

Alfred adler: findings of individual psychology and beyond



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Introduction

Alfred Adler's contribution to the psychology world is unmatched. His findings to his theories are still used to this day. Adler's work of the many theories of personality is unmatched in the psychology world. Adler's major work is the findings of the theory of Individual psychology. Adler is considered the first community psychologist because his work pioneered attention to community life, prevention, and population health (Adler University, 2019). Adler was also was among the first to write about the social determinants of health and of mental health (Adler University, 2019). Adler's work really changed the landscape of psychology and how we learn by the actions of others.

Early Life

Alfred Adler was born in Vienna, Austria on February 7, 1870. Adler was in a family struck by illness throughout the early part of his life (Schultz & Schultz, 2016). Adler was the middle child in his family with one older brother and two younger brothers. At the age of three Adler and his younger brother were both bed ridden with pneumonia, and his brother died right next to him in bed overnight during their sickness (Schultz & Schultz, 2016). According to Adler when he overheard the doctor tell his dad that " your boy is lost" he then knew that he wanted to be a doctor when he grew up because Adler felt like the doctor's treatment and empathy was poor (Schultz & Schultz, 2016).

Adler's childhood really shaped him into his beliefs into what turned into his work into the psychology field. Adler's early childhood was fulfilled by pampering by his mother, and love from his father. In interviews with Adler he stated that he was jealous of his older brother because he was much healthier, athletic, better looking, than Alfred was (Schultz & Schultz, 2016). Alfred's mother and father gave birth to another child after Adler's sickness. With the birth of his younger brother Adler said that he felt replaced and began to resent his younger brother. Adler later said he felt dethroned, and said his mother began to resent him (Schultz & Schultz, 2016). This sense of inferiority went with Adler when he started school as a boy. Adler was a mediocre student in the beginning, Adler's teacher even said that the best occupation for Adler was to be a shoemaker because Adler would not be smart enough to do anything else (Schultz & Schultz, 2016). Rather than beating himself up about the negativity, Adler rose to the challenges and worked hard to achieve what he set out to be.

College and Beyond

Adler then went to college at Vienna University studying in medicine. Upon graduation he began a private practice in ophthalmologist, but Adler eventually shifted to general medicine (Schultz & Schultz, 2016). The stress of not being able to prevent death and started to stress Adler out so after awhile he switched his occupation. Adler then switched from practicing as a doctor in general medicine to specialize in neurology and psychiatry (Schultz & Schultz, 2016).

It is believed that during Adler's time as a general practice doctor, living next to an amusement park, Adler became inspired by the performers' unusual strengths and weaknesses. Adler began to develop his insights on compensation and inferiority (Adler University, 2019). As a psychiatrist Adler then continued to write down thoughts expressed towards him by his patients.

Meeting Freud

After Adler started his work with the psychoanalysis of his patients, he was then asked to meet with another known psychiatrist working on relatively the same thing, Sigmund Freud (Schultz & Schultz, 2016). Adler and Freud shared a lot of similarities like going to the same school, getting the same degrees, and studying their findings by looking at their patients through counseling. These meetings started in 1907, Adler, Freud, and two other psychiatrists Rudolf Reitler and Wilhelm Stekel (Adler University, 2019). Adler, Freud, and company eventually started the psychoanalytic movement. They formed the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society where Alfred Adler was the first president of the organization (Adler University, 2019).

Freud believed Adler to be his disciples, but because of Adler's past inferiority problems he did not think so. Unlike Freud, Adler focused more on the importance of the social realm. Adler used these ideas to form individual psychology (Adler University, 2019). Freud and Adler started to argue with one another and started to resent each other because of their different views of psychoanalysis, eventually Adler broke off on his own to start his own theories that we know now as individual psychology.

After Freud

When Adler broke off from Freud and started to work on his own, Alfred started his own psychology group to teach his findings. Adler started the Society of Individual Psychology in 1912 (Adler University, 2019). After the disagreements with Freud, Adler moved to New York in 1929 (Schultz & Schultz, 2016). Adler continued to develop his idea of individual psychology. After notoriety within the public, Adler started lecturing his ideas in universities around the area (Schultz & Schultz, 2016). With the publications of his books Adler became even more famous because of his work. Before Adler, there really was not an emphasis of what his theory brought to the public. Adler then went on a 57-lecture tour spreading his word. On the tour in 1937, Adler died in Scotland of a heart attack (Schultz & Schultz, 2016).

Individual Psychology

Adler came up with the idea of individual psychology because of the lack of input when it came to be seeing at how other people think and react to what people are thinking (Adler, 1927). Unlike Freudian Psychology, individual psychology it focused on the uniqueness of each person and denied the universality of biological motives and goals that were told by Sigmund Freud (Schultz & Schultz, 2016). Adler took the idea of individual psychology to understand the individual style of life as a part of the whole (Adler, 1927). According to Adler people are perceiving and judging in their own way (Adler, 1927). While gathering information as a psychiatrist, Adler used his own childhood to process how children are thinking through the patient's life. According to Adler's work children are born with defective organs, children

are spoiled or hated by their love ones (Adler, 1927). Children are constantly striving for the goal of superiority to overcome the feeling of inferiority (Adler, 1927). Once again using past experiences and patient's word Adler used this as a coping mechanism that people use in day to day lives.

Inferiority

Inferiority feelings are the normal condition of a people, and it is the source of all human's striving for what they want in life (Schultz & Schultz, 2016). According to Adler people live life with certain goals, when those goals are not met then this feeling of doubt takes over (Adler, 1931). When people cannot get over the idea of not meeting their goals, they start to doubt themselves into what the individuals can and cannot do. Adler then came up with the idea of the inferiority complex.

The inferiority complex is the condition when a person is unable to compensate for normal inferiority feelings (Schultz & Schultz, 2016). That basically means that the person is unable to overcome what is dealt to them in life and start to have doubts. Adler traced that feeling by looking and examining his patients back to childhood. This led to the types of people Adler came to actualize over time.

Types of Personalities

With the way people were dealing with everyday struggles, Adler went back to early childhood behaviors which shape us all into what we are as adults. According to Adler there were four different types of personalities. The first type is the dominant type. Dominant types of individuals have a ruling

attitude with little types of social awareness and these types of people behave without any regard for other people (Journal Psyche, 2018). The getting type, which is the most common human type according to Adler, expect to receive satisfaction for other people (Journal Psyche, 2018). With this behavior people become dependent on other people. The third type is the avoiding type. This type of person makes no attempt to face their life problems (Journal Psyche, 2018). By avoiding difficulties in life, this person avoids any possible type of failure. The fourth and final type of personality by Adler is the socially useful type. These types of people cooperate with others and acts in accordance with their needs (Journal Psyche, 2018). These people cope with problems within a well-developed frame work of social interest.

While Adler was working with his patients to develop these types of personalities, it is easy to see why and how some people struggle with inferiority which were distinguished based on the different levels of energy Adler felt his patients manifested (Journal Psyche, 2018).

Culture of Society

During this point in time society there was not really work in psychology to the mind and thought of people themselves. Instead of working on the conscious mind, like Adler did, psychology work was more towards the unconscious mind of how people thought. Many of the issues that were confronted by Adler remain highly relevant today, and they provide useful guidance regardless of a therapist's theoretical orientation (Overholser, 2010). Even though back then there really was not any type of work towards the thought of individual psychology. At the time psychoanalysis was the key

insight. Over time working with Freud, who was one of the most popular psychologists at the time, Adler's work was at first criticized because of the lack of work on the idea of inferiority playing into how people act. Over time though, his idea started to grasp the idea and it started to make sense to the public and became popular with society.

Conclusion

Alfred Adler started out with the idea of individual psychology because of his intense childhood and his efforts to compensate his feelings for how much inferiority plays apart of people's life (Schultz & Schultz, 2016). Inferiority feelings result from people's attempts to compensate for these feelings. Adler is considered the first community psychologist because his work pioneered attention to community life, prevention, and population health (Adler University, 2019). Without Alfred Adler contribution to the psychology field the work of inferiority in everyday life may not have been talked about. It is easy to grasp now because as humans it is easy to see those types of people because of Adler.

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