

## A SUMMARY OF ADLERIAN FUNDAMENTALS

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The three most fundamental principles are: behavior is goal-directed (purposive); humans are fundamentally social, and their basic motivation is to "belong" and have a place of value as an equal in the human community; the individual is indivisible, functioning holistically, with unity of personality. In integrated form, these principles mean that each person moves in a unitary way towards self-chosen and social goals which, at their root, reflect a striving for value and belonging, and ultimately for social contribution. Each human being is a creatively self-determining individual, who is not driven by external circumstances nor by internal dialectical forces but who holistically moves towards goals that are inextricably embedded in social life and the community of fellow humans.

The "ironclad logic of social living" requires equality and mutual respect in human relationships. Each person has the innate potential to strive to contribute to the welfare of the human community, and this is *Gemeinschaftsgefühl*, or Social Interest. Early childhood experiences that are based on democratic training for cooperation lead to the "feeling of belonging" and to Social Interest. When persons do not feel belonging they come to feel inferior, and this can lead to a mistaken goal of striving for being special and superior, a striving from a minus to a plus.

Through encouragement an individual develops self-confidence and motivation from "within", and through egalitarian group problem solving, the individual's and the group's welfare is strengthened. Mutual respect enhances feelings of self worth. Through not "giving in" nor dominating with power, individuals can establish cooperation and full participation and contribution. Freedom and rights entail responsibility and mutual respect. Democratic, rather than autocratic or *laissez-faire*, processes lead to stable harmony in human relationships, be it in the family, the workplace, or internationally between nations.

Life style is the core and source of unity of personality. It is developed in the early years of childhood within the family. Sibling relationships crucially shape personality. The child creatively interprets life experiences (phenomenology) and formulates a life goal (a long-term goal) and fundamental concepts of self and the world. This "life style" can be diagnosed in adulthood through knowledge of "early recollections" and "family constellation". Short-term goals are congruent with long-term goals. Dreams are preparations for action and reflect primarily short-term goals. Actions and motivation can be changed by redirecting short-term goals. This often does not necessitate therapy or a change of life style.

Choice and decision create goals and, in turn, emotions. Private logic and subjectivity are inherent in human thought, emotion, and action. Counseling and psychotherapy involve education, goal disclosure, and re-directing beliefs and goals, by techniques that enhance feelings of self worth and respect for others. Misbehavior, due to mistaken goals, can be altered by a change in beliefs and goals. This requires encouragement, training for responsibility and social contribution, and creating an atmosphere that establishes respect for the individual as well as the group. Leadership skills are crucial in a democratic society. Democratic methods use natural and logical consequences rather than reward and punishment. Individual and group problem solving is needed to meet "the needs of the situation". Steps for conflict resolution and improved harmony in social living involve encouragement, mutual respect, cooperation, democratic group processes and problem solving, shared responsibility in decision making, and striving for the welfare of the individual and the group. Maximum Social Interest exists when striving for group welfare entails the whole global, human community.