

TWELVE PROPOSITIONS OF ADLERIAN PSYCHOLOGY

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The Individual Psychology of Alfred Adler

1. There is one basic dynamic force behind all human activity, a striving from a felt minus situation toward a plus situation, from a feeling of inferiority towards superiority, perfection, totality.
2. The striving receives its specific direction from an individually unique goal or self-ideal, which though influenced by biological and environmental factors is ultimately the creation of the individual. Because it is an ideal, the goal is fiction.
3. The goal is only “dimly envisage” by the individual, which means that it is largely unknown to them and not understood by them. This is Adler’s definition of the unconscious: the unknown part of the goal.
4. The goal becomes the final cause, the ultimate independent variable. To the extent that the goal provides the key for understanding the individual, it is a working hypothesis on the part of the psychologist.
5. All psychological processes form a self-consistent organization from the point of view of the goal, like a drama, which is constructed from the beginning with the finale in view. This self-consistent personality structure is what Adler calls the style of life. It becomes firmly established at an early age, from which time on, behavior that is apparently contradictory is only the adaptation of different means to the same end.
6. All apparent psychological categories, such as different drives or the contrast between conscious and unconscious, are only aspects of a unified rational system and do not represent discrete entities and quantities.
7. All objective determiners, such as biological factors and past history become relative to the goal idea: they do not function as direct causes but provide probabilities only. The individual sees all objective factors in accordance

- with their style of life. Their significance and effectiveness is developed only in the intermediary psychological metabolism, so to speak.
8. The individual's opinion of themselves and their world, their apperceptive schema, their interpretations, all as aspects of the style of life, influence every psychological process.
 9. The individual cannot be considered apart from their social situation.
 10. All the important life problems, including certain drive satisfaction, become social problems. All values become social values.
 11. The socialization of the individual is not achieved at the cost of repression, but is afforded through an innate human ability, which, however, needs to be developed. It is this ability which Adler calls social feeling or social interest. Because the individual is embedded in a social situation, social interest becomes crucial for their adjustment.
 12. Maladjustment is characterized by increased inferiority feelings, underdeveloped social interest, and an exaggerated uncooperative goal of personal superiority. Accordingly, problems are solved in a self-centered "private sense" rather than a task-centered "common sense" fashion.