching to describe a management style which has at its core a partnership between employee and manager characterized by open, two-way communication and a shared vision of one another as capable, motivated individuals. Similarly, Peters & Waterman (1982) called for the empowerment of employees by expanding employees' opportunities for self-direction and self-control. Scholtes' total quality leadership, which is rooted in the ideas of W. Edwards Deming, called for "... a fundamentally different view of the relationship between employees and the organization" (Joiner and Scholtes, 1988, p. 4). Scholtes replaced the notion of management with that of leadership, whereby, from the top down, an organization's leaders utilize open, two-way communication to develop a shared vision, giving workers a sense of meaning of the work and their involvement in a significant undertaking (Scholtes, 1998, p. 172). Block (1993) proposed the term stewardship to describe a form of management that involved a redistribution of purpose, power and privilege in the workplace. Fundamental to this approach is the idea that managers surrender the need to control; in place of external control would be an atmosphere which encourages and facilitates self-management on the part of the employees.
It should be noted that the internal control management approaches identified above do not constitute an abdication of managerial responsibility. Some managers, in trying to avoid external control boss-management, carry out what is called Laissez-faire management. Described by Wubbolding (1996, pp. 18-19) as “Management by Withdrawal,” this type of manager delegates authority, responsibility, and the setting of standards to subordinates, in an effort to fit in and be popular. In the absence of the kind of open, two-way communication described above, this management style is doomed to fail with anything but the most motivated workforce or team. In contrast, participatory management (or “lead management”, or “democratic management”) involves collaboration between manager and employee, with joint goal-setting, open but non-critical conversation, and a supportive environment which encourages self-evaluation on the part of the employee.

Kohn (1999) offered some suggestions to consider in place of performance appraisals if the goal of management is to foster improvement. He suggested that what is called for is a continuous process of two-way conversation between manager and employee which involves a change of ideas rather than judgments, and which is devoid of elements of ranking, competition and compensation (Kohn, 1999, p. 185). Kohn was particularly emphatic about severing any link between appraisals and compensation, arguing that such reward systems tend to decrease intrinsic motivation and diminish the notion of a task having meaning on its own merit. In a similar vein, Deci and Ryan (1985) persuasively argued that the extrinsic nature of any reward system will inhibit intrinsic motivation. Kohn also advocated that management needs to create the proper conditions to encourage workers’ natural intrinsic motivation, suggesting:

“...a manager committed to making sure that people are able and willing to do their best needs to attend to three fundamental factors. These can be abbreviated as the ‘three Cs’ of motivation – to wit, the collaboration that defines the context of work, the content of the tasks, and the extent to which people have some choice about what they do and how they do it.” (Kohn, 1999, p. 187).

It is noteworthy that Kohn’s “three Cs” closely associate with three of Glasser’s five Basic Needs as set out in Choice Theory (Glasser, 1998). Kohn’s collaboration which is so elemental to the nature of work reflects what Glasser called the Need for Belonging. The content referred to by Kohn directly relates to Glasser’s Need for Power. Glasser (1998) pointed out that meaningful work was one common way of fulfilling this need. Kohn mused on what made for a good job, and offered this: “Let us start by aiming high: at its best, it offers a chance to engage in meaningful work... It isn’t just that the process of working provides enjoyment, but that the product being made (or the service provided) seems worthwhile and even important, perhaps because it makes a contribution to a larger community.” (Kohn, 1999, p. 189). Finally, when Kohn speaks of choice as a fundamental factor in the establishment of conditions for intrinsic motivation, we can see elements of Glasser’s Need for Freedom: “We are most likely to become enthusiastic about what we are doing – and all else being equal, to do it well – when we are free to make decisions about the way we carry out a task” (Kohn, 1999, p. 193). Thus, when American workers were surveyed about the best way to motivate employees, they selected neither pay nor recognition as the optimal motivator. Rather, the number one choice of responses was: “Let me do more to put my ideas into action” (Coens & Jenkins, 2002, p. 184).

Glasser’s more recent writings have focused on the paramount significance of relationships to human happiness (Glasser, 1998). Rath reinforces this notion as it applies to the workplace. Rath studied the admittedly unusual (and often policy-violating) situations where employees reported being true friends with their manager or superior. He reports that workplace friendships between managers and employees offer a multitude of benefits to the organization. Such environments are characterized by increases in: job satisfaction, productivity, innovation, employee retention, and support for colleagues (Rath, 2006), none of which would come as any surprise to Glasser or any other internal control theorists. It would seem that these side-benefits would lead organizations to try and create working environments that foster such relationships, if for no reason other than the profit motive. Yet, such relationships are difficult to develop when the manager is expected to conduct the most acutely-experienced external control element common in the workplace: the performance appraisal.

Glasser suggested that if a company remains committed to some kind of annual meeting between employee and manager, then this should take the form of a solving circle. This represents an application of his marriage and family solving circles to the workplace. Within this company solving circle, the manager and employee would share ideas about how they might collaboratively improve the company. Such an approach avoids any destructive pattern of judging, blaming or criticizing by focusing on what can be done in the future, rather than what has happened in the past. Glasser suggested that a manager might initiate such a solving circle discussion in this manner:

“I’d like you to tell me what you think you might do to improve things around here and what you think I might do to help. It’s not important that we come up with something great, but this is the time for us to level with each other and talk about what you want and how I might help. It’s not the time for each of us to talk about what anyone else is doing, that we can talk about at our monthly meetings” (Glasser, 1998, p. 303).

By focusing on future improvement rather than past performance issues, the company solving circle approach helps the manager and employee develop and maintain a
strong, trusting relationship. It eliminates the atmosphere of fear that pervades organizations which use traditional performance appraisals. According to Glasser, the core idea embedded in Deming's advocacy for striving toward quality is to "Drive out Fear" (Glasser, 1998, p. 284). Organizations characterized by even a moderate amount of fear prevent employees from putting work in their quality worlds. As a result, the quality of the organizations’ products and services suffers.

Csikszentmihalyi’s writings focused on exploring what he termed flow: periods of optimal experience in everyday life. One’s experiences flow "...when a person's skills are fully involved in overcoming a challenge that is just about manageable...when high challenges are matched with high skills, then the deep involvement that sets flow apart from ordinary life is likely to occur" (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997, p. 30). Csikszentmihalyi (1990) described what he called “the paradox of work”: work typically provides most people with the most opportunities for experiencing flow, but most people would prefer to give up work for leisure time, which rarely involves flow. Csikszentmihalyi (1997) focused on explaining how individuals can learn to lead more fulfilling lives in assorted situations, including work. Managers can extend his concepts, however, and attempt to create jobs and work environments which naturally set conditions conducive to flow. These include: a) assigning tasks which challenge the employees’ skills but are achievable; b) establishing clearly stated goals and objectives; c) providing sufficient information to allow the employees to immediately know that they are successful; and d) allow some freedom of choice and variety (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990, p. 152). A key condition for flow is the optimum level of challenge in the work: work which is easily accomplished provides little sense of meaning and becomes boring, while work that is overly difficult ends up frustrating the employee. Therefore, as an employee’s skills improve over time, assigned tasks will need to be made increasingly more challenging. Matching the skill set of the employee to that required on the job will therefore require regular, honest communication between subordinate and manager. Relying on annual or even quarterly appraisals will not suffice. Rather, it would appear that managing to create optimal experiences in the workplace requires frequent, non-threatening communication in the workplace. The fact that such communication leads to more valued relationships as well makes this doubly valuable.

Christopher Lee offered an approach he called Performance Conversations® as an alternative to appraisals. Recognizing that there are a number of modern approaches to management which all reflect a turn towards internal control psychology. Lee advised:

"Regardless of what model we use, simple dialogue – two-way communication – is the indispensable criterion upon which work relationships will be built and thrive. Communication, cooperation, and collaboration should become buzzwords that help to define new generations of employee-manager relationships." (Lee, 2006, p. 224).

Under this approach, Lee suggested that it is the responsibility of both manager and employee to maintain dialogue, seek solutions to challenges, and trust each other. At the heart of this relationship should be ongoing, open, and honest solution-focused conversations. Lee (2006) proposed that such a system of communication could use a set of record-keeping performance logs. These are intended to keep all parties on a track of open communication, and, unlike management-recorded performance appraisals, both employee and manager are expected to record information to be shared with each other. Under this kind of management style, the employee is much more likely to find work to be a needs-satisfying place. Glasser (1998) proposed that we all have five basic psychological needs: Power, Belonging, Fun, Freedom and Survival. Employees who work in such an environment feel a sense of ownership for their work (Power) and can develop a good relationship with coworkers and managers (Belonging). Such a work atmosphere is likely to be less stressful (Survival) and open to flexibility (Freedom) and creativity (Fun). As a result, employees and management are much more likely to put their workplace and its people into what Glasser called their Quality World. Glasser has suggested that:

"...it is more how the worker is managed than the work itself that determines whether the worker will do the quality work necessary for a company to be productive. A company should base all decisions on how well each decision has a chance to persuade and then to maintain (1) the company, (2) the managers, (3) the products and services, and (4) the customers in the workers’ quality worlds". (Glasser, 1994, p. 79.)

Perhaps the failure of most companies and organizations to create such a need-fulfilling environment explains the "paradox of work" identified by Csikszentmihalyi (1990); despite the fact that work offers opportunities for flow experiences, the employees would rather be away from work because they have not placed work in the quality world. Indeed, if the work environment could be of a nature envisioned by Glasser, McGregor, Scholtes, Lee and other internal control oriented thinkers, then the optimal psychological experiences which Csikszentmihalyi has labelled as flow would be even more common. No doubt the quality of the workers’ lives would be measurably improved.

QUALITY COMMUNICATION

How can a manager create the kind of conversations and environment which lead to the employees placing work inside their quality worlds? One approach is that proposed by Wubbolding (1996). The essence of
Wubbolding's approach is that it applies the core elements of Glasser's Reality Therapy (Glasser, 1965) to the interaction between manager and employee. Wubbolding suggests that the manager use the WDEP system: help the worker explore their Wants, identify what they have been Doing, then Evaluate the effectiveness of their choices, and finally Plan a more need-fulfilling course of action (Wubbolding, 1996, pp. 26-35). He also offers guidance relating to the nature of the communications managers should use with workers. In particular, there are certain elements to be avoided: Arguing, Belittling, Criticizing, Demeaning, Excusing, instilling Fear, and Giving up easily (Wubbolding, 1996, pp. 40-41).

Additionally, I propose that a manager keep in mind what Glasser (2002, p.13) called the seven deadly habits which destroy relationships: Criticism, Blaming, Complaining, Nagging, Punishing, Threatening, and Rewarding to Control. In place of these classical internal control habits, Glasser proposed seven connecting habits which build strong need-fulfilling relationships. These are: Caring, Trusting, Listening, Supporting, Negotiating, Befriending and Encouraging (Glasser, 2002, p. 14). If both manager and employee embrace these elements in their work relationships, then they are well on their way to establishing a true internal control work environment. In such an environment, quality, as envisaged by Deming (2000) and called for by Glasser (1994), naturally ensues. When we think about the nature of performance appraisals, it is clear that they much more closely represent the seven deadly habits than the seven connecting habits.

In a recent article in this journal, Pamela Fox provided a clear example of the kind of communication exemplified in internal control management:

"I constantly said 'Everyone sees things differently. Is there a better way to do this? What are you seeing around the place? What are our clients saying?'...I learned to say that we weren't looking for fault; we were looking for a better way to do things. 'Everyone sees things differently. Tell me what you see. What would it make easier to do a better job?' And then I would add, 'Here is what I see and why I think it is important to the business. What do you think of that?'' (Fox, 2006, p. 14).

Fox emphasizes that such conversations between managers and employees allow the individuals to develop shared perceptions, and set new references. In this light, personnel issues are seen as nothing more than information, thereby providing the manager with the "...the opportunity to control more effectively for the references of cooperation and coordination that define the work of management" (Fox, 2006, p. 15). This is the kind of communication Stephen Covey referred to as one of the seven habits of effective leadership: seek first to understand, and then to be understood (Covey, 1991). As modeled by Fox (2006), above, internal control conversations clarify workers' expectations and allow manager and employee to jointly set the work objectives. With such shared perceptions, we move closer to what Rakowski (2006) calls "...the perfect performance world: working people know from day to day how the people to whom they report view their performance." There are no surprises with these ongoing, day-to-day communications, so the deleterious psychological impact of an unexpected negative appraisal will not take place.

If we accept that a primary goal of management is to improve future performance, then the communications between manager and employee must avoid affixing blame. Instead of a past-orientation, the conversations should focus on the present and particularly the future, by cooperatively exploring how to remove existing barriers to performance and create conditions for future performance. Quality is improved when we improve processes, not by increased inspection (Joiner & Scholtes, 1988). As we have discussed earlier, these improved processes and conditions for success will have to reflect the psychological needs of the worker. With this in mind, it becomes clear that there is no room for performance appraisals in today's modern, internal control oriented organization.

CONCLUSION

The nature of management and employer-employee relationship has changed in recent decades, and now more closely reflects the principles of internal control psychology. Vestiges of external control boss-management are still in evidence, however. Chief among those is the continued reliance in many organizations of performance appraisal systems, as well as their affiliated reward systems. Appraisal systems are both ineffective and inefficient. These performance appraisals are ineffective in that they do not measure performance, primarily because they fail to take into account the system factors which account for most of variation within an organization. They are inefficient in that they erode interpersonal relationships, teamwork, creativity and motivation. Organizations which undertake performance appraisals fail to recognize that motivation comes from within the individual – it is not externally implanted. Organizations can create an atmosphere conducive to internal motivation, however. Such a workplace is characterized by ongoing, open two-way communication between management and employees which focuses on future achievement rather than past failures. Workers need to know that they are trusted, that their work is meaningful, and that their input is valued. With this in mind, it becomes clear that there is no room for performance appraisals in today's modern, internal control oriented organization.
REFERENCES


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Defining the 14 Habits

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ABSTRACT

In Glasser’s published writings on Choice Theory, no precise definitions are offered for the seven deadly habits or the seven connecting habits. This paper offers definitions for all fourteen habits and information on the origins of each word.

In the book, Unhappy Teenagers (2002), Dr. William Glasser lists seven habits that have a negative effect on our relationships with other people: Criticizing, complaining, threatening, blaming, nagging, punishing, and rewarding to control/bribing.

In the same book, Dr. Glasser also lists seven habits that have a positive effect on our relationships with other people: Caring, trusting, listening, supporting, befriending, encouraging, and negotiating.

HABITS AND DEFINITIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SEVEN DEADLY HABITS</th>
<th>COMMENTS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Criticizing</strong></td>
<td>Judging someone or something as bad and communicating that judgment. The word critic comes from the Greek word krites. It means, “judge”.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Complaining</strong></td>
<td>To feel dissatisfied or frustrated with someone or something and communicating those feelings. The word complain comes from the Latin word complangere. Com means, “very much”. Plangere means, “to hit the chest”. To hit the chest very much gives us a good image of someone who is complaining.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Threatening</strong></td>
<td>Attempting to force someone to do or not do something by communicating that an undesirable result will occur unless the person complies. The word threaten comes from the Old English word threatnian. It means, “to force”.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Blaming</strong></td>
<td>Communicating that someone has caused something undesirable to happen or not happen. The word blame comes from the Old French word blasmer. It means, “to accuse”. The word blasmer comes from the Latin word blasphernare. It means, “to speak badly of”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nagging</strong></td>
<td>Repeatedly criticizing, complaining, threatening, or blaming. The word nag comes from the Old Norse word gnaga. It means, “to eat at bit by bit”.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Punishing</strong></td>
<td>Imposing a disadvantage on another. The word punish comes from the Latin word punier.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rewarding to Control/Bribing</strong></td>
<td>Attempting to induce someone to do or not do something in exchange for something desirable. During the 14th Century in France, a bribe was alms (charity) given to a beggar. A century or so later in England (because Beggars started demanding alms), the word came to mean, “to extort or steal”. Later, the word came to mean, “a voluntary inducement to get someone to do something for the giver”.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Habits and Definitions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Habits</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Caring</td>
<td>The word <em>care</em> comes from the Old English word <em>caru</em>. It means, “trouble”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trusting</td>
<td>The word <em>trust</em> comes from the Old Norse word <em>traust</em>. It means, “help”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening</td>
<td>The word <em>listen</em> comes from the Old English word <em>hlysnan</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting</td>
<td>The word <em>support</em> comes from the Old French word <em>supporter</em>. It means, “to bring to”. Supporter comes from <em>sub</em> and <em>portare</em>. <em>Sub</em> means, “under”. <em>Portare</em> means, “to carry”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Befriending</td>
<td>The word <em>be</em> comes from Old English. It means, “about,” “near,” “by”. The word <em>friend</em> comes from the Old English word <em>freond</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encouraging</td>
<td>The word <em>encourage</em> comes from the Old English word <em>encoragier</em>. It means, “to give courage to”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negotiating</td>
<td>The word <em>negotiate</em> comes from the Latin word <em>negotium</em>. <em>Neg</em> means, “not”. <em>Otium</em> means, “ease”. Not at ease. One may feel not at ease while discussing a disagreement.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## References


*The author may be reached at professorrapport@yahoo.com*
ABSTRACT

A brief analysis of the concept of basic needs as discussed by a number of individuals.

The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language defines a need as 1) a condition or situation in which something necessary or desirable is required or wanted. 2) a wish for something that is lacking or desired. Human needs have been described in many ways over the years by a number of different individuals. Perhaps a good place to start is with the comment by Stendhal in Le Rouge et le Noir in 1830. He stated:

“There is no such thing as 'natural law': this expression is nothing but all nonsense. Prior to laws, what is natural is only the strength of the lion, or the need of the creature suffering from hunger or cold, in short, need”

Generally, what seems to be the case when reviewing the literature is that the term basic needs typically refers to the need that human beings have for food, shelter, clothing, air, and water - in other words, the basic needs for physical survival. However, several individuals have broadened the concept of basic needs beyond the survival level.

The individual that seems to be the most widely accepted originator of the concept of basic needs beyond just the survival level is Abraham Maslow. In 1954, Maslow developed what he called a Hierarchy of Human Needs. He believed that these needs were instinctual or innate. Maslow assumed that needs are arranged in a hierarchy in terms of their potency or strength. Although all needs are instinctive, he felt that some were more powerful than others. Maslow arranged his needs in the shape or form of a pyramid.

The lower the need in the pyramid, the more powerful it is. The higher the need is in the pyramid, the weaker and more distinctly human it is. The lower, of basic, needs of the pyramid are similar to those possessed by non-human animals, but only humans possess the higher needs.

The first four layers of the pyramid are what Maslow called “deficiency” needs or “D-needs”: individuals do not feel anything if they are met, but feel anxious if they are not met. Needs beyond the deficiency needs are “growth needs”, “being values”, or “B-needs.” When fulfilled, they do not go away; rather they motivate further.

The base of the pyramid is formed by the physiological needs, including the biological requirements for food, water, air, and sleep. The second level is the need for safety and security, including the needs for structure, order, security, and predictability. The third level is the need for love and belonging, including the needs for friends and companions, family, identification with a group, and an intimate relationship.

The fourth level contains the esteem needs. This group requires both recognition from other people that results in feelings of prestige, acceptance, and status, and self-esteem that results in feelings of adequacy, competence, and confidence. Finally, self-actualization sits at the apex of the original pyramid. Maslow’s original theory of human needs builds on the earlier work of Henry Murray in 1938.

In 1970, Maslow published a revision of his original pyramid, adding the cognitive and aesthetic needs at the top of the pyramid. In some of his later writings, he also proposed the concept of spirituality at the apex of the pyramid.

Some years after Maslow’s original description of his Hierarchy of Human Needs, William Glasser, in 1965, described his belief in two basic needs. These were the need to love and be loved, and the need to feel we are worthwhile to ourselves and to others. These would seem to be the equivalent of Maslow’s third and fourth levels.

By 1981, Glasser’s thinking had broadened. He stated that “I have come to believe that I am driven by five needs that together make up the forces that drive me. There may be other needs, but these are the ones I find in my head.” The ones he identified were basic needs of survival, love and belonging, power or recognition (originally called worth and recognition), freedom, and fun. The first four seem to parallel the original pyramid of Maslow. One key difference was that Glasser believed that all needs were of equal strength rather than a hierarchy.

Whereas Maslow believed that the needs he identified were intrinsic or innate, Glasser believed that the basic needs he identified were genetic. Whether or not they are contained in human genes is a matter of opinion. Until scientists complete the mapping of the human genome, it remains a topic for discussion.

There were others who also discussed the concept of
needs as a driving force in human behavior. Building on the earlier work of Alfred Adler, Rudolf Dreikurs believed that the primary driving force for humans was the need to belong. He stated that humans frequently displayed mistaken goals based on this basic human need. These he identified as needs for power, attention, revenge, and avoidance of failure.

In 1989, Brent Dennis, reality therapy certified, in the Spring issue of the Journal of Reality Therapy, posited the existence of a fifth psychological need - that of Faith. He stated:

"Faith is, in fact, the fifth learned psychological need; it could not be otherwise. Faith is considered as the overarching human psychological need that affects how we choose to meet our other four learned needs of Belonging, Power, Fun, and Freedom."

Glasser responded in the Fall 1989 issue of the Journal by concluding

"It is of interest to postulate that there are, in addition to the five needs that most of us accept, other basic needs, for example, that the need for God or religious belief is built into our DNA as Brent Dennis argues. Some will believe this, some will not, but there is no possible way to resolve an argument about belief. Even if there was a way to muster overwhelming evidence against Brent Dennis’ argument, this would not prove him wrong or negate anyone’s belief in God.....Whatever the needs may be and whether we know what they are or not, this will in no way change what is real to each of us which always includes all the pictures that anyone chooses to place in his or her internal or all-we-want world."

In May 1999, I arranged a National Conference on Internal Control Psychology co-sponsored by Northeastern University and the LABBB Collaborative Programs (the LABBB program was the second identified Quality School). Speakers included William Glasser, Albert Ellis, William Powers, and Alfie Kohn. The talks by Glasser, Ellis, and Powers can be found in the Fall 1999 issue of the International Journal of Reality Therapy

(Vol 19, No. 1)

As part of his presentation, Albert Ellis directly commented on a number of similarities and differences between RT and REBT. Regarding our discussion of basic needs, he stated:

"We have strong innate and learned desires or preferences for survival, love and belonging, power, freedom, and fun. But when we self-defeatingly insist, demand, and command that we absolutely must survive, must be loved by others, must have power over people, must be free, and must have fun, then we choose to make our desires and preferences into dire necessities and thereby defeat ourselves."

Readers are encouraged to read the complete presentation in which Ellis comments specifically on similarities and differences between Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy and Reality Therapy.

More recently, Ervin Staub and Laurie Pearlman, of the Trauma, Research, Education and Training Institute, discussed on the Internet the idea of needs. They stated

"Human beings possess fundamental, shared, universal needs. We are talking here not about physical needs, like the need for food, but psychological needs. These needs must be fulfilled to some degree for us to be able to function reasonably well in the world, for our well being and continued growth."

Human beings have basic needs for:
1. security or safety
2. effectiveness and control
3. positive identity and self-esteem
4. positive connection and esteem for and trust in others
5. autonomy and self-trust
6. comprehension of reality or world view

People also have an “advanced” basic need for (7) spirituality, including transcendence of the self.

1. The first one is the need for security. We need physical safety to survive and security becomes a psychological need. We define it as the need to know or believe that we will be free from physical and psychological harm (physical attacks on our body, and attacks on our self-respect and dignity) and that we will be able to satisfy our essential biological needs (for food, etc.) and our need for shelter. We also need to feel that those we love are safe. Safety or security is the most basic of psychological needs.

2. The need for effectiveness and control is another basic human need. Its fulfillment leads to the belief that we have the capacity to protect ourselves from harm and to fulfill our important goals. We also need to know that we can control our behavior toward others. As adults, self-control gives us confidence that we can lead purposeful lives and have the potential to influence our community and the world.

3. Another basic need is for a positive identity and self-esteem. The fulfillment of this need requires us to develop and maintain a positive view or image of ourselves. A positive identity requires self-awareness and an acceptance of ourselves, including our limitations. It requires experience and learning about the world and ourselves in the world. This provides us with faith in our ability to become who we want to be.
4. We also have a basic need for positive connection and esteem for others. This is a need to have close relationships to individuals and groups: intimate friendships, family ties, and relationships to communities.

5. Independence or autonomy and self-trust is another basic need. It refers to the ability to make one’s own decisions, one’s own choices, to be not only connected but also separate. It means trusting one’s own judgment and perceptions.

6. Another basic need is for comprehension of reality or a world view. This is a need to understand people and the world (what they are like, how they operate, why people do what they do, why things happen as they do). It is the basis for understanding our place in the scheme of things. Our view of people helps us make sense of the world and of our relationships to people, places, institutions and life as a whole. Our comprehension of reality can help us create meaning in our lives. It can help us fit into the world and to have a vision of how we want to live life, our values and morals.

7. Finally, we have a need for spirituality, including transcendence of the self. This is a need to connect with something beyond the self. This need becomes especially important in later life, but the groundwork for its satisfaction is laid all through life. We can fulfill it through spiritual experiences or connection to God or other spiritual entities. We can fulfill our need for spirituality through the experience of connection with nature. We can fulfill it by creating higher, more universal meaning in our lives. We can also fulfill it by devoting ourselves to the welfare of people, either by directly helping people or by working for social change.

CONCLUSION

As we review the literature relating to the concept of needs, there seem to be several conclusions that can be drawn.

1. Although a number of individuals have discussed the concept of human needs, there seems to be little cross-referencing or acknowledgment of the work of others. If we accept the work of Maslow as perhaps a baseline, it seems that all who came afterwards either restated or reworked his seminal ideas.

2. Whether needs are intrinsic, innate, or genetic may be irrelevant. The most important fact may be that the behavior of human beings is designed to meet personal needs, desires, wishes - in other words, I believe there is something missing in my life and I will strive toward the missing piece(s).

3. If one studies the history of mankind, it is difficult to dismiss the power of spirituality. Whether called a formal religion, humanism, or a belief in nature, throughout history mankind seems to have had the need to believe in something other (higher, different) than oneself. A personal belief system has helped individuals deal with personal, community, and national crises. It is difficult to deny the need to believe when one examines the choices people make and the sentiments they voice in their final moments.

4. As believers in the power of internal control psychology (as exemplified by the concepts of reality therapy and choice theory) it is difficult to deny the belief of others in their need to believe and the strength and/or solace they receive from believing.

REFERENCES


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Description of the Intensive In-Home Family Service Program

Mike Fulkerson

The author is the program manager for Therapeutic Child Support Services and the clinical director for therapeutic foster care at River Valley Behavioral Health in Owensboro, Kentucky.

ABSTRACT

In this article, the author reports on how Choice Theory/Reality Theory (CT/RT) can be used with S.T.E.P to provide effective Intensive In-Home Family Therapy. The results show substantial progress in helping the “identified client” and the parents make positive changes in their behaviors within a short period of time.

The Intensive In-Home Family Service Program

This program is comprised of three components: parenting evaluation and education, the facilitation of family meetings, and the individual addressing of relationship issues within the family. All three components are delivered in the context of the family home environment.

Parenting Evaluation and Education

In the initial phase of the program, parents are taught the basic principles of CT/RT and S.T.E.P. Systematic Training for Effective Parenting (S.T.E.P) developed by Dinkmeyer, McKay, and Dinkmeyer in 1997, is a parenting curriculum based on Adlerian Therapy (AT) principles which has much common ground with Reality Therapy. S.T.E.P helps parents learn effective ways to build relationships with children without using external control methods such as punishing, criticizing, and rewarding to control. Like Reality Therapy, S>T>E>P> teaches that relationships are strengthened by encouragement and cooperation.

During the first session, the staff conducts a needs assessment of the family, including the administration of the S.T.E.P survey to help determine the starting point of treatment. A S.T.E.P Survey minimum score of “80”, out of a possible score of “108”, is a treatment goal. If the post-test score is below “80”, staff will provide six weeks of parenting education. By the end of the six weeks, a post-test measure will be taken. The purpose of the testing is not to “pass” or “fail” the parents. Rather, the purpose is to identify areas that could be improved as well as to get a baseline regarding parental attitudes and actions.

The Intensive In-Home Family Service Program (IIFS) is 12-18 weeks in duration, pending the needs of the family. The counselor meets with the family a total of three hours per week. Some time is spent with the parents, some with the child or children, and some with the entire family.

The counselor explores and shares expectations of the program, focuses on what parents have tried previously, encourages self-evaluation of past efforts, and attempts to obtain a commitment to a plan to complete the Intensive In-Home Family Therapy Program. The primary role of the counselor is that of an educator.

As stated previously, the participants learn the basic principles of CT/RT as well as the S.T.E.P. curriculum. Recently, I have been incorporating many of the ideas of Dr. Richard Primason’s book entitled Choice Parenting, which is an excellent resource for those looking to apply Choice Theory to parenting. By the end of this phase, parents will have learned about basic needs, goals of behavior, the quality world, total behavior, effective ways of communicating, conducting family meetings, and managing behavior in non-punitive ways (Primason, 2004).

Family Facilitation

During the second phase, the role of the counselor switches to more of a facilitator. In this next phase, the counselor models effective ways of leading family meetings. At this time, the house rules are established, with the children giving substantial input to the development of the rules and consequences in the home. The children are asked to develop the rules and consequences with the understanding that the parents have final approval (Primason, 2004).

Although this approach may appear somewhat permissive to some, its effectiveness is quite paradoxical, because if the children are given some control and input, they are more likely to accept and follow the rules because they see them as their own ideas rather than rules which are being imposed on them.

In addition to increasing their sense of power by giving them input into the rules and consequences, the children are encouraged to self-evaluate their weekly performance in following the rules. The family members are provided
with the opportunity to give non-critical feedback in the form of support, encouragement, or confirmation to other family members.

The parents log and rate the frequency and intensity of the targeted, more desirable behaviors. At the beginning of services, parents are asked to identify what desirable behaviors they would like to see their children using. A baseline of the current rate of these targeted, desirable behaviors is documented. By the end of this service, these data will be compared with the post-test scores to see if there has been an increase in more effective behaviors being exhibited by the children.

Family Mediation

According to William Glasser (1998), most long-term psychological problems are the result of problematic relationships. Since parent-child relationships are so influential in other relationships, this is the emphasis of the third phase of the program. Individual meetings with family members may be necessary to identify unmet needs to be addressed in order for more effective family communication to take place. The counselor serves as a mediator in addressing stress, anger management, and communication issues which may affect the family dynamics.

Autonomy is the primary need of focus because the counselor’s goal is for family members to function on their own with the assistance of the counselor. In this phase, the family members begin conducting their own family meetings. The parent(s), and eventually the children, will be involved in leading the family meetings. Ideally, family members will rotate in leading the meetings.

Parental S.T.E.P. Survey Scores:
Pretest = 67.6
Posttest = 84.5
N = 29
Avg. Gain = +16.9

Children’s Percentage Increase In More Desirable, Need-fulfilling Behaviors
Pretest = 37.8%
Posttest = 82.5%
N = 40
Avg. Gain = 44.7

The scores of the targeted behaviors are determined by the evaluations of the family members. The children are encouraged to practice self-evaluation because it is a great way of teaching children responsibility as well as the importance of living according to one’s own values. One frequent occurrence during the family meetings is the apparent discomfort that many of the young people have when self-evaluating their behavior. This discomfort often times becomes the catalyst for positive changes in the child’s behavior.

In conclusion, the program has shown how CT/RT can be easily integrated with STEP in providing IIFS. The results of the pre- and post-tests shows objective measures of impact which can be obtained combining AT/RT/CT which in turn can help families be more successful in strengthening relationships.

REFERENCES

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Working with Forensic Clients in Quality Education: Tools of the Trade

Ron Mottern

The author, RTC, is the GED, ESL, and Adult Basic Education Instructor for the Literacy Council of Williamson County, Texas, at the Williamson County Jail.

ABSTRACT

In the field of adult education, working with forensic clients, i.e., clients who are a part of the criminal justice system, presents unique and challenging teaching opportunities. Forensic clients tend to possess cognitive processes and exhibit behavioral characteristics, due to their cognitive profiles, that can make the educational process especially challenging. Working with incarcerated clients may present obstacles to the teaching process itself, and trying to influence coerced clients, i.e., clients who are required by the courts to attend classes, can require exceptional motivation work on the part of the education provider. At the same time, helping forensic clients work through their cognitive and behavioral difficulties and apply responsible thinking and behavior to their educational process can be very rewarding. There are various tools that can be utilized by teachers to facilitate the educational process. Among these are cognitive behavioral modalities and concepts developed by Truthought, LLC and the William Glasser Institute, including application of Choice Theory in the practice of Quality Education. Utilization of these tools has proven to be efficacious in helping forensic clients succeed in adult education programs such as the General Educational Development (GED) program of Project Better Chance at Williamson County Jail.

INTRODUCTION

Working with forensic clients occurs in two types of settings: incarceration, which includes work in jails, prisons, and treatment centers facilitated by corrections and criminal justice; and community based programs that provide educational services to clients who are on probation or parole.

Working with incarcerated clients may present challenges such as limited time and space for instruction, limited testing opportunities and limited resources for study by the client, apart from the designated educational time slot. Incarcerated clients may also be in a state of flux. If the educational program is administered in a county jail, for instance, the clients may be very transient, awaiting sentencing and movement to a state jail, a treatment center or another correctional facility.

Unique Challenges Presented by Characteristics of Forensic Clients

Forensic clients share many cognitive and behavioral traits. Dr. Stanton Samenow, along with Dr. Samuel Yochelson, authored, The Criminal Personality, a three volume work based on the authors’ 14 year research study at St. Elizabeths Hospital in Washington, D.C. The result of this study led the authors to conclude that criminals think differently from non-criminals. While this may sound cursory superficial, what they suggest is that there is a fundamental difference in the thought processes, i.e., the way of thinking, of criminals and non-criminals. In essence, forensic clients think differently from other adult education clients. Attempting to teach forensic clients in the same manner as non-forensic clients is often unproductive and a waste of valuable instructional time.

Dr. Samenow's work has been systemized by Truthought, LLC, a company that provides training and certification in its particular method of teaching irresponsible thinkers to think and behave in responsible ways. A basic understanding of some of their concepts can be useful to teachers working with forensic clients.

Truthought, LLC, posits that there is a continuum of thinking and behavior, ranging from Responsible to Irresponsible, Arrestable and Extreme (respectively).

Irresponsible behavior (including Nonarrestable, Arrestable and Extreme Offenses) are caused by errors in thinking that are grouped into nine “Barriers in Thinking”:

1. Closed Thinking
2. Victim Role
3. Superior Self-Image
4. Reckless Attitude
5. Instant Gratification – “I want it now”
6. Fear of Losing Face
7. Power Control
8. Possessive Attitude – “It's mine”
9. Uniqueness
These Barriers in Thinking are corrected, according to Truthought, LLC, by nine “Steps to Responsible Thinking”:

1. Open Channels
2. Personal Accountability
3. Self Respect
4. Daily Effort
5. Self Discipline
6. Courage Over Fear
7. Healthy relationships
8. Respect for Others
9. Humility

There is also a list of 19 “Time Bomb Tactics” that are the result of the nine Barriers in Thinking. These are listed under the major headings of “Shifts Blame or Focus,” “Lies and Deceives” and “Ignores Obligations.”

A good understanding of these various Time Bomb Tactics and the Barriers in Thinking can help teachers work more effectively with forensic clients. There have been many instances where a student took and failed a practice test and, after being provided with materials and studying for a couple of hours (or, in some cases, a few minutes), the student stated that s/he was again ready to test. When working in a non-forensic setting, adult education clients tend to have life experiences that tell them that learning is incremental and takes time. Forensic clients, due to their thinking errors, choose not to learn from their life experiences in a responsible way and use a variety of Barriers and Tactics that may complicate the learning process.

The example, given above, is related to the Time Bomb Tactic 19, i.e., “Says ‘I’m changed’ after one right thing,” and Time Bomb Tactic 16, i.e., “Chooses only what is self-gratifying,” both of which are under the Ignores Obligations heading. The Barriers in Thinking that drive this particular behavior are probably Instant Gratification, e.g., “Expects instant response,” Superior Self-Image, e.g., “Focuses on personal good deeds,” Reckless Attitude, e.g., “Considers responsibility dull,” and Uniqueness, e.g., “Demands more of self than others.” Knowing that a forensic client is using these Barriers in Thinking (as a daily pattern of thinking), a teacher can help the student move into responsible thinking of “Self Respect” which corrects Superior Self-Image, “Self Discipline” which corrects Instant Gratification, “Daily Effort” which corrects Reckless Attitude, and “Humility” which corrects Uniqueness.

Without knowledge of these thinking errors and their corrective measures, teachers may be surprised to find that they are being blamed by students for trying to hold the students back after the students claim that they weren’t really trying on the test and if allowed to re-test, they’ll do much better. There are many Barriers and Tactics being used in this scenario. It doesn’t take many of these situations, and the scenarios are practically endless, to wear out a teacher and produce burn out. Knowledge of the Time Bomb Tactics and Barriers in Thinking, however, will help the teacher place the responsibility where it belongs, i.e., on the student, and do it in such a way as to influence the students to remain in class and advance in their education, i.e., by presenting students with choices.

**Basic Needs Profiles**

Another useful tool for teachers is knowledge of Basic Needs and how to use Basic Needs Profiles. The concept of the Basic Needs underlies Choice Theory and Reality Therapy and was developed by Dr. William Glasser, founder of the Quality School Consortium and author of *Schools Without Failure*. Knowing how to help forensic clients examine their Basic Needs and create Basic Needs profiles can help teachers facilitate a more satisfying relationship with students by helping fulfill their Basic Needs.

According to Choice Theory, there are five Basic Needs, four Psychological Needs and a Survival Need. The four Psychological Needs are Love / Belonging / Acceptance, Power / Recognition / Achievement, Fun / Learning / Excitement and Freedom / Independence / Choice. The terms used to describe these Needs may vary, e.g., Love and Belonging, or Fun and Learning, but they refer to the same genetic Need. Everything that one does in this life is designed to fulfill one or more of the Basic Needs. The Basic Needs are the primary motivators in life and whatever level at which they exist cannot be altered. If I have a high Need for Power / Recognition / Achievement, then I cannot change the level of that Need. I will either find ways to meet that Need or I will suffer because the Need is not met. The suffering from failure to meet Psychological Needs is misery.

The Basic Needs may be graphed using a pathogram to create an individual Basic Needs Profile. Once a Basic Needs Profile is constructed, the teacher can use this information to help motivate students. For example, if a teacher realizes that a particular student may have a high Need for Power/Recognition, then the teacher can make a special effort to provide that student with recognition. Students with high Needs for Freedom/Choice can be allowed some latitude on decision making within the classroom. Once the Needs Profile has been created, the ways in which it may be used to help motivate students are limited only by a teacher’s resourcefulness and imagination.

As a general rule, forensic clients tend to have a high Need for Power/Recognition and Fun/Excitement and a low Need for Freedom/Choice and Love/Belonging. While the Need for Freedom/Choice may be low in relation to the other Needs, the longer that Need is frustrated the higher the motivation becomes to fulfill it.
RESULTS

The concepts and practices taken from Truthought, LLC and Choice Theory/Reality Therapy were applied with the student population of Project Better Chance at Williamson County Jail (WCJ) in Williamson County, Texas. Results were tabulated based on student performance on the General Educational Development (GED) sub-tests for a nine month period, beginning in March 2006 and running through December 2006. The GED test is composed of five sub-tests that measure reading, writing and arithmetic abilities in the subjects of Social Studies, Science, Language Arts Reading, Language Arts Writing and Math.

With 171 sub-tests administered, 165 sub-tests were successfully passed. The passing rate average was 96.5 percent.

Twenty-one (21) GED diplomas were received by WCJ students during the testing period. The requirements for receiving the GED diploma in the State of Texas (requirements vary from state to state) are: a passing score of 410 on all five individual sub-tests and a cumulative test average of 450. It is possible to pass all sub-tests and not receive the GED diploma due to an insufficient cumulative test average.

CONCLUSION

Some of the issues that affect the quality of interaction when working with forensic clients are programmatic and can be solved by a skilled administrator. Other issues tend to fall in the area of motivation and can only be addressed by the classroom instructors, themselves. Working with forensic clients can be more difficult and demanding than working with other adult learners due to the special circumstances and unique cognitive challenges presented by forensic clients. As results from the Williamson County Jail program indicated, learning and using concepts taken from Truthought training and Choice Theory/Reality Therapy training can help teachers working with forensic clients to maintain healthy relationships with students, motivate students, and avoid occupational burn out. These “tools of the trade” can help enhance educational outcomes and promote teacher longevity.

REFERENCES


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Mission Possible: Teaching Certification Week, Part II

Robert E. Wubbolding

The author is Director of Training for the William Glasser Institute

ABSTRACT

Certification in reality therapy provides professionals the ability to have a specialty which then adds a uniqueness in their area of service. Certification week under the guidelines of the William Glasser Institute policies is a culmination of 18 months of study, practice, and growth by the participants. A recent survey demonstrates the perception of the participants that their training is highly effective. The breadth of presentations presented in this article and the diversity of their talents and professions enhances each person's skills and techniques, thus helping to secure the permanence and growth of the Institute in decades to come.

Introduction

Certification in reality therapy provides professional people with a credential that indicates they have completed a training program of approximately 18 months. During this time they attend workshops known as “intensive weeks”. Between these four-day training sessions, they participate in a basic and an advanced practicum during which they further develop their knowledge and skills. Certification is awarded at the closing of the third four-day session held three times a year in various places in North America and in countries from Singapore to Kuwait.

Certification Process

According to the Programs, Policies & Procedures Manual of The William Glasser Institute (2006), the mission of the Institute is to “teach all people choice theory and to use it as the basis for training in reality therapy, quality school education, and lead management.” This lofty goal is targeted primarily by means of the certification process.

Wubbolding and Brickell (2004) outlined the certification process culminating in the four-day certification week. During this final step before achieving the credential “reality therapy certified” (RTC), participants demonstrate their skills with role plays and their knowledge with brief presentations.

Participants' Self-Assessment

In an effort to assess the skills and knowledge of participants attending the February 2007 certification week in Los Angeles, the author surveyed their self-perceptions of what he believes is central to the effective practice of reality therapy. Their self-assessments reveal that, for the most part, they see themselves as having been taught the essential building blocks of the practice of reality therapy. The results of the survey are presented in Figure I.

Figure I: Participants' Self-Assessment on Entering Certification Week

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Participants: 17</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Were you taught 5 - 7 specific types of self-evaluation?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YES-65% / NO-35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Were you taught specifically how to help clients/students evaluate their own behavior, i.e., were you taught specific questions to ask them?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YES-100% / NO-0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Were you taught the difference between choice theory and reality therapy, i.e., choice theory is the explanation and reality therapy is the delivery system?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YES-88% / NO-12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Were you taught reality therapy as a WDEP system?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YES-100% / NO-0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Were you exposed to paradoxical techniques?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YES-82% / NO-17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Were you taught that procedures and environment are essential to know for certification?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YES-82% / NO-17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Were you taught that self-evaluation is the cornerstone in the practice of reality therapy?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YES-100% / NO-0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Were you taught to give feedback with environment and procedures applied to the helper and choice theory applied to the client or student?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YES-70% / NO-24% / not sure 5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Clearly, participants see the importance of self-evaluation, the value of procedures, and the difference between theory and practice. While the participants in the February 2007 certification week were well prepared by previous instructors and practicum supervisors, improvements in procedures, especially self-evaluation. Helping trainees learn theory and practice can be improved by dividing role play observers’ responsibilities into the following categories:

1. One observer watches for choice theory applied to counselee, student, i.e., the helpee. The observer carefully notes helpee’s unmet needs, unfulfilled quality worlds, out-of-balance scales, effective and ineffective choices, self-talk, and perceived locus of control.

2. Another observer watches the helper set the environment: use of toxins and tonics (Wubbolding, 2008). Does the helper argue or accuse, blame or belittle, criticize or create conflict and collide with excuses. On the other hand, does the helper practice tonic behaviors such as communicating hope, listening for metaphors, demonstrating respect, focusing on what the helpee can control, accepting helpee’s behaviors without either agreement with anti-social behaviors or being overly sympathetic?

3. A third observer focuses on the helper’s questioning skills regarding wants (W), doing or total behavior (D), self-evaluation by client (E) and action planning (P). More specifically, the observer marks whether the helper assists helpees in defining and clarifying their wants: what they want from the counseling or consultation session, from family, friends, job, etc., as well as whether they want to change their own behaviors and how hard they want to work at making changes (level of commitment). This observer also notes whether the helper assists helpees to be specific in their descriptions of current behavior, i.e., actions, thinking, and feelings. Additionally, does the helper ask self-evaluating questions, such as, “Is your current behavior helping or hurting you, bringing you closer or farther away from other people?” “Is what you want realistic?” “Is what you want genuinely beneficial to you or to others?” “Is your current level of commitment going to get the job done?” “Is it really true that you have as little control over your life as you think you have?” “Is your plan simple, attainable, measurable, immediate, consistent, and controlled by the planner?” (Wubbolding 2000, 2006).

Presentations by Participants

Demonstrations of participants’ knowledge and ability to teach choice theory and reality therapy were of the highest quality. Participants were eager to present specific highlights or gems of their knowledge and creativity within the 15 minute time limit. In their engaging and humorous presentations, they provided ideas and methods that other participants said were replicable and of practical value. Examples of presentations include:

Teaching inner control. Nancy, an elementary school counselor, teaches each class in her school a weekly 30-minute lesson in choice theory and reality therapy. The goal is to help students gain insight into their own needs and how they are met. She presents lists of words and asks students to categorize them according to their own needs. Much discussion follows this simple activity. Yet the results are notable. One student inappropriately passed from the second to the third grade chose to return to the second grade and was given the opportunity to choose his own second grade teacher. He said, “I don’t know how to be in the third grade.” He is now performing at the top of his second grade class. The school has moved from the bottom three of 66 schools in academic performance to the top 10 schools in the district. Earlier, the superintendent had planned on closing the school. There are now 150 on the wait list.

Cutting and self-mutilation. Andoni, a school psychologist specializing in crisis intervention, described how he applies reality therapy to students. He stated that the rush of power and freedom motivates cutters and self-mutilators. Yet the relief achieved is only temporary as the illusion of need satisfaction passes. He asks counselees, “What are you getting out of this behavior?” He adds, “If you want something different you will need to do something different.” When he teaches them new behaviors they feel more in control of their lives and the motivation to hurt themselves lessens.

Management. Carla, a manager in a utility company, explained how she teaches lead management, total behavior, five needs, and the WDEP system. One of the examples she offered was helping her trainees describe how creative they are in finding ways to absent themselves from work in order to go hunting. She helps them transfer these ingenious behaviors to the work place by using the WDEP formulation of reality therapy. She believes these principles focusing on inner control enhances employee job satisfaction and productivity.

Jeopardy. Using categories such as emotions, drugs, sports, music, and choices, Deirdre, a counselor working with high risk youth, helps them decide how they want to discuss each category. For example, under the category emotions, they discuss how they can control their anger and how to conduct self-interventions by asking themselves questions for the purpose of dealing with feelings. She
states that they more readily disclose themselves than they do in formal counseling sessions which enables the counselor to help them evaluate their own behavior and make plans for reaching goals and for more effective living.

Girls' Volleyball. Marie, a high school varsity coach and Spanish teacher, described how she dealt with a girls' volleyball team performing below expectations and potential. She believed that the team's needs for belonging and fun were satisfied. Yet, she had hoped for a more successful season and wanted them to compete at the state level. She conducted meetings and asked them, "Where do you want to be in the last two weeks of the season?" She believed she could adjust her goals to theirs if necessary. However, they stated that they wanted to play in the state tournament and that they needed to change their behavior. She told them to take a run and come back with their decision. They usually had a run for 10 minutes, but this run consumed 30 minutes. They decided to push themselves harder and asked her to join in the push. Their record at the end of the season was 36 – 6. They lost in the semi-finals to a team that won the state championship. At the end of the season, they wrote letters to the next year's team that would be opened at the beginning of the season.

Other presentations focused on a board game teaching reality therapy, teaching choice theory kinesthetically with each finger of a glove representing a need, changing physiology, parenting skills, "the web of control", a game teaching choice theory through the fun need, developing a school constitution, meeting with a car salesman, depicting the quality world through pictures, teaching total behavior to "tough kids", and 6-inch cards shaped like keys used in teaching Glasser's book Choice Theory (1998).

Observing certification participants practice reality therapy and make presentations provides a faculty member with the opportunity to see many creative uses of a theory and a practice that individuals continue to extend and apply in new and exciting ways. Certification weeks allow for current and future leaders to express themselves. These grass roots applications provide opportunities and beacons for future research as well as structures that can insure the permanence and growth of the William Glasser Institute in decades to come. I am reminded of the words of Colin Powell, former Secretary of State, "If you want to be a leader, get out into the trenches. That's where the wisdom is."

CONCLUSION

The entire certification process aims at increasing participants' skill and knowledge. The certification week provides a culmination of training and offers an added opportunity to demonstrate each participant's unique creativity and inventiveness. And yet finality need not characterize certification week. People receiving the RTC credential can proceed onward. They can become practicum supervisors and intensive week instructors. The William Glasser Institute invites them to look for opportunities to lead, to be further involved, to remain active, and further their skills and knowledge as well as to stay connected with local, state, regional and international events of the William Glasser Institute.

REFERENCES


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Some Tips Regarding How to Motivate Athletes

Thomas S. Parish and Daniel Williams

The senior author is associate professor of psychology and the second author is a sophomore in psychology, both at Upper Iowa University, Fayette, Iowa

ABSTRACT

SPORTS is a buzzword in our society today, and it is not limited to any one sport in particular. For instance, golf has its “Tiger Woods,” baseball has its “Barry Bonds,” and basketball has its “Michael Jordan.” Icons all! However, what motivates the top players may be quite different from what motivates the less “popularized” players. Hence, what might motivate an individual at the beginning of his/her career (be it in middle-school, high school, college, or beyond), is unlikely to remain that way later on. Of course, there are exceptions to this rule (e.g., George Brett of the KC Royals), but success at higher levels often means that the so-called “motivators” change accordingly. Why is so? How can we alter this less-than-admirable orientation from “winning-for-money’s sake,” back to a greater emphasis being placed upon “winning-for-winning’s sake?” This paper will attempt to address this issue and offer some ideas that should be helpful too.

Some Tips Regarding How to Motivate Athletes

Everybody is motivated by something! Athletes are no different since they need to be motivated too. The question is, what “motivates” them to become involved in sports, and what motivates them to stay involved in sports later on? Notably, William Glasser (1986, 1998) proposed the “Needs Wheel,” which basically suggests that all of us (including athletes) are motivated by one or more of the following:

1. **“Power, worth, and recognition,”** which is based on the notion that many strive to “show off,” “outperform others,” and/or “win awards” because they crave the attention that comes from doing so successfully. For some, i.e., those who truly excel, there may be additional forms of “psychological pay,” besides those that were mentioned above. In addition, earning “big bucks” (before taxes, at least) could also provide even stronger feelings of power, worth, and recognition, plus fulfill other needs, too (e.g., satisfy survival needs), as they obtain large sums of money, a luxurious home, more-than-enough food, stylish clothing, plus other things that are more likely to be made available to them because of what they do. A quote that may apply here is, “Those who have the gold... rule.” Notably, though, what forms of “power, worth, and recognition” that serve as motivators may change over time and/or situation, with younger athletes more likely motivated by simply outperforming their competitors, while other motivators seem more likely to rule as the athletes reach their physical prime and learn that if they don’t receive monetary compensation, as well as other tangible rewards, they’ll strike or quit, rather than play the game just for the sake of playing it.

2. **Fun** is another motivator for some, especially when they’re young, but often lose their allure as they find it difficult to endure. Truly, the additive effects of the “bumps and bruises of life,” take away from the idea that sports are fun, unless we’re among the very, very young.

3. **Freedom,** which comes when choices abound, is another motivator for some, especially once they realize that finding the best alternative(s) usually means that they could win the biggest prize, while they soundly beat all the other “guys.”

4. **Love and belonging** is a strong motivator, too, especially for those who support the team, and do all they possibly can, since in so doing, they more likely gain the “warm fuzzies” they need while they help their team to succeed. In so doing, everyone’s needs seem to be better met, since all seem to want what they ultimately get. Defining this “love and belonging” is really hard to do, for some see it as very sensual in nature, while others believe that you simply must do it for those who care for you.

5. **Survival** is a need on Glasser’s (1986, 1998) “Needs Wheel,” too, and still applies to athletes who fear being hurt, and/or can’t bear the pain they experience daily, which effectively can’t be offset by any of the sport’s perks. Some, though, hang tough, even when things get really rough. To them, who can endure, will go the greatest spoils, that’s for sure.

How can we figure out various athletes’ wants and needs, and come to realize the best way to proceed? Questions like these will always abound, but the answers to them aren’t easily found. For those who manage to respond well to this task, they will likely be very popular as they correctly answer the questions they are asked. For
if we can distinguish what some athletes want, while others may not, their value will likely rise quite a lot. Of course, it can't be a function of some "crystal ball," but whether or not they can correctly discern players' needs, and make the correct call. Truly, these people must heed the "Platinum Rule," as they strive to figure out what others want to do. More specifically, the "Platinum Rule" says, that we must do unto others as they want done unto them," and the sooner we realize that this should be our main goal, the quicker we will get the job done.

Who is it that should play in accordance with this rule? Well, coaches, players, and everyone else too. For if we don't understand what others want and need, it is most unlikely that we, or our teams, will ever succeed. But once everyone is on the same page, and truly come to understand that as we help others to succeed at whatever they want to do, and/or meet their needs, too, we will all more likely succeed, at least as a general rule.

REFERENCES
The Personal Choice Model Regarding Mental Health

Thomas S. Parish and Laurence Van Dusen

The first author is associate professor of psychology and the second author is an undergraduate student in psychology, both at Upper Iowa University

ABSTRACT

Several mental health/mental illness models are briefly considered in this paper, including the medical model, the psychiatric model, the public health model, and the personal choice model. While all of these models provide insights regarding the etiologies of various mental illnesses, and ideas concerning how many of them might be remediated, the personal choice model seems to offer additional benefits that have heretofore not been carefully considered. These benefits will be elaborated upon throughout this paper.

The Personal Choice Model Regarding Mental Health

The Medical Model

The Medical Model recognizes symptoms, looks for pathology to support them, but does not diagnose disease unless supportive pathology is found (Glasser, 2005).

The Psychiatric Model

The Psychiatric Model is used to diagnose a mental illness, such as those described in the DSM-IV-R, but relies upon symptoms alone, without necessarily discerning any supporting pathology (Glasser, 2005).

Notably, neither of the above mentioned models seeks to identify the concept of “mental health,” and/or seeks to differentiate between “mental health” and “mental illness.” In addition, both models basically take the position that the doctor/psychiatrist is in charge of treating the disease, and that the patient’s/client’s role is very passive in nature.

There is another model, however, that needs to be considered, especially if one believes that patients/clients are really more likely to be “in control” of themselves and how they interact with their environment. This model may be called by various names...

The Public Health Model (Glasser, 2005)

The Personal Choice Model (Parish and Parish, 2005)

Both of these models, noted above, focus upon the notion that control is in the individual’s hands, at least as a general rule. However, no man (or woman) is an island. Hence, other factors may operate that could impact the individual in various ways.

Said somewhat differently, personal choices can operate to control and/or moderate the effects of the other influences, at least in general terms. However, such control can be reduced or enhanced through one’s personal choices.

As mentioned above, both models by Glasser (2005) and Parish and Parish (2005) are totally in keeping with “Choice Theory,” as proposed by Glasser (1998). In fact, they could be thought of as simple extensions of it.

Regarding external influences, Glasser (2005) asserts that...not getting along as well with others as we would like to is the number 1 “mental health problem” of the world, while Parish and Parish (2005) contend that it is simply the number 1 “personal choice problem” in the world.

In either instance, the cure to the problem isn’t drugs (Barness & Parish, 2006). Rather, as Glasser (2005) suggested, we only need to learn better ways to achieve positive relationships with those whom we value, for in so doing, happiness will more likely be achieved.

Interestingly, Glasser (2005) contends that “external controls” or “external influences” destroy marriages, which may seem to be beyond our personal control. However, Parish and Parish (2005) propose, instead, that such marital destruction is actually often simply a function of our own inefficient “personal choices.”

Hence, according to Parish and Parish (2005), to correct these inefficient personal choices that are causing us so many problems, we simply need to create more and better positive alternatives from which to choose. After all, life really is the search for positive alternatives, or at least it should be if we are truly going to learn to interact more efficiently with others.

Why should we embrace the “Personal Choice Model,” rather than the “Public Health Model?” Well, the “Public Health Model” basically suggests that most of our problems are caused by sources of “external control,” and therefore such problems might be perceived by many to be far beyond their personal control.
In contrast, the “Personal Choice Model” contends that the source of many of our problems is our own inefficient personal choices, but that if we strive to act more efficiently, we will more likely be “mentally healthier” and “emotionally happier” as a consequence of these actions. Hence, good mental health and personal happiness is more likely to occur when we fill our lives with “efficient choices” or “efficient behavior,” while poorer mental health and greater unhappiness is more likely to occur if we make “inefficient choices” or engage in “inefficient acts.”

Said somewhat differently, life consists of our efforts to find “positive alternatives.” If that’s the case, then each individual needs to ask himself/herself the following questions:

“What do I want?”

“What am I doing?”

“Is what I am doing helping me to get what I want?”

“If not, what must I do differently in order to more effectively get what I want?”

Once again, if what you’re doing is getting you what you want, then you should find yourself to be reasonably happy and well adjusted, and therefore more likely to be “mentally healthy.” In other words, you have chosen wisely!

If, however, what you’re doing is not getting you what you want, then you will find yourself to be generally frustrated and not likely to be well adjusted, and therefore more likely to be deemed to be “mentally ill.” In other words, you have chosen unwisely! In turn, you (i.e., your client) must seek more positive alternatives if you/s/he wish(es) to be all that you/s/he wish(es) to be. Otherwise, most would conclude that you are acting very unwisely. Bottom line, though, is that it is always going to be your (i.e., your client’s) choice, unless you/s/he have given up that option, or had someone else make that decision for you/him/her (e.g., like a judge or a psychiatrist). Who do you really believe should make these decisions? If it’s you, then be sure to choose wisely regarding what you need to do.

REFERENCES


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