

IN SEARCH OF A FEELING: THE NATURE OF OUR QUEST TO FEEL GOOD

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Goals

- To suggest a renewed overview of Adlerian theory
- Argue for emphasis on the emotional experience of the person
- Describe the “Adlerian Map”

Basic Adlerian Concepts

- Core Theoretical Components
- Assessment
- Intervention

Core Theoretical Components

- Striving
- Teleology
- Holism
- Life-Tasks, including Social Interest

STRIVING TO THRIVE . . .



- Striving – The Law or Movement
 - ▣ continual movement forward through TIME and CIRCUMSTANCE

Core Theoretical Components

□ Teleology

□ Goal orientation

- Perfection – The “prepotent dynamic”
- Superiority – a “plus” state
- Inferiority compensation – resolution of a “minus” state
 - Overcoming
- Belonging – esteem through affiliation

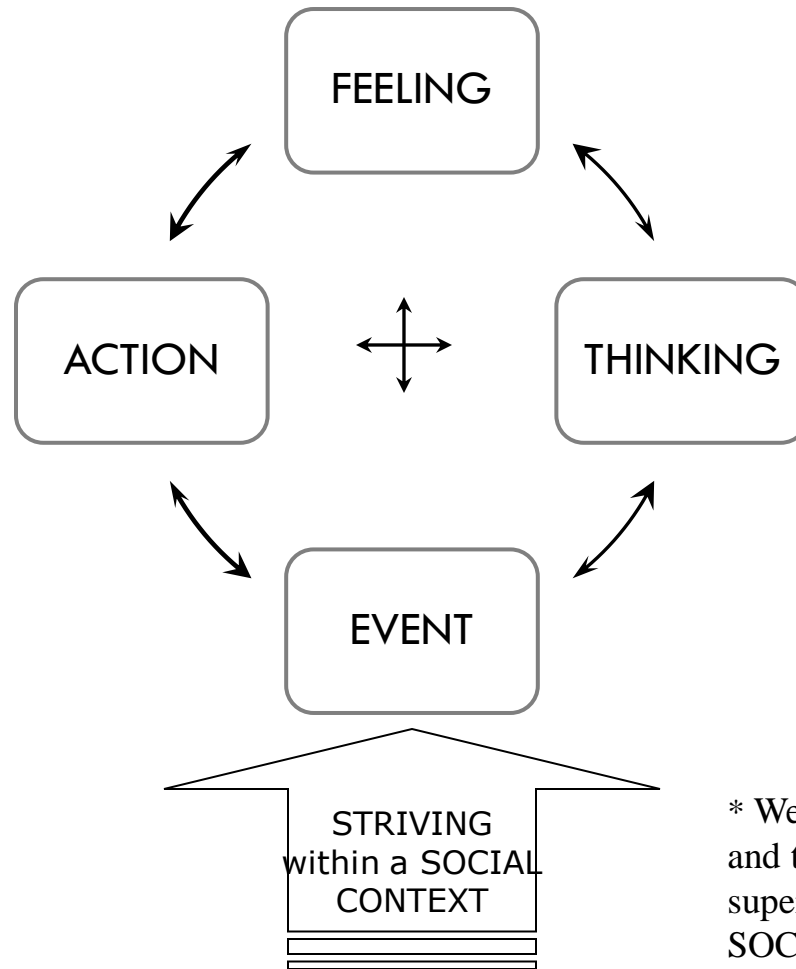
□ Fictional Goals – the “shoulds” “oughts” and “musts”

□ Psychology of Use/Purpose – because “it works”

Core HUMAN Components

- Holism –
- F.A.T.E.
 - ▣ Bio-Psycho-Social/Gestalt
 - Social Embeddedness
 - Organ-inferiority
 - Phenomenological
 - Creative Self
 - Private logic
 - Biased apperception

HOLISM



* We USE our abilities to THINK, to FEEL and to ACT in order to THRIVE (the superior outcome of striving) within the SOCIAL world we are thrown into.

Core HUMAN Realities

- Because we live among others and need basic outcomes for our very survival (literal and psychological) . . .
- Life-Tasks and Social Interest
 - ▣ Life imperatives
 - Work, Social, Love/Sex
 - ▣ Social Interest

Assessment

- Life-Style Analysis – an analysis of how those core concepts play out in the individual's life
 - ▣ Family constellation – Birth order +
 - Parental attitudes
 - Guiding lines (attitudes, presence/absence, values, etc.)
 - Family atmosphere
 - ▣ Peer influences and school experiences
 - ▣ Religious and cultural influences
 - ▣ Early recollections, narratives
 - ▣ Dreams

Assessment

- What do we get from our assessment?

*Assessment tells us how the person has become
“oriented” relative to the core issues.*

Intervention

- Reorientation – directed at increasing life-task fulfillment, which requires social interest
 - ▣ Encouragement
 - ▣ Behavioral Intervention (change in style of movement)
 - Skills development
 - Acting “as if”
 - ▣ Cognitive Intervention (change in convictions)
 - Change in apperception
 - Metaphor and paradox
 - Dream and memory reconstruction

Intervention

- Reorientation – cont.
 - ▣ Affective focus (alter the energizing aspects of emotion)
 - Emotional reorientation strategies
 - ▣ Community intervention – *ultimately one's health is related to the health of the community and the individual must contribute to the welfare of the community and the community should facilitate the well-being of the members.*

Summary . . .




Human beings live their lives in a constant state of movement; and in that state of movement are continually striving to overcome the challenges they face and take advantage of the opportunities they see.

Importantly, there are better ways than others to do this...

Summary . . .

As a human child develops, he or she develops a style of living that reflects his or her perceptions of threat (harm and burden), ways to overcome threats, and his or her own perception of how things ought to go for life to go well.

At the core, the child (who becomes the adult), wants life to go well!



The child, like the adult he or she will become,
seeks . . .

Z

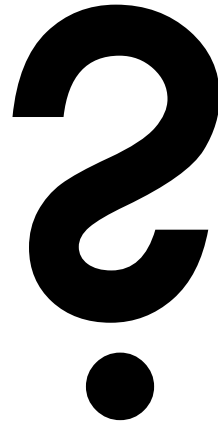
Summary . . .



Adlerian intervention is a process of REORIENTATION.

Changing the maladaptive orientation that the individual developed as a child in such a way that the opportunity for “plus” is maximized and the necessity of “minus” is minimized.

Questions?



Shifting gears . . .

- What do you want in life?
 - ▣ Why do you want that?
 - Exhaust the “layers of why.”

- In search of a feeling . . .
 - ▣ The Z-Factor
 - The Desired State
 - A state of VALIDATION
 - A **FELT PLUS**

“The Functions of Emotions”

- *Emotions are not held in high esteem today; one can say that they are almost in ill repute. Describing a person as being ‘emotional’ is generally not considered complimentary. Emotions are more or less distrusted. They seem to be irrational, provoking unwarranted actions, are difficult to ‘control,’ lead to faulty perspectives and misinterpretations. We witness a tendency to put the blame for any antisocial behavior on emotions. They are considered to represent the ‘lower’ part of human nature, while intelligence is regarded as the higher human level. Emotions seem to pull man down, intelligence up.*

Dreikurs, 1957

Three PURPOSES of EMOTION

- 1. Personal (Existential) Feedback
 - The immediate inventory of our current life satisfaction.
 - The dynamic barometer of our quality of life.
 - "Feeling States"
- 2. Communication
 - Our first means of impacting our environment
 - The PRIMARY means of interpersonal communication
 - "Affect"
- 3. Action Energy
 - Without emotion . . . we do nothing
 - "The steam in the engine." ~Dreikurs
 - "Emotion"

Two CATEGORIES of EMOTION

Those that VALIDATE

- The "END" Game. The outcomes we seek.
- Those feelings indicative of "a job well done," "success," "worth," "superiority."

Two CATEGORIES of EMOTION

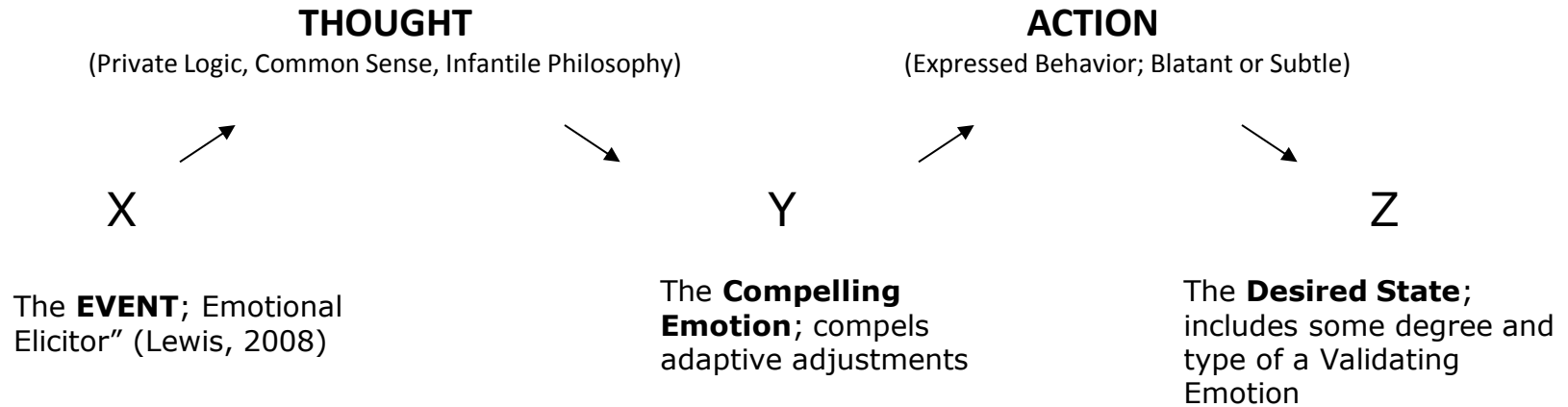
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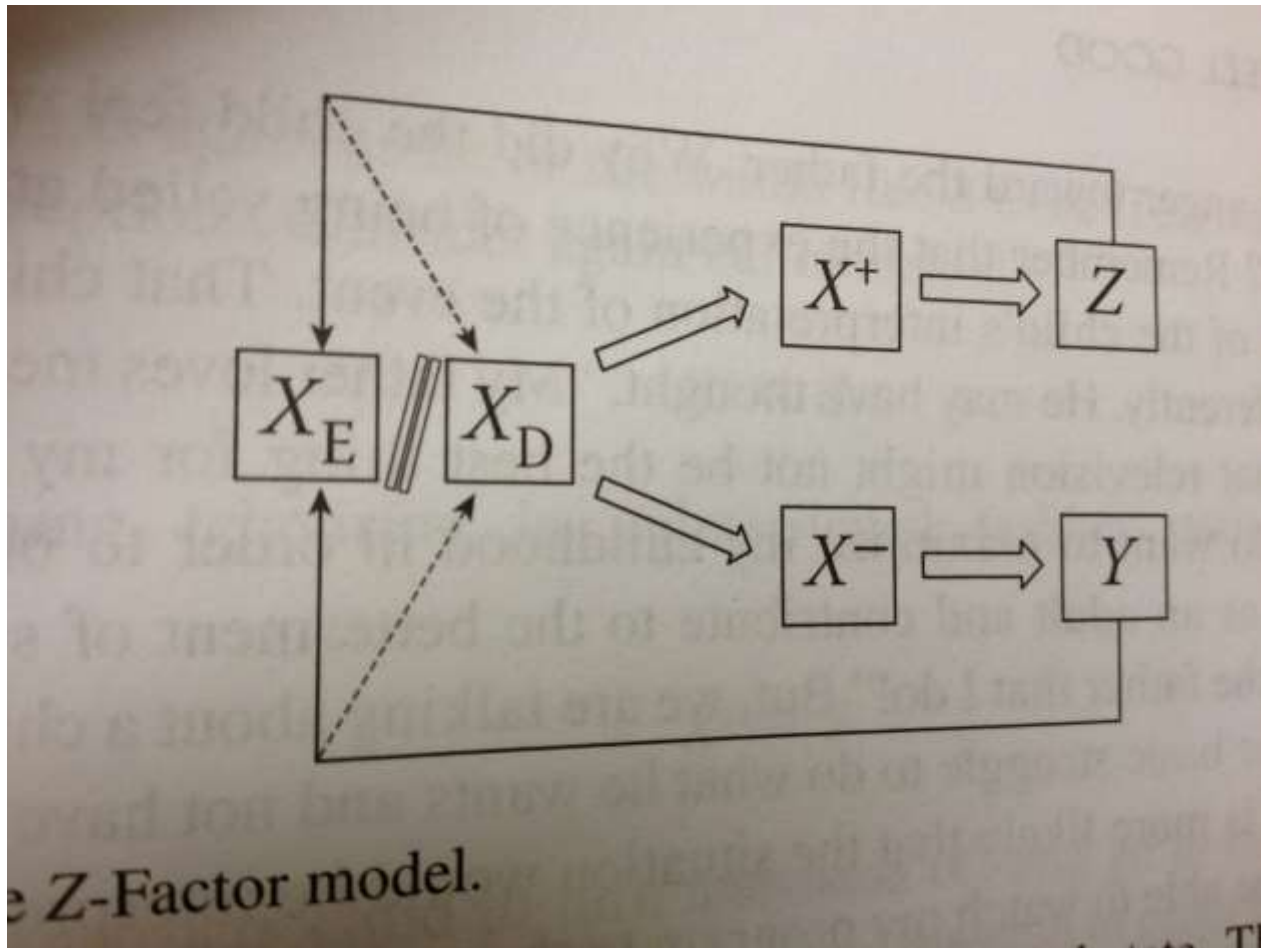
- The "END" Game. The outcomes we seek.
- Those feelings indicative of "a job well done," "success," "worth," "superiority."

Those that COMPEL

- The felt energy that *must* be dealt with. The *forceful* energy.
- The steam in the engine that energizes compensatory actions.

The Z-Factor Model...





e Z-Factor model.

Examples . . .

- **Anger**
 - The obstacle removal emotion implemented in order to remove an obstacle to an outcome one feels entitled to.
- **Frustration**
 - The protest emotion, used to express discontent and to compel others to alter their behaviors.
- **Contempt**
 - The rejection emotion, used to create psychological distance from targets of contempt.
- **Anxiety**
 - The battle emotion, used to increase awareness to possible threats.
 - “False positives are preferable to false negatives.” Ohman, 1999
- **Guilt**
 - The relationship maintenance emotion, used to increase awareness of relationship obligation.
- **Sadness**
 - The Loss emotion, indicates states of loss.
 - When including tearfulness, can be used to elicit reassurance and support.
- **Depression**
 - The retreat emotion, used to withdraw from a hopeless situation.
 - Dreikurs: “A self imposed vacation”
 - Paul Gilbert: “depression is the emotion we rely upon to remove ourselves from a battle we aren’t going to win.”
 - Depression: Internalized anger? We don’t retreat happily.

Questions?

?

The Adlerian Map . . .

□ Guidelines for Mental Health

(The MAP)

▣ Social Interest

Acting with concern for the community, for others.

Staying on the High Road

Graciousness

■ The Advantages:

- Maximizes the probability of rewarding and fulfilling social relationships
- Minimizes the need for compensatory actions (compelled by emotional states) to deal with negative states brought about by contemptuous social relationships and contemptuous self-appraisals.

Still more . . .

- Guidelines for *Mental Health*

- Life Tasks


- Areas in life that must be fulfilled/satisfied in order to minimize the occurrence of negative emotional states and to maximize the opportunities to experience positive/happy feelings.

Still more . . .

- Life Tasks – The R.C.R. Model
 - ▣ RESPONSIBILITY –
 - One must be able to sustain the self in a socially responsible fashion; one must be prepared to do those things that are necessary, even when unpleasant
 - If we meet this task, we are able to function with independence.
 - If we do not, we must depend upon others.
 - ▣ COOPERATION –
 - One must be able to get along with others and hold up one's end as that relates to the success and welfare of the group.
 - If we do, we get to revel in the joys of felt inclusion.
 - If we do not, we will find ourselves compelled into compensatory efforts.
 - ▣ RESPECT –
 - We must be respectful of the self and respectful of others.
 - If we do, we get to revel in the joys of passion and sexual satisfaction.
 - If we do not, we must deal with the consequences of misdirecting these urges or of having failed to express them.

Still more . . .

- Life Tasks – The R.C.R. Model
 - ▣ RESPONSIBILITY – WORK
 - One must be able to sustain the self in a socially responsible fashion; one must be prepared to do those things that are necessary, even when unpleasant
 - If we meet this task, we are able to function with independence.
 - If we do not, we must depend upon others.
 - ▣ COOPERATION – SOCIAL/FRIENDSHIP
 - One must be able to get along with others and hold up one's end as that relates to the success and welfare of the group.
 - If we do, we get to revel in the joys of felt inclusion.
 - If we do not, we will find ourselves compelled into compensatory efforts.
 - ▣ RESPECT – LOVE/SEX/INTIMACY and SELF-CARE
 - We must be respectful of the self and respectful of others.
 - If we do, we get to revel in the joys of passion and sexual satisfaction.
 - If we do not, we must deal with the consequences of misdirecting these urges or of having failed to express them.



Bottom line: If one fails to meet life task responsibilities, and fails to act with social interest, one is forced to contend with less than optimal conditions.

Happiness and its varieties are not outcomes to which we are entitled, but are the outcome of meeting life responsibilities.

Means for Understanding the Person

- Life-style analysis
 - ▣ Via life-style analysis, we come to understand how each person goes about deriving a felt plus and what they do when it does not work out the way he or she desires.
 - ▣ People desire Z

Means for Helping the Person

□ Reorientation techniques

- Acknowledge what the person wants.
 - The person wants to feel good; he or she is compelled by Z.
- Help that person to implement alternative strategies for getting what one wants.
 - It not so much what they want (felt plus) that causes problems, it's what they think needs to happen (private logic) and how they go about getting it (style of movement).
 - Acting with social interest and fulfilling the life-tasks maximizes the opportunity for a felt plus.
 - Acting without social interest and failing at the life-tasks maximizes the probability of a felt minus.



The Relative End

Questions?

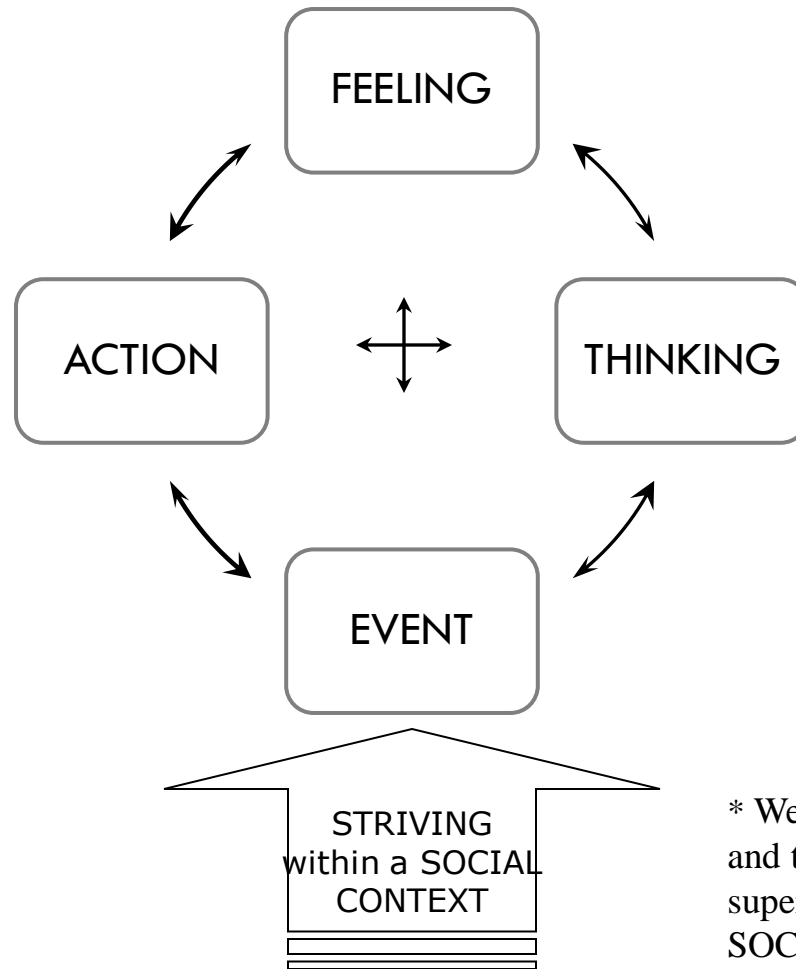
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HOLISM?

- What exactly is “Holism”?
 - Covers all aspects of the human condition?
 - Feel
 - Act
 - Think

 - Relative to what?
 - STUFF
 - The World of OCCURRENCES
 - The EVENTS that happen

HOLISM?



* We USE our abilities to THINK, to FEEL and to ACT in order to THRIVE (the superior outcome of striving) within the SOCIAL world we are thrown into.

Events

□ Social Embeddedness

- The stuff that happens is usually directly social, indirectly social, or non-social.
 - Sometimes intimate
 - Sometime less intimate

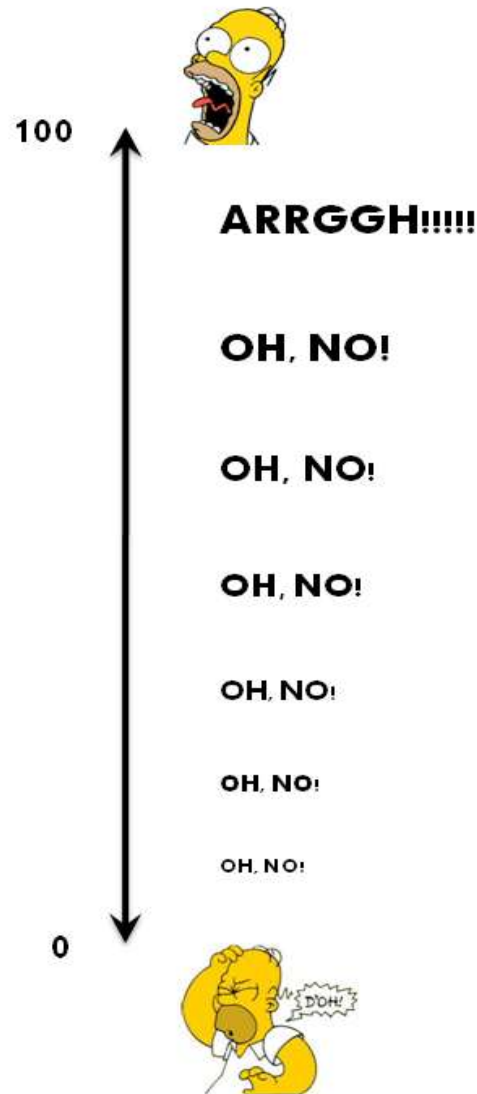
- The world of occurrences is, primarily, a
world of people

“The individual cannot be considered apart from his social situation.” Adler

Thoughts

- The sense making capacity
 - ▣ We use our thoughts to make sense of the world of occurrences
 - What do we understand?
 - What can we predict?
 - What can we control?
- Two general types of thoughts:
 - ▣ “OH NO!!”
 - Those evaluated as threatening and/or aversive
 - ▣ “OH YES!!”
 - Those evaluated as enhancing and/or pleasant

Sense of Perceived Urgency



Thoughts (cont.)

□ Two levels of thought

□ Conscious thought

■ Immediate realities

- Mostly Objective
- Slow
- Flexible
- Long term
- Opportunistic (looks for opportunities/positive experiences)
- Includes some “common sense”

Thoughts (cont.)

- ▣ Adaptive Unconscious (T. Wilson, *Strangers to Ourselves*)
 - “Private logic” – More consistent with our fictional goals
 - Mostly subjective - we often cannot articulate these thoughts
 - Reactive
 - Sensitive to fears and loss
 - Present-oriented
 - Rigid
 - Most sensitive to negative information
 - Infantile Philosophy
 - “I want what I want when I want it, and I don’t want to do what I don’t want to do!”
 - Implications to Parenting: You can’t have everything you want, and there are better ways than others to get what you want and sometimes it is necessary to do things that you don’t want to do.

“Thought processes, including the fictional activity, are fundamentally carried out in the darkness of the unconscious.” ~Vaihinger

Action

- *The Law of Movement*
 - ▣ The things we do

 - ▣ BUT, WHY DO WE DO WHAT WE DO?
 - In order to impact the EVENTS
 - WHY?

TELEOLOGY

- The Psychology of Use
 - Human behavior is “purposeful”
 - What purpose?
 - To fulfill our goals!

“Human functioning in all of its facets is oriented around the striving for the betterment of the individual.”

Alfred Adler

Putting it ALL TOGETHER...

- Back to Thoughts: “Oh, Yes!” & “Oh, No!”
 - Where do they get their meaning?
 - From felt energy associated with the cognitive appraisal.
- Three levels of thoughts that feed this energy:
 - Common sense
 - Private logic
 - Infantile philosophy

Putting it ALL TOGETHER...(cont.)

- Back to Emotions:

- The common assumption:

$X \text{ (Event)} \rightarrow Y \text{ (Emotion)}$

$X = \text{Stressor (threat or opportunity).}$

$Y = \text{Emotional reaction}$

But why the Y ?

- Because of Z!

Implications to Clinical Practice

- Clinical conditions – expressed by people who are discouraged about their ability to derive a Z in the optimal.
- Positive Psychology – we tend to focus too much on the Y and don't spend enough time on the Z.
- Yet we couldn't get to Z without Y.

Implications to Clinical Practice (cont.)

- When do people seek therapy?
- Where are you trying to get them?
- What do you have to offer?



Emotional Intelligence

□ Emotional Intelligence:

- Perceiving emotions – the ability to detect and decipher emotions in faces, pictures, voices, and cultural artifacts—including the ability to identify one's own emotions. Perceiving emotions represents a basic aspect of emotional intelligence, as it makes all other processing of emotional information possible.
- Using emotions – the ability to harness emotions to facilitate various cognitive activities, such as thinking and problem solving. The emotionally intelligent person can capitalize fully upon his or her changing moods in order to best fit the task at hand.
- Understanding emotions – the ability to comprehend emotion language and to appreciate complicated relationships among emotions. For example, understanding emotions encompasses the ability to be sensitive to slight variations between emotions, and the ability to recognize and describe how emotions evolve over time.
- Managing emotions – the ability to regulate emotions in both ourselves and in others. Therefore, the emotionally intelligent person can harness emotions, even negative ones, and manage them to achieve intended goals.

Contention . . .

People typically seek therapy because they desire to be happy.



OR, because they want to be less unhappy.



Contention . . .

- People most typically seek therapy because they are unhappy (Point A) and desire to experience more joy(Point B).





Next question . . .

When do we feel happy?

Or,

When do we feel unhappy?

Happy and Unhappy . . .

- Is happy, or some variation on happy (e.g., joy, elation, satisfaction, etc.), the baseline emotional state?
 - ▣ Is it what we should generally feel?
- Is happy the “order” of life?
 - ▣ Is it the way things “should” be emotionally?
- Are we entitled to happiness?
 - ▣ Do we have a natural right to happiness?

The “Adaptive Unconscious” and the “Peculiar Relationship”



“Let us now examine the peculiar relationship which exists between emotions and reason.” p. 209

Critical Components of Individual Psychology

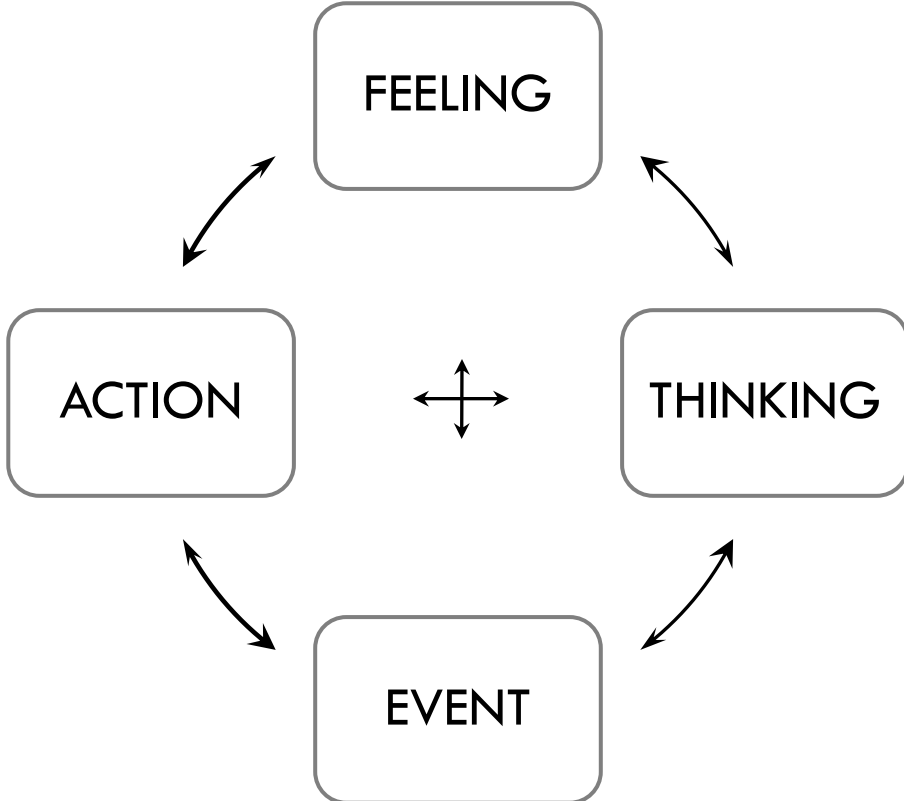
- **Holistic**
 - Considers the whole person; not limited to discussion of thoughts, behaviors or biochemical processes.
- **Teleological**
 - Emphasizes the purposefulness of behavior.
 - Superiority Striving
 - Felt plus vs. felt minus
 - Belonging
 - To have a place among others
- **Social Embeddedness**
 - Understands the critical nature of human relationships.
- **Phenomenological**
 - The individual contributes to the creation of the “self”
 - Creative Self
 - Subjective Perception


Critical Components of Individual Psychology

- **Guidelines for a Healthy Life**
 - Social Interest
 - Life Tasks

- **Means for Understanding and Helping the Person**
 - Life-style analysis
 - Reorientation techniques

HOLISM?






*How could such a universal picture,
which is completely fallacious develop?*

Dreikurs, 1951, p 205

So?

- Would it be fair to conclude the following:

“Happiness is the preferred emotional state and is definitely better than unhappy.”



Happy is the emotion we feel when the world is as it should be, or at least as we think it ought to be.



Thus,

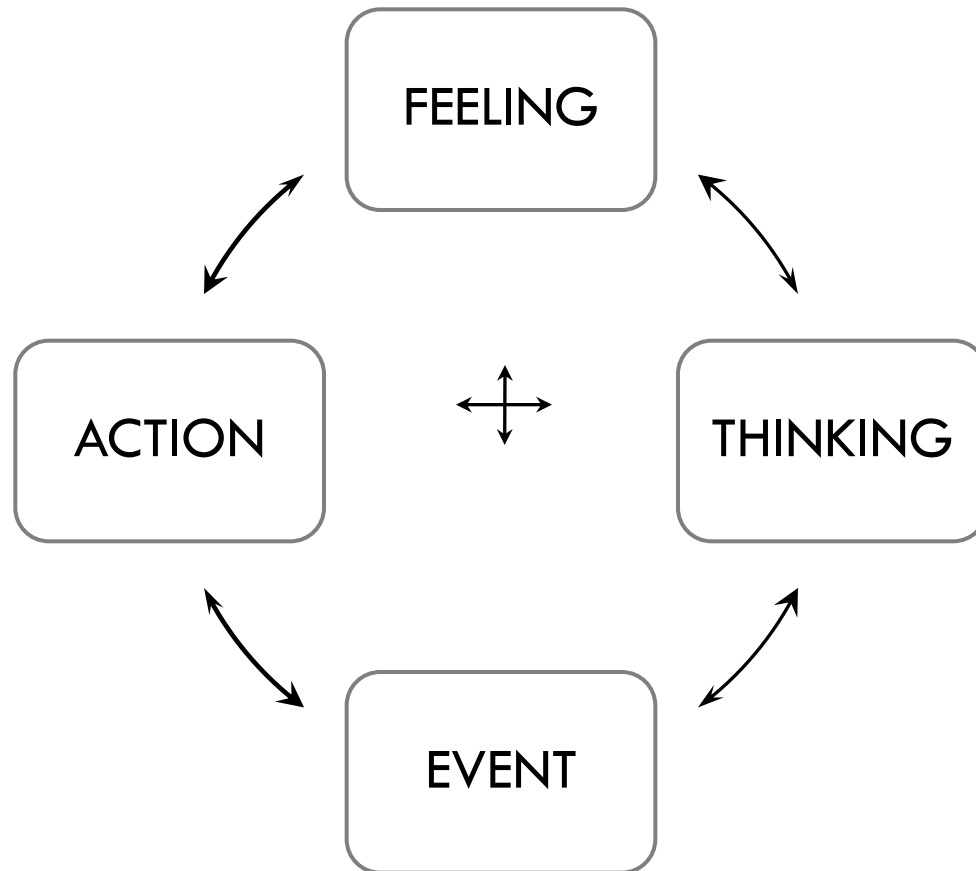
***Unhappy** is the feeling we have when the world is not as it should be, or as we think it ought to be.*

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Thoughts (cont.)

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Feelings

□ Three purposes of Emotion

▣ Existential Feedback

- Feeling State

▣ Interpersonal communication

- Affective Reaction

▣ Action mobilization

- Emotional Response

“They [the emotions] make it possible for us to carry out our decisions.” Dreikurs, 1951

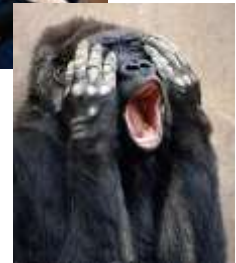
□ Two general types of Emotion

▣ Those that Validate

- The one's we like (the “FELT PLUS”)

▣ Those that Compel

- The one's we don't like (the “FELT MINUS”)




Action

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Back to FEELING . . .

The common assumption:

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Why Y ?

The Z-Factor

X (Event) → Y (Emotion) → Z

Z = Desired Outcome

In a phrase: A Felt Plus (JOYFUL)


Examples . . .

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 - Paul Gilbert: “depression is the emotion we rely upon to remove ourselves from a battle we aren’t going to win.”
 - Depression: Internalized anger? We don’t retreat happily.



Summary: Negative affective states are activated in the service of a felt plus.

The purpose of negative affect is to compel the individual to enact behaviors necessary to maximize positive experiences and minimize negative experiences.



Emotions are felt feedback mechanisms relative to our own opinions (cognitive process/i.e., Fictional Finalism) concerning how we think the world should be.

Back to Adler . . .

□ Holistic

- ▣ Emotions contribute to the overall orchestration of our lives relative to the events that we encounter; all in the service of a felt plus.

□ Social Embeddedness

- ▣ Emotions are felt in most cases relative to our relationships with others.
- ▣ While we may have emotions alone and in reaction to nonhuman objects, our social embeddedness is evident.
 - Leary and the Sociometer Hypothesis

More Adler . . .

□ Teleology

□ Behavior is purposeful . . .

■ The purpose is:

- 1. To create feelings of validation(A Felt Plus)
- 2. To avoid, minimize or eliminate the compelling feelings (A Felt Minus)



The Relative End