CHANGE: MODELS AND PROCESSES

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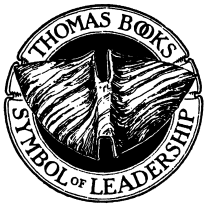
By

SHAWN COOPER



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In memory of my beloved Lesley

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

When individuals write a book, by tradition they include an acknowledgments page, an expression of their thanks to those others whose support enabled the author to write her or his book.

First and foremost, I would mention my wife Lesley. Although she is not with me now, my relationship with her was the most profound and loving bond have ever experienced and I only wish we had had more time together. Lesley and I met in 1967 and over the course of our lives, she offered inspiration and encouragement for all the things I have done and accomplished in much of my adult life. Whatever the future may hold for me, I will never forget Lesley and the extraordinary meaning she had in my life. This book is a commemoration to her and our relationship. Even though Lesley is not with me, she was a central force in my creation of this book and she was in my thoughts throughout the writing process. There are no words that can express my gratitude to Lesley for the contribution she made to every aspect of my life.

Second, I would express my appreciation to those many patients I have worked with over the years who, in their descriptions of their lives and behavior, revealed to me their utilization or failure to utilize some number of strategies–what I conceive of as models–that might be employed in living their lives. Individuals might be aware or unaware of these constructs or might not utilize them effectively. I felt that articulating these models and bringing them into people's consciousness would facilitate the use of these concepts in a person's adaptation. Hence I offer my thanks to those individuals I have treated for their contribution to my thinking.

Third, I would offer my gratitude to Ms. Rachel Gottleib, the person who created the figures that appear in this volume. Her drawing of the figures and her assistance in conveying them to the publisher and hence her help in this vital aspect of writing this book is greatly appreciated.

SHAWN COOPER

REMEMBRANCE

As children we are exposed to a vast array of people, events and experiences that provide us with a number of potential templates for our own future behavior. We may derive from these encounters a set of internalized images that shape many of our subsequent actions throughout life. As an alternative, we may deny these observed and experienced patterns and instead attempt to create a different set of structures to guide our later modes of living.

One of my earliest childhood memories was when my father returned home from work at the end of the day and ritualistically placed several items on his dresser: his wallet, his gold-colored watch, and his wedding ring. I also recall when I was young wanting a person in my life to parallel the part my mother played for my father. It took me many years and some few relationships until, when I was almost 27, I met Lesley. She had come to Rhode Island with her almost four-year-old daughter Jessica immediately after a divorce and where she planned to begin a graduate program at the Rhode Island School of Design.

After a year-long courtship, Lesley and I, with Jessica at our ceremony, were married by the rabbi at Brown University. The wedding ring I chose was one of simple design with a hammered surface. Lesley's was a more complicated, multi-pieced one which she later put away and thereafter she wore the ring of her beloved grandmother. In contrast to my own father's example, though, I never removed my wedding ring. Perhaps it was the profound meaning the ring had for me, representing the status of being married I so valued. I never saw any reason to remove my ring. It simply was part of me and I wore it always.

A year and a half after our marriage, Lesley and I had a second daughter, Liza. I adopted Jessica when I was able to, and we lived our lives as a family in Providence. Lesley first raised our children, then became a practicing artist, and ultimately moved from that identity into becoming an art teacher in the Providence elementary schools.

Over time, all relationships evolve. While some individuals become more distant from their partners, Lesley and I overcame our early frictions

and over time became ever more intimately and deeply involved in our love for one another. No one ever loved me as Lesley did, and my love and caring for her equaled or surpassed hers for me. Our closeness to one another and the sharing of our lives simply grew and deepened over the years we were together. Lesley was my wife, my lover, and my best friend in all the world. We shared virtually all aspects of our lives and we became as one person instead of two, or as Aristotle said, "one soul in two bodies." Joy for me came from making Lesley happy and words simply cannot express the depth of my love for her.

I often think of the qualities that made Lesley the extraordinary person she was: beautiful, intelligent and intuitive, with the mind and heart of an artist. She displayed an exceptional perceptivity, originality and independence of thought, and a wonderful capacity for appreciating and creating beauty in the world, exemplified most clearly in her deftly drawn and exquisitely painted watercolors. She also had tremendous warmth as well as a profoundly loving devotion to both all the members of our family and to the concepts of fairness and equity in virtually all things.

September 11, 2001 was traumatic for the entire nation. Both of our daughters were by this time living in New York City and although neither of them nor our son-in-law or grandchildren was harmed, the event was overwhelming for Lesley. Whatever the connection, only a few days after that terrible occurrence, Lesley developed a cough that did not and simply would not go away. As so many before us, we traveled the path they have: early reassurance locally, subsequent consultation in Boston, initial misdiagnosis there of Lesley's condition and when, the day before our thirty-third anniversary the physician told us Lesley had acid reflux disease, I felt we had been given the greatest gift I could ever imagine: each other. When the condition did not resolve and Lesley coughed up a small amount of blood, a sputum sample was taken and on the day before Valentine's Day of 2002 we were told that Lesley, who had never smoked, had lung cancer.

Even though Lesley had asked from the beginning if she had cancer, we were overwhelmed and simply numbly disbelieving when we heard the diagnosis. No matter the depth of my love for Lesley, I could not protect nor keep her safe from this scourge. We attempted to pursue the only treatment available based on the stage of her illness, which was chemotherapy. Lesley displayed all the courage one could hope for in such a situation and although I had little idea of the future, I vowed to accompany her through every aspect of what we faced. For what it mattered, I was able to be in the room with Lesley through virtually everything she dealt with over the ensuing months. We proceeded through a series of unsuccessful chemotherapies and the periodic CT and bone scans which catalogued the disease progression as

it spread throughout my beloved Lesley. While we vainly struggled to arrest the illness, Lesley and I never spoke of prognosis nor discussed the outcome that neither of us even dared to contemplate.

On a morning in early spring of 2003 as Lesley and I lay in bed together, I noticed my ring finger seemed swollen, making my ring, by now smoothed by years of wear, fit uncomfortably tightly. I removed the ring and placed it temporarily on my pinky, but when I next remembered, it was gone from my finger. As I frantically retraced my steps throughout the house searching for my ring, I was terrified by the thought that I had unconsciously lost the ring in anticipation of what I felt the future held, even though I could not speak the words. After my frenzied search, I found my ring once more. Still unable to slide the ring back on my finger but wanting to keep it close nonetheless, I chose to put it on my keychain instead.

In the late spring and early summer of 2003, Lesley's condition worsened. She was hospitalized in June 2003 and thereafter declined, being increasingly unwilling to leave the house or even our bed. Lesley died on August 9, 2003 in our bedroom with Jessica, Liza, Lesley's mother, and I with her. She had lost the ability to speak and had gone from one sleep to another, so after all the years we had spent talking about everything, our earthly relationship ended on a terrible note of silence. When the family met with the funeral director and she asked if Lesley should continue wearing her wedding ring, I did not hesitate in knowing she would have wanted that, so vital had our marriage been to her.

Since Lesley's death, I have managed to resume some aspects of my life although nothing is the same nor ever will be. I always simply assumed Lesley and I would grow old together. I visit the cemetery frequently, and very often my eyes are wet with recently shed tears. I long to hear Lesley's voice, to laugh with her and to feel her warm embrace. The triggers for my grief are too numerous to list but involve all the things Lesley and I shared or ever hoped to. A word, a place, a piece of music, the change in seasons, any of these can remind me of my sorrow. The most difficult times are those instances when I notice wedding rings on people's fingers, see older couples together, or separate from our children and grandchildren and return home to my aloneness. At any moment I may find myself confronted almost simultaneously by two opposing thoughts: the utter disbelief that all this has happened and the numbing realization that it has.

I am still unsure what my future holds. While life ends, love, loyalty and grief endure, and I yearn for Lesley many times each day. At any moment, my sadness and tears are only a thought away. Now, following the template my father displayed for me, my wedding ring is close to me each day and when I retire in the evening, I place my ring with my wallet, keys and wrist-

watch atop my dresser as I lie down and face or look away from the half of our bed where Lesley should still be but where the blanket now lies flat.

SHAWN COOPER

PREFACE

In introducing this book, it is important to note that it pertains to the concept of change. As a pilot once said as my family and I were flying into Chicago many years ago, "Folks, one thing we can count on is that change is here to stay." This refers to the fact that life involves two polar qualities: stability and change. Stability refers to the relative similarity or sameness in phenomena which is evident in our environs and within ourselves. Importantly, stability does not mean an absence of change. Instead, it refers to unnoticed, minimally observable, or largely imperceptible variation rather than complete stasis in a given circumstance. The more significant element for most people lies in the fact that life involves seemingly endless change: transformations, shifts, alterations or movements in either the surrounding world, or in oneself. All things are almost constantly in flux, changing in small or large ways from one state of being to another. Change is indeed the only constant.

If one takes a historical perspective, it is evident that the universe and the earth we inhabit have involved both great constancy as well as dramatic variation. Change in this sense appears to be a given in life. At times change is something that people desire, as it is stimulating, makes life interesting and provides people with hope that things in the future will be better than they are in the present or have been in the past. At other times, of course, change can be a source of worry or anxiety, when one anticipates that change will be for the worse, and if the change is abrupt, extreme, or completely unanticipated, it can be extremely disquieting, disturbing, and even overwhelming or traumatic to the person. It is a commonplace to observe that many people abhor what they perceive as change. They do not like it when it occurs around them, frequently resist it (Engle and Arkowitz, 2006), and often change their own behavior only when something compels them to. It is not a question of *whether* things will change in life, for they will. It is more a matter of *how* they change, and it is to address this issue that the models I will present are most relevant.

A major purpose of this book is to assist the reader in dealing with the numerous and varied circumstances she or he may encounter in adjusting to

life, many of which will involve either insignificant or profound changes in the surrounding world or in the person himself. In my presentation I will utilize the knowledge I have gained as a psychologist, including both the literature I have studied as well as my own clinical experience dealing with patients across the life cycle. The book will not involve an exhaustive review of all or much of the research relevant to a specific area. Rather, it will include examples of investigations or materials that illustrate the particular concept I am discussing.

S.C.

INTRODUCTION

Although one might consider psychology as having begun when humans first appeared on earth, as a separate discipline, scientific psychology began somewhat over 100 years ago (Benjamin, 2000). A man named Wilhelm Wundt opened a psychology laboratory at the University of Leipzig in Germany and he proceeded to investigate various aspects of human functioning, including people's sensory perceptions and physiological characteristics. Since then, psychology has expanded enormously (Resnick, 1997), perhaps exponentially, and now virtually every part of life seems to involve the application of psychological principles.

Psychologists work in schools (Cole and Siegel, 2003; Conwill, 2003; Greenberg et al., 2003; Roberts et al., 2003); communities (Nagayama Hall, 2005; Miller et al., 2003); healthcare (Brown and Folen, 2005; Gluekauf and Ketterson, 2004; Haley et al., 2003; Nicasso, Meyerowitz, and Kerns, 2004); and organizations (Simola, 2005), basically anywhere there are people. Psychologists devise theories about many aspects of human or animal functioning and behavior and then carry out research to evaluate and refine these views. At times psychological explorations may focus only on obtaining a deeper understanding of questions regarding living organisms. At other times, based on the findings of their investigative efforts, psychologists attempt to apply a variety of discovered psychological principles in different settings to try to improve people's lives and their abilities to deal with various aspects of life.

One of the major branches of psychology is clinical psychology (McReynolds, 1987; Taylor, 2000), which focuses on the application of psychological concepts and principles to the treatment of people who are having difficulty in adjusting. Individuals who experience any of a variety of adaptive problems, including such things as anxiety, depression, health problems, or various kinds of relationship difficulties often seek psychological treatment, and clinical psychologists attempt to help them overcome or cope with their troubles. Psychologists also may focus on ways to assist people who are not having significant problems to adapt more successfully and to live fuller and more satisfying lives.

I was born and grew up in New York City. When I was a little boy, I always loved to draw, and spent many hours using art as a way to deal with and express my thoughts and feelings. I was at least fairly talented, so that other children always said I should become an artist. Whether I believed them or for any other set of reasons, I actually did attend the High School of Music and Art, a public high school in New York City for students talented in art or music. After high school, I began at Pratt Institute, an art college in Brooklyn, New York, with my plan being to become an illustrator.

As with many people's lives, some set of events occurred in my life when I was a mid-adolescent, and I wound up shifting to a different college, and with a different life goal: instead of becoming an illustrator, I decided to become a clinical psychologist. Instead of using pictorial information as a way to express myself and to communicate with others, I shifted to using verbal language as the primary instrument I have used to relate to people and the world. I have always remembered the power of visual images and pictorial information for conveying ideas to other individuals (Butcher, 2006; Dansereau and Simpson, 2009; Schnotz and Kuschner, 2008).

After switching colleges and career paths, I received my graduate training in clinical psychology during the1960s and obtained my doctorate in psychology in 1968. Over the years of my professional life, aside from teaching at the college level for several years, I have primarily been involved in clinical psychology. I have provided psychological assessment of children, adolescents and adults, and I also have provided psychological treatment to a wide variety of individuals: children, adolescents, adults, couples and families. Last, I also have provided consultation to individuals in organizations to assist them with some of the difficulties they have had which appear to involve psychological principles, such as how people relate to one another at work, how managers handle the people they deal with, and how an organization can more effectively handle its tasks.

Elements Involved in Human Change

A next point I would make in the introduction to this book, which is fundamentally about change, is to describe several factors which I feel are relevant to any consideration of human behavior and change. Of course, any discussion of change in human conduct involves the variable of motivation, which includes two aspects, first, a general state of arousal or drive which energizes change, and second, a specific focus of an individual's desire to change. Certainly, in order for people to volitionally change their behavior, they must be motivated to do so (Miller and Rollnick, 2002; Prochaska and Norcross, 2007). However, the elements regarding human behavioral change

that I will describe include three which I noted in an earlier book (Cooper, 1995): context, path, and belief. In addition to those, I would now also include the concepts of time, set, energy, hindsight and foresight, affect, and that of existential choice.

A first construct pertinent to the concept of human change is the significance of time, which is relevant in two ways. First, each of us lives his life during some particular epoch of historical time. Depending on the events which occur during that time period, the individual's life may be deeply affected, at times to an overwhelming degree, by those events. Historical time represents a broad, and often profoundly influential, context for whatever changes occur external to, or within, the person himself.

Second, time also represents the all-encompassing framework which gives ultimate meaning to our lives as human beings since we all are mortal and live during a finite span of time. From this perspective, time provides the central scaffold within which all things occur during an individual's life. Whether something appears to take an instant or whether the phenomenon is extended over minutes, weeks, months, or years, it is within an envelope of time that events in human lives take place. Within this temporal context, we all have some awareness–or denial–of our own mortality as creating the defining limits within which whatever we do must occur. All of the events of our lives derive their significance, first, from the segment of historical time during which we live and second from what Boyd and Zimbardo (2005) label "time perspective." By this they refer to the subjective way in which each of us relates to time and the process by which we divide the continual flow of life occurrences into categories or frames that permit us to arrange and provide meaning to the events we experience.

These frames or cognitive categories allow us to organize, encode, store, and later recall past experienced events, provide a framework which enables us to establish future goals, and permit us to devise strategies to achieve or pursue those phenomena which we believe or hope will arise at some future time.

These cognitions allow us to relate to the passage of time and to locate our existence as living beings within a life cycle. Therefore, any contemplation of human change requires the recognition of time as a critical factor in all aspects of personal development, functioning, and change.

Next, aside from the all-inclusive construct of time, it was and is my view that life events arise within a unique context, a particular background or set of circumstances that provide each event with meaning. The context of life events helps to define them, allows the individuals involved to make sense of their experience, and supplies an overarching structure which enables the person to later recall what has occurred (Klein, 2008). It is also important to realize that various events in fact may be nested within multiple contexts, for

example, the historical time within which one lives, one's society, subculture, or the person's individual history, with these different contexts varying on a spectrum from those that are somewhat removed from the person to those that are quite immediate to the individual's experience. It is my view that in considering change, particularly human change, it is always vital to consider the context or multiple contexts within which the change occurs.

Next, it is my position that within the overarching structures of time and context, life consists of a series of choice points which people encounter constantly. Each of these occasions presents the person with what can be conceived of as a set of diverging paths. While at times these varying routes may be devised by the individual through prudent contemplation, in fact one or more of these alternatives may arise by virtue of such factors as luck, chance, or fortune.

At each of these junctures, the person may have his future direction chosen by someone or something outside the individual himself. Alternatively, the person may actively choose one path or another, with the choice made reflecting the individual's biological propensity, the response to an immediately felt impulse, or thoughtful reflection.

Whether a particular path is selected by the person or by some factor external to the individual, once the way has been chosen, the person proceeds down that course toward, into, and through some unique event or set of experiences. It is my view that in considering human behavior, it is critical to think of the paths individuals travel in their movement through life and it is perhaps particularly important to consider the person's capacity to select the pathway he will follow and the way the individual exercises his potential to make life choices.

Apropos of the concept of path, there is a related idea to consider. Many years ago, when I was in college, I noticed something about my peers which led me to devise what I labeled "set theory." In psychology, set refers to a readiness to respond to a given stimulus in a particular way. The idea of "set theory" was based on my observation of the fact that men and women in my generation typically proceeded through a specific series of phases as they progressed through their college years.

In this characteristic sequence of events, a man and woman would date over some period of time. At some point, the woman would appear wearing the man's fraternity pin, indicating a more significant commitment to the relationship. In the usual series of steps, the next event to occur was the woman turning up with an engagement ring, indicating both an even more significant commitment as well as an intention to marry. The final step in this progression was the announced plan of a wedding date, usually almost immediately after graduation from college. My consideration of this pattern of events

among my peers led me to conclude that the succession of actions reflected a "set" among my fellow students; that is, they viewed the time of life we were in as involving preparation for what was viewed as the ultimate step for people my age, which was finding a marriage partner. In order to accomplish this task, the individuals were "set," that is, prepared to focus on identifying a partner who met some particular array of characteristics they felt relevant to their goal of marriage.

People approached others with this preset goal in mind. Aside from involvement in the intellectual activity of being a college student, most of my peers spent significant time, energy, and effort devoted to the task of locating a partner. Individuals' approaches to others involved evidence of this "set," or implementation of a strategy which would expose them to potential dating (and marriage) partners, and the dating process itself involved determining the appropriateness of another person for the goal of getting married.

Set is the psychological process which delineates the assortment of possibilities (i.e., paths) from which the individual may choose a particular option. Therefore set will determine the one, few, or many alternatives from which the person will ultimately make his selection of which path to follow. It involves the criteria the individual will apply in deciding how broad or narrow the target of the person's actions will be, i.e., whether there may be several possibilities, few, or only a single path for the individual to follow. Any deliberation about human change necessarily involves awareness of the concept of set as a factor that limits the range of alternative choices a person allows himself to even consider.

Related to the above, time, context, path and set, a next essential view of human behavior involves the concept of belief. It is my contention that apart from those perspectives that emphasize unconscious motivation for human conduct (e.g., Brooks, 2011; Eagelman, 2011; Freud, 1966) individuals' behavior is determined by their overtly- or covertly-held belief systems. This viewpoint is represented in current cognitive and cognitive-behavioral theories which suggest that beliefs and ways of thinking underpin the way in which people interpret life events; determine how individuals respond emotionally; and govern the behaviors they engage in and the choices they make (e.g., Beck, Rush, Shaw and Emery, 1979; Beck, 1995; Leahy, 2003). As part of people's belief systems I include a person's values, particularly those most deeply held and central beliefs as to what is vital to the individual in his life. In thinking about human behavioral change, I feel it is necessary to realize that people's views of the world reflect their belief systems, and the changes they make in life are predicated on those beliefs.

A next consideration when we contemplate change in human behavior has to do with the variable of energy, which we can think of in two funda-

mental ways. First, energy is defined as the ability to do work or expend effort. We can think of energy as indicating the general amount of capacity a person has available to carry out life tasks. Individuals of course vary in the amount of energy they have available to them. Some people are highly energetic, appear to need little rest and can work productively on an array of life tasks. Others have perhaps an "average" or sufficient amount of energy available to them. They are able to perform their various life endeavors adequately while requiring a reasonable degree of sleep or rest to be able to complete the activities of their daily lives.

Finally, there are those who appear to have less energy than most people; they may need much more sleep or rest than those around them, and they simply feel much less able to invest energy in various activities because they lack the basic drive to do so. They may report lack of verve, experience chronic fatigue or weakness, and avoid engaging in more than one or only a few tasks since they find the necessary effort more than they have available. While lack of energy, or fatigue, is considered a symptom of depression (American Psychiatric Association, *DSM-IV-TR,* 2000), it may also be that some individuals who are not clinically depressed simply do not have sufficient energy to engage in a wide variety of life activities.

The second way to think about energy is in terms of its deployment. That is, given a certain amount of energy a particular individual possesses, one must consider the way in which the person is able to focus, utilize, or invest his drive to accomplish something. This pertains to whether an individual's energy appears clearly organized and efficiently focused on one or more specific activities, or diffusely dispersed and undirected rather than being systematically applied to permit the attainment of explicit goals (e.g., the person who has an attentional problem).

This latter view of energy relates to what we might ordinarily consider motivation, i.e., the individual's general desire and capacity to take action as well as the person's ability to identify and pursue a distinct objective or outcome. In considering human behavioral change, it is also necessary to include the variable of energy, including the amount the individual has available, the person's motivation to change, and the individual's ability to focus his effort over some period of time on making a particular alteration in thoughts, feelings or behavior.

Still another pair of related factors when considering human change are the concepts of hindsight and foresight. The first of these refers to the person's ability to look backward to recall and examine past actions in terms of their significance, and the success or failure they yielded in the individual's adaptation. The second refers to a person's ability to conceive of some future point in time and to envision what the individual believes or anticipates will

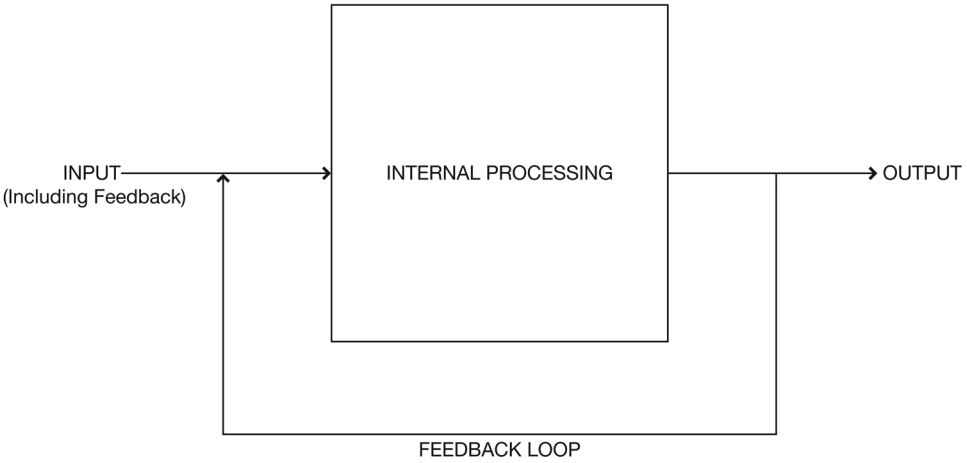

Figure 1. A Feedback Loop.

occur if he continues with, or alters, his current mode of operating.

Although it is of course difficult to predict the future with absolute certainty, the adaptive use of foresight entails the person using his visualization and awareness of an anticipated future to affect what she or he does in the present, i.e., using a theoretical feedback loop (see Figure 1, "A Feedback Loop"). For example, when an individual contemplates a course of action, the person may be able to reflect on the potential consequences of a particular choice–i.e., the impact of the change on oneself and on those in one's interpersonal network–and allow those possible future outcomes to contribute to and influence the individual's decision in the present. That is, the person is able to use foresight in evaluating and selecting a particular path into his future.

Certainly, people may vary both from developmental and personal perspectives in their capacity for using foresight–thinking of future outcomes if one chooses one path or another and allowing those thoughts to affect the person's current choice of a course of action (e.g., Casey, Getz, and Galvan, 2008). A critical aspect of the use of foresight includes consideration of the costs and benefits to the individual of changing versus continuing as she or he is currently. In any contemplation of human behavior change, it is vital to consider the degree to which the person is able to utilize hindsight, a recollection of the past, and foresight, an awareness of potential future outcomes, in determining the decision the individual will make in the present moment.

Still one more consideration when contemplating human behavior change is the notion of affect, which is addressed by Slovic, Peters, Finucane, and MacGregor (2005) and Slovic and Peters (2008) in their discussions of

risk. By affect, these authors mean a particular feeling of goodness or badness which is experienced by a person (consciously or unconsciously) and which leads the individual to perceive a given stimulus as positive or negative. Affective reactions are ordinarily the first ones people have to events; they occur automatically and then guide the individual's subsequent information processing (Zajonc, 1980).

Slovic et al. (2005) note that people employ their emotional reactions as an "affect heuristic," meaning that a person uses his experienced emotions as a critical guide in decision making. Slovic et al. note that the experiential system, which relies heavily on affect, was vital in early primate evolution in enabling individuals to avoid danger. Although people vary in their reliance on experiential or rational strategies in decision making (Peters and Slovic, 2000), the emotional system still allows individuals to assess risk and make rapid decisions in today's world. Slovic et al. suggest that the diverse images in people's memories are tagged with differing degrees of emotion. When making decisions, individuals consult their pool of emotional recollections and these affectively-colored memories influence the person's choices in the present.

Related to the above-noted importance of affect in human decision making, Gershon (1998) and Bradenhop (http://ahpweb.org/articles/4brains.html; retrieved June 6, 2011) note that human intelligence is not comprised of a single brain but rather includes multiple brains which have evolved over the course of human history. One of these is the enteric nervous system located in the gut, which is the locus of "gut feelings," intense, often negative emotional experiences which alert us to risk. The enteric brain was the first to emerge in evolution, followed later by the reptilian brain which regulates such fundamental life processes as breathing; the third brain to appear in evolution was the mammalian or limbic brain which integrates connections between the enteric and reptilian brains to yield people's emotional experience. Importantly, affect appeared before humans developed the ability to reason, and emotional reactions occur immediately in life, prior to cognition, and often play the dominant role in people's decision making. The fourth and final brain to evolve was the neocortex, which enabled humans to apply reason to their experience, to engage in abstract thought, and to develop and utilize verbal language for interpersonal communication and for the formulation of future goals. Both Gershon and Bradenhop emphasize the need to recognize the impact of humans' multiple brains, and especially that of the enteric nervous system, on people's adaptation and decision making.

Consequently, in considering individuals' decisions to make changes in their feelings, thoughts, or behaviors, it is important to realize that their affective experience–particularly including the impact of their enteric nervous

systems–is an ever-present component in their perception of events, their evaluation of any potential change they might contemplate, and in fact plays a central role in a person deciding whether or not to change and if so how.

Finally, related to all the above-noted phenomena–time, context, path and set, belief, energy, hindsight and foresight, and affect–is something I label existential choice, which includes consideration by the individual of some or all of the foregoing factors when contemplating change. The current book is devoted to the topic of change, in the surrounding world and within the person, and the book focuses on various models that may facilitate the individual's recognition of, ways to think about and deal with, change that occurs external to the person and change that occurs within the individual.

While one may assume that some or even many choices people make are done so unconsciously (Brooks, 2011; Eagleman, 2011; Freud, 1966), existential choice refers to the individual's awareness of his unique existence as a living creature. The choice I refer to focuses on the person and involves a presumably conscious determination by the individual of how she or he will act, whether he will make changes in behavior, and precisely what change the person will seek or attempt to achieve. It is this focal decision by the individual as to what she or he will do, whether to change or not and if so how, with an appreciation of the above noted elements, that is the essence of existential choice. It is my view that at its highest level, existential choice reflects a person's effort to find meaning and significance in his life as a human being. Existential choice reflects an individual's most deeply held values and beliefs.

The existential choices we make are critical ones that determine our future path. They are the decisions that we live with, hopefully to look back on later as sources of pride and positive self regard in terms of the particular path or action we have chosen. Yet, our existential choices can also be the decisions we later recall as the bases for regret and even profound guilt or shame. Existential choice, then, involves that selection among alternatives that is the person's sole prerogative, his own unique decision. In a sense, no one can make this choice for the individual. It belongs to the person alone unless, of course, the individual elects to surrender the capacity to choose and either passively allows such external factors as chance to decide his future path, or else turns his existential choice over to one or more others to make for them.

In regard to the idea of existential choice, it is important to realize that the exercise of this potential depends on the actual choices available to the person, and also necessitates some threshold capacity for conscious reflection and the recognition that there are different pathways from which one can or must choose. In terms of the alternatives from among which an individual

makes his choice, the person may perceive some existing set of divergent paths from which to choose, but also the individual may conceive of an entirely new or unique path of his own creation.

In this sense, while all the above noted variables are relevant to existential choice, set and existential choice fit most closely together in that set establishes the cluster of alternatives which are open to the person. It defines the array of options or differing pathways which enter the individual's consciousness and from which he will choose what will ultimately be done in a given circumstance. Set involves the criteria the person will apply in determining how many pathways she or he will actually be able to consider, several, few, or only a single option. Once these various alternatives are acknowledged by the individual, then the person's existential choice can be invoked to determine which specific course of action he will select.

In terms of existential choice, it also may be noted that to the extent that the individual displays a highly impulsive and unreflective cognitive style (e.g., Kagan, Rosman, Day, Albert, and Phillips, 1964; Rozencwajg and Corroyer, 2006), he may make choices without any realization of his capacity to reflect upon and actively choose from among the alternatives he encounters. While the impulsive person does indeed make choices, these occur without any reasonable reflection or evaluation on the part of the individual and therefore without truly invoking his capacity for existential choice. Alternatively, the person who displays some threshold degree of reflection or contemplation in approaching life is able to realize the idea of existential choice, the notion that one of the primary qualities that distinguishes humans from other forms of life is that humans can recognize, appreciate, and demonstrate conscious choice in the decisions which they face in life. A vital aspect of existential choice as I conceive of it is that it also entails taking full responsibility for the choice that one makes.

That is, the individual must attempt to fully appreciate and accept that his existential choice is a deeply held selection from among several alternative pathways that the person will stand by, is committed to, and will act upon. This means that existential choice reflects a profound commitment on the part of the individual to his selection. The person is bound to his chosen pathway, even if the route is daunting and marked by obstacles. On the other hand, it is also important to realize that existential choice reflects the individual's best effort at a given point in time. To the extent that the various phenomena noted above may change–for example, time, context, or energy–a person may need to modify his existential choice depending on an array of personal or situational variables.

Importantly, there are some individuals who are incapable of making existential decisions. These are people who simply feel unable to make crit-

ical choices in their lives, with this often reflecting the person's inability to separate from his parents, to take ownership of his own life, and to realize that the critical determinations in an individual's life are hers or his to make. Such people avoid making essential decisions in their lives. Instead, they may allow others or chance events to make their choices, or else they defer making a decision and wait until the passage of time reduces their alternatives or in fact ultimately makes the decision for them.

Of equal importance, in making an existential choice, some individuals attempt to rely on a rational or reasoned assessment of the options they perceive. Others will invoke what Gigerenzer (2007) has labeled "gut feelings," i.e., the enteric nervous system described above. These feelings reflect the emotional component of our lives, and involve one of the earliest evolved systems among humans, originating early in primate history when immediate affective reactions to circumstances were relied on to protect individuals from some immediate threat.

According to Gigerenzer, these archaic emotional systems, operating at an unconscious level, are still evident in human experience and provide a powerful mechanism for assisting people in making decisions in their lives. In making existential choices, some persons will tap into and profoundly trust these gut emotions when they must make life decisions. Others will attempt to emphasize reason and logic in their decisions while some will attempt to combine their rational thinking with some affective component to guide their existential choices.

Certainly, there are situations where the issue of existential choice may be questioned. For example, consider the soldier who dives on an enemy explosive device to save his companions or the individual who heroically confronts a person who is attacking innocent people with a weapon. To what extent might existential choice have been involved in the individual's seemingly instantaneous decision to risk or even sacrifice his own life for that of his comrades or people she or he does not even know? In examining the situation involved, one might easily speculate that the person who displays such self sacrifice had contemplated the possibility of such an incident before it occurred, and that the individual had made his existential choice at a time before the actual event arose. Or else, indeed, in that fraction of a second when the event occurs, the person actually makes the existential choice to endanger or sacrifice his own life to save his companions or others around the individual.

Another area where existential choice might be possible but may not be employed is in the development of extra-relational involvement. In this scenario, a person in a committed relationship encounters some conflict or friction in that affiliation. She or he may have friendship or acquaintanceship

with a colleague or coworker. That other relationship gradually begins to become a more significant connection and evolves until the point where it becomes a more substantial bond. Without realizing it, and without any conscious existential choice having been invoked, the individual finds himself in an extra-relational involvement even though such action may be in contrast to the person's fundamental values.

Still another realm where one might question the operation of existential choice is where an individual's actions appear driven by some presumed psychological disorder. In these instances, the person's behavior in a given circumstance is seen as reflecting an overwhelming inner urge which propels the individual's conduct without involving any lucid reflection, control, or existential decision making on the part of the person.

The issue of existential choice, however, may be seen, as other concepts to be discussed in this book, as existing on a gradient or continuum. In some cases, existential choice may represent only a small, but perhaps vital, component of the elements involved in a given action. This will depend critically on the available choices confronting the individual and the person's awareness of those alternatives. Where the individual is able to identify several distinct pathways and is allowed some time to select among them, I believe that existential choice plays a critical role in the person's ultimate determination of what he will do in life. Exactly where on a continuum of reflex, immediate necessity, or unconscious motivation versus existential choice a particular selection may lay is up to the reader to contemplate. This book will incorporate and at times refer to the above noted factors: time, context, path and set, belief, energy, hindsight and foresight, affect, and existential choice as each of these elements relates to the various models and topics discussed.

The Origin of My Concept of Models

When I was in graduate school studying to become a psychologist, one of my professors presented a particular idea for thinking about one aspect of human behavior (Epstein and Fenz, 1962) which had been conceptualized some years before by two psychologists (Dollard and Miller, 1950; Miller, 1944, 1952). Throughout all the years that I have been a psychologist, I have always found this idea an extremely helpful way to think about many different life circumstances. Over the years that I have been a psychologist and have dealt with a wide variety of situations, I have continued to find this notion to be very useful and widely applicable. The concept can be represented pictorially, described verbally, and can be made understandable to most individuals. Along with that idea or concept, there are several others that are straightforward, can be represented in visual form, and which I have always

felt can be very helpful to people in understanding and approaching many aspects of their lives. It is these various "models" which will be presented and described in this book.

The Rationale for This Book

People write books for many seemingly different reasons. Yet in the final analysis, each book is written with the intention of changing the life experience of the book's reader. The current volume is predicated on the view that certain aspects of individuals' behavior may operate outside of their awareness, and this book hopes to bring into conscious appreciation the fact that each person utilizes a number of "models," cognitive structures and strategies, to guide his behavior. Bringing these models into conscious perception as distinct phenomena hopefully will allow the individual to reflect on and to incorporate them more effectively in his adaptation.

Models, as I conceive of them, are abstract representations of some aspect of the world. The phenomenon to which a model refers may be tangible and capable of being perceived through one's senses, or else it may be something that is only apparent as an idea. The phenomena that models reflect may be external or internal to the individual. Models involve an articulation of the fundamental principle or principles which describe something else. Models are structural forms which entail a schematic or skeletal depiction of some phenomenon, whether that item involves a real or theoretical object, process, or an actual behavior.

Insofar as the model is an abstraction, it attempts to simplify and clarify the essence of the phenomenon to which it refers. It allows an individual to perceive and understand more readily the fundamental components of what the model symbolizes. It must be realized that any model may not be a perfect representation of that to which it pertains. Rather, the model involves an effort to make the essential features of a phenomenon distinct and lucid and thereby enable the person to grasp the more complex issue and then apply this understanding more effectively. The purpose of this book is to present and discuss several basic concepts, which may be thought of as models, and to explain how they apply to many different aspects of people's lives and adjustments. If you are a therapist who is reading this book, I hope you will find the ideas in it applicable to the conceptualization and handling of a wide variety of clinical situations and patients you may deal with.

If you are a non-therapist who is reading the book, I hope the volume will be useful to you whether in or outside of a therapy relationship or if you are considering entering therapy. Although modern life has become extraordinarily complex for most people, the ideas in this book are fairly simple.

This simplicity is really one of the things that give these conceptions their power, since they may be thought of as paradigms that are easily recalled, broadly applicable, and that can assist people in thinking about and handling many different facets of their lives. Certainly, these few ideas, all but two presented as essentially visual models, will not solve all of the reader's life challenges. It is my intent that as the reader proceeds through this book, he will become increasingly familiar with these paradigms. Hopefully, the reader will become able to apply them to understanding his own life as well as being able to use them to deal more effectively with the multitude of issues that arise in various aspects of living.

In my introduction to this book, there is another issue to be mentioned. While I was writing this manuscript, a Haitian American colleague of mine presented at a Continuing Education program that I had organized. The topic of her presentation was diversity in mental health and the need for practitioners to be aware of the significance of variation among the populations we deal with. In thinking about the issue of diversity as it might pertain to this book, I realized that the universality of the issues and models I will present accommodates very well the fact that people are extraordinarily different from one another in terms of cultural and ethnic backgrounds, beliefs, and even handicapping conditions. At least it is my view that this book is not differentially written for one or another of the wide array of people who may choose to read it.

The book will involve the presentation of a relatively small number of abstract models which can then be applied to a wide variety of circumstances. I feel that the models I will present are clear, helpful ways to think about oneself and about the diverse things which a person encounters in an effort to adapt to the world and to the changing events that occur in living a life. It may be noted that in some circumstances, one or more models may be applied to the circumstance being considered. At other times, none of the models will assist the individual in conceptualizing or dealing with a situation she or he is confronting. Nonetheless I feel the book can make a valuable contribution to the lives of those who choose to read it and utilize the principles it describes.

The organization of the book will involve a discussion of each of the models in terms of its basic form and structure. Following the discussion of each model, there will be a section devoted to the application of that model to enable the reader to become familiar with the relevance of the model to living one's life. For each model I will attempt to consider the way in which the model is evident external to the individual as well as the way in which the model may appear within the person himself.

CONTENTS

CHANGE: MODELS AND PROCESSES

Chapter 1

THE BASIC MODELS

In writing this book I have given considerable thought as to how I might arrange the material I will present. Since I want the book to provide a number of models to facilitate the reader's ability to understand and organize a variety of aspects of his life, I will begin with a broad framework for my presentation. As I noted above, in this book I will first introduce a number of conceptual models that I have observed during the course of my life as a psychologist and as a person. In the first part of this book I will discuss each of these models and describe the essential elements and characteristics of each one and then describe the way or ways in which the model may be applied.

First, although utilizing one of the constructs before having introduced it, one of the models I will discuss is that of a continuum (or gradient), also often referred to by people as a spectrum. This model (see Figure 6) fundamentally refers to the idea that many things in life are distributed from one extreme to another on a particular dimension. I feel that the continuum (or gradient) is an appropriate overarching model to organize the various items I will discuss which involve phenomena external to the person and phenomena which are internal to the person.

I realize that all of the models I will present actually involve kinds of order or organization imposed on phenomena by a conscious individual, i.e., they all require human cognitive activity and are products of a person's thinking. As such, they can be considered forms of mental models (Green, 2007; Hubel, 2009), which are essentially cognitive representations of some aspect of the world an individual chooses to deal with. Nonetheless, I have thought of these diverse models as applicable to events and phenomena which lie outside the person while they also can pertain to things internal to the individual. The organization of the various models to be discussed is shown in Table 1.

As can be seen in Table 1, most of the models I will describe can relate to events external to the person while some of the models apply more clear-

Table 1.

The Continuum of Models
External to the Individual
General Systems Theory
The Normal or Bell-Shaped Curve
Recurrent Patterns
Gradients and Non-Gradients
Hierarchies and Inverted Hierarchies
– –
Internal to the Individual
General Systems Theory
The Normal or Bell-Shaped Curve
Recurrent Patterns
Gradients and Non-Gradients
Hierarchies and Inverted Hierarchies
Chains and Chaining
Levels of Functioning
Attachment Theory and Internal Working Models
The Transtheoretical or Stages of Change Model

ly and some distinctly to phenomena within the individual. Of course one of the implications of these models and how I conceive of them is that there is a relationship between the way these models appear external to the person and within the individual. This means that the application of these models by the person enables her to understand or deal with a variety of phenomena which occur outside the individual, although the person may in fact participate in the operation of these models. In addition, the models also can be utilized by the individual to consider and deal with phenomena that exist within the person himself.

In my presentation, I will discuss each of the various models: systems, normal or bell-shaped curve, recurrent patterns, gradients/non-gradients, hierarchies and inverted hierarchies, chains and chaining, levels of functioning and internal working models. In my discussion, I will consider the essential meaning or nature of each model and then discuss ways in which the model may pertain to events external to the individual where this is relevant, and

ways the model applies to phenomena within the person where this is appropriate.

I have given considerable thought as to whether or not to include a discussion of networks as a separate model in this book but I have chosen not to. Perhaps the major reason for this is that although networks are in fact a distinct structure, now identified as a ubiquitous entity in contemporary life, they are extremely well known. That is, the concept of networks has become central in present-day thought, activity, and discourse (e.g., Nosko, Wood, and Molima, 2010; Patchin and Hinduja, 2010).

I fully recognize the significance of networks in people's lives and the impact of these interpersonal associations on many aspects of human experience (Blais, Craig, Pepler, and Connolly, 2008; Shen and Williams, 2011). In this volume I will attempt to bring into individuals' awareness a number of models which they ordinarily have not thought about consciously. In contrast to the models I will consider, people are very much aware of their participation in a variety of networks, particularly social or gaming networks. For those readers who would want to explore the nature and significance of networks in their lives, there are numerous books which address this specific topic (e.g., Christakis and Fowler, 2009).

It is conceivable that the concepts described by von Bertallanfy in his systems theory evolved into, and were replaced by, the ideas of network theory; that is, the conception of networks describes the collective organization of a number of elements, whether machines or humans. As pertaining to humans, networks refer to the fact that individuals are involved in relationships with others, whether these are in family systems, political structures, or the various social networks that have become so central in people's lives in today's world. While I have chosen to focus on systems theory as the overarching structure within which people live, networks may be another version of the same principles as those that appear in systems theory.