

Who's driving YOUR car?

How to make better choices to get the life YOU want
Teen Edition



BY SUZANNE KRANZ

“An hour to learn – a lifetime to master!”

Based on the works of William Glasser, M.D.

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Dedication

This booklet is dedicated to six extraordinary, loving, outspoken, fascinating, funny and wise human beings whom I am honoured to call friends: my comrades in arms who constantly challenge me to be the best I can be, put up with my many obsessions with good humour, have taught me more than I could ever have imagined – and whose stunning creativity drove me to discover choice theory.

To my six wonderful children –

Jocie, Chloé, Andrew, Emily, Madeleine and James. Thank you for all your love, support, and patience. I know I've been a handful – but you've raised me well!

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Introduction

When you were small, your parents taught you – how to brush your teeth, how to be polite, how to dress yourself. When you got a bit bigger, your friends taught you – how to skip rope or skip stones. When you went to school, your teachers taught you – how to read, write, and do arithmetic. And some things you taught yourself just by watching others and doing what they did – how to walk, how to talk, how to sing.

But there's one thing you probably never learned – maybe because no one knew how to teach it to you, or it never occurred to anyone, or no one knew it was important. And it may be the most important thing you never learned: how to be happy.

Why in the world would you want to be happy? After all, aren't there more important things in this world than being happy? Well, for one thing, being happy feels great! But there are a lot of other benefits:

- People who are happy see more options and have more satisfying lives.
- People who are happy take better care of themselves and enjoy better health – physically and emotionally.
- People who are happy enjoy life to the fullest!
- People who are happy are less likely to be involved in destructive and self-destructive behaviours.
- People who are happy tend to be more creative.

There are several ways to use this booklet:

- By yourself.
- With a friend or friends.
- In a discovery workshop. On the back of this booklet is information on how to find a discovery workshop run by a facilitator who has lots of experience using this approach to getting happy.

Whichever way you use this book, you'll begin to experience a shift in what you think and believe, and you'll find yourself handling frustration better. You'll improve your ability to figure out what you want and how to behave more effectively to get it, and you'll become happier. You'll noticeably improve your skill and dexterity in choosing what makes you most happy, and you'll improve your relationships with the important people in your life.

This booklet will also answer these questions:

- Why do you want what you want?
- How can you tell if you really want something?
- What's the difference between just feeling good and being happy?

- What motivates you?
- Why do you do what you do?
- Why do you continue to do what doesn't get you what you want?
- Why are relationships so important for being happy?
- What are feelings, and what are they for?
- Who's *really* responsible for how you feel?
- How can you take control of your own feelings so you can be happier?
- Can you be responsible and still be happy?
- What habits are you using *right now* that are probably sabotaging your chances to be happy?
- What behaviours could you choose instead?
- And how on earth can you get what you want – what you *really* want – and still stay connected to the important people in your life?

“But I have a disorder!”

Regardless of whether or not you've received a psychological or psychiatric diagnosis, applying these principles can help you to have a happier, more satisfying and more rewarding life.

The concepts you'll learn here have to do with —

- creating and maintaining more satisfying relationships – with others and with yourself,
- learning to self-evaluate your behaviour to determine whether what you're doing is getting you what you want, and
- coming up with and exploring behaviours that may work better to get you what you want.

No one will dispute your diagnosis – but no one will let you get away with using it to excuse less effective behaviour either, because you *do* control your behaviour, and you demonstrate that competency and control every single day in hundreds of different ways.

If you're curious about different perspectives on disorders, syndromes and other diagnoses, you may enjoy reading the books by Dr. Glasser listed on the back of this booklet.

In any event, what you're embarking on here will in no way put you at risk. It won't interfere with any other treatment and if you apply what you'll be learning here, you may just find yourself living a happier and more fulfilling life.

Overview

The balancing act

In a nutshell, here's the theory: You know what you want, and you know what you've got. You're constantly weighing one against the other to see if they match – i.e., if they're in balance. Why? Because you want to be happy, and when your scales are in balance – or moving towards balance – you're happy.

What controls the balance? *Your behaviour*. Everything you do affects the balance – one way or the other. When you do things that are less effective, you have less control in your life and throw the scales farther out of balance. When you do things that are more effective, you have more control in your life and bring the scales more into balance.

Doing *anything* that gives you more control in your life will bring your scales more into balance. The key is *more effective behaviour*, and in this booklet you'll learn —

- how to figure out what you want,
- how to evaluate whether what you're doing is getting you what you want, and
- how to choose more effective behaviour to get what you want.

The problem

The world runs on external control. That means we believe we know what's best – not just for ourselves, but for everyone. We also believe that other people and situations determine whether or not we're happy, and that we control whether or not other people are happy. *Not true!*

Part of the problem is that we believe we can (and should) control others and that others can control us – not just what we do, but also what we think and how we feel. This idea is common in our everyday language: “Now look what you've done. You made your mother cry.” “Look what you made me do!” “It's your fault that I turned out this way!” This extends to motivation: we believe motivation comes from outside ourselves, and that we can motivate others.

As a result, when things go wrong (as they sometimes will), our first impulse is often to blame, criticize or complain, because we believe something outside ourselves is the reason we're not getting what we want, that our scales are out of balance and we're unhappy. We focus on what we *can't* control (other people and situations) instead of what we *can* control: what we do, what we think, and what we want.

The solution

What do you think would happen if you knew – *really knew* – that your feelings (and happiness) were entirely within your own control, that you never again had to depend on anyone else but yourself to be happy, and that, in the process, you could have better, more satisfying relationships than you ever imagined – even with difficult people in your life? That's what this booklet is all about. Imagine the happiest, most excited, most energized you've ever been in your life. If you work at this, that's what you can come away with.

Let's briefly examine the needs -> wants -> behaviour sequence:

Why do you do what you do? To get what you want, to bring the world into line with how you would like things to be.

Why do you want what you want? Because you believe that, if you get it, it'll satisfy one or more of your five basic needs: survival, love and belonging, power, freedom and fun.

So why are you motivated to satisfy your needs? Because it feels good! You're programmed to want to feel good. And the better you are at doing those things that satisfy your needs, the happier you are.

Needs -> Wants -> Total Behaviour

We'll cover the key points of each of these in the overview, then move on to a more in-depth discussion of each.

Needs

Everyone has a *needs profile* made up of five basic needs: survival, love and belonging, power (respect), freedom and fun (learning). Genetically, you're born with a needs profile which is unchanging throughout your lifetime. Everything you do, you do to satisfy one or more of your needs. Why? Because satisfying your needs makes you happy. This is the engine of your car. This supplies the power for what you do.

But while everyone has a needs profile, everyone requires more or less of each of the five needs to be really happy. You may need a lot of freedom and learning to be really happy, while someone else may need a lot of love and belonging. You'll have an opportunity later in this booklet to determine what your own unique needs profile looks like.

Why is it important to know about needs? Because your needs profile determines what you want, how you would like things to be, and that motivates you to act.

Wants

Every one of us has our own private world where everything is exactly as we would like it to be. Your internal world contains pictures of all that is most important to you, everything you want – from the largest idea to the smallest detail, from what you want for dinner right up to who (or if!) you want to marry. These pictures may change over time, but you're always striving to bring the "real" world into line with your vision of how you would like things to be.

What determines how you would like things to be? Your needs profile. You select specific things to want based on your unique needs. If love and belonging is extremely important to you, you'll want to spend much of your time in the company of others, whereas if you require very little love and belonging you'll prefer more solitary activities.

But why do you want what you want? This is the key: You believe if you had it, you'd be happy. And if you get it and it satisfies one or more of your needs, you will be happy. The more needs it satisfies, in the right amount, the happier you'll be. Using the above example, if you have a high need for love and belonging, you'll be happiest around people, but if your need for love and belonging is low, you'll be happiest when you have some time alone.

And it's this expected good feeling that motivates you to do what you do.

Total behaviour

When you think of behaviour, you likely think of *doing*, and maybe even *thinking*. But *feeling* and *physiology* are also part of your behaviour.

Most of us think our feelings are about other people or situations outside ourselves over which we have no control. Listen to the language we use: "Oh, he made me so mad!" "She really hurt my feelings when she said that."

But in fact –

**Feeling and physiology are part of your total behaviour.
They provide you with information about YOU.
They are the feedback system that tells you whether
what you're doing is getting you what you want.**

Understanding this is critical to understanding how to be happy (or happier) in your life, and this is where the booklet takes its name: Who's driving YOUR car?

Here's how it works –

- *Acting* and *thinking* are the front wheels of your car (i.e., of your behaviour). You have direct control over these two wheels, and you use them to control the car.
- *Feeling* and *physiology* are the rear wheels of your car. They are also part of your total behaviour, but they serve a different function: they provide you with feedback, and can only be controlled indirectly – by controlling the front wheels (your acting or thinking).

But feedback on what? On whether what you're doing is getting you what you want:

- If what you're doing is getting you what you want, your feeling and physiology system will let you know (you'll *feel* happy).
- If not, it'll let you know (you'll *feel* frustrated or unhappy), and it'll send you a signal to do something to feel better. The more intense the frustration and unhappiness, the more insistent and urgent the signal to “Do something – *NOW!*”

That frustrated and unhappy feeling could be described any number of ways: anger, sadness, rage, despair, etc. The important thing is that your feelings aren't something that is *happening to you*. They're being *created by you* – by what you're doing and thinking.

Getting started

Following are some exercises to get you started on connecting all the aspects of your total behaviour. We'll start with feeling and physiology, because we tend to be most aware of those. Think of a time when you were unhappy. On the chart below under “feeling,” write “unhappy” and any other words you'd like to use to describe it. How else were you feeling? What was your physiology? When you were unhappy, what were you thinking? And when you were unhappy, what were you doing?

Now do the same with “happy”: Write “happy” and any other words you'd like to use to describe it. How else were you feeling? What was your physiology? When you were happy, what were you thinking? And when you were happy, what were you doing?

How else am I behaving?

acting	thinking
feeling	physiology

acting	thinking
feeling	physiology

Relationships

Being social creatures, one of the things we need and want is satisfying relationships. We all have some need to be loved and to feel that we belong. This is so much the case that all long-term unhappiness can be linked to unsatisfying relationships with important people in our lives.

In order to be happy, everyone needs at least one satisfying relationship with a supportive, happy person. Happiness – whether it be with a family member, friend, neighbour, teacher, counsellor, or coach – is feeling good *with other people*.

What about pleasure? (Think also escape – drinking, drugs, video games, etc.) When you've given up on having satisfying relationships, you may settle for pleasure – which is feeling good *without other people*. "Aha!" You say. "I drink with others!" Yes, but how well are you actually connecting and relating to others when you're in that state? Drunk and stoned are solitary by nature, because you're creating a reality that others can't share.

You have more control than you think, and you can improve your overall happiness and your relationships, even with difficult people, just by changing what you do!

Connecting and Disconnecting

Disconnecting habits push others away from us. (trying to control others' behaviour)	Connecting behaviours pull others toward us. (controlling own behaviour)
Criticizing Blaming Complaining Nagging Threatening Punishing Rewarding to control	Supporting Encouraging Listening Accepting Trusting Respecting Negotiating differences

So let's get busy now on improving relationships. You can practise giving up disconnecting habits and choosing connecting behaviours right from the beginning, without knowing any more than you know now. See if your relationships improve. See if you feel happier just by doing this!

If you choose connecting behaviours, a) you'll feel happier, and b) you'll have better relationships with the important people in your life.

A habit is a behaviour that you've done so often that you don't have to think about it much. And because it's a type of behaviour, thinking is part of it.

If you decided to give up complaining, what would that look like? Well, you could begin by not complaining to your friends about your dad any more. Good start. Now, how about not complaining to them about what another friend is doing? Or how you have to miss the game to do homework?

Feeling better yet? Maybe a bit, but probably not much – unless you've also changed your thinking. Most of us don't pay much attention to what we think, and are relatively unaware of our thoughts. If most of your thoughts revolve around blaming ("Oh, great, my alarm clock made me late again"), criticizing ("That's not how it's done, you bonehead!") and complaining ("I really hate the snow"), how are you probably feeling?

Note: Don't get caught up in "But it's *true!*" It may very well be – but does that make you feel any better? After all, this is all about feeling better!

So what could you think instead? Just about anything that makes you happy. And if you can't come up with something specific, you could try, "What am I grateful for right now? What would it be easy to appreciate right now? What's bringing me joy in my life right now?"

What about your relationship with yourself? How many times a day do you blame, criticize or complain about yourself? You may do it frequently without even being aware of it. This practice can reduce your creativity. What could you think about yourself instead?

Never do anything to damage your relationship with anyone!

Points to ponder

- "How someone speaks of others gives us information about him or her – not about the person being discussed." What do you think?
- Why do we believe that threatening and punishing are useful?
- Why do we criticize, blame or complain?
- Why do we choose to feel guilty? (Note: If we'd done it on purpose, would we still feel guilty?)
- People resort to disconnecting habits when they feel out of control. What could they do instead?
- "Happy people aren't controlling – and controlling people aren't happy." Do you think that's true? Why or why not?

Needs

There are five basic needs:

- survival
- love and belonging
- freedom
- learning and discovery (fun)
- power (respect)

Each person has all five needs in varying degrees. The combination of these five needs and their differing strength or importance in each person's life is called a *needs profile*. Everything you want is based on your unique needs profile. This is the basis of your personality, and is genetic and unchanging throughout your lifetime. Let's take a look at each of the needs, and then we'll look at needs profiles.

Survival

All the functions of your body that keep you alive are part of your need for survival: respiration, digestion, circulation, hormones, nervous system, etc. Survival is also the need that focuses you on food, shelter, reproduction, safety and security – the things that keep the human race in existence.

Different people may exhibit a high need for survival in different ways. One may be very health and fitness conscious. Another may be concerned with financial security and only be happy when she has a healthy savings account. Still another may become a safety inspector.

For some, a focus on survival is less important. This is the high risk-taker, the adrenalin junky, getting a rush from skydiving or bungee jumping, for example. Safety isn't much of an issue. Perhaps the person will become a fire fighter. And someone who doesn't need much financial security to be happy may get more personal satisfaction from volunteering and doing charitable work.

Points to ponder

- How important are each of these in relation to your survival: money, safety, security, health – exercise, diet, dental?
- Does your sense of adventure outweigh your need to feel safe?

Love and belonging

Satisfying relationships are a key component to being happy, to having our scales in balance. Why? Because we're social creatures who love and need each other. To some degree, you need others, you need to belong. You can satisfy all your other needs by

yourself, but if you don't have someone to share that with, your successes won't seem as meaningful or rewarding. But belonging can also be a complicated need, because it's the only need you can't satisfy on your own. It requires someone else to interact with you.

Belonging is the most difficult need to satisfy, because we can't satisfy it on our own. It requires someone else to like us!

Someone with a high need for belonging is usually in the company of one or more people most of the time – or on the phone. Being alone isn't a comfortable idea, and just watching this flurry of social activity is enough to make a hermit feel exhausted and overwhelmed.

Someone with a low need for belonging, however, may spend days alone working on solitary activities: reading, writing, wilderness camping or “veg'ing.” The idea of being with people all the time is as unappealing as the idea of being alone is to someone who's gregarious.

Points to ponder

- What's a friend?
- People you enjoy being around – how do they treat you?
- The term “I love you” is thrown around a lot – but what does it mean? How would you know if you loved someone? If someone loved you?
- Which is more important to you: how someone says they feel about you or how they treat you?
- What needs can be satisfied through sex?
- If you and your partner require different amounts of love and belonging to be happy, how can you resolve this to suit both of you?

Freedom

It sort of speaks for itself, doesn't it? Everyone has some need for freedom – freedom to make their own choices, freedom to explore who they are, freedom to express their own creativity and create their own lives. A need for freedom can be satisfied internally or externally:

- Internally through making choices about your life (friends, food, décor, clothing, career), regardless of the environment you live or work in; or
- Externally – actual physical freedom unrestricted by structures or schedules (working from home, choosing a job with lots of travel).

Whichever means they choose, those with a high need for freedom tend to be less conventional, less conformist in some area of their lives.

If you need a lot of freedom to be really happy, you may be interested in being a writer, a bush pilot, an artist, a war correspondent. If you want to backpack across Europe, you likely have a high need for freedom. And although lawyers, corporate executives, researchers and teachers must deal with stability and structure, rules and regulations, fixed location and rigid schedules, they may also find this environment provides unique opportunities to explore, do innovative problem solving and stretch their minds, with greater freedom for creative thought and expression.

Meeting a need for freedom is often seen as irresponsible, and it can be, but it doesn't have to be. With responsible freedom, you can satisfy your own needs while not interfering with someone else's ability to satisfy theirs. This defines responsible behaviour.

Points to ponder

- What does freedom look like to you?
- How do you prefer to satisfy your need for freedom?
- Is structure oppressive to you, or do you welcome it because it helps you to be creative and productive?
- Internal and external freedom – how much of each?
- “I have to,” “I must” and “I should” can feel very confining. What about changing the language to “I want to,” “I choose to” or “I decide to”?
- What kind of decisions do you prefer to make, and what kind of decisions are you content to have someone else make?

Learning and discovery (fun)

Learning isn't something that only takes place in a classroom; it takes place in life minute by minute, and encompasses more than books and tests. You may be able to skip class, but you can't skip learning. You're hardwired to learn, and this is a need that's shared by every living thing. You've been learning your entire life, and at a very early age you'd mastered two of the most difficult things you'll ever learn: walking and talking.

If mankind as a species wasn't able to learn, we'd be extinct.

But regardless of how you think you feel about it, there's a natural, built-in reward for learning: the joy of discovery. Learning satisfies our natural curiosity and love of exploring – but only if the learning is useful and relevant. Can you recall the excitement and satisfaction you felt when you discovered something or learned something new – whether it was a secret hideout or how to ride a bicycle or how to tie your shoelaces? That was part of your need for learning and discovery. Which

school lessons do you still remember, even many years later? The most memorable ones are usually also the ones that were the most fun.

Someone who needs a lot of learning to be really happy may forget to stop for meals, while someone who needs less learning may be curious, but feel confident and satisfied with what he knows.

Points to ponder

- What's learning for?
- What's the difference between schooling and education?
- What's the difference between exploration and knowledge/information?
- What's the best thing you ever learned?
- What did you learn that made you the happiest? The most excited?

Power (respect)

When we talk about a need for power, we're talking about personal power: competence, respect, attention and recognition, a need to be noticed and thought well of by others – and to think well of ourselves.

Power and control are *not* the same thing:

- Power is a need, and needs don't change.
- Control is a behaviour, and we can change our behaviour.

Everyone is born with some need for power, but control is a learned behaviour that we use to try to satisfy our need for power.

There are two types of control:

- control of self (internal control), which leads to self-respect and inspires respect in others, and
- attempted control of others (external control), which *demand*s respect from others.

When we think of control, we usually think of external control, but in fact internal control is much more powerful – and satisfying.

**There is no such thing as a need for power over others.
Any need for power can be satisfied fully in your own life.**

Examples of internal control

There are as many ways to satisfy a need for power as there are people in the world. We can gain respect for what we accomplish, but also for who we are – our values and what we stand for. An actor or author may gain respect through fame and recognition; an environmentalist, through influencing the future health of the planet; a doctor, through bringing about a healthy outcome for a patient. In each

instance, the person is striving for control in his own life, over his own behaviour and concerning his own creations.

Some examples of those who inspire respect are Ghandi, Einstein, Martin Luther King, Jr., Rosa Parks and Shakespeare.

Examples of external control

Some people, though, in an attempt to gain respect, try to control others. Actually, this is how most of the world operates, and it's something we all resort to from time to time. The "control freak" is an extreme example of this, as is the bully and the dictator. He knows what's best for *everyone* and he's determined that others will obey him. He feels respected when others listen to him and do as he says. Sometimes he feels powerful and respected when others fear him. He's a big fan of rules – but more for others than himself – and he will use threats, punishment, intimidation, and guilt to get his own way. Some obvious fans of external control are Saddam Hussein, Hitler, Stalin, and the schoolyard bully.

The key here is *attempting to control others*: sometimes others do what we want for reasons of their own, and we're fooled into thinking we're controlling them, but in fact they're still the ones making the choice. And while we may pat ourselves on the back for making them obey us, their thoughts are still their own, and their behaviour may change again without notice.

External control and relationships

I run into trouble when I try to satisfy my need for power by trying to control others. There's nothing wrong with trying to satisfy my need for power, only with *how* I try to satisfy that need.

With external control, my need for respect finds expression in attempts to control others, but this will never get me what I want for long. Why?

The only behaviour I can control is my own. I can never control anyone else's behaviour. Because everyone else has some need for respect and freedom, **NOBODY** likes to be told what to do! So my bid for respect, even if it seems effective now, will eventually be doomed to failure.

My attempts to control others get in the way of satisfying my need for belonging, because every time I try to control someone else, I harm my relationship with that person. If I continue with this strategy, not only will I not get the respect I need, but I may also harm or lose my relationship with that person *and* fail to satisfy my need for belonging.

Some beliefs that go with this are – “I know what’s best for you, and I have a right to tell you what to do. What I do is right, and what you do is wrong. You control what I feel, think and do (e.g., you make me angry, you make me crazy, now look what you made me do!). I have a right to use any means at my disposal to try to control you, to make you do what I want, for your own good, because what I want for you is more important than what you want for you. I will try to control you, even at the expense of my happiness, your happiness, and our relationship.”

Ironically, external control isn’t even possible. So when I trade a relationship for respect, I’m trading something for nothing. Attempting to meet my need for respect through external control is doomed to failure, because respect can’t be mandated or enforced. And even if I fool myself into believing I’m successfully controlling others, it won’t make me happy in the long run if it comes at the expense of belonging.

When I practise external control, I use disconnecting habits that push others away: criticizing, blaming, complaining, nagging, threatening, punishing, rewarding to control.

**Using external control in a relationship won’t satisfy your need for power,
because the only behaviour you can control is your own.
And if you keep using external control, it will eventually destroy
your relationship, because no one likes to be told what to do!**

With internal control, my need for power finds expression in better controlling the only behaviour I can control – my own – and is in harmony with my need for belonging, so it leads to co-operation. I control my living space – the colour of my walls, the fabrics, the arrangement of furniture. I control my health – what and how much I eat, how much and how I exercise, how much I sleep. I control who I spend time with and when. I control how I spend my money, how much I save, and whether I use a bank account or investments. Everyone has some need for control, and focusing on what I *can* control can be very satisfying.

The beliefs that go with this are – “You know what’s best for you and I know what’s best for me. I don’t own you and you don’t own me. I’m the only one who can control what I do, think and feel, and I’m responsible for getting what I want out of life. Same for you. You have a right (and a responsibility) to live your life in the way that seems best to you, and I have no right to try to control you or change you or make you do anything. But your happiness is important to me, too, because I like being around happy people, and if we’re going to be in a relationship, then it’s in my best interests to treat you well. So maybe if we work together and treat each

other well, we can help each other get what we want and be even happier! And the happier we each are, the more we'll enjoy being around each other and the better we'll treat each other and the more we'll help each other..."

When I practise internal control, I'm using connecting behaviours that pull others towards me: supporting, encouraging, listening, accepting, respecting, trusting, and negotiating differences.

Points to ponder

- Who do you respect? Why? (If you named a family member, consider this: If they weren't related to you, would you still respect them?)
- Where does self-respect come from?
- If you really respected yourself, would it matter what others thought of you?
- How can you tell when someone respects you?
- Who inspires respect? Demands respect?
- What's the difference between respect and fear? Respect and manners?
- You can't *make* anyone respect you. So what *can* you do to get respect?

Needs profile

Your needs profile is a genetic map of your personality. The profile you're born with is the profile you have all your life. You may think your needs changed as you got older, but it would likely be more accurate to say that you became more aware of what your needs profile was all along. As a child has less opportunity to make choices, it would be hard for him to judge the strength of one need as compared to another.

When you're happy, one or more of your needs is being met. And you'll likely be happiest when every need is being met in just the right amount. **Note:** However, you may be most aware of a need that's *not* being met, even if it's not necessarily a high need; and you may be unaware of a need being high if it's *always* being met.

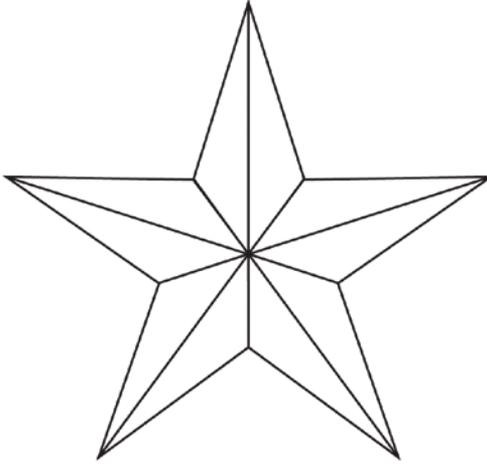
Now go back through each of the five needs. How high is your need for each?

- To what degree does this need drive my behaviour?
- How important is that need to me?
- When I'm happy, how much time and energy do I focus on satisfying that need?
- How much of that need do I require to feel satisfied and really happy?

With what you now know about needs, what does your needs profile look like? Who are you? What do you know about your personality? Based on the answers you gave above, label each point of the star below with a need. Now fill in each need section fully or partially or use shading to show how much of each you require to be really happy. Use colours if you want!

Note: *This is not a hierarchy of needs.* No one need has more value or is more important than any other need – except maybe to you in certain situations. And you can require the same amount of several needs.

Who are you?



Points to ponder

- Can we create situations in our lives where two or more of our needs are in conflict with each other?
- Although it will only be an approximation, do a needs profile of someone you'd like to get along better with. How does that profile differ from yours?
- Do you think that recognizing different needs profiles can lead to more acceptance and less judgement of others?
- We live in an external control society where others know what's best for us – or so they believe. How can you satisfy your own personal need for freedom and/or power and still maintain good relationships with others?
- What about living a life that matched your needs profile perfectly – the perfect amount of every need: not too hot, not too cold, *just right!*

Wants

You have a mental picture album of all your wants. From birth to death, you put pictures in this album of those things that best satisfy your needs. It's the world the way you'd like it to be, from the most mundane to the most profound – the colour you want for your bedroom, the shoes you want to wear, whether or not you want to be a rock star, and everything in between.

These are pictures of all that is meaningful and desirable to you: things, concepts, beliefs, activities and – most of all – people. Why did you pick them in the first place? Because you believed they would satisfy your unique need for survival, belonging, power, learning and/or freedom.

Others may influence the pictures you choose of what you want, but only you can make the final decision. Others may try to tell you what to do, but no one can tell you what to want!

These pictures are what motivate you – not the pictures themselves, but *the good feelings you expect to experience when your vision becomes reality.*

What do we want most? At least one satisfying relationship with a happy person. Meeting the rest of our needs is less meaningful if we have no one to share our experiences with.

Almost all long-term unhappiness stems from a relationship that's not working with an important person in your life. And almost all unhappiness can be remedied by improving your relationships.

Even when you don't believe the relationship is the problem, improving relationships can make you feel better.

Motivation

You're motivated to get what you want. Why? Because you believe, if you can get whatever that picture is –

- (a) it'll meet your needs, and
- (b) it'll feel good – you'll be happy.

It's not the *picture itself* that motivate you. It's the *feeling* attached to the picture, how you expect to feel when you get it, and the belief that, if you can get it, you'll be happy. And these pictures are always the most needs satisfying pictures you have.

The fact that you want something is no guarantee that getting it will make you happy. It will only make you happy if it meets your needs.

How happy? Some discovery workshop participants described happiness as ranging from “content” and “puts a smile on your face” right up to “raising your life and awareness to a new level,” “putting you in a state of wanting to be alive,” “erases all negativity,” “intense,” and “makes you feel alive,” “lights you up.”

The process of working towards getting what you want can feel great, too, when you can see how each step you take moves you closer to what you want.

Can I motivate myself to do something I don't want to do?

Yes – but only if you expect that doing it will feel better than not doing it, if you believe the outcome will be worth the effort. You may *hate* studying – but if you want that A badly enough, you'll suck it up and put in the time and effort. You may not like cleaning your room – but if you like order and being able to find your clothes in the morning, the result becomes worth the effort. The trick is to stay focused on what you *do* want (the A), not on what you *don't* want (the studying).

How can I tell if what I want is really what I want?

Think about having it. If you had that, how would it feel? If it would feel great, then you probably really want it. If not, then you probably don't. When asked, "What do you want?" you may answer with what you think the other person wants to hear or what you believe is an acceptable answer or what you think you *should* want. But you'll know what you want by how you feel.

Why can't "knowing better" motivate me?

When what we do is at odds with what we believe, this makes us uncomfortable. In an attempt to reduce this gap and feel better, we invent new thinking about what we're doing.

I smoke. I know I shouldn't. What I know about the evils of smoking could fill a book, and I feel frustrated when people say, "Don't you know...?" What I'm doing is at odds with what I know, so I find ways to justify it: "I only do it when I'm really stressed. It's better than breaking things! No, I really enjoy it. I don't know what else to do with my hands. It's a comfort thing. All my friends smoke, so smoking makes me feel like I belong. I can't help it – it's an addiction."

So why did I start smoking in the first place? Because I expected it would feel good. But I was also attracted to smoking because of the relationship(s) I hoped it would get me. The moral of the story is:

**"Should" and "know better" have no power to motivate you.
The only thing that can motivate you is how you want to feel.**

Dire warnings, education and lots of public information do little to keep kids off drugs. Horrific images on cigarette packages do little to keep kids from smoking. Neither of these addresses the issue of what motivates us.

The good news is this may provide the key to quitting smoking:

- If I smoke to be less frustrated, I can reduce my frustration by focusing more on what I want, and thus reduce my need to smoke.

- If there's something I want that I expect will feel better than smoking – especially if smoking prevents me from doing it – that expected better feeling can motivate me to quit.

Points to ponder

- Can you know what someone else wants based on what you want?
- If it's your want, who's responsible for ensuring you get it? (*Hint: Who's responsible for creating the want in the first place?!*)
- Why are relationships such a key ingredient to our happiness?
- If you want something you apparently can't have, figure out *why* you want it.
- What other want might give you the same feeling, satisfy the same needs?

Total Behaviour

We always behave in a way that we believe gives us the most effective control over our lives. Everything I do makes sense to me – even when it doesn't make sense to anyone else – and it's always my best attempt to get what I want.

Why do I do what I do?

To get what you want – which is, ultimately, to be happy. Nobody does anything unless they can see a benefit. You do what you do because there's something in it for you. Even when you help someone else out you're doing something for yourself. Maybe it makes you feel good to be useful. Maybe it gets you out of doing something you'd rather not be doing. Maybe it gets somebody off your back for a while. But everything you do, you do because there's something in it for you.

You do what you do to get what you want.

Nobody does anything unless there's something in it for them!

What is total behaviour?

We think of behaviour in terms of doing and sometimes thinking, but feeling and physiology are also part of your total behaviour. How does that work?

Think of behaviour as a car: the front wheels are doing and thinking, and the back wheels are feeling and physiology.

- You have direct control over you acting and thinking (which steer).
- You have only indirect control over you feeling and physiology.
- *But they all move together.*

What powers the car? Your needs. What gives direction? *What you want!*

Why are emotions and physiology part of your total behaviour? This is the part of your behaviour that gives you feedback on your doing and thinking:

- it lets you know whether what you're doing is getting you what you want, and
- if not, it urges you to act – “Not working here! Do something!”

This feedback is immediate and easily understood: *happy or not happy*.

Feeling and physiology let you know how well your acting and thinking are getting you what you want. However, this is just information, and what you do with that information is up to you. You can choose to ignore these signals or act on them, but, depending on the signals, if you ignore them, they may become more insistent, more painful, and harder to ignore (like a physical injury left unattended to).

When your feelings and physiology are letting you know that all is not well, you have several choices:

- blame it on someone or something else (usual in this society!), in which case it'll get worse, because the problem isn't out there – and even if it was, there's nothing you can do about it,
- ignore it – in which case it'll get worse, or
- figure out what you can do differently to get what you want so you can be happier.

My feelings are not about another person, circumstance or event.

They're not about anything I can't control.

They're all about the only thing I can control – myself!

This is good news, because the only behaviour I can control is my own. If the problem really *were* some other person or circumstance or event, unless they changed, I'd be doomed to be unhappy forever! Also, because all my behaviour is total behaviour, when I change one part, *I change them all*. It's all interconnected.

If I want to change how I'm feeling, for example, that may be difficult to do directly – but it becomes much easier when I realize it's part of my total behaviour. *Doing and thinking do the steering*. So if I want to change how I'm feeling, I can –

- change what I'm doing,
- change what I'm thinking, or
- change what I want.

And that will change *everything!*

More effective vs. less effective behaviour

Most people look at behaviour in terms of good and bad. We're going to look at it differently – and in a way that will hopefully give you more effective control over what you think and do, and enable you to make different or better choices.

You know when what you're doing isn't getting you what you want. You can *feel* it. There's an imbalance between what you want and what you've got. Now it's up to you to decide what you think about that and what you're going to do about it. Let's look at a date situation.

More effective behaviour

You want a date with that cute little red-haired girl. But you don't have a date with that cute red-haired girl, and a date with someone else won't do. You don't have what you want, but you know there must be *something* you can do to get her to go out with you. Maybe you feel curious, optimistic, challenged, interested. "Hmm, I wonder..." You decide: "I'll ask her out!"

This isn't necessarily easy. You're thinking, "I think I caught her looking at me earlier. But I stutter when I'm nervous (and, boy, am I ever nervous!), and my palms are sweaty. But I remembered to put on deodorant and brush my teeth, and my clothes are okay. Besides, I'm not bad looking, and I'm a lot of fun. I have nothing to lose, and I'll never know if I don't ask."

Armed with this encouraging thinking, you ask her out and she says yes! Your behaviour in this instance got you what you wanted.

Less effective behaviour

Same scenario, but your internal dialogue is quite different: "I sure would like to ask her out – but why would she want to go out with someone like me? There's way better looking guys in the school, and she probably doesn't even know I'm alive. Why even bother?" <*Sigh*> "Oh, well. I guess I won't even bother. She'd probably just say no anyway. I'll go to Johnny's instead and we'll raid his parents' liquor cabinet. That'll make me feel better and take my mind off it."

Less effective thinking moved you *farther away* from what you wanted, and increased your frustration. (Remember, how you're feeling is information about what *you're* thinking or doing – not about something outside yourself.) Armed with this discouraging thinking and feelings of frustration, you chose less effective behaviour (drinking) which didn't get you any closer to what you *really* wanted: a date with that cute little red-haired girl.

But that's not the end of it: Johnny's parents came home early and found the two of you drunk, so now you're not allowed over there any more. And they phoned your parents to pick you up, so now you're grounded for the rest of your life. Not to mention the hangover the next morning. And, to top it all off, you're probably blaming how you're feeling on everything but your own behaviour – which will

likely lead you to come up with even less effective behaviours to feel better, which will move you *farther* away from what you want and increase your frustration...

More Effective vs. Less Effective Behaviour

More effective behaviour moves you towards what you want. If it fulfils your needs and doesn't prevent someone else from fulfilling his needs, it's also responsible.

Less effective behaviour moves you away from what you want. It may reduce your feelings of unhappiness and frustration temporarily, but it will likely create more unhappiness and frustration in the long run. And because it doesn't fulfil your needs, it's irresponsible.

The following story illustrates the almost irresistible urge we can feel to reduce our frustration when we aren't getting what we want.

A young man, when asked about a time he was frustrated and what he did about it, said, "I broke things."

"Did that get you what you wanted?"

"No – but it sure felt good!" Big grin.

"Exactly! You just wanted to do something – *anything* – to feel better. How often did you use violence to feel better?"

"Often."

"Okay. And did it make you feel better?"

"Yeah."

"Okay. So you used violence to feel better – and then ended up in jail and Children's Aid. Was that what you'd wanted?"

Look of shock. "Huh? No."

"So the violence felt better – but did it get you what you wanted?"

"No."

"So then you had to figure out what you *really* wanted."

"To be back at home."

"Right. And then you had to change what you were doing to get what you *really* wanted." Which he did. Happy ending.

The problem with less effective behaviour is that, while it may feel better for the moment, it ultimately won't get you what you want, and may very well lead to more frustration.

Frustration and control

It's not true that you're ever "out of control." You are *always* in control of what you do (although it may not always seem like it) because you are always making decisions about what you're doing. Even if you "lose it" and hit someone, you made a decision to hit *him* and not someone else.

However, the more frustrated you are, the less *effective* control you have. The more frustrated you are, the less you're *thinking* (front wheels) and the more you're *feeling* (back wheels). And the less you're thinking and the more insistent your feelings are that you "*Do something – anything – NOW!*", the more likely you are to act on the first "solution" that presents itself.

How frustrated or out-of-balance you feel will also depend on –
importance – how important what you want is at that particular time,
intensity – how big the gap is between what you want and what you've got, and
quantity – how many other things you're frustrated about.

**Increase your effective control in any area
and you'll immediately feel better and less frustrated.**

What about *responsible* behaviour?

"Responsibility is the ability to fulfil one's needs, and to do so in a way that does not deprive others of the ability to fulfil their needs" (William Glasser, *Reality Therapy*, 1965).

In order to be truly responsible, I must be willing to take ownership of every aspect of my life: what I want, what I think and do, and how I feel.

What does this look like? Well, first of all, I'm familiar with my needs profile so I know what's most important *to me*. I have no control over the strength of my needs, but I *do* have control over what I choose to want, over what pictures I create that I hope will satisfy those needs. So part of being responsible involves wanting things I can have and examining why I want what I want. For example, if I'm 17 and I can't be happy unless Daddy buys me a new car, I'm not being very responsible in what I want. But if I can look at *why* I want a new car so badly, if I can figure out what it'll do for me, then maybe I can come up with something else that could feel just as good – at least for now, until I can afford to buy my own car.

What do I do to get what I want? I choose behaviours that are more likely to get me what I want. And when I'm not successful, I figure out what I could do differently (or want differently) to get my needs met. I don't blame others or complain about

circumstances. I focus on *me* – my needs, my wants and my behaviour. If I want something, I know it's up to me to get it. It's not anyone else's job to do it for me! And because I want to be responsible and use more effective behaviours, I take ownership of what I think and feel. I recognize that thinking isn't just something that happens to me. I know I can think *deliberately* – and that I can change what I think. So I pay attention to what I think.

I also know that my feelings are just information about what *I'm* doing and thinking, not what anyone else is doing or what's going on outside me. So when I'm feeling something I'd rather not be feeling, I don't blame others or demand they change to suit me or choose less effective behaviours to feel better. Instead –

- I get clear on what I want,
- I look at what I'm doing to get it,
- I evaluate whether what I'm doing is getting me what I want, and if not,
- I choose to act or think in a way that may work better to get me what I want.

I don't prevent others from getting their needs met. The more responsible I am, the happier I am, because I'm getting my needs met. And when I'm happy, I'd rather have happy people around me, so their happiness becomes important to me. They have their own needs and wants (which aren't the same as mine!), so I'll lend a helping hand or ear, but I'll also respect the fact that they aren't me and that I don't know what's best for them.

Points to ponder

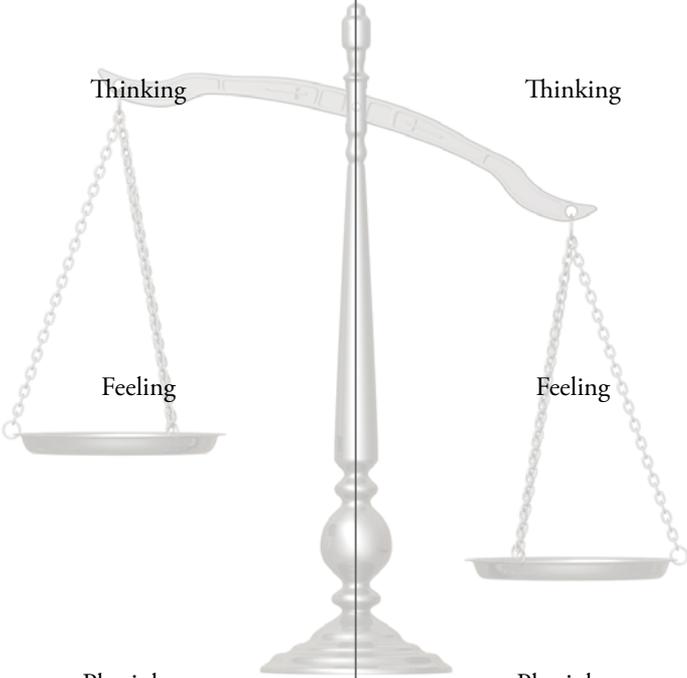
- What does unhappy or frustrated feel like to you? How do you know when you're frustrated? How would you describe it (pictures or words)?
- What does happy feel like to you? How do you know when you're happy? How would you describe it (pictures or words)?
- Who or what makes you angry? Sad? Happy? Depressed?
- When you're angry, why do you choose anger instead of, say, sadness or depression?
- Who has to change in order for you to be happy?
- When you're frustrated, you're more aware of what you're feeling than what you're thinking. How will this affect your choices and decisions?
- How can changing your thinking reduce your frustration?
- You know now that you can't control others to get what you want. When you're frustrated, where can you use more effective control to feel better and get what you want?
- How could you help someone else break the frustration cycle?
- In terms of total behaviour, why is "What do you want?" such a powerful question?
- What behaviours do people use to try to control others?
- Why do you think people blame/complain about weather, traffic, others?

How effective is your behaviour?

When my behaviour is more effective...	When my behaviour is less effective...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – I feel challenged and happy. – I’m more aware of what I want. – I’m optimistic. – it’s directed at getting what I want and feeling <i>great!</i> – I get more of what I want. – I’m less frustrated. – I’m more responsible. – I’m more in control. – I deliberately choose behaviours and evaluate their effectiveness. – I’m able to see “the big picture” and put off gratification now to get what I really want later. – my behaviour is purposeful: I use it to get more happiness. – I feel grateful, appreciative, thankful. – I’m virtually symptom-free! 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – I feel frustrated and unhappy. – I’m less aware of what I want. – I’m pessimistic. – it’s directed at relieving my symptoms, reducing my discomfort. – I get less of what I want. – I’m more frustrated. – I’m less responsible. – I’m less in control. – I act impulsively on the first behaviour that comes to mind. – I can’t see past the next five minutes, and want gratification and relief <i>right now.</i> – my behaviour is purposeful: I use it to get less frustration. – I feel angry, bitter, resentful. – I have lots of symptoms! And the more I focus on reducing my symptoms, the more frustrated I get and the more symptoms I have.

What does it look like?

Think of a time you behaved more effectively to get what you wanted. Now think of a time you behaved less effectively to get what you wanted. With these in mind, fill in the table below.

More Effective Behaviour	Less Effective Behaviour
<p data-bbox="277 391 348 418">Doing</p>  <p data-bbox="263 686 362 714">Thinking</p> <p data-bbox="274 987 352 1015">Feeling</p> <p data-bbox="256 1284 370 1312">Physiology</p>	<p data-bbox="713 391 785 418">Doing</p>  <p data-bbox="697 686 796 714">Thinking</p> <p data-bbox="708 987 786 1015">Feeling</p> <p data-bbox="690 1284 804 1312">Physiology</p>

Is what I'm doing getting me what I want?

Think of something you wanted that you didn't have. Fill in the chart below:

Line 1

What I wanted – What did you want? What was the picture? How did you want things to be? How did you expect it would feel?

What I did – What did you choose to do or think? Was it to get you closer to what you wanted or to feel less frustrated?

What I got – What did your behaviour get you? What was the outcome?

The balance – Did it work? Did your acting or thinking get you what you wanted? Closer to what you wanted? Farther away from what you wanted? (Use a word, scale, number or symbol that shows it clearly for you.)

Line 2

(What I wanted – Only fill this in if you changed what you wanted.)

What I did – What did you do or think next?

What I got – What did your acting or thinking get you?

The balance – Were you more frustrated, less frustrated, or the same as before? Did your acting or thinking get you what you wanted?

If you moved closer to getting what you wanted, did that change how you felt, even if you didn't have it yet?

If you changed something to get what you wanted, what did you change: (a) what you were doing, (b) what you were thinking, or (c) what you wanted?

What I wanted	What I did	What I got	The balance

What I wanted	What I did	What I got	The balance

Activity – putting it all together

**Several times a day, stop and notice what you're feeling. Are you happy?
 If so, what are you doing? What are you thinking? What's your physiology?
 And if you're not happy, what are you doing? What are you thinking?
 What's your physiology?
 Never mind what anybody else is doing! Focusing there won't make you happy.
 What can you do differently? Think differently? What *else* do you want?**

Beliefs about happiness

Is it possible to be responsible *and* happy?

Could you trust yourself to behave well if you weren't afraid?

Could you trust yourself to make good decisions if you were happy?

Why do we continue to return to thoughts that feel bad?

Do you want to be right – or do you want to be happy?!

If you didn't feel guilty, what would that say about you?

What if your life was so satisfying that being straight felt better than any drug you could do?!

Scenario: I sacrifice my happiness so someone else can be happy, and I believe that's a good thing to do. If it's a good thing for me to do, then it must be a good thing for *everyone* to do. But if everyone sacrifices their happiness for someone else – who gets to be happy?!

Quotes

Though no one can go back and make a brand new start, anyone can start from now and make a brand new ending. — *Author unknown*

Until you are happy with who you are, you will never be happy with what you have. — *Zig Ziglar*

A musician must make music, an artist must paint, a poet must write if he is to be at peace with himself. What a man can be, he must be. — *Abraham Maslow*

Don't ask yourself what the world needs; ask yourself what makes you come alive. And then go and do that. Because what the world needs is people who have come alive. — *Herald Whitman*

I have only one life, and it is short enough. Why waste it on the things I don't want most? — *Justice Louis Brandeis*

Life does not require you to sacrifice or compromise your joy to get what you want. Joy is what you want, so when you choose in harmony with it, you are fulfilling your purpose in living. — *Alan Cohen*

Each moment that you are happy is a gift to the rest of the world. — *Harry Palmer*

We either make ourselves miserable, or we make ourselves happy. The amount of work is the same. — *Carlos Castaneda*

When you follow your bliss, doors will open where you would not have thought there would be doors; and where there wouldn't be a door for anyone else. — *Joseph Campbell*

There is only one success – to be able to spend your life in your own way. — *Christopher Morley*

If you always do what interests you, at least one person is pleased. — *Katherine Hepburn's mother*

Be true to your dream and the universe will show up to support you in amazing ways. — *Alan Cohen*

Dear Sue:

I read your booklet with great interest. It is extremely accurate, and goes further than my booklet, which is considerably shorter and doesn't cover nearly as much ground. I certainly encourage you to keep doing what you are doing. I would appreciate your keeping in touch and summarizing how the groups are progressing. You are doing exactly what I had hoped people would do, and doing it so well that I congratulate you very much.

Cordially,

Bill Glasser, M.D.

Recommended Reading

William Glasser, M.D., *Choice Theory* (New York: Harper Paperbacks, 1990).

William Glasser, M.D., *Warning: Psychiatry Can Be Hazardous to Your Mental Health* (New York: Harper Paperbacks, 2004).

William Glasser, M.D., *Every Student Can Succeed* (New York: Black Forest, 2000).

Resources

Life Whisperers offers —

- discovery workshops to help you explore how you can be more effective in getting what you want,
- life coaching, specializing in teen and parent coaching, and
- an upcoming series of booklets on choice theory tailored to the needs and perspectives of different groups.

Call or e-mail with comments, suggestions or requests!

For training in choice theory, reality therapy or lead management, contact Jim Montagnes & Associates — www.makechoices.com or phone 416-261-1085

For more information on choice theory, reality therapy or lead management, visit the Glasser Institute website — www.wglasser.com

The logo for Life Whisperers features the words "Life Whisperers" in a cursive, handwritten-style font. Above the word "Whisperers", there are three stylized, flowing lines that resemble wisps of smoke or sound waves, suggesting the concept of "whispering" or "life's voice".

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