

Please note: these are unedited transcriptions of some of my lectures by an undergraduate student. There are very likely errors in it. jl

Psych 451 -- Notes -- 10/15/99

You don't believe this do you? The truth is that you are here because you set some kind of goal for yourself and coming to class is part of that goal. Now we've kind of got a hierarchy of them, right? I mean, your goal isn't just to be here today, that's kind of a sub-goal. What you really want is either to learn about personality or pass the class or getting good grades or something else and that fits into a larger scheme of things right, you want to do this for particular reasons. It could be because you want a degree because then your family will feel good. It could be that you have ambitions to go into psychology, it could be because you think you'll make more money if you have a degree. It could be to be one up on your neighbor who's been really snotty to you all of your life. You could be here for a lot of reasons.

The truth is you're not here because of any of this unconscious stuff. You're here because you've chosen to be here. You got up this morning, you went through some kind of planning, you didn't just appear here, you had to get dressed and you had an idea in mind that you are moving towards something. There is nothing unconscious or mysterious about any of this is there? Isn't this the way the rest of your life works too? You're not the pawn of your unconscious. The truth is that you know what you're doing and what you do in life is the result of decisions you make consciously. Isn't this true? At any point in your life I said hey you what are you doing and why are you doing it -- you could answer me.

There's sometimes we don't want to answer. You find that wallet full of money and you don't want to think about consequences. Or you get your test back and I forgot to mark a couple wrong or something. You want to get lots of money so you charge a little more. It bothers you a little so you don't want to think about that. (ex. landlord raised rent 30% in 3 years--costs have gone up -- sure landlord believes it) don't want to think about things, but we're not an unconscious machine -- the us that running us -- it's cause it makes us feel guilty and uncomfortable to think about these things. Do you really need to think about all this garbage that lung and Freud have been talking about? It's just upper middle class pretentiousness. Is that true?

What do you really want in life. If you think about it, you can, you can think about what you really want and why. Sometimes it might feel a little uncomfortable because you don't want to admit it. We don't want to admit that we want to do better than our brother or sister did. But we really can know what we want because we have decided what we are going after .

Now what do we really want--what is the ultimate wanting? Think about what we are like as human beings. The truth is that we come into this world and we are just little tiny critters and we are at the mercy of everyone and everything. What we really want is we want to be superman. We want to be the man or woman of steel who is invulnerable and can leap tall buildings in a single bound run faster than a speeding bullet. We really want to be superior. Part of the superiority has to do with comparisons with other people. We really want to compare ourselves favorably. But part of it is we don't want that awful sense of vulnerability. A sense of inadequacy

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affairlyandpotential',m. What we do is we plan ways out of it. That's why you're here and I'm
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want to t . lves positively. We want to think well of ourselves.

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Think about what you want, and worry
about and where you want to get to.
w hich,youc havec been,liviug.

What we want to eat depends on -ial,gronp. Isn't your being here, ... it's because of the
meaningfulness of being here to you. You've thought about it, you've planned it -- you have an
idea of why you are here mther than somewhere else.personal meaning with reference to the
social world as you find it. The reasons all make sense within the social world as we understand
it. And" a1l'6f'6urcplansoriginate'with reference to the social group'that'we'Ve experienced earlier
in our lives,as,well as,now. Because our plans extend into the future. They don't happen now.
We're part of a plan and planning that's been going on for as long as we're alive. Once we know
we can think, we begin planning.

One of the things we don't like is to feel inadequate or vulnerable. But the truth is that every
voluntary act originates in some sense of inadequacy. Every voluntary action begins with a
feeling of inadequacy. Is this true? The implication of this is that there is nothing wrong with
feeling inadequate or vulnerable. It's simply the human condition. Problems arise only when we
don't try to do something about it. There's nothing wrong with feeling vulnerable or inadequate,
unless we don't try to do anything about it.

What happens if we don't try to do anything about it? Well, we end up feeling kind of depressed
and frustrated and pull back from the world. We end up getting even more frustrated because the
truth is if we don't do anything, we don't get what we want. When there is something about
which we feel inadequate, if we don't try to do something about it, just that not trying to do
something about it, leads us to feel even more inadequate and we end up feeling kind of
depressed, so we are unable to cope with things related to that -- whatever the that is.

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This sense of being inadequate and unable to cope we might call an eno. compleX.; So when
we are overwhelmed with the inadequacy we feel depressed if we are unable to try and cope with
it.

One of the things we've all noticed is that people are different. One of the things we all do is
compare ourselves with other people. We've been doing this since we were little kids. (ex.2 little
girls -- little one trying to reach something -- big one grabs it and gives it to her -- little one angry ,
she wanted to get it herself)

We are born different from each other. There are all kinds of things we do better and worse. We

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might call this org~ inferiority . way we

Just don't qUIte measure up. We may think that our nose IS too bIg or too small, we are too tall or too skinny. In some way we all wish that we were other than what we are. The truth is that in varying ways this has been true all of our lives, as long as we can remember .

Does this mean we are in some way doomed? No, not at all. That's simply the human condition.

There's no one perfect, or better than everyone and everything. None of us is really superwoman or superman. We're just us. Here we are. What we need to do is work with whatever feelings of inadequacy or inferiority that we have. If we worry about having our ears too big, how could anyone love me. unending list of things we can feel bad about. we are not doomed by any of it.

There is no organ inferiority that we cannot cope with. We may not be able to cope with it in one particular way. Whatever your state is, what you have to do is deal with that. 400 years ago we all would have been peasants ..... The things we worry about are not absolute, they are social constructions. There are absolute limitations. You can't change some of your things. (nationality, height, etc.) 99% of the things we worry about are not of that sort. They are of the social construction sort. They are things that we like or dislike because of the society in which we've grown up, in which we find ourselves, the ways we think about it, and the things we want to get. When we're real unhappy it's not because we're doomed to it, it's because we haven't yet found a way to cope with it, or we've stopped trying.

What we can get is a general sense of being able to deal with things, with a positiveness, a superiority , superior to our circumstances, we can cope with them. Someone from another social position would laugh, because in their social framework what we are doing, what we feel good about, is not something they would feel good about. Don't you end up feeling good when you have a sense that you've actually done it, that there were these things that you wanted and your plan worked and you are getting what you want. Part of that inevitably is some sense of connectedness or relatedness with some people, not with all people but with the ones that are important to you.

ALFRED ADLER: born in 1870; as a child had ricketts - deficiency disease that causes the bones/joints especially in the legs to be weakened - so he had trouble walking when he was a little kid - he was short - round - not very athletic - had older brother tall and very good at athletics - lower middle class family- mother was cold and gloomy, negative martyr type; father was cheerful, warm, caring; family was Catholic but converted to Protestantism; he was a so-so student - felt inadequate compared to his brother, esp. women and romance; went to medical school, not best student, graduated in lower third; married a woman named Bryca Epstein - radical; concern for poor, lower class; first publication was on the pathogenesis for working conditions for tailors; jointed psychoanalytic society in 1902; became its president after lung left, but he only lasted a year, conflict with Freud; when he left Freud forbid contact with him or wife.

--The Child and the Family: died in 1937

The society for individual psychology; drafted; socialist; war run for profit; met clients at coffeehouses and taverns, park benches. started society to provide psychotherapy to poor people; child guidance centers ---first in both; father of family therapy; saw both couples and whole families in therapy; great deal of influence on school counselors. Approach called individual psychology, because the person becomes an individual in a social context.

Can you imagine what psychotherapy would be from this point of view? ( 1) It's a discovering of what the person has stopped trying to deal with. (2) developed plans conflict with each other.

(ex. roommate - steak)

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Ideas of Alfte er. t d suggested, parap asing is that we actually what we are doing and why.

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Most of the things we want we want because of the social context in which we've made our decisions. 'Ftfe'4,

I;4j~cof,tBecw~rld;C1'tie further suggested that there was nothing wrong with feeling inadequate and vulnerable and all of our conscious actions result in a direct line from this sense of inferiority because we all want to overcome it.

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Adler suggested tha~sonai liYwas--a-Whole and it really didn't make sense to break it up into pieces. So he didn't want to talk about things like the id, ego, superego, collective Our first development in life usually comes during the nursing relationship. He said, "We probably owe to the maternal sense of contact the largest part of the human social feeling. The innate social feeling that we have is largely developed in the first year or so of life. The mother's role in this initial relationship is to initiate cooperation and to teach the child to work with others. Fathers usually but not always serve more as examples of striving and overcoming obstacles. He saw the masculine/feminine split more as one of social orientation vs. striving orientation although they are not completely separable. He thought there were things the parents could do wrong.

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The second great parental sin is w~~ neglect. Neglect is not doing for the child what

~e child cannot do for themselves. c What this ends up with is the child ends up with the sense that the world is a cold and unsympathetic place. +Children who are neglected tend to; overrate the difficulties in the world and to underrate their abilities. They tend to be "suspicious, isolated, stubborn, and malicious". Why? The world is out to get me, I'm going to get it first.

These are tendencies. Circumstances don't determine the way a person becomes, but they tend to lead the person in certain directions.

Neglected children tend to feel that the world doesn't care. The world is out to get me. I can't do anything in the world; grab what I can grab; they don't give a damn about me.

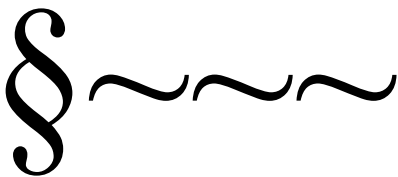
What Adler is basically saying is that the parents should do for the child what the child cannot do for themselves, but not more.

What Freud called the Oedipal conflict happens only in a very small percentage of children, usually pampered children. What Freud calls the Oedipal conflict is really a pampered child trying to maintain control over the parents so the parents meet their needs instead of them trying to meet their own needs. The reason Freud made this mistake is that he saw only upper middle class people and the ones that he got were largely pampered.

only, one of the million varieties of striving for superiority and we cannot take it as the central motive of all expressions of personality. ~~~~~

Along with organ inferiority, which is the sense that there is something wrong with us in our basic being, pampering and neglect will lead to most of the difficulties that people have in life. Again these are circumstances that tend to lead towards problems. They do not of themselves create problems. Because we are after all individuals and we cope with the same circumstances in different ways. Whereas a pampered child may end up becoming dependent, clingy, they may not as well. We actually have control over it although the environment pressures us in particular ways and many people succumb to the pressure or they go along with the circumstances.

There are also six minor parental sins (this is a list I made up)



1. Failure to show tenderliness towards child. This impairs their ability to love. or tends to lead them to have impaired ability to love. So that generally they do not take establishing loving relationships as a means of personal striving.
2. Setting of unobtainable standards. This tends to lead the child to feel inferior and helpless. (ex. park - daughter - tools - boards - nails - young boy/father pushing him to do better)
3. Corporal punishment. physical punishment. Corporal punishment always tends towards a sense of inferiority because it focuses the child's attention, not on what they did wrong, but on the power differential between them and the parent. Basically what the child learns is big people can

and will hurt me. Rather than worrying about what they've done wrong, most children are focused on the struggle against the parent who is hurting them. Corporal punishment is simply not a good idea. Leaves the child feeling helpless and resentful.

4. Ridicule. "Ridiculing a child is well nigh criminal." Children who are ridiculed fear exposure. So they tend not to try.

5. Excessive Criticism. tends to leave the child to expect that of others - tend to avoid others - if you expect others to be negative about you and your efforts - why bother. Tend to have difficulty working with others and cooperating with other people and tend to be socially avoidant.

6. The Tin God Father. tend to be perfect - child is always wrong. The pretense is that the parent is always right and the child is always wrong. Tends to lead to hypocrisy and unwillingness to cooperate/work with others.

Another thing that tends to influence the development of the individual is one's place in the family. Birth Order. Every family is different for each person in it. Remember these are tendencies, and it really is all up to the individual. n~::~-;-;-;~::~;t~

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,t.".,/V,;;;";;c;@West!@tI:ild. born to parents who usually aren't very experienced - tend to pamper child -

trying to do good job - don't know what child can do and can't do - tend to then lose pampering and they see parents attention turn to someone else - combination of pampering and neglect. tend to have most trouble in birth order - sense of paradise lost - politically conservative - look back to good old days. Tend to have the most sex, drug problems. In general to have more kinds of problems than the other children do. A lot of this is because of when the new child comes they compare themselves to the new child and they say they must be better than me because my parents seem to like them better.

2. Middle Children. tend to do best. feel pressure from both ends - born into family where there's already someone ahead of them and then after a while there's someone behind them gaining on them - always trying to keep up and get ahead - serves them well because what we need to do in the world is keep trying.

There are no circumstances of family or social status that dooms us to an unsuccessful life.

Anyone can live a happy and successful life as long as you keep trying.

Middle children try. they tend to be more competitive - tend to like change - tend to be liberal politically and want the whole power structure to be in flux - want people who don't have power to gain it - lack negative aspects of older and younger children.

3. Youngest child: Evette's ahead of them and they never catch up. Because they're last, the tendency for parents to pay more attention to them never stops. Tend to be pampered and behind in their comparison to others. tend to be highly ambitious, but have sense that it is a little

hopeless. What youngest children frequently do is try to be different than the others.

( ex. family - 3 out of 4 kids - medical school - youngest took up drama and refused science - couldn't compete )

4. Only children. They tend to be pampered and expect to have a unique status. Not only expect others to do things for them and doubt their ability and expect to be treated as special. Parents who have only one child tend to be unusually fearful for that child's safety and well being. This is communicated to the child, so they tend to be more fearful of the world than do children from larger families.

5. One of certain sex - 1 boy/1 girl. They tend to emphasize sex role either in same or opposite way of other kids. One girl in a family of boys tends to be either a tomboy or very feminine. You get one boy in a family of girls - he tends to be either effeminate or very masculine. Why? they either compete in the same way as the other children or they choose the other path. Their special status becomes usually something of emphasis for them. All of these are just tendencies - none of this is certain - it is all up to the individual child.

We choose to do things - more successful way to live.

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Adler -- Style of Life

The style of life, we all have a style of life, has three components.

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1. Goals that we have selected in life; cWe tend to, select these quite early in life, generally in the first 4 or 5 years of life. You can pick a whole bunch of different kinds of goals. One goal that most of us have since we all have an innate social interest is to have warm and close relationships. Not everybody has that as a goal. What other goals do people have in life? academic/career success/center of attention/to be one up on everyone else/competition/revenge/to be taken care of/avoid other people/part of a family/

There are all kinds of goals and most of us are dominated by 4 - 6 goals. They don't always agree with each other.

2. Methods used to strive for the goals", We select a goal, as we get older method becomes more intelligent and sophisticated. ( ex. to avoid people - sit in back of class - avoid eye contact) Methods don't always work to achieve goals. ( ex. thinking about things -- end up only thinking -- not doing anything; you have to take specific actions to achieve goal)

3. Thoughts, perceptions, memories and other mental activities that go along with pursuing the methods we use to try to reach the goals that we have chosen. ( ex. flirting as method, what goes through your mind? notice the characteristics of people you like to flirt with) Perceptions are geared towards what you are trying to get. The way we think, feel, remember are means to our ends ( achieving the goal). You don't really think you think randomly or objectively do you? Geared towards getting what we want.

cHow do you know what someone's style of life is?

F first you can notice how they act in a general sort of way. What are their character traits, , especially character traits that don't work very well or appear not to work very well. ( ex. graduate school, big assignment, guy waited until night before to do, he did this with everything. What do you think this says about this guy? procrastinator - method, what's goal? just wants to get by, doesn't want to succeed in some way, why? to avoid having weaknesses exposed -- just did the night before, if I had started earlier would have done better) (ex. another student same goal-- didn't think he was as smart as everyone else, but different method -- started assignment as soon as he got it.)

Another way of telling what someone's goal or methods are is by physical orientation (body language) - movements - posture.

What do we remember? are, our subjective starting points.

We can think about how these things work. We can think about how different character traits fit in with the goals you have chosen. Remember the goals are all conscious at least to some point. What we are doing is the result of our conscious choices including what we think and how we feel and what we notice. It is not the case that they are determined by some strange unconscious thing. It has to do with what we want in life and how we are going about getting it or trying to get it. The truth is we don't get everything we want in life. None of us is perfect in how we do things. What happens in our mind is always taken up with how do I get it and things related to the feeling we have as a result of those how do I get it.

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