Relationships

Understanding Self and Others

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"If any person be in Christ, he is a new creature..."
(2 Corinthians 5:17)

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Understanding Self and Others

This lesson will look at different levels of relationships and different styles of behavior.

Before continuing, please write three or four sentences expressing your thoughts on what the different types of behavior are. **Write your thoughts on the enclosed** Response Sheet **and then put it our of sight until the end of this lesson.** Next we recommend that you read the entire lesson through once without looking up any of the scriptures. Finally go back for a more in-depth study before completing the Response Sheet.

I. Introduction

No two snow flakes are alike. When we look out upon a field covered with snow, we either forget this or find it hard to believe. It is the same with people. For all the billions of people who have ever lived, no two of them have been the same. Until recently, the military and police have used fingerprints to identify people. Recent developments in genetics, DNA and eye retina are considered better ways to identify people. We are both different and similar. The differences are physical, emotional, and intellectual. Our similarities are based in the fact that we are all created in the image of God (Genesis 1: 26-27, 2:7).

Because we are made in the image of God, we have the ability to know what our needs are. Also, we have the ability to fulfill our needs and to ask others to help us meet them.

People are also social beings. As the poet, John Donne, said, "No man is an island." Because we have needs, we know that others have needs also. Their needs are both similar to and different from ours.

The more mature, complete persons we are, the better we can recognize and respect these differences. Just because a person's needs are different from ours does not mean that he is perverted or wrong.

In Genesis 4:3-8 Cain asks God, "Am I my brother's keeper?" Indirectly, God's answer was *yes*. This means that we cannot be selfish or indifferent to others' needs. In 1 Corinthians 9:19-23 and 10:23-24 Paul tells us that we are to be servants to each other. He summarizes it with "Let no one seek his own, but each one the other's well-being."

II. Human Behavior

Our behavior is not something that just *happens*. It is the result of several factors that have influenced us in the past and are still influencing us today. The four main factors are: genes, group, guidelines, and goals.

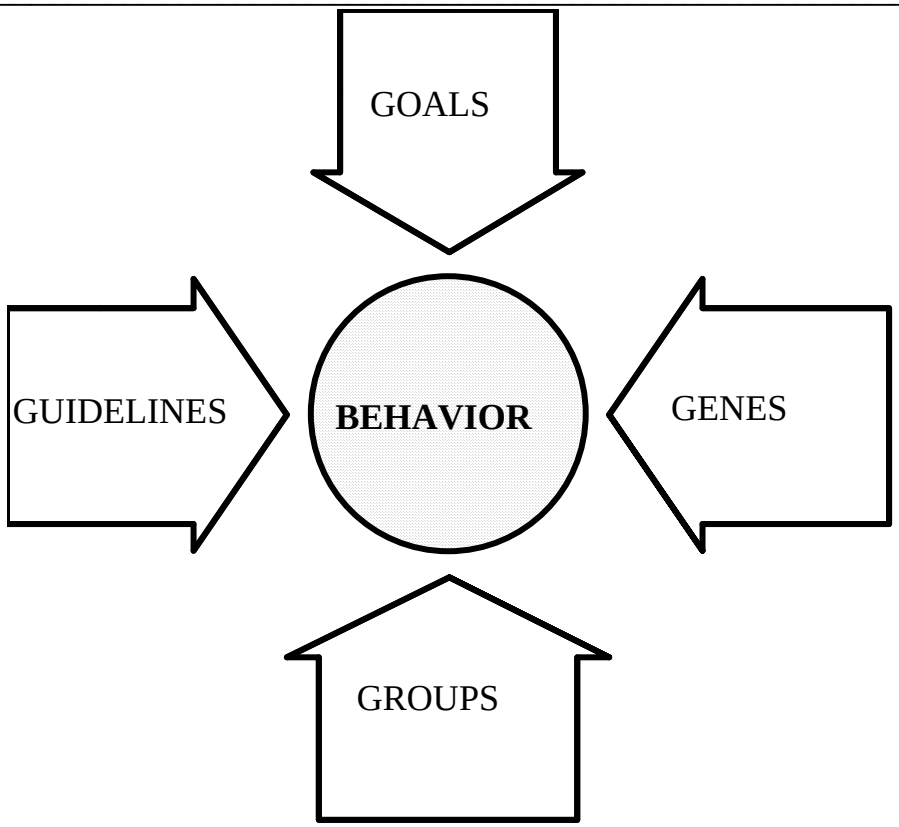


Figure 8-1. The Four G's of Human Behavior.

A. Genes

Each of us inherits a genetic code from our mother and one from our father. These genetic codes provide the blueprint to make us what we are. They determine such physical characteristics as our sex, the color of our hair and eyes, our skin tone, and build. They also play some part in our intelligence, temperament, and sociability. How much of our intelligence, temperament, and sociability is genetic or environmental is still debated. Some see genetics as the primary influence in these areas. Others see the environmental aspect as the primary influence. Probably, the truth lies somewhere in between. Many believe that genetics provide several potential ways a person can develop, with the environment being the major factor that decides which way the person actually does develop. This is trying to have it both ways, but it seems to be supported by more research than a pure genetic or environmental approach.

Genetic codes are not always positive. They can be defective. Some genetic abnormalities are PKU, Down's, Klinefelter's, and Turner's syndromes. These cause physical and mental abnormalities.

B. Groups

Groups are people and institutions who influence us in our early development. The most important influence is our parents. They form our first values and principles in life. It is from them that we learn to love and to be loved. It is as infants that we learn how to express love. If we are not taught how to express love, we will have relationship problems and low self-esteem as we grow older.

In the past the groups or individuals who influence our behavior are our siblings, other relatives, church, school, neighbors. Today, due to our modern life style, we should include television, and child care centers as major influences on how our behavior is developed.

C. Guidelines

Guidelines are rules. Rules include laws, social customs (written and unwritten), values, religion, and principles. We learn these guidelines from our parents, schools, the business for whom we work, society in general, government, friends, church, and clubs.

Life would be impossible without some form of rules to govern it. Rules are not just designed to stop us from doing something. They are to help us live in society. Some rules are more important than others. Some rules we can ignore without too much social censure. These might include jaywalking or failing to take a daily bath. Others might not approve of our refusing to obey the social customs, but normally nothing bad will happen to us. Other rules are so important that society responds with harsh punishments. These might include murder, burglary, or driving while drunk. Without rules, life would sink into anarchy.

According to Thomas Szasz, people are rule followers. When we refuse to follow the rules, we eventually become unable to cope with our relationships and society in general. When this happens, we become dysfunctional.

D. Goals

A goal is something for which we aim. It is our purpose. A goal can be almost anything: money, fame, health, houses, cars, education, career, salvation, revenge. A goal is something to which we devote our time and energy. Our goal can be either negative or positive.

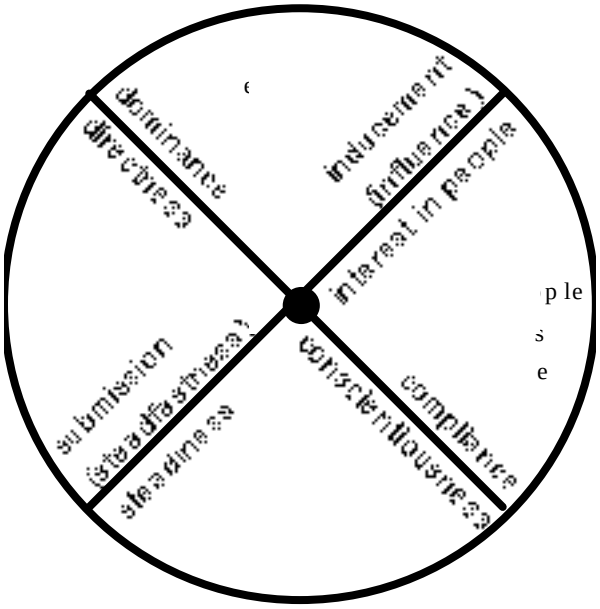
People without a goal are just drifting through life without ever accomplishing anything. Thomas Carlyle wrote, "The man without a purpose is like a ship without a rudder—an orphan, a nothing, a no man. Have a purpose in life, and, having it, throw such strength of mind and muscle into your work as God has given you."

III. Styles of Behavior

William Moulton Marston said that there are four different styles of behavior: (1) ***C****ompliance*, (2) ***D****ominance*, (3) ***I****nfluence*, and (4) ***S****teadfastness*. These styles are sometimes called the ***DISC*** behaviors. We all exhibit some of these four styles of behavior to some degree. Usually, one of them will be more dominant than the other three. This dominant style of behavior produces our primary behavior traits. Although we have the other three traits in our personality, and they do surface from time to time, they are of less importance than our primary style of behavior.

Marston believed that *dominance* and *influence* are process oriented while *steadfastness* and *compliance* are product oriented. That is, a person who is process oriented is more concerned with how something is done. A person who is product oriented is more concerned with the finished product. The following illustration shows how Marston believed the four primary styles of behavior related and interacted.

Process Oriented



Product Oriented

Certain character traits are grouped around each of the primary styles of behavior, as explained next.

A. High D(ominance)

A person who is a High D is characterized by a desire for victory over an opponent of weaker or inferior intensity. A High D person enjoys dominating others. It is his reason for being.

A High D person has the tendencies to want immediate results from whatever project or job he is working on. He likes to make quick decisions and cause things to happen. He is not afraid to question the existing condition or to accept a challenge to change it. He is not afraid to assume authority, especially when it requires that he solve problems or manage a venture that is having problems.

He likes to work and live in an environment that is not dull and boring. The more new and varied the activities, the better he likes it. He needs a challenging job that has a wide scope of operations to keep him from becoming bored. He enjoys power and authority and the freedom from controls and supervision that comes with them. He likes the prestige and challenge that come with a job that provides him with a degree of power. He wants an opportunity to express himself through his accomplishments and likes to be rewarded for them. He needs a job in which advancement is possible. Dead end jobs cause him to lose self-esteem and become depressed.

B. High I(nfluencing)

Influencing or inducement is the idea of "persuading someone in a friendly way to perform an act suggested by you." The High I shapes his environment by bringing others into alliance with him to achieve a goal. This is different from the High D who shapes his environment by dominating his opposition to achieve a goal.

The High I has tendencies centered on motivating people by making a good impression on them. He goes out of his way to meet and impress new people. Unlike the High D who likes to run a one man operation, the High I likes a group operation. He does this by getting others involved in the decision making and problem solving process. Also, he enjoys entertaining and helping others. He gets others involved by trying to create an environment that will generate a high level of enthusiasm.

Because he needs to be popular and to be recognized for his abilities, he likes to live and work in an environment that is friendly. He feels a need to be free from controls

and details. He finds this freedom by establishing and maintaining democratic relationships which allow him the freedom to express himself.

Because he has the need to be liked and respected by others, he needs people around him who can bring structure into his life. He needs people who are logical in their approach, seek facts before making a decision, speak candidly, concentrate on the task at hand, and have the will to follow through on the required action.

C. High S(teadiness)

Steadiness or submission is allowing someone else to direct you. There is a mutual warmth between the person who is submitting and the person to whom he is submitting. The person who is a High S emphasizes cooperating with others to accomplish a task.

He has a tendency to be a loyal lieutenant. He will stay with a job until it is completed and will perform it to the required specifications. He is extremely patient and loyal. Because of this, he will develop specialized skills to get the job done. He is a good listener and has a talent for calming excited people.

He likes an environment that follows tradition and will only change the existing conditions when given a specific reason. Unlike the High D, he does not like a job with a wide scope of operations. He does want to be appreciated and likes to work with groups. He feels most comfortable in a secure job that has limited boundaries. He does not want a job that will interfere with his home life.

Since he is traditional, he needs people around him who are flexible in their approaches, will react quickly to an unexpected challenge and become involved in several projects at one time. Also, he needs others who enjoy working in an unpredictable, challenging environment. He needs someone who will not be afraid of applying pressure to others to ensure that they do their job.

D. High C(ompliance)

Compliance is allowing a superior force to dictate to you. The High C's emphasis is on working with existing circumstances to promote the quality of products and services.

The High C is very focused. He totally complies with authority whether it is a person or something in writing. He pays great attention to key directives and standards. He is a perfectionist and pays close attention to details. He is very critical in his thinking and of his and other's performance. He constantly checks for accuracy. Being a perfectionist, he is very accurate and diplomatic in dealing with others.

The High C needs to work in a sheltered job where there are no abrupt changes, and he is assured of security. He needs standard operating procedures and requires assurance that everything will be o.k. He accepts changes to the existing conditions only when assured that there will be stringent quality control guidelines. He likes being part of a work group which provides a form of security for him.

He needs others around him who desire to expand authority, make quick decisions, and delegate important tasks. Also, he needs others around him who will look at directives and polices as only guidelines instead of absolute standards. Because he has a high need for security, he needs someone around him who is not afraid to state unpopular positions and compromise with the opposition.

VI. Ways To Build Positive Relations

Building a good relationship with someone who has a different style of behavior than you takes work. You will need to understand their basic style and know what qualities they value. The following provides some helpful information in forming such relationships.

High D, be prepared, well organized and result oriented.

High I, be sociable, friendly and willing to visit for a while.

High S, be sincere, loyal and agreeable.

High C, be accurate, stick with the business, and allow him time to think it over.

V. Conclusion

All of us have a comfort zone. That is, there are certain behaviors, thoughts, values, and rules with which we feel comfortable. When we do not live within these behaviors, thoughts, etc., we become uncomfortable. We can change our behavior and values, but it

causes anxiety. When we encourage others to change, we help them through the difficult times as they move from one comfort zone to another.

Jesus' style of behavior was versatile and flexible. He met people where they were and met their needs. Paul did the same when he said that he became all things to all men (1 Corinthians 9:19-23).

Now, please start over and study the lesson and the related scriptures. **When you finish your in-depth study, return to the enclosed Response Sheet and write your answers to the study questions about this lesson.**