



## Module One: Introduction

Congratulations! You are about to begin a fabulous journey that will take you through the evolution of some extraordinary ideas and concepts from one of the revolutionary thinkers of our time, Dr. William Glasser.

You may have purchased this eBook because you are curious about Dr. Glasser's teachings but perhaps aren't ready to commit to an entire week of training or the two-year certification process. This will be a good beginning and will definitely whet your appetite for more. These ideas are very transformative so let's start with an introduction to the man himself.

Dr. Glasser was the founder and creator of Choice Theory, Quality Schools, Reality Therapy and Lead Management. His commonsense, practical ideas seem very simply on the surface but the application can create change that is astounding!

Dr. Glasser began his academic career as an engineer. He recognized that was not his calling and switched his academic direction toward psychiatry. He went to medical school and specialized in psychiatry. He began his work as a psychiatrist in 1956 and practiced until his death on August 23, 2013.

He began his work in the field under the tutelage of Dr. G. L. Harrington, his mentor. Glasser had a unique way of working with patients in mental hospitals that had remarkable success. His basic theme was, "Things are tough all over. What are you going to do about it?" His thought was that people cannot control or undo their past. Often we can't even control the circumstances surrounding our current situations. He didn't focus on past events. While he appreciated the impact the past has on individuals, he believed it was a waste of time to stay focused there, so his approach was completely present focused.

In 1965, Glasser wrote his book titled, *Reality Therapy*, to explain the process of counseling he had come to develop and perfect. It was a method of inviting clients to look at the behaviors they were choosing to engage in and to consciously evaluate whether or not those behaviors were likely to take them in the direction they wanted to go to accomplish the things they wanted in

their lives. If the answer was yes, then great—as long as the behaviors weren't illegal or likely to hurt someone.

If the answer was no, then Glasser would work with clients to formulate new plans that were likely to be more successful in helping them meet their goals. He also focused a great deal on developing a therapeutic rapport with the client. His belief was that until clients understood that the therapist was someone who actually cared about them, they weren't very likely to be forthcoming in their therapy.

At the time, one of the limiting factors of Glasser's Reality Therapy was that there was no psychological theory upon which it was based.

During the 80s and 90s, Dr. Glasser was largely influenced by the work of Dr. William Powers, an engineer who wrote the book, *Behavior: the Control of Perception*. In that book, Dr. Powers spoke about his theory of perception that he coined, "Control Theory." Dr. Glasser was fascinated with Power's theory because it provided an explanation for why Glasser's process of Reality Therapy worked.

For several years, Dr. Glasser taught Power's "Control Theory" alongside Reality Therapy, with Power's blessing. It provided the explanation for his success with Reality Therapy. Glasser took Power's scientific model of perception and translated it into a user-friendly explanation of human behavior. He added some concepts to Power's work—namely the idea of the five basic needs and total behavior, which will be explained in greater detail in Chapters 3 and 6, respectively.

Then in the mid-1990s, again with Power's permission, Glasser began to call what he was teaching, Choice Theory®, because it was much more synonymous with the concepts he was teaching.

Control theory seemed to carry with it the negative connotation that Glasser was teaching how to control other people when in fact, this couldn't have been further from the truth. Glasser has always been an advocate for the idea that the only person's behavior you can control is your own, so Choice Theory® became a more apt name.

In the early 1990s, Glasser was influenced by the work of the late Dr. W. Edwards Deming, a renowned author and leadership consultant. Dr. Deming outlined a 14-point system for transforming the current management system in the US. Glasser took Deming's system, which is quite complicated, and parlayed it down to three main points to achieve quality, which Glasser calls Lead Management.

The point of both of these great minds is that in order to solve many problems, addressing it at the level of the individual is an ineffective approach. Frequently, the problem-solver must step back far enough to achieve a good view of the system in which the individuals operate and make systemic changes.

At the end of his career, Glasser's main thrust was his intense focus on human relationships. Glasser believed that most long-term psychological problems are current relationship problems

and deficits. He developed a relationship focus that looks at the destructive behaviors many people engage in as they attempt to control the other people in their lives. Learning to give up this attempt to control others is central to the ideas Glasser espouses.

He frequently advised people to examine their behavior and ask themselves, "Is what I am about to do or say likely to move me closer to the person I am dealing with or further away." If the answer is further away, then he cautions against it.

Everything Glasser taught had its roots in Choice Theory®. His Reality Therapy process has applicability to counselors, social workers, psychologists, clergy, case managers and anyone working in the helping professions.

He wrote extensively about the magic that can happen when Choice Theory® concepts are applied in a school setting. Schools that are really interested in investing in an effective program to transform their school can seek to become a Glasser Quality School. These ideas are applicable throughout the school system, from kids, to parents, to support personnel, to teachers, to guidance counselors, to administrators.

Glasser's lead management concepts help leaders motivate their employees and focus on improving retention rates. Lead management helps managers focus on the human capital and relationship part of the business world.

Finally, anyone who would like to improve their own inner peace and happiness can benefit from learning Choice Theory® and applying it in their lives. You will strengthen your relationships with the important people in your life. You will become more inner directed and full of peace. You will parent better, be a better life partner, a better employee or supervisor and better all-around person.

This eBook will provide you with an overview of all these concepts—Choice Theory®, Reality Therapy, Lead Management and Quality Schools.

**All exercises referred to throughout the modules can be find in the Workbook.**