
Copyright © 2009, Psychotherapy.net, LLC. All rights reserved. Published by Psychotherapy.net
150 Shoreline Highway, Building A, Suite 1
Mill Valley, CA 94941
Email: contact@psychotherapy.net
Phone: (800) 577-4762 (US & Canada)

Teaching and Training: Instructors, training directors and facilitators using the Instructor’s Manual for the DVD Reality Therapy with Robert E. Wubbolding, EdD may reproduce parts of this manual in paper form for teaching and training purposes only. Otherwise, the text of this publication may not be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise without the prior written permission of the publisher, Psychotherapy.net. The DVD Reality Therapy with Robert E. Wubbolding, EdD (Institutional/Instructor’s Version) is licensed for group training and teaching purposes. Broadcasting or transmission of this video via satellite, Internet, video conferencing, streaming, distance learning courses or other means is prohibited without the prior written permission of the publisher.

Wyatt, Randall C., PhD & Wubbolding, Robert, EdD

Instructor’s Manual for Reality Therapy with Robert E. Wubbolding, EdD

Cover design by Sabine Grand

Order Information and Continuing Education Credits: For information on ordering and obtaining continuing education credits for this and other psychotherapy training videos, please visit us at www.psychotherapy.net or call 800-577-4762.
# Instructor’s Manual for

**REALITY THERAPY**

**WITH ROBERT E. WUBBOLDING, EDD**

---

## Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tips for Making the Best Use of the DVD</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wubbolding’s Approach to Reality Therapy</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wubbolding’s Reflections on the Session</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reaction Paper for Classes and Training</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Related Websites, Videos, and Further Readings</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion Questions</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete Transcript</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WUBBOLDING’S APPROACH</strong></td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PSYCHOTHERAPY SESSION</strong></td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video Credits</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earn Continuing Education Credits for Watching Videos</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>About the Contributors</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More Psychotherapy.net Videos</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Tips for Making the Best Use of the DVD

1. USE THE TRANSCRIPTS
Make notes in the video Transcript for future reference; the next time you show the video you will have them available. Highlight or notate key moments in the video to better facilitate discussion during the video and post-viewing.

Interspersed throughout the session transcript, you will find Wubbolding’s own commentaries elucidating his interventions and responses at key moments in the session. You may copy the transcripts for student or group training purposes and pass them out to viewers for their own study and for use in a class.

2. FACILITATE DISCUSSION
Pause the video at different points to elicit viewers’ observations and reactions to the concepts presented. The Discussion Questions provide ideas about key points that can stimulate rich discussions and learning.

3. LET IT FLOW
Allow the session to play out some so viewers can appreciate the work over time instead of stopping the video too often. It is best to watch the video in its entirety since issues untouched in earlier parts often play out later. Encourage viewers to voice their opinions; no therapy is perfect! What do viewers think works and does not work in the session? We learn as much from our mistakes as our successes and it is crucial for students and therapists to develop the ability to effectively critique this work as well as their own.

4. SUGGEST READINGS TO ENRICH VIDEO MATERIAL
Assign readings from Suggestions for Further Readings and Websites prior to viewing. You can also time the video to coincide with other course or training materials on related topics.
5. REFLECT ON REFLECTIONS
Hand out copies of Wubbolding’s Reflections on the Session, giving participants an inside view of Wubbolding’s experience of his work with this client. Wubbolding’s reflections humanize the process and provide viewers a context into which they can place the person of the therapist. In this way, Wubbolding becomes not just an expert therapist but also a real person.

6. ASSIGN A REACTION PAPER
See suggestions in Reaction Paper section.

7. CONDUCT ROLE-PLAYS
After watching the video, assign groups to role-play a brief psychotherapy session following the reality therapy model. Organize participants into triads, consisting of one psychotherapist, one client, and one observer. Then rotate so each person has a chance to play each role.

Clients can explore personal concerns from their own life, or role-play a client or someone else that they know well.

As a basic instruction, suggest to therapists that they focus on helping clients explore an area in their life that would benefit from specific, focused changes in thinking and/or action. The therapist can work with the client to identify goals related to needs for survival, love and belonging, power, freedom or fun and follow the WDEP system to structure the session. First, clients identify a specific want that serves a more general basic need. Clients then describe what they are doing, their behavior, thoughts, and feelings related to that want. Next, the therapist helps them evaluate the ways in which their behaviors impede progress toward their goal. The final emphasis in the session should be on developing a workable plan for change. See Wubbolding’s Approach to Reality Therapy in this manual for a brief review, and then modify these guidelines to fit the time you have available.

After each role-play, have the groups debrief. First have the clients share their experiences; have them discuss what they learned about
the client’s experience from this exercise. Then have the therapists and observers talk about what the session was like for them. What did participants find challenging or exciting about this way of working? Finally, have the large group reconvene to share their reactions, and open up a general discussion on what participants learned about Wubbolding’ approach to reality therapy.

An alternative is to do this role-play in front of the whole group with one therapist and one client; the entire group can observe, acting as the advising team to the therapist. Before the end of the session, have the therapist take a break, get feedback from the observation team, and bring it back into the session with the client. Other observers might jump in if the therapist gets stuck. Follow up with a discussion of what does and does not seem effective about Wubbolding’s approach.

8. WATCH THE EXPERTS SERIES

This video is one in a series portraying leading theories of psychotherapy and their application. Each video in the series presents a master therapist working with a real client who has real problems. By showing several of the videos in this *Psychotherapy with the Experts* series (See the More Videos section for a complete list of the videos in the series), you can expose viewers to a variety of styles and approaches, allowing them an opportunity to see what fits best for them.

**Videos with this Client:** Dr. Wubbolding works with a client named Juan. Juan is also featured as a client in another video in this *Experts series, Multimodal Therapy with Arnold Lazarus, PhD*. It can be particularly enlightening for viewers to watch these two therapists work with the same client to see how their styles, personalities and theoretical orientations play out differently. If you have viewers write a Reaction Paper—see the guidelines in this manual—you can ask them to also address what differences they notice in how Lazarus and Wubbolding work with Juan, and how these differences affect the outcomes of the two sessions.

Other videos in the series use different therapeutic models. We can reflect upon the differences among these models by exploring the following questions:
How does the model explain the therapeutic process?
What assumptions does the model imply about the purpose of therapy?
How is theory translated into practice in real-life situations?
What is the role of the therapist?
What outcomes are associated with successful therapy?

PERSPECTIVE ON VIDEOS AND THE PERSONALITY OF THE THERAPIST

Psychotherapy portrayed in videos is less off-the-cuff than therapy in practice. Therapists may feel on the spot to put on a good demonstration, and clients can be self-conscious in front of a camera. Therapists often move more quickly than they would in everyday practice to demonstrate a particular technique. Despite these factors, therapists and clients on video can engage in a realistic session that conveys a wealth of information not contained in books or therapy transcripts: body language, tone of voice, facial expression, rhythm of the interaction, quality of the alliance – all aspects of the therapeutic relationship that are unique to an interpersonal encounter.

Psychotherapy is an intensely private matter. Unlike the training in other professions, students and practitioners rarely have an opportunity to see their mentors at work. But watching therapy on video is the next best thing.

One more note: The personal style of therapists is often as important as their techniques and theories. Therapists are usually drawn to approaches that mesh well with their own personality. Thus, while we can certainly pick up ideas from master therapists, students and trainees must make the best use of relevant theory, technique and research to fit their own personal style and the needs of their clients.

PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

Because this video contains an actual therapy session, please take care to protect the privacy and confidentiality of the client who has courageously shared his personal life with us.
Wubbolding’s Approach to Reality Therapy

Robert Wubbolding’s approach to Reality Therapy is based on Choice Theory, which was developed by William Glasser, MD, during the second half of the 20th century. Choice Theory posits that behavior (including both actions and thoughts) is paramount to effecting change; that almost all human behavior is chosen; and that people are innately driven to fulfill five basic needs: survival, love and belonging, power, freedom and fun. According to Choice Theory, the most important need is love and belonging, because connectedness with others is a prerequisite for the other basic needs.

Wubbolding describes Reality Therapy as the delivery system for Choice Theory. His approach emphasizes people’s inner control as the source of their behavior, rather than control coming from their histories or external circumstances. Wubbolding deals with problems in the present. He avoids discussion of symptoms, complaints and feelings, and instead focuses on how clients can change specific ways they act and think in order to change their lives.

Wubbolding typically works with clients following what he calls the WDEP (Want, Doing, Evaluation, Plan) system. First, clients identify a specific want that serves a more general basic need (for example, finishing a master’s thesis, in the service of having a more satisfying career). Clients then describe what they are doing, their behavior—their current actions, thoughts, and feelings that are germane to their want. Next, Wubbolding helps them evaluate the ways in which their behaviors impede progress toward their goal. Finally, clients formulate a realistic, measurable plan to change their behavior and progress towards their goal.

Wubbolding offers the following examples of questions reality therapists might ask. These can provide ideas about how the WDEP system is applied in a real interaction with a client:

- **Belonging**: Are you happy with the relationships you have? Are other people in your life happy with the relationships you have?
- **Power**: Are you happy with the way you are satisfying your need
for achievement and accomplishment? Are you getting what you want from the world around you? Are you getting the internal satisfaction, the sense of pride at doing something you can really succeed at? Is what you’re doing getting you what you want? Tell me about a time when you did something you were really proud of.

• **Fun:** When was the last time you did something you really enjoyed?

• **Freedom:** What choices can you make about your behaviors and actions that will help get you where you want to go?

• **Overall:** If you had what you wanted, what would you have?

Reality therapists strive to remain non-judgmental and they encourage clients to ask themselves whether specific behaviors are moving them towards their goals. Because connected relationships with others are of vital importance, goals pertaining to relatedness behaviors are often a significant part of Reality Therapy. Reality therapists tend to be directive. They help clients develop specific, workable plans for change. Because of its pragmatic approach to problems, Reality Therapy has often been used for couples, family, and school counseling.
Wubbolding’s Reflections on the Session

When I attend state and national conferences, graduate students, therapists and university instructors repeatedly approach me with questions about my single session with Juan. They wonder:

- “How could you tolerate his relentless effort to intellectualize?”
- “How much patience do you need to work effectively with someone like Juan?”
- “What did you do to stay focused?”
- “Where were you going with your use of reality therapy?” (i.e. “What was your sense of direction in this session?”)
- “What part of reality therapy did you stress?”
- “What would you emphasize in your next sessions?”
- “Why did you avoid asking him to discuss his feeling of being trapped?”

They occasionally express admiration and surprise that I was so patient with his tenacious intellectualizing and avoidance. But from my point of view, Juan was a very sincere client, willing to present himself as best he could, express himself in his own language and on his own terms. Additionally, Juan provided many opportunities for this therapist to practice his reality therapy skills. I found him a joy to work with – a challenge but a joy. My continual self-reminder that people usually do the best they can, that they make the best choices they see available to them, helped me, the therapist, to acknowledge that Juan is a worthwhile person struggling to find his way.

My first goal was to establish a friendly and safe, yet firm, atmosphere so that Juan would feel free to discuss as frankly as possible his wants and actions as well as his self-talk and feelings. My second goal was to emphasize a discussion of what he wanted out of life in general and, more specifically, what he wanted from himself and from the world around him. As the session developed I tried to listen empathically and help him focus on specifics. This proved to be a necessary but
lengthy process. However, knowing where the focus should be if I was going to be of help to him, I found it challenging but quite easy to maintain a sense of focus. Eventually he made a realistically doable plan. This therapy/counseling session exemplifies the reality therapy axiom, “Don’t give up on the client” and “Don’t give up on the WDEP system of reality therapy.”

Dealing with Juan meant helping him clarify his specific wants related to his needs, especially his need for power or inner control. I attempted to facilitate a discussion on his controllable behaviors by asking him what issue would be the easiest to work on. This question communicates to any client the following:

• It is within your power to change.
• Change is not automatic. It requires effort.
• Taking one small step is worthwhile and effective.

Because he seemed to think in a divergent manner, I asked him questions that required convergent thinking, i.e., either/or answers. As he sought refuge in vague generalizations I asked him to decide from two alternatives.

• Move forward or delay
• Keep his music inside or release it
• Deal with something that needs to be ended or something that needs to be begun

My effort to focus on his internal motivation and controllable behaviors was often diverted to issues that were out of his control. He states that “people” do this or “people” do that. He even refers to “macro-social” issues. But my determined effort to focus on his controllable choices and internal motivation, was illustrated by several interactions.

• Writing gave him an internal sense of pride
• He could achieve his deadline if the payoff were sufficient; a clear and satisfying career or a winning lottery ticket

Together we established that he could even reach his deadline if he
truly wanted to. In other words, if he defined the mental picture of what he wanted he could fulfill it. More specifically and somewhat reluctantly, he chose to make a specific doable plan, i.e., work on his thesis at a definite time and to call me two days later.

Juan was an elusive client. Nevertheless, he provided a wealth of information about himself making it easy for a reality therapist to work with him. His comments about his external world and his intellectualizing can be translated into wants and goals. I assisted him to formulate an achievable plan with follow up. Preceding the plan required not only identifying a want. It also involved helping him describe specific behaviors and evaluate them.

Future issues for counseling gleaned from his comments might include the following:

• How he could regulate his life so that he could satisfy his desire for writing
• Further discussion of what he means by “growing up” and “maturing”
• Developing a successful and satisfying career path
• Most importantly, subsequent sessions would focus on interpersonal relationships: his relationships with his parents; his social contacts; etc.

Juan did not call me as he had agreed to. Consequently, I called him and he related that he fulfilled his plan and that he wanted to complete his work. Several years later I heard that he was enrolled in a doctoral program. I can only hope that he finished it and is now gainfully employed, enjoys a social life and a harmonious relationship with his family.

Learning the WDEP system of reality therapy through determined and continual practice makes it second nature and provides a therapeutic map. Similarly, choice theory provides the direction for clients to satisfy their five needs or motivators: survival or self-preservation, love or belonging, power or inner control, freedom or independence and fun or enjoyment. Choice theory is the train track. Reality therapy is the train.
In practicing reality therapy with any client, a very useful initial question is, “What would you like to have happen as a result of our conversation?” Many clients who seek counseling or therapy appear once and only once. It is incumbent upon the therapist to make the session as meaningful as possible. The basis for change is the rapid engagement of the therapist and client. The therapist needs to be able to quickly connect with clients, to help them define their wants and evaluate the effectiveness of their behaviors.
Reaction Paper for Classes and Training

Video: Reality Therapy with Robert E. Wubbolding, EdD

- **Assignment:** Complete this reaction paper and return it by the date noted by the facilitator.
- **Suggestions for Viewers:** Take notes on these questions while viewing the video and complete the reaction paper afterwards, or use the questions as a way to approach the discussion. Respond to each question below.
- **Length and Style:** 2-4 pages double-spaced. Be brief and concise. Do NOT provide a full synopsis of the video. This is meant to be a brief reaction paper that you write soon after watching the video—we want your ideas and reactions.

**What to Write:** Respond to the following questions in your reaction paper:

1. **Key points:** What important points did you learn about reality therapy? What stands out in how Wubbolding works?

2. **What I found most helpful:** What was most beneficial to you as a therapist about the model presented? What tools or perspectives did you find helpful and might you use in your own work? What challenged you to think about something in a new way?

3. **What does not make sense:** What principles/techniques/strategies did not make sense to you? Did anything push your buttons or bring about a sense of resistance in you, or just not fit with your own style of working? Explore these questions.

4. **How I would do it differently:** What might you have done differently than Wubbolding in the therapy session in the video? Be specific in what different approaches, strategies and techniques you might have applied.

5. **Other Questions/Reactions:** What questions or reactions did you have as you viewed the therapy in the video? Other comments, thoughts or feelings?
Related Websites, Videos, and Further Readings

WEB RESOURCES
Wubbolding’s Center for Reality Therapy
www.realitytherapywub.com
The William Glasser Institute
www.wglasser.com
Interview with Dr. Robert Wubbolding
www.ait.net/workshops/wubbolding
Institute for Reality Therapy UK
www.realitytherapy.org.uk

RELATED VIDEOS AVAILABLE AT WWW.PSYCHOTHERAPY.NET
Reality Therapy for Addictions
Reality Therapy with Children
Multimodal Therapy with Arnold Lazarus, PhD*
*additional video that features the same client

BOOKS


Discussion Questions

Professors, training directors and facilitators may use some or all of these discussion questions, depending on what aspects of the video are most relevant to the audience. On-screen minute markers are noted in parentheses to indicate where a topic arises in the video and transcript.

WUBBOLDING APPROACH

1. Philosophy of Therapy: Reality Therapy emphasizes that clients can improve their lives by accepting full responsibility for, and assuming control of their behavior and choices. Do you share this view? Why or why not? How might reality therapy impact clients who are constrained by external forces--for example, discrimination or incarceration?

PSYCHOTHERAPY SESSION

2. Establishing an Alliance (2-1): How does Wubbolding build an alliance with Juan? Does it seem that they are working towards the same goals? What do you observe that gives you an indication of how comfortable Juan is with Wubbolding at the beginning of the session? What verbal or non-verbal cues suggest to you that Juan may or may not be growing more comfortable as the session progresses? How does Wubbolding’s style facilitate or inhibit their alliance?

3. Process: What do you think of the way Wubbolding directs the conversation back to specific, doable goals in response to Juan’s generalizations and shifts from topic to topic? Why do you think Wubbolding conducts the session this way? What effects does it have on the content and the process of the session? If you were the therapist here, how would you have worked with Juan’s topic shifts and generalizations?

4. Intervention Via Questioning (e.g., 2-14, 15): How effective is Wubbolding’s emphasis on clarifying Juan’s beliefs, goals and choices
in this session? Which parts of the session support your view? When you think about your own clinical cases and ways of conducting therapy, what are the pros and cons of this style? Have you had clients for whom this approach is more or less effective?

5. Choice Point (2-24): Wubbolding asks Juan to imagine a hypothetical situation in order to point out that Juan is making a choice about how quickly he finishes his master’s degree. What is the immediate therapeutic impact of this intervention? What changes do you notice, if any, in Juan’s affect and thoughts about his degree progress in the exchanges that follow? Does Juan seem to become more or less aware of his beliefs, feelings, and choices?

6. Cultural Competence (2-2, 3, 4, 7): Early in the session, Juan repeatedly brings up his cultural identity and thoughts about assimilation, and Wubbolding responds by focusing on Juan’s individual identity and goals. How do you react to this? Does it seem to you like Wubbolding is missing an opportunity to join with Juan, or do you see Wubbolding’s responses as intentionally reshaping the conversation in some way? How do you think this impacts the alliance, affective tone, and content of the rest of the session?

7. Body Language (e.g., 2-24: 2-27): What do you make of Wubbolding’s body language and non-verbal communication over the course of the session? Does Wubbolding’s physical movement towards and away from Juan seem related to his engagement with what Juan is talking about? Why or why not? What immediate effects does Wubbolding’s body language have on Juan? In what ways are you aware of your own body language and the effect it has on your clients?

8. Goal Setting (2-37: 2-40): At the conclusion of the session, Wubbolding urges Juan to plan how he will change his behavior as a result of their conversation. How would you characterize Juan’s reactions to Wubbolding’s suggestions? Does Juan seem to engage with these suggestions or withdraw from them? Based on Juan’s affect and comments, what expectations do you have about the likelihood that he will implement these
changes? If you were Juan’s therapist, in what other ways might you want to work with Juan regarding his goals for change?

GROUP DISCUSSION

9. **Your Therapeutic Style:** What will you take away from watching how Wubbolding works with Juan? What aspects of his approach would you like to integrate into your therapeutic style, and the way in which you assess your clients’ choices, goals, and therapeutic progress? What new tools or approaches would you use in your goal-setting with clients?

10. **Your Therapist:** How would you feel having Wubbolding as your therapist? Do you think that you could form a working alliance with him? Would you feel comfortable formulating a plan and expressing vulnerable feelings with him? Why or why not?
Dr. Jon Carlson: What do you know about reality therapy?

Dr. Diane Kjos: Well, I know it was developed by a psychiatrist, William Glasser, and it’s based on this concept called Control Theory, but it’s a humanistic, existential kind of background in it. And I think he developed it when he was working with adolescent offenders; I know it’s used a lot in school settings.

Carlson: It’s my understanding that it’s also a very active, a very practical approach, one that’s more thinking, more focused on cognitive. And if I understand the ideas that Glasser was talking about, he said it’s based upon a belief that people are responsible for their own behavior, and that one’s identity and one’s self-worth are really related to one’s own behavior. And when people have problems, it’s because they are irresponsible.

Or they just don’t take responsibility for their own behavior. I’m wondering how this whole theory relates to other theories.

Kjos: I think it’s seen as being a, as you said, a directive type of a
therapy approach, which is similar, for instance, to behavior or cognitive behavior, but it also then has this other piece to it, the humanistic phenomenological, which is similar to person-centered or existential, so I see it kind of bridging between the two extremes or the two poles in terms of types of theory.

**Carlson:** Sounds like we know a little bit about this generally. Why don’t we bring in our guest, Dr. Robert Wubbolding, and have him give us some more information about reality therapy.

**Dr. Robert Wubbolding:** Hello, John.

**Carlson:** Hello, Bob. Come on right in. Have a seat.

**Kjos:** Bob.

**Wubbolding:** Hello, Diane. Nice to be here.

**Carlson:** Diane and I have been having a discussion about reality therapy, and we’re just not sure what reality therapy is. Can you help us understand?

1—3

**Wubbolding:** Yes, reality therapy is the method that, as you said before, that William Glasser developed, and it is based on the idea that we have inner control and a lot more control than we think we have. And it’s based on the idea that when we work with somebody, we help them identify what they want, how they perceive the world around them, how hard they want to work at improving their lives. Then we get them to examine how it’s going, what are they doing, what are they thinking, what are they feeling… mostly what are they doing. And then we have them evaluate what’s going on, and that’s a very detailed process, and then we encourage them to make some plans. This used to be formulated as eight steps but about 1986, we abandoned the eight steps and reformulated it into two major components called environment and procedures.

1—4

And what I have done is to try to take the—or the procedures and formulate them in a way that people can remember using a formulation called WDEP—wants, doing, evaluation and planning—
which is a very, very brief summary of the overall procedures.

**Carlson:** Can you talk about each of those four steps?

**Wubbolding:** Yeah. Now, first of all, they’re not really steps because it’s more of a system and you would take out of the system what’s useful at a given moment. I know of one reality therapist, for example, somebody walks in and sits down. He says, “Hi, I’m Bob. What’s your plan?” That’s not my style, but it sounds a little bit hurried to me, but, but the point illustrates that this is a system, not steps.

But maybe I should explain a little background as to where or how these fit into a theory, which would help me elaborate on each point.

1—5

Reality therapy is based, as you said, on Control Theory or Control System Theory, which is a cybernetic theory. And Glasser has taken it and made it a clinical model and an educational model, and it’s based on the idea that we are not driven to do whatever we do by past history nor by external stimuli that we get from the world around us. So what motivates us is our five needs: our need for belonging, our need for power, our need for fun or enjoyment, our need for freedom or independence or perhaps what Piaget called autonomy, and then our need for survival, which is our need for life. Sexuality is connected with that, also. So those are the five drives and needs that everybody has, we say. Not that anybody has researched this with four billion people, but what we say is that this is a way of looking at human nature and that these are the forces that drive us.

1—6

We say they’re multicultural. People have them everywhere. And it’s certainly something that unites human beings.

What is the next motivator is our specific wants, and these of course, are unique to every individual. And our behavior is an attempt to get those, and what we really want is perceptions. We want the perception from the world around us. So our behavior is designed to get us the perception we want. In fact, we want the perception so much that we will actually sometimes deny ourselves information from the world around us so, to maintain a perception.
Carlson: I’m not sure what that means. Can you give us an example of that, Bob?

Wubbolding: I can give you a good example of that. I like to ask people this question: How many people in a group of, say, 25 people would want to know everything that happens in an autopsy? How many people want to know everything that happens in the kitchen of a restaurant?

1—7

Carlson: I see.

Wubbolding: In other words, sometimes we will deny it. I’m not recommending this. I’m just saying we will actually deny ourselves information to maintain a certain perception. We want the perception of being an adequate person, being a competent person, being capable, being a good parent, being a good teacher, whatever it may be.

Kjos: So this is an internal perception, rather than our concern about how others see us?

Wubbolding: Well, that’s part of what we want, many... You would want people to see us in a certain way. That would be part of what we want.

Kjos: So we, we would even deny how other people see us if it’s necessary.

Wubbolding: Sometimes. Appropriately or inappropriately, sure.

Carlson: Can you go back to this WDEP?

Wubbolding: Yeah. It’s a formulation of the procedures based on the Control System Theory, and what we would do with that is try to establish an atmosphere, a climate, and then the procedures are the interventions that we actually make.

1—8

The W standing for the exploration of the person’s quality world or mental picture album. This is a little bit of the jargon we use. There’s not a lot of jargon in the system, but there is just a little bit of technical language, and that is the quality world being everything in our head.
that we have found over the years to be need satisfying. We might have a specific idea or a general idea of what a need-satisfying person is in a relationship or a job or a career or something that we enjoy doing.

**Carlson:** So you take these general wants people have and then get them to get more specific?

**Wubbolding:** More specific, right.

**Carlson:** So that they can actually be clear what the goals are?

**Wubbolding:** That’s right. And some people have rather generalized pictures of what they want.

**Carlson:** That’s not too helpful, then.

**Wubbolding:** Well, it may be the best they can do, but we try to get them to clarify it. It’s like, you know, you want to eat dinner tonight, but you don’t know exactly what you want.

So the want for dinner is there, but the clarification of it takes some time and dialogue back and forth and eventually the person clarifies it.

**Carlson:** I think I understand the W part. What’s the next? D?

**Wubbolding:** The D is the exploration of what’s, of the behavior, the total behavior, the action/thinking/feeling and even physiology. And you know, “what are you doing? How are you spending your time? What did you do yesterday? What did you do overall? Was there ever a time when you did something that was problem-free?” And we would explore that at, in great detail.

And then some thoughts: what are you telling yourself as far as control? What are you telling yourself as far as where your control is? And, for example, perhaps a very hostile, difficult person, there’s a lot of self talk that that person chooses which would be like, “Nobody’s going to tell me what to do.

Everybody’s against me. I can’t do anything about this.” And so we might explore that to some extent.
And then the feelings. The feelings, the emotions are like the red lights on the dashboard of a car. When they go on, you know something’s wrong. When a person gets depressed, we say the depression’s not the problem; the depression’s the symptom of the problem, and so we would really help that person examine his or her total life as to how the individual’s living and then get them to do something different about it.

**Kjos:** And the E… You had W,D, E…

**Wubbolding:** The E is the heart and soul, it’s the cornerstone, it’s the keystone in the arch, it supports everything else, because without that, nothing happens. The self-evaluation. It’s like looking in the mirror and saying, “What am I doing? How am I living my life? And is it really the way I want to live it?” And I would say this, that as human beings, we have what I sometimes refer to as this relentless undying belief in something that doesn’t work.

1—11
Like looking for the car keys in the same place 25 times. You know, figuring that they will miraculously appear the 26th time. And sometimes, we do things not knowing that it’s not working, and so we, we need to have that client really self-evaluate. Many clients don’t know how to self-evaluate. For example, if you’re raised in a family where there is a lot of turmoil, a lot, perhaps chemical dependency, perhaps inconsistency, the person grows up not knowing what helps, what works, what doesn’t work. And I think we need to be fairly clear about our interventions and teach the individual that this helps and this doesn’t help.

**Carlson:** What about defense mechanisms, I would think would be really a problem when people are trying to evaluate themselves. How does a reality therapist…

**Wubbolding:** It certainly is, and defense mechanisms are behaviors that we generalize, that we generate.

1—12
Denying, minimizing, rationalizing, putting blame on other people: this would be, these are behaviors we generate to get our needs met.
And so the way we would deal with them is by having the person describe exactly what’s going on in his or her life, or in some cases, what other people say is going on. Like a person who’s chemically dependent might say, “Well, I don’t, you know, I really don’t drink that much. I don’t really, I don’t really do drugs or whatever.” Well, the intervention would be made as, as is very common in that particular field, based on what other people say.

**Kjøs:** What about a person who sees themselves as constrained by outer forces, such as racial or gender?

**Wubbolding:** Sure. Sure. There’s a, I mean, you know, a limitation in our choice is clear in our society, and many people don’t have as many choices as other people have because of race, because of sex, because of age, because of disability, 1001 things.

1—13

What we would do in this system is really try to help them focus on the possible, and I think, I think counseling, like politics, is the art of the possible. It’s what you can do. And we would really have them evaluate what is realistically doable and attainable. And really help them, one thing we would help them do is evaluate whether that perception of being a total victim is really helping them, and we would try to have them evaluate it. We wouldn’t say you are or aren’t. That would not be, I don’t think, a reality therapist’s position to do that, but help them evaluate and really focus on what they can control and work on it. And, of course, lots of systemic changes which we could help to facilitate, but that would not be unique to reality therapy. That part would not be unique at all.

1—14

**Carlson:** And so then the P part, is that the action part of this?

**Wubbolding:** The P stands for planning. A realistic, doable, measurable plan: “What will you do today to make things different?” So that’s really the culmination. It’s the part that’s easily remembered, and certainly not unique to reality therapy, but it is something people associate with this system.

**Carlson:** We were trying to talk and look at how reality therapy
compares to the other theories. And as you talked, you talk about the thinking part and the feeling part and the doing part.

**Wubbolding:** I would put it in the general category of a cognitive behavioral theory.

**Carlson:** The thinking/doing.

**Wubbolding:** Yeah, I would just put it in that school of thought. But it has, as you said earlier, the other elements, too.

**Kjos:** My sense is that you would put it “doing” first. Or would you put…

1—15

**Wubbolding:** Well, this is a very good point. We emphasize the doing but there’s a lot of thinking, as you’ll see in the video there’s a lot of thinking that goes into it, helping the person evaluate. And sometimes, the plan you just make, the action plan is made very quickly. So there’s a lot of cognition that we emphasize in the system.

But your question how does it compare specifically with other theories, I think, is important. I think we probably don’t emphasize the family constellation as much as Adlerian. We would see the need for significance as very important, probably in the area of power, and we would, we would… But the idea of inner responsibility and inner ability to control would be, I think, I think a theme that runs throughout most of the very current and popular theories.

1—16

Many people suggest there are similarities with Albert Ellis’s rational emotive behavioral therapy, and there would be as far as technique goes, but the theory is very different. We stress the idea of those needs as being motivators and innate, whereas his particular school stresses that those are not needs. It’s nice, he says, to have them but you don’t really need them. We see, we see thinking as a behavior, not as the source of a problem. It’s something you generate along with action and feelings and physiology.

**Carlson:** One of the confusing parts for me, I think I’m beginning to understand this a little bit more, but then we get into this biological
part. You just made a reference to that, and I’ve read some of these, the neurobiology that Dr. Glasser talks about. I’m not sure I, how that fits into this. It almost sounds like…

1—17

Wubbolding: Your biological behaviors are just that: they are behaviors. And there may be some chemical imbalance with some people, but how do you know? I mean, as counselors, we don’t treat people as physicians, but we would ask them about it. We’d ask how is your life direction impacting your physiology? And have them kind of look at that and, of course, have them get medical opinions about it. But we really, never really know how much is determined biologically.

Carlson: That’s the part I couldn’t figure out. When I look at things biologically, psychologically and socially and Glasser has quite a bit that he does talk about, the biological, and it, yet I don’t see that used very much in the treatment protocol.

Wubbolding: I think because most people who do this are not physicians, and probably very cautious about even getting close to it.

Carlson: Would Glasser himself?

1—18

Wubbolding: He might. He might. Sure.

But we don’t, he has a statement in one of his books, a book called What Are You Doing?, where he makes the statement of, that medication is helpful but he certainly does not agree with large doses for long periods of time and thinking that that’s the cure.

Carlson: In a few minutes, we’re going to watch you in a demonstration. What were your goals as a reality therapist in this demonstration?

Wubbolding: My goals were primarily, I guess you’d call them process goals, is to help this client, about whom I knew almost nothing beforehand, a few facts, but had to help him identify, and to clarify what he wanted, what we call his quality world. An analogy that explains it a little bit more is something that I’ve been using just for about a month now, and that is, his inner house, his mental house.
And my goal was to try to get into his mental house, to become somebody that he could relate to and connect with to some extent. And then to get him to identify what he wanted. And so we take, we take seriously what people say they wanted and work with that and work with what they present to us. So that was my goal, would be to start at that point and, and then to get him to talk a little about, you know, what’s going on in his life, especially what he’s doing. Especially what he’s doing. More than what he’s feeling and more than what he’s thinking. Not that we ignore those. As a matter of fact, that’s one of the misconceptions about reality therapy is that we don’t talk about or deal with emotions or feelings. I think that’s an erroneous point. But we emphasize the action part, so I would, my goal is to get him to talk about that and then to evaluate it.

**Carlson:** So more in the doing and getting him to accept responsibility for his actions?

**Wubbolding:** Yeah.

**Carlson:** Is that something we should look for when we look…

**Wubbolding:** I would say look for focusing on what he can control.

**Kjos:** What are some of the other things we might look for in terms of what you’re doing in the session?

**Wubbolding:** Well, people tell me that when I work with people, they say, they observe my body language, which I am not very much aware of at the time, but how, how I kind of perhaps engage him with, with my, moving toward him when he’s talking about something that he can control and how I sort of withdraw when he’s not talking about something he can control, which I’m not aware of. But that might be something to look and listen for.

Also, listen for the atmosphere. Not only the words but the music, the, was it a friendly atmosphere? Was it safe, the usual things that I think apply to any counseling.

**Carlson:** Can you talk a little more about that? That’s one of the
hallmarks of reality therapy, is setting up that environment, or that, I think you call it a psychological atmosphere?

1—21

**Wubbolding:** Yeah, it’s, perhaps Carl Rogers said it, you know, the climate, the atmosphere, the almost unspoken ability to connect with this person. I mean, is there empathy and regard? I mean, these are parts of the atmosphere.

**Carlson:** So it’s good, healthy…

**Wubbolding:** Those are very, very much applicable to reality therapy. And so I don’t want to imply that this is anything, in any way a harsh method. I think harshness is the person doing it. If we’re harsh, we’re going to be a harsh reality therapist.

**Carlson:** So we’d see those good healthy, helping skills that you see in like person-centered therapy?

**Wubbolding:** Sure. But I would say look also for what is perhaps central to reality therapy, which is identifying what he wants and focusing on what he can get, and you’ll see how he eventually does formulate some very specific plans.

1—22

Also look for any kind of movement, any kind of change in his, in his communication as far as, perhaps, does he get any kind of insight and I think he indicates that in perhaps the way he, his expression.

**Carlson:** Good. Well, let’s watch, watch you at work.

**PSYCHOTHERAPY SESSION**

2—1

**Wubbolding:** Okay, well, hello, Juan. My name is Bob and you’re here for a counseling session. And what do you think about shaking hands before we start?

**Wubbolding Commentary:** The simple technique of asking clients if they want to shake hands appears insignificant and yet it communicates a subtle message, “You have choices.” It sets a tone of client empowerment achieved by taking charge of one’s own life.
Juan: Sure. Okay. Hi.

Wubbolding: So I’m just wondering what thoughts did you have as you came for counseling today?

Juan: Something interesting, I… Let’s see. Sort of like, you know, you wake up and you say to yourself, you know, there was a song out like that, wasn’t there? How did I get here? Where do I go from here? But I recently ran into one of my high school counselors, and that was the year I dropped out of high school and I was 16, and it was really interesting to bump into him again. He… You know, it was just odd. It was odd. I wonder what he had in his mind, with the picture of me then still seems unchanged as to what he sees in me now.

2—2

But I remember at the time him saying, you know, “Your problems are rooted in the fact that you’re not as Americanized as your brother,” which didn’t mean a damn thing to me. And still doesn’t. It’s a weird, it’s an odd statement. I don’t understand what that means. But it’s maybe a sense of dislocation for one reason or another from someone who pretends to be perceptive. Or just on a daily basis. I don’t know.

Wubbolding Commentary: From the very beginning, Juan talks about events over which he has very little control. Because the experience of them might be painful to him, I tried to listen carefully while gently helping him focus on current events and behaviors over which he does have control.

Wubbolding: Well, was this something that happened recently or…

Juan: Yeah, I just saw this guy, gee whiz, just saw him again last week, I think. Nice man, but just kind of out of touch, I think.

Wubbolding: I’m not sure how that, you know, what that does to you, I mean, when you, when somebody says that to you.

Juan: I think what, because at the time, I think I was more frustrated with a lot of things. I think the things that still frustrate me but are more pronounced now or seem more pronounced now.

2—3

I don’t know. It had something to do with dropping out, with getting
somewhere and then dropping out again in college later and then again at another school. And I can’t seem to finish my Master’s thesis, which I am putting off endlessly right now. But I want to pinpoint the frustration but, damn it, I know it’s not because, you know, of not being Americanized or whatever the heck that is supposed to mean. So I think that was probably the last time I tried approaching anything. You know what I mean? In this, in this manner. So.

**Wubbolding**: What would you like to have happen here today as we talk?

**Wubbolding Commentary**: A therapist might be tempted to pursue the many frustrations expressed in his comments. From the point of view of reality therapy, such counseling could result in an endless process characterized by discussions focusing on his frustrations and many other more intense feelings. Acknowledging such pain is helpful but I chose to ask him what he believes he could accomplish today. My thought was that with many clients in many settings, only one session is available. So, my axiom is, “Let’s make it a good one, and make it action centered with a measurable plan as the immediate outcome.”

**Juan**: Let’s see. Get a career plan. Go home and start writing my, the outline to my thesis. I guess decide whether or not to go on for some kind of PhD program or terminal degree or something else. I don’t know. And to believe that that is there for me, that I can participate in that.

**Wubbolding Commentary**: The above question helps Juan focus. He does not feel misunderstood nor does he feel that his pain has been minimized.

2—4

**Wubbolding**: Does any of that have to do with being more Americanized or something? Less Americanized?

**Juan**: Well, not to me. I mean, heck, you know, I mean, I, what the hell. You know, I… I think it might mean that to people around me but not a whole bunch. I mean, it’s not like everyone… The walls don’t have eyes, you know what I’m saying? But it seems that everywhere you go, you run into people now and then who will project that upon
you, and for the life of you, you’re sort of like pawing at a windowpane and you can’t wipe that windowpane clean, and they’re looking through that, and it’s odd. It’s an odd feeling sometimes. And it seems to happen with… I shouldn’t trouble me as much. I guess it shouldn’t trouble me as much, but it seems to happen with people who are in authority, who are, teachers or this counselor, you know. It’s odd. You just want to rap on the window.

**Wubbolding Commentary:** Juan provides several areas that could be explored. Rather than helping him elaborate or even indulge feelings of victimization, I chose to emphasize in an indirect way what he could do about these feelings. This is based on the principle that discussions centering on pain does not equal dealing with it. Dealing with pain at least includes a method and a pathway for relieving it. This method and pathway are often indirect rather than direct. The Ericksonian principle fits with reality therapy: “Sometimes there is not a one-to-one correlation between the problem and the solution.” I tried to be of help to Juan in this indirect manner: find success in your life and thus replace the pain.

**Wubbolding:** We can accomplish a limited amount in the time that we have. Which of those do you think would be easiest to work on?

**Wubbolding Commentary:** I chose to ask the question which involved the word “easiest” because of the importance of helping him begin to traverse a pathway leading to the satisfaction of his wants/needs. I thought he felt overwhelmed. Starting with a huge problem, it seemed to me, would only discourage him.

**Juan:** Which of?

**Wubbolding:** Well, career, finishing the dissertation.

**Juan:** Probably, career, I guess then, yeah.

2—5

**Wubbolding:** Think that’s easier?

**Juan:** You know why? Because… Yeah, you know why, because I think that you’re supposed to, you, the efficacy of education, I mean, right, you’re supposed to gain insight and integrity and you’re supposed to have that stand up inside you, and I don’t know if that makes me
quaint, but I believe that. And when I encounter people who, you know, Dr. So and So or Professor So and So and they don’t behave that way, I think to myself, you know, “What, where’s the value?” It doesn’t have to be an absolute value, but you know what I mean. Where’s the integrity? Where did it go? What’s the point? And then that’s probably why I drop out again.

_Wubbolding:_ Again.

_Juan:_ Well, I mean, you know, there’s no guarantees. I mean, why do it?

**Wubbolding Commentary:** _In spite of my specific question, Juan chooses a rather general topic and then seems to be unfocused in his comments. Nevertheless, I follow his lead and in the next question ask him indirectly (paradoxically) to self-evaluate a possible choice._

_Wubbolding:_ Well, what if you did drop out? So what?

_Juan:_ What if I did again? Yeah, at this point, it’s so what, I think. I regret not being done already, you know. I would like to be a professor now.

2—6

I don’t know. I think I did a lot of things that were very good. In a way, I think that dropping out was the best thing I did, really. At least the first two times. I don’t know about the last two times, but…

_Wubbolding:_ I take it that this career or finishing whatever it may be, school et cetera, you know, finishing projects major or minor, would do something inside for you, would satisfy some longing or some drive inside of you. Is that accurate?

**Wubbolding Commentary:** _I asked him about his internal motivations and how they are satisfied, in this case the need for power, achievement or accomplishment. His response below indicates that he prefers to talk about his external world, i.e., topics out there rather than his own internal personal motivations._

_Juan:_ Yeah, I… I… You know, I think I can do it about as well as the next person if not better, especially if I sit and concentrate and put my mind to it. But I guess I keep selling myself short and, you know, how
this hen pecking… I think it’s the dictatorship of the mundane, the dictatorship of mediocrity of the 20th century. The problem is noise. People talk too damn much, and they have nothing to say.

2—7

But darn it, they’ll assert their right to say it, you know. And you just want to tell them, “Shhhh.” You know, or rap on the window and, you know, “Go pick up a book. Go enjoy it,” you know. I don’t know. There doesn’t seem to be any, any… I don’t know. I don’t know. Maybe it’s all industry now. Maybe it’s all, the universities are just businesses now. I don’t know.

But I always thought, I was always brought up to think, you know, you’re a teacher. You’re a doctor. You’re a priest. You know, my parents, that’s, they were, you know, campesinos, you know, they were migrant workers. They were field workers. They didn’t go to school like me, you know. And you know, I don’t know if, I guess I’m sort of pushed into that, too. I happen to be good at it, but I’m still not sure if it’s, that’s the spaces that I want to find myself in. So.

**Wubbolding Commentary:** I listened carefully and tried to think of an intelligent response based on reality therapy. Once again, my goal is to help him focus on specifics related to him-self and over which he has at least some degree of control. In my response below I once again ask him about what he wants.

**Wubbolding:** I think we need, I need to ask you about a sense of direction, and I need to ask you about what’s in your head as far as what you want for yourself.

But let me ask you another question first. If you were to be doing this afternoon, today, what you really, what would really satisfy something inside of you, what would it be?

2—8

**Juan:** Probably climbing the Alps. Or…

**Wubbolding Commentary:** He once again demonstrates his skill at avoiding specifics. Juan’s therapist needs to be patient and understand how difficult it is for him to self-disclose.
Wubbolding: Okay, what’s the second thing? Something that’s doable.

Wubbolding Commentary: I respect his response, accept it and help him move to something more concrete, realistically attainable and need satisfying.

Juan: That’s doable? Ideally or…

Wubbolding: No. Just like, this afternoon.

Wubbolding Commentary: I try to focus on today rather than on “ideally…” In practicing reality therapy the therapist needs to assist clients to be specific in defining their wants, describing their behavior and in formulating action plans.

Juan: If I were to do something this afternoon?

Wubbolding: Within your, within your world. What would it be?

Wubbolding Commentary: The practitioner of reality therapy needs to be firm but not harsh, empathic but not colluding with client’s avoidance or resistance.

Juan: I don’t know. I’d like to have more money, because if I had more money I could entertain myself in certain ways that you need, you know. I would kill the afternoon shopping, I think, you know.

Wubbolding: You’d be shopping.

Juan: Why not? You know, I need, I need the clothes and…

Wubbolding: How would that fit in with a kind of a life goal?

Juan: It probably wouldn’t, but it’s what I’d do this afternoon.

Wubbolding: But it’d be fun.

Juan: Yeah, sure. Definitely. You know. I need a new winter coat, winter’s coming up, so.

Wubbolding: Well, that would be fairly easy to accomplish in a counseling session, I think.

2—9

Juan: Yeah. There you go. Go get the Spiegel catalogue or whatever they use.
**Wubbolding**: So what would it be? Would there be something that you’d be doing that would be within the, you know, the line of your overall hope for yourself?

**Wubbolding Commentary**: I respect Juan’s tangent but because I know reality therapy, I appreciate the importance of bringing him back to something that pertains to his more specific wants and to something that I can help him with in one session.

**Juan**: I’d like to go back and…

**Wubbolding**: I’m not minimizing shopping, you understand. I’m not minimizing it.

**Juan**: Yeah. No. I’d, if it were something in line, what I would need to do is work on my thesis and beyond that, I think I’d like to go back to my writing. I used to want, I still want. I always say “used to,” I think, as a way of, the fact that I dropped from that thing also, but I would like to do that again. I would like to do it as seriously as I once did.

**Wubbolding**: Do more writing?

**Juan**: Yes.

**Wubbolding**: When was the last time you did that?

**Juan**: Oh, I guess last trimester here.

**Wubbolding**: How many months ago was that?

**Juan**: I don’t know. What are we in? October.

2—10

November first, rather.

No, I think it would have to be April or May, at least, the last time I participated in anything here.

**Wubbolding**: Is that the last time you did anything on your own, too?

**Juan**: No. You mean writing-wise?

**Wubbolding**: As far as writing, yeah.

**Juan**: No. I, it had to be a couple months ago, you know.

**Wubbolding**: But I get the idea you’re kind of a little frustrated in that
you haven’t done more of that.

**Wubbolding Commentary:** *Juan formulates a specific want, i.e., to write more. It is not yet clear, at this point, whether he wishes to take action toward fulfilling the want.*

**Juan:** Yeah. That’s right. You know, sometimes it seems too easy. It seems too easy. I think a lot of that is, they say urine. You know, you look out there. I have a lot of… Because it’s terrible. It’s terrible writing, and it’s not life affirming. It’s fragmentated, fragmented.

**Wubbolding:** It’s long-range pay off sort of thing.

**Juan:** It’s goofy, you know. And if you look at certain things, like I was at a coffee shop recently. They had a section on, like, Hispanic writers, you know, and they had a couple of books of poetry and these guys are from LA or what not, and they were singing their praises and they were terrible, to a man. Every single one of them was a hellatious … terrible.

2—11

And I’m thinking, you know, that’s again problems with windows, rapping on windows and perceptions. And also, I think it’s a real dearth or is it, are we that, is it, are people searching, is that the industry? People are searching… I don’t want to be fitted into that, you know what I mean. I don’t want to be fitted into that. And someone would say, “Well, you…”

**Wubbolding:** That’s what you don’t want, but you want, do you want to write?

**Wubbolding Commentary:** *With this simple question I try to refocus the discussion on a possible specific want. Students watching the video repeatedly comment about Juan’s unique skill in avoiding a discussion of specifics. My response to their observation is that counseling Juan is very enjoyable because he is an interesting person and he presents so many discussion points that can be translated into WDEP questions especially centering on “What do you want?”*

**Juan:** I sure do, but I think that people are going to say, “Well, you know, here’s another Hispanic writer.” You know, be I better than or
less accomplished than these other guys, you know what I mean? I just would rather not be compartmentalized that way. I don’t think other people are asking to be compartmentalized that way, and maybe we shouldn’t do that in the canon of literature.

**Wubbolding:** Well, that’s what they say. What do you say?

**Wubbolding Commentary:** *The key in the above comment is to focus on Juan.*

**Juan:** Well, I think some of them are culture specific, whatever that means, but I think most of my things are, you know, pretty darn Midwestern suburban and occasional leaps into universal.

**Wubbolding:** When you do it, do you get a sense of pride?

**Wubbolding Commentary:** *Once again, I ask about his internal motivations, his need for power, achievement or accomplishment.*

**Juan:** Sometimes. Sometimes, sometimes I do it, I know it’s good. Sometimes I do it and it’s fantastic.

**Wubbolding Commentary:** *This time the question is like a key in a lock; it fits perfectly.*

2—12

**Wubbolding:** Let me ask you this. If you were, and we’re kind of just really focusing on one little thing here for a moment.

**Juan:** Okay.

**Wubbolding:** If you were, if you were to write, or when you write, what percentage of the time would you say that you feel, “Now, this is really something I like.” What percentage of the time?

**Juan:** When I do it? The whole time. The whole time. People are silly are when they say, “I hate writing, but I love having seen what I’ve written.”

**Wubbolding:** One hundred percent of the time? You feel pride and…

**Juan:** Yeah, well, unless it’s for a class. You know, term papers don’t count.

**Wubbolding:** Yeah. But we’re talking about the kind of writing you
really want to do.

Juan: Yeah. Yeah. Even if it’s terrible, I still enjoy the act. When something’s done, it’s just, you throw it out.

Wubbolding: You accomplish something.

Wubbolding Commentary: I insist on feeding back to him that I heard him say that writing is internally satisfying.

Juan: Yeah.

Wubbolding: It satisfies something in here.

Juan: Right. But you can’t make money on that. It’s really not respectable. It’s really…

Wubbolding: Not yet.

Juan: Yeah. Not yet. I don’t know. I don’t know. Maybe I should have done that, too. So. I don’t know.

Wubbolding: If you were to spend the next day or two working on some kind of a project like that, what would that do for you? Based on what you just told me.

Wubbolding Commentary: By now it should be clear that the practice of reality therapy involves asking questions. However, they are questions related to the theory underlying reality therapy, choice theory. The above question, posed with a hypothetical “if,” once again aims at helping Juan be specific. I also attempt to be patient but persistent.

Juan: Oh, I’d get, I’d feel better. Then I’d feel like something, you know, substantive. You look and, you put it in the portfolio, right, but it’s something that’s complete.

Wubbolding: You feel a little sense of control? In your life, I mean. You know, you feel, “I did this. It’s accomplished.”

Juan: Well, I don’t know if… Yeah. I would feel a sense of accomplishment. I don’t know if it’s control.

Wubbolding: Well, I mean inner control.

Juan: Even that.
Wubbolding: Satisfaction.

Wubbolding Commentary: I’m trying to select words that appeal to Juan and that genuinely help him reflect on his inner motivations. He will later clarify “satisfaction” as relief.

Juan: Yeah, I would feel satisfied. I would, yeah. I’ve just become such a slouch, I think. So, I don’t know.

Wubbolding: Is that, is that kind of the way you’ve been thinking about yourself?

Wubbolding Commentary: Juan moves from his wants to his behavior: not his actions as much as his cognition, i.e., what he tells himself. In the context of self-talk based on choice theory his underlying statement seems to be “I can’t.” He expresses it as though he has become “such a slouch.” Self-talk as seen in reality therapy is described in the book Reality Therapy for the 21st Century, pages 68 – 72.

Juan: Yeah. Yeah. But it’s true, though. You know, I mean, it’s, it’s what I’ve been doing. I’ve been wasting, wasting my time now for awhile, so.

2—14

Wubbolding: You’re the worst slouch that ever walked the planet?

Wubbolding Commentary: In an indirect and paradoxical manner I ask him to self-evaluate his thinking about being a slouch.

Juan: No. Probably…

Wubbolding: Okay, so you’re not that bad.

Juan: No. No.

Wubbolding: Okay. Now, let me ask you this: you tell yourself, kind of, “I’m a slouch.”

Juan: Yes.

Wubbolding: Okay. Where’s that getting you?

Wubbolding Commentary: I ask him directly to make a self-evaluation of his self-talk.

Juan: Bad posture, I think. I mean, it doesn’t, it doesn’t…

Juan: Yeah, I would feel satisfied. I would, yeah. I’ve just become such a slouch, I think. So, I don’t know.

Wubbolding: Is that, is that kind of the way you’ve been thinking about yourself?

Wubbolding Commentary: Juan moves from his wants to his behavior: not his actions as much as his cognition, i.e., what he tells himself. In the context of self-talk based on choice theory his underlying statement seems to be “I can’t.” He expresses it as though he has become “such a slouch.” Self-talk as seen in reality therapy is described in the book Reality Therapy for the 21st Century, pages 68 – 72.

Juan: Yeah. Yeah. But it’s true, though. You know, I mean, it’s, it’s what I’ve been doing. I’ve been wasting, wasting my time now for awhile, so.

2—14

Wubbolding: You’re the worst slouch that ever walked the planet?

Wubbolding Commentary: In an indirect and paradoxical manner I ask him to self-evaluate his thinking about being a slouch.

Juan: No. Probably…

Wubbolding: Okay, so you’re not that bad.

Juan: No. No.

Wubbolding: Okay. Now, let me ask you this: you tell yourself, kind of, “I’m a slouch.”

Juan: Yes.

Wubbolding: Okay. Where’s that getting you?

Wubbolding Commentary: I ask him directly to make a self-evaluation of his self-talk.

Juan: Bad posture, I think. I mean, it doesn’t, it doesn’t…
Wubbolding: Well, what I mean is, Juan, is it helping or hurting you?

Wubbolding Commentary: Once again, I ask the same question in a different way.

Juan: Oh, it’s got to be hurting me. I mean, gee whiz, I, I should be done. I should have finished this thesis...

Wubbolding: No, I mean telling yourself that.

Juan: Well, I mean, it’s not a positive thing. I mean, surely, but it’s...

Wubbolding: Well, I like, I ask a lot of questions as you noticed, and some questions seem very simple when I ask them.

Are you telling me that, you know, that kind of inner conversation doesn’t really help you much? That kind of criticizing?

Juan: In some ways I think it does. I think it does. I think people need a sense of, being self-critical, you know.

2—15

Why would you want to be so free and easy about everything, you know? Everyone has an opinion, but is it critical? No way.

Wubbolding: What I mean is, does it help you to develop this writing habit that you want?

Wubbolding Commentary: Gentle persistence is the concept behind the above segment. I continue to focus on Juan’s self-evaluation. He avoids facing the ineffectiveness of his behavior, i.e., self-talk, when he says that it is helping him. The axiom “Don’t give up” on the system applies here.

Juan: I think it, you know, actually, probably not. When I was... Because I dropped out of school, you know, and then I went to an art school, and that’s when I, I got there on the strength of my writing because I had straight E’s, you know. I think I did it a lot more freely then; it was a lot more fun. You’re a kid. You know, you have this silly romantic notion of doing something.

Wubbolding: Well, it sounds like you still have kind of a romantic notion of doing something.

Juan: Well, yeah, but you know, now I have all these...
**Wubbolding:** That’s what great, that’s what great writing is made of, isn’t it?

**Wubbolding Commentary:** Because of the gradual strengthening of the therapeutic alliance I feel comfortable interrupting Juan occasionally in order to keep the focus on his motivations and behavior rather than extensive discussions about the world out there.

**Juan:** Yeah, I think so. I think so, but I don’t know. I don’t know.

**Wubbolding:** Well, I’m not trying to talk you into it. I’m just asking you, you know, to kind of take a look at that, see if that’s where you want to go.

2—16

**Juan:** Yeah, I think I would go… there’s an MFA, you know, you can get it in writing but it would just seem easy. It would seem pointless. It would seem like a pointless degree in a way, in the same way this English degree is sort of pointless.

**Wubbolding:** Well, that’s something to examine and to weigh. But you’re interested in it.

**Juan:** A degree, cultural currency. Someone says, you know, “You can get a job.” So.

**Wubbolding:** Well, when you get a job, they’re going to have to train you anyway, no matter what, no matter what you study.

**Wubbolding Commentary:** This is an attempt to help him drop his excuses without criticizing him.

**Juan:** Yeah, I know. Yeah. So. But at least it’s something that can be done. I went to a high school reunion recently and it was really—I had to crash the reunion, since I wasn’t invited and I haven’t graduated. It was a, it was a great time. Saw a lot of people I liked and a lot of people who, jeez, you know, 10 years, it’s just fascinating. These people, man, it’s a shame. You know, out of shape, balding, divorced.

**Wubbolding:** A lot of older people, huh?

**Juan:** Yeah. A lot of older people. I couldn’t believe it.

**Wubbolding:** I noticed that at my reunions, too.
Wubbolding Commentary: *My attempt at humor might have been a bit feeble!*


2—17

Wubbolding: It’s interesting, it’s interesting that you say you crashed the reunion, so that must have taken a little determination.

Wubbolding Commentary: *Part of the therapeutic relationship is not merely seeing the client’s point of view but helping him broaden his perspective of himself. Reframing “crashing” the reunion was an attempt to help him see that underlying this behavior is a quality that he can use to achieve a more satisfying goal.*

Juan: Yeah, it did. Yeah. Well, sure. Yeah. Yeah. It was funny. It was…

Wubbolding: I’m wondering if you want to try to work on capitalizing on that determination and sort of spreading it. I mean, not that you’re not determined. It’s just a matter of adding on to it.

Juan: If I could feel large like that, larger than life, on a regular basis, maybe, like that, that would be good. If that’s what you’re asking. I don’t know. I felt… It was, it was, it was fun. At least I’ll have a Master’s, you know. At least, and these other, these other slobs will not have theirs, so.

Wubbolding: And if you have it, you’re going to feel something inside of you. Some… some…

Juan: Yeah. At least it’s one less obstacle you need to worry about. Someone will say, “What are you now,” you know, “you un-Americanized dropout?” And I will say, “You know, friend, you know, this means nothing to me except in the cultural currency, except for the social areas, and so you don’t have this, and where are you now?”

2—18

And so, I do have a lot of anger at least with that, but you know. Best of luck to them. But you know, you shouldn’t treat people like, you know, why should you treat people the way people do? So.
Wubbolding: So, well, you’ve said a lot of things here, Juan, really a lot of things. As a result of our conversation today, you know, 45 minutes or whatever it is, what would you like to be doing? I mean, I know I asked that but, you know, these things change as people talk. You said career. You said finish your research. Write. I mean, I’m just kind of asking you once again to think about that.

Wubbolding Commentary: There are so many areas that a counselor could help Juan explore such as his comments about rapping on a window, being un-Americanized, anger, etc. I heard these cues loud and clear, but I wanted to help him with something realistically doable as a first step toward indirectly dealing with possible feelings of alienation, resentment or loneliness.

Juan: Yeah, I still want to write. I guess it’s really the only thing I’ve wanted to do, and you know, I would be very, more than content publishing those cheesy novels you get in the checkout line at the Kmart as you bring up your, you know, blue light special items, but…

2—19

That would be entirely satisfying. I mean, you know, I’m not going to be any kind of Helprin or Marquez or, you know, people of that nature. And that’s okay, you know, but I would sure like to be able to go home, sit at my, you know, word processor and make a living at that. That would be incredibly, I, I… yeah. I could really do that.

Wubbolding: And you actually have written things.

Juan: Yeah.

Wubbolding: It’s not like this would be the first time you put the finger on the keyboard.

Juan: Right. I actually used to publish things when I was younger. Little things, in little…

Wubbolding: Is that right?

Juan: Yeah. But to, maybe that’s, it just seems easy, you know. I don’t know. It really does.

Wubbolding: How would that propel you along toward a kind of a life direction if you were to do this today, tonight, tomorrow?
Wubbolding Commentary: Once again I try to listen carefully for something specific and concrete and attempt to ask a question aimed at helping him self-evaluate. Self-evaluation is the cornerstone of reality therapy. People change behaviors only after making the judgment that their current direction or specific behaviors are not helping them as much as is desirable to them.

Juan: How would it propel me along in a life direction? I don’t know.

Wubbolding Commentary: He says he doesn’t know. But I can’t help thinking that he does know or can easily discover the answer.

2—20

I probably need a good job, a decent place. I really think that I need those things. Some new clothes. Finish this darn degree and these, you know, then I would feel a sense of accomplishment or worth or, you know, I don’t know. I think I need to grow up.

Wubbolding: Are all those the things that you want to accomplish?

Wubbolding Commentary: He expresses specific wants and then discloses deeper hopes and dreams. My own self-evaluation at this point is that I wish I had reflected more intensely and fed back to him the impact of his above comments. My statement might have been, “You’re really saying something deeply personal. I would imagine it took some courage to say that and to face yourself in such a serious way. Let’s talk about how you could fulfill just one of these desires.”

Juan: I guess. Yeah.

Wubbolding: Those five or six things.

Juan: It’d be less to worry about.

Wubbolding: Okay, and would that constitute “growing up,” as you call it?

Juan: I don’t know. I don’t know. I don’t see it. I think when I was younger, I was almost ready for marriage, it seemed like. I’m glad I didn’t because I was not ready for marriage. But, hell, now that I’m older, I, you know, I have no desire at all to, to mature or something, you know. Whatever it means; I have no idea.
**Wubbolding:** So that’s not something you give a lot of… worry…

**Juan:** No.

**Wubbolding:** You don’t give any worry to that.

**Juan:** Yeah, I really can’t, you know. I mean, I know that I’m an adult, especially. It troubles me when, when like those eight- and nine-year-old kids will say things back to you, and you’re thinking, you know, “My God, you know, I would have never done that.”

2—21

Maybe they’re acting from the TV, but, so I know that. I don’t care for that, you know, I think. Well, I don’t yell at them, but it’s sort of like, “Wow. Jeez.” You know. So no, it’s not something I give a lot of thought to, I guess.

**Wubbolding:** So finishing your, your research, doing some writing and developing a career path, those are some things that are going on inside of you right now?

**Wubbolding Commentary:** Once again Juan and I have one session together. It is not possible to deal with every issue great or small. As with the current standard practice of counseling and therapy I attempted to help him focus on improvement rather than cure.

**Juan:** Yeah.

**Wubbolding:** As we sit here, I mean.

**Juan:** Almost everyday, everyday lately.

**Wubbolding:** Like prey on your mind?

**Juan:** Yeah, I think about it a lot, actually.

You know, I’m living at home. I went home to finish the second degree. It’s going on two and a half years. I’m just, I’m dying to get out, you know. And none of these conversations I can have with my folks.

2—22

I mean, I can, but you know, they don’t understand it. They won’t grasp it; they never have. My family and extended family are busily pursuing, you know, the next sale at Marshall’s and so on and so on
and there’s little resources, that even the friends around here—Well, I don’t usually talk like this, but there’s just really no one to do that with. So their thing is, “Go get a job. You’ve got a degree. Go get it.” You know. But it never worked that way. “You get straight A’s; stay in school.” It never worked that way for me.

**Wubbolding:** You said something there that really caught my attention. You said you don’t usually talk like this. That’s an interesting point.

**Juan:** I don’t think most people do. I mean, that’s… or at least that’s… I don’t think most people do. I mean, you know. Do they? Wouldn’t it be a drag if you were hanging out at a party with someone who, you know… I had a friend like that who cried in his beer all the time, and I couldn’t believe it, so. You know.

**Wubbolding:** Well, I’m not suggesting do it. I’m just saying that you don’t get a chance to do it very often.

**Juan:** Yeah. No, I don’t.

2—23

**Wubbolding:** You’re probably right: a lot of people don’t.

**Juan:** Right. It doesn’t… I don’t know if it brings any solutions, but it’s…

**Wubbolding:** Well, what I’m asking…

**Juan:** Sometimes you want to blab about it. I know I do. Because I, you know, I just, I, you know, I feel like something should be happening. Something should be happening that isn’t.

**Wubbolding:** In your life?

**Juan:** Right. At this point, you know. Maybe that, this completion of the degree will make, you know, springboard into like… So.

**Wubbolding:** Yeah. Yeah. I’m sure it would, but the question is: how do you get started to finish it?

**Wubbolding Commentary:** In the above dialogue Juan discloses what appears to be a sense of loneliness about his life direction. I could have pursued the pathway indicated by his comments regarding an inability
to talk to people or his completion of a degree. I chose the latter with the belief that possible side effects would be the establishment of relationships as well as the inner satisfaction of accomplishment.

Juan: How do I finish the darn thing? Yeah. It’s a good topic.

Wubbolding: That’s right. How do you get started. My question is how do you get started to finish it, not just how do you finish it? I think you know how to finish it.

Juan: Yeah, I just… The research is done. I handed in my works cited thing last trimester. I even honestly began an outline the other day. Something clicked, and so it’s started to move forward, but I’m certainly not going to finish it by the deadline. I mean, I’m going to…

Wubbolding: When is the deadline?

Juan: Well, December something. It’s not going to happen, you know.

2—24

Wubbolding: How much work would it entail?

Wubbolding Commentary: Together we are gradually approaching the plan-making stage of the counseling session.

Juan: I want mine to be long and expansive. And by that, I mean stylistically. I hate things that are choppy and dry, especially if you’re an English major. And I think, I’ve heard, that people here have handed in papers that are like 30 pages long or something and that’s not really…

Wubbolding: I’m just curious: when I ask these really weird questions sometimes—this is, this is kind of a really strange question—but if someone were to guarantee you the exact kind of career and job that you wanted, and maybe you don’t exactly know what it is, but it would be, you know, some kind of guarantee that you would have what you wanted by that deadline, would you be able to finish it by then?

Wubbolding Commentary: That question illustrates my attempt to help him determine whether he can translate wish into a firmly rooted want or goal.

Juan: By the December… Yeah, I, yeah, I think so.
**Wubbolding:** Or if you were to win the lottery by then and somebody guaranteed a winning lottery ticket, would you be able to finish it by then?

**Juan:** Yeah, I would. I, I certainly would. But the stakes are higher then, you know. So.

**Wubbolding:** So the point is that if you wanted to choose to do that, you could do it.

**Wubbolding Commentary:** *I’m helping him reflect on his level of commitment, i.e., whether he wants to work hard at achieving his goal.*

2—25

**Juan:** Yeah, I guess. Yeah, I mean, I could. I should. I know that. I can’t…

**Wubbolding:** Now one thing we do know that there’s, probably, that there’s not going to be anything out there that’s going to be an incentive for you to do it. In the sense of an absolute guarantee about a job or something like that, those ridiculous examples I gave.

**Juan:** Oh, yeah. That’s true. They won’t, they’re not…

**Wubbolding:** So it’s going to have to be something that you tap inside of you.

**Wubbolding Commentary:** *Stated in a wide range of ways I relentlessly return to the theme of his internal motivation. No outside force or environmental influence will determine his behavior.*

**Juan:** Yeah. I mean, yes. That’s true. It would.

I don’t… I would need to do that sometime soon.

**Wubbolding:** How about tonight?

**Juan:** I don’t know about tonight. I’m thinking, what’s on TV?

**Wubbolding:** It’s a bad night for TV.

**Juan:** Is it? Yeah, well, the Bears played on Monday and… You know.

**Wubbolding:** No, I’m just kidding. I don’t know if it’s a bad night or not, but compared with your goal, is it a good night or a bad night?

**Wubbolding Commentary:** *The E of the WDEP system represents*
self-Evaluation. The above either/or question helps him evaluate more specifically and concretely. Open-ended questions can be helpful but clearly Juan’s situation and manner of avoidance would only be encouraged by the exclusive use of open-ended questions.

2—26

Juan: It’s got to be immediate. It’s got to be. I mean, the immediacy is only going to get me out of the house quicker and get me toward these things sooner. But I don’t know.

Wubbolding: See, you can, you can go along the way you’re doing for the next 10 years if you want. It’s not, it’s not like you’re really hurting anybody or really doing great damage to yourself. I don’t, I don’t see that you’re going to really do any damage to yourself. It’s just that you’d like to move along quicker.

Juan: And what then, though? I mean, you know, why be there in 10 years? If I crash the next reunion…

Wubbolding: Yeah, and they could, you can say you’re still working on your research.

Juan: That’s right. They’ll say, “Well, he’s still… he’s getting there.”

Wubbolding: And all those guys and women who are even older.

Juan: And balder, I think. Yeah. No, I don’t know. I, I don’t know. You know, why waste food and air on a person if they’re not doing something. So. You know.

Wubbolding Commentary: Paradoxical techniques are not always effective but in this case Juan tries to convince himself to get to work. I carefully avoided pushing him to move forward. In fact, I made the point that there would be no great harm done if he did very little work on his research and on his career. In the comment below I encourage him by giving him credit for knowing what he needs to do.

Wubbolding: It seems to me it’s up to you. I have a hunch you know exactly what to do.

2—27

Juan: Yeah. I don’t know. I, I have to spend three years in a PhD
program, I suppose, and, man, I don’t know if I want to do that. I want the darn degree, though. I do want the next one. I do want the next one. This thesis has to be decent because it can’t be, it can’t be, you know. I’ve got to get something out of this. Throw it in the college journal. Got to get one or two articles out of this.

**Wubbolding:** Well, on one hand... on one hand, you want to finish it; on the other hand, let’s face it: what’s the rush?

**Wubbolding Commentary:** Once again, in a paradoxical manner I ask him to self-evaluate.

**Juan:** Well, I don’t know if there’s a rush, but...

**Wubbolding:** Your parents aren’t pressuring you to do it or kick you out, are they?

**Juan:** No, but I mean, you know, that’s just, that’s just wretched. I think that’s just a wretched situation, so. I miss my own place, you know. I miss having company. I miss, you know... So.

**Wubbolding:** It’s nice to be, to have your own place and not to have a lot of distractions.

**Wubbolding Commentary:** He insists on defining his want and perhaps he is willing to begin to formulate a plan. Consequently, I join him in indirectly encouraging him to formulate the goal of having his own place.

**Juan:** Right. It is. So. It’s not a, it’s not a rush.

2—28

It’s not a rush, but I can’t prolong it anymore, either.

**Wubbolding:** Well, you can if you want to.

**Juan:** Yeah, but I really don’t want to.

**Wubbolding:** Or you could choose, or you could choose another pathway.

**Juan:** Right.

**Wubbolding:** See, I think the career is out here and doing these other things is like here.

**Juan:** Like endless preparation and never getting there?
Wubbolding: Well, like doing, getting some of these details out of the way like your degree and your research and do some writing, which will help you feel better inside because that’s what you want to do.

Wubbolding Commentary: Once again I emphasize his internal motivation.

Juan: Yeah. Even if you just throw it aside, you know, publish now and then. I mean, what the hell? You know. That’s the neat thing about plays: I mean, you get a check for $20 or $30 every now and then in the mail. It just keeps coming your way.

Wubbolding: Have you had one?

Juan: I got one, so that was neat.

Wubbolding: No kidding.

Juan: Yeah.

Wubbolding: Well, you’ve already proven you can do that.

Juan: Isn’t that a drag? I mean, that’s the same thing. It’s sort of like, well, what then?

It’s sort of like the research is done; why write the paper now?

Wubbolding: You have a play, you had a play inside of you, didn’t you?

Juan: Yeah, that one I did. That one I was, that was, that was a, was sleeping.

Wubbolding: Do you think there’s any more inside waiting to come out?

Wubbolding Commentary: I expressed excitement that he has demonstrated skill and accomplishment and I imply that he can continue on this successful pathway.

Juan: I think maybe one more I got in there, play-wise. The rest, I do a lot of poems, so. One more. You know... I don’t know. Maybe I need to be more productive with that, too. You’ve got to churn things out, right? You can’t...

Wubbolding: Have you written anything on that one play that’s still
inside you?

**Juan:** Yeah, I did. I did, and that came out pretty well, too. My roommate took a monologue from that, took it to this Irene Ryan competition downstate, and people said, “Where did that monologue come from?” And he said, “Oh, it’s my roommate,” and… so. But I never finished that thing.

**Wubbolding:** You never did finish it?

**Juan:** I never finished it.

**Wubbolding:** Up till today.

**Wubbolding Commentary:** These simple words are my attempt to help him reframe what might be a perceived failure into a possible success that he can achieve. Paradoxical techniques are further explained in the book, Counselling with Reality Therapy, (published in England) pages 111 – 119.

**Juan:** But it took him… Yeah, up until today.

**Wubbolding:** Up until today.

**Juan:** But it’s very personal, I think. I think maybe I’m just waiting for the actual story to finish before I go back to it, so.

2—30

I don’t know. But it’s good to be talking like this, I just, you know. Who wants to hear it? I mean, so. Yeah. It’s pretty decent.

**Wubbolding:** Who wants to hear what?

**Juan:** You know, well, you know, people…

**Wubbolding:** Your story?

**Juan:** Yeah, people, you know, people when they talk, so it’s, it’s interesting.

**Wubbolding:** Well, for what it’s worth, I find it fascinating.

**Wubbolding Commentary:** I ask the reader to reflect on the value of the above statement. What does it accomplish? How is this simple self-disclosure connected with reality therapy?

**Juan:** Well…
Wubbolding: Really, I really do.

Juan: Well, good. I mean, good. This is good.

Wubbolding: And I think the decision is, are you going to keep the music inside of you or are you going to, you know, release it? The music being the play, the writing, the degree...

Juan: It just seems like that would be easier in my own place. I don’t know why. You know what I mean? I… That would be much easier. It would be easier. Wouldn’t be any distractions, you know?

Wubbolding: Your parents are making a lot of noise?

Juan: Well, it’s just, yeah. There’s a lot of distractions, too, you know. Plus, you know, there’s a lot of other things.

Wubbolding: I mean, they’re not, they’re not making a lot of noise and preventing you from writing, are they?

Juan: Well, they’re not, you know, but it seems like there’s just something. Maybe it’s noise in my head, then. You know. My sister is, you know…

Wubbolding: You did mention that earlier.

Juan: Yeah. Well, it is. There’s too much noise going.

Wubbolding: You mentioned noise.

Juan: Too much noise.

Wubbolding: But you think some of it’s in your head. I’m asking you this: would it be any less if you moved into your own place?

Wubbolding Commentary: This question is a self-evaluation question. Implicit in such a question is “How much control do you have over the obstacles preventing you from getting what you want?” The explicit question would have been appropriate but as I counsel I am not able to formulate every question in as perfect a way as possible. Sometimes we simply ask the question that appears to be appropriate and upon subsequent reflection think of a better way to formulate the question.

Juan: I think so because, I mean, it’s going to be…
Wubbolding: Moving the noise in your head outside?

Juan: I just want a complete break from this. We’re getting into another subject, though, and, and, you know… It’s just… I just… Yeah, it’s time to… I think the resources are strained. My sister recently got divorced. She’s got the five-year-old son. She just got her radiology degree from I forget what grad school.

Wubbolding: She’s home also?

Juan: No. No. She’s at her own place, but she doesn’t have a car, so we’re, we’re shuttling, you know. I’m doing her lawn work, and I don’t mind. You know, grocery shopping, I don’t mind. Then there’s my, you know, my other sister, and the same darn thing is happening there.

Of course, her husband recently got his own construction… and they at least, you know, came, came along after many years of that. But that was irritating as hell, you know.

Wubbolding: You know what, there’s a thousand reasons for not doing what you want to do.

Wubbolding Commentary: *I listen carefully to his excuses, accept them unconditionally and even exaggerate them below.*

Juan: You’re right. For not doing that.

Wubbolding: You’ve only named about five. You’ve got 995 to go.

Juan: To go. I bet I could, I bet I could generate them, too, you know. But yeah, I don’t know. Heck. Yeah, I guess. I guess. I guess. But yeah. Something needs to be, I guess, ended and as you say, something begun. I can feel that.

Wubbolding: What would that be?

Juan: Where?

Wubbolding: What has to be ended? Let me ask you this before you answer that. What has to be ended and begun, where is it? Is it in here or is it out there?

Juan: In a way, it’s almost, it’s not… I guess it’s… I, you know, I don’t want to say it’s mostly internal but…
Wubbolding Commentary: When students view this tape they invariably say, “Juan is all over the place.” They realize how difficult it is to help some clients focus and grab hold of a behavior that they can change. But with a patient and persistent series of questions built around internal motivation, counselors can lead clients to take internally satisfying steps, i.e., make realistic plans for change.

2—33

Wubbolding: Well, how much would be internal?

Wubbolding Commentary: This brief question focuses on his perception of his control: whether he sees his control as internal or whether he feels powerless over his external world. Most clients perceive a mixture of both.

Juan: Well, a large part of it, probably.

Wubbolding: What percentage?

Juan: I don’t know. Nine pieces of the pie, I suppose, the tenth piece probably being external. But that external last piece…

Wubbolding: Ninety percent?

Juan: Probably, and that last piece, though, is just really, you know…

Wubbolding: Well, why not work on the pieces that are inside?

Juan: Okay. Okay.

Wubbolding Commentary: I interrupt him so that he will be more likely to take on board the fact that he can make changes if he has the desire to alter his behavior.

Wubbolding: And leave, when you leave here today and you walk out that door, would you be interested in leaving some of the obstacles in this room right here? The internal obstacles?

Juan: I don’t know that that would be possible. I don’t see that that would be…

Wubbolding: Not all of them. No, no, no. Maybe like 10 percent of them.

Juan: Yeah, that would be a neat trick. That would be a neat trick. You
know.

**Wubbolding:** See, I don’t see it as a trick as much as a decision.

**Juan:** I hate to think that I’ve just been dragging my feet this long, you know, but I mean…

**Wubbolding:** No, I don’t see it as dragging your feet, but it’s a matter of where do you want to go from here?

**Wubbolding Commentary:** The goal of this segment is to help him realize that change is possible. He can throw away some of the barriers preventing him from achieving his goals.

2—34

**Juan:** Yeah.

**Wubbolding:** I think you’ve been doing, you’ve been accomplishing a lot, but… You’ve done some writing. You’re getting an education. You have a sense of wanting a career. This is quite a bit. So I’d say you’re a 300 hitter; now, how do you hit 325, in other words? That’s the idea.

**Wubbolding Commentary:** I point out his successes. The key is to be specific.

**Juan:** Yeah. Well… Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Well, I suppose, what do you they say, you act your way into doing something even if you don’t believe it, then eventually you do, right? So.

**Wubbolding:** There’s an old saying like that, you know. You can act your way to a new way of thinking easier than you can think your way to a new way of acting.

**Juan:** Yeah. There it is.

**Wubbolding:** Something like that.

**Juan:** Something like that. So I imagine I will attempt that. Oh, I guess I can do that. I guess I can at least finish the thesis. Finish that damn thing.

**Wubbolding:** Who knows? Who knows? That deadline might not be so close after all. Maybe there’s time to do it.

**Juan:** I’m still thinking I’ll get the incomplete. You know.
I really would... Maybe I can turn in a rough draft then, if she’s accepting that. But I, it needs to be completed, it needs to be completed before I apply to another, to a school.

Wubbolding: Yeah.

Juan: So, yeah. It’s not just fulfilling an assignment. It has to be more than that.

Wubbolding: Oh, it’s something in here. You’d feel better, wouldn’t you? I’m just, I’m just going on what you’ve told me.

Wubbolding Commentary: Once again I point toward internal motivation. Finishing the thesis and getting his degree will result in a huge sense of satisfaction.

Juan: Well, sure. Getting, getting an A is easy. I mean, you know.

Wubbolding: Yeah. You think you’ll get an A?

Juan: Yeah.

Wubbolding: Sure.

Juan: Yeah.

Wubbolding: You didn’t even hesitate. You’re very, you’re very sure of that. It’s just a matter of when you’re going to get it.

Juan: Right. I think it’s a good, a good topic.

Wubbolding: It’s just a matter of when.

Juan: Right. Right. And what then? So.

Wubbolding: Well, let me ask you this: if you spend a lot of time worrying about “what then?” is that going to, where is that going to get you as far as finishing the immediate goal? Accomplishing the immediate task?

Wubbolding Commentary: I ask him to evaluate his behavior, i.e., is indulging his worries and thinking too far into the future to his advantage?

Juan: Probably nowhere. Probably nowhere.
But I’ll tell you, the suburbs, at least for me, the south suburbs are such a doldrum. I miss, I miss living in Montreal. I miss living in New York. I miss traveling. I used to travel the country. Me and a friend of mine, you know, friends, actually, would come and go because, you know, out in Michigan, that’s where you meet them and they’d drive up and you’d go, so. Being sedentary, I think, will kill you. So.

But to answer your question, you’re right. It doesn’t, it doesn’t go, it doesn’t, rather, reach the immediate goal. Very true.

**Wubbolding:** What do you want me to say to you right now?

**Wubbolding Commentary:** Once again Juan verbally ruminates about his external world over which he has very little immediate control. I ask him an open-ended question with the idea that he might look inside himself for an answer that might lead to action.

**Juan:** I can’t think of anything. I think you’ve… This is, this is clarifying. I’m glad this has nothing to do with nationality, God, or concepts of macro-social issues, you know. Jesus. Like that weird thing that guy said once.

**Wubbolding:** That’s a little bit much to handle, isn’t it?

**Wubbolding Commentary:** Juan takes refuge in externals. I believed that he realizes the necessity of accepting responsibility and yet he feels uncomfortable about taking on such a burden.

**Juan:** Oh, yeah. What a nut. But yeah, I guess it’s easier than I’ve been making it. That’s what it strikes me as. It’s funny. I guess you can really knot yourself up, so. That’s enough to think about for now. I can’t imagine what else you could say. You know.

**Wubbolding:** Well, let me ask you this: in the next day or the next few hours, what will you do that’s different than what you would have done if we’d have not had this conversation?

**Wubbolding Commentary:** It is impossible to respond to every macro-problem presented by Juan. My thought was to relentlessly pursue with him a course of behavior that he could realistically choose.
Juan: Well, again, it’s probably going to be, I know I’ll probably let myself off the hook more. I’ll probably relax, try to relax more. You know.

Wubbolding: What would that, what would that look like?

Juan: It’ll probably show on my face, I think. I’ll just look more relaxed.

Wubbolding: Okay. That’s how you’ll look, and that’s a big step. What will you do?

Wubbolding Commentary: The reality therapist gently but firmly needs to focus on a SAMIC plan: Simple, Attainable, Measurable, Immediate, and Controlled by the planner. With Juan this is a laborious, but extremely worthwhile, task.

Juan: Probably at least—and I hate the phrase—but you know, flesh out the outline more.

2—38
I’ll probably begin to think of where I’m going to cut and paste, you know, your quotes and junk like that. The nuts and bolts of the paper, probably.

Wubbolding: Is that probably? Does that mean you will do it or you’ll…

Juan: Yeah, I probably will. You know. I mean, I will.

Wubbolding: You will?

Juan: Yeah, I will. I will. It was more fun just reading about the stuff, you know. Now that it’s done, it’s just like, I say it’s sort of just like nuts and bolts, but that has to be done, so.

Wubbolding: When will you do that?

Juan: Maybe Thursday. Maybe beginning Thursday. I have to work this evening, so.

Wubbolding: That’s tomorrow. Oh, you have to work tonight? Okay. And what time do you work?

Juan: Till eight. Go home, eat, laundry, all the rest.
I do have the night mapped out.

Wubbolding: Okay. So tomorrow would be... what time would you start this tomorrow?

Juan: I’d have to wake up, get some coffee. You know. Probably not till the afternoon. I’m not a morning person. So. But yeah. I would need to do that. I’d need to do that.

Wubbolding: What time would that be?

Juan: What time? What specific, concrete, detailed.... Gee whiz. How about, about three-ish, I would think. Three-ish. I could knock out a couple hours of that. At least a good sustained hour, you know. Anything after that is probably... I can get a good hour in, so.

Wubbolding: Would you do it?

Juan: Would I? Well, I’ve got to have something if I’m even going to...

Wubbolding: I mean, are you really going to do this? Or...

Wubbolding Commentary: I ask the reader: Am I, the therapist, relentless enough in helping him make a SAMIC plan?

Juan: I’ve got to have something. Well, I guess, yes. You know, because I mean, I have that deadline approaching. And I’ve got to have something, even, even something, and something, you know, developed enough to even say, “So do I get the incomplete?”

Wubbolding: Well, it would be helpful.

Juan: So yes, it would be helpful. Yeah, I’ll do it. I’ll try it. I’ll try it. See what... yeah. It just seems like a lot to do, you know, but I guess it’s going to always be a lot to do until you do it. So I’ll try it and see if it’s lots to do.

Wubbolding: Well, getting started, how much, how much is a lot when it comes to getting started?

Juan: I guess just getting over the inertia of not starting, so.

Wubbolding: If you did that, Juan, would you have a sense of kind of
like inner satisfaction?

Juan: No, because it’s, because it’s a thesis and stuff. No. I would be relieved. I would be… pleased.

Wubbolding: That’s what I mean. Inner, inner relief, pleased, yeah.

Wubbolding Commentary: One more time I ask him about inner motivation. He rephrases the internal payoff from “inner satisfaction” to “I would be relieved.” I respond that we are in agreement about his inner need fulfillment. This is another attempt to join with him, to be connected with him, i.e., to enhance our relationship.

Juan: Yeah, I would be relieved. Absolutely, yeah. But it wouldn’t be the same as, you know.

Wubbolding: Well, no. I don’t mean you’re going to be totally fulfilled.

Juan: Yeah, no. It wouldn’t be, it wouldn’t approach the other…

Wubbolding: No, no. But what I mean is, would you feel like, “Well, I’m on the right track.”

Juan: Yeah.

Wubbolding: The engine is getting, you know, is starting to, to move a little bit, get the, it’s starting to get the locomotive down the track a little bit.

Juan: Yeah. Yeah, I would.

Wubbolding: Now I’m going to ask you one more thing, and would… You know how to get in touch with me. Would you be willing to call me and let me know how it went?

Juan: If I finished the thesis?

Wubbolding: No, no. If you get started tomorrow. I’d like to know what happened after, from three o’clock until four o’clock.

Juan: You know, it’s weird. If, that’s, to me, is like making an appointment. I’ll just do it then. I’ll just do it and call you and say I did that.
Wubbolding: That’s what I mean.
Juan: Yeah, I can do that.
Wubbolding: Will you do it, though?
Juan: Sure. Yeah. I can keep that… I keep appointments or whatever, obligations.

2—42
I know what you’re saying, but yeah. That makes it easier. So.

Wubbolding Commentary: A follow up contact helps Juan to realize that I’m truly interested in his planning and his success. It also facilitates a sense of responsibility on his part.

Wubbolding: Okay. So you, you’re, we talked a little about, a little about life career. I mean, I don’t think we solved it, but I think what you’re talking about from what you’ve said kind of fits in with a, with a goal that maybe you have yet to define clearly. You know.
Juan: Yeah. Yeah. I would go with that.
Wubbolding: Who knows? Maybe you’ll never clearly define your goals.
Juan: Youch. Yeah.
Wubbolding: Because these things change. Well, you know, life is dynamic; it keeps changing. I see that as a real strength.
I’ll talk to you tomorrow sometime after four o’clock.
Juan: Okay.
Wubbolding: Okay. Thank you for coming in.
Juan: All righty.
Wubbolding: Okay.

2—43
Juan: Real good.
Group Discussion
Video Credits

SPECIAL THANKS TO:
The clients Gina, Juan, Robin and Phil for their time and the courage to share their personal stories so that others may learn.

Barbara Milton, Project Coordinator, for her dedication to the success of this project.

Faculty and students in the Psychology and Counseling division of the College of the Education at Governors State University for their participation.

Addison Woodward, Chair, Division of Psychology and Counseling for his support, participation and encouragement.

Leon Zalewski, former Dean, and Larry Freeman, Acting Dean, College of Education for their support and encouragement.

A very special thank you to Ray Short, Editor, Allyn & Bacon, for his courage and vision.

A production of Communications Services, Governors State University

Video copyright © 1997, Allyn & Bacon
DVD released by Psychotherapy.net, 2009
Notes...
Earn Continuing Education Credits for Watching Videos

Psychotherapy.net offers continuing education credits for watching this and other training videos. It is a simple, economical way for psychotherapists—both instructors and viewers—to earn CE credits, and a wonderful opportunity to build on workshop and classroom learning experiences.

- Visit our **CE Credits** section at www.psychotherapy.net to register for courses and download supplementary reading material.
- After passing a brief online post-test you will receive your **Certificate of Completion** via email. Voila!
- **CE Approvals:** Psychotherapy.net is approved to offer CE courses for psychologists, counselors, social workers, addiction treatment specialists and other mental health professionals.

Psychotherapy.net also offers CE Credits for reading *online psychotherapy* articles and in-depth interviews with master psychotherapists and the leading thinkers of our times.

To find out more, visit our website, www.psychotherapy.net, and click on the **CE Credits link**. Check back often, as new courses are added frequently.
About the Contributors

VIDEO PARTICIPANTS

Robert E. Wubbolding, EdD, Featured Therapist, is the Director of the Center for Reality Therapy and a psychologist and Professional Clinical Counselor. He is Professor Emeritus of Xavier University and Senior Faculty for The William Glasser Institute in Los Angeles. Dr. Wubbolding has written 10 books and over 125 essays and chapters in textbooks, as well as published seven videos on Reality Therapy.

Dr. Wubbolding’s professional goal has been to make Reality Therapy respected, practical, cross-cultural, and universally applicable. To achieve this goal he has sought to strengthen the delivery system, publish chapters, articles, and books, taught Choice Theory and Reality Therapy in many countries, and developed Reality Therapy as the WDEP system. This expression of Reality Therapy facilitates both learning and practicing of the skills by individuals, groups and agencies, schools, and businesses around the world.

Jon Carlson, PsyD, EdD, Host, is Professor of Psychology and Counseling at Governors State University and a practicing clinical psychologist. He has authored 40 books, 150 journal articles, and developed over 200 videos featuring leading experts in psychotherapy, substance abuse treatment, and parenting and couples education.

Diane Kjos, PhD, Host, now retired, was a professor at Governors State University in Illinois for twenty-two years, and past-President of both the Illinois Counseling Association and the National Career Development Association. She is co-author, with John Carlson, of two textbooks, Theories of Family Therapy, and Becoming an Effective Therapist, and co-host of the video series Psychotherapy with the Experts, Family Therapy with the Experts, and Brief Therapy Inside-out.
MANUAL AUTHORS

**Randall C. Wyatt, PhD**, Editor-in-Chief of Psychotherapy.net, is Director of Professional Training at the California School of Professional Psychology, San Francisco at Alliant International University and a practicing psychologist in Oakland, California.

Robert E. Wubbolding, EdD, see above.

**Megan E. McCarthy, PhD**, completed her PhD at the University of California, Berkeley and is a psychology fellow in the Program for Psychotherapy at The Cambridge Hospital in Cambridge, MA.
More Psychotherapy.net Videos

New videos are added frequently. Visit us at www.psychotherapy.net or call (800) 577-4762 for more information.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Ackerman Institute</th>
<th>Couples and Infertility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gender Differences in Depression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constance Ahrons</td>
<td>Making Divorce Work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ellyn Bader &amp; Dan Wile</td>
<td>Couples Therapy: An Introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insoo Kim Berg</td>
<td>“I’d hear laughter”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Irreconcilable Differences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stephanie Brown</td>
<td>Treating Alcoholism in Psychotherapy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2-DVD series)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Bugental</td>
<td>Existential-Humanistic Psychotherapy in Action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>James Bugental: Live Case Consultation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tian Dayton</td>
<td>Healing Childhood Abuse through Psychodrama</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trauma and the Body</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George De Leon</td>
<td>The Therapeutic Community (3-DVD set)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pamela Dunne</td>
<td>Exploring Narradrama</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George J. DuPaul &amp; Gary Stoner</td>
<td>Assessing ADHD in the Schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Classroom Interventions for ADHD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bruce Ecker</td>
<td>Down Every Year: A Demonstration of Depth Oriented Brief Therapy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Edwards</td>
<td>Tools and Techniques for Family Therapy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stephen Feldman</td>
<td>Legal and Ethical Issues for Mental Health Professionals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linda Gask</td>
<td>Suicide and Self-Harm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Glendon Association</td>
<td>Invisible Child Abuse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sex, Love and Intimate Relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Voices About Relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Voices of Suicide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenneth V. Hardy</td>
<td>The Psychological Residuals of Slavery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Susan Heitler</td>
<td>The Angry Couple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karin Heller &amp; Bill Domonkos</td>
<td>Coming Out</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Harville Hendrix
Harville Hendrix on the Healing Relationship

Evan Imber-Black
Family Secrets

Arnold Lazarus
Arnold Lazarus: Live Case Consultation

Steve Lerner
She’s Leaving Me

Ronald Levant
Effective Psychotherapy with Men

Hanna Levenson
Time-Limited Dynamic Psychotherapy

Marco J. D. Maida
Jacob Levy Moreno: His Life and His Muses

Rollo May
Rollo May on Existential Psychotherapy

Monica McGoldrick
The Legacy of Unresolved Loss

Donald Meichenbaum
Mixed Anxiety and Depression:

Scott Miller
What Works in Psychotherapy

Jacob Moreno
Moreno Movies (4-DVD series)

Zerka T. Moreno
The Zerka T. Moreno Series (3-DVD series)

Rod Mullen
Encounter Groups for Addictions

Frank Ochberg
PTSD and Veterans

George Papageorge
Connecting with Our Kids

Erving Polster
Psychotherapy with the Unmotivated Patient

Ron Scott (Producer)
Psychotherapy with Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Clients (7-DVD series)

Martin Seligman
Positive Psychology and Psychotherapy

Lenore Walker
The Abused Woman

Irvin Yalom
The Gift of Therapy

Irvin Yalom: Live Case Consultation

Understanding Group Psychotherapy

(3-DVD series)

Harry Wexler
Therapeutic Communities in Prisons

BRIEF THERAPY FOR ADDICTIONS SERIES

Bruce S. Liese
Cognitive Therapy for Addictions

G. Alan Marlatt
Harm Reduction Therapy for Addictions

Barbara S. McCrady
Couples Therapy for Addictions

William R. Miller
Motivational Interviewing

John C. Norcross
Stages of Change for Addictions

Robert E. Wubbolding
Reality Therapy for Addictions

Joan Ellen Zweben
Integrating Therapy with 12-Step Programs
CHILD THERAPY WITH THE EXPERTS SERIES

Jon Carlson  Adherian Parent Consultation
Janet Sasson Edgette  Adolescent Family Therapy
Gerald Koocher  Psychotherapy with Medically Ill Children
Terry Kottman  Adherian Play Therapy
Stephen Madigan  Narrative Therapy with Children
Bruce Masek  Cognitive-Behavioral Child Therapy
John J. Murphy  Solution-Focused Child Therapy
Violet Oaklander  Gestalt Therapy with Children
David Scharff  Object Relations Child Therapy
Anin Utigaard  Person-Centered Child Therapy
Robert E. Wubbolding  Reality Therapy with Children

PSYCHOTHERAPY WITH THE EXPERTS SERIES

Insoo Kim Berg  Solution Focused Therapy
James Bugental  Existential-Humanistic Psychotherapy
Jon Carlson  Adherian Therapy
Mary Goulding  Transactional Analysis
Kenneth V. Hardy  Family Systems Therapy
Allen Ivey  Integrative Therapy
Jeffrey Kottler  Integrative Counseling
John Krumboltz  Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy
Arnold Lazarus  Multimodal Therapy
Donald Meichenbaum  Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy
Natalie Rogers  Person-Centered Expressive Arts Therapy
Ernest Rossi  Mind-Body Therapy
Jill Savege Scharff  Object Relations Therapy
Lenore Walker  Feminist Therapy