

How People Change - Five Theories of Influence

1) People change by *the reinforcement or punishment of behavior*. (**Behavior Influence**)

[tool: consequences]

By this way of thinking, people are changed by the stimuli and the responses in their environment. Rewards and negative consequences from others serve to manipulate behavior in such a way that people *change* because people are adaptive; they respond to the pressures in the environment to maximize comfort and minimize discomfort. (A behavioral pleasure principle of some sort)

e.g., learning not to ask parents about adoption

2) People change by *the way in which they think* about their life situations. (**Cognitive Influence**)

[tool: an idea]

In this expanded view of consciousness, it is believed that the method by which people cognate, that is, think about their experience greatly determines the way in which they will *choose* to behave in a given situation. Cognitively reframing thoughts, that is, thinking about life differently, arguing with “stinking thinking”, serves to change perceptions of self and others, and, as a result, changes behavior.

e.g., believing that relinquishment does not matter

3) People change by way of *the dynamics that are part of relationships*. (**Dynamic Influence**)

[tool: a relationship]

By this view, people change as part of the interactions with others with whom there is some form of emotional bond, that is, some sense of significance. Others persons mediate care and facilitate connection in such a way that persons respond by internalizing the values and beliefs of important others. In this view the relationship is transformative because it has the power to create change in the values, beliefs, and behaviors of others.

e.g., feeling valued because we are love by adoptive parents

4) People change by way of *the role they play in their families of origin*. (**Systemic Influence**)

[tool: position in a system]

By this way of thinking, each of us is formed and influenced by the system[s] in which we exist. In this systemic interaction, persons are given certain assigned roles to play for the purposes of the family/system. In contrast to cause-effect or multi-causal theory, this view sees all parts of a system forming and influencing each other.

e.g., being a replacement child in an adoptive family

5) People change by way of *unexplained influence*.

(**Supernatural?? Influence**)

[tool: a miracle]

By this view, people change because of reasons and influences that are not known or understood. Human resiliency is at times beyond scientific explanation.

e.g., truly forgiving the injury of parent loss

There are Different Kinds of People!!

... Living in differing degrees in the Image of God.....

There are people who know their feelings, who have “struggles of the heart”. These kinds of people know inner conflict. They struggle with painful emotions like
Sadness- experiencing the importance of a loss
Anger- experiencing the importance of self esteem
Guilt- experiencing the importance of change
Shame- is experiencing the importance of being someone who matters
Fear- experiencing the importance of the future **[normal neurotic]**

They find relief in a lament, that is, mourning the losses of life, and in being understood and in forgiving and being forgiven. Such persons are able to cope with deeply felt suffering and "work things through" in a way that is restorative.

(A dynamic-influence method of change is indicated)

e.g., most of us

There are people who do not know their feelings, who are disconnected from their hearts in such a way that they struggle to understand themselves as well as the feelings of others. They may be unaware of inner conflict and also unaware of how others experience them. They do often struggle with anger as a basic emotion.

[traits of disorder of character]

They find help in their minds, learning how to *think* differently about their life experience. These people respond to ideas and perspectives that make life work better.

(A cognitive-influence method of change is indicated)

e.g., m m

There are people who have no conscience, a certain “hardness of heart” that disallows connection to other people. There is little eye contact as well as a variety of defenses against attachment to parents and others. They are primarily concerned with survival at any cost to others. These kinds of people exist on a continuum of un-attachment.

e.g., LA

[disorders of character]

These people only respond to rewards and consequences in their environment. Positive reinforcement of good behavior and punishment for bad behavior are necessary. External controls must be imposed which create order and a sense of security.

(A behavior-influence method of change is indicated)

There are people who have thought disorders like Schizophrenia who cannot respond to personal warmth and care without getting worse. Here distance is the kind empathic response whereby boundaries are clear allowing for a mentally ill person to feel safer.

(A behavior-influence method of care is necessary)

[disorders of thinking]

e.g., CS

People may experience the same moment in time in very different ways!

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