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## The Link Between Behavior and Need

**It is important to understand that all animals, humans included, have genetic links between certain behaviors and a need for acting out those behaviors. When we do certain things, we also satisfy a fundamental need for just that action. Sometimes, this connection can be hard to identify, but for all natural behaviors, it is there!**

**It *must* be there. If not, Nature could not maintain balance - there has to be a reason for a behavior to both start and stop - and the reason must support the species' ability to survive!**

### **How needs and behaviors are connected**

A simple example is eating behavior. There must be good reasons to start eating. There are two: a need for nourishment - and the detected presence of food! The need for nourishment is called "hunger" in daily terms.

But hunger alone does not make us eat. We must also experience the presence of food in front of us. And the food presented to us must satisfy certain criteria before we will classify it as "eatable". We base this judgment on sense impressions: if it looks good, smells good, and tastes good, we will eat it. If not, we won't.

With this, we can explain why eating would *start* - but no behavior can continue forever. There must be a way to make it stop again...

The behavior causes things to happen in the body, chemically. This, in turn, will start certain body processes that affect the biochemical balances in the body in such a way that the need will disappear - it gets satisfied!

The origin of the need is the presence of certain chemicals in the body, in concentrations that are larger than they will be when the need is not present.

In the case of food and eating, we do know, for instance, that food in a human stomach will cause the concentration of blood sugar to rise. We also know that we can make the experience of hunger go away by giving people intravenous injections of sugar! Obviously, our sensation of hunger is related to the sugar chemistry in the body. And eating will certainly do something to change that - when we eat, sugar will very quickly get absorbed into the blood! The sugar reacts with certain hormones and will thus cause their concentration to go down. Those hormones represent our "hunger".

When we use up all the sugar in the blood, those hormones are released again from their bonding to the sugar - simply because the sugar "gets called away"

to be used as fuel in the body. When this happens, we experience hunger again.

### **The problem with needs not being satisfied**

Now, what happens if we do not allow the natural behavior to take place?

Well, for eating, we know: We get hungry first. Then we start all kinds of other behaviors that possibly could lead us to food, and it gets worse and worse, as time passes on and we still got nothing!

You may not have the personal experience (I hope not...), but the evidence is there: Unless we are sick, we get both destructive and aggressive when deprived from eating!

What about other fundamental needs? Would it be the same?

The answer is yes. Thirst, as an example. You drink when you feel the need for water. The trigger is your sensation of the presence of water ("wet" feels incredibly good on the tongue when you are thirsty!) The drinking will quench your thirst if you have enough water available - and you will then stop drinking at some point.

### **Your dog needs more than food and water!**

The next thing is that you must understand that **all natural behaviors** are linked to a need and a trigger, and that the need gets satisfied by the behavior taking place. With "natural behaviors" I simply mean any behavior the dog can and will do without learning it first. There are lots of natural behaviors that do not fit well with our society's standards...

The needs are there, though, whether you like it or not. You cannot make them go away by not satisfying them. Hunger does not disappear by fasting - it gets worse.

Needs that are left unsatisfied will cause havoc in the body's metabolism and cause all kinds of frustration behaviors, destructive and aggressive behaviors included!

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