

Promoting Discipline & Learning

by Dr. Marvin Marshall

Tapping Into Internal Motivation

This article first appeared in the December 2008 issue of teachers.net/Gazette at <http://teachers.net/gazette/DEC08/marshall/>

*When I first came upon the system, it was the concept of **motivation** featured in the hierarchy that initially grabbed my attention. **The hierarchy** was the first time that I had ever seen anyone explain that high level behaviour is actually all about personal **motivation**. The contrast between the higher levels points this out perfectly. To me, **the hierarchy is absolutely brilliant**, especially because of its simplicity. When something is simple enough that even children can understand it and yet so striking that many adults are stopped in their tracks by it, it's got to be something worthwhile. —Kerry Weisner, British Columbia, Canada*

The foundation of **The Raise Responsibility System*** is teaching **before** problems occur. How young people mature after learning the hierarchy is what makes teaching it so valuable. Rather than focusing on discipline, **think of the hierarchy as an OPPORTUNITY for young people to have a rubric for making decisions in life.**

*** The Raise Responsibility System is Part III of the Discipline Without Stress Teaching Model** described at http://www.marvinmarshall.com/teaching_model.html

The following are **Significant Points about the Hierarchy of Social Development** described at <http://www.marvinmarshall.com/hierarchy.htm>

1. Some *adults* may feel uncomfortable with the vocabulary, **but these specific terms are the most effective** in empowering students *to resist bullying, resist negative peer influence, and make responsible decisions.* After the concepts have been explained, reference is made only to the *letter*. For example, the lowest level, **Anarchy**, is referred to as **Level A.**

2. Occasionally, an adult thinks that youngsters may confuse the letters of a grading scale with the letters of the hierarchy. Since language has meaning in context (e.g., when to spell *to*, *too*, *two*), students do not confuse the hierarchy of **D, C, B, A** with the reverse order of letters in grading systems.

3. Two significant advantages in referring to the levels are: (a) **the deed is separated from the doer** *so students never feel a need to defend themselves*—which often leads to arguments, and (b) the vocabulary can be used **in every grade level and by every staff member**.

4. **The hierarchy is NOT an assessment tool for someone on the outside looking in.** The motivation of some students during an activity will be at **Level C** while others will be at **Level D**. *Only individuals themselves can accurately assess their own level of motivation.*

5. As we live, we experience various levels. If you have experienced great anger, chances are that you had little concern for the effect your behavior had on others (**Level A**). If you ever drove faster than the speed limit, you made your own rules of the road (**Level B**). If you were courteous and considerate of others, your **motivation** could have been to do what others were doing (**Level C**), or your **motivation** could have been to be courteous and considerate of others because that was the **right thing to do (Level D)**.

6. To perpetuate a civil society, **motivation at Level C** is *essential*, and this is the motivational level at which most of us live our lives most of the time. However, since **obedience does not create desire**, when working with young people the **GOAL** is to **promote motivation at Level D**. The reason is that **motivation at this level actuates the greatest desire for responsible behavior and for putting forth effort in learning. Learning requires motivation.**

7. Since **rewards change motivation**, once a reward is given the reward becomes the focus. Rewarding **Level D** is both counterproductive and guesswork because no one can know the **motivation** of another with complete accuracy.

8. The *hierarchy becomes significantly more effective* when the **FOCUS** is on the **DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE MOTIVATIONAL LEVELS OF C and D.** The more you **have students reflect on their motivational level,** the more effectively the system serves both you and young people.

Copyright © 2008 Marvin Marshall.

Additional information is available at www.MarvinMarshall.com