

The Seven Stage Model for Effective Working Relationships



oasis

School of Human Relations

Learning through relationship is at the core of the transformation needed for us to survive, challenge and create the realities of the 21st century. When it comes to living and learning in relationship – we need all the help we can get.

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This booklet is based on research conducted at the Oasis School of Human Relations, originally authored by Bryce Taylor.

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Foreword

In getting from 'here' to 'there', it is helpful to know the choices available and be equipped with the skills for a process that works.

In the late 1980s I was appointed director of a new public purpose organisation. The organisation was addressing challenging issues and new questions, and it was clear that innovation was needed; primarily to engage more people in decision making and shared action – a relatively novel idea in that era.

I struggled to work out what to do next.

At the same time, alongside an experienced and radical facilitator, Rosie Burton, I was fortunate to be able to prototype the Seven Stage Model in a seven-month programme in the UK. It was very successful, not least because of its high level of application, based on what works.

The model simplifies the realities of practice; it reduces disparate experience into manageable pieces and acts as a guide to what the practitioner *might* do. It provided me with a much-needed framework for practice, helping me to make decisions and be more effective. It offered transferable skills and understanding which I apply not only to working with people, but also with projects, systems and processes, in fact, any situation where it is important to bring more of myself as the agent of change.

In presenting the model in this booklet, the intention is to make it accessible to more practitioners in more places; to highlight the stages of effective relationships and the skills that are essential in a range of contexts other than helping.

The Seven Stage Model is designed to free practitioners, not limit them. It is a description of what many effective practitioners actually do, rather than a rule book of what practitioners should do. Many people encountering the model for the first time are delighted to realise that they are already doing it; they simply have not framed it in this particular way. In wanting to find out how to 'help people change', the model, captured by Bryce Taylor, a founding director of Oasis, was informed by the experiences of hundreds of practitioners, clients, teams and leaders.

This booklet offers an overview of the working relationship rather than a dissection of the minutiae of what goes on between two people.

It is one of the *Oasis Elements* series and goes a surprisingly long way in equipping individuals to develop helping and conscious human relationships.

The model represents the seven stages of an effective relationship, each stage overlapping with the next. The model is cyclical, dynamic and developmental. This means it is usually impossible or at least very ineffective to 'jump' a stage. Each stage builds on a previous one. For instance, in most circumstances it is not possible to finish something before it has begun, or to challenge another person with any hope of it being effective without first establishing an adequate level of rapport and understanding.



I hope that by sharing our 'know how' of human relations and making this material more freely available, we will continue to contribute to inspiring and developing 21st century relationships for meaningful, responsible and sustainable action.

Nick Ellerby

*Co-founder and Co-director, Oasis School of Human Relations
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The Model: Context and Application

Introduction

The Oasis Seven Stage Model arose from the need to provide people from a wide variety of backgrounds with a simple overview of the stages of an effective interpersonal or helping relationship. As well as offering a complete model, each stage offers specific skills that can be applied according to the needs and priorities of a relationship.

The model can be applied in any setting where awareness of self, the other and the process of the relationship can contribute to being effective. The term used to describe activities which rely upon the use of the self as the major resource is the self-as-instrument. This approach refers to applied activity where knowledge alone is not sufficient to be effective.

Since its launch in the 1980s the model has been introduced to thousands of people and has proved robust across a wide range of sectors and within a variety of contexts and cultures. It is used by GPs in UK health, clinical nurse specialists in Africa, leaders in manufacturing, retail managers, change agents working in third sector organisations, community developers and coaches and counselling practitioners in Europe, Australasia and North America.

The model works so long as there is:

- sufficient **commitment** to the relationship and the work
- sufficient **willingness** to be engaged in doing the work together
- sufficient **capacity** in those involved to do the work.

It also requires that we believe that people:

- are essentially worthy of dignity and respect
- can resolve their own predicaments, if given the right support
- can work together positively
- have an inherent capacity to work, learn, develop and mature.

Applying the Model

Although the Seven Stage Model can be understood in a linear form, it is better practised as a cyclical, dynamic model. In many situations, this means that certain stages need to be revisited a number of times, albeit at different levels or depth, before moving forward.

The model can be applied to any situation where an effective relationship is critical. It can be used by change agents, leaders, managers, supervisors, mentors, group leaders, facilitators, helpers or anyone with the responsibility for holding a meeting or series of meetings. The context may be a mentoring relationship, organisational team or business meeting.

Conditions for Effective Relationship

Authenticity – the successful avoidance of posturing, playing a role, or creating a facade or barrier. Allowing oneself to be known and real to the other person. It calls for courage and honesty. It encourages others to take risks and offers a model of such behaviour.

Empathy – to comprehend the other person’s world, and to communicate that understanding. It calls for a willingness to be internally agile.

Warmth – communicating a willingness to accept and respect the other person as a fellow human being. It should be distinguished from simply being ‘nice’ – it is realistic not sentimental.

Collaboration – a genuine recognition that working *with* another is better than having power over another. The capacity to act as a peer or equal, and in doing so being willing to benefit both, rather than one or the other.

Creativity – being willing to discover the new, open to trying different approaches and being open to learning through relationship makes more possible.

For people wanting to work in the world of effective relationships, it is essential to have these qualities and to be able to communicate them. So long as a person has these qualities within them, it is possible to develop them through whole person learning approaches.

1: Contacting



Effective Listening

The first step is to recognise the essential pre-condition of active listening in any effective relationship. Active listening follows quite different rules from the listening that most of us engage with in everyday conversation. Listening allows the other person to explore his or her own *experience* in more depth. The most engaged form of listening is not simply listening *to*, but listening *with* another person in an active and involved way. This means that we are no longer observers, but become actively involved in what we are being told.

Accurately listening to hear the ‘music behind the words’ is an active process which involves overcoming many of our habitual ways of responding when others are talking. Really listening is at the core of so many emerging roles in our contemporary world – listening to unspoken market needs marks out the entrepreneur; listening to people and planet, the social entrepreneur; to the deeper questions within a person, the coach; and to the emerging requirements for a business in a changing context, the responsible leader and manager.

Sufficient Contact

The next step in the development of any relationship is to establish sufficient connection for the relationship to form. This stage is helped by ensuring there are no distractions and the potential for interruptions is minimised. If the work is more personal, the atmosphere needs to feel safe enough to talk about difficult or challenging issues. If there is likely to be emotional content it is worth considering a private setting. Being genuine in your communication, coming over as available and respectful, not in a hurry to be somewhere else, and demonstrating that you accept the person, are all characteristics that help in building rapport.

In this stage you will need to give attention to the following elements:

- **Finding balance:** between making interventions and active listening
- **Pace:** allowing the other person to find their own speed
- **Being agile:** being willing to respond flexibly to what is said
- **Development:** noticing how a session unfolds and takes shape.

Where to begin?

If the work is postponed in favour of spending too long in catching up and saying 'hello' this may be a way of never getting round to any crucial material. Lots of good chat may happen but nothing much may emerge. If you begin with too abrupt a request to get to the heart of things, the other person is likely to back off. It may help simply to ask: 'Where is a good place to begin?'

Most of us are aware that much of what we communicate is non-verbal, related to complex forms of behaviour including tone and body language. Non-verbal prompts and nods of encouragement can be surprisingly effective at this stage. For many, refraining from doing too much or saying too much is a very worthwhile skill to develop!

Some reminders of what works when building rapport:

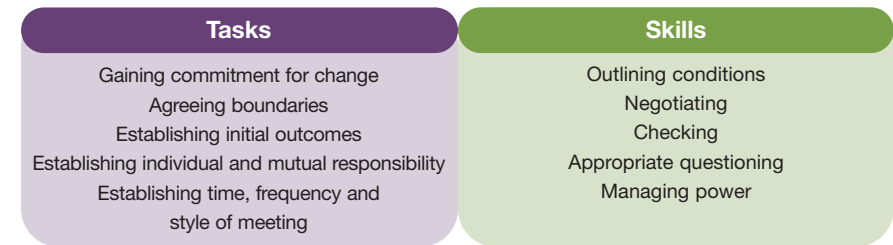
- Adopt an 'open' posture – sounds simple, but a person will often be more open if you are more open
- Be aware of the other person's overall body posture and mirror their body posture and movements in a non-overt way
- Look at the person without staring
- Match their language to get on the same wavelength
- Listen to their world-view in an attempt to understand their frame of reference rather than challenging their ideas and beliefs early.

No matter what the context, if there is a need to develop an effective relationship this stage is the foundation. It is all about you moving toward the other person – not necessarily physically, but certainly in terms of willingness to engage. If you want a person to feel more comfortable, being comfortable yourself helps, but more than that, being willing to match and mirror your movements and words to them has a profound impact on establishing a sense of connection. Out of respect for the other person and an understanding of the importance of making effective contact you bring all your skills to the relationship. To be effective you need to care enough about the other person to give them your full attention.

Establishing rapport creates the environment to help a person move from where they are to where they would like to be. It sets the scene for a problem-solving process that works through and out of a relationship.

If during the later stages there is insufficient rapport, those involved need to return to this stage to rebuild the relationship.

2: Contracting: Conditions and Agreements



The context defines the contract. To reach a realistic outcome, those involved need to take into account the contexts of their inner and external worlds. There needs to be a thorough exploration of these during this stage.

Developing a shared agreement

If you are the one in the acknowledged enabling role, you need to *manage the process*. The required minimum conditions must be made explicit and boundaries clearly established – even if they are changed in the light of new information.

The following need to be clarified:

- **Time:** the length and possible frequency of meeting
- **Space:** the location – provision of sufficient freedom from interference and distraction
- **Interventions:** the options that might be used in any work together
- **Structures:** overall clarity, so that no one misconstrues the situation or the reason for the meeting.

Contracting Questions

Within this stage, there are a few questions that it is essential for those involved to ask to reach a mutual agreement. This list is not exhaustive, but gives the minimum. We have known these questions save organisations tens of thousands of pounds through effective contracting. At a personal level they can help most people shape a clearer understanding of what they want or need.

If we don't know where we are going, we will always end up somewhere, it just may not be a place worth visiting.

1. **What do you want...? What do you really want?** *This helps to access the genuine requirements and motivations*
2. **Is it realistic?** *This engages a more rational and cognitive response, often leading to exploring the wider context and forces that may help or hinder a piece of work.*

3. **How will you and I know when you have achieved the change?** *This establishes measures and qualitative indicators for success.*
4. **What will you have to give, or give up, to get it?** *This accesses the power dynamics that often are very strong in difficult negotiations or serious development challenges.*
5. **How might you sabotage yourself?** *This names some of the known patterns the person might use to undermine him/herself or the initiative – naming things helps to loosen their power and increases conscious choices.*
6. **What is the first step and by when?** *This can help determine how committed the person is to changing something, as well as simply clarifying the first step in a more comprehensive action plan.*

The more uncertain or unpredictable the context, the more the initial contract is likely to be loose and informal. As more becomes clear, the contract will become more specific. A contract offers enough structure for progress to be made without overwhelming those involved. Contracting is not a one-off event and is a stage that will be re-visited in the form of review, revision and evaluation throughout the relationship. This enables flexibility, agility and renewing or refining of initial commitments.

Ways of working together – conditions – agreeing ground rules

Studies into performance clearly show that effective individuals and teams develop a set of understandings that help them achieve their purpose, or contract. The time and dialogue necessary to develop these conditions can develop stronger bonds, bonds that in turn deepen trust and shape ways of working that are sustained through the whole relationship. Whilst the conditions in which two or more people work together vary depending on the contracts agreed, the following have proved effective in many settings:

- Individually and mutually responsible and accountable
- Silence is not taken as consent
- OK to clarify and/or challenge
- OK to ask for help.

Depending on the nature of the work, some discussion and agreement about confidentiality is often necessary.

Establishing the relationship

During these early stages, the other person begins to feel you are taking the trouble to learn about their individual *model of the world*, and that you are keen to help them with their challenges. As a result they will be more willing to *introduce* you to further areas for exploration and clarification, and later be more open to being challenged to develop new options and choices.

3: Clarifying

Tasks	Skills
Developing safety and permission Enabling understanding Understanding implications Identifying issues and questions Identifying themes and patterns	Reflection/paraphrasing Open questions/prompts Re-stating/word repetition Testing understanding Summarising

Asking questions and inviting a more detailed response invites the person, team or organisation to go further into their experience and to retrieve more detail of what has happened, what they are working with or what they have experienced so far. The tasks relevant to this stage are:

- **Contextualising:** hearing the story; identifying the themes and issues; listening for *generalisations, distortions, deletions and additions*
- **Retrieving meaning:** breaking up abstract concepts into specific experiences; listening for generalisations that would benefit from greater specificity
- **Constructing meaning:** listening in order to construct a frame of reference that matches the person's experience.

The skills used during this stage are those which help the other person clarify or amplify their ideas, thoughts or feelings further. These skills, when utilised well, elicit self-direction – as the other person becomes clearer about what they think, how they understand themselves or a situation, very often the process itself leads them to become clearer about what they want to do. Hearing oneself talking about something actually causes one to see the bigger picture.

Done well, the clarification stage can be all that is needed – with the person or team doing the rest of the work themselves. It is a stage that has elements of a self-review process.

Within a team context, this phase is often related to gathering information in relation to how they perform, or undertake a role or responsibility. It is the phase of getting on with something, and in doing so, evidence is gathered. As a result the context, questions and ways of working become clearer.

It is important to remember that gathering understanding of what is happening or clarifying a situation is like listening to a story. Rather than being overwhelmed, it is worth considering that some stories are complex and will take more than one telling. Some stories only become clear in the process of telling them, and the very act of telling of a story can create new possibilities and endings.

A story can be understood at different levels, and it is these levels of understanding that unfold at this stage.

Level 1: Content – the facts of a story including such aspects as how it began, who was involved, the sequence of events, the consequences, and outcomes, if any.

Level 2: Feeling – this identifies the feelings associated with the information. This level provides the significance or meaning of the story for those involved. In many settings this calls for what we term *affective competence* as you listen to a person outline a situation and their response to it. There is a great deal of skill involved in conveying to the person an understanding of what they are experiencing at this level.

Level 3: Advanced Understanding – this is a more complex level, at which a deeper sense of what is being experienced is discovered, almost working with the hunches about what might be happening beyond what those involved are fully conscious of. In organisational settings we might be uncovering the cultural norms that operate just outside awareness.

Level 4: Projective Empathy – at the deepest level we are able to ‘walk about’ inside the experience of the other person. We are able to project the implications of how the person inhabits their world into other settings or contexts within the person’s wider context. In practical terms this refers to being able to accurately predict what would also be part of the bigger picture.

This stage gathers data from all our senses, and with the other/s involved we process the information and communicate our emerging understanding to the person we are working with. In such a way they hear themselves more clearly. The clarifying stage helps to make meaning, or if no meaning is possible, highlights that more help is called for to be able to take another step.

4: Challenging

Tasks	Skills
Identifying the impasse Working with themes or patterns Offering permission Encouraging consideration of options Encouraging self-confrontation Supporting through discharge Holding the challenge Developing new and latent strengths	Focusing Defining Confronting Immediacy ‘Tough loving’ Cathartic skills Specifying actual examples

Approaching Challenge

Many of us have a negative view of challenge. Essentially it is any intervention that provides information or data that questions a person’s understanding of their world. For instance, if a person thinks they aren’t very good at something, but is given positive feedback that surprises them – this is a challenge.

Challenge needs to be done not only with the person’s interests paramount but also with the person’s *permission*. For a challenge to succeed it is essential that the person *owns* the issue, i.e. takes responsibility for their part in whatever situation they are in. In all this, they need to feel supported by the person giving the challenge.

Challenge requires a balance between *care* and *power*. It requires a sufficient degree of *compassion* to be demonstrated, so the other person recognises there is a sense of being with them in any distress or discomfort. There needs to be enough *power* to hold the challenge effectively, especially when the person wants to move to the safety of keeping things the way they have always been.

Challenging skills move all the way along a spectrum from gentle requests to major confrontations. Ideally, all confrontational interventions come out of a desire to assist the other person and not to serve your own needs. Therefore there should be no great investment in any intervention; if a particular observation or challenge to a person does not fit for them, you don’t have to pursue it until it does!

It is during this phase that you will most need *cathartic skills*. Working at any depth within the challenge stage can produce a release of emotion. When we see things more clearly we can be irritated with ourselves, upset about a particular realisation or simply happy to be free of what might have felt like a weight or burden.

Challenging Questions

Challenge may be experienced at any point, but the explicit use of challenging questions at this stage has four principal purposes:

- To free a person from unhelpful blocks or barriers
- To obtain more refined information
- To elaborate distinctions
- To bring more specificity.

There can often be an impasse, a kind of paralysis that overcomes the person at the thought of going ahead and making some change. Challenge questions are designed to *elicit and retrieve the information* that highlights how to move beyond an impasse.

Challenging questions include:

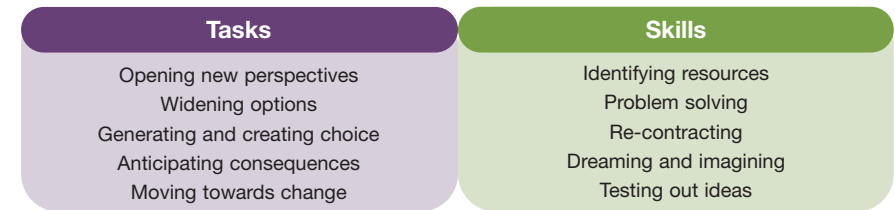
- What is the pay-off for things being like this?
- What have you tried already?
- What would happen if you did...?
- What is the worst thing that could happen?
- What would you really like to do?
- If you had a magic wand what would you wish for?
- How do you know that would happen?
- Who says you can/cannot?
- What stops you?
- How do you feel about...?

Summary

Challenge is likely to be the most emotional of all the phases of a relationship; it is also a time when the person can experience the emotion of 'breakthrough'. The challenge stage is when giving and receiving feedback is most appropriate.

There is sometimes the elation of moving beyond a place in themselves that they were sure was going to limit them forever. It can be a time when there is the excitement at attempting to succeed in situations that have hitherto baffled or overpowered them. It may well be a time of satisfaction at the realisation that some long-held belief or sense of inadequacy is about to fall down and reveal the person to be far more capable of many things than they had ever considered. When a team are met by an effective challenge they might have come to terms with difficult feedback, but once accepted and understood it can lead to improved performance.

5: Choosing



The 'True Third Alternative'

The question for the *choice* stage is, 'How many ways are there to...?' Following a successful *challenge*, there is a sense of renewed enthusiasm, a willingness to go forward and a more committed potential for change. Choice is akin to the earlier clarification stage but with an added dynamism.

The stage of choosing is a time for generating options, imagining possibilities and weighing alternatives in a way that is free of consequences.

One choice is no choice, two choices only adds up to a dilemma. Real choice begins with three options. Discovering the direction that offers the greatest sense of freedom and responsibility is the essence of this stage.

It is the stage for dreaming, opening oneself imaginatively to what the options could be. Never mind, for a moment, what it costs or whether it is feasible. Simply encouraging the person to play with ideas can lead to novel ways of fulfilling the task. Dreams do sometimes serve to limit and enslave us rather than point the way ahead but we might not know which until we have played with them.

Realising that real life brings costs to all choices can lead the person into an awareness of the need for action rather than allowing them to accumulate issues and concerns, and be put off in the hope that someone else or something else will come along to prevent any choice being necessary.

There may be many choices, and this itself can create a new problem: 'How do I choose when there are so many options?' This can make the person realise that it is not a lack of choices in the world, but rather the lack of ability to know how to effectively choose.

Assessing the likely consequences, considering implications and impact, and rehearsing possibilities can all be very valuable in assisting the person to develop themselves within this stage. For some people, they can look back and feel safer when they had no choices, because at least then there was no sense of responsibility for whatever happened.

In developing the choice work, there are essentially three core ingredients:

- Building the picture (thinking)
- Valuing and weighing (feeling)
- Making a decision to act (willing).

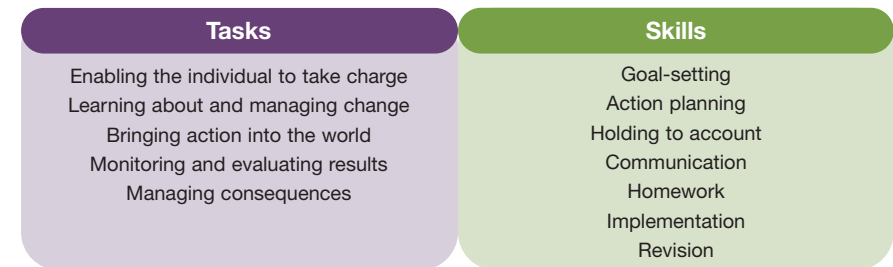
The last ingredient can have two paths, active or cognitive. The former results in a decision to do something, the latter occurs when no action is necessary or possible, and often all that can be done is to gain a shared understanding.

In many settings the first two ingredients are given too little attention. When a person, team or organisation keep coming back to the same or similar issues, a repeating pattern, it is often as a result of initial poor decision making. A desire to move quickly rather than take the time necessary for applying a more effective approach may be experienced as slow at first, but can in the longer term create more pace.

Avoiding examining alternatives at this stage can cost dearly later, when the person or team discovers that things that could have been anticipated have simply been ignored. The potential for this stage is that those involved can gain a rich sense of their own capabilities and resources for taking action in the world.

Taking action is the focus of the next stage.

6: Changing



Managing Change

Nothing changes in a person's circumstances until they begin to *act*. It is not sufficient to have an insight or come to a decision for change to take place; it has to be *implemented*. At this stage the person may well become nervous and anxious at the prospect of what they now know they have committed themselves to.

Before a change is attempted, the person, the situation and the world in which they exist must be *aligned* enough for the person to manage what results.

Most change processes create a sense of ambivalence and uncertainty. Even hoped for changes bring disturbance to our ways of understanding our world and our sense of *how things are*. This makes people living with change feel vulnerable.

Implementing Change

A model of action has to have *manageable chunks* of activity and *realistic steps* that the person can, with a reasonable degree of confidence, expect to accomplish. It helps many people to report back to someone on their progress. *Reviewing* what actually happened in the light of experience is an important source of further learning that without encouragement might be overlooked.

A good deal of useful effort fails at this last stage if not enough time and attention is given to asking, 'Will this work, given where it is to be implemented?' or 'Will those who have the task of dealing with our decisions have the capacity to manage the consequences?'

Asking a person if they have thought of how they will manage the impact of any decision they make ensures they do!

Communicating change

Where change is being undertaken, communication is a core skill that will need to be developed and applied. Communication needs to match the stage for which it is appropriate, for instance, is it to connect, clarify, challenge, stimulate choice, urge change or bring something to a close?

When to communicate, about what and to whom, is a challenge in itself. It is an art rather than a science, and no approach will be ideal. However, few people like to hear things third-hand. Most of us like to be in adult relationships, even when we don't think we do, and it's healthier to be incomplete and open rather than complete after leaks have happened.

7: Closing

Tasks	Skills
Bringing the work and relationship to a close Reviewing and evaluating the effort	Managing endings Disengagement Letting go

Closing is an important stage in any relationship and never more so than in a working relationship of significance. Closing is about *completion* – of the work or the issue. It is a time to look back and evaluate what the person is taking away or what the team has achieved.

Any ending means saying 'good-bye'. It means acknowledging that we are no longer going to be meeting like this. For the person who has found an effective facilitator, coach or manager, there is a loss to face, as well as the potential freedom and discovery that change can create. Preparation for the end of any effective relationship may be as important as the work that has been done within it, and often holds another opportunity for learning and development.

Phases in Closing

We all have things to work out about how we end things and the people involved will be having their own reflections and making assessments. It is important to:

- Bring reflections and assessments into the relationship
- Talk together in good time about the ending
- Think beyond the relationship's conclusion so that the other person can plan their future beyond its end.

You can usefully take time to identify your own fears and concerns about what endings represent to you, so that you are as free in your closing of relationships as is possible and the other person is left with the opportunity to make this one more important learning.

An Overview of the Stages

Tasks	Skills
1. CONTACTING	
Establish rapport Relationship building	Listening Attending Matching Questioning Mirroring
2. CONTRACTING	
Gaining commitment for change Agreeing boundaries Establishing initial outcomes Establishing individual and mutual responsibility Establishing time, frequency and style of meeting	Outlining conditions Negotiating Checking Appropriate questioning Managing power
3. CLARIFYING	
Developing safety and permission Enabling understanding Understanding implications Identifying issues and questions Identifying themes and patterns	Reflection/paraphrasing Open questions/prompts Re-stating/word repetition Testing understanding Summarising
4. CHALLENGING	
Identifying the impasse Working with themes or patterns Offering permission Encouraging consideration of options Encouraging self-confrontation Supporting through discharge Holding the challenge Developing new and latent strengths	Focusing Defining Confronting Immediacy 'Tough loving' Cathartic skills Specifying actual examples

Tasks	Skills
5. CHOOSING	
Opening new perspectives Widening options Generating and creating choice Anticipating consequences Moving towards change	Identifying resources Problem solving Re-contracting Dreaming and imagining Testing out ideas
6. CHANGING	
Enabling the individual to take charge Learning about and managing change Bringing action into the world Monitoring and evaluating results Managing consequences	Goal-setting Action planning Holding to account Communication Homework Implementation Revision
7. CLOSING	
Bringing the work and relationship to a close Reviewing and evaluating the effort	Managing endings Disengagement Letting go

About the Oasis School of Human Relations

The Oasis School of Human Relations is a not-for-profit learning, research and consultancy organisation. We have been at the forefront of human relations practice and consulting for over 20 years. We bring radical human relations approaches to transform the world around us. We work with people and their questions, key decision makers, communities and the workplaces of tomorrow.

Oasis provides a 'fertile spot in the desert' – time and space, individually and collectively, to reflect, raise consciousness, influence worldviews, implement change and deepen relationships with oneself and others. Our solid reputation is based on the quality of our services, our holistic approach and the meaningful, sustainable relationships shaped by those we work with.

As a partner of the Globally Responsible Leadership Initiative since 2004, we have an international reputation for our work and research and we are the global pioneers in the application and the practice of Whole Person Learning.

We fulfil our purpose through:

- Equipping individuals as the 'instrument of change' through developing practical applied human relations skills and approaches
- Providing direct development and services to communities, organisations, teams, workforces and individuals engaged in change
- Encouraging local, national and global communities of responsible action
- Supporting original and unique collaborative and co-operative research
- Dissemination of learning through dialogue, seminars and publications
- Developing a community of human relations practitioners.

Our work is deep and wide-ranging. We offer ways of working that engage with the future, awaken a passion for learning, harness the potency of uncertainty and deepen effective relationships.

Oasis Services

We provide quality services to a wide range of individuals and organisations in the social business, commercial, not-for-profit and public sectors, so long as they are working toward sustainable and equitable social change, ethical action and globally responsible practice.

Essentially, we recognise that relationships are at the heart of effective development. Organisations are a potent mix of people, processes, values, resources and purposes, operating in a changing context. Networks, groups, teams and communities bring organisations to life, but these are only as good as the relationships within and between them. Relationships are not easy, especially in organisations with complex and emerging dynamics. Oasis helps to develop human relations, both internally and externally, to allow organisations and those who work within them to unlock their potential and better achieve, if not shape, their purpose.

Our areas of activity include:

Team Development

- Facilitating team effectiveness and inquiry
- Working with creativity and challenge

Organisational Development

- Harnessing the wisdom held within organisations
- Building collaborative leadership and participative cultures

Community and Employee Engagement

- Engaging more of the whole person at work
- Designing and developing participative, collaborative action

One-to-one and full circle development

- Developing leaders, managers and teams
- Supporting boards and developing effective governance

Learning and educational programmes – developing capacity

- Preparing facilitators, developers, practitioners and change agents
- Enhancing personal and professional performance
- Establishing self and peer review and learning strategies

Staff wellbeing services – developing the Workplace of Tomorrow

- Wellbeing audits
- Conflict facilitation and mediation

Further Resources at Oasis

Publications

Learning for Tomorrow by Bryce Taylor. Globally recognised source material on the thinking and practice of Whole Person Learning. Ideal for those who develop or help others learn to consider new approaches for the 21st century.

Forging the Future Together by Bryce Taylor. A comprehensive application of the Seven Stage Model in the helping, coaching and counselling context.

Working Relationships for the 21st Century: A Guide to Authentic Collaboration by Nick Ellerby, Susan Ralphs, Angela Lockwood, Gill Palin and Bryce Taylor. An applied framework for those who are engaged with larger groups and teams.

Learning programmes

Working With Others: for a more 'hands on' approach, talk to us about the introductory programmes we run at our centre in Boston Spa, or the bespoke courses we offer for organisations and groups.

The desire to help another is no guarantee of success. All forms of helping are essentially applied activities; mere knowledge alone is not sufficient to make an effective helper. The key is the ability to apply knowledge sensitively and appropriately to facilitate an individual or group towards the resolution of some dilemma. Consequently, the main resource for the work is oneself.

Bryce Taylor 1989

The degree to which I can create relationships which facilitate the growth of others is a measure of the growth I have achieved for myself.

Carl Rogers 1961



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