

## **Basic Principles of Human Behavior**

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1. People are complex
  - Psalm 139:14
  - I Thessalonians 5:23
2. All behavior is purposeful
3. Rewarded behavior will be repeated
4. Stimuli perceived as real the effects will be real
  - Actions precede attitudes - Proverbs 16:2-3
  - Right actions produce right attitudes and vice versa
5. People return to places of unresolved conflict
  - Need for resolution
  - Need for forgiveness from sin
6. Feelings not talked out will be acted out
  - People are “verbacious”
7. People assume that the way they were treated as children
  - is the way they deserve to be treated as adults and the way they will treat others
8. Emotional injury causes defensive behaviors that can impact all of life if not healed
9. It is always right to do right – obedience to God’s principles is always right.
10. Every person deserves respect- treat them that way.

Working with people is rewarding and challenging. There are basic principles that can be helpful in understanding some of the “whats” and the “whys” of human behavior. You may find these useful in your own life and in the lives of those around you. Following is a list of principles that can be helpful for understanding yourself and others.

**1. People are complex** - People have needs, longings, drives, wishes, gifts, temperaments and other specific characteristics. People are body, soul (mind, will, and emotion), and spirit (I Thessalonians 5:23). Psalm 139:14 says: we are fearfully and wonderfully made; indeed, we are complex. Even though we are complex and sometimes cannot understand ourselves, God can understand us and His Word is sharp enough to see through our complexity. It is important to see people as complex. Do not try to reduce them to simple formulas.

**2. All behavior is purposeful** - Human behavior does not always seem to be useful but it always has a purpose. Behaviors are not accidents; they have purpose. Even when the individual does not understand the behavior, it has a purpose. We need to ask, what was the purpose for that behavior? We then need to bring biblical correctives to that person’s life and help them to see when their behavior is not useful.

**3. Rewarded behavior will be repeated** - This seems to go without saying, but if we reward behavior it will typically be repeated. Payment for work, appreciation for kindness, and honor for valor are all ways to reward behaviors that we wish to have repeated. Rewarding wrong and harmful behaviors will produce more wrong behaviors.

**4. If stimuli are perceived as real the effects will be real** - If we believe appreciation is real, we will respond as if it is. If we perceive disrespect to be real, we will respond to that. So, it is important to be kind and caring at all times, even when we do not feel like it. The kindness and caring will typically produce positive effects. Threats can produce fears and negative effects. Actions precede attitudes (Proverbs 16:2-3); right actions produce right attitudes and vice versa.

**5. People return to places of unresolved conflict** - We need resolution for conflicts and we need for forgiveness from sin. When these do not occur, we continually return to them or else we carry them with us everywhere we go.

**6. Feelings not talked out will be acted out** - People need to talk. When people do not express their feelings with words, the feelings come out in physical ways. Unexpressed anger can turn violent; unexpressed affections can be displaced onto animals or inanimate objects. It is important to learn to communicate effectively. When people are “acting out” it is important to find the underlying feelings and help them to express the feelings in helpful, constructive ways.

**7. People assume that the way they were treated as children:**

- is the way they deserve to be treated as adults
- is the way they will tend to treat others

Persons who were abused may assume that they do not deserve gentle treatment. Persons doted on by parents typically expect people to meet their every whim all through life. The way we were treated as children becomes our “home” concept. That “home” concept tends to define life’s choices. We gravitate to what feels like home.

**8. Emotional injury causes defensive behaviors** - If emotional injuries are not healed, they will impact all of life. All persons are emotionally injured, but many have received healing for those injuries. We will be very defensive if those injuries are not healed. We can find healing by forgiveness and the grace of God. As the injuries are healed, the defensive behaviors will diminish.

**9. It is always right to do right** – We need to act in correct and appropriate ways even when we do not feel like doing what is right. We need to obey parents and the Bible even when we do not understand why. Obedience is never wrong; obedience is always right. Obedience to what is right and Biblical will bring blessing to all involved. We do not wait until we feel like doing what is right. It is always right to do right.

**10. Every person deserves respect** - We need to respect people as we attempt to bring healing into their lives. Jesus treated people with the respect that their damaged dignity required. Respect does not mean acceptance of their sinful behavior. Respect means treating them with dignity. Respect means treating people the way you would want to be treated. We respect while we apply truth with love.

Unhealthy people produce unhealthy behaviors and families; healthy people produce healthy behaviors and families and communities and churches and schools, etc. I share these principles with the prayer that they will be useful in producing Godly and healthy persons.

## Basic Needs

1. Security
  - Need for “place” in life
  - Identity-part of group
  - Disturbed attachment cycle (see sheet)
    - Attempts to develop attachment in adolescence
  - False security
    - Premature relationships
    - Gangs = replace family
2. Significance
  - Need for importance in life
  - Spiritual gift – important task

## Basic Drives

1. Preservation of the self—God given love for life
  - Fears: falling, drowning, choking, etc.
  - “Fight or flight”
2. Preservation of the race—God designed family (Genesis 2:24)
  - “Be fruitful and multiply”
  - “Boy/girl” attraction
  - Male role-love, provide, protect, direct
  - Female role-birth, nurture, homemaking
3. Procreative drive
  - In control = positive
  - Out of control = destructive

Incest	Polygamy	Prostitution
Rape	Bestiality	Masturbation
Pornography	Promiscuity	Homosexuality
Fornication	Sexual abuse	Polyandry
Adultery		

Relationships and experiences that God did not intend for His creation:

Effects of media

Advertisements

Movies/videos

I Corinthians 7: Marriage and family are God’s plan for the expression of sexual energies.

## Traits of healthy, functioning, Godly humans

### Maturity

Growing in knowledge and understanding of God and His Word

Worship of God

Hunger for God's Word

Realize dependency on God

Understanding of God's will for life – Romans 12:1-3

Yielded to God and His plan

Growing in knowledge and understanding of self and purpose for life

Healthy self-concept

Harmony between inner self and outer self

No hypocrisy

Ability to make Godly decisions and choices

Recognize effects of the fall into sin

Ability to deal with sin and sinful tendencies in self and others

Love of God, others, and self

Respect for God, others, and self

Willing and able to edify others

Encourage and perceive needs

Use healing words

Maintain balance between mercy and truth - Proverbs 3:3

Live in harmony with nature - Psalm 24:1

Be led by the Holy Spirit - I Corinthians 2:9-16

Express the Fruit of the Spirit of God

Virtue

Integrity

Responsibility

Forgiveness

Humility

Unselfishness

Permeable – allow people to enter and influence

### **Egotism contrasted with the drive for significance**

The need to be significant is seen in all people. It is noticeable even in young children. It is a part of being human. Along with the need for security, significance is a deep longing in the human soul. If security and significance needs are not met, people may develop feelings of insecurity and worthlessness. Individuals, then, find ways to mask those negative feelings. Sometimes, in persons of strong will, feelings of insecurity and insignificance are masked by egotism.

Egotism is a destructive force in human behavior. It is a frantic, all engrossing effort to hide the real feelings of insecurity and inadequacy. As such, it is demanding and unforgiving. It sees all of life through the self. It is unrelenting. In persons of small influence it appears foolish and trifling. In persons of sanguine personality and forceful drive it becomes a power to control and manipulate either by clever means or by "getting even."

God's way is best. Love is stronger than any other emotion. Love is the fruit of the Spirit. It suffers long and is kind and is the greatest of all. (I Corinthians 13)