8. MODELS FOR LIFE PLANNING
8.1 A MODEL OF EDUCATION FOR SELF-REALIZATION: Self Realization Approach: The Self Realization (SR) Approach is an intrapersonal value-expectancy theory that applies the concept of performance to human behavior. This model recognizes the role of genetics in performance and the innate differences in human potential. By acknowledging genetics as a limiting biological factor in performance, the SR approach emphasizes components of human performance that can be modified (those that are within the control of the individual). Also, by acknowledging the innate differences in human potential, the SR Approach stresses reaching one's "own" potential. Both a strength and a weakness of this theory is the subjective nature of Self Realization.

In developing this theory, the original goal of the author was to create a systematically integrated model that could be utilized to predict and modify athletic performance. The author first chose what he believed to be the strongest predictors and most essential attributes of optimal performances and performers via his own personal experiences.

He then assimilated existing research in the areas of developmental psychology, existential philosophy, humanism, and social learning theory to refine and support his initial thoughts. Finally, the thoughts and opinions of elite and world class athletes and coaches were gathered through personal interviews and biographical research. From this information, a model was created of the most essential components of success- the Self Realization Model (SRM). These components are presented below. The purpose and design of the model then evolved into one that could predict behavior in other areas by looking at all human behavior in the context of performance, resulting in the development of Self Realization Approach.

Self Realization Definitions:

- **Self Realization** - fulfillment by oneself of the possibilities of one's character or personality (Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary). The fulfillment of one's potential (Penguin Dictionary of Psychology).
- **Self Realizing Personality** - Challenge seeking, autotelic, able to commit, high internal motivation, self efficacious, and the ability to apply these qualities across a broad range of activities (omnidirected belief system, multi-directed belief system).

The Self Realization Model:

The SRM consists of four interrelated components: Beliefs, Motivation, Commitment, Perseverance/Resilience.

- **Belief System (beliefs)** - comprised of identity, self efficacy, and locus of control. [*] The way one views and defines the world, his/her fellow humankind, self and the interrelationship between these three components. A set of attitudes, opinions, and convictions that affect personal behavior, interpersonal relationships, and attitude toward life. (see conceptual system, Penguin Dictionary of Psychology).
- **Motivation** - the process of initiating, sustaining, and directing psychological or physical activities, including internal forces such as impulses, drives, and desires involved in this process. Motives may operate on a conscious level or unconscious level, and are frequently divided into physiological (primary, or organic, such as hunger elimination) and psychological (secondary, or personal/social, such as affiliation, competition, and individual interests and goals). (Penguin Dictionary of Psychology). The physiological or psychological drive or desire. ... motivation can be understood as a person's present state or stage of readiness for change. It is an internal state influenced by external factors. (Miller & Rollnick). Must consider value system which is strongly influenced by the environment (i.e. Familial, cultural, societal, etc.) see Belief System.
- **Commitment** - The dedication of the necessary resources (i.e., attentional, physical, etc.) to accomplish a task. Commitment to action motivation - the probability that a person will enter into, continue, and adhere to a specific change strategy (Council for Philosophical Studies, 1981; Miller, 1985) Adherence to advice or a plan (Miller & Rollnick).
- **Perseverance** - the behavioral tendency to persist (Penguin Dictionary of Psychology) persevere - to persist in a state, enterprise, or undertaking in spite of counter influences, opposition, and discouragement change (Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary) resilience - an ability to recover from or adjust easily to misfortune or change (Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary)

8.2 Model of assertiveness: There are several models that describe assertiveness and how to develop it, but the probably the best thinking comes from Ken and Kate Back, who've specialized in this area of human behavior for over 20 years. In their

book "Assertiveness at Work - a practical guide to handling awkward situations", they describe what assertiveness is, and how to develop it. Their concepts are simple and make sense, and have helped many people to become more effective in their dealings with others.

DEFINING ASSERTIVENESS

Assertiveness lies in the middle of a continuum of behaviour towards others, that the Backs defined in terms of how we recognise the **rights** of the two parties involved.

Aggressive	You exert your right to have ideas and opinions at the expense of the other person's rights. In fact you behave as if the other person's rights don't matter.
Assertive	You exert your rights freely and clearly, but at the same recognize the other person's rights to be heard, to have pride in what they do, etc.
Non-Assertive	You take too much account of the other person's rights, to the extent that you forego some or all of your rights to express ideas or influence events.

To illustrate the three types of behavior, they quote a simple example of a manager spotting some minor errors in the written work of a subordinate. The manager goes to the individual and says:

Aggressive	"I don't know how you've got the nerve to give me this sort of stuff for signing. It's full of mistakes."
Assertive	"Jane, I'd like you to re-do this document as there are several mistakes in it."
Non-Assertive	"I know it's, er .... probably my fault in .... not writing very clearly, but is there, um .... any chance at all you could find a spare minute to um .... just change one of two small things on this letter for me?" Or you find an excuse not to take the document back at all.

Clearly the desired behavior is to be assertive, and the book goes on to describe in detail how you can develop assertiveness in a range of situations. To frame that development, they put forward the idea of **Inner Dialogues**: those conversations we have with ourselves before we interact with someone else. Sometimes these Inner Dialogues are subconscious, but if you become more aware of them, you can manage them and become more effective in your dealings with others.

To go back to the example above, the inner dialogues might be:

Aggressive	"If people produce rubbish, I have every right to tell them so" "She obviously doesn't care. That's typical of young people today." "This reflects badly on me, and I won't stand for it."
Assertive	"This may be uncomfortable for us both, but we can handle it." "She has the right to make mistakes, but the responsibility to correct them." "I want her to know the effect her errors have on other people."
Non-Assertive	"I don't want to make a scene or upset our working relationship." "I'm sure these are unintentional errors - I'll let it go this time." "I know she's very busy, so I expect that's why these mistakes happened."

Problems with Assertiveness

Problems with assertiveness usually fall into two contrasting types

1. Passive behavior - where you have a tendency to want to avoid conflict or you feel that you shouldn't express your own feelings or thoughts, with the result that you go along with what others say or ask, without paying attention to your own needs.

2. Aggressive behavior - where you have a tendency to dominate conversations or to ignore other people's views and seek to control what others do by dictating to them or telling them what *they* must or should do.

Sometimes it is possible to swing from one type of behavior to the other - particularly if you have a general tendency to be too passive. This can lead to a build up of frustration and anger which can eventually come out in an aggressive way.

Is There an Easy Solution to Assertiveness Problems?

Becoming assertive if you are not naturally assertive involves practice and effort. Developing assertiveness (where you behave and speak in articulate sensible ways rather than passively or aggressively), whether through an assertiveness training course or through following instruction and techniques from coaches or books, requires you to retrain yourself to learn ways of being assertive and to unlearn habitual patterns of behaving which you may have had since you were young - perhaps because of notions that you were taught by important people in your lives such as parents or teachers, which influenced your behavior and your self image.

Becoming more assertive will therefore involve you in learning helpful techniques or methods which need to be practiced before they become second nature. There may not be an easy way round this but it is worth it if you are prepared to try it out, because of the benefits it brings.

Assertiveness Training - The Benefits

There are many potential benefits to training yourself to be assertive. If you can become more assertive it is likely to lead you to:

- Feel better about yourself
- Feel more confident
- Feel more relaxed
- Have a greater awareness of your own needs and how to meet them
- Be able to create personal and professional goals instead of putting other people's needs or wishes first
- Be able to work effectively in partnership with others
- Participate in honest, constructive relationships where you and others can develop understanding and respect and solve problems together