

Notes on Behavioural Management Techniques

3rd edition



Howard Lees

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Other Hollin publications:-

Ideas for Wimps

How to empty the 'too hard' box

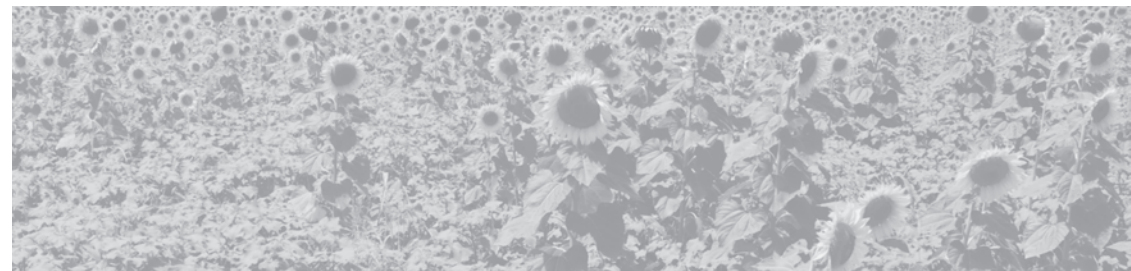
How to escape from Cloud Cuckoo Land

Behavioural Coaching 2nd Edition

Behavioural Safety for Leaders

This book is dedicated to Dr Bill Hopkins

I would like to thank the following people who helped in the production of this third edition of the booklet with ideas and written text. Thanks for the great feedback on the drafts and for plenty of encouragement to Nicole, John, Rachel, Krystyna, Nora, Allison, Mark, and Bob. Special thanks to Jean for the sunflowers. Extra special thanks to Joanne for the fabulous insightful cartoons. Not forgetting all the people who have completed the BMT & BBS courses and provided invaluable feedback on this material.





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First published by Hollin publishing October 2009
Third edition published September 2011
Hollin publishing is a division of Hollin Consulting Ltd
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Graphics by Creative Hero
Printed in England
ISBN 978-0-9563114-1-2

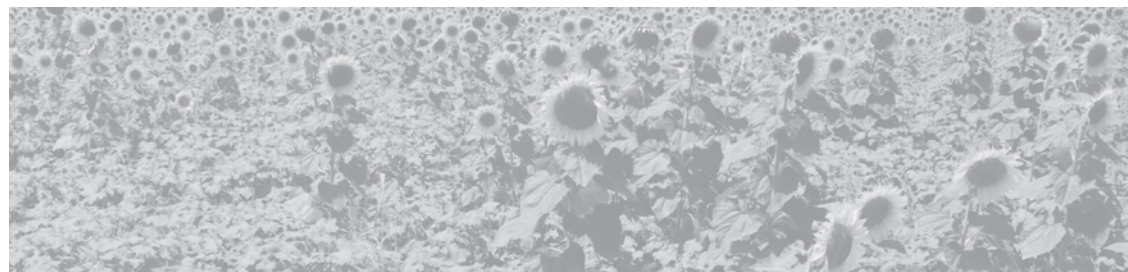
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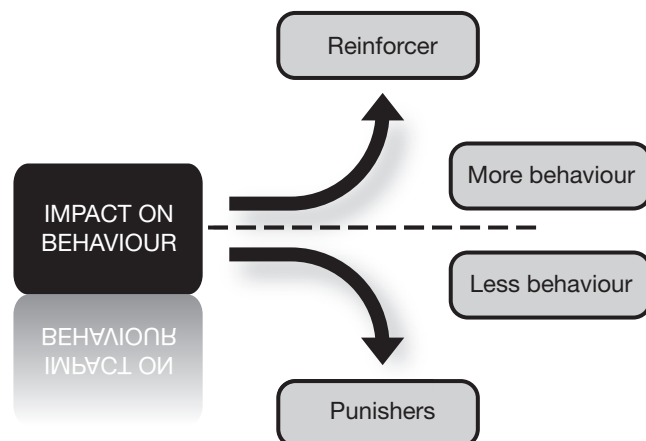
4. An introduction to Consequences



Consequences are the most influential means by which to shape behaviour and patterns of behaviour in individuals or groups. Consequences are always defined by their impact on behaviour. For example if you put money in a vending machine and get nothing, you won't continue to put money in. If your friends laugh at your jokes you will continue to tell jokes.

There are four types of consequences you can receive from any particular behaviour, as outlined below:

Positive reinforcement (R+):	You get something you like
Negative reinforcement (R-):	You avoid something you dislike
Punishment (P+):	Something you dislike happens to you
Penalty (P-):	Something you like is taken away from you



Consequences don't have any value – i.e. there aren't good or bad consequences. What's described here simply explains why we get more or less of a behaviour. It's not the consequence itself that is good or bad, but the environment created by high uses of these consequences. As Eric Morecambe inferred "they aren't necessarily the wrong notes, they may be just being played in the wrong order".

Reinforcers (R)

If a behaviour is occurring, there must be a source of reinforcement for it. To reinforce behaviour means to strengthen it, i.e. make it more likely the behaviour will occur again. Consequences are defined by their impact on behaviour, so we know a reinforcer has been received if the behaviour occurs again. What's important is what actually happens to the behaviour; not what was intended. Of course different people find different things reinforcing, some people like ice cream, some people don't.



"Reinforcers always increase behaviour"

R+ and R-

Both R+ and R- (R plus and R minus) increase behaviour. The '+' and '-' signs explain why behaviour increases:

- R+ involves adding something into the environment, which causes behaviour to increase – in other words we are behaving in a way that will get us what we want.
- R- involves removing something from the environment, which causes behaviour to increase – in other words we are behaving in a way that will help us avoid something we don't want.

R+ and R- both increase behaviour. It's important to understand the difference between them because they have a very different impact on the amounts of behaviour they produce.

	R+	R-
Change	Something is added	Something is removed
Lay terms	Get something you want.	Avoid something you don't want.
Impact	Want to do more of the behaviour.	Do just enough behaviour.
Examples	Eating out at a nice restaurant. Winning a contract, getting a promotion, getting married. Going out with friends. Finishing a successful project early. Having 'the crack' at work. Going for a nice walk. Playing golf. Sexual pursuits.	Slowing down for a speed camera to avoid the fine. Wearing PPE to avoid being sent home for the day. Paying your taxes, heating bills, VAT bill. Taking your medication to avoid getting sick. Putting out the bins so they will get emptied. Submitting paperwork on time to avoid a fine. Applying for a new passport.

After a behaviour, ask yourself, "Would I press a button to go back and experience that again?" If yes, it was probably R+, if not, it was probably R-.

Punishers (P)

If behaviour stops it has been subjected to punishment, i.e. It is now less likely it will occur again.

Consequences are defined by their impact on behaviour, so we know a punisher has been received if behaviour stops. What's important is what happens to behaviour; not what was intended.



"Punishers always stop behaviour"

P+ and P-

Both P+ and P- (P plus and P minus) decrease behaviour. The '+' and '-' signs explain why behaviour decreases:

- P+ involves adding something into the environment, which causes behaviour to stop – in other words we are behaving in a way that will get us something we don't want.
- P- involves removing something from the environment, which causes behaviour to stop – in other words we are behaving in a way that will result in us losing something we like.

	P+	P-
Change	Something is added	Something is removed
Lay terms	Get something you don't want	Lose something you wanted to keep
Impact	Behaviour stops	Behaviour stops
Examples	Receive a smack in the teeth Get sacked Get dumped by someone Discover your partner is cheating on you Get shouted at by the boss Be forced to spend time with someone you dislike Playing golf	Have to pay a fine for speeding Have your privileges removed Discover you didn't pick up the item you bought at the shop Lose a kidney A fire destroys your CD collection Forgot to save a day's writing & lost it all Getting your car clamped

Not strictly a consequence but.....

Extinction (i.e. nothing happens following behaviour).

Extinction occurs when the consequence we were expecting doesn't happen. When we are accustomed to doing something and getting the outcome we want, it can be confusing and painful when we don't get that outcome anymore. When the expected consequence is withheld from us (deliberately or not), it can feel like we are being ignored, as such we learn over time that there's no point performing the behaviour, so we do it less and less over time.

As a result, the behaviour occurs less often. When people feel they are not getting enough attention they can get emotional, children respond in the same way to lack of attention from their parents.

"I'm playing all the right notes, but not necessarily in the right order."

Eric Morecambe

NOTES:



Howard Lees is a British Chartered Civil Engineer with 40 years construction experience. In 2004 he set up Hollin Consulting Ltd, specialising in Behavioural Management Techniques (BMT) which combines applied behavioural science tools and project management skills to improve effectiveness in organisations, businesses and projects.

Over the last 10 years an industry group has built up worldwide called the BMT Federation. The Federation is made up of practitioners using BMT to improve efficiency, safety, effectiveness and enjoyment within the workplace.

Over the intervening period Hollin has served a number of Clients in the UK and abroad and a high level of success has been achieved in the use of BMT delivered in courses, via coaching or from reading Hollin publications.

This is the third edition of notes on BMT. This text is not supposed to be an exhaustive study on BMT, it is an introduction. However if read multiple times it has the effect of cementing the basic premise that if we learn to observe what's going on around us we can have more influence over what happens.

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Price £6.50 UK
\$10.00 USA, Australia and New Zealand

ISBN number 978-0-9563114-1-2