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The Deeper Magic

I was presenting Choice Theory concepts at a recent workshop when an attendee pointed out that the word *theory* implied that what we were considering was not a law or a fact, so maybe he should be a bit skeptical. In spite of my firm belief in the ideas of Choice Theory, I answered, “Yes, I think you should be skeptical in the same way the Bereans [Acts 17:12] of the New Testament were skeptical. They tested what they were told and considered the evidence for themselves. We must be no less vigilant.”



Jim Roy

Dr. William Glasser created a counseling approach known as Reality Therapy in 1965. Many have acknowledged its effectiveness (it continues to be used in psychiatric treatment centers around the world) even though Glasser himself felt that it lacked a theoretical foundation. In 1976, Glasser began talking with William Powers, author of *Behavior: The Control of Perception* (1973). Out of their collaboration came Control Theory, which Glasser felt explained the foundation for Reality Therapy. Over the years, Glasser has continued to refine his ideas. This development, combined with his increasing discomfort with the label Control Theory, led to his writing *Choice Theory* in 1998, which he feels is the clearest explanation so far of his view of human motivation and behavior. Glasser is a board-certified psychiatrist and an agnostic, a secular thinker in what for him is a totally secular world. Yet his Choice Theory offers a compelling and compassionate framework around which Christians can shape their lives. His explanation of how people can be happy and get along well with others is appealing to more and more people.

Comparing Glasser’s ideas to Scripture and the work of Ellen White led to my writing *Soul Shapers: A Better Plan for Parents and Educators* (Review and Herald, 2005). I am convinced that Glasser’s ideas are more significant than even he understands and that these ideas tap into what C. S. Lewis refers to in *The Chronicles of Narnia* as “the deeper magic.” To me, the deeper magic is the realm of the truth of God’s kingdom, truth that at times seems forgotten or ignored. Using appropriate skepticism, you can draw your own conclusion.

Certainly, Choice Theory helps us to be more effective educators in tangible ways, which is good, since principals and teachers are always on the lookout for useful strategies. But at its core, Choice Theory begins with a private journey, rather than a public one. As we begin to understand Choice Theory and apply it in our lives, it makes a positive impact on our public experience as well. As we become more mentally healthy and happy, we are better able to get along with the important people in our lives, including our students.

I want to thank the authors who contributed to this edition of the JOURNAL. They are busy educators, yet they took the time to share the concepts that have made such a difference to them. Since beginning this project, I have met other Adventist educators who are successfully implementing Choice Theory in their classrooms and who should be writing articles for this journal, too, but we will have to hear from them in later editions. I look forward to that.

Choose to have a good school year!

Jim Roy, the Coordinator for this special issue on *Quality Schools*, is Chair of the Education Department at Pacific Union College in Angwin, California, and the author of *Soul Shapers* (Review and Herald, 2005), which grew out of his doctoral research on the ideas of William Glasser. The editorial staff of the JOURNAL express heartfelt appreciation for Jim’s enthusiasm, hard work, and assistance in the planning and production of the issue, which occurred while he was preparing to defend his dissertation.