

Robinsons on Parallel Emotions in Individual Psychology

In the stunning country of Romania, the summer institute of practicing psychologists, counselor, parents, and graduate students, we sat at the feet of Dr. Paul Rasmussen. Paul is at Furman University here in SC!! What an honor for him and for South Carolina to be lecturing at this highly respected international forum, ICASSI!

Dr. Rasmussen began his lecture on emotions in psychology with a quotation from Rudolph Dreikurs' book Psychodynamics, Psychotherapy, and Counseling, "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 complementary. Emotions are more or less distrusted."

It is clear that folks want good feeling emotions and don't want the bad feeling ones. Dr. Dreikurs says "It is not so difficult to recognize the benefit and purpose of emotions when we experience them as positive, constructive and helpful. The difficulty arises when we deal with the disturbing emotions."

Bad emotions are a result of one of the following:

- Biochemical imbalance
- Genetics
- Pampered by parents
- Abuse or Neglect

The feelings go hand in hand with the style of life. Therefore, we are no longer in the realm of physiology; we are in the realm of psychology. The Individual Psychology of Alfred Adler is **HOLISTIC**. In other words the whole person is taken into consideration, not limited to decisions, thoughts, behavior or

biochemical processes by themselves. It is very important remember that each of us is a whole being and that each part affects the other.

The second critical component of Adlerian Psychology as pointed out by Paul Rasmussen is that all behavior has a purpose. Some persons strive for superiority; some feel they are inferior to other persons. (Adlerians call this moving from a felt minus to a felt plus.) These feelings/emotions come from our relationships with other people and what we believe about ourselves—how we are accepted and how we approach others.

We all come into this world looking for a place to belong. We are determined to find our place in the family, in the classroom, in our peer group, and in the professional work place. In other words, we are socially embedded.

Dr. Rasmussen discussed the fact that we live our lives constantly in a CYCLE of F. A. T. E., which stands for these elements:

Feelings

Actions

Thinking

Events

Each one leads to the other and back around again. We use our thoughts to make sense using our own life style, our own private logic (which is how we view the world, others, self, and life from our own unique perspective.)

Our own private logic comes from what we understand, what we can predict, and what we can control. Cleverly, Paul describes our

general thoughts about what comes our way. They are “OH NO!!” (I don’t like this situation) or “OH YES!!” (This is wonderful) or “HUH??” (I need more information). How we respond to life’s events as based on how we see the world is our life style. Our thoughts all fit into our own private picture of life.

What a counselor then can help clients do is see how their feelings, thoughts, and actions work for them OR work against them. Interesting work for the therapeutic team (counselor and client).