

## Why Kids Misbehave In-service Training, 1-14, 2014 Trainer, Betsy Clinton

1. Basic needs:
  - sick, hungry, sleepy
  - feel threatened or afraid
2. Attention: 90%- When kids are behaving, you go on doing what you are doing...but not paying attention to the child!
  - Ignore if you can, isolate if behavior is too extreme to be ignored
3. Power: Kids feel they only count if they are running the show. When these arise, don't have a power struggle. Don't talk, don't get emotional, (both give the kids power) do take action with a firm, kind, clear consequence. Prevent power struggles by giving choices, choices choices.
  - Challenging the Status Quo, boundaries
  - What is the payoff, what do they gain
  - Testing rules: Will you be consistent
  - Asserting independence – choice, choice, choice
4. Revenge/Payback – they get hurt, they hurt others. Increase relationship building, self-esteem
5. Don't know what to do
  - Developmentally not ready
  - School rules vs. home rules
  - Rules and routines need to be explicit, simple, taught, modeled, practiced and reinforced
  - Lack accurate information, prior experience
6. Boredom, not challenged

### HOW DO YOU FEEL?

- You feel annoyed – attention
- You feel angry – power
- You feel hurt - revenge



# Quality World – William Glasser (Reality Therapy, Choice Theory)

## 5 genetically driven needs :

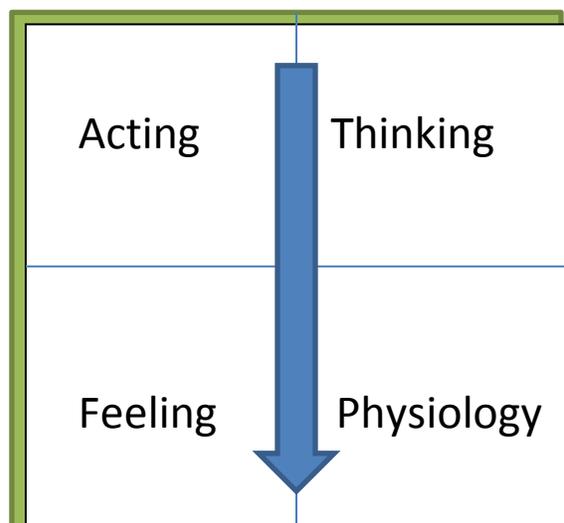
- Survival: home, food, water, safety
- Belonging/love: bonding, friendship, community
- Power/significance/competence
- Freedom/autonomy
- Fun/learning

## Quality World:

- If you aren't in their Quality World, you aren't in a place of change.
- Past behavior impacts present choices. Our present choices to satisfy basic needs will impact future ways to satisfy needs.
- Behavior may have been reinforced in past by adult, need re-teaching
- Satisfy needs through satisfying the pictures in our Quality World

## Relationship Building:

**Acting/Thinking vs Feeling/Physiology** - You can impose considerable direct control over how you act and think, but little on how you feel or your physiology. How you choose to act and think does impact your feelings and your physiology.



## **Celebrate Calm – Kirk Martin – Adult reactions**

- I cannot control you, but I can control my reaction.
- Anxiety about being a good parent/teacher leads to anxious interaction, trying to “change” a child. This leads to defiance.
- Hit the pause button – calm yourself
- Kids can’t “make” you lose your cool – you choose it
- Parents fear disappointing or hurting a child’s feelings, make sure child is always happy. OK to disappoint a child, actually a good lesson to learn early.
- All we can give another person is information
  - Directions, choices, limits, alternatives, redirections leads to child’s choices, both good and bad
  - We appreciate child’s differences
- Sit on the floor, color. I am not panicking, everything is under control. Teaching moment is shared.

## Love and Logic - Jim Fay

Making choices and being responsible for those choices

Shared control through lots of choices.

I will provide consequences that are not punitive, but will allow a child to experience the results of poor choices, enabling him/her to make better choices in the future.

### Consequences plus empathy = learning

#### Rules for giving behavioral choices:

- Always be sure to select choices that you like. Never provide one you like and one you don't, because the child seems have a sixth sense in selecting the one you don't like.
- Never give a choice unless you are willing to allow the child to experience the consequence of that choice.
- Never give choices when the child is in danger
- Never give choices unless you are willing to make the choice for the child in the event he or she does not choose within 10 seconds.
- Your delivery is important – try to start your sentence with:
  - You are welcome to \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_
  - Feel free to \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_
  - Would you rather \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_
  - What would be best for you \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_
- The question we want our children to learn to ask themselves is "How is the next decision I make going to affect me?".
- Kids who have adults who make all decisions for them don't learn how to make their own decisions. Then, when

they need to make a decision, they make it not based on what is right but on who is going to find out, how that person will react, and how they can hide it from that person

- Give suggestions if they want them. "Would you like to hear what other kids have tried?"
- Parents have a choice in how to deal with any situation. They can rant and rave, give in and take away the child's sadness, or they can allow the consequence to sink in, which will in turn create a life long lesson.
- Kids need to feel they have an investment in something in order to take it seriously.
- Kids often lie because the odds are on their side. They believe that if they tell the truth 100% of the time, they will probably get in trouble 100% of the time. But if they lie 100% of the time, they will probably only be caught 40% of the time. The odds are on lying.
- Remember to pick your battles wisely. Not many things are worth fighting over. If you choose to fight, you better win.
- Never argue with your kids. Always tell them what you will do, not what you want them to do. "I would love to have you sit with us at the dinner table when you can do it quietly." "Feel free to come watch TV with me when your homework is done." "Our car is leaving in 10 minutes, we'd love to have you come with us." No need to remind or nag. Tell them once; they are smart enough to remember if it's important to them.

## Article Review: The Power of Guidance: Teaching Social-Emotional Skills in Early Childhood Classrooms by Dan Gartrell

### Patience or Understanding? Written by Nancy Weber

- Patience is defined as "bearing pains or trials calmly or without complaint." Patience is associated only in unpleasant situations and is not even considered in a pleasant context! Nancy Weber says, "Because I find teaching young children very pleasant, I believe that patience is an *undesirable* teacher attribute. Visitors to my classroom had mistakenly believed that I exhibited patience with young children, when in reality they were witnessing the behavior that results from understanding."
- The teacher (or parent) who understands the developmental level of the child does not need to "bear pains calmly." This teacher will accept the behavior as developmentally appropriate and will not see the child as an adversary, because the child is inexperienced. Teachers and parents who understand young children will see themselves as children's partners in learning and will not view children as opposition. The adult will approach the learning situation and the child as a pleasure rather than a trial. The child's intuitive reaction to this approach will be positive and will create a positive learning experience.
- Nancy Weber describes how we do not want to depend on patience in order to act effectively with our children. If we rely on patience, there is a danger of it running out, resulting in inappropriate teaching (or parenting) behaviors (yelling, giving too many time-outs, using the wrong word choice, tone of voice or body language). If we rely on understanding that is based on the developmental ability of the child, then this understanding will never run out. We are not perfect or super human, but when we apply understanding vs. patience, we are more effective with our children, act more appropriately and we are less stressed.
- I think sometimes we expect too much of our kids and we think that they should just "know better." I always forget that three and four-year olds whine and have temper tantrums. They are still so egocentric and they have trouble putting their feelings into words. They may know what they are supposed to do, but putting it into practice is a whole different story. I think the same holds true for myself. I know that I should talk things out with my husband, but sometimes I am moody and I yell at him.

### Misbehavior or Mistaken Behavior?

- Dan Gartrell says he has difficulty with the term **misbehavior** because he believes that many teachers make a moral judgment about a behavior and then make another moral judgment about the child. With their patience running out, these teachers too easily conclude that the "misbehaving" child needs to be "disciplined." He explains that these teachers have resorted to patience rather than understanding. Gartrell believes that these teachers did not look into the situation to figure out: (1) reasons why the child behaved in a certain way and (2) what they could teach so that the child can behave differently next time. These teachers have reacted to "misbehavior" in a way that prevented them from understanding the situation and taking a more positive approach.
- The term "**mistaken behavior**" encourages teachers (and parents) to follow the guidance practices mentioned above. Mistaken behavior reminds us that the child is just at the beginning of a lifelong learning process, which we also are undertaking, and that in the process of learning we all make mistakes. Some people believe that misbehavior and mistaken behavior is the same thing, but they really are not. Knowing the difference between the two will help us with guidance alternatives for when conflicts arise.

- There are two ways we can handle a problem when it arises at home or at school. We can use traditional discipline or use conflict resolution and guidance. The difference between the two approaches is that traditional discipline tends to criticize children - often publicly - for unacceptable behaviors, whereas guidance teaches children alternatives, what they can do instead. Traditional discipline punishes children for having problems they cannot solve, while guidance teaches children to solve their problems in socially acceptable ways.

### **"Misbehavior" Makes Us Think of Punishing.**

- Traditionally, misbehavior implies willful wrongdoing for which a child must be disciplined (punished). Gartrell says that the term "misbehavior" is moral labeling of the child. What kind of children misbehaves? Children who are "naughty," "rowdy," "mean," "willful," "not nice." Although teachers who punish misbehavior believe they are "shaming children into being good," the opposite result may happen. Because they are young and inexperienced, kids may internalize negative labels, see themselves as they are labeled, and react accordingly.
- Some people think of "misbehaving" children as "bad" children. I do not believe we should be telling children that they are "good" or "bad." Yes, we all make mistakes, but I don't like labeling kids. Either a child makes a "good choice" or a "bad choice." I don't think this hurts or labels the child; it just gets him to think of the choices he makes. However, I don't just stop there. I talk about what has happened and I teach the child acceptable alternatives. I also need to consider the reasons for the behavior. Is the child sick or tired? Is he struggling at home as well? Maybe my activity was too long or not age appropriate? Maybe I could have done some things to prevent the behavior? Maybe the child didn't even realize he made a "bad choice"?

### **Mistaken Behavior Makes Us Think of Guiding and Educating.**

- In the process of learning the complex life skills of cooperation, conflict resolution, and acceptable expression of strong feelings, children like all of us, make mistakes. Gartrell says, "By considering behaviors as mistaken, the teacher is freed from impediment of moral judgment about the child and empowered instead to meditate, problem-solve, and guide."
- We model (or guide) problem solving in our classroom during center time. We play pretend games to help the children learn what to do in certain situations. I pretend to be a child and I take a toy from another child. Then I coach the child and say, "What just happened? What should you *say* to me?" I am trying to get the child to say, "That was my toy. Please give it back" in a kind yet firm voice. If the child doesn't understand, I model it for him. Then I ask, "Should you yell at me or hit me?" I am trying to get the child to understand that we use kind words to work out problems. "We don't yell or hurt our friends, but we let them know that we are upset with what they have done." I model everything for the child from my body language, tone of voice and word choice. I think if we say, "Use your words" that doesn't always mean very much to a child. We don't just tell them what to do. We model or guide what to do, say and how to say it.
- I also let the kids know that I want them to try and work out their problems on their own, but if they need help, I am there for them. This is how we handle tattling: If a child tattles on another child I say, "Why don't you try and talk to the child again and I will listen." This way the child learns to handle problem independently, but he knows I am there if he needs me. Because I am standing by listening, the other child usually complies so the first child feels like he solved a problem on his own. If the other child does not comply, I model problem solving so the first child knows what to say or do in that type of situation. You don't have to give a lecture or be wordy. You just need to know how to say things so the child can understand.

# Strategies for Managing Mistaken Behaviors

Be mindful of developmental levels

Environment choices:

- Proximity – visual and physical
- Organization

Scheduling choices:

- Routines and structure – knowing what comes next
- Transitions

Behavior Management Strategies

- Positive redirection
- Humor, ease
- Neutral voice and body language (power struggles)
- Consistent consequences
- Personal responsibility
- Ignoring
- Scripting
- Rules and routines need to be explicit, simple, taught, modeled, practiced and reinforced
- Modeling
- Rehearse and reinforce
- Peer reinforcement
- Patience vs. Understanding: Patience is “overcoming adversity”
- When power struggles arise, don’t play.
  - Don’t talk, don’t get emotional, (both give the kids power)
  - Do take action with a firm, kind, clear consequence.
  - Prevent power struggles by giving choices, choices, choices.

Research by Carol Dweck, Ph.D. a professor at Columbia University, has now proven what Adler taught years ago. Praise is not good for children. Praise can create "approval junkies" instead of children with enhanced self-esteem. Dweck has also found that praise can hamper risk taking. Children who were praised for being smart when they accomplished a task chose easier tasks in the future. They didn't want to risk making mistakes. On the other hand, children who were "encouraged" for their efforts were willing to choose more challenging tasks when given a choice.

All of the Positive Discipline books teach the value of encouragement instead of praise. Following is an excerpt from Positive Discipline on the difference between praise and encouragement.

#### DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PRAISE AND ENCOURAGEMENT<sup>1</sup>

	Praise	Encouragement
Dictionary Definition	1. To express favorable judgment of 2. To glorify, especially by attribution of perfection 3. An expression of approval	1. To inspire with courage 2. To spur on: stimulate
Addresses	The doer; "Good Girl."	The deed; "Good job."
Recognizes	Only complete, perfect product; "You did it right."	Effort and improvement: "You gave it your best." Or, "How do you feel about what you accomplished?"
Attitude	Patronizing, manipulative: "I like the way Suzie is sitting."	Respectful, appreciative: "Who can show me how we should be sitting now?"
"T" message	Judgmental: "I like the way you did that."	Self-directing: "I appreciate your cooperation."
Used most often with	Children: "You're such a good girl."	Adults: "Thanks for helping."
Examples	"I'm proud of you for getting an A" (Takes person of ownership of own achievement.)	"That A reflects your hard work." (Recognizes ownership and responsibility for effort.)
Invites	Children to change for others. "Approval junkies"	Children to change for themselves. "Inner direction."
Locus of control	External: "What do others think?"	Internal: "What do I think?"
Teaches	What to think. Dependence on the evaluation of others.	How to think. Self-evaluation.
Goal	Conformity. "You did it right."	Understanding. "What do you think/learn/feel?"
Effect on sense of worth	Feel worthwhile when others approve	Feel worthwhile without the approval of others
Long-term effect	Dependence of others	Self-confidence, self-reliance.

<sup>1</sup> From *Positive Discipline in the Classroom Teacher's Guide*, by Jane Nelsen and Lynn Lott, [www.empoweringpeople.com](http://www.empoweringpeople.com)