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Behaviour and learning

In his book 'Choice Theory', William Glasser outlines his explanation of human behaviour; that everything we do is an attempt to meet one or more of our five basic needs.

Basic Needs

Glasser theorises that we are universally driven by our genes to satisfy five basic needs:

- **Survival -** the core needs (food, shelter, safety). This is similar to Maslow's physiological and safety level.
- **Love & belonging** - includes relationships, social connections, affection (felt & given) and feeling part of a group. It is similar to Maslow's belonging need, and recognises how important it is for us as a tribal species to be accepted by our peers.
- **Power** - to achieve, to be competent, skilled, recognised, listened to and have a sense of self-worth. This maps to some extent to Maslow's esteem need, although the power element focuses on our ability to achieve our goals (which is perhaps a lower-level control need for Maslow).
- **Freedom -** is the ability to do what we want, to have free choice, independence and autonomy. Freedom is connected with procedural justice where we seek fair play.
- **Fun/learning –** pleasure, enjoyment and play to support learning life skills.

Figure 1.5. Glasser's Basic Needs

Love & Belonging	Power	Fun	Survival	Freedom
• belonging • being loved • being respected • friendship • sharing • cooperation	• recognition • success • importance • achievement • skills	• enjoyment • laughter • learning • change	• health • relaxation • sexual activity • food • warmth	• choices • independence • freedom from • freedom to

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Quality World

For Glasser, we were both humans and individuals. We each have a unique set of life experiences through which we perceive the world. This personal view that we build up - our Quality World - portrays the best ways we have found to satisfy our basic needs. It is a "personal picture album" of all the people, things, ideas, and beliefs that we have discovered increase the quality of our lives. Our Quality World contains the information that is most important to us.

The 'pictures' within our Quality World:
* are unique to us
* meet one or more of our Basic Human Needs
* are continually changing and changeable
* often conflict with each other
* vary in levels of intensity
* vary in levels of attainability

Total Behaviour

One of Glasser's major premises is that all behaviour is purposeful: that all of our behaviour is trying to meet our basic needs in the best way we know, <u>at that time</u>. This is informed by whatever is in our Quality World.

Therefore, **all behaviour** is an expression of an unmet need.

He deliberately expands the word *behaviour* to the words *total behaviour* because, in his view, behaviour is made up of the four components working together simultaneously:

thinking	acting
feeling	physiology

In Glasser's model, they are always operating together. He suggests that we can directly control thinking and acting, but we can only indirectly control feeling and physiology through changes made to our thoughts or actions.

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Building Relationships

Glasser emphasises the importance of quality relationships for increasing well-being, and that disconnectedness is the source of all human problems;

> *"To get along better than we do now with another person, we need to try to learn what is in that person's quality world and then try to support it. Doing so will bring us closer to that person than anything else we can do."*

To achieve this, he suggests we cultivate a Choice Theory approach (and the Seven Caring Habits) to replace external control (and the Seven Deadly Habits):

Seven Caring Habits	Seven Deadly Habits
1. Supporting	1. Criticizing
2. Encouraging	2. Blaming
3. Listening	3. Complaining
4. Accepting	4. Nagging
5. Trusting	5. Threatening
6 .Respecting	6. Punishing
7. Negotiating differences	7. Bribing or rewarding to control

Identifying and planning to support needs

If something is a need for us and our group (learners, leaders & staff team), then how do we identify it and plan to provide for it? Some ideas could be to:

- Use opening & reviewing routines, and non-hierarchical conversation
- Have a cycle of observing ➤ interpreting ➤ adapting
- Engender open dialogue through invitations, open questioning, a 'process' over 'goal' approach, doing/walking alongside one another, waiting and listening for far longer than seems natural for someone to be ready to communicate
- Co-construct sessions

- Inform ourselves about human nature interests & nature theme information
- Establish links with a child's wider world (to inform, not to label; may be two-way?)
- Consult (auditory, visual or kinaesthetic responses to provocations*)

*This is a term used in early years, linked to the Reggio Emilia approach, where a 'provocation' is an open-ended activity with no prescribed outcome, that is used to stimulate a learners ideas or imagination, to help develop skills such as flexible thinking and creativity.

Other approaches

Alfie Kohn - www.alfiekohn.org

Kohn distills what most learners need in order to support their wellbeing, engagement and growth as follows:

- Choice
- Community ethos (giving love and belonging to enable learning)
- Content (learning that is relevant & motivating)

Carl Rogers - www.simplypsychology.org/carl-rogers.html

Rogers believes that everyone can achieve their goals, wishes and desires in life, if they have the right environment in which to 'grow'. Learners are best supported by us being:

- Trusting
- Real (authentic)
- Unconditional in positive regard
- Empathetic

Glasser text taken from:

- 'Choice Theory' by William Glasser, M.D.
- 'An Introduction to Choice Theory' - www.brucedavenport.com/introduction.html
- A brief Introduction to Choice Theory - www.headstuff.org/topical/science/psychology/brief-introduction-choice-theory/