

Robinsons on Parallel Taking Charge of your own Life Style

In Adlerian Psychology, Life Style Analysis is an awesome journey of self-discovery, often led by a therapist, who provides direction. Dr. Richard E. Watts, from Sam Houston State University, introduced his students to a Self Administered Life Style Analysis that was originally published in The Journal of Individual Psychology in 1981. At the Adlerian Summer Institute in Switzerland, we students took a look at how we viewed ourselves, our lives, and others. We looked at the LIFE TASKS: of Work, Social, and Love Relationships to determine what our unique thoughts and approaches to life were. What a personal adventure it was and is. We were to write a paragraph about each of the following. The questions helped us understand the different views.

Your View of Self

1. What are your strengths?
2. What keeps you from growing?
3. What are the behaviors that summarize you as a person?

Your View of Others

1. What are the thoughts you have when you think of people in general?
2. Are others basically trustworthy and good, self-serving and egocentric or something in between?
3. Around people, are you usually at ease, tense, or on guard?

Your View of Life

1. What do you think about life?
2. Does the world seem like a fair or unfair place to you?
3. Do you see yourself as having or not having control in relation to the world about you?

4. Do you view the world as being a comfortable or somewhat uncomfortable place as you move about from day to day?

The above process is extremely revealing to client and counselor alike. To go through the thinking and writing about the source of one's perspective toward self, others and life is worthwhile use of one's time. Here is another valuable tool worth one's time:

THE PUSH BUTTON TRICK

1. Create a pleasant situation from the past. Note the feelings that accompany the situation. Now, wipe that away and
2. Create an unpleasant (sad/depressed/angry) situation from the past. Note the feelings that you experience.
3. Recreate the first scene and recall the feelings.

What just happened with you? You found you were in charge of your emotions using your THOUGHTS!! What you choose to think about significantly influences how you feel. You are now powerful and in charge of your emotions. How about that? This simple exercise can be used any time with those feelings of joy, sadness, anger, or fear.

So if we are stuck with a challenge/issue/problem, we can ask ourselves THE QUESTION; “*Is there another way to think about it?*”

Dr. Watts shared a cognitive restructuring process from Cognitive Behavior Therapy that looks at the role beliefs in both feelings and behavior. Here is his plan of teaming up with a client to make progress:

Step 1: Invite the client to tell his or her story about what the problem is (What brought you to the counselor?)

Step 2: Ask for a recent specific occurrence of the problem.

Step 3: Tell how you experienced the situation. Was there anything disturbing about this for you?

Step 4 What does this situation mean to you?

1. What did the situation mean about you?
2. What thoughts crossed your mind?
3. What did you say about yourself to yourself?

From here Dr. Watts and the client could move into a discussion of what happens around us, what we think about it, and what the consequences are (Emotional and Behavioral). Knowing that we CAN change our thoughts, and that by changing our thoughts we can change our feelings and actions, gives us power and confidence to take charge of our lives.