

## Robinsons on Parallel Adlerian Counseling Makes So Much SENSE!!

In Switzerland at the International Adlerian Summer School (ICASSI), South Carolina's own Dr. Frank Walton made a significant contribution ONE MORE TIME this summer. Frank Walton was fortunate to have studied under Rudolf Dreikurs, M. D., in 1968 and 1969. Rudolf Dreikurs wrote books that helped practitioners understand Alfred Adler's Individual Psychology-- books such as CHILDREN: THE CHALLENGE. His books have helped countless parents, teachers and counselors understand, apply, and live the principles of Adlerian Psychology.

Frank and his wife, Kathy Walton, founded the Adlerian Child Care Centers and Kindergarten in the greater Columbia area in 1977, providing education, modeling, and care to countless children, parents, and educators. As a result of his teaching and counseling demonstrations at home and at ICASSI, Frank has had opportunities to teach Adlerian Psychology in Germany, Spain, Bulgaria, Lithuania, Switzerland, Romania, and elsewhere: 32 countries in all.

Frank's lecture and demonstration highlighted some of the cornerstones of the Individual Psychology of Alfred Adler. For example, "nobody wishes to stand in a position of inferiority; no one will agree to stand in a position of less than." Adler himself said, "Equality is the iron clad principal of social living." When we treat one another with an attitude of respect, we can "do business together."

Think about this precept: "Life and all psychological expressions of life move ever toward overcoming, toward perfection/superiority." We human beings are always on the move, even if we are sitting and thinking, meditating and listening. Our brains are at work, and our brains are the engineers of

movement. We are always on the lookout for others who appear to us as being in a “superior” position. Franks says: “You cannot train a living human being for defeat!” Wow! Is that ever a provocative thought!

Adlerian counselors make use of the teleological principal, which simply states that **all behavior is goal directed.** We help clients, parents, teachers, students, and even children see what they are up to. What beliefs does one have about how the world is? How life is? About men? About women? About their own family values? **Since thoughts cause behavior, changing thoughts can change behavior.** Kurt Adler, Alfred Adler’s son, said, “The most important service we can provide clients is to help them see more clearly what they are doing.”

Frank asks important questions, as a therapist, such as, “What is the use of parents’ behavior in dealing with their children?” and “What is a parent guarding against?” or “What is a parent seeking to avoid?” (What comes to my mind immediately is “embarrassment in public” or “Will I be seen as a ‘bad’ parent?” “**How much of what I do as a parent is for the children and how much is to elevate me?**”)

An Adlerian counselor uses information such as, the place in the family of origin, called the Family Constellation. Was the client a first-born, a middle child, an only child, or the youngest child? What parenting techniques did the parent use with the client? Democratic? Autocratic? Abusive? None at all? How did the members of the family communicate information that the client found useful? All of this information, in addition to therapist observations of non-verbal signals, is helpful in figuring out how the client sees life, others, and the world.

When boys and girls are in early adolescence, they look around at our own family and draw conclusions: “I really like this in my family” or “I really don’t like this in my family.” They then take positions; such as “If I am not a loving, parent, I would not be a good parent.” Or “I’ve had enough of chaos, when I’m a parent, I want to get rid of it.”

Frank Walton, Ph. D. has developed a technique called THE MOST MEMORABLE OBSERVATION, which gets at the above information. He asks a client to remember when he/she was 12 or 13. “As you looked around in your family of origin, your own mother and father, and siblings, what did you really like? What did you really not like?” As a parent, this is not just a random idea, it is very important. A parent will say, “When I get to be a parent, I will do everything I can to \_\_\_\_\_” Perhaps, have a family be just like his or her own family, perhaps just the opposite.

It is one thing to know the purpose of the children’s behavior, but it is also very important to look at the parents’ belief system and what the purpose of the parents’ behavior is. Will parents spend their lives showing others what good parents they are or will they spend their lives saying my family will never be like the one I grew up in.

Frank has used THE MOST MEMORABLE OBSERVATION with clients, parents, and teachers. Teachers can see the way they make trouble for themselves in the classroom, and they can decide to change.

Dr. Walton’s simple three-step use of THE MOST MEMORABLE OBSERVATION is as follows:

1. Listen carefully to the presenting problem (the reason the client comes to the counselor).

2. The client thinks back to the family of origin at about age 12 or 13 and explains the observations he or she made at that time.
  
3. The client is encouraged to see his/her private logic in action. This way the client can see how she/he may overemphasize the likelihood of perceiving what he/she guards against. Then the counselor and client discuss together about different ways to think about and handle the presenting problem.

Frank and Kathy Walton have “done South Carolina proud” with their walking the walk, talking the talk, and demonstrating kindness and caring in their child care centers for all these years. They both believe so strongly that human beings have the potential to live peacefully together in this world that they have dedicated their lives to teaching and demonstrating Adlerian principles.

If you’d like more information, you may visit his website:  
[Dr.FrankWalton.com](http://Dr.FrankWalton.com).