

Robinsons on Parallel

The Individual Psychology of Alfred Adler: Then and Now

The ideas of Alfred Adler and Rudolf Dreikurs were true in the 1900's, and they are true now. The basic truths of these great psychological thinkers were highlighted and brought to light by Eva Dreikurs Ferguson, the daughter of Rudolf Dreikurs himself, at the opening session of the first day of the two week educational and cultural experience, called ICASSI.

How about this piece of valuable information? When meeting a person who is disruptive and disturbed, start with the thought that this person does not feel understood. Helping a person feel understood is the foundation for any movement to a different mental place.

How did Dreikurs understand children? He understood their PRIVATE LOGIC—their own individual way of looking at the world, others and themselves. Each of us has our own private logic. It is what underlies why we think and behave as we do. We all have it, but we may not know it.

Whether we are with the psychotics, children, angry spouses, or military generals, if we understand their private logic, we are in a better place to deal with them. For example, it is to the kids' advantage to understand the parents' private logic. ("If I help them, it will help me.") As counselors and other helping persons, we must remember that it is important to stop focusing on our own private logic. Focusing on others is helpful, healing, and a great antidepressant.

If our private logic is illogical or faulty, it makes sense for us to change our thinking. It is just as **illogical** to believe that **you can trust everyone** as it is to believe **you can trust no one**. As Eva Dreikurs Ferguson pointed out, it takes a lot of work to change a

person's private logic. We will only change the way we think if we see a good reason to do it. If we don't understand our private logic, and ourselves we are at a disadvantage as we move about in this world.

Think about the leaders of industry: what are the good reasons to behave in moral, cooperative decent ways? We all know the reasons they do not. How can we establish a society that supports individual integrity in every business and level of government?

To do this would take a great deal of courage. We all get discouraged and pessimistic, when we fall into negative thinking.” However, when we understand that we **CAN DO SOMETHING ABOUT THAT**, in a position of encouragement, we become optimistic.

Looking at our own personal histories and the cultures in which we landed at birth, **we all bring our past with us---not in our genes but in our experiences.** We are who we are because we have been where we have been.

Optimism in the face of reality may need to be tempered. Adlerians advocate optimism, always clothed in realism. Meeting the needs of the situation often dictates our path. It makes logical sense to live in the world as it is, always asking how is the situation now? What can I do to change?

Adlerians predict that in a hundred years folks will realize that cooperation, mutual respect and understanding each other will be the most effective ways for folks to live their lives. It will take time as individuals, families, couples, employers, employees and nations move forward to get along better. It will not be easy. It is not easy to live an Adlerian life.

So there you have it, a plan for a better tomorrow, delivered by the eternal optimist herself, Eva Dreikurs Ferguson.