



## Module Seventeen: Four Types of Relationships

Dr. Glasser's model of lead management was influenced heavily by the work of W. Edwards Deming, the founder of Total Quality Management (TQM). In Glasser's model, he distinguishes between four types of relationships. It is important to understand the distinction so you can know which application of Choice Theory to apply in each situation.

### ***Friend -- Friend:***

The first relationship Glasser speaks about is called the friend to friend relationship. Included in this category are healthy intimate relationships, as well. When you are in a friend/friend relationship, there is practically never any external control used. If you were to use external control with your friends on a regular basis, you would soon discover you don't have any. Friends stay involved with each through choice, not obligation.

In healthy friendships, each person has their own Quality World, filled with unique and special pictures of what is important and need-satisfying to the individual. With friendships, there is an overlapping of Quality Worlds where you share some people, things, and values in common. You enjoy each other in that overlap but completely accept each other's involvement in the things you don't share. Of course, there may even be those occasions when you engage in activities that are outside your overlapped commonalities because you want to try something new or you want to spend time with your friend.

There is no pressure. There is no external control. There is respect, trust and acceptance. This is a pleasurable experience and these are the relationships that tend to last, standing the test of time.

### ***Counselor -- Client***

The next relationship Glasser talks about is the counselor/client or helper/helpee. The only time you are in this relationship is when one person has a problem, recognizes it is a problem and seeks the help or advice of a counselor. The person seeking the help is a voluntary client. Their scales are already out of balance. They already know they aren't getting what they want and need help.

Whenever you work with non-voluntary clients, their scales are usually in balance. Even though they may have a problem, they think other people are causing it and life will improve if only certain people would just leave them alone or circumstances would change.

As Finley Peter Dunne says, our job is to "comfort the afflicted" and to "afflict the comfortable." Your voluntary clients need to find comfort, while your non-voluntary clients need first to be afflicted, then to be comforted. Whenever you are working with a non-voluntary client or a person who doesn't recognize the problem they have then you are not counseling, you are actually managing.

As a true counselor, your job is to simply to help clients accomplish their goals to minimize their pain or achieve their aspirations. You do not have an agenda. What you want is not a part of the equation.

### ***Teacher -- Student***

The next type of relationship is teacher/student. Any time you have knowledge or expertise in a particular subject area and you are sharing what you know with people who want to learn it, you are purely teaching.

As most teachers know, it is not often they get to function in the role of a pure teacher. Kindergarten and first grade teachers do. Physical Education teachers, vocational training teachers and teachers of elective classes do. However, the vast number of teachers are teaching many students in their classrooms that don't really want to learn what's on the curriculum. Even if there are always some students, usually A students, who want to learn what's being taught, it is the majority who determine the atmosphere in the classroom.

When a teacher gets to work with excited, eager learners, it is a pleasure. Teaching students who want to learn is the real joy of teaching. When students are eager to learn your subject matter, everything is fairly easy. All teachers need to do is share a topic they love with students who love it too.

Whenever teachers are working with less than voluntary learners, they are not teaching. They are managing. They have an agenda--the curriculum, and it's their job to convince their students of the value of the material in order to enhance students' motivation to learn.

### ***Manager-- Worker***

This is the role that covers employers/workers, non-voluntary counseling clients, or non-voluntary students. It is the role of the manager. A manager has an agenda. The manager wants something. In the workplace, a manager is attempting to get their workers to do their best work. What the manager does is crucial to this process. If the manager applies just the right balance between producing a quality product or service and taking care of his/her workers, then workers are inspired to do their best.

The counselor is managing the non-voluntary client. The counselor's agenda in this case is often keeping people out of jail, making sure they follow the rules, helping clients get and stay sober. The counselor wants something from the client. There are non-negotiables. If clients engage in certain activities, then the counselor often must report them to certain authorities.

The teacher who is teaching students who don't necessarily want to learn what is being taught is also managing. The teacher's agenda is to cover the curriculum so the students can score well on standardized testing. This is often the measure of how well the teacher is doing. As a manager in this situation, the teacher needs to help the students find a connection to the material that's applicable in their lives.

### ***Parent -- Child***

Glasser does not mention parent/child as one of the types of relationship and people will often ask about this omission. When you are a parent, are you sometimes a friend to your child? A counselor? A teacher? A Manager? Of course, you play all those roles! So, when Glasser talks about these four types of relationships, parents do not have their own separate category since they play every one of the four depending on the situation.

### ***Summary:***

Whenever you are interacting with another person, you are functioning in one of these four roles- friend, counselor, teacher or manager. Each role calls for different behavior on your part. Being clear what role you are playing will assist you with how to create a need-satisfying environment and how to interact given the situation. Being clear and consistent in your role can help avoid unnecessary confusion.

Your assignment this week involved analyzing your significant interactions with others this week. Write down any significant interactions you have with another person on the Relationship worksheet. For example, if you have a conversation with a friend about their worries regarding their marriage, write it down. Then determine which role(s) you were playing. In the previous example, even though you were with a friend, if you were attempting to help them do something to feel better, you were in the role of counselor. If you helped them by joining in on a spouse-bashing session, then you were functioning as a friend, albeit an ineffective one. If you were teaching about whose behavior you can control, you were teaching. It's possible to play a few of the roles in the same interaction.