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Vol XXVIII No. 2

Ahmad Jazimin Jusoh
Roslee Ahmad
The Practice of Reality Therapy From the Islamic Perspective in Malaysia and Variety of Custom in Asia

Adrian Schoo
Counseling: Using Metaphorical Narratives

Jill D. Duba
Mary A. Graham
Mark Britzman
Neresia Minatrea
Introducing the “Basic Needs Genogram” in Reality Therapy-based Marriage and Family Counseling

Gary W. Louis
Using Glasser’s Choice Theory to Understand Vygotsky

Elijah Mickel
Cecilia Hall
Choosing to Love: Basic Needs and Significant Relationships

Daphni Clifton
Cultivating Self-Awareness and Self-Management in Children Diagnosed with Asperger’s Syndrome

Yaakov Barr
Reality Therapy and the Talmud

Paul Pound
Neil Duchac
Driven by Goals: Choice Theory and the HELP Method

Anthony Cameron
Regret, Choice Theory and Reality Therapy

Thomas K. Burdenski, Jr
Brenda Faulkner
Mark J. Britzman
Willa J. Casstevens
Gloria S. Cisse
Jeri L. Crowell
Jill D. Duba
Neresia B. Minatrea
Tammy F. Shaffer
Michael Dyson
Sylina B. Gilchrist
Mary A. Graham
The Impact of the Glasser Scholars Project on Participants’ Teaching and Research Initiatives: Part I

Robert E. Wubbolding
John Brickell
Perception: The Orphaned Component of Choice Theory

Magan Caplin
Balancing the Scales - A Personal Journey
The International Journal of Reality Therapy is directed to concepts of internal control psychology, with particular emphasis on research, theory, development, or special descriptions of the successful application of internal control systems especially as exemplified in reality therapy and choice theory.

The International Journal of Reality Therapy is published semi-annually in Fall and Spring. ISSN: 1099-7717.

Material published in the Journal reflects the views of the authors, and does not necessarily represent the official position of, or endorsement by, the William Glasser Institute. The accuracy of material published in the Journal is the responsibility of the authors.

Subscriptions: $15.00 for one year or $28.00 for two years. (U.S. currency) International rates: $23.00 for one year or $40.00 for two years. Single copies, $8.00 per issue. International $10.00 per issue. Send payment order to the editor. Back issues Vol. 1-8, $3.00 per issue. Vol. 9-14, $4.00 per issue. Vol. 15-19, $5.00 per issue. Vol. 20-25, $7.00 per issue. Vol. 26-28, $8.00 per issue.

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The Practice of Reality Therapy from the Islamic Perspective in Malaysia and Variety of Custom in Asia

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ABSTRACT

This article is meant to observe the practice of reality therapy in the context of Islamic perspective in Malaysia. Besides this, the article is also reviewing the related research on reality therapy in Asia. The method used by the author is based on library research. Findings show that there is a connection between WDEP aspects with the Islamic perspective. This finding also shows that Islam does not prohibit its followers to help individuals in that its method is not in conflict with the syariat, ibadah and akhlak. This relationship is explained in Al-Quran, Hadith, view of ulama’ and kias. Moreover, the authors give example of reality therapy practice in Korea, Japan, Taiwan and Australia. All reality therapy practice in Asian countries still perpetuates the WDEP procedure based on their own culture and religion. As a conclusion, the WDEP procedure can be used universally with the aspect of religion and culture in a community. The authors view is that reality therapy cannot be separated from Islam as a living style, especially in Malaysia.

Reflections on the relationship between the Islamic perspective and WDEP practice

Practices by counselors who use WDEP in the counseling process based on reality therapy are similar to Islamic concepts. This can be seen from the aspect of how to help through reality therapy. Some counselors would like to help their clients with honesty. This commitment is the willingness to help by giving help from an external source. Exploration skills, namely stage W (wants, needs & perceptions), are important for Muslim counselors to get to know the client's intention or need in counseling sessions.

The basic concept theory, including psychological needs (love and belonging, fun, freedom and power), occurs in W (wants) and is related to Islamic concepts. Islam means safety. Safety helps to achieve harmony. Harmony enables human beings to feel therapeutic in life. So, good elements in a psychological context cannot be separated from Islamic beliefs. Islam was brought to the world to give blessings to entire nature. So, it is important for counselors to be conscious about psychological needs, which are based in human souls, which are also a gift from Allah.

Research by Czikszentmihalyi in 1987 shows less attention and love syndromes clearly seen in cities, especially among parents who are busy with work. This causes teenagers to feel lonely and have less self-motivation. Average time shared by teenagers and their parents was only 12 hours per week, during which most of the time was spent while eating and watching television. This shows love provides a big impact towards the development and personality of teenagers (Aziz 2003).

Love and affection cannot be measured with numbers but can be seen by the style and behavior of a person. Based on experts in the human intelligence field, love consists of three components, such as intimacy, passion and commitment, and the extent of love can be measured from these matters. Love can bring bliss. Not a request but willingness, not to ask but to give sincerely. Love is giving the thoughts of each other (Hamdan, 2002). Choice theory stresses love and belonging. If one wanted to measure the psychological aspects of love, this is not a simple matter. Counselors who follow this therapy and practice frequently are able to do this.

In Islam, counselors are encouraged by Allah to have ideas and serve as a client's inspiration. This is suitable with the commandment of Allah in Surah Al-An' am sentence 59-60 which means:

Allah holds the key of surprise, no one knows except Allah; and Allah knows all the lands and oceans, and not even a piece of leaf drops without his knowledge and not even a piece of seed drops in the earth in darkness. Allah is the one who makes you sleep at night. He knows what to work for you in the noon and he will wake you up in the noon to complete your age as decided, then you finally reach to him and will let him know whatever he has given to you.

Stage D (Doing & Direction) strengthens the counselor’s strategy to get to know a client's direction. All this needs high counseling skills and a counselor's sincerity to go deeper. Islam organizes its followers to have goals in their life. In order for the counselor to explore goals and directions, the counselor will need to identify what is the client’s need. Islam emphasizes that intentions must be in parallel. Wrong intentions, although the way is right, are considered wrong in Islam, whereas right intentions also are considered wrong if the way was incorrect.

So, counselors should help a client self-evaluate what the goal should be in order to achieve the goal. In this stage, the counselor must check a client's credibility. How far are the clients committed to do what they think. Islam
stresses that an individual who needs something must make his own effort. It's impossible for an individual to achieve success without any effort. So, this stage is very critical to clients. Clients are free to make choices towards their needs. Islam says that any way can be used unless it's impinge syari'at. This supports the view that counselors can use reality therapy and modify this contiguous therapy based on cultural values, needs and client's expression style (Glasser and Wubbolding, 1995; Wubbolding, Al-Rashidi et al 1998).

Once clients are confident with their choice, the duty of a counselor is to discuss with clients about planning and commitment. In this process, action will be planned. Glasser (1965) says that individuals have fundamental rights towards success or failure. A counselor's duty is only to guide and to discuss each decision of the client. This procedure is very suitable with living ways that exist in Islam. Islamic followers need to concentrate and plan what they need within their capability. Muhammad Qurib (1996) debated this matter with the statement that:

“A child who is born is the kernel from which both positive and negative energy may grow at the same time. This is a bizarre reality which rises from the involvement of human opposites. Allah knows the happening of humans. Allah is clever and excellent.”

So, the responsibility of a counselor who is using reality therapy is to simplify the client's difficulty. In Islam, dependency on Allah is important, no matter who or where. So Islam does not burden its followers to do what they are unable to do. It's impossible to do something which one is really unable to do from the beginning. The SAMIC2C3 concept which makes the plan easier and enables a client's action will be parallel with Islamic concepts. It can be a good propagation method to help clients disengage complex psychological ideas which they hold. Allah promises that whoever simplifies the complexity is a follower. Allah will simplify their difficulties. In this stage, a Muslim counselor's duty is to multiple the techniques to help clients. Prayer practices can also brought in as a support to a client's plan.

Human origins involve internal and external elements. Internal elements are heart, passion and human mind, whereas external elements are devil and the surroundings of a human's living. The pollution of tithe happens when external elements are able to influence the internal elements in order to make these internal elements unstable and without disturbances. In order to be back to the origin tithe, human beings should return to Islam because human beings originally came from Islam (Haron, Sulaiman, Hassan & Sidi 2003; Mizan Adiliah et al 2006). Mizan Adiliah, Wan Mohd. Fazrul Azdi and Hanit (2006) explained that the tithe based on Al-Quran and Sunnah always protects individuals from any disabilities and effects of others as translated in Surah Al-Hijr sentence 9 which means as follow:

Indeed we sent Al-Quran, and we will protect and take care of it.

Coherent Mizan Adiliah et al. (2006) actually showed the relation with each theory, philosophy and understanding about tithe compared with Islam concepts. Yet based on tithe, Islamic humans are based on Al-Quran and As-Sunnah that are natural traits; this has been supported by a group of famous ulama'. When interconnected with reality therapy, Glasser (1965) views that human beings have needs to choose their goals. It is a tithe to a human being's life. What happens to an individual is based on the inner world of an individual. Refer to Glasser again, changes happen for an individual if the decision is made by an individual based on personal responsibility. This is parallel with the decree of Allah surah al-Muddaththir 74:38 which means:

Everyone is responsible for what they have done.

In conclusion, based on research, there are similarities and differences between reality therapy and views based on Islamic perspectives.

Reality therapy practice in Asia culture

Family relationship in Korea

Cheong (2001) has done suitable reality therapy application research in the context of Korean culture. Findings show that this therapy is very suitable to apply in i) family structure and functions in Korean modern community context based on western community; this contiguous reality therapy is suitable with goals that exist in family patterns in Korea. ii) Human relationships among Koreans stress this therapy. iii) the problem solving method is counted into this therapy. iv) therapy's value in Korea towards interventions based on reality therapy. v) Communication methods used by Koreans and vi) reality therapy evaluation in the context of the Korean culture.

Regarding Park (1993) until now, numbers of members in families within the Korean community have become less. This means that a wide family will form a nuclear family (Kim, 2000). Since the industrial process has grown, women have seen economic growth. From the couples of working ratio has come a third generation which is busy; this has resulted in the need for high understanding among couples. Children of parents who are divorced and single parents have become a common problem among this community (Lee & Yang, 2000).

The effect of the industrial growth makes relationships between parents and children brittle. The power of the husband becomes weaker, and women's status more powerful, and they change earlier family tradition in Korea (Kim, Y. T. 2000). Research by Kim (2000) finds that the power of husbands will be dominant if compared with wives, but the power of a mother in the household will be dominant in leading towards children's socialization.
Focused on exploring needs of group members by asking choice. Eight sessions were held in this program. Session 1 was an introduction and orientation. The focus during modules in that program were on group dynamics. There were 13 school children in the experimental group, and 10 school children in the comparison group. The research subjects were chosen at random. Research shows the quality of life is better among educated husbands and wives compared with others who are less educated (Chong, 2001).

Based on characteristics that exist in Korean community culture, reality therapy and choice theory are suitable as psychological theory and counseling (Cheong, 2001). This coincides exactly with Wubbolding’s (2000) view that reality therapy and choice theory are based on psychological theory which can apply towards all humans within existing cultures. Findings from the synthesis made by Euk Suk Cheong (2001) shows that the family model in the Korean industrial community is very congruent with goals in reality therapy. Second, human relationships in Korea still emphasize the wellness concept, and it’s exactly congruent with reality therapy concepts which stress love and belonging. Third, the Korean community has a problem solving method which is parallel with application in reality therapy which focuses towards the problem that occurs, compared with many reasons given to act. Therapists who use this therapy will focus on clients’ behavior, and only clients admit their responsibility to choose it. Fourth, Cheong (2000) suggests that communication methods in Korean communities must be suitable with flexible reality therapy application because of that community’s ties with non-direct communication and values that cannot hurt others. Apart from that, Wubbolding (2000) says that it’s not a big problem because communication questions set in reality therapy can be adapted based on the location. For example, Wubbolding suggests that this sentence “what do you want?” can be replaced with “what are you looking for?”, “what would you like to have happen today that is different from what has happened before?” can be replaced with “what do you want from me, your therapist?”

Kim (2002) did research to evaluate the effectiveness of a program based on reality therapy with primary school children in Korea. This research was conducted in an experimental way. Research subjects were chosen at random. There were 13 school children in the experimental group and 12 school children in the control group. The instrument used to evaluate effectiveness of the Responsible Behavior Choice Program (RBCP) is Internal Locus of Control and Social Responsibility.

Pre and post tests were used to evaluate that effectiveness. The focus during modules in that program were on basic needs, control, responsibility, entire behavior and choice. Eight sessions were held in this program. Session 1 focused on exploring needs of group members by asking them to draw their needs on a paper. Session 2 discussed about the quality world which is exploring about what is the real need of group members. In Session 3, the counselor provided activities to explore client’s entire behavior. In session 4, the counselor discussed differences among individuals. In Session 5, the counselor gave activities to finish questions, as an example “if I’m like this ………… I will be happy”. Session 6 included role plays among group members. In Session 7, the counselor discusses choices of group members and responsibility, and the counselor and group members do an evaluation in final session.

A finding from Kim’s (2002) research shows that there is a positive improvement from the Responsible Behavior Choice Program (RBCP) program towards Internal Locus of Control and Social Responsibility among members of the experimental group. This means there are significant differences between control group and experimental group towards manipulated control and responsibility.

**Communication relationship in Japan**

Goshi (1984) says that traditionally Japan is actually rich with unique culture. Whereas, within the last few years, culture has become more open with learning from eastern and western cultures. In Japan, Masaki Kakitani has led the development of reality therapy by the William Glasser Institute, Japan which he has opened. Development of this therapy is touched on by Alfie Kohn (1993) in a book titled *Punished by Rewards*.

One of the reasons for differences between western and Japanese culture is language. In western culture, communicators can explain with clarity about what they think. Individuals and communities there can accept criticism and comment in good manner, although it’s painful. It’s very different from Japanese communication, which cares a lot for language. Assertive communication is not suitable, especially between children and adults or between employee and employer. This is because Japan’s culture always respects elderly people or authority people (Wubbolding, 2002).

In America, the relationship between a counselor and client is democratic. It’s different from Japan’s culture where counselors are seen as people with authority. A person who would like to be an assistant or counselor to a client in Japan must be respected highly by the community. Goshi (1984) adds that feeling of respect is very important to have a good communication process. With this way, the counselor is enabled to enter the quality world which is owned by the client.

Helping strategies using the WDEP method must be modified based on Japanese culture. In the West, direct questioning can be done to explore a client’s need. It’s very different from the culture in Japan. To explore a client’s need in Japan, it needs deep belief by the client. Sometimes, questions that are asked are not direct to the real meaning. A counselor uses non-direct questions to...
maintain a counseling relationship in order to improve the depth of a counseling relationship. A counselor's confrontation skills may threaten a client. Other than that, teaching assertiveness to a client also is not an easy matter. Many feelings have to be considered in Japanese culture. So counselors should be sensitive towards a culture which the client owns.

Research on locus of control and student's needs of satisfaction in Taiwan

Peterson, Chang and Collins (1997) examined the relationship between reality therapy groups with locus of control among students in Taiwan. That research used experimental research which involves pre and post test methods. Research subjects were 217 bachelors' degree students from various universities in Taiwan. Subjects were randomly divided into counseling group, lesson group and control group. Control group applied choice theory for 8 weeks whereas counseling group received 2 hours each week for 8 weeks.

With use of statistical protocol including ANCOVA, this research showed that the control group had a significantly higher external locus of control compared with the treatment group. Findings also showed that there was no significant difference between treatment groups. Other than that, there are no differences between genders in this research. Peterson, Chang and Collins (1997) suggest that future research could use a combination of lessons on choice theory with counseling based reality therapy with research subjects among Asian students. They suggest that this research focus on cultural background and norms when implementing reality therapy with these students.

Peterson, Chang and Collins (1998) again researched the effect of choice theory and reality therapy towards satisfying needs among university students in Taiwan. Researchers used Pete's Pathogram method, which was used as a clinical instrument. This is used to compare desires, duration and achievement on a client's each psychological need. Researchers used factorial design 2x3 with different genders, and consisted of counseling group, lesson group and control group. A pre and post test was administered which used ANCOVA and other statistical instruments.

Research finds showed that client's needs re four psychological factors (fun, freedom, power, love and belonging) were significantly added to through participation in the treatment and counseling group. This treatment counseling session also displayed that there was a big impact on female students, compared with male students in the love and belonging aspect. Whereas, need of power improves among lesson group compared with counseling group. Peterson, Chang and Collins (1998) conclude that counseling and lessons in reality therapy are very effective in treating psychological needs among university students in Taiwan. They suggest combining lesson theory with counseling based reality therapy to get a good result.

From this research, one can conclude that the counselor's role is very important in the treatment of psychological issues among university students in Taiwan. Researchers must take into account cultural aspects and modify reality therapy to do counseling sessions. Religion, culture and norm factors must be taken into consideration by therapists to enable maximum help for clients.

The reality therapy relationship with Christianity in Australia

Dettrick (2004) researched the reality therapy relationship and belief in Christian religion. Reality therapy has been used as filsafat in handling schools in Queensland State School in Australia. Dettrick discussed doubt from the Christian community about the usage of reality therapy as a basic support in the context of school. The issue was how far did Christian counselors use this reality therapy equivalent with their religion. The question is, how can a Christian counselor give a concept of redemption and holy belonging, compared with the correction concept. This issue has been raised because the understanding in Christianity is that there are 4 types:

i) integrated group which believes all realities are from god. Integrating spirituality with different realities is not a big issue so long it does not express different opinions than from the bible.

ii) Non integrated group who believe that is impossible to integrate religion and psychology. This is because the basics are not the same

iii) The third group is the group which view a separation between religion and psychology, which means whoever is having a problem in spirituality can be referred to the bible, whereas those who are having problems such as worry, feeling guilty, feeling not accepted and not safe can be referred to a counselor or a psychologist.

iv) The fourth group agreed that Christian counselors may use psychological counseling without integration with religion.

Dettrick discussed that the second group is the group who reject the psychology idea. Dettrick views that there are similar concepts between reality therapy and the bible. One example is the concept of choice. Reality therapy stress on choice and the bible which also stresses the same matter is foremost in loving in god and human love. The same thing is found in the reality therapy process which appreciates client's choice, and explores the basic needs of clients which include love, recognition, happiness, freedom and continue life span. According to Dettrick, reality therapy can become a model in Christianity to organize counseling. Finally, Dettrick agreed that reality therapy can be applied with the need in Christian religion.
Discussion and conclusion

The writers conclude that many Muslim counselors have a strong akidah. This is important for the Muslim counselors for their strategy of being used as an assistant for help. The changes in a client's life depend with hidayah from the creator Allah so that it is important for Muslim counselors to return to Allah if they found it difficult in handling the counseling session based on reality therapy.

At the same time the writers also discussed how reality therapy is suitable in the application in other countries such as Korea, Japan and Taiwan. The counselor uses different contexts of culture in handling reality therapy. This refers that religious factors, culture and living style will justify their importance in the application of this therapy.

Lastly, this shows that choice theory and reality therapy have universal attributes, and these can be interpreted in any religion or culture. Choice theory through its basic concepts can be used with anyone all over the world (Glasser, 1998; 2000a, 2001; Glasser & Glasser, 1999; Wwbbolding, Al-Rashidi et al. 1998). Wwbbolding, Al-Rashidi et al. 1998 stress that counselors, supervisors or the users of reality therapy should have the capability and be able to handle counseling sessions with awareness of multicultural issues, including knowledge and experience on clients’ culture. What is important in therapy is to understand and respect the surrounding of clients so that it is challenging for a counselor to use reality therapy as an approach to help clients.

REFERENCES


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Counseling: Using Metaphorical Narratives

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ABSTRACT

This purpose of this paper is to describe metaphorical narratives that could provide assistance to clients in dealing with their problems. Metaphorical stories have been used to alleviate emotional problems (Burns, 2001) and give meaning to the lives of those with a chronic physical illness (Quinn, Barton, & et al, 1995). Most of us have experienced challenging moments when we asked for strength or for other qualities or traits, not realizing that we immediately received what we asked for. We may not have received the strength, but at that moment we certainly received the opportunity to work on it. It takes courage to recognize the positives in the negatives, to see the teacher in the criminal, and to recognize the learning moments and the opportunities to get what you have asked for as long as you do not stare yourself blind on a desired specific outcome. The following narratives have been chosen to enhance internal control.

Traveling to the chosen destination

Like most journeys, there needs to be an agreement on the destination. Choices are to be made on the paths to follow. There are no right or wrong choices. Although some routes may take considerable more traveling time, they may be smooth and easy to follow. Others can be much shorter, but challenging and testing physical and mental strength.

Notwithstanding the route options available, it is advisable to minimize baggage to be carried during the journey. There is no need to carry unnecessary items from the past since they will slow down speed and drain energy that is required for moving forward. Courage, fidelity, restraint, generosity, tolerance and forgiveness (Dowrick, 1997) are valuable virtues that can assist in reducing excessive baggage and sticking to the track.

Courage is needed to make decisions on direction or risks, whereas restraint needs to be exercised to focus on the correct course and not to get side tracked by mixing up means to survive with the meaning of the journey. Tolerance of, generosity towards, forgiveness of, and fidelity to oneself and others can be valuable tools to enjoy the trip. Fellow travelers may show the way when being lost, offer to carry luggage when in need of rest, give food when starving, or encourage when losing motivation. Burning the bridges after having used them to cross hurdles is not a good idea, as you could be traveling along a dead-end road.

It is possible that steep rock walls have to be conquered. Standing back and looking up a rock wall helps to get a clear view of the preferred route to follow when aiming to reach for the top. Unfortunately, this picture will get lost when standing at the bottom of this vertical wall. It needs faith to reach out for points of support that cannot be seen when being stuck against the rock wall and being absorbed by details of the wall, but they will be there. Being fearful at this point of time is a sign of lacking faith or trust, and will cause unnecessary stress and waste of energy. It needs courage to take support on the smallest ridge or to cling onto the smallest edge, but it is possible. Although the rocks may hurt and cause scratches when scraping past, opportunities keep arising while wounds heal. It is of no use looking back, because it may cause loss of balance. Also, it is dangerous to become complacent or arrogant when reaching the top since it may lead to lack of support and painful or deadly falls.

When reaching the top, an immense feeling of achievement can be felt. Enjoy the view, the change of perspective, and the lessons learned. Awareness of the experiences and the lessons that were learned can be helpful to understand the meaning of the chosen route.

Suffering: Is there a bigger picture

There were numerous ants running over uneven ground exploring the environment, finding food, and building or restoring their nest when I was walking on a track through the bush and enjoying nature. Suddenly, I noticed that some of the ants were being squashed under the weight of my boots, in the midst of performing their useful tasks, while I was walking. It reminded me of the difficulty of understanding the reason of human suffering. Just imagine that, as ants, human beings are a part of a much bigger multi-dimensional picture. Can sacrifices be accepted as a consequence of a much bigger entity trampling and jeopardizing our human existence when it is carrying out its tasks for reasons we may not entirely understand? It will be of little use to blame the entity as it is for the ants to accuse us when stepping on them or for bacteria or parasites in our bowels to dread us when eating garlic, cloves, ginger and other foods for reasons of well-being.
The challenge of achieving while keeping perspective

Undertaking a huge task that has not been undertaken before can feel like entering a building at night. We may have images of this building among many other buildings, perceptions of how it will look from the inside, and how it will feel to be at the top.

On entering the building, the elevator may be out of order and the staircase may not be found so easily. Lights may be dim and all sorts of useful and less useful items may hinder the way to the stairs. After finding the door to the stairs, the steps may be slippery or steps may be missing. Some of the items you cursed when falling over them when searching for the stairs may prove to be very useful to provide more light, grip and support when heading to the top floor.

Reaching the top can be a wonderful experience, particularly when dawn breaks. Enjoying the view and the feeling of achievement can make it an unforgettable experience. After the first impressions and emotions fade, it may become apparent that some of the surrounding buildings appear taller and nicer than the one we have conquered. However, the taller surrounding structures have to take the brunt and will provide protection when a storm builds up and the weather conditions change for the worst. Enjoy the shelter provided by these taller surrounding buildings and appreciate those who are prepared to take the brunt in life because they often get the attention and receive the criticism. You can still contemplate whether you really want to be on top of another building, but you realize that the view may not be better and that being there may not produce greater feelings of happiness.

Control, stress, limited outcomes and growth

Desiring to achieve a particular outcome in a specific way may lead to exerting excessive control, thereby denying others to learn by experience, and preventing equally effective or even more effective solutions to develop (external control psychology). Also, excessive control can lead to stress and anger, and associated diseases in those who exercise it as well as those who have to endure it (Selye, 1956). Stress and anger can make people blind for options that are available to them and can limit positive outcomes for everyone involved.

Instead of fighting head on to get your way, it may be worth looking at the principles of martial arts such as judo which developed ways of using the momentum of oncoming forces one is exposed to in life. Jigoro Kano, who developed judo (the pliable and gentle way or principal), aimed at perfecting body and mind (Harrington, 1987). The skilful judo player is like the grass in the wind, bending under force but always straightening up and keeping its appearance when the force of the wind diminishes. Being efficient in achieving positive outcomes while using a minimum of energy requires liaison, cooperation and trust. Gradual progress is made by fostering, encouraging, mentoring and accepting other solutions while staying positive and focused. In other words, it is more efficient to avoid direct confrontation and to be a part of the action by nudging the action in its stride, thereby providing opportunities for all parties to learn and understand the process while achieving lasting outcomes that are acceptable to all.

Times for production and times for rest: Make the best of both

There are times that hard work needs to be done in the form of jumping hurdles along the path of life that leads to fulfillment of goals that have been set. There are also times that we have been put to pasture in order to evaluate, refocus and revive. The latter times provide opportunities for orientation, learning from past experiences, awareness of one's purpose and re-energizing. A great deal of energy can be wasted by attempting to jump hurdles that can be circumnavigated, or by clearing them with far too much height. Also, energy can be wasted by not enjoying the times that have been allocated to rest and by continuing to restlessly look for more hurdles that are not there. It may be better to learn to appreciate times that nothing seems to work out, recognizing that these times could be meant for resting.

Times for productive work and rest intertwine. Although productive work and rest both can be associated with feelings of unhappiness at the time of the activity, in hindsight these times can be experienced as very positive. Why is it not possible to enjoy each time as it occurs at that particular moment? Appreciate and learn from times at school, from times that nothing seems to work out, and from times that everything seems to roll along.

Childhood, the child within, and staying positive

Children can be so enthusiastic, honest, genuine, uncomplicated, transparent, warm hearted and forgiving. It is a shame that some children change these precious traits for less positive ones as they grow up. Why is it not possible to acknowledge and nurture the child each person has within? Isn't it easier to say what is meant to be said, hear what is meant to be heard, see what is meant to be seen, feel what is meant to be felt, taste what is meant to be tasted and think what is meant to be thought. How enjoyable would it be not to pretend, to lie and to deceive, and to be the real person that others perceive us to be.

Think what it is to be a happy child and notice the unbridled enthusiasm, sense of belonging, openness, joy, curiosity, trust, acceptance, forgiveness, optimism, and the will to live forever. It is wonderful to see that the glass is half full and not half empty, and to enjoy all days instead of only Saturdays and Sundays. Why miss out on the fun of drinking half a glass or feeling happy every day of the week. William Glasser would say 'The choice is yours!'
Weight and vulnerability

Extra layers of fat as in fatty tissue, money or other assets may provide the cushioning needed to feel less vulnerable. Weight can be thrown around to make an impression or to achieve the desired results in a forceful manner. Also, weight can make it very difficult for others to pass, thereby forcing them to walk in the same direction or risking being squashed. However, excessive fat may lead to poor flexibility, poor circulation of blood, undue stress and not reaching full potential because of premature death.

Like money, fat is essential, but in moderate quantities. Accumulating material that is not directly needed by overeating, hoarding and storing could stagnate the flow of life by stressing the organism and/or the community by depriving parts or sections that have their needs. Good circulation is required to provide all cells of the organism with the life sustaining nutrients they require.

Unfortunately, means and meaning can be mistaken for each other (Frankl, 1978) as progress takes place. It can easily be forgotten that money and status are means and not the ultimate meaning of life. In fact, they can be a hindrance. Cleansing can be an effective way of freeing up excess material. Open up the windows of your organism and allow circulation, trust that excess weight is not warranted to lead a meaningful life. Accept yourself and be happy with whom you are, don’t try to be someone else.

Play of life: Expecting nothing and getting everything

Imagine that there is an opportunity to choose scenarios and roles, and that lessons can be learned from participating in one of the plays of life. Each play has a purpose and each actor has a function. Timing of the desired play that will be staged needs to be correct in order to be relevant to the audience, thereby increasing chance of success. In addition, contracts that are drawn up between players and the director may take into account factors such as role preferences and actors’ talents. It does not make sense for an actor wanting to play the role of Einstein in a play that takes place in the stone age, or when consolidating, which in itself can be an enriching experience that assists in the development of new skills and the establishment of strong foundations that allow for further growth. Enhanced mental and spiritual growth create potential for exploring new avenues and taking on new tasks successfully like the opening of buds and the sprouting of new shoots in springtime. The maturation, beauty and efficiency of function that follow are the highlights of the seasons. This seasonal cycle spirals living creatures to its full potential, and can be compared with the creative ‘sheng’ cycle in the Chinese yin-yang philosophy (Gerber, 2001; Lawson-Wood & Lawson-Wood, 1975).

The emotions that are associated with the different stages in the creative cycle are grief, fear, anger or aggression, joy and sympathy/empathy. Grief can generate fear and fear can generate anger. For example, the death of a spouse may cause a fear of having to live in solitude, and anger because of its personal effect on the grieving individu
ual. Feelings of joy counteract the emotional state of grief and generate feelings of sympathy, which is seen as a broad appreciation and understanding that come forth from well-balanced ideas and thoughts (Gerber, 2001; Lawson-Wood & Lawson-Wood, 1975). Stagnation in this generating cycle may limit the ability to mature and reach the full potential that each individual has. It may limit the formation of roots or branches, and the tree may therefore reach a reduced height or could easily fall over. Although grief is a natural process, at some stage we will have to (be prepared) to let go.

**Freedom through forgiveness: Maximizing potential**

It seems ironic that some people are so adamant on being able to make their own decisions, yet let their lives be dictated by reacting to past or present actions of others. Finding excuses for personal weaknesses, blaming others for one’s failures, setting unrealistic goals that are pursued at all cost, pretending to be different than what one really is, or ever achieving can be signs of lacking freedom. True freedom cannot mean that one is dictated by, for example, past actions that others still have on our self-esteem.

Always fighting to prove being a worthy person, always hungry for more praise, yet never succeeding in enjoying the achievements is not truly being free. Staying in a depressing state by reliving past experiences and blaming others for one’s misfortunes is also not being free. It is a matter of personal choice to detach from past events by forgiving, seeing the bigger picture, and realizing the real meaning and purpose of one’s individual life.

Standing back and obtaining a better view on the situation, and being receptive to what can be learned from painful or difficult situations, can assist in a better understanding of needs, actions and reactions, whether they are right or wrong, and whether they are your own or that of others. Recognizing the function of the different mechanisms people use can provide valuable information on how they act and what drives them. Observing our own needs, desires, actions and inactions, and those of others can be an eye opener and can be seen as a helicopter ride over the fast landscape of our physical and mental surroundings. It may assist in recognizing that there is a degree of freedom, that there are choices, and that there is a responsibility for whatever action or inaction we choose to exert.

Although it may take courage, there is a choice to forgive, to forget and to get on with life. Alternatively, there is a life that is dictated by past experiences, judgments, blame, rivalry, jealousy or other drivers; a life that offers limited choices by keeping memories alive and basing present actions on past experiences, thereby inhibiting the discovery of the meaning of one’s own existence and reaching its fullest potential. True freedom means that all options are available since there are no emotional ties or attachments.

**Achieving maximum results with minimal energy**

A great deal of energy is spent by human beings on surviving, in addition to meeting targets that have been set by themselves or their peers. It can be tempting to roll up the sleeves and start swimming upstream to reach the target head on. A great deal of energy may be required to make progress against a strong current and there is danger of losing progress when resting or when confronted with an obstacle. It can be very hard work and, unfortunately, the destination may never be reached when the flow is too strong and when it forces the individual in the opposite direction.

In the midst of the struggle to survive and to reach targets, it is easy to forget that there is something like “choice”. There are factors that cannot be changed easily, for example, the strength flow of the river. However, it is up to the individual what goals need to be pursued and how they can be approached. Identifying goals that give real meaning to one’s life, prioritizing them, and developing a strategic plan to bring them to realization is a matter of choice. Although swimming with the flow may give the impression that the target is moving away, there is no time and energy wasted on attempting the impossible and trying to beat the odds. Usually there is plenty of time to swim to either side of the river and to go ashore, then to walk back upstream, well past the level of your target, and to re-enter the water and approaching the target while swimming downstream.

It is possible that we lose direction when walking along the river and find ourselves in a hole. Valuable time and energy can be lost by continuing to dig deeper instead of climbing out of the hole and reassessing the situation. Taking time, setting realistic targets and asking for help are not signs of failure, but ensure that goals will be obtained. Also, other swimmers have the opportunity to add meaningful experiences to their existence in this process and may achieve their goals by helping you to reach yours.

Another possibility is that unexpected forces are encountered, for example other individuals may attempt to limit your progress by throwing items at you that you cannot use. Although it may feel like you are not reaching the preferred destination directly, it may be very beneficial to avoid wasting energy by throwing these items back, and use them in a creative way to survive instead (Hoff, 1989, 1993). For example, when pieces of wood are thrown, you can build a raft that can be used to reach your destination. Also, pushing rocks is not always necessary, it is possible to sit on them while relaxing with your feet in the water and enjoying the present moment.

**The unwritten book**

There are different categories of books. Each book is indexed and can be found in its designated section of the
library. Each person that lives represents an unwritten book that is destined to fill one of the shelves eventually. Each book that is completed tells facts and stories that may assist others in reaching their potential. Each chapter in the book reflects a particular phase in life with its options, challenges and achievements. Each word reflects an emotion, an experience, or an activity that made an impression.

It is possible that we have been programmed to fill a particular type of book, for example, with science fiction, art, romance, history, or science. However, it is up to us to determine if its contents are uplifting or sad, exciting or dull, successful or unsuccessful, the history of used options or failed opportunities, resilience or defeat. It is up to us to keep writing positive experiences in the book, experiences that are based on the lessons we have learned, and experiences that can be an example for others.

**Decision making: The consequences**

It can be extremely difficult for us to make a decision for reasons such as not wanting to hurt others or ourselves, and taking the easy way out by failing to make a decision. Lack of courage can prevent us from taking the preferred decision. Ironically, it does not seem to matter what choice is made since either way, there will be suffering involved.

Although some choices can bring on a great deal of immediate suffering, the long-term outcome can be sweet. For example, solving a developing relationship problem can require much energy to get it back on track, but the end result can be a stronger relationship that flourishes and expands to another level. By running away from the relationship altogether, there can be arguments, rejection by others, legal battles and the risk that no lessons are learned to prevent a next mishap. All of these factors can cause stress and pain.

Perhaps there are no wrong or right decisions, but each choice provides learning opportunities because of the consequences that are attached to it. Like negative and positive addiction, learning opportunities come at a cost. It seems that decisions can either give immediate gratification and eventual pain, or immediate pain and eventually a deep gratification that enhances physical, mental and spiritual well-being. Either way, it is up to individuals to decide how their energy is spent and at what cost.

**Metaphorical understanding of the garden**

There are several lessons to be learned from working in the vegetable garden (Glyck, 1998). Although the provision of physical (compost) and mental (care) nutrients assists in growth, it may be necessary to let the land rest for a while or to transfer plants to a different part of the garden. Rest and change of scenery can be rejuvenating. At times, space needs to be made by weeding certain activities out of our life in order to make space for others that need nurturing. Weeds compete for food, restrict growth and have a negative influence on the crop.

Planting different vegetables together can be very beneficial because of reasons such as cross-fertilization and disease control. Similarly, there are people and activities that go well together and that complement or supplement each other. There are also plants that don’t mix well and that have a negative influence on each other. Although this needs to be respected, it is possible to grow them in the same garden by giving them the space they need.

When maturing, some plants need a stick to lean on in order to prevent them from buckling under their weight. It is quite acceptable to have something in life that holds you up and provides support. Support can be happily provided by neighboring plants. It may even be their only purpose. Accepting help from others in order to blossom and to bear fruit is definitely not shameful, but a wise move that justifies existence to those who provide support as well as those who receive it.

**Bringing good intentions into practice: The test**

How often does it happen that we learn by direct experience, and bitterly fail each time when it is put to the test to bring into practice that which we have learned from the experience. For example, after a period of racing through dense traffic and feeling stressed and exhausted, one may come to the realization that traveling at a relaxed pace does not take that much longer at all. The perceived benefits may include many moments that can be used to reflect or focus while waiting for traffic lights, and arriving at the destination in a relaxed and focused state. The good intentions that are made on the moment, however, are quickly forgotten when they are put to the test as driving behind a driver that is just a little slower than was hoped for and who cannot be passed due to oncoming traffic. Also, the good intentions can easily be forgotten when road works are encountered that force traffic to slow down or to stop for a relatively long period of time.

Good intentions can be made after taking on too much work, developing health problems, experiencing relationship problems at home or at work, or being stressed by wanting more and more in order to feel important. Perhaps it has something to do with synchronicity. It seems that each time a good intention is made, it is immediately tested in a practical situation. Although it can be a challenge to pass each test, it can be done!

**Living water: Trusting to go with the flow**

Water forms a substantial part of our physical makeup, yet many human beings find it difficult to trust the cycle of living water. When water droplets are suspended in the atmosphere, they are driven together as clouds. We don’t have to worry about where we have to go and what we have to do, because we will be born as raindrops or
snowflakes where the pressure is low and where we are needed for the time being. Although different in appearance, raindrops and snowflakes are equally important in sustaining life. There is no need to be jealous or to worry about the path in life, whether we will be stored for a while and enjoy some rest or not, because we will be carried through many waterways and may be needed for many different purposes along the way. Initially, the path may be narrow and winding and we may have to plunge down huge waterfalls, but gradually the path may become smooth along wide and slow moving rivers. Eventually, all of us will finish in the almighty ocean that is located below all the waterways and where everyone is equal. We will be waiting to be lifted again to renew the cycle of living water.

Accepting and loving the present moment

It is odd that there are young people who do their utmost in looking older than they really are without having the experience, social skills and responsibilities that go with advanced age. It is also odd that there are adults who wish to appear much younger than they really are, thereby forgetting times of insecurity, and feelings of rejection and low self-esteem. Why is it so difficult to enjoy the present moment and to appreciate the unique qualities that give opportunities to the young and that made possible the realities behind those who advance in years (Frankl, 1978).

Why do people with black hair want to be blond? Why do those who are small want to be tall? Why do we not realize that those attributes cause us to perceive the world in our unique way. For example, your voice depends on the size of the voice box and vocal cords, the resonance of your skull, and your view of the world depends on your height, the size of your nose and whether you are visually impaired (Hunt, 1996). Why is it so difficult for some to recognize and appreciate the beauty from inside, and the unique qualities each person possesses. Pretending to be someone other than who you really are, imitating others who you secretly admire or openly criticizing those who may resemble your shadow is denying your potential to progress in life. Blaming and criticizing others for what they have done is denying responsibility for one’s (in)actions and the opportunity to learn from them.

Perhaps there is a different way of looking at the world, accepting that some things do not warrant change, and recognizing that each situation is perfect and provides learning opportunities. Maybe one of the secrets of happiness is to live in the present moment, to know that the qualities we possess have been given or chosen so that we can experience the world in our own way and achieve specific goals that we have agreed upon (Myss, 2001).

One of the beautiful stories in the “Tao of Pooh and Te of Piglet” by Hoff (1989; 1993) underscores acceptance and loving the present moment. It is about a stone carver who wants to have more power and respect by being a public servant who everyone has to look up to. The hot sun torments the public servant during his journey and he desires to be a cloud since it can take away the sun’s heat. When the wind drives the clouds away, he thought that it was more powerful to be an immovable rock that can withstand the wind. Finally he realizes that … a stone carver is even stronger than rock.

Further metaphorical reading

For those who like metaphorical stories and affirmations, there are books that are easy to read and that contain parables (Hoff, 1989, 1993). Other books contain healing stories that are based on the use of metaphors during counseling sessions (Burns, 2001), or give insight in possible archetypes that may assist in understanding individual response patterns and chosen routes in life (Myss, 2001).

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Introducing the “Basic Needs Genogram” in Reality Therapy-based Marriage and Family Counseling

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this article is to address how a genogram can be incorporated in Reality Therapy based family counseling. We will review the core tenets of Reality Therapy, the general therapeutic use of genograms, while introducing the Basic Needs Genogram. Secondly, we will provide a case example to illustrate the use of the Basic Needs Genogram to a family. Finally, we will offer our final thoughts about the therapeutic implications of this intervention tool.

Introduction to Choice Theory

Choice Theory, developed by William Glasser, is an internal control psychology (1998). Human behavior is guided by internal factors. Glasser (1998) postulates all human behavior is a choice, and said choices are driven by internal instincts and basic needs. A component of Choice Theory is the concept of a “quality world” or a “picture album.” Throughout a life span, individuals consign things of value such as relationships, beliefs, and cultural rituals to create an ideal picture of a world in which they aspire to live. Human behavior and choice are an individual’s attempt to align experiences with quality world vision (Glasser, 1998; Wubbolding, 2000). According to Glasser (1998), the basis of misery for many people is the lack of healthy relationships with those individuals in a person’s “quality world” or “picture albums.” Woven within the “picture album” are five basic needs intrinsic to all humans. These basic needs are satisfied or thrown off balance by choices made to create the ideal “picture album.” The five basic needs in all people are survival or self-preservation, love and belonging, power or self-worth, freedom or independence and fun or enjoyment.

The core and most physiologically based need is survival or self-preservation. Survival occurs by staying alive through basic physiological behaviors. The need for love and belonging focuses on relationship of mutuality, giving and taking, belonging and connectivity within ones family and support system. Power is the drive and instinct for accomplishment, self-worth and competence. Freedom or independence centers on the need for autonomy and opportunity of choice. Fun and enjoyment is the need for humor, activity and pleasure. The described basic needs are interconnected; although depending on the individual do not require equal attention (Glasser, 1998; Wubbolding et al. 2004, Wubbolding, 2000). Some individuals have a greater need for fun while others have a higher need for freedom or independence. However, in order for individuals to be in balance, They strive to meet all basic needs to their degree of satisfaction. The choices made by individuals to meet the basic needs will directly impact their psychological balance. When individuals see that they are getting what they want from the outside world, their immediate wants and basic needs are satisfied. When an individual perceives a disparity between what is desired for and what he or she is receiving, the individual is “motivated” to make a behavioral choice that influences his or her external world (Wubbolding, 2000). That is, “from this perspective, behavior serves a purpose, which is to close the gap between what a person wants and what a person has in the given moment” (Wubbolding, 2000 pg. 21).

Choice Theory tenders the theoretical foundations of practice for Reality Therapy. Reality Therapy is the path for therapists to work with clients on assessing needs fulfillment, effectiveness of behavior and growth toward behavior change (Wubbolding et al. 2004).

Reality Therapy

Reality Therapy is based on the principles of Choice Theory; furthermore, it is used as a means in therapy to facilitate problem solving. In the late 1980’s, Robert Wubbolding developed an acronym congruent with Reality Therapy techniques. The WDEP represents a group of ideas and choice of possible therapeutic interventions within the Reality Therapy framework. The W corresponds to the process of counselors assisting clients in examining what they are seeking in counseling. The D encourages the counselor and client to explore what the clients are actively doing to meet their basic needs. The E is the evaluative component. The counselor assists the client in a self-evaluative process that examines level of commitment to change. The final intervention in the acronym is the P representing the plan. The counselor and client develop a plan of action both immediate and longer term to assist the clients in working to balance their psychological wants and basic needs. The WDEP is not a linear process. The therapist often times, within a single session or multiple sessions, relies on the revisitation of the WDEP component (Wubbolding, 2000; Wubbolding et
Choice Theory and Reality Therapy are utilized with individuals, groups, in schools and with families and couples in counseling. The focus of this article is the examination of these principles in couples counseling. Primarily the use of Choice Theory and Reality Therapy with couples and families is grounded in the examination of individual wants and basic need satisfaction within the relationship. Reality Therapy assists couples and families as a whole in problem solving and awareness of needs and the integration of one another in individual "picture albums" (Glasser, 1998; Wubbolding, 2000).

Reality Therapy in Family Counseling

According to Wubbolding (1988) when family or marital discord exists, so will an incongruence or lack of commonality between and among the wants or "picture albums" of each family member. As a reminder, these "picture albums" hold images of how each person wishes to fulfill the five basic needs. All families entering counseling initially meet two conditions. First, one individual wants the other family member(s) to match his or her own pictures. Secondly, this individual (the one wanting the match) is unwilling to change this want.

The Three Stages of Marital and Family Counseling within a Reality Therapy Context

Within a Reality Therapy framework, marriage and family counseling takes place over three stages with the goal of family and marriage counseling being to help members increase the overlap or commonality of their "picture albums" or the ways in which they perceive getting their needs met. The stages include: (a) assessment, (b) intervention, and (c) action. In the first stage, family members are encouraged to define and evaluate the following information: (a) their individual wants; (b) the family's (or couple's) wants; (c) their perceptions about the other family members and about the family in general (i.e., what is working and what is not, context of arguments, alliances, what is hurting and helping the family); and (d) expectations for counseling. In stage 2, various interventions can occur including psychoeducation (about how to build strong relationships), disrupting alliances, heightening anxiety, and teaching new ideas (Wubbolding, 1988). Finally, in the third stage, family members evaluate and carry out a plan. Readers may review Chapter 8 in Wubbolding's (1988) text. Using Reality Therapy for a thorough review of the three stages suggested for marriage and family counseling.

The "Basic Needs Genogram"

An Introduction

Genograms have been used historically to illustrate the emotional patterns within a family unit that are typically repeated from generation to generation (Papero, 1990). Patterns include basic emotions and feelings, as well as subjectively determined values, attitudes, and beliefs. A genogram used within an intergenerational framework provides a foundation from which clients and counselors can talk about emotional patterns affecting or contributing to their present symptoms or presenting problem (Gilbert, 2006). Further, the use of genograms often brings clients to greater insight, awareness, and understanding about their own interpersonal patterns, as well as the communication patterns between themselves and others. In addition, greater mental clarity about such familial influences provides clients with a basis from which to challenge and change how they interpret the world, as well as how they behave.

Over time, therapists have integrated and applied genograms as an intervention tool in various clinical settings (Magnuson & Shaw, 2003). For example, genograms appear beneficial in couples counseling to address sexual, intimacy, and conflict related concerns. Additionally, therapists have constructed genograms as a part of family counseling, in treating symptoms associated with parental separation and divorce, re-marriage, grief, while also eliciting family strengths. Lastly, counselors have incorporated genograms in individual counseling, as an intervention tool in treating addictions, religious-spiritual, sexuality, and career and academic related concerns.

The Basic Needs Genogram

We believe that the Basic Needs Genogram will allow individuals, as well as family members, to consider how current and past generational patterns influence the formation of their "picture albums." Moreover, this intervention tool might help clients challenge and modify their "picture albums" in ways that bring greater accord and commonality among their interpersonal relationships. In order to illustrate how the Basic Needs Genogram can be instrumental in heightening one's awareness and insight about the construction of one's "picture album," we ask that you take part in a brief self-assessment. First, consider the five basic needs and evaluate the strength you, personally, attribute to each of those needs.

Next, consider how you think about satisfying those needs and what you do to satisfy those needs. For example, consider that your need for self worth and power is very high. How has your family (throughout the generations) informed you about why feeling empowered, competent, and valued is so important? Who else in your family (or extended family) has a similar degree of need for self worth and power? How has this need been trans-
mitted across the generations (i.e., through family tradition, rules, work ethic, expectation)? Consider how you satisfy this need. What do you do to be recognized, to achieve, to feel competent and “worth it”? How are these behaviors the same to other members in your family? What happens to persons in your family who don’t have such a high need for self-work and power? What are the motivators within your family system for maintaining power and autonomy, and for being valued?

Thirdly, how does your need for self-worth and power, and how you are meeting this need interfere or contribute to your present relationships with family members? Do your goals in meeting this need overlap with the overall goals of any given relationship in which you are involved? Is this overlap or lack thereof a common pattern among your family members intergenerationally? How do members alter their need for self-worth and power or the ways in which they satisfy this need to get along better with family members?

After much discussion regarding the intergenerational influences on one’s basic needs and how such needs alter and contribute to familial relationships, clients can consider a plan regarding how to change or alter their need strength and ways in which to achieve satisfaction so as to bridge and repair family-related problems (e.g., strains in relationship). For the purpose of this article, however, our focus remains on the introduction of the Basic Needs Genogram rather than how it contributes to the third stage of the marriage and family counseling process.

**Case Conceptualization**

**Presenting Problem**

Bob and Donna entered counseling after 20 years of marriage. Bob is career oriented and a top executive at a large law firm. Donna is a stay at home mother of three boys, ages 15, 17, 19. For the past year, Donna has been feeling disconnected to Bob. Bob works long hours, leaving the house by 6:00 am and often times not returning until 7:30 pm. Based on the demands of his job he works most weekends. Prior to this year, Donna has focused a great deal of time and energy on parenting her sons. Lately, her sons seem distant. One son has left the home for college, one is preparing for graduation from high school, and the youngest is involved in many social friendships and activities, and often absent from the home. Now that her sons are “disengaging,” Donna feels isolated and lonely. She indicates she has been satisfied with her life and roles for the past nineteen years; however, for the first time she is feeling sad and abandoned most of the time. Bob reports he has encouraged Donna to seek a part-time job or hobby to fill her time.

Tension in the relationship exists. Bob indicates he does not have enough time to “entertain” Donna. He feels she is constantly complaining and nagging him about being more intimate and connected. Bob thinks Donna is acting like a “child” and needs to take responsibility for at least some of her happiness. Bob feels a great deal of stress and pressure from work and home and reports being at the “breaking” point. He indicates he cannot spend his energy worrying if Donna is enjoying herself, as he has “real” responsibilities needing attention. He does not see a problem in their marriage; nevertheless, to appease Donna he agrees to counseling.

**Course of Treatment**

The following illustrates how a therapist in couples counseling can use the basic needs genogram, consistent with Reality Therapy principles, to bring about a better understanding between a couple regarding their “picture albums.” The case example will illustrate how the therapist can lay a foundation using the basic needs genogram to open up communication patterns between Donna and Bob and to facilitate the appreciation of varying levels of needs in a relationship. First, the goal of marriage and family counseling is to provide an environment where each spouse and family member can self-evaluate what he or she is willing to do to bring out the best in one another concurrently with significantly decreasing the use of external control (Glasser & Glasser, 2007). The deadly relationship habits related to external control undoubtedly have surfaced in Bob and Donna’s relationship. Such habits include “criticizing, blaming, complaining, nagging, threatening, punishing, and bribing or rewarding to control” (Glasser & Glasser, 2007, p. 68). These attitudes and behaviors have enormous power to contaminate each family member’s need for love and belonging, freedom, fun, power, and even threaten health and overall physiology. However the antidote for external control and promote movement towards a satisfying marriage and family life, is to choose attitudes and behaviors related to supporting, encouraging, listening, accepting, trusting, respecting, and negotiating differences (Glasser & Glasser, 2007).

There is a high probability that Bob and Donna’s initial marital and/or family session will be problem saturated. That is, they will likely complain about each other and want each other to change. Furthermore, there is a high likelihood that their marital conflicts systemically influence their adolescent children’s behaviors. Seemingly, the best way to help the entire family is to strengthen the marital subsystem.

Conducting a genogram can be beneficial to diffuse their strong emotions, cultivate empathy, and facilitate understanding of the devastating relational consequences of external control. This can set the stage to begin to evaluate the following: (a) what each partner wants, (b) what attitudes and behaviors are most likely to bring each other closer, and (c) a mutually agreed upon need satisfying plan of action.
Reality Therapists advocate “looking at the past but not staring at it” (Wubbolding, 2008, personal communication). Although the therapeutic process will ultimately focus on the present and future, conducting a genogram can enable participants to become more aware of attitudes and behaviors that lend themselves to a satisfying picture of marriage and family life. The following questions have the potential to help Bob and Donna understand what has been more or less helpful in past familial relationships:

1. Describe the closest family relationships in the past three generations in your family?
2. What specific attitudes and behaviors were chosen that contributed to the stated healthy relationships?
3. Describe the most distant and conflictual relationships in the past three generations in your family?
4. What specific attitudes and behaviors were chosen that eroded these relationships?
5. Describe how specific family members in previous generations sought to obtain significance and power in useful ways?
6. Describe how specific family members in previous generations sought to gain significance and power in ways that were damaging to the family?
7. What attitudes and behaviors led to the erosion of these relationships?
8. What family rituals in the past were valued and enjoyed the most?
9. What did specific family members in past generations successfully do to overcome adversity?
10. How did specific family members in past generations unsuccessfully deal with adversity?
11. What family members in past generations made healthy choices that strengthened their overall health and physiology?
12. What have family members in past generations chosen to do that have led to health and physiological problems.
13. What was your picture of a wonderful family life on your wedding day?

Following a discussion of Bob and Donna's genogram, the stage is now set to apply the WDEP (i.e., Wants, Doing or Direction, Evaluation, and Plan) system to explore their current relationship and vision of an optimal future. This can be accomplished by conducting the following:

1. Exploration of wants, needs, and perceptions related to each family member’s quality world that will include unfulfilled and fulfilled needs.

Useful questions to ask Bob and Donna may include; however, are not limited to the following:

1. What is your vision of a satisfying marriage?
2. What has worked in the past to bring you two closer together?
3. What can you do to bring out the best in your spouse?
4. What can you do to become more trustworthy in your marriage?
5. How does each want to be treated and what can you do to treat your spouse with respect?
6. How can you be supportive of each other’s differing needs?
7. What type of encouragement does your spouse want and need?
8. How do you feel when you are closer to each other?
9. What are you willing to do more of and less of to better meet each other's needs?

Summary

We purport that Reality Therapy coupled with the use of a genogram has the potential to help Bob and Donna in various ways. For example, using a genogram provides a springboard for more in depth conversation about each other's needs and wants. Learning about one another's family history can provide clues about why each partner needs or wants what he or she is expressing. Consequently, genograms can provide greater opportunities for understanding and empathy on the part of the other spouse. Through ongoing dialogue, each partner will learn ways of meeting each other's needs, which will serve as a positive model for their adolescent children. Through behavioral shifts, each partner can become more need fulfilling which can essentially lead to an increase in positive feelings toward each other. Finally, through education, both Bob and Donna will be more prone to incorporate aspects of Reality Therapy that can help them with future challenges (Wubbolding, 2000).
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Using Glasser's Choice Theory To Understand Vygotsky

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ABSTRACT

Provides a brief review of Lev Vygotsky's theory of sociocultural cognitive development, including its three main elements - culture, language, and social interaction - and the three concepts that must be understood and applied in order for cognitive development to proceed effectively - the Zone of Proximal Development, scaffolding, and psychological tools. Reviews Glasser's Choice Theory, and discusses how it can be used to facilitate the implementation of Vygotsky's recommendations. Concludes with examples of how a classroom could be structured to achieve maximum cognitive development in students.

As educators strive to continually improve our understanding of how students learn, we naturally study the works of various cognitive theorists. While Piaget's theories have long been preeminent, another theorist has become increasingly important in our efforts to better understand learning. Lev Vygotsky (1896 – 1934) formulated his theory of sociocultural cognitive development while working in the Soviet Union. As a result, although he was a contemporary of Piaget, his work only became known in the West in the 1980s. Vygotsky's work has much to add to current educational practice, and William Glasser's Choice Theory helps us better understand how sociocultural cognitive development proceeds.

Vygotsky's theory proposes that cognitive development proceeds through three main elements: culture, language and social interaction (Vygotsky, 1978). While culture is deemed most important, language and social interaction are viewed as the means by which culture drives cognitive development. Of these two means, social interaction is the element that we are more concerned with here. Language functions as the facilitator of social interaction, and that interaction is then the means through which culture fosters cognitive development.

Vygotsky also identifies three concepts in particular which should be understood and applied in order for cognitive development to proceed effectively. The first is the Zone of Proximal Development. This zone describes the range of difficulty of tasks that are too hard for the learner to complete alone, but can be completed successfully with the appropriate assistance of someone more knowledgeable. Thus, according to Vygotsky, cognitive development will only occur when a learner is confronted by a task that lies within the zone. If a task is easy enough for the learner to complete alone, then no cognitive development will occur (although gains in fluency and accuracy may well accrue through repetition). Also, if a task is too hard for a learner to complete successfully, even with assistance, no cognitive development will occur.

The second concept that Vygotsky identifies is that of scaffolding, which describes the nature of the assistance given by the more knowledgeable person. As a learner completes a task within the Zone of Proximal Development (with assistance), cognitive development is greatest if the level of assistance is large at first, and then gradually reduced as the learner's skill improves. Eventually, the learner will be able to complete the task alone, at which time cognitive development will only continue if that task is replaced with another, more complex, task which is tailored to the new Zone. (As mentioned earlier, repetition of a mastered task may result in benefits other than cognitive development.)

The third important concept, that of psychological tools, provides another reason that social interaction is pivotal in cognitive development. Psychological tools are intellectual mechanisms or operations which we use to examine our environment and interact with others. Some examples of psychological tools are formulae, written language, symbols, maps, the scientific method, and oral language (Gredler and Shields, 2004). According to Vygotsky, only through social interaction are these tools shared with learners, thus enabling them to develop more complex and complete understanding of the world.

All three concepts, the Zone of Proximal Development, scaffolding, and psychological tools, require effective social interactions in order to produce cognitive development. However, students do not always know how to foster and participate in social interactions that will result in appropriate cognitive development. Without that relationship knowledge, students will not benefit from the major learning activities in the classroom. Therefore, teachers must assure that students either possess or acquire the appropriate relationship knowledge and abilities.

Using Vygotsky's theory, it is possible to design a classroom which will foster cognitive development through social interaction. Such a classroom would have frequent,
varied activities which make extensive use of language - reading, writing and speaking. Also, social interactions would not only be emphasized, but encouraged and even systematically developed as part of the curriculum. Learners will work frequently in groups, starting with pairs (such as in tutoring arrangements) and progressing to groups of four or five, and even larger as the tasks and student abilities permit. Student discourse will be central to the effective functioning of these groups.

This theory and the concepts it includes, together with the strategies, activities and procedures they inspire, seem so obvious that they might be labeled "common sense." Most, if not all, successful teachers will automatically include Vygotsky's recommendations intuitively, and we might question whether conscious consideration is necessary or even productive. However, the value of this theory is that it draws attention to social interaction as being absolutely necessary to cognitive development, not just beneficial to it. As Vygotsky says, "Through others we become ourselves" (Vygotsky, 1978). To state it another way, if social interaction is absent, then cognitive development does not proceed; if social interaction is inefficient or ineffective, then cognitive development is hindered. What is a teacher to do, then, when social interaction is absent, ineffective or inefficient in the classroom? An understanding of Glasser's Choice Theory provides teachers with the tools necessary to introduce and improve social interactions.

William Glasser, psychiatrist and author, has worked with schools and students since 1956. From his experiences, he has elaborated a theory which explains why people behave the way they do, including learning in school. According to Choice Theory, all behaviors are consciously chosen. In addition, these behaviors are consciously chosen for one specific reason - they are what we perceive to be our best chance at meeting one or more of our five basic needs. Glasser identifies these needs as (in no particular order or hierarchy) survival, love/belonging, power, freedom and fun (Glasser, 1998). In other words, when we experience these needs, we choose a behavior (or combination of behaviors) that we believe will enable us to meet those needs.

The very nature of these five needs determines that meeting most of them requires other people. As Glasser says, "...we are social beings, and to satisfy our needs we must have good relationships" (Glasser, 1998). For example, meeting the need for love and belonging obviously requires other people, by definition. The need for power, which can be described as the need for respect or being listened to, also requires other people. Survival, while it can in some circumstances be achieved alone, requires effective relationships with others in most places around the world. Fun can be had alone, but most of us prefer to be with others when we're having it. Freedom, alone of all the needs, is met through some degree of independence from others.

It is at this point in our consideration of Vygotsky and Glasser that we begin to see how their theories relate to each other. Vygotsky demonstrates how cognitive development is dependent on effective social interactions (relationships). Glasser demonstrates how to make relationships (social interactions) effective. Therefore, as teachers seeking to introduce and promote effective social interactions in our classrooms, we can use Glasser's Choice Theory to develop and support such interactions. How should we proceed?

Assuming we find Vygotsky's theory credible, then we want to use scaffolding to assist students with completing tasks within their Zones of Proximal Development, through which they will acquire the psychological tools they will use to explore their environment and interact with others. All of these processes require effective social relationships to proceed smoothly. How do we develop and promote effective social relationships? Glasser postulates that people engage in social relationships in order to meet the five basic needs. Therefore, if we teach students to help each other meet those needs, then their relationships will be effective, and those relationships in turn will engender cognitive development.

Teaching students to help others meet their needs is not as difficult as it might sound. The first step is to acquaint them with the concept of the five basic needs, and teaching students the basics of Choice Theory is one of the regular practices in a Glasser Quality School (Glasser, 1990). The teacher would explain, in appropriate language, the nature of the needs and give some examples of behaviors that help meet them. Next, (s)he would elicit additional examples from the students, to further clarify the concepts. As an example, the teacher would introduce the need for power, and explain to students that this need can also be understood as the need for respect, for being listened to. Next, (s)he would ask students to recall occasions when they felt respected, or that people were listening to them, and then ask them to recall how that felt. The students will probably reply that it felt good. The teacher would ask them to recall occasions when they felt disrespected or ignored, and how that felt. Most importantly, (s)he would then ask them how they behaved when they felt disrespected or ignored. Students will probably give examples of inappropriate and/or antisocial behaviors.

With the stage set thus, the teacher next asks students how they would prefer their classroom to operate - with everyone in a good mood, or everyone behaving appropriately and antisocially. When students respond honestly (not for joking or amusement purposes) they will say that they want a classroom where everyone is in a good mood. At this point, the teacher can start students thinking about how they can help others meet their need for power, and the other needs as well. As this discussion proceeds, the students and teacher develop together a set of classroom operational guidelines that, when followed by everyone,
will result in effective and efficient social interactions/relationships.

What might such guidelines look like? Regarding the need for freedom – that is, respect, being listened to – some suggestions might be 1) listen when another person is talking, 2) respect personal property and space, 3) treat other people as you'd like them to treat you.

Note that some behaviors help meet more than one need. When this occurs, use it as an opportunity to stress how especially important these behaviors are to creating an enjoyable, needs satisfying classroom. Above all, help students develop the habit (primarily through modeling) of frequently thinking about how they will help themselves and others meet these needs.

The needs for freedom and fun were not discussed in the previous paragraph because students will not find it easy (at least at first) to help others meet them in a classroom context. The teacher will have to take the major responsibility for helping students meet these needs within the classroom. Glasser defines freedom as the ability to make choices (Glasser, 1998). A teacher intent on helping students meet this need would provide many opportunities for students to make choices in a variety of contexts. For example, students might be allowed to choose when during the period or day they work on certain subjects or assignments. Students might be given some choice of which assignment to complete, or which book to read, or which modality to choose for a presentation. Gradually, as choice becomes an integral part of classroom operations (and as students become more aware of how important choice is to them), the teacher can initiate discussions about how students can help provide choices for others in the classroom.

The idea of helping students meet the need for fun in the classroom might create visions of students perpetually partying at school instead of learning. However, it need not be this way. Glasser describes fun as nature’s reward to us for learning something new (Glasser, 1978). Thus, the act of learning generates its own fun. The teacher’s focus now becomes figuring out how not to separate fun from learning (although we have all been in classrooms where the teacher did exactly that). The activities that students identify as fun vary greatly. Generally, these activities share one or both of the following characteristics: they involve students actively, not passively, and they are challenging, as opposed to repetitive and boring. So, by structuring classroom teaching to include such activities, teachers can help students to meet their need for fun. As students become more familiar with how intimately fun and learning are connected, they can generate ideas for new activities in the classroom, and so begin to help other students meet their need for fun.

A teacher who embraces both Vygotsky’s and Glasser’s theories would create a classroom that focuses on effective social relationships as a key component of cognitive development. (S)he would greet students enthusiastically, ask about their interests and concerns, and attend after-school events. The teacher would involve students in setting the rules and operating procedures of the classroom, and participating in the classroom, and students have become at least somewhat skilled at helping themselves and their classmates meet the five needs. What would social interactions/relationships look like in that room? We could

Imagine that a teacher has implemented the preceding suggestions in the classroom, and students have become at least somewhat skilled at helping themselves and their classmates meet the five needs. What would social interactions/relationships look like in that room? We could
probably predict that the relationships would be not only effective, but enjoyable as well. Under these conditions, scaffolding and the transfer of psychological tools will proceed efficiently, and the desired cognitive development will occur.

Both Vygotsky's sociocultural cognitive development theory and Glasser's Choice Theory are more complex and detailed than can be described here. However, the basic relationship is clear. Using the tenets of Choice Theory, teachers can equip students with the knowledge and skills to create and foster the social interactions that Vygotsky deems so essential to cognitive development. Indeed, Choice Theory provides the key concepts necessary to our understanding of how critically important effective social interactions are to cognitive development. Without Choice Theory, teachers are left in the unsatisfactory position of depending on social interactions without knowing how to produce them.

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Choosing to Love: Basic Needs and Significant Relationships

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ABSTRACT

This article is a continuation of the article that appeared in the Spring 2008 issue of this Journal

Need fulfillment is a process which is operationalized through behaviors. Each person must meet his or her basic needs. A significant relationship is need fulfilling and expressed through the strength of the connection between mind, body and spirit. The more balanced these components, the more reflective of need fulfillment is the relationship. In order to be loving, one must love oneself. In order to love oneself, one needs to responsibly meet one's needs. In order to develop the significant relationship, one must contribute to the other's picture of significance. The relationship if it is to succeed must be need fulfilling.

Optimally, need fulfillment considers each partner. Although the process of meeting one or more needs is continuous, the relationship must fulfill each need. That is, you meet each need concurrently with the other. The personality is, in the final analysis, the method by which each person fulfills needs. According to Glasser (1998), "The personalities of some couples are different but complementary, that is, the differences enhance the relationships. But in my observation, the best marriages are ones in which the husband and wives have similar personalities" (p. 92). One of the most outward expressions of similar personalities is friendship. The most important gift is the giving of friendship. At its pinnacle, loving is a journey which leads to the destination of close friendship. According to Glasser (1995), "Close friendship is built on a lot of comfortable hugging, kissing, and caressing, talking to each other easily and enjoyably, sharing common interest, and, especially, doing things together where there is some learning and improvement" (p. 119). This friendship is both the precursor and the sustainer of significant relationships. Each of the basic needs must be fulfilled to develop a close friendship. Developing close friendships can lead to developing loving behaviors.

The objective of loving behaviors is to prepare for the moment that transforms into a significant relationship. The significant relationship is holistic. The whole relationship is both physical and spiritual. The spiritual component is operationalized in loving that is not only for this life (physical), but also for the eternal. Many are confused in the sense that they believe that what has been joined physically is never to be disconnected. The physical is but one component of the relationship. It is that part that is observable and obvious. It is a series of seeming small events that join together to make a chain. This chain is a series of steps that lead to the end point. The end point, it must be remembered leads to the satisfaction of total need for love. According to Glasser (1965), "When we cannot satisfy our total need for love, we will withhold fail, suffer and react with many familiar psychologic symptoms, from mild discomfort, through anxiety to depression to complete withdrawal from the world around us" (p. 10). In the relationship, each needs to express or behave as if the other is needed. If you give up on or another, you begin to do more without the other. Giving up behaviors reifies that one can manage alone. The longer you engage in activities without others, the more likely you are to end up alone. It is possible to discover that joy and acceptable need fulfillment can be found in solitude. Alone behavior is unbalanced belonging. The longer we are unbalanced, the less successful in relationships we become. This is unhappiness.

A successful search for happiness can be blocked by non-need fulfilling behaviors. When partners don't share pictures in their quality world, they experience frustration. It is to note that noncongruent pictures can be expressed as frustration. This frustration is framed as being our love. The more pictures partners share, the deeper partners may perceive themselves as being in love. When the share these pictures, they usually share many of the tot behaviors required to meet their basic needs. This is to posit that having different pictures precludes the development of a loving relationship. It is to proffer that having different pictures require partners to work harder developing and keeping the loving relationship.

The search for a balance within the loving relationship is blocked by non-need fulfilling behaviors. In a non need fulfilling relationship, one or both partners choose to focus on the external. They resort to injustice inherent to the relationship. Balance requires a need to act when we become aware of unbalance. This does not mean that loving cannot be rekindled, it simply means that to be in love again requires commitment. Both partners must be committed. Admittedly it is easier to just get along and to be cordial than to rekindle the loving. In order to rekindle
the loving, one must be willing to tolerate the fire, the annealing fire of self evaluation and rebirth. This fire may sear and burn while it recreates. Underlying the relationship is love but loving has abated.

The search for significant relationships must be based on a realistic self evaluation (Mickel, 1996). In order to act lovingly, one must be aware of how one’s behavior impacts each person in the relationship. Awareness allows self evaluation. Self evaluation may not result in action but does place one in a position to act upon the results. According to the Dalai Lama (1999), “It is far more useful to be aware of a single shortcoming in ourselves than it is to be aware of a thousand in somebody else. For when the fault is our own, we are in a position to correct it” (p. 153). Without self evaluation, it is highly likely there will be no action. The focus must be self correction rather than partner blame. The outcome is to understand why we feel, act, think and have physical conditions the way we do. What are the pictures in our quality world? Where are the error signals emanating from? What is the corrective action? Out of conflict can and must come a minimum a desire for consensus, if the relationship is to work. Self evaluation requires each partner to do at least three things: Be aware of their own pictures, become aware of the significant other’s pictures, and develop joining pictures. When these three activities are accomplished, the relationship tends toward significance. Significant relationships require that each partner place the relationship above individual wants.

Marriage/partnership is a present or a problem.

To love is good. To be loved is better. To love and be loved is best. Loving as a constant becomes real through acting, thinking, feeling and physical aspects (total behavior) of a shared quality world. In the loving quality world, there are usually many more shared pictures than the couple will use. As we live our lives, we accumulate our loving pictures. These pictures prepare us for our perception of in loving. It is the building of a loving reserve in the quality world. The accumulation of more pictures than we currently use (negative entropy) is necessary for that moment when in loving is threatened. These are the problems (Mickel and Hall, 2008) of loving. Presents are available to counter problems. Presents lead to loving behaviors. In terms of love and belonging, each of us can acquire any number of pictures.

We are born with the ability to love unconditionally. We are reared to love within conditions which are socially and/or culturally structured. We can re-learn to overcome our social and cultural restrictions and strive for perfect loving. The question is what type of love exists? One can transition from in loving behaviors to love behavior. When one encounters problems in the relationship, one can move from agape loving to philia (Felder, 1989 and Washington, 1986). Here the relationship is based on reciprocity. When one uses the presents (Mickel and Hall, 2008), one can move from philia to agape. The loving system will always seek homeostasis. This is a balance of love within or outside of the relationship. Ideally, the system will seek balance in a healthy need fulfilling manner. A healthy relationship is not about how much you have. It is about how much you believe you have. The more we believe it, the truer it is. Loving relationships are the perfect model of the concept of constructivism (Mickel and Liddie-Hamilton, 2002). The world of loving is socially constructed around what we believe. That is, poverty or deprivation is not the key to building poor relationships. The key is disappointment.

If one or both parties believe that they could or should have more than they possess, they are/feel deprived. If the balance is unhealthy, intervention is necessary. Self evaluating for loving is required in the significant relationship. The definition of love maybe is elusive. We may not be able to define the loving relationships but we all know when we have it. The authors posit that one can determine love. It is a measurable, qualitative variable. The couple can operationally define love. For our purposes, you have a loving (or tending to in loving) relationship if you have more presents than problems. Whether or not the behavior is loving or not, balance will be the outcome. The system will not judge the behaviors but acts to achieve balance. It is up to the perceptual system to interject judgment into the type of balance achieved. When one encounters presents in the relationship, one can regain agape loving. The more presents, the more homeostatic (loving) the relationship. Self evaluating will determine through the valuing filter if the behavior is loving.

Spiritual Loving

Spiritual loving is the transforming component of perfect loving. Perfect loving is timeless, no beginning and no end. One cannot remember the moment of transformation to perfect love, that is when it begins or ends. Spiritual loving has staying power. Perfect loving includes mind, body and spirit. It is the love that is both convergent and triangular in the practice. Spiritual loving is need fulfilling. Spiritual loving is pure love. This is the love that is beyond the physical and the mental. It is love based on the existence of the perfect within the imperfect (Mickel and Hall, 2008). The struggle toward perfectibility is the physical attempting to be congruent with the spiritual. The spiritual is that which lasts forever, while the physical is temporary and limited. Spiritual love is loving without boundaries. Its residual exists on the physical plane, but it is in reality on a spiritual plane. The integration of those planes raises the level of consciousness of the participants. A holistic approach widens the sphere of influence and concern. The presents and problems of loving exist on both the physical and spiritual planes. To love physically is limited. It requires only the here and now. To be concerned about meeting today’s needs is the foundation of physical love. To love spiritually requires one to be absent from the confusing body/physical needs and move to a higher plane.
Those who love are connected beyond space and time. Loving spiritually can be overwhelming, if not in the appropriate context. Choosing to love perfectly requires that one practices at fulfilling each of the needs. We must practice fulfilling these needs in the past, present and future. The ability to love outside of time when properly understood is completely satisfying. Practice does not make perfect but perfect in loving practice makes in loving perfect. This is especially true in the realm of spiritual loving. This perfect practice is required to reach perfection. Perfection requires a focus on loving. To be perfect in loving, one must aspire to be perfect in behavior. To be perfect in behavior, one must focus on total commitment to self as well as to the significant other. It is the opinion of these writers that what has been joined spiritually is the most difficult to disconnect. Thus, the loving journey to build significant relationships must focus on what actions are required to be spiritually connected. It is the spiritual loving – love of the Creator, love of self and love of others. This loving, that is spiritual, is not selfish, but is transformative. Transformative loving is beyond the physical.

Many confuse physical needs with the total behavior of loving. In fact, a satisfactory physical relationship is important but not the most important component of loving. In some relationships, one partner may protect and hold onto the physical needs but allow others to provide non physical basic needs. This process can be seen in relationships where friends and acquaintances become just as important as the significant other. Because the relationship is not physical, the significant other fails to realize that the loving is leaving. If one tends to focus only on satisfying the physical, one compartmentalizes loving. Compartmental loving gives rise to affective behaviors.

Relational Problem Solving

The unintended consequences of focusing on affective behaviors are that we transmit more problems than presents in the relationship. A relationship built on problems is a disconnected relationship. Partners tolerate rather than invest and continually develop the relationship. Toleration is one form of giving up. Tolerators are estranged lovers. The choice not to communicate is a choice to disconnect. Silencing behaviors are expressions of angry thoughts, affective emotions. It is operationalized aggression. It is acting out behavior. The message may be interpreted as “I don’t like you, or your behavior; since I don’t like you or your behavior, I will punish you.” Out of silence comes anger. I will make you sorry because I will withhold verbal intercourse. The answer to angry silence comes restraint. According to the Dalai Lama (1999), “Nowhere is the uselessness of affective emotion more obvious than in the case of anger. When we become angry, we stop being compassionate, loving, generous, forgiving, tolerant, and patient altogether. We thus deprive ourselves of the very things that happiness consists in” (p. 95).

It is through need fulfilling communications that we transmit energy for ourselves to another. If we choose to withhold communications (verbal), we open our nonverbal behaviors to other’s interpretation without the connective of truth. Each partner’s beliefs are based on values and knowledge. Silence is an irresponsible choice when used to communicate unhappiness. Although some silence can be effective in the relationship, one must know when to be quiet.

How do you change your situation? Focus upon needs. Remember that we need all of the needs all of the time. Also that the ability to fulfill the needs differ among people. In the relationship, attempt to be complementary with one’s significant other. Therefore, meeting any of the needs is helpful and strengthening to the relationship. Use the presents (Mickel and Hall, 2007) every day. To use the presents is to look beyond the mere appearance and look at the causative factors. It is not specific events (wants) but the underlying causes (needs). One must always fulfill each need and the presenting behavior in our best attempt to accomplish this task.

We can choose a more effective behavior. We put labels on people and things, we can remove them. Because it is different, does not mean it is “bad”. Although we cannot always get what we want, one can always get some of what we need. In order to get our needs met, we must communicate in a need fulfilling manner. In order to communicate, one must be willing to listen. In order to listen constructively, one must be loving. If one is loving, one can build a loving relationship.

In order to change the current situation, one should focus on the presents as well as the present. As one’s focus is on the present, one can immerse one self in the journey (smell the flowers) and not be as concerned with the destination. It is the journey toward perfect loving which makes life worth living. This is the ultimate meaning of life. The presents and problems (Mickel and Hall, 2008) are ever present even as one reaches toward perfection within imperfection. Identify your area of gifts. Strength of gifts and problems tend to lead you to believe that you may only have that issue/strength. Forever is in the journey to the destination of perfect (spiritual) based loving these are the imperfections within perfect loving. These imperfections within perfection requires efforts at significant relationship improvement.

Conclusion

When two are in love, each acts lovingly. Sharing of loving is expressed in related behaviors. The most significant practice of acting lovingly is to be open to love. According to Glasser (1965, p. 10), “To either love or allow ourselves to be loved is not enough, we must do both.” Basic needs that are infused with spirituality are holistic. The more interconnected one is with another, the
more aware they are. Involvement is a process manifest-
ed through awareness. Awareness is the coming together
of those with like minds.

One must choose to be aware of the other's behavior as
well as the choices made in an attempt to reframe our
awareness to give meaning to our life. All behavior is our
best attempt to choose our perception. These are the vis-
ibly present manifestations of the spirit of loving.

Love is and isn't at the same time. It is everything and
nothing. It is the all but it fails to meet the any. Love is
the joining of extremes. It is a union of opposites. This evid-
ences a commitment to the process and practice of
loving. It is both presents and problems.

Perfect loving develops within the significant relation-
ship. Perfect loving motivates partners to go beyond the
possible and act lovingly beyond individual ability. This
loving is stronger and more lasting then unifocal loving.
Loving transforms two into one. That is, each partner
brings a vision of loving into a reality based on the five
presents.

In the loving relationship, participants choose to be a
present. This is both on the spiritual and physical levels.
In this relationship, we choose to be obligated to one
another. When we fulfill these obligations, we provide the
foundation upon which to build the need fulfilling loving
environment. We choose to provide a foundation for lov-
ing. This is the foundation required to reinvest in the
loving process. This foundation is basic to significant rela-
thionships.

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work. I have seen it with my own eyes. N is now able to tell us what his needs are; this was not possible before.

I have to tell you a funny story that happened yesterday. Grandma gave B a kiss on the cheek and he wiped it off. Then she gave N a kiss on the cheek. Grandma asked N “Why didn’t you wipe off the kiss like B did?” His reply was, “I absorb love”. This is just one of the wonderful things that you have taught N about his needs and feelings, and the impact on us is unbelievable.

My life might not be perfect right now but I’m slowly seeing the light at the end of the tunnel. I have been applying Choice Theory to my marriage and just when I think it is working, a brick wall goes up, but I’m still determined to continue and try and work my way around it. After reading the last book, Dr Glasser said this is not a quick fix or a cure, that it does take time. This is a true statement as I look back and see how long it took me to make sense out of what I learned in the Basic Week.

I have been spreading the word about Choice Theory to several people that I know are looking for a way to change their life. I have one girl from work who bought the book and is reading it this weekend and I have dropped off my copy to R’s sister, also. They are really looking forward to reading it.

When I look back in my life to people I have known, or still know, that are on medication or see some of them that have been diagnosed with so-called mental illness, I can reflect because I know some of their stories, and I feel they are just unhappy, people not mentally ill.

To sum up what I learned from Choice Theory, it’s such a simple concept and is full of common sense, but it does take the time and effort to change your life and it will make you a much happier person. For new people interested in learning Choice Theory, my words to them are, “Try it. What do you have to lose? It can only make you think there is another way to make you a happier person and the people that you care about.”

Daphni, thank you from the bottom of my heart. It’s people like you that have and will continue to make such a positive impact on people.

Thank you,

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Cultivating Self-Awareness and Self-Management in Children Diagnosed with Asperger’s Syndrome

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“The quest to understanding others begins at the end of the road to self acceptance.”

Max Joseph Ritvo Age 13, 2004

ABSTRACT

This article explores the possibilities of teaching Choice Theory and modeling the WDEP process when working with children diagnosed with autistic spectrum disorders.

BACKGROUND

Over the thirty plus years that I have been working with special needs children in the province of British Columbia, Canada, the incidence of autism in children has risen from one in 1200 to one in 150. The reason for this phenomenon still remains a mystery, but what presents as fact is that our classes seem to be filling with children who are groping their way through their day without a social compass. What will be the social impact, decades from now, if this trend continues at such a prodigious clip and how does one attempt to reach these children with choice theory and lead management in mind?

The following letter was emailed to me at the end of last summer. The names have been reduced to initials to protect the privacy of those involved:

Dear Daphni,

I thought I would write to you to thank you for making such a world of difference to my family. After the Basic Week in training, you asked if we could write how we felt about Choice Theory. At the time, I could not think of anything because there was so much to process and I wasn’t sure what I had learned or how to describe how I felt.

After reading Dr. Glasser’s two books on Choice Theory and Counseling with Choice Theory, I had a better understanding of what I learned in the Basic Week. The light bulb finally lit up and it has been getting brighter ever since. I have now read another two books, The Language of Choice Theory and Warning Psychiatry Can Be Hazardous To Your Mental Health.

Your teachings and Dr Glasser’s books have literally changed the way I think. The work you have done with N for the past year proves to me that this theory really does work.. I have seen it with my own eyes. N is now able to tell us what his needs are; this was not possible before.

I have to tell you a funny story that happened yesterday. Grandma gave B a kiss on the cheek and he wiped it off. Then she gave N a kiss on the cheek. Grandma asked N “Why didn’t you wipe off the kiss like B did?” His reply was, “I absorb love”. This is just one of the wonderful things that you have taught N about his needs and feelings, and the impact on us is unbelievable.

My life might not be perfect right now but I’m slowly seeing the light at the end of the tunnel. I have been applying Choice Theory to my marriage and just when I think it is working, a brick wall goes up, but I’m still determined to continue and try and work my way around it. After reading the last book, Dr Glasser said this is not a quick fix or a cure, that it does take time. This is a true statement as I look back and see how long it took me to make sense out of what I learned in the Basic Week.

I have been spreading the word about Choice Theory to several people that I know are looking for a way to change their life. I have one girl from work who bought the book and is reading it this weekend and I have dropped off my copy to R’s sister, also. They are really looking forward to reading it.

When I look back in my life to people I have known, or still know, that are on medication or see some of them that have been diagnosed with so-called mental illness, I can reflect because I know some of their stories, and I feel they are just unhappy, people not mentally ill.

To sum up what I learned from Choice Theory, it’s such a simple concept and is full of common sense, but it does take the time and effort to change your life and it will make you a much happier person. For new people interested in learning Choice Theory, my words to them are, “Try it. What do you have to lose? It can only make you think there is another way to make you a happier person and the people that you care about.”

Daphni, thank you from the bottom of my heart. It’s people like you that have and will continue to make such a positive impact on people.

Thank you,

LS
DISCUSSION AND EXPERIENCE

N is just nine years old. He is obsessive about everything military. Shooting with weapons, camouflage clothing, tanks and torpedoes turn him on with passion and euphoria. For anyone who has worked with this disorder, it is well known that these children have their obsessive niche of interest to which they cling with pride, passion and comfort, but show little flexibility to transfer to other interest areas unless cajoled or medicated. N has heard about basic needs and is currently following a sequence I have developed for him to assist him in relating positively to others. Engrossed in a discussion post Xmas, I probed for some inner pictures of what the Xmas event meant to him. He announced proudly that he had received the latest XBOX 360, a video game that excited him beyond words as he related with pride on how skilfully he had shot down a record number of planes in the course of his new game. Curious, I asked him, "As you are shooting these planes down, do you ever wonder who might be in them, like children who are on their way to Disneyland excited about the holiday of their life, or moms and dads flying home looking forward to being with their kids?" He stared at me in wide eyed wonder for a prolonged minute or more before saying "Oh no, I was doing the world a favor. They were all Russians."

Despite his interesting logic, obviously flavored with a little help from XP360, I considered this progress for N, who six months ago would have simply stared at the ceiling while working through his familiar "uhm...uhm". until I was ready to intercept his repetition. He would not have comprehended the question at all. Could a semblance of a conscience be emerging or is it the will to please me with an answer he thinks I might like to hear? Even that much is progress, as I feel the shimmer of a relationship emerging between us. He now initiates a greeting accompanied by a smile as he walks down the drive to his lesson. All small increments of progress on his way to learning how relationships work and how to maintain them.

Reality therapy, or the process of lead management, asks questions that are way beyond an 'Asperger's child' to internalize or comprehend. Pure autism cannot answer the questions such as, "What do you want?!", because self awareness must precede self evaluation. If you do get an answer, the most sophisticated one will be directed at something tangible in the immediate now, like an orange or a glass of milk which will more likely be pointed at or reached for from the fridge. So how do we begin to address the multi-layered onion called Asperger's or autistic spectrum disorder?

For those of you who are battling your way through similar challenges, be it parenting or guiding one or more of these children professionally, Tony Attwood's books, Asperger's Syndrome: A Guide for Parents and Professionals, and his most recent, The Complete Guide to Asperger's Syndrome are, in my experience, practical, hands-on tools to understand this social enigma, especially for those who are just coming into the awareness that the condition exists. Asperger's could be described as a comet tail to full blown autism. These children are more 'high functioning' and can be trained more readily to re-enter our complicated social system with some confidence.

As more authors are coming on board with their experience with Asperger's, the general public are becoming more knowledgeable, but few know yet, exactly what to do with it unless they are specifically trained in intensely structured autistic programs. My reason for bringing it up here, is that few have come to the challenge with a specific choice theory framework in mind.

Having worked with learning disabilities of all kinds, and been certified with the Glasser Institute since 1986, approaching my work using RT/CT is a natural given. Understanding that every human being is predestined to need love, play, freedom and personal power, gives me a solid place to start. And what a relief to parents who have this challenge in their face on a daily basis. N's mother and father have both taken a basic week and are currently following through with practicum training towards certification.

N attended a local Montessori School here in Delta. A school that is deeply steeped in Choice Theory and its approach to need fulfillment. All staff members, except newly hired staff, have taken a basic week and are moving towards certification. A wonderful, loving environment prevails and the majority of children give feedback to its 'quality feel' as a school for them. But even in this specially designed corner, N could not cope with the transitional demands of subject change and the social adjustments of group and playground activities which draw on a child's understanding of others and their needs. It was at this point that the school recommended that he step out of the context and come to me for assessment. He had not been officially diagnosed with Asperger's, but it was clear after three hours of working with him, that there were strong indications. My hunch was verified by a local clinic which specializes in autism, so we moved in the direction of home schooling and extra support for the parents by fortifying them with basic week training to bring them in on the framework.

I have worked with N for almost a year now, and adding that experience with at least ten others who had been diagnosed similarly, I feel that the knowledge of Glasser's work in these cases, is so valuable. Step one is to help them to become aware of themselves and how their 'machinery' works. Another common denominator is that they are usually very bright and can understand technical or factual information well. Emotional innuendo, intuition, body language and 'reading people' is a whole different story, but draping a Choice Theory chart in front of one of them is a fascination and drawing card in itself. I don't even do that with my adult trainees until the latter half of a basic week. But these quirky little people eat up the detail. I am currently engaged in writing helper manuals and children's activities, which provide the
Get my Picture (title) is the stage of self understanding through a Choice Theory lens. We spend a lot of time here on quality worlds, basic needs and pictures. The second stage; Teach Me How to Drive, covers the understanding of their control system using the car model but it is usually during this stage that it dawns on them that everyone else is built somewhat the same way. N has responded positively to this approach due to his interest in machines. Many of these children absorb themselves in things mechanical or digital in preference to understanding people. Machines do not entail social interaction. But the information and activities along with the car and driving analogies in this stage, helps them to build a foundation on which to make self evaluations.

The third stage: Out in the Traffic, (conflict resolution) is designed to lead them towards interaction with others and the typical scenarios that challenge meeting one’s own needs while in the midst of others. Driving safely and with satisfaction. This stage is still ahead of him but already I am debriefing him on looking at what is working well with the relationships that he trusts, which, at present, are his family members and myself. He is currently involved in a monthly program with children similar to himself and he is beginning to include vignettes from these events in his responses. He seems now more equipped and willing to see the community aspect of ‘peopledom.’ Lights are turning on and thoughtful thinking is emerging, but I know we have a long way to go before he can handle the multiplicity of sensory and cognitive response that a regular classroom demands.

Teenager P shared a lot of the above traits. He was obsessed with Pokemon when, at twelve years of age, he first came to see me. He had a phenomenal memory for the scripts of movies or written stories based on these characters. His reading was more like immaculate word calling, but if questioned regarding the feelings or intents of the characters, he would look at the ceiling for endless minutes for his answers. P was my introduction to Asperger’s syndrome, although I was unaware at the time. I remember often remarking to his mom that his behavior at times reminded me of some aspects of autism but it wasn’t until I had worked with two other boys, one of whom had been diagnosed with autism, that I began to connect the dots and realize that all of these young students shared a common trait. Difficulty with empathy and social awareness. Developing self awareness, for them, was a slow and sometimes rocky road to negotiate. But the elements of reality therapy and lead management, based on the framework of Choice Theory, made it much easier to build a credible relationship with them that could prove to them that relationships can work out for them apart from their own families.

I remember a treatment called ‘brushing’ that had been part of J’s therapy program. The therapist would come to the school and this procedure helped to calm him down amid the stressfulness of the school day. One day he came out of one of his self awareness sessions with me when we were exploring the science and biology of human needs, and he remarked to his mother that his time spent with Daphni was like being ‘brushed’.

It is experiences like this one that deepen my faith in the authenticity of Glasser’s theory of motivation and human need. If just talking about needs is enough to help J feel ‘brushed’, how many of these socially challengee children are missing out on being ‘brushed’ in our stimulus response world?

PROPOSAL

Autism is an intriguing corner of experience to place these practices, but given its rising incidence and the success this approach seems to have. I would invite more of you to connect with these struggling families around you and teach them the simplicity of these concepts in order to relieve the complexity of their lives.

..a recent email from N’s mom solidifies this thinking:

Hi Daphni,

I have to tell about my conversation with N on the way home from your house yesterday.

N said, “Mom ... isn’t it kind of cool that a spoonful of honey can cure your cough?”

I replied, “It sure is. How do you think you could cure unhappiness?”

N said, “You could express your feelings.”

Is this not a Choice Theory kid or what?

L and N

Daphni would welcome any interaction from parents, teachers and specialists who are currently dealing with similar situations discussed in this article. She can be contacted at www.educereconsulting.com or djclifton@dccnet.com

REFERENCES

Reality Therapy and the Talmud

Yaakov Barr

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ABSTRACT

A comparison of some of the basic tenets of Reality Therapy and the Talmud

It was some time after having received my rabbinic ordination and Bachelor of Talmudic Law, having studied the Talmud for 10 years while in Israel, that I was introduced to reality therapy which was being taught at the Refuah Institute. While studying the Talmud, I was also counseling adolescents, and I felt hindered by what I perceived in myself as a lack of direction and strategy. Reality therapy caught my eye by its sheer simplicity. Therapy and its theory have traditionally been intricate, complex and extremely difficult for the layman to grasp. Yet here was a therapy, which dispelled these notions, a therapy whose very essence and success is its clarity and logic. This was a therapy, where the focus was not on detailed psychoanalysis of the past, but on the doing behavior of the present. This was a therapy with a clear model and a clear goal—change. Having undergone the necessary training in reality therapy, the success I had was immediate; I now had renewed confidence, I now had a strategy and an approach which I understood and which was easy to explain to the client. Yet what still gnawed away at the back of my mind was whether my extensive education in the Talmud and the huge influence it had on my life was in any way in jeopardy from Glasser’s work. So for my own peace of mind, I investigated, researched, compared and contrasted the psychology of the Talmud and that of reality therapy and was amazed at my findings.

What is the Talmud.

If the Bible is the cornerstone of Judaism, then the Talmud is the central pillar, soaring up from the foundations and supporting the entire spiritual and intellectual edifice. In many ways, the Talmud is the most important book in Jewish culture, the backbone of creativity and of national life. Completed around the middle of the fifth century, no other work has had a comparable influence on the theory and practice of Jewish life, shaping spiritual content and serving as a guide to conduct. Rabbi Israel Steinsaltz, founder of the Israel Institute for Talmudic Publications, describes the Talmud as “the repository of thousands of years of Jewish wisdom. And the Oral Law (Torah), finds expression therein. It is a conglomerate of law, legend, and philosophy, a blend of unique logic and shrewd pragmatism, of history and science, anecdote and humour.”

There are two editions of the Talmud; one was composed by Babylonian Jews and one by Jews who lived in ancient Jerusalem. Generally, a citation from the Talmud refers to the Babylonian version, which is considered authoritative. The Jerusalem Talmud is not generally taught in even the most Orthodox Jewish schools today, though advanced Talmud scholars sometimes study it.

Fundamental to reality therapy is choice theory. Choice Theory states that all we do is behave, that almost all behavior is chosen, and that we are driven by our genes to satisfy five basic needs: survival, love and belonging, power, freedom and fun. It is the function of the reality therapist to assist the client in helping him take greater responsibility for his actions and make the proper behavior choices. Glasser states, “We almost always have choices, and the better the choice, the more we will be in control of our lives.” Glasser contends that how we feel is not controlled by others or events, unless we choose to allow it to. As core as choice theory is to reality therapy, it is pivotal to Judaism. The Talmud is replete with references to the ‘free will’ which every single person enjoys and describes it as one of the most crucial differences between man and animal. There is a famous Talmudic saying “All is from Heaven, except the fear of Heaven.” (Tractate Berachot 33b) Rabbi E. Dessler, a great rabbinic philosopher, explains the Talmudic verse, that all that befalls a person, everything that determines where his choice shall take place, the level of his choice as well as the kind of test to which he will be submitted - all this is from Heaven. The only thing in man’s hands is “the fear of Heaven,” which is the sense of responsibility to the truth which he can either adopt or reject as he wills. The fear of God, whether the fear of material consequences, or fear and awe on higher levels, is essential to prevent one being deflected from the truth. This is the essence of free choice. (Strive for truth)

The Talmud brings down a fascinating exchange between Roman philosophers and Jewish sages illustrating the free will which permeates our world. The philosophers asked why if G-d does not permit idol worship, does He...
The commentaries explain the wisdom behind these words. The sages in tractate Avos 1:6 use perplexing terminology when discussing friendship- 'acquire for yourself a friend.'

They make sure it is not of inferior quality, so too when picking a friend you should consider the type of person he/she is, ensuring that your friendship will be mutually beneficial. The sages are also advising us that often a person can be in the haunting position of having lots of friends with it, but really having none. It is therefore better to have just one solid friendship which you care and would sacrifice for, then having lots of friends bound only by circumstance so that when the circumstances change, the friendship is lost. (Relevance by Dan Roth, p15)

You ask me why I do not write something... I think one's feelings waste themselves in words, they ought all to be distilled into actions and into actions which bring results.

(Florence Nightingale by Cecil Woodham-Smith 1951)

Glasser recognizes four separate components of what is he calls total behavior, doing (or active behaviors), thinking, feeling, and physiology. But it is the doing behavior which reality therapy seeks to change first. Glasser explains, "... I have no ability to change how I feel, separate from what I do or think, but I have almost complete ability to change what I do, and some ability to change what I think, regardless of how I am choosing to feel." (choice theory).

One of the great sages Hillel used to say that 'one who concentrates on doing good deeds brings peace to himself.' (Avos de rabbi Nosson chap 28:9) Hillel highlighted that it is only by one's actions and not by anything else which have the capability to bring a person to his most quality of worlds, a world where one is completely at peace with his own self and with everybody around him. A friend of mine asked a rabbi what he should do if his marriage has gone a bit stale and he has lost some feelings of love for his wife. The rabbi replied with a well known Jewish axiom which originates from a 13th Century Spanish Rabbi-"the heart is drawn after one's actions." (Sefer Hachinuch) If one wants to put the spark back into a relationship and make that heart love once more, than one begins with actions, actions of giving, actions of love, and then the heart will follow suit. The Sages explain that there is no coincidence that the letters making up the root for the Hebrew word for 'love' are identical to the root of the Hebrew word 'give'. For the key to changing one's thoughts and feelings is to begin with the action. This sage old advice has rescued many relationships and been the catalyst for sustained happy marriages. As far as the Talmud and Jewish tradition is concerned, Glasser is spot on in his quest to concentrate on the doing component before anything else.

However the Talmud advances this philosophy central to Reality therapy a step further, contending that the key to happy human existence relies on keeping active and being hard working. The Talmud proclaims, "Man was created to work," (tractate Sanhedrin 99b) which can also be inverted to read that 'Man's work is to create.' The Book of Genesis proclaims "G-d created us in His own image," (Chapter 1:27) to instill in us one of His unique attributes, the attribute to create. Just as G-d is a Creator.
jealousy and its harmful effects. Tractate shabbos (152b)

consider the ability to recognize who we are and what
reality therapist is trained to respond, 'the only person
help in transforming his spouse. parent. teacher etc. The
so too must His human shadow strive to create and be con-
stantly preoccupied with good deeds and actions. Because
there is nothing more constructive than creation, and
nothing more destructive than boredom: “One, who turns
his heart to idleness, has forfeited his life.” (Tractate Avos
Chapter 3:4) meaning that inactivity causes boredom lead-
ing to emotional problems and mental instability. (Tractate
Brachos 29 and Rashis commentary) The western world’s
dream of retiring as early as possible and spending one’s
life relaxing, is a fallacy, and the frightening statistic that
“the highest suicide rate in the United States is among
those over the age of 65” (University of Texas Web site)
only confirms this sage old Talmudic advice.

O, beware, my lord, of jealousy! It is the green-eyed mon-
ster which doth mock the meat it feeds on.(William
Shakespeare (1564 - 1616),”Othello”, Act 3 scene 3)

If happiness is the art of taking pleasure in what you
have, than unhappiness is the art of focusing on what you
don’t have. In today’s world, we often see people who
seem to have everything yet are plagued by unhappiness:
the cause, jealousy. The Talmud in many places refers to
jealousy and its harmful effects. Tractate shabbos (152b)
quotes a saying from King Solomon that ‘jealousy causes
the rotting of bones.’ In its literal meaning, jealousy has
the ability to kill a person as it denies him any vestige of
happiness. Alternatively, the commentators explain that
often a person is so preoccupied with his friend’s achieve-
ments and possessions that he completely ignores his own
assets regarding his inner self, his ‘bones’ are valueless and
filled with rot. Glasser too once remarked “I have noticed
that happy people are constantly evaluating themselves
and unhappy people are constantly evaluating others.” In
tractate avos, the Talmud asks ‘who is a happy person?’ to
which it answers ‘a person who is happy with his portion.’
One who focuses on his own positive attributes and is con-
tent in his own way of life will not have to keep looking
over his shoulder at anyone else and will be guaranteed
happiness. ‘If you are not happy with your portion in life,
then it doesn’t matter how much is in your bank account.
It will never be enough. You can be a miserable million-
naire’. (Adapted from “Remember My Soul.” by Lori
Palatnik, Leviathan Press. Pikesville, MD, 1998) It could
well be argued that even one who has a quality world with
all the basic needs could still suffer from this debilitating
‘disease’ called jealousy, and the Talmud would certainly
consider the ability to recognize who we are and what
qualities we possess as one of the basic needs and an essen-
tial factor in determining one’s happiness.

“A truly happy person does not allow his happiness to be
dependent on any external factor over which he may not
have control.”

(Rabbi Simcha Zissel Ziv Broida 1824–1898)

All too often a client comes to a therapist and asks for
help in transforming his spouse, parent. teacher etc. The
reality therapist is trained to respond, ‘the only person
whose behavior we can control is our own and not any-
body else’s.’ Indeed, this is one of the key axioms of choice
theory. However every therapist will also recognize the
disappointment of clients as they now perceive the solu-
tion to their problems to be further away. There may be
instances when the client is the more innocent party and
changing his/her behavior does not seem to resonate well.
The wisdom of King Solomon in Proverbs provides new
understanding to the reality therapy process. King
Solomon contends that if a person wants another to alter a
negative attribute, then that person must take the lead and
exemplify this behavior and the other will respond and
mirror this behavior accordingly. The onus therefore is
completely on the one who wants the change in the other
and not initially on the one who needs to be changed. In
my experience in counseling couples, I can attest to its pos-
tive outcome, much to the surprise of the clients involved.

There is little doubt among the experts, that education
today is failing our children. The headline in Britain’s
biggest selling broadsheet, the Daily Telegraph, screamed
‘Billions spent but schools still fail’ (headline, Daily
Telegraph, 2006) Across the ocean. America is experienc-
ing the same crisis in education. A report by the Center for
Education Reform in the USA stated ‘Despite spending
more than $11,000 per student annually on education, the
United States ranks towards the bottom in international
testing.’ Glasser has tried to revolutionize our antiquated
educational system by introducing a novel approach called
‘quality schools.’ To be a quality school, Glasser has six
criteria, the first and arguably the most imperative con-
cerns the relationship between teacher and student.
‘Relationships are based upon trust and respect, and all
discipline problems, not incidents, have been eliminated.’
The importance of respecting one’s students is referred to
many times in the Talmud illustrating its huge significance
on a successful student/teacher relationship. The Talmud
draws from an example of Moses who, despite being the
greatest Jewish leader in history, would still converse with
his students with total equality, not displaying even the
slightest haughtiness. (Tractate Avos Darebi Nosson 27,4)
One sage was opt to say, ‘the honour of your student
should be as precious to you as your own honour.’
(Tractate Pirkay Avos ch 4, 16) Another sage famously
remarked ‘I learned much from my teachers, more from
my friends and the most from my students’. (Tractate
Taanis 7), thereby reaching the pinnacle in admiration for
his students. This vital ingredient goes a long way in facil-
ilitating the sense of rapport between teacher and student in
the Glasser classroom.

Another imperative piece to Glasser’s quality school
puzzle is the responsibility of the teacher to teach in a way
that makes the subject relevant, interesting and fun. Too
often are students required to memorize needless informa-
tion which has no impact on their lives. “We need to start
understanding the difference between what I call factual
knowledge and educational knowledge, and we don’t focus
much on educational knowledge." (Interview with Glasser in the Teacher Education Quarterly, summer, 2002) Once learning becomes relevant, it becomes fun and enjoyable.

- ‘Education is the process in which we discover that learning adds quality to our lives.’ (William Glasser) The Talmud too states in many places that relevance is fundamental to education. ‘Learning must be done in order to be put into practice.’ (Avos 6:6) Indeed the Talmud does not consider wisdom and knowledge per se as anything praiseworthy, rather a “sprouting tree with shallow roots and likely to fall when the wind blows.” (Tractate Avos ch 3:17) The sprouting tree has little value and has no longevity without roots as does knowledge without relevance. If the teacher has the ability to impart information in this manner then education becomes what Glasser has always striven for: ‘fun and enjoyable.’ One Sage called Raba. would precede his Talmudic class with some humor, and then sit in seriousness and begin the lesson. (Tractate Shabbos 30) The positive effects of learning and humor have been studied extensively by researchers, and Glasser would certainly approve, as humor makes learning fun and further develops the relationship between student and teacher.

‘When the love between us was intense, we could have lain together on the edge of a sword.’

(sanhedrin 7)

Marriage today is an institution in ruin as so many couples are plagued by unhappiness and marital stress, yet the Talmud says that the truest happiness is with one’s soul mate, ‘a man without a wife is not a man.’ (Tractate Yevamos 63a) Yet the question which begs to be asked is why is the divorce rate so high in the western world? The sages centuries ago discovered exactly what John Grey revealed in his bestselling book, Men are from Mars, Women from Venus, that ’women are a nation unto themselves,’ (Tractate Shabbos 61a) They react differently, particularly after an argument, ‘a man is easily conciliated, but not a woman.’ (Tractate Niddah 31) Women are more sensitive and the Talmud warns husbands not to verbally offend their wives, ‘a man must be careful not to insult his wife since her tears flow easily which shows that she is easily hurt by his words.’ (Tractate Bava Metzia 59)

However, awareness of gender differences is only one factor in creating a successful marriage. Glasser has established the seven deadly habits in a marriage: Criticizing, Blaming, Complaining Nagging, Threatening, Punishing, Bribing, and the seven caring habits: Supporting, Encouraging, Listening, Accepting, Trusting, Respecting and Negotiating Differences. Essentially, the Talmud simplifies and groups Glasser’s habits into one vital trait: respect or lack of. ‘He should honour his wife....more than himself’ (Tractate Chulin 84b, Tractate Yevomas 62b)

The Talmud says ‘if your wife is short, bend over to hear her advice.’ Rabbi Shlomo Yitzhaki, born in 1040, and the author of the first comprehensive commentary on the Talmud, explains this passage that the Talmud could have said ‘if your wife is short, bend over,’ instead it adds ‘bend over to hear her advice,’ recommending a husband to take council from her, value and respect her as he will only benefit. A spouse will be prone to employ the seven deadly habits in order to exert external control; this Glasser says “is by far the main source of all marital unhappiness.” (Eight Lessons for a Happier Marriage by William Glasser and Carleen Glasser) However, if these practices are replaced by mutual respect between one another, the marital bond will automatically begin to strengthen and the level of love will begin its ascent to its most sublime peak, where ‘love is not contingent upon externalities,’ (Tractate avos 5:16) where a spouse loves the other not because of any external reason, only because she is my partner and my very own gift from G-d.

The Talmud demonstrates how beautiful a marriage can be by telling the story of Rabbi Akiva. ‘A young woman called Rachel whose father was incredibly wealthy, desired to marry a simple shepherd called Akiva. The outraged father vowed that if she went through with this marriage, she would not benefit from any of his property. Nevertheless, Rachel was determined to marry him and the couple lived in abject poverty, sleeping on straw in the winter. She told him, “Go and [study] at a school [and become a sage].” So he went and spent twelve years studying. On his return, he overheard her saying that she would be happy if he studied another twelve years. So off he went. After this second twelve years, he had become the greatest sage of his day and he returned with 48000 students. Everyone came out to greet him, including his devoted wife. Due to the crowds, she ended up being pushed away, whereupon Rabbi Akiva shouted the now legendary words ‘Leave her alone for what is mine and what is yours is really hers,’ all his success is because of her. (Tractate Kesubos 63a) The marriage between Akiva and Rachel was the epitome of a harmonious relationship, illustrating Glasser’s caring habits of acceptance, support, trust and the encouragement of Rachel along with the tremendous respect demonstrated by Rabbi Akiva towards his venerable wife.

As I reach my conclusion, I am left amazed at the complete compatibility between the age old Talmud and Glasser’s relatively new reality therapy. I feel vindicated in my admiration for William Glasser as my Talmudic education complements Reality Therapy perfectly. Some may challenge the achievements of Glasser if most of his ideas and theories were written some two thousand years ago. Indeed Glasser himself acknowledges that Powers and Deming deserve much of the accolades for their contribution to reality therapy. Yet in my own mind, the genius and importance of Glasser’s work has only been heightened after seeing the results of this study.
“Genius lies not in thinking of ideas, but in the ability to execute the ideas.”

Jane Warnock McElyea

It matters not from which sources Glasser draws from, what matters is that Glasser has the unique gift of collating and organizing ideas from wherever they originate, and incorporating them into what is known today as reality therapy, a therapy which is revolutionizing the therapeutic and educational world. I am also not surprised that the Talmud contains such a well spring of wisdom and counselling techniques, as Judaism always refers to the Talmud and the bible as the ‘living law,’ a law which contains a survival guide for each and every person. Rabbi Yisrael Salanter, often known as the father of the Jewish ethical, educational and cultural movement that developed in 19th century in Eastern Europe, said of the Talmud:-

“One can possess broad Talmudic knowledge and be a fountain of deep penetrating analysis and yet he does not deserve to be considered a true Talmudic scholar, if he has not allowed his Talmudic knowledge to refine his character and restructure his personality. Instead he is an ignoramus who happens to know how to learn.”

Studying the Talmud is a life-long commitment. With its sixty three Tractates, thousands of commentaries and sub commentaries and an infinite depth, it is impossible to comprehensively evaluate this ‘Pillar of Judaism’ in this study alone. However, to this end, I owe Glasser much appreciation for compiling a theory which for a Talmudic scholar has the most unyielding foundations and made up of unshakable truth. Indeed, society itself owes much to William Glasser and his tireless efforts. I will fittingly end with a quote from the Talmud which adeptly illustrates the immense recognition, honor and divine reward given to such men as William Glasser. “Whoever destroys a single life is as guilty as though he had destroyed the entire world; and whoever rescues a single life earns as much merit as though he had rescued the entire world.”

(Tractate Sanhedrin, Mishna)

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Driven by Goals: Choice Theory and the HELP Method

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ABSTRACT

This article discusses the relationship between a goal driven counseling approach and choice theory. The HELP method employs hope, evaluation, teaching/learning and action – planning in a client – centered approach.

Introduction

Choice theory has provided a knowledge base for counselors who attempt to enhance the lives of their clients. Delivery systems have been utilized by Reality Therapists that can incorporate choice theory and provide a vehicle that is congruent with their clients' needs (Schoo, 2008., Wubbolding, 2000). The Wants, Direction, Evaluation, and Planning [WDEP] (Wubbolding, 1991) system was recently endorsed by the William Glasser Institute (2008) and has been included in Reality Therapy certification training. This article describes the HELP Method as a goal – driven system that is a client – centered approach that can be employed to deliver many of the principles found in choice theory.

Prior to establishing a therapeutic relationship utilizing Choice Theory or other theories, three key assumptions are made. These assumptions include: (1) that clients seek counseling when they have exhausted their ability to find solutions without help, (2) that clients have entered a stage that is a myopic approach to problem resolution, and lastly (3) that clients have the internal strengths to overcome their problem. In combination, these assumptions contribute to the counselor's ability to assist the client.

Intervention

The HELP system of counseling is an example of a counseling method that is designed to be applied in a private counseling session due to its' application and client portability. This model is a positive, client – centered approach that utilizes an educational component to encourage clients to explore and resolve their problems. Inspiration has been drawn from Snyder's Hope Theory and Wubbolding's system of evaluation (Snyder et al., 1991., Wubbolding, 2000). The elements of hope and evaluation are used to foster an environment that allows the counselor to be influential while the client is self - reflec-
tive. This four stage approach is progressive, with stages building upon each other to develop an intrinsic drive in the client to fulfill a life improving goal. The HELP model of counseling entails the counselor undertaking a teaching role during stage three while maintaining a collaborative counselor – client relationship.

Hope

Hope is highlighted as an important ingredient in the development of goals (Snyder, 2000; Staats, 1989; Yalom, 1995). Snyder et al (1991) believe hope is a proactive construct that is comprised of two subcomponents, agency and pathways. The high hope client is able to demonstrate motivation and an ability to create alternate strategies to blockages that impede progress towards a hope – related goal. The uncertainty that is embedded in hope based goals presents an opportunity for the Reality Therapist to evaluate the clients' perception of choice theory needs that contain doubt regarding fulfillment. Hope based goals are multidirectional and may contain positive or negative desires.

The lack of client confidence in the ability to create a choice - driven quality world may be the essential element for consideration for a Reality Therapist who is determining a treatment plan. The introduction of language that emits hope can explicitly create an environment that is positive while moving the client toward cognition of possible present and future success. This appears compatible with Reality Therapy which places an emphasis on moving the client away from the problem toward exploring behavior that is congruent with the clients' choice theory needs and quality world.

The client who has voluntarily entered counseling has expressed both agency and pathway behavior. The presentation of basic choice theory concepts during the first stage of the HELP method can enhance actions by the counselor demonstrating explicit therapeutic knowledge that will help clients move toward their goals (Snyder, 2000).

Evaluation

The HELP model utilizes evaluation procedures that focus on in - session counseling. The counselor attempts to
assess the thoughts expressed by the client as well as the attainability of the expressed goals. Wubbolding (1991) points out that many clients continue to repeat unsuccessful behaviors. The development of pathway cognition provides a building block toward creative strategic thinking that moves the client toward goal attainment. There may be some clients who express high hope goals despite an appearance of incongruity with their abilities.

The counselor employing the HELP method may guide the client through a forward thinking exercise designed to outline the probable steps that would be required to attain a high hope goal (Janis and Mann, 1977). The forward thinking exercise provides the client with an opportunity to self-evaluate through decision balancing which may include the investment of personal time, effort, resources and ability required for successful goal completion.

Teaching and Learning

Many clients seeking counseling may be aware they are unable to satisfy their needs, yet are unable to picture the quality life they desire. The client who desires an improved relationship may require examples of behaviors that characterize a quality relationship. The reality therapist can use this opportunity to teach the client behaviors that can be used to create the quality environment that will fulfill a client's needs. Piaget examined the learning process in a series of four stages. Ideally, he believed in leading one step ahead process whereby teachers aimed their efforts one level above the known comprehension of a child to foster development through assimilation (Coon, 2001). Vygotsky (1978), in his Sociocultural Theory, suggests learning is most effective when occurring within the learner's zone of proximal development. Vygotsky understood the crucial role that adults play in the development of a child. Children rely on adults to help them understand how things work (Coon, 2001). The counselor's ability to use scaffolding can be seen by the client as a template that utilizes incremental steps that are within the learning ability of the client. Pathway development can be encouraged by the counselor through exercises that enable the client to create. Examples of creative exercises may include a variety of role play situations: cognitive rehearsal and gestalt stem questioning.

Action – Planning

Action planning is for the HELP Method an amalgamation of simplicity and creativity. The essence of action planning is found in the ability of clients to choose the moments they activate the details of their plans. Planning procedures that are characterized by narrowly designed steps may fail to capture the zone of proximal development that has been fostered in the counseling session/s. Clients are encouraged to implement action – planning through autonomous goal activation. An example may be seen in the couple who are attempting to fulfill their partner's choice theory needs at a counseling session planned dinner. The action planning may include questions related to the husband's need for recognition and power while the wife seeks satisfaction for her need for love and belonging. Although the counseling session may provide role – play and action – planning for this event, the important choices of timing and delivery of the needs satisfying actions are chosen by the couple. The goal for planning in the HELP Method is to free people to act and create rather than over – regulate.

Case Example

Background

Mark is a 17 year old football player who has asked to see a counselor. Mark has been having problems on and off the football field due to his aggressive behavior.

Stage 1 Hope

C: Mark, you mentioned your coach thought you were acting too aggressive?

M: Yea, but I've got it under control.

C: I'm sure you do as I guess its part of being a football player.

M: It is, you know, I have to look tough!

C: It sounds to me we can work this out as you really know what's going on and of course by working together we might even find ways to improve other areas of your football.

M: What do you mean?

C: Mark, I work with clients to help them get what they need in life. It's based on ideas called choice theory which basically states we have different levels of the needs for survival, love and belonging, power, freedom and fun. I'd like to return to this idea a little later, is that O.K. with you?

M: That's fine.

Stage 2 Evaluation

C: You are obviously a great athlete and I can see you're a strong guy. I'd be interested in learning what you think is necessary for others to be like yourself?

M: Well, I do hit the weight room a lot?

C: Can you think of anything else?

M: Nothing I say gets back to coach, right?

C: That's right: I'm here to help you.

M: I have been stacking some steroids, they are great!

C: It sure seems to have worked for you. Can you think of any reasons why others should use them?
M: It makes all the difference, I feel so much stronger.

C: Mark, I mentioned to you before about our choice theory needs of survival, power, love and belonging, freedom and fun, do you have any thoughts on what your greatest need might be?

M: That's easy, power, without a doubt!

C: I agree, I was wondering if we could have a look at how your power need is satisfied at the moment.

M: Sounds good.

The counselor is now in a position to question Mark to promote a decisional balance concerning the use of steroids. This self-reflective stage encourages Mark to evaluate his own behavior.

Stage 3 Learning/teaching

C: Mark, I know you have picked up quite a bit of information about steroids and I was hoping you could let me know what I may be missing.

M: Sounds good.

C: Mark, I am sure you are aware of all the damage steroids can cause to your liver and bones as well as how it can mess with your mind?

M: Sort of, some guys said I might not be able to have kids if I kept doing this stuff.

C: That's right, but it's not the worst of it. I'm sure you heard about the guy your age who tried to commit suicide while using.

M: He did, I'm sure I'll be O.K.

C: You might be and it could work out for you as long as you don't get caught.

M: They never test at my school.

C: I've heard it's too expensive but college scouts will test. Do you want to play college ball? Is it worth risking everything?

The counselor can now begin to have Mark list the risk factors against his dream goal of professional football. The final stage focuses on action - planning that moves Mark closer to professional football without steroid use.

Stage 4 Action/Planning

C: Mark, you are obviously knowledgeable about weightlifting, have you ever done any other form of power training?

M: We do some sprints at practice.

C: I'm sure they are tough, have you talked to your coach about plyometrics and nutritional supplements?

M: Not really:

C: I've got an idea you can try or we can come up with another idea, it's up to you. Some time before we meet next week, ask your coach about plyometrics and some of the supplements you can take to work on the power you have.

M: O.K.

C: When we meet next, bring all the information so we can have a look at it together. I can help you with scheduling some extra workouts as well as keeping up at school. Those extra workouts can make a difference.

This brief example has attempted to demonstrate the progression of the HELP model. The counselor may find clients are unable to complete all the stages in one session and it may require two or three sessions before action-planning can be completed.

Stage 1 Hope

Stage 2 Evaluation

Problem

Stage 3 Learning/Teaching

Stage 4 Action/Planning

Figure 1: H.E.L.P. Counseling Model Progression

Additionally, clients who are unable to collaborate during the action-planning stage may require more time in the stages that invoke hope and evaluation. The counselor can return to stages one and two with the incorporation of new information taught in the first cycle of stage three.

CONCLUSION

The HELP method is a simple delivery system that provides a method that can be utilized by Reality Therapists. Although the major components of the HELP method are supported by established research, this method requires testing.
REFERENCES


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Regret

According to the Oxford American College Dictionary (2007), regret is defined as, “feeling sad, repentant, or disappointed over something that has happened or been done, especially a loss or missed opportunity, used in polite formulas to express apology for or sadness over something unfortunate or unpleasant” (p. 1150). Often times, we regret what we have done, sometimes we regret the circumstances in which we did something, and sometimes we regret what we did not do. According to Raikka (2004), regret resembles such emotions as guilt, shame, sorrow, disappointment and remorse, but it is not reducible to any of these terms. In a sense, “regret itself is a punishment” (p. 2). Our regrets are a form of self-betrayal, a momentary lapse in judgment, in which we don’t remain true to ourselves, abandoning our values and hurting the people we love most. In counseling, we often encounter individuals who are suffering from regret over their bigger life decisions.

Regret can be philosophically examined through a Choice Theory lens, and people who are struggling with regret can be assisted in overcoming it through a Reality Therapy approach. In addition, our regrets can lead us toward turning inward and living more authentic, fuller lives. Our regrets bring with them an opportunity to reinvent ourselves.

Choice Theory

Our basic psychological needs include: survival, love and belonging, power, fun, and freedom (Glasser, 1998). It is important to recognize that the ways in which people choose to meet these needs is interconnected, as well as oppositional. Glasser (2000) explains the Quality World as “detailed memory pictures of people, things, and systems of belief that have satisfied our basic needs better than anything else” (p. 78). Therefore, our Quality World Pictures overlap as well as contradict each other. For example, a woman might be working at a job where all of her basic needs are being met. However, this job is also taking her away from spending time with her husband and children. Tough decisions have to be made regarding how we go about getting our needs met and often times when our needs are at odds, it leads to regret.

Survival

In my estimation, death and regret are interconnected (Cameron, 2005). The examination of one of these factors seems to lead to the exploration of the other. This is often times the case when we lose someone to death and their passing brings forth regrets regarding the relationship, as well as a heightened awareness of our own mortality. Death puts everything into perspective and maybe some of the mistakes we make are not such a big deal in lieu of non-being.

Love and Belonging

In my counseling experiences, I have often encountered people who are burdened with regret over things they have done or not done to the people they love most in life. To satisfy our needs, we need to have positive relationships and when we damage our most significant relationships we are unable to get our other needs met. People become trapped in their regret and are unable to create and maintain significant relationships in the present. It is interesting to me how we are often times able to forgive others, but struggle considerably more with forgiving ourselves. One’s self-worth comes into question when we contemplate how our actions or inactions let down the ones we care most about.

Power

In experiencing regret, we come to realize that we are “stuck” with our past decision because we cannot change what we chose to do or chose not to do. Therefore, a sense of helplessness derives from our inability to be in control. People who are entombed in regret have difficulty with moving into the here and now and recognizing that they are not controlled by factors outside of themselves. By moving toward an internal locus of control one can overcome regret, but it can also be quite frightening because an individual cannot minimize or rationalize the decision made and the consequences that came with the choice.
Fun

Regrets can often times take over our lives and we are not open to what is currently happening in our days that is joyful. Many of us don’t make enough time for fun, but when we are experiencing the prolific psychological pain of regret we often times feel hopeless. It is of paramount importance to have fun, and in counseling a sense of humor goes a long way. Those who are suffering from regret can be helped greatly by creating laughter, opportunities to learn new things, and by making time for participating in activities that are enjoyed.

Freedom

A sense of freedom is derived from our ability to make choices. Regrets often come down to looking back on a choice of either freedom or responsibility (Cameron, 2005). Therefore, the finality of our bigger life decisions can bring with them a sense of dissatisfaction. By choosing either freedom or responsibility, we have left one door closed. Thus, we are left with the reality of our current situation and what might have been. Our regrets lead us to a confrontation with the finite aspect of our choices. By making a final decision, an individual is inevitably going to regret the path that was not taken. Roese (2005) refers to this as “if only” thinking.

Total Behavior

Glasser (2001) believes that we choose all that we do and he explains this through the concept of Total Behavior, which is made up of the following inseparable components: doing, thinking, feeling, and physiology. One cannot directly change physiology or feelings such as regret, but one does have direct control over the doing and thinking components of behavior. A change in any of these components will influence the entire behavioral system, but the easiest components to change are what one is doing and thinking. Therefore when an individual comes to counseling regretting, he or she can be helped by focusing on the acting and thinking components of behavior.

Reality Therapy

Glasser (2000) states, “The continuing goal of Reality Therapy is to create a Choice Theory relationship between the client and counselor” (p.23). Choice Theory provides us with a blueprint to create a therapeutic alliance through focusing on utilizing the seven helping habits (supporting, encouraging, listening, accepting, trusting, respecting, and negotiating differences) as opposed to the seven deadly habits (criticizing, blaming, complaining, nagging, threatening, punishing, and bribing to reward control) (Glasser, 2005). If a counselor can enter the Quality World of the person he or she is working with, then this will greatly improve the counselor’s ability to help this individual. An ideal therapeutic alliance is comparable to the concept of polyphony in music. Kundera (2000) says, “Polyphony in music is the simultaneous presentation of two or more voices (melodic lines) that are perfectly bound together but still keep their relative independence” (p.73).

A paramount step in counseling individuals who are exploring their regret is to teach them about external control psychology and to help them recognize three false beliefs (Glasser, 2003). People who are experiencing regret often distance themselves from it by blaming others or rationalizing their behavior. Regretful individuals often avoid responsibility by saying “he or it made me do it”. Therefore, the first false belief is other people or things outside ourselves can control us.

The second false belief is that we can control other people. Individuals who are engulfed in regret are often telling themselves such messages as “If only she would give me another chance”. People often think that if they just try hard enough, they can convince someone else to do what they want them to do.

The third false belief extends to “not only do I know what’s best for me, but I know what’s best for everybody”. In our attempts to control others we often try to impose our values and beliefs on people, which can produce significant regrets when others do what we have told them to and it does not work out for them. This false belief is of particular significance to the counselor who must be constantly self-evaluating in order to avoid imposing values and beliefs on the human beings that are engaging in counseling.

The counselor should also focus on addressing issues of regret within the therapeutic relationship. Counselors should role model dealing with regrets in a positive manner as evidenced by acknowledging mistakes and taking steps to correct them. Counselees can be helped greatly by learning the process of how to think through their choices and the possibilities.

Wubbolding (2007/2008) states, “An effective way to understand Reality Therapy is to see it as the delivery system for Choice Theory and the way to operationalize it. A method for this practical system is the acronym WDEP” (p.7). Therefore a counselor can assist a human being who is suffering from regret by utilizing a questioning process that encourages responsibility, self-evaluation, and planning.

The counselor begins with the wants of the individual to find out about his or her Quality World, which in some cases might be to no longer feel regretful, to win a significant other back, or to make meaning out of the experienced regret. Some possible W questions include: What do you want from counseling? How will we know when you have overcome this regret? What will that look like? What do you want to feel like? What do you want things to be like?
The counselor then focuses on what the counselee is doing, to gather information about Total Behavior and the individual's perception about what has been going on regarding his or her regret. The counselor must be tuned in to whether the client sees himself or herself as an agent of change or a victim of outside circumstances. Some possible D questions include: What did you do? What was happening before this incident of regret? What was your part to play in the situation? What is your story?

The core of Reality therapy is self evaluation, and at this point counseling is focused on helping the client put a value on what he or she has been choosing regarding his or her regret (doing, thinking, and perception). Some possible E questions include: If you continue to do what you have been doing, what is going to be different for you? Are you okay with the way things are for you right now? On a scale of 1 to 10, how important is it to you to move forward with your life? Is it possible for you to get what you want?

After the counselee decides that what he or she has been doing has not been working for him or her, the counselor then helps the counselee create a plan to address the particular regret. Thus, one begins the process of self-correction and healing. Hoglund (2006) encourages the use of a SMART plan (simple, measurable, aligned, realistic, and time bound). Perhaps the plan is focused on apologizing to the person that was hurt or utilizing positive self-talk. Some possible F questions include: What is one thing you can do to improve this situation? What choices do you have right now? What could you do differently? What is in your control?

Summary

Regret is the price we pay for memory. One who is experiencing regret is forced to examine a choice that was made, which often leads to a desire to go back in time and change the decision. Our bigger regrets in life are often times perceived as a form of self-betrayal because the choice that was made is not in accordance with whom we truly are and what is most important to us, bringing about a confrontation between inner-knowing and outer reality, as well as our concept of our "ideal self" in the Quality World versus our "real self" in the Real World. Our identity comes into question and we must stare at our imperfections, which humanizes us. Although our regrets are painful, we can learn from them and improve our quality of life by focusing on our relationships, the doing and thinking components of behavior, as well as avoiding external control. Regrets serve as reminders of a wrong turn a few miles back and when people come to counseling suffering from regret, a therapeutic alliance based on becoming more responsible, self-evaluation, and planning to make meaning out of their experience and avoid future regrets can be extremely helpful.

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ABSTRACT

The William Glasser Institute provided choice theory/reality therapy certification scholarships to 12 individuals working in post-secondary education in order to ensure that teaching of choice theory and reality therapy is accurate and up to date, and to increase the growing body of research on reality therapy and choice theory that addresses the efficacy of both the theory and the practice. This is the first of two articles to examine the actual impact of this program on participants’ teaching practices and scholarship activities, especially manuscripts submitted to professional journals that examine the efficacy of choice theory and reality therapy.

In the fall of 2007, the Board of Directors of the William Glasser Institute established the Glasser Scholars Project. The purpose of the project was three-fold: (1) to help ensure that instruction in choice theory and reality therapy is accurate and up-to-date; (2) to provide training to university faculty as a means to facilitate purpose number one; and (3) to increase the growing body of research on reality therapy and choice theory that addresses the efficacy of both the theory and the practice (Glasser Scholar Project, n.d.).

University faculty members involved in teaching, training, and conducting research in the Education, Counseling, Social Work, Counseling Psychology, Rehabilitation and related disciplines were encouraged to apply for the project. The applicants accepted for the program were offered scholarships covering the tuition for the entire Institute sponsored training process leading to Reality Therapy Certification. In exchange for the scholarship award, the applicants were asked to include a statement of how they would use choice theory (CT) and reality therapy (RT) in teaching, and how the training would contribute to the applicants’ research agenda. The letter of application also included a statement of commitment to conduct research on the efficacy of choice theory and reality therapy and to submit articles for publication.

The cost of the tuition was picked up by William Glasser Institute and the Glasser Scholars Project was advertised through professional associations and at professional conferences. In December of 2007, 12 faculty members were selected, as part of a cohort intended to support each other in their learning, teaching, and research while enhancing their resumes as professors committed to scholarship. They attended the Basic Intensive Week together in Cincinnati, Ohio from February 29 to March 3, 2008.

The original group of Glasser Scholars included eight untenured assistant professors, three tenured faculty members, and one program administrator. Of the eleven faculty members, six were from Counseling programs, four were from Departments of Social Work, and one was from a Department of Secondary Education and School Leadership. There were: Mark J. Britzman, EdD, Associate Professor of Education and Counseling at South Dakota State University; Thomas K. Burdenski, Jr., PhD, Assistant Professor of Counseling and Counseling Psychology at Tarleton State University; Willa J. Casstevens, PhD, Assistant Professor of Social Work at North Carolina State University; Gloria S. Cisse, MS/MSW, Assistant Professor of Behavioral Sciences/Social Work at Fort Valley State University; Jill D. Duba, PhD, Assistant Professor of Counseling and Student Affairs at Western Kentucky University; Brenda Faulkner, MEd, Director of Student Success Programs at Tarleton State University; Sylinda B. Gilchrist, EdD, Assistant Professor of Secondary Education and School Leadership at Norfolk State University; Mary A. Graham, PhD, Assistant Professor of Counseling and School Psychology at Seattle University; Steven L. Hartsock, PhD, Assistant Professor of Social Work at Frostburg State University; Jay Memmott, PhD, Chair of the Department of Social Work at Washburn University; and Albert L. Watson, PhD, Associate Professor of Counseling at the University of Cincinnati.

The Advanced Intensive Week (AIW) was held in Cincinnati from July 26-29, 2008. Nine of the original group returned for the advanced training and the group were joined by three new faculty members who completed their Basic Intensive Week before the Glasser Scholar Project was formed. The new members included Michael Dyson, PhD, Program Leader of pre-service teacher education programs at the Gippsland Campus of Monash University in Australia; Neresa B. Minatrea, PhD, Professor of Counseling and Student Affairs at Western Kentucky University; and Tammy F. Shaffer, EdD, Assistant Professor of Counseling and Student Affairs at Western Kentucky University.

To assess the impact of the intensive training on the Glasser Scholars' teaching, supervision, and research...
activities, the participants were asked to respond to the following five questions within one week of completing the Advanced Intensive Week:

1. How did training in reality therapy and choice theory in the Basic Intensive Week and the Basic Practicum improve your ability to teach reality therapy and choice theory or help you update your understanding and practice of reality therapy and choice theory?

2. How did training in reality therapy and choice theory in the Basic Intensive Week and Basic Practicum improve your ability to teach reality therapy principles in your counseling theories or other didactic counseling courses?

3. How did training in reality therapy and choice theory in the Basic Intensive Week and Basic Practicum assist you with supervising students in field-based practicum or internship courses?

4. How did participation in the Basic Intensive Week and Basic Practicum help you establish or build your research/publication agenda?

5. How did participation in the Basic Intensive Week and Basic Practicum help you develop research plans or proposals targeted at reality therapy and choice theory specifically?

Since the Glasser Scholar Project was aimed primarily at making sure that instruction in reality therapy/choice theory is up to date and that research is generated to promote the efficacy of reality therapy/choice theory, this article will focus on participants’ responses to questions two, four, and five. Responses to question four and five were combined for the sake of length. What follows are excerpts from participants’ written responses presented in alphabetical order.

**How did training in reality therapy (RT) and choice theory (CT) in the Basic Intensive Week (BIW) and the Basic Practicum (BP) improve your ability to teach reality therapy principles in your counseling theories or other didactic counseling courses?**

**Mark J. Britzman**

As a counselor educator who has taught theories of counseling for numerous years, I must admit that CT/RT always had an appeal of being an efficient and pragmatic approach that appears to be useful in a variety of contexts. Regardless of theory, any approach must ultimately help a client make more useful and life-enriching choices which is the core of any meaningful change. Most counseling theories textbooks made CT/RT seem overly simplistic, especially when discussing the application of the approach and dismissing the theory because of deemphasizing mental disorders. Many students came to the conclusion that regarding becoming a reality therapist, you just educate the clients about their quality world, how their choices are linked to basic needs, and then just ask, “is what you are doing working for you?”

**Thomas K. Burdenski, Jr.**

The BIW week allowed me to immerse myself in CT/RT and it really helped me see how this counseling approach rightfully belongs among the so called “brief therapies.” Most people think of Solution-focused, Narrative, Rational-Emotive and Cognitive-Behavioral as brief models counseling, but it became very apparent to me that CT/RT is a similar form of therapy that focuses on getting the client back on track in his or her life and that it can be used effectively in as few as one or two sessions. I also became aware of this is a form of therapy that you can utilize in small chunks of time rather than a 50 minute therapy hour. In my teaching, I showed one of my two BIP training tapes, in which I worked as a counselor with a role-played adolescent client, to demonstrate how to use CT/RT with clients to my Counseling Theories class. Students sometimes comment that they often have no idea how their classroom instructor or supervisor actually does therapy and that watching them in action is a very powerful way to learn from the supervisor’s strengths as a therapist. It also makes applying the theory less formidable if you get to see someone you know apply it. Moreover, having a strong grounding in CT/RT practice and theory gave me more confidence and enthusiasm for teaching this model than I had previously, when it was just one of the 12 major theories I covered in my Theories of Counseling course. I became so enthusiastic about the efficacy of CT/RT as a brief treatment model that I added it to my Brief Therapy course beginning in the fall semester of 2008.

**Willa J. Casstevens**

Since the BIW was my first exposure to CT/RT principles, it was not a matter of improving my ability to teach these principles, but rather of opening the door to a new range of ideas that I can now share with students. I will add this material to our graduate program’s course on advanced practice with families. The supplemental course material will now include readings and handouts on RT/CT. The BIW and BP role-play assignments also provided approaches and material that I can incorporate into classroom exercises and role-plays, which students generally consider both constructive and enjoyable.

**Gloria S. Cisse**

The extent of my knowledge about RT/CT was what I had learned in my master’s program. I had not had any intensive learning related to any specific methodology. After completing the BIW and BP, I was not only more knowledgeable about what RT is but how its applications can be used in every aspect of my professional life.

**Jeri Crowell**

The most poignant application that occurred to me after my BIW and BP is the use of the WDEP in counseling supervision. I found over the semester that I referred numerous times to RT as a problem-solving tool and counseling intervention that works well with many cultures and in numerous contexts.
In the summer of 2008, I taught the Counseling Theories course and used a survey counseling theory text book and Glasser's *Choice theory: A new psychology of personal freedom* (1998). I was surprised at my ability to answer some (not all) of the questions the students had as we read through the book together. The 12 essay questions that were assigned during the BIW really helped me get a better grasp of the major tenets of RT. In fact, after John Brickell (Director of RT/CT Training in the UK) graded my answers, I put them together in a PowerPoint lecture for my Counseling Theories class that I taught last summer. Because I was still trying to conceptualize the theory, I felt only adequate in explaining the basic components of the theory (i.e., basic needs, what WDEP means, the Satisfaction Scales). Due to my interest in couples counseling, I also highlighted the Solving Circle in the class. Although most of the students were school counselors and would most likely never work directly with couples, some of them used this technique in their own marriages. It was exciting to be able to take my training into the classroom!

**Michael Dyson**

My response to this question is focused on my specific teaching of the principles of RT/CT to pre-service teacher education students and teacher educators. The knowledge and skills that I gained through the BIW and BP has led me to speak publicly and with authority to a number of different audiences of pre-service teachers and teacher educators. As a result of these presentations, conducted in both lecture and small group settings, I have now become known as a strong supporter of the Glasser principles (Dyson, Albon, & Hutchinson, 2007; Dyson & Hutchinson, 2008) and have become a resource for many individuals and groups, who prior to my intervention knew nothing of Glasser's work. Although I recognize that I still have much to learn, I now know enough to speak confidently and can convince others of the significance of Glasser's work.

**Brenda Faulkner**

Since the BIW, I have had the opportunity to present CT/RT as a guest lecturer. Armed with “The Chart,” the five genetic needs and the car metaphor, I have been able to bring CT to life for students in a variety of graduate counseling classes. My training in February has provided me with a stronger understanding of some of the more basic components for CT/RT which has translated to a more animated presentation of the theory to graduate students. The “Total Behavior Car” is a very lively presentation and gives the students a strong visual reference to the four elements of total behavior. This illustration is simple to do in the classroom and it is amazing as you see the “light bulbs” come on as they personify thinking, acting, feeling and physiology. The strongest piece of this presentation is letting the students know, that according to CT/RT, clients have little or no control over feeling and physiology. I like to pass along to the students Glasser’s notion that if you change what you are doing, you will change what you are thinking or vice versa. This gives the students a moment of pause, but, again, you can slowly see the light come on and they will eventually reach a very rich understanding. Another nugget gleaned from the BIW was “WDEP.” Again, another simple idea – wants, direction, self-evaluation, and a plan. Presenting the “WDEP” model to counseling students provides them with an instantaneous counseling procedure that will carry them through an entire session. “What do you want?” “What are you doing to get what you want?” “Is what you are doing getting you closer to what you want?” “What do you plan to do in the future?” Of course, I am oversimplifying, but not by much, which is the wonder of CT/RT.

**Sylinda B. Gilchrist**

Like many counselors and counselor educators, without extensive specialized training in a specific theoretical orientation, we often practice from an eclectic modality and incorporate a variety of techniques and theoretical concepts. It is important for our students to have knowledge of various theories; however for students specializing in school counseling, it is important for them to have a clear understanding of theories that are most effective with children in the educational setting. I often instruct school counseling students to focus on counseling theories that can be effectively practiced with students. CT/RT is one of the theories that I emphasize. After completing this training, I am equipped with an in depth understanding of the concepts of CT and a clear understanding of the techniques of RT, which has enhanced my ability to teach these concepts to my students. I am now able to teach CT/RT beyond the information in the theory textbooks. I am confident that the lecture and activities that I have incorporated in my courses have enhanced my students’ knowledge of CT/RT. I am more assured in my ability to teach these principles because I had the privilege of learning CT/RT from Dr. Wubbolding. The Glasser Scholars Project has given me an increased sense of confidence when teaching CT/RT because I have been taught by a pioneer of RT. Completing this training has made me a better counselor and more importantly, a better professor.

**Mary A. Graham**

The BIW and BP has greatly influenced my instruction and experience with students in the classroom. Prior to attending the BIW, I felt at times muddled with questions that were difficult to answer from students regarding CT/RT. Having participated in the BIW has given me a sense of confidence in the basic foundation and practice of CT/RT. The experience has provided me with solid footing when fielding difficult student inquiries regarding the theory, the practice and the theorist. The BIW experience has armed me with the needed knowledge to debunk myths that students have regarding CT/RT. Participating in the BIW was an opportunity for me to collaborate and share
ideas with colleagues regarding their implementation of CT/RT. I gained valuable insight and ideas regarding instructional strategies and theory implementation.

Neresa B. Minatrea

After attending the BIW, my confidence in the basic principles increased enough that I conducted training for senior military personnel on management strategies using CT/RT. Next, I have provided numerous short trainings for local community agencies and undergraduate and graduate level courses. Additionally, I organized and conducted a three-credit graduate level course entitled Using RT during my doctorate studies. Furthermore, I presented the CT concepts at state and regional conferences. Soon after attending the BIW, I developed a series of PowerPoint slides enhancing my ability to apply theory to lecture format. Versions of these slides are still used today to teach RT concepts. I incorporated CT/RT into the following graduate courses: Counseling Theories, Group Counseling, Counseling, Social and Cultural Diversity, Techniques, Substance Abuse Counseling, the Mental Health Practicum and Internship. The BIW provided me the knowledge and skills to not only teach the principles, it also supplied me the proficiency level to conduct role-plays for graduate level students and practicing counselors in the community.

Tammy F. Shaffer

I primarily teach clinical courses (practicum and internship). However, I found I became much more skilled in finding creative means of teaching the principles of RT/CT to my students, and used it frequently in my group counseling course. It was a challenge, though, to explore how to use RT in a group setting, as most of my reading and studying has been about RT with individuals. However, my students appeared to benefit from my taking the training, and I felt more confident in my ability to give my students information in a manner they could apply with clients. They are eager to use the approach in a school setting.

How did training in reality therapy (RT) and choice theory (CT) in the Basic Intensive Week (BIW) and the Basic Practicum (BP) help you establish or build your research/publication agenda? How about research plans or proposals targeted at reality therapy (RT) and choice theory (CT) specifically?

Mark J. Britzman

I was struck that CT, the conceptual framework, and RT, the delivery method, was linked to the research I was conducting on positive psychology, individual psychology (founded by Alfred Adler) and solution-focused brief approaches. Specifically, CT/RT respects the client's desire to define his or her quality world, which elicits hope and optimism. A client's cognitive and behavioral plan is then linked to total behavior to ensure useful choices. Good choices elicit internal motivation that is further enhanced via constant awareness and self-evaluation, followed by a very specific plan generated from the client. The linkage of CT/RT has been in concert with my aspirations for teaching, research and practice. Consequently, I decided to write a manuscript using CT as a conceptual framework that is reinforced with research findings from other approaches that can be taught using RT as a delivery mechanism. I also aspire to collaborate with fellow Glasser Scholars to develop an assessment tool to measure current need satisfaction in a valid and reliable fashion. Lastly, I would like to learn to apply RT to a more systemic, familial approach with the goal of helping individuals within a family context develop a plan that can be encouraged by other family members.

Thomas K. Burdenski, Jr.

The Glasser Scholars Project met my research needs perfectly because I do not like conducting research on my own. All of the research projects I have been involved in over the past ten years have included one or more research partners. When I went to Cincinnati and trained with the other dozen or so Glasser Scholars, I was able to form some personal and professional friendships that I am using as a springboard for planning and implementing research studies. This article (Burdenski et al., 2009) came directly from a Glasser Scholars brainstorming session while completing the Advanced Intensive Week. I am also conducting a major CT/RT study (Burdenski & Faulkner, 2009) in the fall semester 2008 at Tarleton State University with Brenda Faulkner, another Glasser Scholar. She and I will be investigating whether or not teaching WDEP and CT to first-semester high-risk college freshmen helps them meet their personal and academic goals. We are hoping that exposure to this practical method for identifying their wants and needs and gentle self-evaluation as to how what they are doing is helping them or hurting them in terms of meeting those needs will lead to better satisfaction of Glasser's Five Basic Needs and consequently, better retention of new students, higher GPAs, and overall increased academic success at Tarleton State University.

Willa J. Cassvevns

The training in RT/CT in the BIW and BP helped me to formulate a structured approach to a project I was consulted on by a local agency for individuals with severe and persistent mental disorders. The agency asked for assistance in developing a health and wellness program, something that has been difficult to successfully implement with this client population in agencies elsewhere. CT provided a framework to use in generating “buy-in” at the initial stage of program development, which has led to a research project focused on this process. This plan, if accepted by the agency, will likely lead to a funding proposal at the university level. As a land-grant university, we have annual (competitive) funding opportunities available for community development projects and this project should qualify for such funding. I would very much like to
find a collaborator interested in work with this population for further research into choice theory and reality therapy. The opportunity to talk with, and listen to, others involved with and engaged in clinically oriented research has been especially helpful in stimulating my thinking along these lines. This will assist me to build on my current research/publication agenda, which focuses on mental health treatment and interventions.

Gloria S. Cisse

Prior to attending the BIW and BP, I knew that I wanted to conduct research and possibly write for publication, but I did not have a clear direction. Being a part of the group, watching those who are researchers at work, feeling motivated and empowered to do research by this group of people has caused me to seriously think about what I can do. I am also clear about the fact that RT/CT will make a difference in the lives of my clients and I want to help to develop the body of research which will inform the clinical world of the relevance of RT. Listening to others speak about research topics was enormously useful for me. There were people present who have worked in clinical areas that I am interested in and others who have taught classes similar to those I am responsible for teaching. The conversations regarding techniques led to my making some professional connections that would have been impossible before. The practicum forced me to read more information about RT/CT leading to a greater understanding of how these tools might be used to facilitate change within the populations that I am working.

Jeri Crowell

As a new faculty member, research was not high on my achievement list until I attended the BIW. Even then, I was not sure how to incorporate any significant time for research in an already busy schedule. I have to admit that I also felt inadequate to do such research on a topic that was quite new to me. However, through the practicum experience I was able to gain comfort with incorporating the theory into my work as a counselor and a teacher, and the practicum made a strong impact on the possibilities I could see for using reality therapy in my life, my teaching and in my counseling. That increased self-awareness and self-satisfaction in gaining more competence with the practice of RT fueled a desire to develop a model for supervision that will enhance the internship experience for my interns and myself. My agenda for research has since been jump-started with enthusiasm and curiosity. My idea to use WDEP in supervision is quite specific to RT. The idea for developing a model for counseling interns to use in supervision came from the assigned practicum essay questions and reading responses that we shared with our supervisors and colleagues during our basic practicum. WDEP provides a procedure to help counseling interns formulate and clarify their learning process. Just as we learn that we cannot control others' behavior through external control psychology, interns develop the awareness that they cannot control their clients' choices. What RT can offer in supervision is helping interns to understand their own balance of behavior and needs. This approach will also enhance self-reflection on the part of interns.

Jill D. Duba

It was fabulous to be in a group of persons who are like-minded in terms of scholarly activity such as research and publishing. I felt rejuvenated and excited during the BIW when talking about the possibilities of research with my newest colleagues! One of the exciting parts of this was that this process of establishing a research agenda became a pathway to building relationships among group members. Exploring research ideas seemed like a way to continue to build upon the cohesiveness of our group; a very good feeling! My research agenda never really became clear, however until the advanced training week. I think this may be due to a couple of reasons. One, my excitement for RT really did not develop until about the second day of the advanced training week. It was then that the concepts actually began to click and make sense to me. Prior to that, I was not sure that “reality therapy was for me.” Secondly, my research plans also involve my colleagues at Western Kentucky University. Since they had not attended the basic training week that I attended, we were a bit off in terms of where to go. When the three of us attended the advanced training week together, we seemed to have a better basis from which to talk about our ideas and move to them into a plan of action. Thirdly, it helped to hear what other members of the group were doing during the advanced training week. This too helped us think about where we wanted to go with our own research plans. In fact, I later collaborated with three other Glasser Scholars to develop a way to apply Glasser’s five genetic needs to the practice of marriage and family therapy (Duba, Graham, Britzman, & Minatrea, 2009).

Michael Dyson

Since my basic week in 2006 and into my practicum I have written and submitted three academic papers putting forward the notion that CT/RT should be embedded components of all pre-service teacher education programs (Dyson, Albom & Hutchinson, 2007; Dyson & Hutchinson, 2008; Dyson, 2008). As a result of my professional development in the fields of RT/CT, I now have a clear research focus and plan to research and embed Glasser's ideas into pre-service teacher education. A major focus of all my research is now directed towards gathering empirical evidence as to the benefits of CT/RT. My specific research plan is to gather empirical evidence about the development of positive relationships in elementary classrooms as the result of using the connecting habits rather than the deadly habits. This study will become the focus of my Glasser Scholar research project.
Neresa B. Minatrea

The BIW afforded me knowledge and understanding of CT/RT principles; thus, the courage to write and submit articles and research. My first article in using CT/RT involved integrating Myers-Briggs-Type Indicator with RT (Minatrea & O’Phelan, 2000). I conceptualized and developed the hypothesis that MBTI was a filter to achieving our needs and wants. The 16 personality types discussed in MBTI colors or effects how each of us meet our needs and wants. The results included a publication and numerous workshops at community, state, and regional conferences. Next, I co-authored a research project integrating Animal Assisted Therapy (AAT; Minatrea & Wesley, 2008) and RT measuring treatment outcomes between two groups of individuals addicted to poly-drugs. This research has been accepted in two different journals and national, state, and regional presentation have occurred. Additionally, my co-researcher obtained his doctorate from the study. Another research project involves using RT in play therapy. The text has been outlined and after my RT practicum experience, I sense a greater competency to complete the project and a higher motivation to contribute to the growing body of material related to RT. Lastly, a research project was developed with three other Glasser Scholars. This project involves comparing the use of CT/RT and Solution Focused Therapy (SFT) with individuals seeking services at community counseling center. This will be an empirically based study occurring over the next several years. Because of collaborating with Glasser Scholars, my most recent research project surfaced. This study measures treatment outcomes in using RT or Solution Focused Therapy in a University Family Counseling Clinic. This undertaking involves training and supervising mental health practicum/internship students, coordinating four faculty, and involving individuals living in the community. Through networking with other Glasser Scholars and my team of four researchers, this research plan has been discussed, enhanced, and formalized to an achievable project. Furthermore, in discussing the project with other scholars, there appears to be increased energy and dedication to completing the research among our team. Lastly, on the opposite end of the spectrum of formalizing my own research, it was rewarding to discuss other scholars’ research plans, assist in revisions, and provide encouragement for them. This was a surprising need fulfilling benefit not initially anticipated.

CONCLUSION

From the personal accounts noted above, it appears that the Glasser Scholar Project has made a significant impact on the teaching of RT/CT and that the experience has been a catalyst for a variety of research collaborations between the Glasser Scholars. In a follow-up to this article, we will examine how the Advanced Intensive Week and Advanced Practicum further impacted their teaching, research, and lives as scholars.

REFERENCES


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Perception: The Orphaned Component of Choice Theory

Robert E. Wubbolding, John Brickell

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ABSTRACT

Explores the use of the perceived world, i.e., the storehouse of perceptions or "current realities", and discusses the place of internal and external locus of control in choice theory. Illustrating this concept is a dialogue with a client who sees himself as externally controlled; the counselor joins the client, listens carefully to his sense of being controlled, and almost imperceptibly leads him to discuss and explore his burgeoning sense of internal control. The authors suggest the addition of a third level of perception when teaching CT/RT. This relationship filter allows human beings to see the connection between incoming information and the value placed upon it. It also provides a way to connect wants with behavior, and measure the effectiveness of behavior.

In choice theory and reality therapy instruction, there is much emphasis on the quality world and the behavioral system. Clients, students, teachers, corrections workers and training participants are asked, "What do you want?" They describe what they want from the world around them, from themselves, and from whatever process they are involved in: counseling, supervision, instruction, etc. They describe their actions, their self-talk and even their feelings that serve as the lights on the dashboard of the car. When lit, we know some part of the behavioral car needs attention. The choice theory/reality therapy literature gives major attention to the behavioral system as the vehicle for choice (Glasser, 1998; Wubbolding, 2000). Moreover, instructors have developed dozens, even hundreds, of activities for use at training weeks and practica as well as creative ways to tap the behavioral system and the quality worlds of clients, students and trainees. This effort serves the purpose of becoming part of their quality worlds as a pre-requisite for change and for learning.

Perceptual System

But where does the perceptual system fit into this process? What is its purpose? Is it useful only to explain "input gained from the purposeful choices directed toward the external world"? Of what practical value does it serve when implementing the WDEP system of reality therapy? Is it an orphan, the love child kept out of sight? The relative who is part of the family but unknown to visitors when they call upon us? Put another way, how can perception be integrated into the counseling process and into the quality school journey?

Therapeutic Process

In implementing reality therapy the question often arises, "What is reality?" The fact is that there is a world outside of our minds. There are galaxies, stars, planets, moons, and of special interest to us, a star known as the sun, as well as the planet earth. And their accompanying physical laws exist regardless of whether we perceive them or not. Some people believe there are objective moral laws that determine right from wrong. However, much of reality is what we perceive it to be. For example, one person perceives the room temperature as too hot; another person perceives the same temperature as too cold. Similarly, some people perceive the world as unfair or hostile and perceive themselves as controlled by others, while others see justice and friendliness and perceive themselves in charge of their lives. These perceptions constitute current reality. Essential to the user of reality therapy is an understanding of the clients' or students' current reality, i.e., perceptions.

Consequently, the perceived world, i.e., the collection of "current realities", provides an eminently useful focus, and its skillful exploration opens many avenues for counseling. In general, helping clients, students and institutions raise their awareness of and evaluate the contents of their perceived worlds plays a crucial role in assisting them to take better charge of their behavior, direction and destiny. One of the goals of discussions centering on perception is to help clients and client systems decide what they can control and what they cannot control. Thus, individuals with a perceived locus of internal control have a healthy sense of who they are, and they achieve success more readily (Rotter, 1954). Mearns (2008) states, "People with a strong internal locus of control believe that the responsibility for whether or not they get reinforced lies within themselves. Internals believe that success or failure is due to their own efforts. In contrast, externals believe that the reinforcements in life are controlled by luck, chance or powerful others. Therefore, they see little impact of their own efforts on the amount of reinforcement they receive" (p. 4). A major difference between Rotter's principle and choice theory is that in choice theory the payoff for behavior is not seen as reinforcing but rather as satisfying the internal motivation i.e., general needs and specific wants.

Interventions based on the perceived world are especially useful in counseling involuntary or court referred
clients. Many such clients see themselves victimized and "put-upon" by society. In fact, even some professional training encourages clients to see themselves as victimized by the attitudes and discriminatory behavior of others: racist, homophobic, genderist, etc. From the point of view of choice theory, facilitating the further development of such a world view only serves to keep them from driving their behavioral car in a more effective direction and taking better charge of whatever behaviors are under their control. The reality therapist does not accept the fact that they need to remain as floor mats oppressed by their exploitive external worlds.

Examples of useful questions focusing on the perceived world often include language related to visioning:

- How do you look at the situation?
- How do you see other people: friendly or unfriendly?
- How do you think other people see you?
- What do you think other people see you doing?
- Where do you see your control: inside or outside?

The task of the reality therapist is not to impose his/her theoretical view on the client but to acknowledge the painful perceptions shown in red on the How the brain works chart (Glasser, 2005) and to allow clients to describe them and even to explore them. This discussion serves as a process to gradually lead clients away from a sense of external control and toward a sense of internal control.

Below is a reconstruction of a demonstration occurring during a training session illustrating this process and a participant’s reaction to it.

Th = Therapist    F = Fernando, the client
Th: Fernando, tell me what brought you here. I know you don’t want to be here.
F: Yeah. I hate this crap. The judge sent me and my old lady pushed me to come.
Th: What did they think you did to require you to come for counseling?
F: They said I was drunk and the police gave me my third DUI and I pushed my wife around.
Th: So they think you have a problem. What else do they think you’re doing?
F: They’re against me. The white judge hates Mexicans. Everybody knows it.
Th: Who else do you think treats you badly?
F: My boss fired me.
Th: So he’s not exactly on your side either? Do you see him as a friend or an enemy?
F: Not a friend, that’s for sure. He’s a bigot. He promoted everyone else but me.
Th: Everyone else?
F: Well, some people.
Th: Did anyone deserve a promotion?
F: Some of them probably did. But I know he can’t stand me.
Th: Let’s come back to his attitude later. What does he think you did that he doesn’t like?
F: He’s on my back about my work. He’s the foreman and tells me to do things I don’t think are my job.
Th: What would be an example?
F: If I come a little late he makes a big deal out of it.
Th: Let’s be specific. How many times did he think you were late the week before he fired you?
F: He said I was an hour late four days out of five.
Th: Do you agree?
F: I guess so.
Th: So he fired you. What did he say when he fired you?
F: He said he couldn’t keep driving me out to the work site everyday anymore. He had to drive the other workers and come back for me.
Th: So he really was upset because he had to backtrack and take you out to the work site. Was he completely unfair in his decision?
F: I guess not, but I had good reasons to be late.
Th: I guess you did. So your boss, your wife, the judge and the police are on your back. Is there anyone else after you?
F: The *#!**#! neighbors hate me. They’ve called the police on me.
Th: How many times in the last two months?
F Four or five times.
Th: What do they think you do that prompts them to call the cops?
F: My wife and I fight at night and it keeps them awake. Oh yeah, I did shoot their dog house and they were really mad about it. And our dog barks late at night.
Th: So, we’ve established that you see yourself as victimized by the judge, by your wife, by the police, by your boss, by the neighbors and probably five or six other groups of people. How about people in stores, hospitals, doctors’ offices, agencies, etc., etc., etc.
F: That's right. Well, maybe not the hospitals.

Commentary

At this point in the one-day training session the leader stopped the demonstration and asked for observations from the participants. One trainee who had experienced some reality therapy training vigorously stated that the session was extremely negative and that the counselor encouraged the client to talk about his negative plight. Discussing the part of his life over which he has no control should be avoided. After all, CT/RT is an internal control psychology. The participant was firm about the importance of being positive and talking about the choices that will improve his life.

The trainee is right in theory but, on the other hand, saw the practice of reality therapy [rom the limited point of view of behavior only and secondarily on the need for inner control. He thought the therapist should not encourage the client's indulgence of his sense of being externally controlled. Nor should he be encouraged to "harp upon negative thinking." Be positive. Look for what Fernando could do better. But the therapist's purpose was to establish the therapeutic alliance, to connect with the client on the client's terms, not on the basis of a limited and narrow agenda of a therapist precipitously applying only one principle of choice theory/reality therapy.

From External Control to Internal Control

In the above dialogue it is evident that the client's perceived locus of control is external. He does not see his own role as an active agent but rather as an oppressed and devalued object rejected by others.

A cornerstone of the reality therapy process is the client/therapist relationship. The therapist attempted to communicate to Fernando that he understood his belief/perception that he was being controlled by external oppressive forces. Only gradually by careful listening will he be able to lead Fernando to the point of view, i.e., the perception that he might have at least some responsibility for at least part of his current plight.

Moreover, by listening carefully and by reflecting his sense of external control, Fernando accepted some responsibility for his behavior. The therapist asked, "What do they think you do that prompts them to call the cops?" As is typical of this process, the client, Fernando, did not respond by projecting the blame onto the neighbors. Rather he stated, "My wife and I fight at night ... I did shoot their dog house." The skilled counselor listens carefully for the client's manner of expression, i.e., his language and the change from external control vocabulary to internal control.

In the following dialogue, Fernando discloses his initial level of perceived inner control or responsibility.

Th: As we were saying, you're surrounded by people who are ganging up on you, singling you out and in general clobbering you. Are you saying that you've never, ever, ever done anything that they accuse you of?

F: No, I guess I've done some things illegal.

Th: How much of the blame they've dumped on you do you think you deserve?

F: A little.

Th: Could you give me a percentage? Just take a guess.

F: I'd say about 20%.

Th: That much! You'll take pretty much responsibility for the stress and pain that you're experiencing. That's more than I thought. Could you give me an example?

F: When the neighbors called the police last time I was fighting with my wife and I threw things at the neighbor's house after I shot at their dog house.

Th: So the judge was right when he said you were in the wrong?

F: Yeah, I hate to admit it but he was right.

Th: I admire your courage in admitting your responsibility. Do you see your actions as choices?

F: Yes. If I am responsible then I chose my actions. That's what your pamphlet said I'm supposed to say.

Th: That's right. Do you see the connection between what you did and what happened to you later?

F: Yes, I do.

H: Now here is a crucial question. Are you ready for it? If you don't change anything you do, will your life change for the better or will you remain a floormat?

F: It will be as it is. I'll be dumped on.

Th: Okay. Rather than spending more time blaming yourself, could you describe a way to handle a similar situation, a better way, a way that would result in a better outcome? Let's say your wife gets upset because you had to work overtime and you forget to bring home a few items from the store.

F: I could tell her I forgot and simply return to the store and tell her I'm sorry for forgetting. And you know I really ought to repair the damage I did to the neighbor's dog house.

Th: Could you do all that without embarrassing yourself too much?

F: I think so.
Th: You're hesitant, but would it be worth it?
F: I think so.
Th: It seems you now see the connection between your actions and what happens later. Could you describe the connection?
F: If I give in to my temper I hurt the family, damage my relationship with neighbors and invite the police into my home.
Th: Sounds like you really see a lot of connections.

Commentary

The above dialogue is intended to illustrate the process of a client moving from a perceived external locus of control to a perceived internal locus of control. Of course, with clients whose history consists of real or imagined unfair treatment, the process is more lengthy with many steps both forward and backward.

Locus of Control and Relationship Filter

When Fernando moves from a sense of external control to a place of internal control, he perceives relationships unknown to him prior to the therapist's early acceptance of his perceived external locus of control. Clearly, there can be a relationship filter placed between the total knowledge filter and the valuing filter. At the level of the total knowledge filter, we simply recognize incoming information. At the highest level, the valuing filter, we label the information positive, negative or neutral. But a valuing label can be placed on information only after the information is perceived as having a relationship to a quality world want or a behavior and its accompanying consequence.

In its most simplified format the labeling filter merely recognizes the object:
- Chair
- Man
- Woman
- Car

The relationship filter compares each item with a standard:
- The chair is comfortable
- The man is short
- The woman is tall
- The car is a limousine

Fernando utilizes the relationship filter at a higher level. Her perceives his own actions as interconnected with other events. His insight extends to the relationship between his choices and their impact on his family, the neighbors and the assault on his own quality world/needs. What he gets is something undesirable from the judge and he furthermore sees that he'll suffer future pain if he continues to behave in similar ways.

Systemic Aspects of CT/RT

Because the elements of choice theory – wants, behavior and perception – comprise a system of interconnected parts, the entire theory is connected with the procedures, the WDEP system. For it is through questions springing from self-evaluation that Fernando sees the connection between his actions, his wants and his diminishing perception of being controlled externally. The therapist could ask Fernando, “If you continue to do what you’ve done, if you

![Three Perceptual Filters](image)

Figure 1.

Three Perceptual Filters: low-level or total knowledge, middle-level or relationship, high-level or valuing.
continue to handle things with your wife, your boss, your neighbors as you have done in the past, will your relationships with them be strengthened or weakened?" The counselor could also ask, "What will happen to you if these relationships don't improve?" "How will your life be better if you deal with people in a more courteous and friendly manner?"

Figure I illustrates the place of the relationship filter located between the low level filter (total knowledge filter) and the high level filter (valuing filter). A value can be placed on the input received only if it is compared with a quality world want, a behavior or a consequence. We can determine if the information deserves the color red, green or yellow only if such a comparison is made, i.e., a relationship established.

SUMMARY

Because of the emphasis on choice, reality therapy is often seen as an existential method. On the other hand, Wubbolding (2000) states, "The three levels of perception and their practical implications serve to put reality therapy in the cognitive school of counseling theories" (p. 27). Even further, choice theory and its essential delivery vehicle, the WDEP system, (Glasser, C & Glasser, W., 2008) place reality therapy as a free standing theory separated, yet connected with, the cognitive, Adlerian, existential and NLP schools of therapeutic systems.

Moreover, the perceived world occupies a central place in both theory and practice. It is the storehouse of memories and current perceptions; painful, pleasurable, neutral. As human beings, we perceive the world around us indifferently (green), pleasaefully (yellow) or painfully (red) and inter-connectedly. We perceive incoming pieces of information as related to each other and connected with wants/needs and behaviors. Thus, there can be a third and very useful filter.

Finally a major part of the perception is seeing what is controllable and what is not controllable. This principle has extensive implications in that it is eminently useful in counseling and education. At another time, we will explore its usefulness on an organizational level.

REFERENCES


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Balancing the Scales - A Personal Journey

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The author's name is a pseudonym for the writer

ABSTRACT

The journey from an out of balance quality world versus real world to the balancing out of the two worlds.

I remember saying so many times 'I wish he were dead' and then as the years passed, I began saying, 'I wish I was dead'.

If you've never experienced emotional pain that's so great where you feel empty inside, and you want to just run away but you can't; you don't have the strength to, you feel like your chest is closing up, and you want to scream but you're too weak; you feel numb, but yet you still feel the excruciating pain that cuts through every inch of your body - pain that as I am writing this still cannot be explained to the point of understanding unless you have been through it: well, that's what I felt like for years.

I grew up in a home with a controlling abusive father and a mother that, although she tried her best and was loving, was unable to subdue my father's abusive tendencies or otherwise appease the situation. I was always so scared of my father as I watched him interact with my two older brothers and myself. My two brothers were very different from each other; one kept his head down and let everything around him slide off his back, and the other was much like me, he sought attention whenever he could, be it positive or negative. This attention seeking behavior caused things to escalate for me at home and at school; the constant screaming between my father and my brother, together with the physical abuse, left emotional scars; occasionally, I would hide in a corner and cover my ears trying to escape from the abuse. My brother who was 8 years my senior needed a punching bag to let out his emotions and anger, and I was just that. My home life continued for years in this manner, and as I got older, I started getting the brunt of it from my dad more and more. Eventually, all it took was one word in the wrong direction and I would get slapped so hard or sent to my room for hours without dinner. All the begging and apologies in the world wouldn't change my father's mind, and I was just that. My home life continued for years in this manner, and as I got older, I started getting the brunt of it from my dad more and more. Eventually, all it took was one word in the wrong direction and I would get slapped so hard or sent to my room for hours without dinner. All the begging and apologies in the world wouldn't change my father's mind. I felt like nothing I did could ever make my father proud or happy, but my brother and I continued to yearn for our father's approval, although it never came.

Things went from bad to worse. When I was 15, my father had an affair which almost tore our family apart; every school that I was enrolled in wanted me out due to my intense behavioral issues. In both my home and school, I was constantly being criticized, blamed, nagged, threatened, punished and controlled. I felt so unwanted and rejected, no parents wanted their kids associating with me; I was starved for love and acceptance and I felt it.

My father would criticize me by saying things like, 'you look like a prostitute' if my clothes didn't meet his standards in fashion. On other occasions, he would threaten, control and harshly punish me for such actions. Such punishments included my dad practically giving me a concussion at the age of 16. I'll never forget those two punches I received to my head for being 15 minutes late for curfew (let me tell you, my father is a very strong man). Ending up in hospital at the age of 19, it began to really take its toll on my psychological well being.

As if my home life had not been traumatic enough, after having been kicked out my parents' house, I built up this father figure relationship with a well respected man from my community. He took me in when I was at my lowest point and so vulnerable, I felt so loved and cared about I was practically calling him dad, although my life was still in a mess. I had him and his family to call my own, until this man whom I had come to trust as my surrogate father started sexually abusing me. It started as small gestures, and I told myself this wasn't happening or wasn't real and wished it away, it still very much was. I begged him to stop as he forced himself on me and did things to me, it hurt so much, but as I pleaded and cried, he would say things like, "I know you like this, your body is telling me that you are". I tried to escape but he threatened me, after all, I was the vulnerable 'teen at risk' whom he 'saved' and he was a very powerful man, you know the kind that is wealthy, gives lots to charity, has friends in high places, and sets themselves up as indestructible. I dealt with the pain by involving myself in self-destructive behaviors such as drinking and promiscuity. I slept around like there was no tomorrow. I felt so dirty and cheap from all the abuse that I started subjecting myself to more of it. I began to yearn for the feeling of pain that came from guys using me like an object of no worth. I hated myself so much and I wanted to be treated as badly as humanly possible. I loathed myself inside and out, but the one thing I wanted most was impossible; I was stuck with myself, and, although every ounce of my being wanted to escape from the ugliness I felt for myself, that was just not possible.
I had sunk into such a deep depression that I was consistently in and out of the hospital, together with battling my anorexia of 10 years which caused me to collapse quite often. My desire to end my life was so overwhelming that it consumed my every thought for a full three years. The abuse went on for about a year, until I landed myself in a rehab and they figured out that I was a current victim of sexual abuse. The dean of the rehab called the man and wanted to bring him to justice, but he threatened to bring the rehab down to its knees and he had the power to do just that. One thing the dean did achieve was getting it out in the open so that it came to a stop. I thought all my pain would get better, that I would get better but I didn’t. I was out of control and so was my pain; every time I thought I had hit bottom, something else came along that told me things can always get worse. Drinking till puking wasn’t doing it for me anymore, and since the abuse stopped, so did my sleeping around. I needed something more, I needed to stop the pain, the deeper I cut, one night I cut so deep I needed to get fifteen stitches. I scared myself so much.

What terrified me more than anything ever had was that nothing and no one else could help me anymore: I had been to therapists, psychiatrists, a therapy based institution, and I had taken meds, I was 22 and nothing helped and I had no life. If nothing had worked, then what the hell was I going to do? How was this going to end? As much as I wanted to die, I wanted to live too, I wanted to be happy like other people were, I wanted to experience love, success, life’s beauty, I didn’t want to give up, I just wanted to be happy. I needed to be happy.

So, this is when things changed. I was lying in bed crying and had a little talk with myself; it went as follows, “am I happy with my current situation?” “No” “do I need to change it?” “yes”, “how am I going to do that?” “Either I’m going to live or I’m going to end things. If I am to die, I need to just do it. If I’m going to live, then I need to start living, really living”. I didn’t look back after that night; it took a long time and it was by no means easy. It was an uphill battle of baby steps, and sometimes I slipped, but for the first time in my life I was not being controlled by anyone but myself.

This change had a ripple effect on my parents in particular. They changed in ways that I never could have dreamed of. My father started taking real responsibility for his negative role in my life. I never felt that he trusted me; he didn’t, but this changed too. He validated me and my pain, I never got that before, he was proud of me and I felt it. His genuine support was breathtaking, and he showed he cared in a way I really needed. His love for the first time was unconditional. I now call my father my best friend.

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