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Reality Therapy in the Classroom

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Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfilment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Masters of Arts in the Faculty of Education

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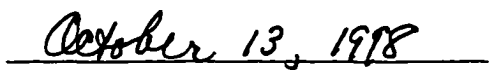
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Abstract

Reality Therapy in the Classroom

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October 1998

The impetus for this thesis was a presentation Dr. William Glasser gave in Halifax in the Fall of 1996. It was at that time I first heard Dr. Glasser expand upon his theories of Choice Theory (1998) and Reality Therapy (1965).

This thesis will explore in depth the concepts and practice of Choice Theory and Reality Therapy and will provide both a theory-based insight and a practical application of the theory.

It is the aim of this thesis not only to explore the ideas and principles of Choice Theory/Reality Therapy but also to provide a step by step process to help individuals understand why and how they are responsible for their own actions. Upon completion of this thesis, the reader will have been shown that not only are they responsible for their own actions and decisions but that they also have a choice.

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my sons Christopher Kahlil Abbass and Nicholas Abrahim Abbass. May the strength, fortitude and dedication that was put into this thesis inspire you to persevere, to have patience and to keep your goals in sight.

Acknowledgements

I would first like to thank my thesis advisor Dr. Blye Frank. of Mount Saint Vincent University. Blye is an outstanding academic. a man of vision and a true living example of compassion and love for others. I would also like to thank Catherine Rahy who gave me my early teaching, by example. of what makes an outstanding teacher.

Thanks goes out to Kevin Davison for making himself available on short notice to edit this thesis. Finally. to Gwen Houston who typed most of this thesis and through her encouragement inspired me to write it one page at a time.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

My name is Blair Abbass and I am a Career and Life Management teacher at Millwood High School in Lower Sackville, Nova Scotia. The following thesis is the result of several years of study and practical application of the ideas of Dr. William Glasser.

In deciding to put together this thesis on Choice Theory (Glasser, 1998) and Reality Therapy (Glasser, 1965), the teachings of Paulo Friere ruminated through my mind. Friere believed that the consequences of reflection are essential to the learning process (Shor, 1987, p. 42). He promoted the concept of problem posing (Wallerstein, 1986), an intricate part of it being the action phase. The action phase occurs when the student tests out the analysis in the real world (Glasser, 1984).

I did not want this thesis to be one of the millions that, after deep thought and reflection, simply sit on a shelf. I therefore designed this thesis to include worksheets (Chapter 4) based on the principles of Choice Theory/Reality Therapy that may be put into practice. The worksheets are the result of 18 months of extensive study that enabled me to be certified in Reality Therapy. The main target of the worksheets will be putting them into use at Millwood High School during the 1998-1999 school year.

My first exposure to the concepts of Choice Theory (Glasser, 1998)/Reality Therapy (1965) came when I first heard Dr. William Glasser speak. Glasser was in

Halifax in the fall of 1996 for a series of lectures on "Quality Schools" which are schools that incorporate the principles of Choice Theory and Reality Therapy as part of the teaching package.

During the lecture Glasser spoke about how Choice Theory attempts to explain both the psychological and physiological behaviour of all living creatures. In his Choice Theory, Glasser (1998) maintains that all we do from birth until death is to behave, and that all our behaviour is total behaviour. Total behaviour is made up of four components; acting, thinking, feeling, and the physiology. Glasser proposes that acting and thinking are always voluntary; feeling and physiology can only be changed through changing how we act and think.

Choice Theory explains that all total behaviour that satisfies our needs is chosen, and all the choices are an ongoing attempt to act on the real world so that it coincides with a small world that we build into our memory called the quality world (1998).

Glasser's Choice Theory puts forth that everything we do is to satisfy one or more of five basic needs: survival, love and belonging, power, freedom, and fun. Therefore, all behaviour is internally motivated to satisfy these needs.

Reality Therapy (Glasser, 1965) is a method of counselling that uses the principles of Choice Theory. Glasser began to develop his Reality Therapy due to his disillusionment with his psychiatric training. He states:

Toward the end of my psychiatric training I found myself in the uncomfortable position of doubting much that I had been taught. My teachers implied that there was a great deal more to be learned in the field. but only a few questioned the basic tenants of conventional psychiatry. One of these few was my last teacher. D. G. L. Harrington. When I hesitatingly expressed my own concern. he reached across the desk. shook my hand and said "Join the club." For the past eight years as I progressed from student to colleague he has continued to work with me to develop the concept of Reality Therapy. (Glasser. 1965. p. 15)

Reality Therapy is different from most types of psychotherapies because it focuses on the present and helps people understand that they can choose a better future. The basic concept of Reality Therapy is responsibility. Glasser states "people do not act irresponsibly because they are `ill`. they are `ill` because the act irresponsibly" (Glasser. 1965. p. 9). Glasser's whole premise is to have people take responsibility for their own actions. He states "responsibility. a concept basic to Reality Therapy is defined as the ability to fulfill one's needs and to do so in a way that does not deprive others of the ability to fulfill their needs" (Glasser. 1965, p. 11).

The whole concept of individual ownership and responsibility is not new. Scott Peck in *The Road Less Travelled* states "we must accept responsibility for a problem before we can solve it" (1978, 32).

The ideas that Glasser was presenting were not new to me. During my twenty years as a classroom teacher I have been exposed to ideas such as Maslow's (1987) hierarchy of needs and how that applied to his students. Maslow believed that everything we do is in relation to satisfying our basic needs of survival, safety, love, self-esteem and self-actualization. I would use these needs to help students realize what motivates them to do the things they do.

What differentiated Maslow from Glasser was his complete package of Reality Therapy. I now had a tool to show the students what motivates them to make good and poor choices and a detailed plan to live potentially more fulfilling lives. Glasser provided a step by step decision making process to help the individual meet his/her needs in a productive and fulfilling manner.

Glasser says that a key part of the process of Reality Therapy is the therapist's involvement with the client. He states:

Involvement is the foundation of therapy. All other principles build on and add to it. As soon as possible the person being helped must begin to understand there is more to life than being involved with his misery, symptoms, obsessive thoughts, or irresponsible behaviour. He must see that another human being cares for him and is willing to discuss his life and talk about anything both considered worthwhile and interesting. (Glasser, 1972, p. 19)

Glasser promotes therapist-client involvement. He states that "the ability of the therapist to get involved is the major skill of doing Reality Therapy" (Glasser, 1965, p. 26). He goes further in describing a good therapist: "The therapist must be a very responsible person - tough, interested, human, and sensitive. He must be able to fulfill his own needs and must be willing to discuss some of his struggles so that the patient can see acting responsibly is possible though sometimes difficult" (Glasser, 1965, pp. 26-27).

I was intrigued and motivated by these ideas that reinforce his own beliefs and offered further insight into what motivates human behaviour. As a result, I began a two-year program to become certified in Reality Therapy. This thesis explores the past two years of extensive research into the area of Reality Therapy. It evaluates strengths and weaknesses and finally provides a workable tool to be used to explore Reality Therapy concepts in the classroom. Since Reality Therapy includes the theories of Choice Therapy, this thesis predominantly uses the term Reality Therapy (Glasser, 1965).

Chapter 2

Literature Review

How well do these ideas of Glasser play out in the real world? After an extensive literature research I soon discovered that the application of Choice Theory (Glasser, 1998) through Reality Therapy (Glasser, 1965) is plentiful.

Some school systems have applied the theories of Glasser's Choice Theory in the form of "Quality Schools." A quality school is one in which the majority of the teaching staff and administrators are trained in Reality Therapy (Glasser 1992).

The first major application of Reality Therapy (Glasser, 1965) through Glasser's Quality School theory (1992) was at the Apollo High School in Seimi Valley, California. This school had an extremely high drop out and failure rate. Glasser felt if the school recognized the needs of the individual and ran the school using the method of lead management as opposed to the method of boss management (Glasser, 1992) it would become more need satisfying for its students. Crawford, Bodine and Hogland state that:

> Glasser (1990) distinguishes lead managers from boss managers by their view and establishment of rules. Boss managers depend upon rules and rules proliferate with each new problem. These rules are sacred and often become more important than the problem they were designed to solve. Lead managers also have rules but they do not depend upon rules to solve every problem.

The lead manager designs the total operation so that hard work will produce need-satisfying results. (1993. p. 97)

The staff at the Apollo High School met with Glasser and developed the following mission statement: "The mission of Apollo is to provide a place where both students and staff can satisfy their needs for belonging, power, freedom, and fun in the pursuit of learning and teaching" (Green. 1991. p. 71).

Brad Greene, the principal of Apollo High School, after three years of following Glasser's principles of Reality Therapy, concluded the following from student surveys done from 1985 to 1989: "Improvement in attendance was 20%, improvement in attendance was up from 72% in the 1986-87 school year to 97% in the 1988-89 school year" (1991. p. 70). Greene also noted: "the fact that the overall educational program based on Choice Theory was meeting the students' needs and causing them to be internally motivated to attend and do quality work was probably the most important reason for improved attendance" (1991. p. 70).

Greene's survey pointed to the fact that "in 1989 Apollo High School seniors showed the biggest increase of any High School in the county on the state mandated achievement test" (1991. p. 69). Greene also cited that:

of the 150 students that graduated from Apollo between 1986 and 1989 only one failed to pass the district proficiency tests in reading, mathematics and written expression. The students were proud of their performance as a group

– evidence of their strong sense of belonging and their feelings of empowerment. (1991. p. 69)

This was a school that had a high failure rate and drop-out rate. The evidence shows that if you create an atmosphere that enables students to do their work and at the same time meet their needs. academic performance will improve.

Reality Therapy has even been used in the resettlement of the Khmer refugees in the United States. Rosser states that:

Reality Therapy is most definitely a doing therapy. The emphasis is not on how a person feels but rather on what action the person is taking in his or her own life to improve the quality of life. For the Khmer refugee who culturally has tremendous difficulty expressing feelings. concentrating on their actions is much more comfortable than the traditional therapies that concentrate on the feeling aspect of a person's life. The reality therapist working with Khmer refugee is concerned with helping the client adjust to life in a new culture. Kinzie. Trans. Beckenridge and Bloom (1980) indicate that questions of psychiatric treatment that question feelings and sensitive relationships may seem threatening to the Indochinese refugee patient. As. Reality Therapy is concerned with what the client is doing about a particular problem this would enable it to be more effective than other therapeutic approaches. (Rosser, 1986, p. 23)

Rosser adds: "much research has proven that discussing past events with the Khmer refugees leaves them feeling worse not better (Kinzie, Frederickson, Ben, Fleck, and Karls, 1984, p. 24)" (1986, p. 23).

Rosser concludes that her use of Reality Therapy counselling techniques have been extremely successful with the resettlement of the Khmer refugees in Greenboro, North Carolina.

Boffey Barnes in his book *Reinventing Yourself* based on the Reality Therapy theories, explains how the theories of Glasser (1965) helped him deal with conflict in his life:

> I began to develop a picture of myself in that situation and how I would act if I were the person I wanted to be. I needed to reinvent myself if I was to finish that meeting and feel the way I wanted. I knew that I couldn't change how others would act in this situation. However, I could choose how I wanted to act. (Barnes, 1993, p. 29)

Barnes realized he had no control over others but by using Reality Therapy he chose his own actions thereby empowering him and enabling him to deal with his life.

Bassin backs the value of Reality Therapy when he states "Reality Therapy is not a technique or a collection of tricks and underhanded strategies that force a person to change against his will. Rather, it is existential philosophy that can be translated into a clear cut operational component to help a troubled person arrive at

a solution to his problem" (Bassin, 1993, p. 22).

Bill Howatt states: "I continue to be amazed with how, through Choice Theory, clients are able to move from choosing happiness by understanding, through self evaluation, how they can choose to organize effective behaviours" (1997, 75).

Rachor notes that "Reality Therapy has also been used in a domestic violence program the program called "Passages" (1995, p. 29). Passages is a treatment program using a Reality Therapy approach for males and females involved in domestic violence. An evaluation of the program was designed to measure the attitudinal and behavioural effects on clients and the effectiveness of Passages in reducing violence and threats of violence in domestic relationships. Rachor found that:

almost sixty percent of males reported increased self-control. Five others reported either major changes in their lives or improved relationships (for a total of 82%). Eighty three percent of females reported that they had not experienced threats of violence or violence by partners since First Step.* The rates of non-violence for the "Passages" program are much higher than the expected 33% non-violence without treatment reported by Dutton (1986). A judgement can be made that "Passages" appears to be effective in reducing the incidence of domestic violence. Males learn self-control and techniques for effective relationships. Females improve their self-esteem and learn how to

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*First Step is a shelter and treatment program for domestic violence in Fastoria, Ohio, U.S.A.

function independently. (1995, p. 35)

After looking at the areas that used Reality Therapy successfully, I decided to explore where Glasser derived his theories. This search was deterred by the fact that Glasser gives very few references in his work. Therefore, I set out on an investigative track to examine similar theories to Glasser that might have influenced and supported his work.

I found extreme consistent thoughts between Albert Ellis' (1973, 1985) work on Rational Emotive Therapy and William Glasser's (1965) Reality Therapy. Ellis states that "RET is a system of psychotherapy designed to help people live longer, minimize their emotional disturbances and self-defeating behaviors and actualize themselves so that they have a more fulfilling existence" (1985, p. 5). This process compares to Glasser's work in that it focuses on thinking and behaviour. Ellis adds that "RET works best with people who are willing to work at understanding and changing their thinking and behavior" (1985, p. 6). This is exactly what Glasser proposes in all of his books, that effective therapy focuses on changing thinking and action (1998). Ellis backs up this point further when he states: "People and things do not upset us, rather we upset ourselves by believing they can upset us" (1973, p. 50). This, too, relates to our thinking process which, in turn, creates the feelings inside of us, again, echoing Glasser (1965).

As I continued to read Ellis' work, I was astounded by the closeness of the two theories. Ellis (1985) even uses the concept of "choice" which is also reflected

in Glasser's work (1998). In Ellis' dialogue on goals, he says, "RET sees them as matters of choice, rather than as absolute givens" (1985, p. 4). Ellis expands upon this concept of goals by adding that "RET consists of helping people to think more rationally (scientifically, clearly, flexibly); to feel more appropriately; and to act more functionally (efficiently, undefeatingly) in order to achieve their goals of living longer and happily" (1985, p. 5). Ellis also touts the need for the individual to accept responsibility. He states that "part of RET is getting people to become healthy individuals who tend to accept a great deal of responsibility for their own disturbance, rather than defensively blame others or social conditios for their self-defeating thoughts, feelings and behaviours" (Ellis, 1985, p. 6). This point is also made throughout Glasser's theory of Reality Therapy (1965).

The congruencies between the two theories finally came together for me when I read:

Furthermore, RET has been almost astoundingly successful in that many writers have incorporated its philosophy and practice into their work even though they may have failed to acknowledge doing so. As some of these writers have published immensely successful and influential books including L.S. Barksdale (1972), Wayne Dyer (1977), and William Glasser (1965). (Ellis and Bernard, 1985, p. 4)

Whether this is true or not, I can only speculate. But as a researcher, I conclude that the similarities are obvious.

Glasser's Quality World (1998) is also similar to the techniques used in Cognitive Therapy (Beck 1967). Beck states that "Cognitive Therapy is based on underlying theoretical rational that individual's affect and behavior are largely determined by the way he [sic] structures the world (1965, p. 3). Weiner also says that cognitive theories take the position "that prior experiences are embodied and transformed into a belief system that includes an anticipation of the final goal event" (Weiner, 1972, p. 274). This again can be compared to the Quality World (Glasser, 1998) which Glasser states is made up of all our past experiences.

Furthermore, Glasser's need structure is also similar to Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1987). These are: Physiological Needs--hunger, sleep and so forth. Safety Needs--stability, order. Esteem Needs--self-respect, recognition. Self-Actualization Needs--development of capabilities (Maslow, 1970, p. 38).

Maslow (1970) believed that the desire to satisfy these internal needs motivates us into behaviour. Glasser also believes that internal drive/needs (1965) motivates us into action. This motivation of need is further supported by Clark Hull when he states: "Since a need either actual or potential usually precedes and accompanies the action of an organism, the need is often said to motivate or drive the associated activity (1943, p. 54).

Additionally, Glasser's Reality Therapy appears to be similar to Carl Rogers (1951) "Client Centered Therapy." Rogers describes his client centered therapy as:

1. The newer approach relies much more heavily on the individual desire

toward growth. health and adjustment.

2. This new therapy places greater stress upon the immediate situation than upon the individual's past. (1951. p. 12)

Reality Therapy also emphasizes needs and places very little emphasis on past experiences in dealing with the present.

Glasser's Reality Therapy (1965) also resembles Social Learning Theory (Rotter. 1954). Rotter and Hochreich state:

In sum social learning theory suggests an eclectic approach to psychotherapy. The theory stresses: the development of problem-solving skills on the part of the patient. such as looking for alternative ways of reaching goals. analysing the consequences of behavior and trying to analyse how situations differ from one another. The goal of therapy is not only to help the person solve his immediate problems but to provide him with skills which will be useful to him in meeting life's difficulties in the future. (1975. p. 109)

Both social Learning Theory and Reality Therapy use self-evaluation in making a plan to achieve goals.

Since Glasser gives very few references, 1 can only speculate that the preceding pioneers in motivation and therapeutic approaches influenced his work.

Chapter 3

Weaknesses of Reality Therapy

As with any therapy approach some flaws can be found to counter the positive effects.

Elwood M. Bowers did an evaluation of Reality Therapy in a rural K-4 elementary school in Michigan. Bowers noted that "there was a level of discomfort with a seeming lack of boundaries" (1997, p. 29). This is supported from the feedback I received when doing Reality Therapy workshops with teachers for the Halifax Regional School Board. Many ask: "Where are the boundaries if students are allowed to simply fulfill their own needs?" This comes from the fact that Quality Schools do not recognize failure. You simply keep trying until you finally pass.

Glasser states: "I believe we are genetically programmed to try to satisfy four psychological needs: love and belonging, power, freedom, and fun" (1998). Bourbon remarks that: "there is absolutely no scientific evidence to support William Glasser's claim that there are five (or is it four) needs like the ones that he proposes. William Glasser's "needs" are abstract words" (1997, p. 4). I too support Bourbon's claim because my search to find proof of Glasser's allegations was fruitless.

Arnold A. Lazarus at the Evaluation of Psychotherapy Conference in Las Vegas noted that "a viable science of psychotherapy needs more than 'conversation' and often demands specific techniques that have empirical backing. Also needed are treatment outcomes that supply precise specifications beyond a vague allusion to

something called 'helpfulness'" (Zeig, 1997, p. 130).

Lazarus also states that "Chambless (1995) published a range of empirically validated methods (reality therapy is not on that list)" (Lazarus quoted in Zeig, 1997, p. 131).

It would seem to me that Glasser's claims about the effectiveness of Reality Therapy, and its fundamental premise that needs are genetically programmed, have not been scientifically validated.

I have heard Glasser state a number of times that the past has little value in Reality Therapy. Corey explains that "Reality Therapy discounts the therapeutic value of exploration of the client's past, dreams, the unconscious, early childhood experiences and transference" (1998, p. 457). It would seem to me that past experiences would be important to any form of therapy.

Glasser has also run into opposition over his claim that spirituality has no place in Reality Therapy. Emed states:

Glasser has steadfastly refused adding a spiritual need to the list of basic needs. He has done this in numerous talks, in an article in the *Journal of Reality Therapy* in 1989, and as late as July 1994 during certification week in Dublin where he went so far as to say that "to postulate such a need would drag us right down into the gutter" (1995, p. 63).

One of the greatest weaknesses I find to Glasser's work is the lack of

references for his material and his empirical studies. An additional weekness is Albert Ellis' claim that some of Glasser's theories are based on Ellis' work without proper accreditation (Ellis & Bernard, 1985).

The weaknesses I have shown explore some serious flaws in Reality Therapy. I have heard Glasser speak a number of times. When he is questioned about any of these, as yet unproven claims, his retort is simply: "Prove me wrong." This attitude could cause serious problems in the future as more professionals and academics demand scientific data to back up Glasser's theories.

Chapter 4

Worksheets For Teaching Reality Therapy in The Classroom

The Golden Eagle

A man found an eagle's egg and put it in the nest of a backyard hen. The eagle had hatched with a brood of chicks and grew up with them.

Believing himself to be a backyard chicken, he clucked and cackled. He thrashed his wings and flew a few feet into the air, just like a good chicken. He scratched the earth for worms and insects.

Years passed and the eagle grew old. One day he noticed a magnificent bird soaring in the heavens in graceful majesty. The old eagle gazed up in awe.

"Who is that?" he said to his neighbour.

"That's the eagle, the king of birds," said the neighbour. "Wouldn't it be wonderful if we could soar like that up in the heavens?"

"Don't give it another thought," the chicken replied—"you and I are chickens."

So the eagle never gave it another thought. He lived and he died thinking he was a backyard chicken.

Anthony Demello, *The Song of the Bird*

Preface

The preceding story sums up the impetus for the worksheets. As a beginning teacher I frequently had to try to still the fears of my students. Years went by and as I would relate to them. "Don't worry, it will all work out," I was always left with an empty feeling. It seemed to me I could fill them with knowledge but I was ineffective in my attempt to help them deal with the trials and tribulations of life. This sent me on a quest, a journey towards not only my own fears, but those of my students as well.

During the past 21 years of teaching many teachers have come and gone; some proposed to know the true meaning of life, others only pretended to. While I sifted through all those who said they knew, the story of "The Golden Eagle" would run through my mind. I saw my students as potential "eagles" who could free themselves if only they could let go of self-defeating ideas. Their ability to soar was buried deep within them; I only needed to find the tools to allow them to start their journey.

Many teachings and as many years later, I came to realize that one of the most powerful tools to self-discovery and empowerment is **Reality Therapy**.

The worksheets provided here in Chapter 4 will present students with thought-provoking ideas, concepts and life skills to enable them to face life's challenges. The material presented here may offer them the chance to look beyond the position of the backyard chickens watching eagles fly. We are all eagles waiting to spread our wings

and soar through life. The reality therapy worksheets will give students the step-by-step process and visualizations that will reinforce their ability to achieve desired goals.

Glasser argues that we can do or be anything we want: it is all a matter of thinking and action.

Section 1

Introduction to Reality Therapy

This section will deal with the use of "Reality Therapy" in the classroom. The school system in its present state is failing miserably for many students. They are coming to school and are in conflict with teachers, administrators and authorities on a daily basis as everyone tries to meet their own needs. William Glasser states:

In the past hundred years, there has been considerable technical progress. We have moved from the first airplane to the supersonic jet to explore Mars. Communication has gone from the turn-the-crank phone to the Internet. The list is endless. Not so with human progress. Except for some improvement in civil rights in the 1960's and some recent movement towards better relationships between managers and workers since quality management surfaced in the 1970's, we are no more able to get along well with each other than we were before.

Can anyone say that there has been any improvement in how husbands and wives get along with each other? Are families in better shape today than years ago? If they are, it's news to me. I work in schools and I have yet to hear a teacher say things are better now than when he or she started teaching. Actually, I hear more of the opposite - that the kids are tougher to teach than

ever. And in these days of the sacred bottom line and the heartless downsizing it takes to raise it, no one is making much noise about how much better the workplace is than it was years ago. In fact, even bosses are experiencing less job satisfaction. (Glasser, 1998, pp. 8-9)

Glasser reflects in many workshops that most problems in life come right down to relationships. If we look at how and why we have these conflicts in our lives we find that they are relationship oriented. Each one of us is striving to achieve our needs in a world of individuals who for the most part are ignorant of each other's needs.

Reality therapy, and more importantly, quality schools, provide us with a mechanism that allows students to develop their internal locus of control: it gives them the ability to realize the power and control they have over their own lives. Knowing that they have this ability empowers them to set goals and achieve a more satisfying life.

If relationships are the key to many of our problems, then they are also the key to our solutions. The worksheets will provide both teachers and students with not only the ability to understand themselves better, but also the tools to enhance their lives.

Section 2

What Makes Us 'Act'?

Each day teachers have conflicts with students. Students in turn have conflicts with each other and also with their parents. We blame others all the time for our feelings, but is that really fair?

Glasser believes we are internally motivated and not, as the old theory goes, externally motivated. He provides an excellent example when he reflects on the concept of a ringing phone. The phone rings and then we *choose* to answer it depending on whether or not we want to speak to someone.

The old theory was stimulus response: I demand you to do something and then I can force you to comply. This will work for a short time and then I will eventually return to old behaviours unless I choose to change. Speeding is a perfect example: I will follow the rules as long as I believe I might get caught. If I believe that no police officers are around, then I will choose to continue to speed.

Glasser's theories explain that it is not the external world but rather the internal world that determines what I will do at any given moment. Some might say that I am being controlled by the speed limits, but this is not true. Many choose to speed despite the consequences. Their world at this point does not hold the same value as the law in regard to speeding. According to Glasser, the only way we can hope to have better relationships with ourselves and with others is to understand how the following needs motivate our behaviours.

Section 3

Our Basic Needs - Powerful Forces that Drive Us

•

Each day we are motivated intrinsically to satisfy a need. There is not one thing we do that is not done to satisfy one of our basic needs.

Once we understand that we are driven by these needs, we can truly use them to live more satisfying and productive lives.

William Glasser states: "Through a careful examination of my life, I have come to believe that I am driven by five needs that together make up the forces that drive me" (1994, p. 5). Through the understanding of these needs you can and will have more fulfilling relationships with yourself and with others. It is these needs that I will attempt to explain in the following sections.

3.1 The Need To Survive

According to Glasser, this is our most basic of all needs. Many of us take the satisfaction of this need for granted. We all need food, clothing and shelter, and for the most part, for most of us, this need is met.

However, even within our industrialized society there are many people who do not have this need adequately satisfied. Examples of this would be street people, individuals on welfare, single teenage parents and people who are unemployed.

If these needs are not adequately satisfied then we will struggle to have them

met. This sense of meeting our needs will manifest itself in different ways. The choices we make will depend upon how strong the need is and what resource we possess to satisfy that need. This will determine the path we will take.

We must never assume that we or others have this most basic need satisfied. The young offender who goes into a store to steal a loaf of bread may do so in order to satisfy his basic need of hunger. We must show him/her how to reach out and get this need met in both a moral and productive way for his/herself and society as a whole.

3.2 The Need to Belong — To Love, Share, Co-Operate

According to Glasser, each and every one of us has the basic need to "love and belong." We all have the inherent need to have a sense of love and closeness in our lives. We want to feel that we are a part of a community of friends, family, or society in general.

This sense of connecting to others need not apply only to humans. It can and does include pets, plants and even non-living entities, such as cars or boats.

The above drives us to seek out other people and things to fulfil our need for love and belonging. A lonely person may feel they have nothing to live for as that need goes grossly undernourished.

3.3 The Need for Freedom

This need expresses itself in our want to come and go as we please. We look towards others as sometimes being roadblocks to acquiring the satisfaction of this need. We all want to feel free both in a political and personal sense. This need has the potential to cause a great amount of turmoil in relationships as each of us wants to feel and live an aspect of freedom.

3.4 The Need for Fun

Fun is such an important part of our lives that most of us could not imagine life without it. Think of the times learning was made easier because our need for fun was being satisfied at the same time. Life can be very dreary if this fundamental need is not met.

How often have we said. "I am just not having any fun." Deep inside we strive to seek out and bring more laughter into our lives. more excitement and inevitably more fun. How great an impact this need has on our lives and relationships is directly related to how important it is to us.

3.5 The Need for Power

Power or influence is another one of our basic needs. We have an internal

need for power and control. We need to not only feel power over ourselves, but also over situations. It may take many forms, such as skill, money, intelligence, social status or recognition.

Even as babies we quickly learn how to obtain power. When we cry we soon learn that most often our parents will respond. This need starts during childhood and continues throughout our adult lives. Each day we struggle to obtain this power in our lives.

In the class students vie for power with each other and with the teacher. At home, relationships either flourish or are destroyed as we seek out the satisfaction of this need. We need to know that we have control over our lives and that we are recognized for our accomplishments.

It is extremely important that in our attempt to satisfy this need we do not impede the ability of others to meet their needs.

3.6 Needs Chart - Where Do You Fit?

I have just finished describing what the different needs mean. The following is one schematic of needs

Survival	=	Food. clothing. shelter. safety
Love	=	Belonging
Power	=	Self-esteem. recognition. acceptance
Freedom	=	Choices and decisions
Fun	=	Laughter

It is important for us to understand how much of each we need in our lives in order to feel fulfilled. On a scale of one to five, five being the highest. rate where you are with each need - eg. The following is how much I require of each need:

Survival	Love	Power	Freedom	Fun
5	5	4	4	4

According to Glasser. if you understand these needs and how important they are in your life, you can find fulfilling ways to satisfy them.

Survival	Love	Power	Freedom	Fun
—	—	—	—	—

3.7 Who or What Meets your Needs?

The following exercise is designed to illustrate who and what are meeting your needs. For each of the needs below, write down the names of family members, activities and things that help you meet each individual need.

Survival

_____

_____

Love and belonging

_____

_____

Freedom

_____

_____

Fun

_____

_____

Power

_____

_____

Is there any area where you feel you are not getting enough of that need met?

_____

_____

_____

3.8 Relationships and Needs

You can also use your number ratings to discover if you are suited for a potential relationship.

You can use the ratings to compare with someone you have in your life. For example. your ratings:

Survival	Love	Power	Freedom	Fun
5	5	4	4	4

Girlfriend's ratings:

Survival	Love	Power	Freedom	Fun
5	2	5	2	2

As you can see with these ratings. you may not be compatible. You have a high love need. Your partner does not have such a strong need for belonging. You

could end up feeling abandoned and not having your need for closeness met. In order to have this need met you could place pressure on your partner which will cause him/her to be resentful.

Exercise

Your ratings:

Survival	Love	Power	Freedom	Fun
—	—	—	—	—

Person being compared to ratings (eg. girlfriend. parent. brother. sister):

Survival	Love	Power	Freedom	Fun
—	—	—	—	—

In relation to the needs rating excercise between yourself and another. answer the following questions in the space provided:

1.) Where are your major differences?

_____

_____

_____

_____

2.) What problems could these differences create between yourself and the other person?

_____

_____

_____

_____

3.) Explain some of the things you might do to avoid these problems.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

It is extremely useful to discuss this chart with the individual who completed it with you. It can be used to identify potential problem areas. Just by realizing that we have different fun needs can help us to understand each other better. The chart becomes a starting point to work out our problems. This point will become clearer as you complete other exercises in the worksheets.

3.9 Getting in Touch With Your Needs

The following will describe a process called "room of your inner-self visualization." I use this with my students who come from extremely dysfunctional/co-dependent backgrounds. Although their needs for survival. power. love/belonging. control and fun are there. they have lost the ability to hear the voice that represents each need. It is at this time that you can pull this technique out of your box of skills to help the individual get in touch with their needs

Section 4

Room of Your Inner-Self Visualization

For many of us, due to the dysfunction that occurred throughout our lives, it is truly hard to remain quiet and hear our inner voices. Whenever we face a decision, we hear a number of voices—our parents, friends, children, partners, bosses, *et cetera*—all these voices coming at us, repeating their messages in our mind. Some messages are self-serving, wanting us to do what is best for them, not us. Some are coming from the pain of dysfunction, such as alcoholism.

How can we trust the voices? We must stay in tune with our own inner voice. The voice that tells us when there is danger, when something is just not right, and at the same time, when something is good for us.

Although at times it can be hard to hear this inner voice, there is an exercise designed to get you in touch with this beacon on the winding road—the voice that has been suppressed over the years—the one that you have become disassociated with as you reacted to people telling you to do it their way. Why? Because they say so!

I first came across this type of exercise in my research on children of alcoholics. These children, as well as those in dysfunctional families, suppress their ability to hear their inner voice. This is because the negative family structure teaches them not to feel, think or act.

An example of this would be a home that has a mother with a drinking problem. The child knows that there is a problem with the mother as she passes out

all the time. but the father. in denial. declares there is no problem. He exclaims to everyone that his wife does not have a drinking problem: she is just under a lot of pressure. The child learns not to trust what he sees. thinks or feels. He denies his own voice over that of his father.

This can also happen with teenagers as their peers struggle for control over them. They do not feel right about doing something. but their own inner voice is drowned out by the insistence of friends. "It's okay. Let's do it." We drown out our own inner voice. saying that it is not okay to smoke dope. because we hear our peers' voices saying. "Do this and we will accept you."

The following exercise will help you to get in touch with this inner voice. You can use this exercise whenever you are having difficulty making a decision or want to get in touch with your needs.

4.1 Main Relaxation Excercise

The following relaxation exercise is one of the most effective I have ever experienced. Using soft music can enhance this process. but it is not necessary.

Find a comfortable space, and if possible, lie flat on your back. If not possible. sit in a comfortable position with legs uncrossed.

With eyes closed. breathe in very gently to your belly. Focus your energy on the breath as it slowly lifts the belly out as you breathe in, and down as you breathe out. Continue to do this for a few moments.

Now, focus your energy on your feet. As you breathe in, tighten your toes as tight as feels comfortable, and as you breathe out, let go. Breathe in again and tighten your calf muscles. Let go as you breathe out. Continue this process with the thighs, buttocks, stomach, chest, hands, neck, face and scalp. Pause for a few seconds in between one group of muscles and the next.

Now, tighten every muscle in your body as tight as you can—breathe in as you tighten the muscles—breathe out as you let go.

In order to go deeper into relaxation, visualize an escalator in front of you, and on the count of 10 step onto the escalator.

10 - on the count of 10, step on the escalator, and go deeper and deeper in to relaxation

9   - feel your body going down as the escalator goes down

8   - you are becoming more and more relaxed

7   - your body is one with the escalator; the further it goes down, the deeper your become relaxed

6   - you are going further and further down the escalator

5   - there is nothing to do, nothing to become, just go further into relaxation

4   - deeper and deeper

3   - you see the bottom of the escalator coming up

2   - you feel totally relaxed

1   - step off the escalator

Now your body is totally relaxed. You can remain in this position for as long as you feel comfortable. There is nothing to do. nothing to become.

With your mind's eye. picture a hallway leading to a magnificent door. This doorway leads to the room of your inner self. A place for you to be with you. No one else can come into this room with you. for this room is just for you—a place for you to be with you.

Notice the detail of the door. the type of wood and handle. Are there any designs in the wood? Remember that this door leads to your inner room—a place for you to be with you. Open the door and walk into the room.

This is the room of your inner self—a place for you to go when the world is just becoming too hectic. Notice that this room has all your favourite belongings. all your books. pictures. music. trophies. but at the same time. no living entity. This room is just for you. No one can come into this room. for this space is for you to be with you.

Look around the room and notice that in this room is a beautiful chair. This chair was made for you and no one else. Notice the detail of the chair—the intricate detail of the work that went into making this chair. Sit in this chair and allow the chair to encase your body. This chair is so comfortable it seems to allow you to become even more relaxed.

In front of this chair is a huge picture window. Look out this window and see your most favourite scene. It could be the ocean. It could be a field of flowers. It could be a mountain area—whatever you find most relaxing. See that vision now and

allow it to aid you in relaxing further. Just sit here and take in this magnificent scene. Take in the comfort of this room. the security of being in this room with just you. This is your place. a space to be with just you. free from all the other voices that try to influence your decisions.

This is a time for you to hear your own voice. A time for you to be with you. To hear what you need to hear. Ask yourself. "What is it that I need now. at this point in my life?" Listen for the answer. If the answer does not come, ask again. Tell yourself you will meet that need and will try to listen to your inner voice on a daily basis.

If you have a decision to make. you can also ask your inner voice for guidance. Listen to your voice and hear what you need to do in order to make that decision. Remember that any time you need to be alone or hear your inner voice, you can come here to be with you. Get up out of the chair and look around the room. See all your favourite objects in this room. Remember this space. for this is your place to be with you. Walk toward the door. Open the door and leave the room feeling peaceful and secure in the knowledge that you have this hidden sanctuary. Close the door as you leave. Remember that you can come back here at any time. Coming back to the awareness of being in the present moment. open your eyes, feeling refreshed and relaxed.

Do the following after completing the "Inner Room" exercise:

1.) After reflecting on your "Inner Room" experience. write a few paragraphs about the experience. Also include what it was you said you needed.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

2.) Upon completing the writing exercise. about your experience. re-read what you wrote. When you finish reading. go back to the "Inner Room" exercise and ask yourself: "What do I need in order to satisfy this need?" Write about this experience below. You can use this information when setting up good plans later.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Section 5

Quality World

Each and every one of us perceives a situation from a different perspective. Two people may witness the same activity and yet both of them tell a different tale to explain what they have seen.

This can be explained by the concept of "quality world". Our minds contain the most important knowledge. All the people of the past, places and things have made a positive impact on us. We place these details in what Glasser refers to as our quality world.

Our parents, friends, pets, co-workers, et cetera, are all in this quality world. How we believe each of them *should* behave is also present. Whenever we see a situation we take this information and compare it to the quality world that exists in our minds. If what we see fits with what is in our minds then there is no problem. In the event it does not fit, we will have conflict. We call the ideas in our mind and our impression of how life should be our "quality world". The way it is in reality is called the "real world". The battle between these two worlds can lead to a lot of frustration for both students and teachers if they don't appreciate how these worlds impact on their lives.

A teacher believes in a quality world where students sit, are quiet, and do their work. In reality a student has needs such as fun, freedom and power. They may try to meet the fun need by talking to their friends in class. The freedom need is

satisfied by going to the washroom or walking around the room. The power need may be met by joking in the class and trying to put the teacher down.

The above are negative examples to some but in the mind of the student and his/her quality world, these are positive and productive ways to behave in order to have his/her needs met, though they are not aware that they are behaving in this way in order to meet their various needs. The challenge is for the teacher to help these students achieve their goals without disrupting the class.

Over the past several years I have introduced the concept of quality world to students and I have found that they are very receptive to the concept of quality worlds and because of it, understand how conflict can arise between individuals. In many cases just showing students that people have different quality worlds can help alleviate a potential problem.

A teacher who recognizes that students have a need for fun, power and freedom can also alleviate potential problems. This teacher will realize the importance of including need-fulfilling aspects into his/her lesson plans. S/he sets up lesson plans that empower students, allow democracy within limits, and are fun. This sounds simple; what we quite often forget is that life is simple, but it is our minds that make it complex.

The first step, then, is to introduce students to the concept of "quality worlds". Once they understand that, you can use the following exercises to explore this premise further.

5.1 Exploration of Your Quality World

In order for you to more fully understand how the "quality world" concept exists in your mind, do the following exercise:

Sit quietly and think about how you would ideally like your relationship to be with your parents. After reflecting for a few moments, write a few paragraphs with the following questions in mind:

1. How do you and your parents relate to one another?

    _____

    _____

    _____

2. Do you have a curfew? How late is it?

    _____

    _____

    _____

3. How often can you have the car?

    _____

    _____

    _____

4.   Is there a bedtime?

_____

_____

_____

5.   When can your friends come over?

_____

_____

_____

6.   What is your room like?

_____

_____

_____

Add any other thoughts below.

_____

_____

_____

_____

You have just described your "quality world" relationship with your parents.

5.2 What's it Like When You Don't Get What You Want?

There is a *real world* and there is a *quality world* picture of what you want inside your head. When these pictures do not match. you get a frustration signal in your brain. Your car of life goes out of control as you try to make both worlds match.

Directions: Describe a real world situation in your life that definitely does not match the picture of what you want in your quality world.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

1.   What are your feelings when the pictures don't match?

_____

_____

_____

_____

2.   Do you have any physical symptoms? What is your body talk?

_____

_____

_____

_____

3.   What are you thinking about when your pictures don't match?

_____

_____

_____

_____

4.   What are your actions? What are you doing?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Now decide. is what you are doing helping you? Write about it in the space provided

below.

_____

_____

_____

_____

5.3 Is the Picture in Your Quality World Realistic?

How do you know if you have an unrealistic picture in your quality world? Has this picture been in your mind for a long time? Does it seem that no matter what you do, you cannot get it? If you answered yes, this could be a clue that what you want might be unattainable or impossible to get.

So, now what do you do? *Decide* how long you want to keep being frustrated about something that is impossible to get. Then think about what else you could want instead. What would you settle for?

Directions: Write about a want in your quality world that you believe might be an unrealistic picture. Then, think of ways you can revise the picture to get what you want. Write about the revised picture in the space below.

My unrealistic picture is:

_____

_____

The revised picture is:

_____

_____

_____

Once you have finished your revised picture, go to the handout on the S.I.S.S. plan (p. 56) and apply your revised picture.

Section 6

We Always Have Control Over What We Do

However dysfunctional my family was, both my mother and father taught me one thing, and that was no matter how bad life gets you can still enjoy it. My mother had lupus and was given four years to live. She had a strong will to live and enjoyed 16 years past the point the doctors had given her. The year she died, although she only weighed 78 pounds, she attended the New Year's Ball. She chose not to allow the disease to control her life and exercised that concept as much as her body would allow.

I use the above example to show you that regardless of how we feel physically or mentally, we always have some control over what we *do*.

Glasser states that whenever we are faced with a situation involving our *quality world* and the *real world*, we use four different behaviours that make up what he calls "total behaviour." Glasser lists them as follows:

1. Doing (or active behaviours): Such as walking or talking, which means voluntarily moving all or parts of our bodies in some way that we want to move it. (Some involuntary behaviour necessarily accompanies most routine activities; for example, I don't voluntarily position my tongue when I talk.)

2.   Thinking: Voluntarily generating thoughts or involuntary

generating thoughts. as in dreams.

3.   Feeling: Feelings. such as anger and joy. which mean we

have the ability to generate a wide variety of feelings.

both pleasurable and painful. just as we initiate thoughts

and action. Some of these may be known only to us. as

when we hide pain or joy. but most of what we feel is

readily apparent to those around us. especially those who

know us well. Difficult as it may be to accept. our

feelings are just as much a part of our total behaviour as

what we do and what we think.

4.   Physiology: Such as sweating or clenching our fists.

which means the ability to generate the voluntary and

involuntary body mechanisms involved in all we do.

think and feel (Glasser. 1989. pp. 46-47).

Using the above and applying it to my mother's situation, we can see how all

four components were at work in her life. Although she was physically sick and

feeling depressed. she chose to change her thinking and go out. She couldn't change

how her body felt. or her feelings. but she could change her thinking and action. She

recounted to me many times that she was not going to sit around being depressed waiting to die.

Do we all have this ability? Glasser believes we do. I have heard him state many times that if you change the action and thinking. in many cases the feelings and physiology will follow. Countless studies point to the fact that people who exercise have less severe periods of depression than individuals who don't. This can be explained by the fact that, while you are doing (e.g. playing tennis), you are less likely to think negative thoughts. thereby creating more positive feelings and less negative stress on the physical aspect of your body.

We can also apply this concept to our students. When students fail tests. total behaviour comes into play. They may start to *think* they are failures and *do* nothing but sit home and mope which in turn manifests into *feelings* of depression which *physically* may also develop into headaches and stomach pains.

It is not my premise that we can avoid all pain in life. I remember a guru once asking me that if we are *always* happy, how would we know we were? We must experience the lows of life in order to appreciate the highs.

After 21 years of working with students who are depressed and at times suicidal, I believe students understand what it means to be low. Understanding "total behaviour" will show them there is a healthy way out, other than drugs which numb the feelings.

6.1 What Do You Do to Get What You Need?

The following is an exercise to get you in touch with your *total behaviour* when you try to get your needs met.

How do you get what you want? All anyone can do is use their behaviours. The behaviours are: feelings, body talk or physical symptoms, thinking, acting and doing. They are like the four wheels on a car. This is the car of life. Your basic needs are like the engine that drives the car. Your steering wheel, or what you want, determines the direction you take.
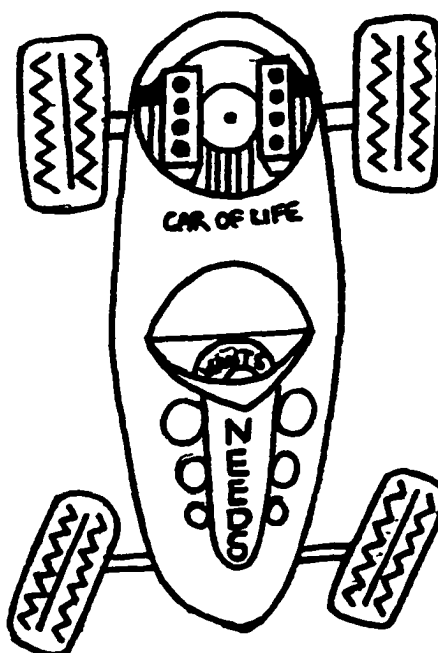
Directions: In the space below, list some behaviours you used during a recent situation in your life.

FEELING WHEEL
Examples: Sad, Angry

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

BODY TALK WHEEL
(Physical Symptoms)
Examples: Headache,
Knees Shaking

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

**ACTING OR
DOING WHEEL**
Examples: Talking,
Running

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

CAR OF LIFE

NEEDS

THINKING WHEEL
Examples: Worrying,
Remembering

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

After doing this exercise, you begin to realize a very important aspect of life. We have no control over our feelings and body talk but we do have power over what we think and do. Feelings and body talk occur in direct relation to what we are thinking and doing.

An example of this would be if I was worried about writing an exam. The worrying causes me to feel fear and have pains in my stomach. If we can learn to stop thinking in negative terms about the exam. the feelings of fear will be replaced with confidence and the stomach pains replaced with energy.

6.2 Who is in the Driver's Seat of Your Car of Life?

Whenever things did not go your way. did you blame someone else? Did you say, "He made me do it!" or "She started it by calling me a name"?

These people are playing "The Blame Game." They believe other people are responsible for what they choose to do or not to do. They are actually allowing their lives to be controlled by the behaviour of others.

Directions: Have you ever played "The Blame Game?" In this space. write about something that you really thought was somebody or something else's fault.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Now reflect on the above and see if you can identify in the space below where you are/were responsible.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

You cannot control what other people choose to do! You can. however. choose to control what *you* do.

Directions: In the space below. write about a time when someone did something to you or something happened in your life and instead of being controlled by this event. you were in the driver's seat of your car of life.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Everything is about choice. We can choose how we deal with any situation; even if we believe that someone else is in control or to blame. We must always remember that we have *control* over our own behaviours. We are ultimately responsible for everything we do.

The following worksheet will help you to quickly get in touch with what you want and illustrate if what you are doing is working.

6.3 WDHP Worksheet

W - What do I want?

Is what I want possible or impossible to get?

D - What am I doing?

H - Is what I am doing helping or hurting my chances of getting what I want?

P - What is my plan of action?

I tried my plan. How did it work out?

6.4 Do You Have a Road Map To Help You Reach Your Goal?

Having a plan of action that will work is the same as having a good road map. When our "quality world" picture does not match the "real world" situation and what you are doing to change it is not working, you need a plan. A good plan of action, like a good road map, will help you take the most direct route to get you what you want.

Directions: Think of something you need but so far have not been able to achieve. Write a plan of action that you have never tried before. Use the formula to make sure you have the best of all possible plans. It is called:

The "S.I. Double S." Formula

S   Make it Simple -   Plan something you can do easily that only depends on you to do it, not on anyone else. Something to do, not something to stop doing!

I   Do it Immediately - Plan something you can do right away and repeat often.

S   Be Specific -   Say with whom. where. when and how you plan to do

it.

S   Be Sincere -   Really mean to do it. Write a contract or make an

agreement with someone you respect. then do it!

6.5 My S.I.S.S. Plan of Action

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

6.6 A Chart for Using Reality Therapy

The following chart can be used on a daily basis. It allows us to see how our

needs are causing us to seek goals. Because of the simplicity of the chart, it can be

filled in quickly. This will allow an individual to get a quick overview of how their

life is going. Are they doing what needs to be _done_ in order to live a fulfilling life.

		What I Observed
W	Wants & Needs (Met in Present) Belonging Power Fun Freedom	
D	Total Behaviour Doing Thinking Feeling What are you doing: Name that behaviour	
E	Evaluation Is it helpful? Getting wants Realistic and attainable What you want	
P	Planning and commitment Need fulfilling Simple, realistic and attainable Something you do Immediate/Repetitive Firm/Reinforced	

Section 7

Why Do We Choose Misery?

It can be very difficult for us to face the fact that most of the misery we suffer we choose. Let us look again at the student who fails a test.

They have a number of alternatives such as getting extra help (doing). Instead of taking a positive route thinking they can get extra help and actually do the work, they choose to be depressed and say they will never pass the course. They choose to do nothing to get themselves out of this 'down' part of their lives. This feeling can expand into other courses.

Students can also choose misery when it comes to relationships and the failure of them. Whenever any relationship fails, grief is a healthy part of the healing. All too often this grief becomes a depression that they are choosing. There are definite things that can be done to help deal with this loss: Going out with friends, taking up a new activity or volunteering, all positive doing activities which will ease the pain of loss. Instead of doing, many students will sit at home feeling sad and lonely doing very little to lift themselves out of this depression.

Why would anyone want to choose misery? Glasser states that there are four reasons.

7.1 The First Reason - To keep anger under control (Glasser. 1984. p. 56).

We learn at a young age that anger gets us nowhere with our parents or others. It may get their attention but also rejection. If they can avoid it people do not want to be around angry individuals. As children we quickly learn people will try to cheer us up if we are sad. Therefore we choose depression over anger.

A perfect example would be the end of a relationship. My anger will keep the person away but my sadness might bring them back because they feel sorry for me.

7.2 The Second Reason - To get others to help us (Glasser. 1984. p. 59).

The second reason we choose depression when we are frustrated is to attract help. We enlist sympathy for our misery. Depression is probably the most powerful help-getting behaviour we have. It is hard to walk by someone who is depressed. We immediately sympathize, since we all know what it feels like to be depressed. Many of us have become so skilled at the "art" of depression that we are able to feel depressed just enough to get help without asking.

For example. I tell myself I will not ask anyone out after a failed relationship because of the fear of rejection. I choose to feel depressed instead of dealing with the fear of rejection.

7.3 The Third Reason - To excuse our unwillingness to do something more effective (Glasser. 1984. p. 60).

This allows us to use the depression to stop us from coming head-on to the problem. I am afraid that I might fail so it becomes advantageous for me to say "I am just too depressed to start my book report today."

7.4 The Fourth Reason - To gain powerful control (Glasser. 1984. p. 61).

For example. feeling that sadness can control the people. A child learns this at a very young age. The parents are going out and the child becomes very depressed about them leaving. They decide not to go out and s/he has learned one of his/her first controlling behaviours.

People in our lives use depression to get us to do a number of things: To either go on a trip or not go on one. go to a movie or not and so on. This can be one of the more powerful reasons to choose misery.

7.5 Exploring Your Reasons For Choosing Misery

Describe an incident when you were depressed for a period of time that was much longer than you feel was healthy for your well being.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Reflecting on the above incident, and the previous reasons given for choosing misery, can you see why you might have chosen this state?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

How might you better handle this situation in the future? What doing behaviours could you use?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

.

Section 8

Choosing to Think Positively About Ourselves

Sometimes we may choose misery because we have become used to negative self-talk. Negative self-talk refers to the negative thoughts we have in our minds about ourselves. Examples of this are:

1.   I am so boring.

2.   I never get my work done.

3.   Who could ever love someone who looks like me?

Once again, we are making the choice to allow these negative thoughts to ruminate in our minds. The following exercises are designed to allow us to let go of these self-defeating attitudes and learn to accentuate the positive.

8.1 Self-Esteem List

It is very easy to recognize the positive qualities of others and yet so hard to see them in ourselves. We all have positive attributes and yet we fail to praise ourselves for them. Many of us believe it would be conceited to reflect on what is great about ourselves. I tell my students all the time to acknowledge themselves when they walk by a mirror by saying something nice about themselves. It is so easy to

tear ourselves apart in a negative light yet what does that do for us? It is time to start reflecting on what we like about our bodies. our character. our intellect and the ways in which we relate to others.

For example:

1. I am very loving.

2. I love my hair.

3. I have beautiful hands.

4. I am a very happy person.

5. I am sensitive to others.

Write down everything you like about yourself. You may feel inhibited at first but go beyond that and celebrate yourself.

_____

_____

_____

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8.2 Accomplishment List

How often do we reflect on our failures? And. heaven forbid. if we should forget. someone will surely remind us. This is exercise is designed to enable you to recognize just how much you have accomplished. It is time to celebrate your successes. No matter how small they might be. write them down. Remember you have to walk before you can run.

For example:

1.   I can drive a car.

2.   I speak French and English.

3.   I am an excellent cook.

4.   I do well in math.

5.   I am sensitive to others.

Things I have accomplished:

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Section 9

Self-Appreciation List

It is so easy to do for others and. at times. so hard to do for ourselves. We are conditioned as young children that to do too much for oneself is selfish. Although this can be true. the end result is that there are a lot of teens and adults who have a very hard time doing something nice for themselves.

Doing nice things for yourself is one of the first steps in healing the body and soul from the pain and stress incurred in life's journeys. After you write out a list of ways of appreciating yourself. make a plan to see them reach fruition. For example:

1.   Go visit friends who love and nurture you.

2.   Buy yourself a new compact disk.

3.   Eat something healthy.

Some things I can do to appreciate me are:

_____

_____

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Chapter 5

Discussion

Reality Therapy (Glasser, 1965) is but one tool that may be used to educate our students and children. I, therefore, present the ideas in this thesis as but one skill that may be used to help motivate individuals to learn. Each person has his/her own social limitations, cultural background, ideas and beliefs. It would be presumptuous of me to assume that this one way could deal with all the diversities and provide potential solutions to all the challenges of society.

As I continue to discuss and explore the use of Reality Therapy, I must reiterate that it is but a suggested practice that may help an individual in the learning experience. This way and perhaps none other, can encompass all problems. I say this in direct contradiction to Dr. Glasser whom I have heard at workshops state: "Teach the world Reality Therapy" which to me implies his way is the only way. Glasser believes that his theories can change the world for the better.

The Glasser Institute appears to be so closed to other theories that at certification I was told that if I wanted to be a Reality Therapy instructor I could present no other theories while representing the Institute. To believe that one theory holds the key is both an egocentric proposition and a dangerous one. We could be forcing ourselves to continue to mould a theory to a situation that will just not fit.

As I reflect upon this thesis, I will interject personal observations of how

effective I perceive the theories have worked in their application at Millwood High School. I will also offer my suggestions on how these concepts might be applied as well as their potential limitations.

At the end of this school year (1998-1999) most of the 970 students at Millwood High School will have been exposed to the theories of Reality Therapy (Glasser, 1965). This has been accomplished through five sixty minute classes. It was instituted through the Career and Life Management Program by using some of the materials presented in this thesis.

Three years ago. I persuaded the administration at Millwood High School that Glasser's theories would be a valuable tool in the decision-making process being taught in Career and Life Management course curriculum. At that time our school was seeking methods that would move us away from practices that use coercive programs which use the threat of punishment to motivate students. I proposed that Quality Schools (Glasser, 1990) might take us to a more cooperative, responsibility orientated method. As a teacher I am trying to find ways to help students with their decisions and find healthy ways to meet their needs. Reality Therapy (Glasser, 1965) appears to be one of the many positive steps to take. It was agreed that Reality Therapy theories would be presented to the students in my Career and Life Management program.

Instituting these theories at Millwood has been aided by the fact that not only am I certified in Reality Therapy but so too is the Vice Principal Dianna Lim. In an interview with Ms Lim she stated "the fact that the students are exposed to Reality

Therapy through your program aids me in dealing with students. It helps us to go deeper and more quickly into the reasons for their actions" (D. Lim, personal communication, September 21, 1998). She also stated that "the theories help me as an administrator to help the students to focus on their own behaviour not allowing them to get into blaming others for their actions" (D. Lim, personal communication, September 21, 1998).

I realize that the empirical testing needed to validate the three year exposure to Reality Therapy has not yet been done. I cite the fact that the effectiveness of Reality Therapy to enhance the lives of students both in the classroom and out has been well documented (Browning, 1979; Dakoske, 1977; Gang, 1975). There have been eighty-two Reality Therapy Doctoral Dissertations written between 1970 and 1990 (Franklin, 1993, p. 76).

The first aspect of Glasser's theory is their basic needs. By showing an individual what motivates him/her to act, I believe you are creating some possibilities for personal empowerment. I feel that as we understand our basic needs for survival, love, power, freedom and fun we may in turn develop a greater understanding of ourselves. My students have reflected how clearer things become for them when they understand what motivates them to act. One of the needs they readily relate to is the need for power. Countless times I hear students relate the need for power in arguments with parents. I have even heard a student state "they want to continue to control us as they did when we were little but we are not little, we want to have power over ourselves." I try to work with them to show them ways to gain power

in their lives. I offer suggestions such as: they have potential to obtain power in many other ways. They can choose to get power and recognition through doing well in school. getting a part-time job. volunteering within organizations. getting involved in school politics and activities. We brainstorm to find possible positive ways for them to obtain power legitimately. These brainstorming sessions are recorded and taped to the wall in the classroom to be used in the planning stage at a later date. When discussing power issues with students Wubbolding offers a firm warning that "fulfilling one's need for power should not be seen as exploitation of another person or diminishing someone else's power (1991. p. 28). I or anyone presenting this concept must be sure to clarify that power of one's life is not the same thing as power over another. This could lead to the manipulation of others in an attempt to satisfy one's own needs.

Another tool I find useful in the classroom is worksheet 3.8 "Who or What Meets Your Needs." It is fascinating to watch students examine who or what both meets their needs and influences their lives. This activity can give the student a clearer vision of what needs are being met. They may have a strong need for love and belonging but have very few people or things in their lives to help meet that need. An example of the effect our needs have on our lives would be a person with a very high need for love and belonging who has only one or two friends. This person may unwittingly place great expectations and pressure on these relationships. Students have related to me how they have lost friends due to the very high expectations they have placed on their friends because of their need for love and

belonging. This self-evaluation could be used at a later point in the planning stage of how to bring more influences in your life to satisfy that need.

I have also found this a useful tool to help deal with substance abusers in my class. I present to them the theory that drugs offer an opportunity to get a false sense of need satisfaction. Glasser explains that "it does not seem to matter which of the several needs is not being fulfilled; alcohol gives the user the false sense that the need is being met. It makes the lonely sociable, the powerless powerful, the gloomy fun-filled and the imprisoned less confined" (Glasser, 1984, p. 127). Although I realize the simplistic slant this statement makes on alcohol abuse, my students seem to relate to the concept presented. Students in my classes who have attended the Choices drug rehabilitation program in Halifax state that for many of them they can see how this statement fits in their lives. I do not argue that this statement can stop drug abuse but it can be one more step in understanding why these activities are so appealing. Understanding the reasons for the behaviour may help end the cycle of addiction. I say that with the realization that there are many components to addiction (Wegscheider, 1981).

The exploration of the Quality World worksheet 5.1 may provide the student with the opportunity to see how their world differs from others. Its intention is to have them examine how each of us has a different set of values, beliefs, and perception within their minds. Perhaps the recognition that we each value things differently may aid the students in their appreciation of the different stands taken by people in regards to different issues. This understanding of one another might provide

us with a tool for negotiations.

I see the potential for the future use of the Quality World concept in the conflict resolution program (Sadalla, Hendriquez, & Holmburg, 1987) at Millwood High School. As a direct result of peer mediators being exposed to the quality world concept, they can use this tool to aid them in resolving conflict. They can use the concept to explore how each of the parties views an incident. Crawford, Bodine, Hoguland state:

> the perception in each person's quality world are very specific and completely individual. Individuals choose to behave in different ways to fulfill their needs because their quality worlds are different. To be in effective control of one's life means integrating this knowledge into the way one deals with others. (1993, p. 47)

Each year the Halifax Regional School Board has numerous schools implement workshops on the theme of Celebrating Our Differences. I see the Quality World concept as one more tool to help our students see that we are not only physically different but our perceptions of the world vary from person to person.

It is my hope that the Quality World concept could be one more tool to enable us to have a better appreciation of one another thereby perhaps leading to more peaceful resolutions.

Once the students in my class have a firm understanding of who and what is

in their quality world we move on to: is it realistic? I often pose the question to them. "Is it realistic for have a fifteen year old stay out all hours of the night?" Their initial response is "Yes!" We then examine the consequences of such actions. Many of them see that there are definite dangers and risks involved in allowing fifteen year olds to be out alone very late at night. This enables them to understand why their parents enforce curfews on them. I say *some* because inevitably others will see that there is nothing wrong with this same picture. With the ones who are willing you can then lean towards negotiation skills they might use to come to a compromise with their parents. These skills might be used in any situation where they are trying to satisfy a need. Some students have said that in cases of family disagreements their parents are unwilling to revise the picture in their quality world. This I see as being one of the limitations of Glasser's Reality Therapy. It cannot prove useful unless both parties concerned are willing to negotiate. Glassser would state that you can only change yourself but how can that make your life better if you are under the control of people who have absolute power over you. Let me add that in many cases I support the idea that the parent should have the final say in parent-child conflicts and I have used the above example only to demonstrate how Glasser's theories cannot apply to all cases.

As I continue to reflect on these theories many of my own doubts arise. I see that many may give up goals too early and revise their quality world picture to avoid conflict and/or failure. This is an avenue that I will explore further as I continue to test out Glasser's theories in the classroom.

One of the aspects of Glasser's theories that I have had the most success with in aiding students to deal with conflict is illustrated in the Total Behaviour worksheet 6.1. Through the exploration of past experiences many students come to the realization that the thinking and doing effects their feelings and body talk. Many students relate to me that after examining the incident they realize they acted from feelings of hurt, shame and anger. This sometimes led to negative consequences. This process provides them the opportunity to realize that their thinking and actions can create feelings. This, in turn, gives them the ability to realize that they may have a choice on how they will react to any situation if they change their thinking and action. I say *may* because there will inevitably be a time when they can change their thinking process but it will not change the world outside of themselves. This point was made to me during my discussion with Blye Frank. The example he gave was of individuals in oppressive situations. I can change my thinking but that does not stop the fact that prejudices and violations of human rights still exist around me. This was a very valid point and perhaps a limitation to the theory. This may be a case where the theory might not fit the situation and, as educators, we would have to go to our bag of skills to find other tools.

Reflecting through the worksheets the aspect that I feel makes all the theories come together is the planning stage (Worksheets 6.3, 6.4, 6.5 and 6.6). To come to realize what motivates us could be life enriching but may become moot unless we put this information into action. This stage allows students to examine if what they are doing is helping them achieve what they want in relation to their needs. At this

stage success can be difficult unless the student realizes that their current behaviour is being detrimental and even hurtful. It is at this time we might bring in other tools to help with the planning stage. An example might be study habits. What constitutes good study habits? The study habits inventory (Devine, 1987) and the Personal Evaluation Worksheet (Crawford, 1988) are both useful for helping students evaluate their current study habits. This would allow the students a comparison of what they do and what others find effective. To not augment their knowledge with alternative positive practices might sabotage their plan. This can be applied to any situation where more information could help with choosing a plan. We have to extend their knowledge base of possible solutions when working with problems.

Katz points out a pitfall that might occur in the planning stage, he states "the important point here is that we are not overzealous in guiding clients to make just any plan but rather in helping them choose a plan with the greatest potential for success (Katz, 1991, p. 64). This I feel is where the SISS Worksheet (6.5) becomes an asset. This plan enables the student to set small achievable goals. If they can feel some success they might be inclined to tackle a broader scope of an issue with which they are currently struggling.

Dianna Lim states "that quite often students do not know how to self-evaluate their work" (D. Lim, personal communication, September 21, 1998). This program's potential success is based on self-evaluation. We are constantly looking at what we are doing and how it is effecting our chances of success. Through the use of the worksheets we are able to identify what we need to change and who is responsible

for managing change. Through this examination my students are able to develop self-evaluation skills that can be used in all areas of life.

Glasser is quick to point out that many of us choose our own misery (1984). Section Seven can be a useful tool to allow students to explore this concept and see if they are hindering their own potential success to solving a problem. Many of my students relate to these exercises. They recount tales of how they would use fears to get control of their parents when they were younger. They say how they would expand on their fear of being alone so that their parents would not go out. They also relate stories of faking illnesses so that they would not have to do a particular task. This becomes a useful tool to examine if they are still using these practices today and if they are hurting or helping themselves.

I have some reservations when teaching the topic of choosing misery and illness in the form of depression. There is a current new-age belief that we create our own illnesses (Hay, 1984). Glasser supported this theory at the 1998 certification week in Orlando Florida. He made several references to the mind's ability to create sickness and depression. When using these worksheets on choosing misery one should be careful not to instill feelings of guilt. The intention of the worksheets is to help the students consider the ways in which some of their depressions may be the result of choosing misery. This can however be a dangerous concept as we do not want students to feel responsible for their depression in all cases. There are some cases where depression is physiological and in these cases it could be very dangerous to blame the victim as Glasser does when he states that the mind creates sickness and

depression. The worksheets are intended to help students consider that perhaps their depression is created by their mind and is indeed a self-defeating behaviour used to allow them to avoid moving forward. Some students may be using depression to stay stuck in self-defeating behaviours because they are afraid of the changes that will occur in their lives if they begin to progress.

The Chapter 4 Worksheets' Section 8 "Choosing to Think Positively About Ourselves," can be a useful tool to help students explore ways to value themselves. One of the assignments I often give after completing these exercises, is to actually do something nice for themselves, every day for a week. They have to record what they did and the associated feelings. I feel this exercise not only teaches them to value themselves but at the same time allows them to recognize the good feelings associated with the celebration of themselves.

Overall my students appear to develop a greater sense of understanding that they are responsible for their choices after completing the worksheets. This becomes evident as I hear them ask such questions as "What am I doing that is stopping me from getting a part-time job?" and "I wonder what part I played in the fight with my sister?" This self-evaluation of both past action and future plans could help them to chart a course for present and future success in achieving goals.

Chapter 6

Conclusions

The writing of this thesis has been a long and enduring process. This has enabled me to expand my knowledge and vision of myself in the education field. After twenty-one years of teaching I feel the education system is in the need of a new orientation. One that sees teachers not only as educators of knowledge but also therapeutic practitioners that help an individual live a healthy, physical and emotional lifestyle. Simply providing theory without self-examination may not be the impetus needed to move the students in the direction they need to go in order to fulfill their needs and reach our full potential.

William Glasser's theories of Reality Therapy (1965) has the potential to be one of the tools that might led students in the above stated direction. I believe that one thing students do not want is one more person telling them what is wrong and what they need. Glasser's theories take the individual on a self-evaluation journey which I see as prescriptive, non-directive and non-coercive. It provides the opportunity for students to evaluate for themselves if what they are doing is helping them to achieve their goals or not. It appears also to be effective in creating cognitive dissonants. This state is created when they witness themselves saying they want one thing but their actions indicate a different message. This awareness might

motivate a reason to look at what has to be changed in order to achieve greater satisfaction with their wants and needs.

The study of Glasser's Reality Therapy has made me much more effective as a teacher. I have become a better listener and more empathetic to the differences that exist in the Quality World (Glasser, 1990) of both myself and my students. My questioning skills have become more inquiring as a result of my studies and I am less inclined to provide what I perceive to be the answers.

I feel I have met the aim of this thesis. I have explored the theories with a critical mind and devised what I perceive to be practical steps to implement the program. The thesis became much more powerful for me because I was able to use Glasser's theory in the classroom.

While I recognized many benefits of Glasser's Reality Therapy, I also noted some of the flaws in his theory which I discussed in Chapter 3 and Chapter 5. Glasser, to me, is a man of ideas - someone who comes up with an idea that might, and in some cases does, work but many times has no empirical backing to prove what he proposes. There definitely will have to be controlled studies done on some of his theories before he, or anyone else, can rightfully back his claims. The most important thing I have (re)learned from writing this thesis is that any educator who embraces and follows only one theory leaves him/herself open to tunnel vision. This creates no sense of individuality for the people we offer our tutelage.

From my early studies of Paulo Freire I learned that one lone classroom cannot change the system (Shor, 1987). In order for my students to truly benefit from

the theories of Reality Therapy it would have to become part of the mission of the school. We as a school would have to incorporate the teaching of Reality Therapy in the form of self-evaluation throughout the curriculum. This can be done in the format of "Quality Schools" (Glasser. 1990). This is an avenue that we at Millwood High are currently exploring.

In closing, one of the greatest insights we can give our students is the skill to accept responsibility in decisions and the notion that we always have choices. Through my examination of Reality Therapy, I see it as being a process that could enable us to achieve that goal. It becomes a tool that does not accept blaming and complaining which translates into defences that do not move the student forward. It can give a sense of power in our destiny in that we examine what has to be done and then through a series of trial and error set out a plan to achieve the end result Reality Therapy can be a powerful skill to aid our students in the learning experience.

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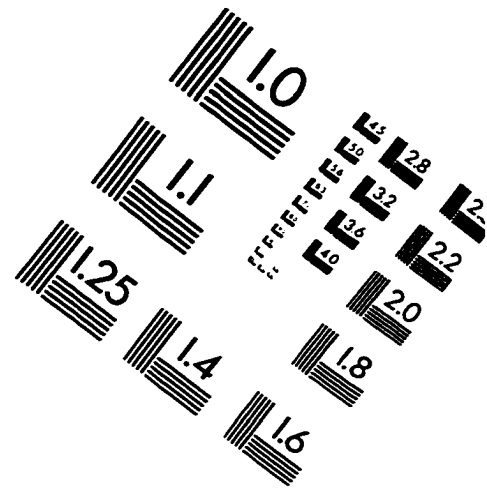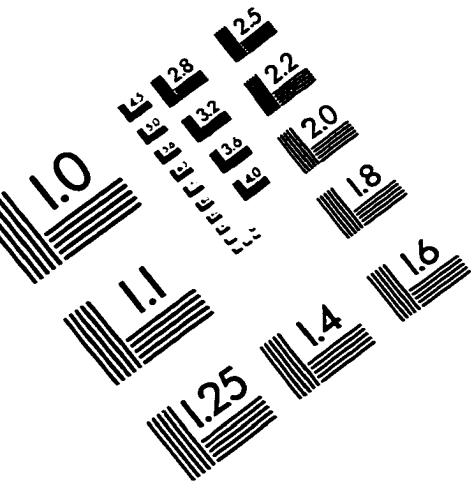
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IMAGE EVALUATION
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