

The ABCs of Behavior

WHY DOES MY BIRD DO THAT?

WHY DO I DO THAT?

WHY DO WE DO WHAT WE DO?

- We go towards something we want
- We go away from something we don't want or like
- If something good happens, then maybe we'll do it again!
- So we “get what we reinforce”
- What works for one person or bird may not work for another
- The past does not equal the future

LABELS

- Words matter. Facts matter.
- Some words reflect observable behavior; other words reflect our personal interpretation
- We can agree on observable behavior; interpretations vary by our own experience and perceptions
- Labels may restrict a bird's future opportunities (fewer available antecedents?)
- Common negative labels are: “hormonal, aggressive, mean, jealous, does not like men/women ...”
- Common positive labels are: “friendly, easy, happy, funny, good, affectionate, likes men/women ...”
- When we use a negative label, we blame the bird, and don't take responsibility for the behavior

OPPORTUNITY

- Also known as the ANTECEDENT (ABCs)
- Sets the environment up for success or failure
- A signal that something is possible
- It is NOT a command
- Opportunities empower us, and our birds
- Offer opportunities to succeed!
- Avoid offering opportunities that lead to dysfunction and unpleasant relationships

BEHAVIOR

- Known as the BEHAVIOR (ABCs)
- Action taken by the bird (or person)
- A very precise moment in time
- Can be described in strict observable terms
- Not an interpretation or label

CONSEQUENCE

- Known as the CONSEQUENCE (ABCs)
- Can be positive or negative
- The consequence is what determines future behavior
- What is positive or negative is in the eye of the beholder
- Remember: we go towards something we want, or away from something we don't

BRIDGE A BEHAVIOR

- Bridging is a tool to reinforce the behavior we want to happen again
- Bridge is done by you at the EXACT SAME time as the desired behavior by the bird
- It marks a very precise moment – an **EVENT MARKER**
- It communicates to the bird that a specific behavior was desired and achieved
- It promises the bird that a reward has been earned and will be provided
- So it is also a **PROMISE TO PAY**
- The most common bridge is “Good!” or a click
- Best to be staccato and crisp

CONSEQUENCE - REWARDS ARE POSITIVE

- The bridge (“good!”) will become meaningful when paired with a reward.
- Rewards are used to recognize a desirable behavior
- Try to Bridge and Reward when good behavior occurs
- The behavior will occur again if recognized and rewarded
- The reward must be something of value
- Perception of value can change
- Not knowing what the reward will be can increase behavior. Avoid luring.

CONSEQUENCE - PUNISHMENT

- We use punishment when we want to decrease behavior
- “Positive” punishment means we are adding something to the environment to change a bird’s behavior (harming, throwing, spraying..).
- This kind of punishment breaks trust. Never recommended!
- “Negative” punishment is when we take something out of the environment to change a bird’s behavior. Like the absence of a reward can be powerful.
- “Mistakes are an opportunity to try again with more information” ~ Steve Martin
- It is much easier to teach a bird what TO DO

CONCLUSIONS

- Antecedents give us the opportunity for a good or bad experience
- Consequences, good or bad, are what determines future behavior
- You are responsible for communicating with your bird
- You are responsible for your bird's behavior, so avoid blaming or labeling them
- Always acknowledge the “good” behaviors
- Give no value to the “bad” behaviors you do not want to live with
- Teach your bird what TO DO

CONCLUSIONS

- The easiest way to solve a problem is to prevent it from occurring
- Don't give a bird the opportunity to perform a behavior you don't like
- Give them lots of opportunities to do the things you do like
- In the best of worlds, give them multiple good options
- Empower them to make positive choices
- “The past does not equal the future” ~ Steve Martin
- Create a positive future!!

LET'S PRACTICE

- Be concise
- No long stories or excuses for behavior
- Avoid labels!
- Summarize the very precise moment in time when the behavior occurred
- Please don't take it personally if I ask you to be more succinct
- Our goal is to understand a specific behavior and analyze it, so it is not a story

ABCs

Antecedent or Opportunity

Behavior

Consequence or Reward

Functional analysis: when using the ABCs to analyze behavior, always start with the **B**

RED LIGHT

- What is the Antecedent or Opportunity?
- **YOU DON'T STOP AT THE RED LIGHT**
- What are possible Consequences?

Does the consequence affect your future behavior?

(Always start by describing the behavior)

SCREAMING

- What is the Antecedent or Opportunity?
- **YOUR BIRD SCREAMS WHEN YOU TALK ON THE PHONE**
- What are possible Consequences?

Does the consequence affect the bird's future behavior?

(Always start by describing the behavior)

SLOT MACHINE

- What is the Antecedent or Opportunity?
- **YOU PUT MONEY IN THE SLOT MACHINE**
- What are possible Consequences?

Does the consequence affect your future behavior?

(Always start by describing the behavior)

VACATION

- What is the Antecedent or Opportunity?
- **YOU ENJOY A PARTICULAR HOTEL**
- What are possible Consequences?

Does the consequence affect your future behavior?

(Always start by describing the behavior)

HELLO!!

- What is the Antecedent or Opportunity?
- **YOUR BIRD SAYS “HELLO” OR SQUAWKS WHEN HE HEARS YOU OPEN THE FRONT DOOR**
- What are possible Consequences?

Does the consequence affect the bird's future behavior?

(Always start by describing the behavior)

SCREAMING CHILD

- What is the Antecedent or Opportunity?
- **YOUR CHILD SCREAMS FOR CANDY IN THE GROCERY STORE**
- What are possible Consequences?

Does the consequence affect your future behavior?

(Always start by describing the behavior)

SCREAMING

- What is the Antecedent or Opportunity?
- **YOUR BIRD SCREAMS WHEN YOUR HUSBAND WALKS INTO THE ROOM**
- What are possible Consequences?

Does the consequence affect the bird's future behavior?

(Always start by describing the behavior)

FLAPPING

- What is the Antecedent or Opportunity?
- **YOUR BIRD FLAPS WILDLY WHEN YOU GET CLOSE TO THE CAGE**
- What are possible Consequences?

Does the consequence affect the bird's future behavior?

(Always start by describing the behavior)

JOB

- What is the Antecedent or Opportunity?
- **YOU BOSS SAYS THAT MAYBE NEXT YEAR YOU CAN HAVE A RAISE**
- What are possible Consequences?

Does the consequence affect your future behavior?

(Always start by describing the behavior)

CARRIER

- What is the Antecedent or Opportunity?
- **YOUR BIRD DOES NOT WILLINGLY GO INTO THE CARRIER**
- What are possible Consequences?

Does the consequence affect the bird's future behavior?

(Always start by describing the behavior)

RED LIGHT

- What is the Antecedent or Opportunity?
- **YOU STOP AT THE RED LIGHT**
- What are possible Consequences?

Does the consequence affect your future behavior?

(Always start by describing the behavior)

EATING

- What is the Antecedent or Opportunity?
- **YOUR BIRD DIVES INTO YOUR QUINOA/VEGGIE MASH**
- What are possible Consequences?

Does the consequence affect the bird's future behavior?

(Always start by describing the behavior)

FLAPPING

- What is the Antecedent or Opportunity?
- **YOUR BIRD FLAPS WHILE ON A HANGING GYM**
- What are possible Consequences?

Does the consequence affect the bird's future behavior?

(Always start by describing the behavior)

BATHING

- What is the Antecedent or Opportunity?
- **YOUR BIRD DIVES INTO THE WATER BOWL WHEN YOU TURN ON THE VACCUM**
- What are possible Consequences?

Does the consequence affect the bird's future behavior?

(Always start by describing the behavior)

LUNGING

- What is the Antecedent or Opportunity?
- **YOUR BIRD LUNGES AT YOU AS YOU WALK BY**
- What are possible Consequences?

Does the consequence affect the bird's future behavior?

(Always start by describing the behavior)

FAMILY DINNER

- What is the Antecedent or Opportunity?
- **YOU LIKE YOUR MOM'S POT ROAST**
- What are possible Consequences?

Does the consequence affect your future behavior?

(Always start by describing the behavior)

BITING

- What is the Antecedent or Opportunity?
- **YOUR BIRD BITES YOUR HAND WHEN YOU TRY TO PICK THEM UP**
- What are possible Consequences?

Does the consequence affect the bird's future behavior?

(Always start by describing the behavior)

SHOULDER

- What is the Antecedent or Opportunity?
- **YOUR BIRD FLIES TO YOUR SHOULDER**
- What are possible Consequences?

Does the consequence affect the bird's future behavior?

(Always start by describing the behavior)

EATING

- What is the Antecedent or Opportunity?
- **YOUR BIRD FLINGS BANANA CHUNKS**
- What are possible Consequences?

Does the consequence affect the bird's future behavior?

(Always start by describing the behavior)

CHASING

- What is the Antecedent or Opportunity?
- **YOUR BIRD CHASES YOUR FEET**
- What are possible Consequences?

Does the consequence affect the bird's future behavior?

(Always start by describing the behavior)

BITING

- What is the Antecedent or Opportunity?
- **YOUR BIRD FLIES AT YOUR FACE TO BITE**
- What are possible Consequences?

Does the consequence affect the bird's future behavior?

(Always start by describing the behavior)

STEP-UP

- What is the Antecedent or Opportunity?
- **YOUR BIRD WILLINGLY STEPS ON YOUR ARM**
- What are possible Consequences?

Does the consequence affect the bird's future behavior?

(Always start by describing the behavior)

CHASING

- What is the Antecedent or Opportunity?
- **YOUR BIRD CHASES YOUR HANDS WHEN YOU PUT THE FOOD BOWLS IN THE DOOR**
- What are possible Consequences?

Does the consequence affect the bird's future behavior?

(Always start by describing the behavior)

FLIGHT

- What is the Antecedent or Opportunity?
- **YOUR BIRD FLIES**
- What are possible Consequences?

Does the consequence affect the bird's future behavior?

(Always start by describing the behavior)

SCREAMING

- What is the Antecedent or Opportunity?
- **YOUR BIRD SCREAMS WHEN SOMEONE WALKS DOWN THE SIDEWALK**
- What are possible Consequences?

Does the consequence affect the bird's future behavior?

(Always start by describing the behavior)

DATING

- What is the Antecedent or Opportunity?
- **YOU ENJOY THE EVENING WITH A FIRST DATE**
- What are possible Consequences?

Does the consequence affect your future behavior?

(Always start by describing the behavior)

CONCLUSIONS

- Antecedents give us the opportunity for a good or bad experience
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