



## 2. Strategies to fulfil Basic Needs

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# “The only person whose behaviour you can control is yourself.”

*William Glasser*

## 1 Introduction

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The only person whose behaviour you can control is yourself.

- *What do you think? Is this statement true?*

Of course, this can only be true from a certain age, because with children and adolescents it would be really negligent if the parents or guardians did not intervene in a caring and controlling way.

But - what do you think - at what age can young people take over this control themselves? Is there a certain age; can you say, for example, from the age of 16, or is it a process in which young people can take more responsibility for themselves and their actions step by step? How do you recognise that a person is ready for this?

Don't we all try to influence or control others all the time? You probably also have this experience. Let's take a closer look at this behaviour:

Think of a situation in which someone else tried to control your behaviour (e.g., when a friend of you wanted something from you that you didn't want).



■ *How did that feel?*

■ *How did that feel?*

1. *Did you do what the other person wanted you to do?*
2. *Did you not do it?*
3. *Did you only pretend to do it?*

You see, basically you are the only person who decides how you behave. - And it is the same with others.

Now think of a situation in which you have tried to influence another person to do what you want him or her to do.



■ *Why did you do that?*

When you understand that the cause of your behaviour was an unmet or compromised basic need, you can also better understand why you behaved the way you did.

**Security and survival**

**Have you been afraid for your security or feared losing something important?**

**Power and influence**

**Did you feel oppressed and wanted to assert something that was important to you?**

**Fun**

**Did you feel too restricted?**

## Love and belonging

Did you feel abandoned, rejected or misunderstood by the other person?

## Freedom

Did you feel controlled by the other person?

Now you probably also realise that it is not about condemning a behaviour, but about understanding better why we behave this way or that way.

### 1.1 Understanding instead of controlling



- *So, if you know that you can only control your own behaviour, does that now make a difference in your behaviour towards others?*

If the other person always has at least the three options (consent, deny or pretend), how is it most likely that they will consent?



- *How can you make it as easy as possible for the other person to give consent?*

**It is important that the other person first understands that it is about a basic need of yours. As you know, these basic needs are present in everyone and therefore the other person will understand well what is not right for you. In Part 1 of this booklet, you will find a description of how you can perceive and express your needs.**

## 2 What we do to fulfil our needs

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In this chapter we want to explore the question of what ways and means there are to fulfil a basic need. You will see that there are, of course, countless ways, but that not all ways or behaviours are always good and useful for everyone involved.

### 2.1 How do we behave when basic needs are threatened or unfulfilled?

When a basic need is threatened or unfulfilled, it does not suit us. Everyone wants to change this unpleasant situation, and we do this by behaving this way or that. Exactly how we behave depends on our personality and various additional influencing factors:

### 2.2 Factors influencing our behaviour

How we behave in a certain situation depends mainly on these influencing factors:

- *Importance*

How important is it to you that the need is met, how important is it to you that you feel good again?

- *Chance of success*

Can you have any influence through action and how big can the success be?

Sometimes you can only accept the situation, even if it does not suit you.

- *Your values*

What is really important to you in your life? Typical values are, for example, loyalty, friendship, justice, honesty, etc.

- *Your previous experiences*

How do the people closest to you behave? How often have you experienced similar situations? Are you open to new experiences?

- *Your personality*

Depending on whether you are a quiet or an active person, outgoing or withdrawn, you will behave differently.

### ■ *Behaviours you know and can use*

The more possibilities you know and have at your disposal, the better! You can think of it like a toolbox: The more different tools a craftsman or craftswoman has at his or her disposal and knows how to use them, the more things can be done with them.

## 2.3 Different ways of behaving in a situation

As different as we are as human beings, the behaviours of how we react to a certain situation can also be different.

*Let's imagine the following situation:*

Paul, Elias and Sandra are scouts. Today is group evening and today they wanted to show their photo show from the last camp, for which their team has put in a lot of work. They sat together for many hours and selected the photos, decided on the order and chose the background music. Now the cooking, which was also on the programme today, has taken so long that the photo show is not going to last and they would have to extend it by about 20 minutes. Now they are discussing in the group how they want to deal with the situation. Frida wants to leave on time and says that she now has more important things to do than watch a photo show. The group leaders therefore decide to postpone the photo show until the next group evening.



**Sandra** gets loud. She confronts Frida about what could possibly be important

**Paul** suppresses his rising anger. He feels himself trembling inside, but says nothing.



**Elias** expresses his disappointment and explains to the others how important it is to him that the photo show is shown and that they made it for the others to remember.

Characters: Maria Riga, CC-BY-ND-NC



- *How would you act?*

Before we look at how the story continues, let's briefly summarise that we all have the same basic needs, but we react and behave differently when one or more of the basic needs are unfulfilled or threatened. Every behaviour of one person triggers new behaviour in the others. In this way, one can say that every behaviour has consequences.



### 3 Our behaviour always has consequences

---

Now let's look at the consequences of the different behaviours of Sandra, Paul and Elias in our example:

#### Sandra's story:



*Sandra gives vent to her anger by becoming loud. She asks Frida what the important thing is that she has to leave on time. Otherwise, Frida wouldn't be so strict about punctuality.*

*Now Frida feels attacked and controlled by Sandra. Why should Sandra care about her private affairs? Besides, she doesn't want to tell everyone that she had a discussion with her mother because of her unpunctuality and promised to be home on time this time.*

*For now, this story would end like this: An argument ensues between the two girls, which the leaders break up after some time and close the group evening. Most go home feeling uneasy as their needs for fun, influence and belonging have not been heard.*

#### Paul's story:



*Paul swallows his anger. He thinks to himself that there is no point in saying anything, because either someone will then feel attacked or they won't hear his opinion at all. So he thinks it's better not to say anything at all.*

*This story could end like this for now: The group evening ends on time. Most people are left with an uneasy feeling. The group that prepared the photo show goes home pissed off.*

*At home, Paul defrosts a pizza, then takes a bar of chocolate and a packet of crisps to his room and watches an action film. But his thoughts still revolve around the group evening and what he should have said. He thinks about whether he should go to the group evening again.*

## Elias' story



*Elias expresses his disappointment and explains to the others how important it is to him that the photo show is shown and that they also made it for the others to remember.*

*This story would end like this for now: The others listen to Elias and many tell him that they were also looking forward to the photo show. Now the group decides that those who want to take the time can stay longer today and see the photo show.*

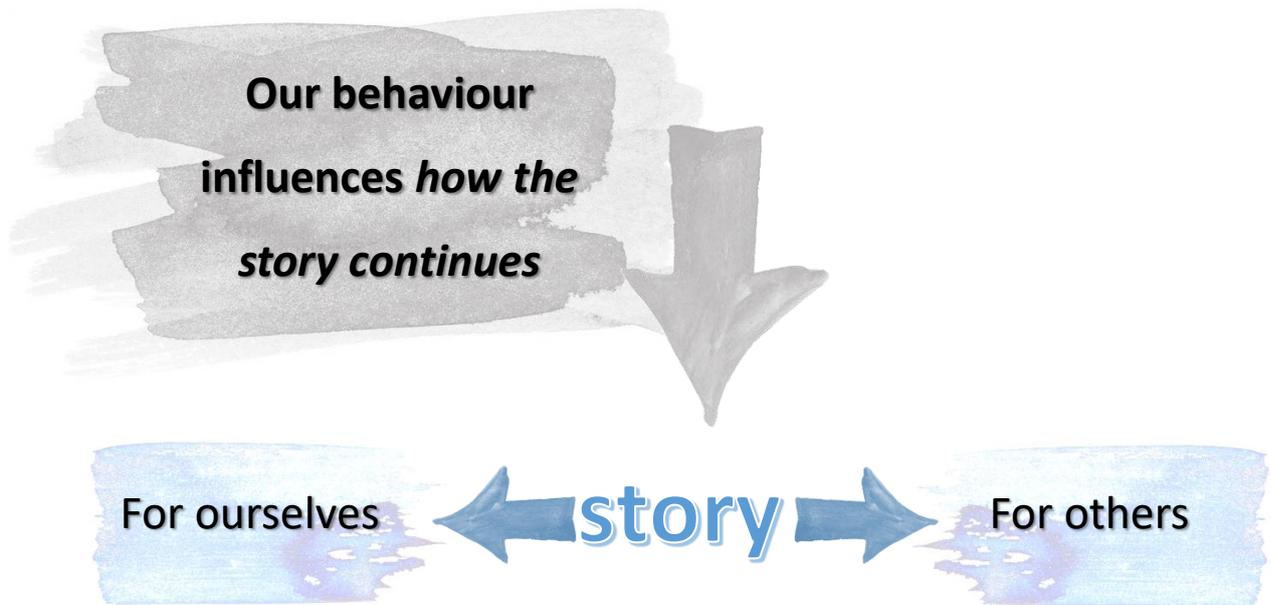
*In addition, the photo show will be shown to everyone, including parents and other scout groups at the next larger meeting.*

**Have you also observed that every behaviour always has consequences? If this is clear to you, you will also realise that you can always influence the effects with your behaviour.**

### 3.1 Positive and negative effects on you and the others

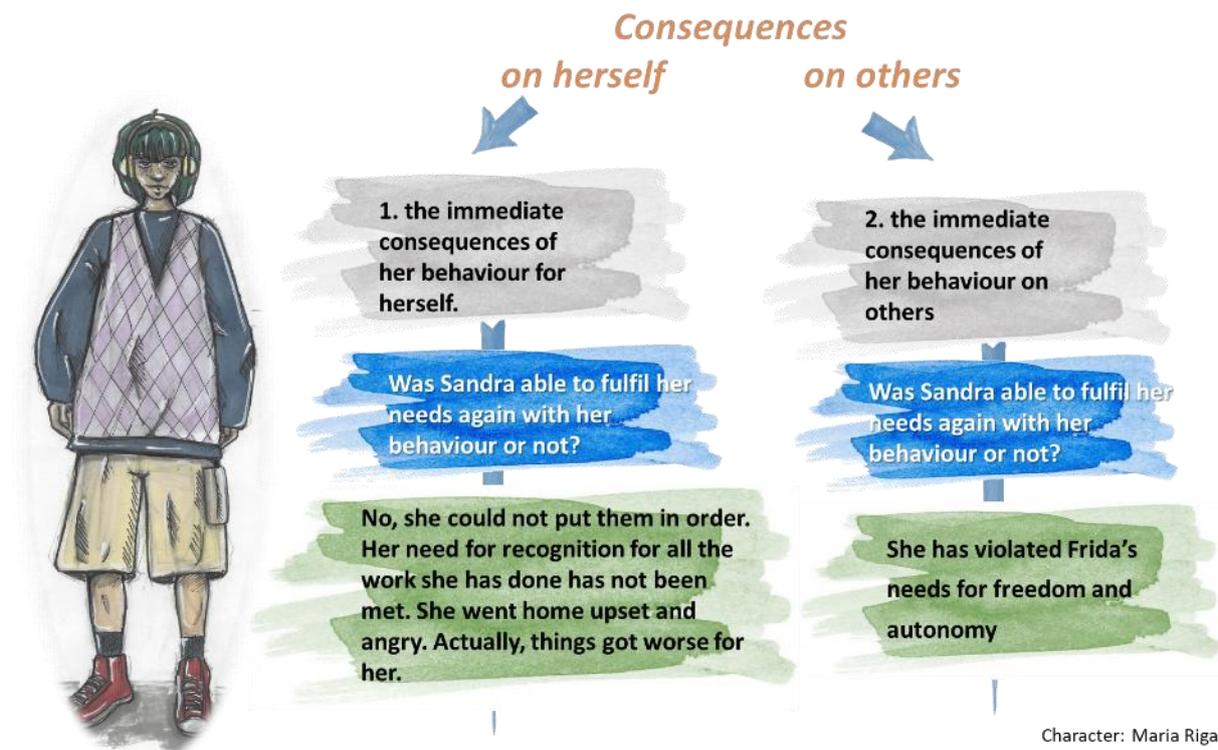
Take the example story from earlier again: the same initial situation can continue quite differently, depending on how the individual persons behave.

We all influence with our behaviour whether the story continues positively or negatively.

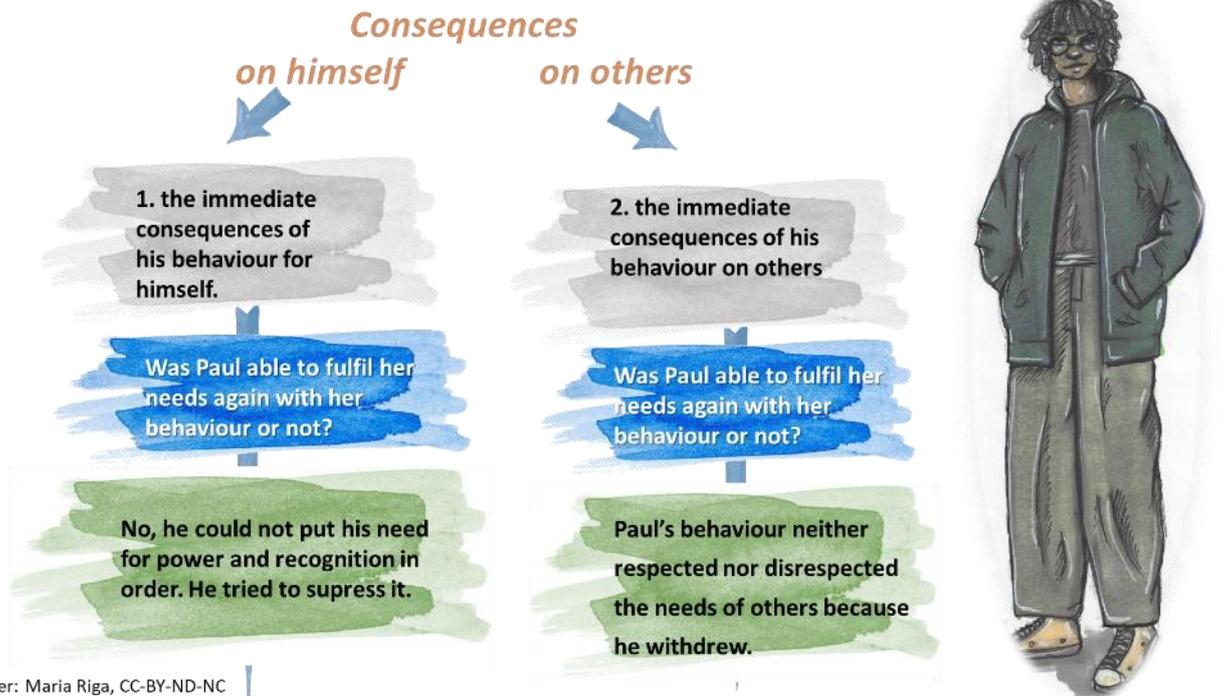


Maybe this sounds a bit complicated now, but if we take the example from before again, it will certainly become clearer for you:

**Example Sandra:**

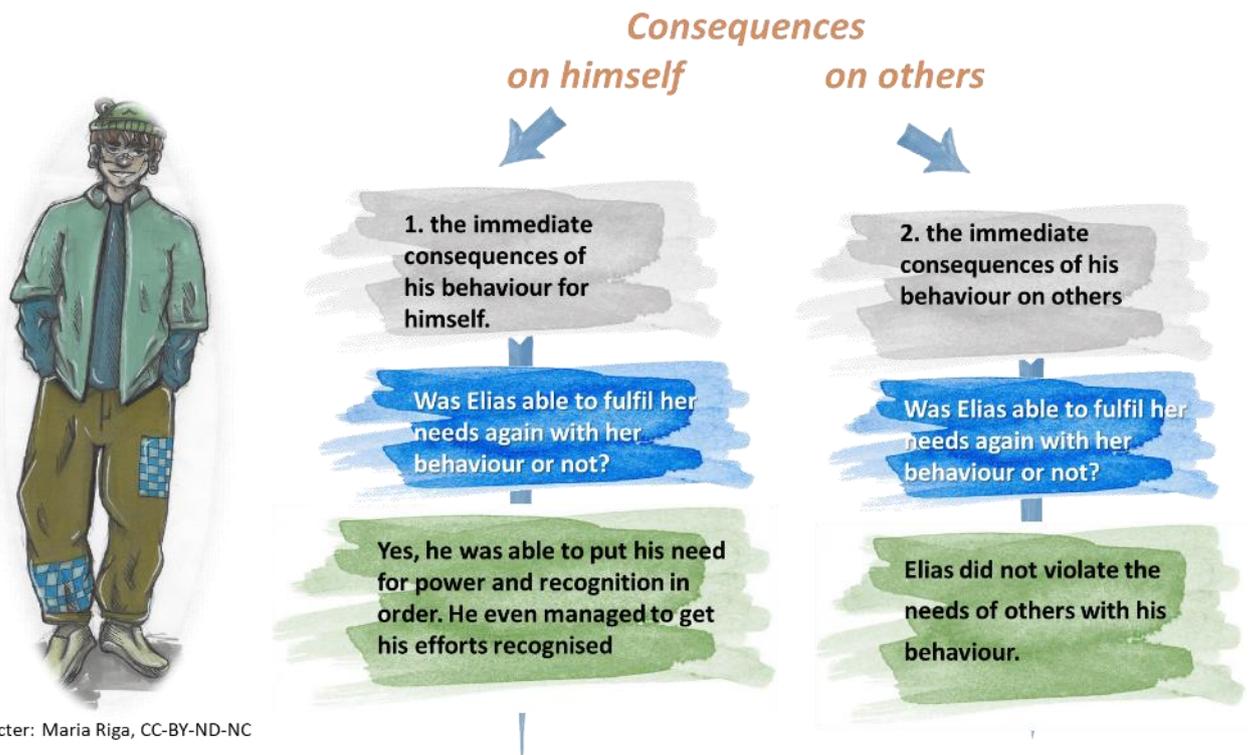


**Example Paul:**



Character: Maria Riga, CC-BY-ND-NC

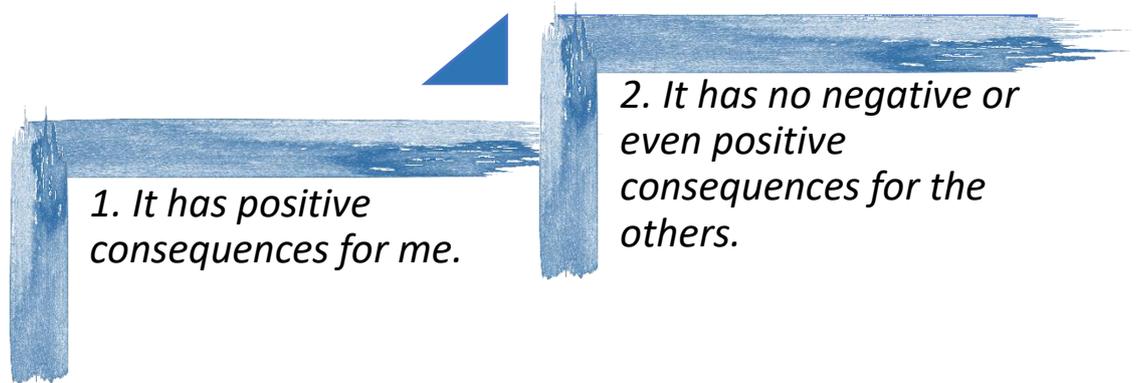
**Example Elias:**



Character: Maria Riga, CC-BY-ND-NC

### 3.2 The big difference

So, actually, it's quite clear! You only have to think about two things before you act:



***Now you can start!***

## 4 Finding the right strategy - actions that lead to success

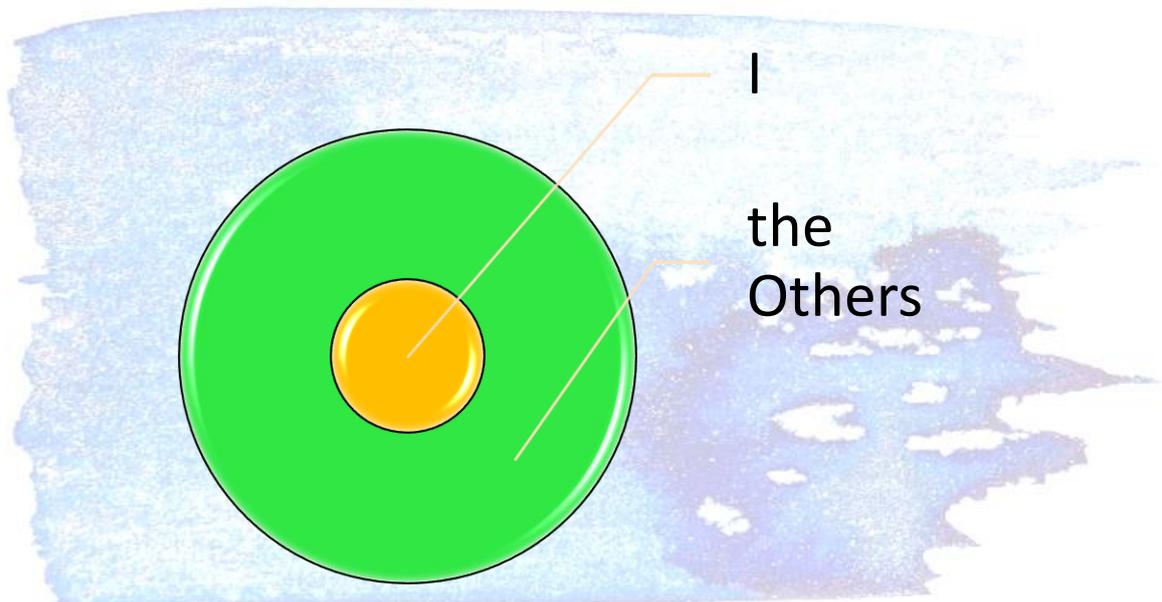
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So, in essence, it's about considering if what you're doing right now is really bringing you the success you want. Does it really help to fulfil your basic needs? So, is this behaviour good for you?



And if you have followed the stories of the three scouts, you have also noticed that all three stories were not only about the so-called main characters, but that it was also important to see whether a certain behaviour or strategy is also good for other people involved.

Therefore, it is just as important to include the others in your considerations. "If I behave in a certain way, is it also good for the other people involved? Are their basic needs met, or do I risk hurting them with what I do or say by disregarding their needs?"



And this brings us to a very crucial point. You can only really determine whether you have chosen a really good strategy when you have checked whether what you do or say also includes the others and respects their basic needs.

**Is it good for me and my basic needs what I am doing?**

**Does it also respect the others who are involved when I behave in this way?**

## 5 Create positive consequences

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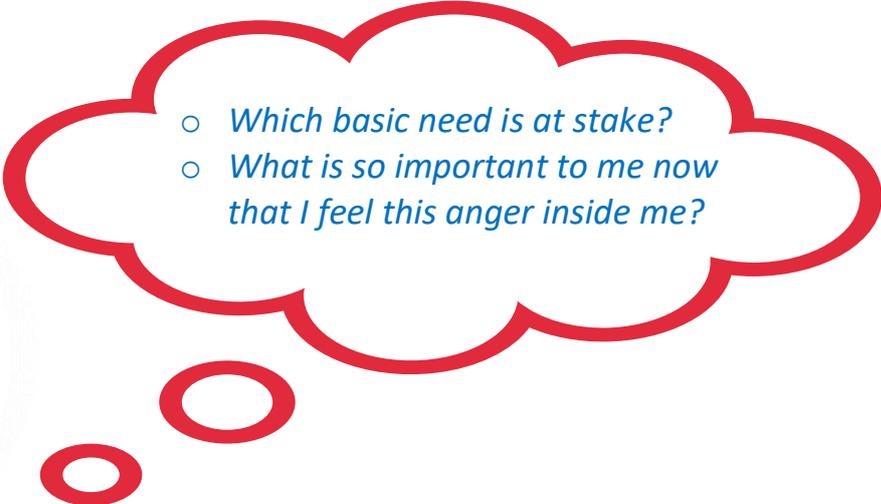
After Elias has managed this so well, let's take him as an example:

Elias also notices the rising anger in himself. But somehow, unlike Sandra and Elias, he manages to make the best of the situation. And not only for himself, but also in such a way that the others involved feel noticed and also understand Elias' needs. This is called a win-win situation, i.e., a solution where both sides win and there are no losers.

*What does constructive behaviour mean?*

*What does Elias do exactly?*



- 
- Which basic need is at stake?
  - What is so important to me now that I feel this anger inside me?

He recognises the emerging feeling of anger as a sign that at least one of his basic needs is not being met and asks himself which one it is mainly in this case (because sometimes more basic needs than one are involved). He asks himself:

He knows that all people have the same basic needs. So, he has a good chance that the others will understand him if he first expresses which of his basic needs is in distress. Once the others have understood this, they are much more likely to engage in conversation with him and feel invited to express their needs as well. On this basis, they can then consider together how they want to proceed.

## 6 Our actions in the now also affect the future

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We have now dealt in great detail with the distinction between constructive and non-constructive behaviour: we think of the direct consequences. Now we want to go one step further. Aren't there also longer-term consequences? - Consequences of our actions that only become visible later?

Do you remember Sandra, Paul and Elias and their group meeting? Let's look into the future now:

Imagine how the next group meeting could go.



**Sandra's story – continued**

*Sandra and Frida are not on good terms with each other because their dispute from the last group evening has not yet been resolved. In the meantime, Sandra has posted in her Tik Tok group what she thinks about Frida. As a result, Frida and her friend Carla have left the group and some others have made more or less helpful comments.*

*The thick air at the group evening is felt by everyone. Sandra has been thinking for some time whether she should come at all, but since the photo show has been postponed to this group evening, she wants to be there. Frida also thought about whether she should come at all, but her friend Carla encouraged her not to give in. The group leaders have discussed the situation with each other beforehand and decided that a discussion is necessary, because otherwise there will be no end to the spoken and unspoken arguments. After all, they want everyone to feel good and enjoy coming to the group evening. We'll get to how they do that below.*

**Paul's story - continued:**

*Paul stays at home. He defrosts a pizza, then takes a big bar of chocolate and a packet of crisps to his room and watches an action film. But his thoughts turn to the group evening and what they are doing now. Somehow, he feels lonely. Should he go again next time - what will he say when someone asks him why he wasn't there this time?*

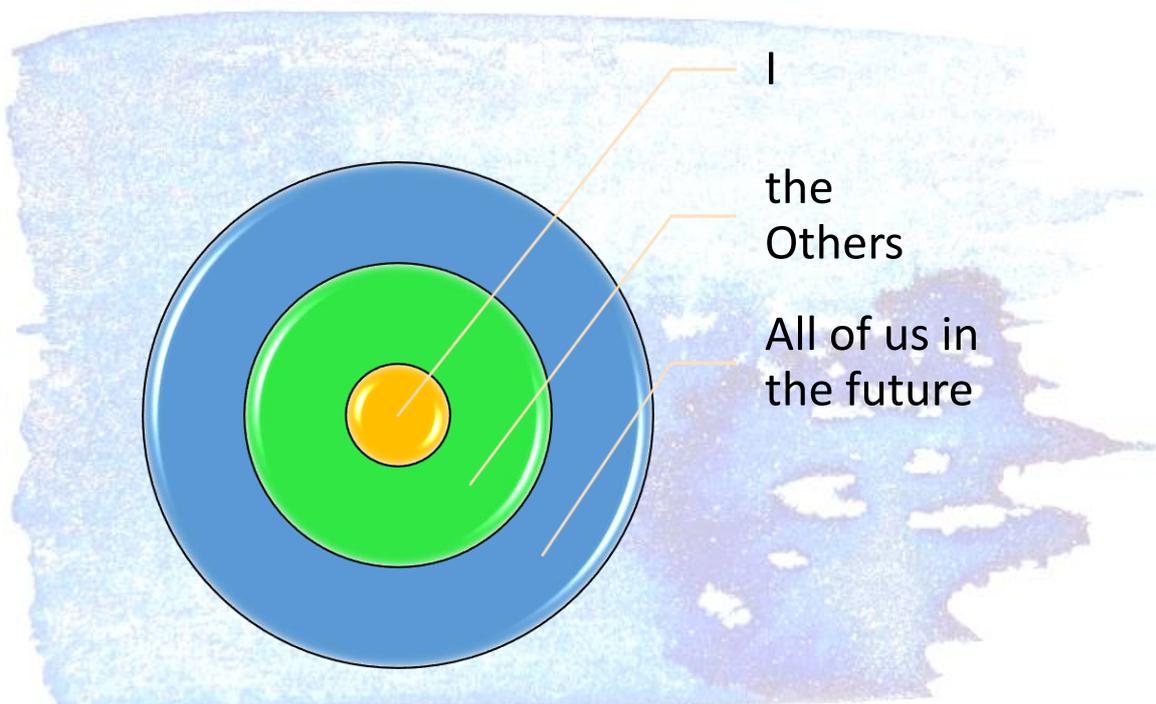
**Elias' story –continued:**



*Elias really succeeded last time in perceiving and expressing his threatened needs. In this way, he not only took good care of himself, but he also managed to bring about a good solution for the others. So, this group evening goes in such a way that everyone has fun, feels safe, free and empowered and everyone feels good in the group. Sandra, Paul and Elias get a lot of appreciation from the others for the great photo show and together they plan a supporting programme for the next bigger event. With the revenue from the buffet, they could then perhaps finance the next joint excursion.*

**6.1 Consequences of our behaviour for the future and the community.**

It's also really important to think about how what you say and do will affect the future and the community.



Take Paul again, for example: How will he be in half a year if he continues with his strategy?  
How will he be in a year?

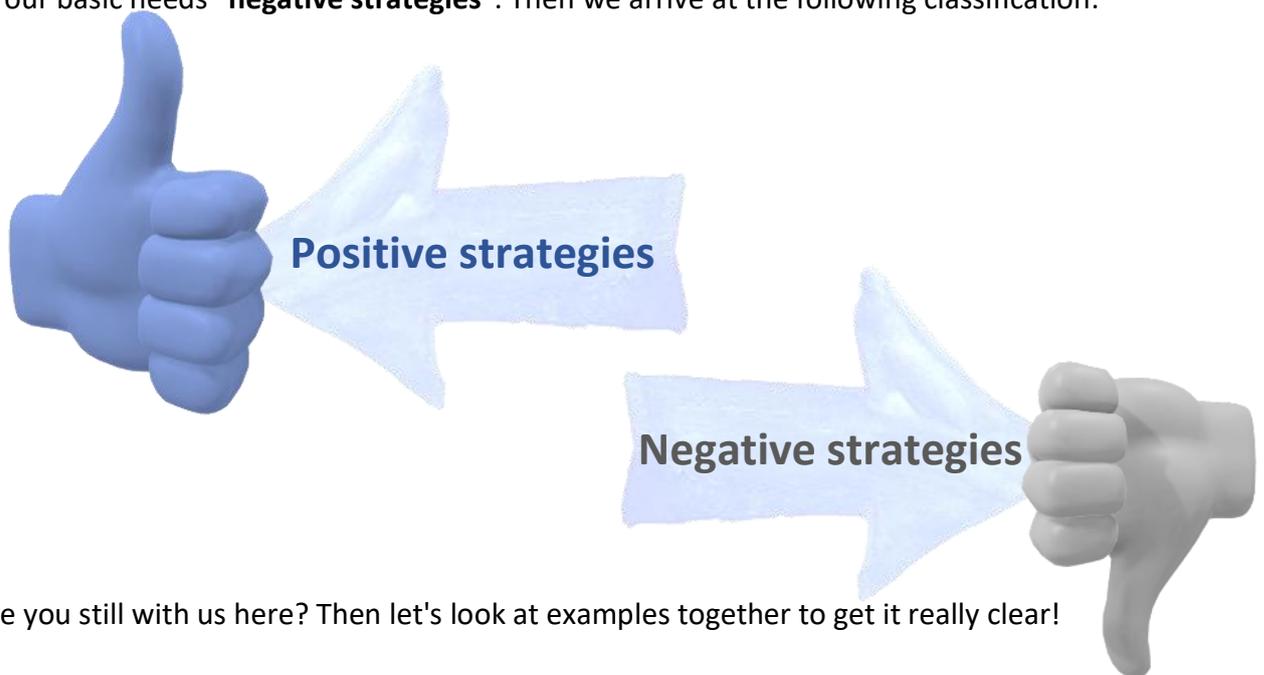
Elias' behaviour has also had a direct impact on the future: there will be an event that will promote the cohesion of the group and that everyone is already looking forward to.

## 7 Use helpful strategies

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We are starting from the assumption that there are strategies that are helpful to you because they help you to fulfil one or more basic needs and those that, on the contrary, tend to block or prevent the fulfilment of your needs. And the bad thing about the latter strategies is that we humans use them to get one or even more of our basic needs met - and yet they usually have exactly the opposite effect. That's a true pity, isn't it?

Let's call the ones that serve us "**positive strategies**" and the others that thwart the fulfilment of our basic needs "**negative strategies**". Then we arrive at the following classification:



Are you still with us here? Then let's look at examples together to get it really clear!

### 7.1 Positive and negative strategies for fulfilling needs

For each basic need, let's give an example that shows you what is meant by positive and negative strategies:

## Love and Belonging



### positive strategy

Johanna calls her friend Petra, whom she hasn't seen for a long time. The two spontaneously arrange to meet and spend a lively evening together in a café.

### negative strategy

Johanna is totally disappointed because she was not invited to the party by her friend. Instead of having a nice evening anyway, she posts some nonsense about her friend on her social networks



## Power



### positive strategy

Alex seeks a conversation with John. He tells him that he would also have had something to say and tells John his point of view in the discussion. John takes it upon himself to pay more attention to others in discussions.

### negative strategy

Alex is totally pissed off because he hardly got a word in edgewise in a discussion. Now he tries to turn others against John, who stood out in the discussion, by talking bad about him.



## Freedom



### positive strategy

Maria notices that her friend Anja is doing very badly at the moment. She takes this into consideration and makes sure that she does not hurt her when she has an honest conversation with her.

### negative strategy

Maria doesn't mince her words. She gives her best friend a piece of her mind and doesn't even notice that she is in a terrible state at the moment and actually needs Maria's encouragement.



## Fun



### positive strategy

Roman is really frustrated because of the bad grade. He resolves to be better prepared next time and downloads a funny film to watch with his friends.

### negative strategy

Roman is really very frustrated because of a bad school grade. When he and his friends see an orphaned bicycle by the bicycle racks at the station in the evening, he and his friends kick it until it is completely bent, just for fun.



## Security and Survival



### positive strategy

Gerald pays more attention to signs that indicate he can trust his friends and gradually begins to feel a little more secure.

### negative strategy

Gerald is really a control freak. Afraid that someone might betray him or talk bad about him, he even starts spying on his friends.



## 7.2 Examples of constructive and non-constructive behaviour

In this table you will find examples of positive and negative behaviour to fulfil a need. In the column to the right of the basic need are the feelings that you may experience when the basic need is not met. If you have good access to yourself, you can distinguish between these different feelings and they will give you an indication of which of your needs you should take care of now.

In the two columns next to them you will find examples of constructive and non-constructive behaviour to fulfil the respective need. It can always happen that one or the other behaviour is based on a different need than the one indicated in the table. Please observe this yourself and form your own opinion about what is true for you.

## Security and Survival

### You feel

threatened, full of worries, full of fear, restless, hungry, thirsty, you are cold, you sweat

#### Constructive Behaviour

- *Caring for yourself and others*
- *Building trust*
- *Gratitude*
- *Being in good contact with one's own needs*

#### Non Constructive Behaviour

- *Stealing*
- *threatening others*
- *Accumulating*
- *Excessive control*
- *"Hard shell, soft core"*
- *Being constantly on the run*
- *Fight mode (you or me)*

## Freedom

### You feel

Constricted, annoyed, full of protest, full of rage, aggressive, resigned

#### Constructive Behaviour

- *Be well informed*
- *Ask questions if you do not know what to do*
- *Search for a good solution*
- *Explain the situation to yourself*
- *Think optimistically*
- *Acting responsibly*
- *Being reliable*

#### Non Constructive Behaviour

- *Constrict others*
- *Immoderateness*
- *thinking pessimistically*
- *disregarding the limits of others*
- *being unreliable*
- *taking something away from others*

## Love and Belonging

### You feel

Sad, lonely, senseless, at the mercy of

#### Constructive Behaviour

- *Feeling connected with others*
- *Responding to others*
- *To please someone*
- *Empathising (trying to understand the other person)*
- *doing something together*
- *looking out for the community*
- *contributing to the community*

#### Non Constructive Behaviour

- *Abandoning others,*
- *exclude others*
- *Intentionally hurting someone*
- *Avoiding conversations*
- *Talking badly about someone*
- *Putting one's own needs aside in order to belong*
- *Swallowing one's own opinion in order to belong*



## Power

### You feel

Envious, incapable, shy, full of shame, overlooked, ignored

#### Constructive Behaviour

- *Wanting to make a difference,*
- *Help others*
- *to contribute oneself and one's ideas*
- *to stand up for something*
- *Supporting others*
- *praise*
- *Accepting praise*
- *Being proud*

#### Non Constructive Behaviour

- *Sabotage others, counter-subtlety*
- *Shame others*
- *Blackmail others*
- *dominate others*
- *think of themselves as "something better"*
- *devalue others*
- *discriminate against others*
- *accuse others*
- *Oppress others*
- *exploit others*

## Fun

### You feel

Nervous, tense, listless, bored, blocked

#### Constructive Behaviour

- *Unbiased observation*
- *Looking at things without judgement*
- *Astonishment*
- *New learning*
- *Co-creative design Sticking to a goal*

#### Non Constructive Behaviour

- *annoy others*
- *making fun of others*
- *sarcasm*
- *cynicism*
- *being made fun of*
- *television addiction*
- *Gambling addiction*

Do you remember the statement at the beginning of this chapter?

# The only person whose behaviour you can control is yourself.

- *Do you now realise how far this meaning reaches and how much freedom and responsibility arise for you at the same time?*

Depending on which strategy you choose, you will steer events in a different direction.



## 8 Practice good habits

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Now there is a small catch, which you have probably observed in yourself:

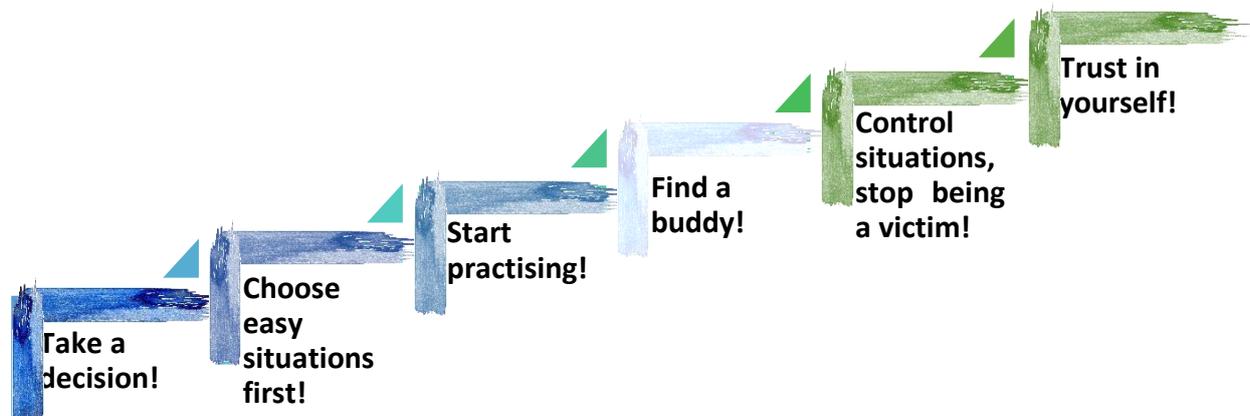
It is often difficult to think clearly when you feel a need that has been ignored. It's as if the agitated feelings cloud the connection between you and your head and you then somehow act almost automatically without thinking of the consequences beforehand.

That's how it is with all people, and many researchers have studied why it is like that. Precisely because it would be so much better if people would switch on their heart and mind before they act.

The most important finding for us from this research is:

**We can train our behaviour so that we can act carefully in an emergency.**

*This is how it works:*



### 1) Take a decision!

At the beginning, as always, there is a decision. It could be something like this:

"I decide that from now on I will perceive my needs and fulfil them in a positive way."

### 2) Choose easy situations first!

Start with the easier situations, be patient with yourself and don't expect yourself to become a master overnight.

### 3) Start practising!

What do you think - you know yourself best - what simple situations could you use to start practising?

1) ...

2) ...

3) ...

#### **Examples:**



Carina has problems with her little sister Ida. She is really annoying at the moment and it often happens that Carina puts Ida down in order to have some peace. Afterwards she feels sorry for her. Actually, she doesn't want to be like that, Ida loves her very much and she is a great role model for her.

Carina has taken step 1) and decided to become more aware of her needs and to meet them in a positive way.

The next time Ida started to get on her nerves again, Carina took a breath and felt that it was not convenient for her if Ida just came into her room and wanted something from her, not

even noticing that she was busy. Her needs for power (Ida does not respect that Carina is busy) and freedom (Carina can feel constrained by Ida's behaviour) are thus affected.

Surprised, Carina realises that it's actually not that difficult! She is the big one and she can explain to little Ida calmly and understandably that she is working now and doesn't want to be disturbed. Ida can understand that, because she also doesn't want to be disturbed when she is fully absorbed in playing. Carina offers Ida to come over to her when she has finished working.

Carina is proud of herself for handling the situation so well. She realises that the realisation that she is the big one helps her to feel up to the situation and not to slip into the victim attitude.



Paul (you already know him from the example earlier) has problems expressing his needs and feelings. He has also dealt with this book and made the decision that he does not want to suppress his needs so often any more.

He was not present at the next group evening and after the film his thoughts were still about the last scout evening. So he took the time and felt again which of his needs were affected.

He came to the conclusion that he had two basic needs in conflict. On the one hand, he felt left out because the others did not appreciate his commitment (power). On the other hand, he was afraid of being left alone (belonging) if he spoke his mind.

However, the fear of standing alone was greater and therefore he swallowed his anger. He then did the same with the pizza, chocolate and crisps, although he had long since sensed that none of this was good for him.

Paul is surprised to see how logically everything is connected. He even secretly has to laugh a little at himself, as he is now sitting at home alone, although he actually wants to belong! He reaches for his mobile phone and calls Elias. He asks him how the group evening was today and also talks to him openly about the realisation he has just had. Elias thinks with him about how he could have told the group how he felt last week.

From now on, Paul wants to approach the others more honestly and look for the signs where he can feel welcome and accepted. Elias is a really good role model for him and he is happy to have such a friend.

#### **4) Find a buddy!**

Do what Paul did and find a friend to share your reflections with. It is important that you both trust each other so that you can be open with each other. Together you can share your experiences and think about what needs are affected. You can also give each other feedback and encourage each other to try something new. How do you think this could strengthen your friendship!

#### **5) Control situations, stop being a victim!**

You will see that you will understand yourself and your needs better and better. You will be more in control of situations where you used to feel like a victim and this will encourage you to move on.

## 6) Trust in yourself!

The more positive experiences you have with your strategies, the better your basic needs will be met. You will be able to trust more and more in yourself and experience that you have a positive influence on your life and on the people around you.

# 9 How to continue

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If you are now curious and want to continue working with the 5 Basic Needs, check out the other materials on the topic:

### **Human Needs and Strategies - Booklet 3 - Crucial Steps in history on our way to democracy**

History in a different way: Historians from Austria, Greece, France and Sweden have intensively dealt with the topic of what we can learn from the history of Europe. They have described exciting episodes from the perspective of the 5 basic needs. You have the chance to slip into the roles of the people involved and experience the scene from their point of view!

### **Short Movies**

Take a look at the short movies that pupils from Austria, Greece and La Reunion have written and produced themselves.

*The source of the pictures is Pixabay. [Pixabay Licence](#). Check the links in the pptx versions.*