



Development of the Ideas

For many years, I used the term Control Theory for what I am now calling Choice Theory. Even though I had always believed that we are intrinsically motivated, I learned from an exponent, William Powers, a theoretician, that there was an actual theory congruent with what I believed. In order for Control Theory to work for me as a practicing psychiatrist, psychotherapist and educator, I made changes in what Powers taught me. These changes are explained below.

First, I figured out what I believe is the fundamental human motivation: The basic needs. Then, to help counselors avoid focusing on what clients cannot directly change, which is how they feel, I created the useful concept of **Total Behavior**. This concept explains that all we choose are our actions and thoughts. Feelings and physiology are always a result of our actions and thoughts. To bring Choice Theory more in line with W. Edwards Deming, I then added the much more specific concept of the **Quality World** to replace Powers' less specific Internal World. Very early, I deleted what, from Powers' standpoint, was his major contribution, the levels of perception. Instead, I replaced them with the much more usable perceptual filters – the **Total Knowledge Filter** and the **Valuing Filter**. From what passes through these filters I created a new version of the **Perceived World** that puts a value on all that we perceive. I replaced perceptual error with **frustration**, in an effort to make that concept coincide with everyday usage. Finally, I replaced the concept of reorganization with **creativity**, because reorganization implies changing around what is already there. Creativity often means changing what is there to something totally new and more effective; for example, that the earth is round, not flat.

Considering that I have always taught that **we choose all we do**, I decided in the spring of 1996 to call what I teach, **Choice Theory**. I changed the name because of my significant alterations to the original Control Theory. In my view, people often misinterpreted the concept of control.