

The Addiction to Power

One of the interesting features of the two week long training were morning lectures and demonstrations from revered practitioners of Adlerian Psychology from eight countries. Among these was Rachel Shifron, from Israel, who lectured on “The Addiction to Power.” Her insights into the Individual Psychology of Alfred Adler were obviously the result of years of experience and study. She described the “excessive” creativity of individuals to escape pain, humiliation, etc. This excess can lead to an addiction. When it works, one does more of it, more and more.

The Addiction to Power us a creative will to power without boundaries-- the will to power at all costs. Rachel Shifron then brought forward an esteemed panel to discuss power from different disciplines:

Gad Shifron to discuss economics, who told the counselors that money gives human beings a sense of security. He also explained that “Recession is when **you** are unemployed; depression is when **I** am unemployed,” which resulted in laughter and recognition responses from the gathering of professors and therapists.

Bill Linden, from Illinois, reminded us that Francis Bacon said that “Knowledge is power.” He then described the following concepts of power: reward power, coercive power, legitimate power, and expert power. Human beings move toward and become what they think about.

Paul Rasmussen, from South Carolina, discussed Clinical power. If the clinicians/counselors use power inappropriately, they cross ethical boundaries. He pointed out that oppressed people either wilt or rebel.

John Newbauer, from Indiana, reminded us of the use of power in religion: priest versus prophet, shamans, medicine men and women. Religion has been described as a way of keeping people in line. The criterion for being involved in religious activities was very opportunistic. Now, there’s an interesting concept.

What to do about the addiction to power?? When a person feels the power is within them, the addictions aren’t necessary. Adlerian approaches to the addiction to power include the following personality tools:

- Courage and awe (looking at the world with wonderment)
- Humility and cooperation
- Being willing to ask for help
- Being encouraging to others
- Enthusiasm

Together the clinician/therapist and client work toward the above goals, deciding on homework that would result in developing the strengths of the client. The final wisdom resonated with Jane; healthy power is quiet strength, and get this: “YIELD AND BE OLD,” Don’t you just love it??