

Robinsons on Parallel Ten Principles of Encouragement

A great fan of encouragement, I want my tombstone to read: SHE WAS AN ENCOURAGER—oops! I am too environmentally friendly to take up a gravesite, I'll be cremated, but if I had a tombstone that's what I'd like on it. At the International Adlerian Summer School, ICASSI, Yoav Shoham, from Upper Galilee, Israel, taught the class that was offered to all participants in encouragement. Over 20 of us learned and practiced ways of encouraging others and ourselves.

Our teacher provided for us these Ten Principles of Encouragement that are based on the ideas of Alfred Adler and Rudolf Dreikurs. They were formed into these 10 steps by Achi Yotam and Yehudit Eluf, who are from Israel, as is Yoav, our teacher and facilitator.

TEN PRINCIPLES OF ENCOURAGEMENT

1. Accept a person as is, without conditions. Every person including the encourager is of equal value and deserving of respect.
2. Mutual respect, which means not to hurt, belittle or humiliate anyone, particularly the encouragee. Mutual respect is achieved by listening and accepting the fact that there are differences in this world. These differences do not work against society, but as an advantage to enrich our lives.
3. Emphasize the positive, which is placing the emphasis on what there is and not what there is not. In spite of the difficult in every situation there is also positive, even if we have difficulty finding it. Emphasizing the positive, small as it may be, points to strengths and not to weaknesses, and is the very basis for growth.
4. Recognize the effort. We live in a world where people are judged every day by successes, which often gets inappropriately linked to a person's view of self. If a person has put forth a huge effort and invested as much as possible, this is to be acknowledged, even if the outcomes are not the best or what the person desired.
5. Eliminate the fear of making mistakes (if possible). In a world of criticism there is a great deal of fear of making mistakes because criticism is usually aimed toward the person who is putting forth the effort. If encouragement is the goal, mistakes become the basis for learning and improvement.
6. The speed and ability for progress is personal. The necessity for quick progress according to strict outside criteria may result in feelings of helplessness and the mistaken perception of incapability and failure. Slower progress with short-term goals enables a body to feel capable and successful.
7. Allow the person to take responsibility. In this way we communicate to the person that ability is recognized. It is not the intention to escape our responsibility but to teach and enable the person to take small steps and be responsible in every area of life.
8. Cultivate a deep and sincere belief in others. A person who feels trust and that others believe in him/her and who knows that others depend on him/her, is self confident and courageous.

9. The need to belong is the basis of security. The feeling of belonging gives meaning to our lives and is the source of our human strength. It secures our place in the world. A person who feels a part of a group, family, team is able to deal with the tasks of life.
10. Sharing is connecting with others. The connection created between people in the areas of interests, goals, values or ideals binds them together emotionally. Everyone has value and makes a contribution.

Yoav Shoham pointed out to us that these ten principles are not in “hierarchy” form. They are all components of the same goal, which is to raise another person’s self worth through true sharing and beliefs in that person’s capabilities and strengths. True to form, our teacher Yoav would have us re read the principles and apply them to ourselves as we move forward and encourage ourselves so we can encourage others along life’s path.