

# Basic Ideas of Choice Theory

- The only person whose behavior we can control is our own.
- All we get or give to other people is information. What we/they do with that information is up to us/them.
- All long lasting psychological problems are relationship problems.
- The problem relationship is always part of our present life.
- What happened in the past has a great deal with who we are today but may have little to do with what we need to do now, which is to improve relationships in our present life.
- We are driven by five genetic needs: survival, love & belonging, power, freedom and fun. These needs have to be satisfied the same as physical needs like breathing, eating and sleep. We can delay meeting these needs but not deny them. No one can tell us how to meet these needs. Only we know when they have been satisfied.
- We can satisfy these needs by first having an idea of the ideal way we would like to satisfy the need and then trying to make that happen. Since most of our ideas are visual, we refer to these ideas as the pictures in our head of how to best satisfy the need; what Dr. Glasser calls our Quality World.
- All we do from birth to death is behave. We refer to our behavior as Total Behavior because it has four separate but interrelated parts: thinking, doing, feeling and physiology.
- All total behavior is designated by verbs. Instead of saying "He made me angry." for example, you would say, "I am angering." or "I choose to anger."
- While all total behavior is chosen, we only have direct control over over what we think and what we do. The way we control our feelings and physiology is by changing what we think and do. When you are leading a balanced life through responsible behavior, you feel good (happy) overall. When you are not, you feel bad (sad, grumpy, disappointed, etc.).

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**Balanced life** means attending to all your needs in a way that makes sense to you. You can put off meeting a need for a short time but when you ignore the need, it may begin to effect you physically and emotionally.

**Responsible behavior** is meeting your own needs without getting in the way of someone else meeting theirs. In Choice Theory, the emphasis is based on effectively meeting your basic needs and on relationships. There are 7 habits that reduce the connection we have with other people: criticizing, blaming, complaining, nagging, threatening, punishing and bribing to reward or control. We do our best to move from use of the 7 habits that reduce connection to the 7 habits that support and encourage connection: supporting, encouraging, listening, accepting, trusting, respecting & negotiating differences.