

Bumping it up!

Moving from a Human Feeling to a Human Being

By Glenn Smith

How we live our lives day to day determines who we are. What we know about Perceptual Control Theory is that we can input information from various levels of perception. When we look at the world, we see a lot of things. We see different colors, shapes, and sizes. We see things moving about, some on their own and some needing our assistance. We give names to what we see and start to define the relationships that all we experience have with each other. In some cases we give what we name and experience a value. We call it good or bad, pretty or ugly, helpful or not helpful. Through this, we experience feelings. These feelings are resultant from how we perceive our experience while comparing it to how we believe it should go. These feelings are information telling us if we are close to getting what we want out of life.

As a younger man, I often let how I felt determine what I did next. If I felt frustrated, I often directed that frustration towards those I was around. If I woke up feeling fortunate, I would in turn show this good nature towards whoever crossed my path. My first thought when I awoke was "How am I feeling today?" I kept a journal on what I was experiencing and my conversations with others centered on feeling this or feeling that. Often family and friends would describe me as temperamental and unpredictable. Fortunately I created mostly positive feelings about my life and based my decisions on this outlook. However on negative feeling days, watch out. Looking back, I could say I was acting on the world as a "Human Feeling." This lifestyle served me well until it didn't.

Focusing my awareness on my lower levels of perception, I was in a sense living through my feelings. This could be exhausting. The decisions I made on "bad days" had consequences that could be long term. I lost jobs and sabotaged relationships. It was time to shift my awareness to the levels of perception that were centered on what I really wanted to do. I refer to this as "Bumping It Up!" Shifting my awareness to these higher levels is about living procedures, rituals, habits, and routines. I became focused more on starting a career, developing meaningful relationships, both personal and professional, and began focusing on long term goals. I began developing references on what type of education and relationships I wanted, I maintained a disciplined workout routine, I budgeted my income and started my career path. I kept a daily journal on "daily doings," prioritized and maintained a schedule, and produced extensive "to do" lists. My first thought when I awoke was "What do I need to do today?" Through time I became good at my job, started a family, made my health a priority, and went to church "religiously." Looking back, I could say I was acting as a "Human Doing". This lifestyle served me well until it didn't.

After time I found words creeping into my vocabulary such as "I have to do this... and I got to do that." Life was becoming one big obligation, and I started resenting what I believed I had to do and who I believed I had to do it for. It was time once again to "Bump it Up!" The highest levels one can perceive are the principle and system levels. When operating from these levels we are focused on "Who we want to be".

The thoughts I began creating were "Who do I want to be when my relationships, job, finances, emotions, etc., are going well and who do I want to be when they are not? I began asking myself in any given situation, who do I want to be, and if was being that person what would I do? Instead of waking up and asking myself "How am I feeling?" or "What do I need to do?" I ask myself "Who do I want to be?" Instead of journaling about how I feel, or what is happening to me, I write about whether I was the person I wanted to be during that day. I developed "To Be" lists, instead of "To Do" Lists and I was focused on the principles I was living, not what the day brought forth.

Obligations became opportunities and the attitude I created moved from "got to" towards "get to". Although it is easy to slip and shift my consciousness to my feeling and doing perceptions, I can say that focusing my awareness on these higher levels of perception has brought more value to my life. I am finally living as a "Human Being" and this lifestyle is serving me well.