BEING A THERAPEUTIC CHAMELEON: AN ENCOURAGEMENT-FOCUSED PERSPECTIVE

Richard E. Watts, Ph.D.
Sam Houston State University
Individual Psychology (IP), or Adlerian Psychology (AP), is often misunderstood as primarily focusing on individuals. However, Adler chose the name Individual Psychology (from the Latin, “individuum” meaning indivisible) for his theoretical approach because he eschewed reductionism. He emphasized that persons can not be properly understood as a collection of parts but rather should be viewed as a unity, as a whole.

An integration of cognitive, constructivist, existential-humanistic, psychodynamic, and systemic perspectives, Adlerian theory is a holistic, phenomenological, socially-oriented, and teleological (goal-directed) approach to understanding and working with people.
IP/AP emphasizes the proactive, form-giving and fictional nature of human cognition and its role in constructing the “realities” that persons know and to which they respond. Adlerian theory asserts that humans construct, manufacture, or narratize ways of viewing and experiencing the world. It is an optimistic, positive psychological theory affirming that humans are not determined by heredity or environment. Rather, they are creative, proactive, meaning-making beings, with the ability to choose and to be responsible for their choices.
Adler seems to have paved the way for current developments in both the cognitive and constructivist therapies. . . . A study of contemporary counseling theories reveals that many of Adler’s notions have reappeared in these modern approaches with different nomenclature, and often without giving Adler the credit that is due him. . . . It is clear that there are significant linkages of Adlerian theory with most present-day theories. (Corey, 2013)

*Theory and Practice of Counseling and Psychotherapy* (9th ed.)
Adler was clearly ahead of the learning curve in psychotherapy. His social recasting of Freudian theory initiated psychodynamic therapy; his task assignments foreshadowed the development of behavioral and other directive therapies; his specific techniques involving basic mistakes and “as if” anticipated the cognitive therapies; and his community outreach and psychoeducational programs foreshadowed contemporary community mental health. Many of Adler’s ideas have quietly permeated modern psychological thinking, often without notice. It would not be easy to find another author from which so much has been borrowed from all sides without acknowledgment than Alfred Adler. (Prochaska & Norcross, 2010, p. 91)
KEY CONCEPTS IN ADLERIAN THEORY

- Emphasis on client’s subjective experience
- Teleology (Goal-directed)
- Holistic
- Interpersonal/social
- *Gemeinschaftsgefühl* (community feeling/social interest) and *self-realization* (completion)
- People are neither “good” nor “bad.” Optimistic.
- Freedom within limits: Humans can creatively choose to respond to their genetics and environment (focus on *use* rather than *possession*)
- Developmental perspective based on observation and direct study of children.
Significant influences on development: Family constellation, culture, and society

- Egalitarian: People are equals, “neighbors.”
- Women and minorities may feel inferior because they are undervalued.
- Emphasizes the primacy of the client-counselor relationship.
- Holds a non-pathological view of maladjustment.
- Stresses an encouragement-focused process of facilitating change.

Whether or not counselors identify themselves as Adlerians, nearly all counseling approaches now reflect some of Adler’s concepts:

- The crucial importance an egalitarian, respectful, and cooperative counselor-client relationship (therapeutic alliance)
- The focus on social equality and social justice
- The real or perceived impact of early childhood/family constellation (system) experiences on current functioning
- The importance of taking a holistic approach that considers mind, body, and spirit
- The need to view people contextually; in their family, social, and cultural contexts
- The recognition that thinking influences emotions and behavior.
- The emphasis on strengths, optimism, encouragement, empowerment, advocacy, and support
The relevance of style of life and goals

The need to identify, understand the purpose of, and modify repetitive self-defeating behaviors

The importance and benefit of counselors and clients developing realistic and mutually agreed upon counseling goals (goal alignment)

The recognition that having problems, difficulties, and differences is a normal part of life and can be viewed as opportunities for growth rather than “pathology”

The view that counseling is educational, preventative, and growth-promoting, not merely a remedial one
Think of some one of more persons who was encouraging to you.

What were some characteristics of your encouragers?
Adlerian counseling is a growth/wellness model. It is an optimistic perspective that views people as unique, creative, capable, and responsible.

Adlerian counseling emphasizes prevention, optimism and hope, resilience and growth, competence, creativity and resourcefulness, social consciousness, and finding meaning and a sense of community in relationships.

Because Adlerians believe the growth/wellness model of makes more sense than a sickness model, they see clients as discouraged rather than sick.

Thus, Adlerians are not about “curing” anything; counseling is a process of encouragement.
Encouragement, for Adlerians, is the interpersonal conveyance and therapeutic modeling of *gemeinschaftsgefühl*: community feeling/social interest.

**Community Feeling**: affective and motivational aspects – sense of belonging, empathy, caring, compassion, acceptance of others, etc.)

**Social Interest**: cognitive and behavioral aspects – thoughts and behaviors that contribute the common good; the good of the all at both micro- and macro-systemic levels.

Both are required for a holistic understanding of Adler’s *gemeinschaftsgefühl*. (Watts, 2008, 2012)
Clients present for counseling because they are discouraged and lack the confidence and "courage" to engage successfully in the tasks or problems of living.

Encouragement is not a technique, but rather an attitude and a way of being with clients.

Dreikurs (1967) noted the essential necessity of encouragement in psychotherapy. He stated that presenting problems are “based on discouragement” and without “encouragement, without having faith in her/himself restored, [the client] cannot see the possibility of doing or functioning better” (p. 62).
Adler (1956) once asked a client what he thought made the difference in his successful experience in therapy. The client replied: “That’s quite simple. I had lost all courage to live. In our consultations I found it again” (p. 342).

Adlerians consider encouragement a crucial aspect of human growth and development. This is especially true in regard to psychotherapy. Stressing the importance of encouragement in therapy, Adler (1956) stated: “Altogether, in every step of the treatment, we must not deviate from the path of encouragement” (p. 342). Dreikurs (1967) agreed: “What is most important in every treatment is encouragement” (p. 35).

In addition, Dreikurs stated that therapeutic success was largely dependent upon “[the therapist’s] ability to provide encouragement” and failure generally occurred “due to the inability of the therapist to encourage” (pp. 12-13).
Encouragement focuses on helping counselees become aware of their worth. By encouraging them, you help your counselees recognize their own strengths and assets, so they become aware of the power they have to make decisions and choices. Encouragement focuses on beliefs and self-perceptions. It searches intensely for assets and processes feedback so the client will become aware of her strengths. In a mistake-centered culture like ours, this approach violates norms by ignoring deficits and stressing assets. The counselor is concerned with changing the client’s negative self concept and anticipations. (Dinkmeyer, Dinkmeyer, & Sperry, 1987, p. 124)
As noted earlier, Encouragement is the interpersonal conveyance and therapeutic modeling of *gemeinschaftsgefühl*: community feeling/social interest – *Adler’s view of mental health.*

I think you would agree that it is a counselor’s responsibility to model mental health for clients.

Therefore, when we understand encouragement as a way of being with others—especially clients, and *genuinely* strive to convey the attitudes and skills of encouragement with them, we are modeling mental health.

*Do you have an encouragement-focused ways of being with others, including clients?*
WHAT ARE THE ATTITUDES AND SKILLS OF ADLERIAN ENCOURAGEMENT?

Before we answer that one, let’s answer this one: **What is the most important thing a counselor brings to a counseling session?**

The Common Factors of Successful Outcomes

- Extratherapeutic (Client) Factors (40%)
- Therapeutic Relationship Factors (30%)
- Hope and Expectancy Factors (15%)
- Theoretical and technique Factors (15%)

(Scott Miller - based on Lambert’s research)
Only 15% of successful results in counseling is accounted for by theory/techniques? Does this mean theory and techniques are not important? No, not at all. Effective use of counseling skills and techniques is necessary for building a strong counselor-client relationship, for engendering hope and expectancy of success, and for discovering and helping clients access the growth producing abilities, assets, strengths, and supports they bring with them to counseling (Watts, 2001).

“Adlerian counseling resonates enormously with the common factors of successful outcomes.”
According to Prochaska and Norcross (2003), despite theoretical differences, there is a central and recognizable core of psychotherapy . . . [that] distinguishes it from other activities . . . and glues together variations of psychotherapy. The core is composed of common factors or nonspecific variables common to all forms of psychotherapy and not specific to one. More often than not, these therapeutic commonalities are not specified by theories as being of central importance, but the research suggests exactly the opposite. (p. 6)

Adlerian counseling resonates significantly with the common factors of successful outcomes and these common factors are indeed specified by Adlerian counseling as being of central importance.
### Four Phases

1. **Forming a Relationship**
   - Caring Interest / Listening with the eyes
   - Informed Consent
   - Hearing The Story

2. **Psychological Investigation (Assessment)**
   - Lifestyle Assessment
   - Conceptualization
   - Listening for Meaning

3. **Psychological Disclosure/Interpretation (Insight)**
   - Tentative Suggestions (Hypothesis Interpretations)
   - Collaboration and Challenge

4. **Re-orientation and Re-education**
   - Reframing Old Experiences, Patterns, and Messages
   - Creating New Experiences
Encouragement is a vital element in every phase of counseling.

- **Relationship**: Cooperative, collaborative, egalitarian, optimistic, and respectful.
- **Assessment and Insight**: Illuminating strengths helping clients understand their power to choose and change.
- **Reorientation**: Promoting change by stimulating the client’s courage to change.
THE ATTITUDES AND SKILLS OF ADLERIAN ENCOURAGEMENT?

- Valuing clients as they are;
- Demonstrating concern and care for clients through active listening and communicating empathy and respect;
- Focusing on clients strengths, assets, abilities, and resources, including communicating confidence in clients and identifying past successes;
- Helping clients generate perceptual alternatives for discouraging fictional beliefs and oppressive narrative, and behavioral alternatives to problematic actions and interactions;
- Helping clients distinguish between what they do (the problem) and who they are (the person); the deed vs doer (problem is the problem);
- Focusing on clients’ efforts and progress; helping clients view successful movement or progress incrementally rather than only in terms of an end goal or final outcome;
- Communicating affirmation and appreciation to clients; and
- Helping clients see the humor in life experiences. (Watts & Pietrzak, 2000)
The skills of encouragement are crucial throughout the counseling process – successful outcomes are predicated upon the development and continuation of a strong therapeutic relationship; an encouragement-focused relationship, that is characterized as cooperative, collaborative, egalitarian, optimistic, and respectful.

Adler (1956) stated that therapists should not “insist upon any superior rank or right” with clients and should not allow clients to place them in some expert role such as “teacher, father, or saviour” (p. 338).
“Different clients may require different therapeutic metaphors. One client may prefer or be best served using cognitive-behavioral techniques, another may prefer solution-focused procedures, and yet another systemic or narrative oriented methods. Adlerian therapy allows the therapist to tailor therapy specifically to clients’ unique needs, situations, and expectations, rather than forcing clients into one therapeutic or technical framework. The Adlerian approach provides a solid base for integrating diverse treatment modalities and formats.” (Carlson, Watts, & Maniacci, 2006, p. 10)

Adlerian therapists tailor therapy according to the unique needs and situations of clients. A vital aspect of Adlerian therapy is its integrative flexibility. Adlerians can be both technically integrative, whilst maintaining theoretical consistency.

**Being a *Therapeutic Chameleon***

Richard E. Watts - 11-22-14
Let’s go back to that the list of attitudes and skills of Encouragement list. What other theoretical perspectives (besides Adlerian counseling) do you see in these skills?

What procedures/techniques from those approaches do you see as being potentially useful in an encouragement-focused approach to counseling?
- Humanistic-Existential therapies
  - Frankl, May, Maslow, Rogers

- A brief aside: Positive Psychology

- Cognitive therapies
  - Ellis, Beck

- Constructive therapies (Constructivist, Solution-focused and Narrative)
  - Kelly, Mahoney, Neimeyer, Gutterman

Many concepts and interventions from these (and other approaches) resonate with the attitudes and skills of encouragement.
We will begin with ADLERIAN PROCEDURES

- Listen for encouragement-focused themes in Style of Life
- Ask for encouragement-focused early recollections

- “The Question” - “How would your life be different if you no longer had this problem?” Other ways to ask it
  - "How would your life be different if, all of a sudden, you didn't have this problem anymore?“
  - “Suppose I gave you a pill....”
  - “What if you had a magic wand…”
  - “What if you woke up in the morning and no longer had this problem?”
  - “If you looked into a crystal ball…”
TAKING A “CAB” ACROSS THE LIFE TASKS

Love and Family

Present
Preferred

Relationships

Cognition
Affect
Behavior

Friends and Society

Cognition
Affect
Behavior


Richard E. Watts - 11-22-14
## TAKING A “CAB” ACROSS THE LIFE TASKS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Work or School</strong></th>
<th>Present</th>
<th>Preferred</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cognition</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Affect</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Behavior</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Self</strong></th>
<th>Present</th>
<th>Preferred</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cognition</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Affect</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Behavior</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Spirituality</strong></th>
<th>Present</th>
<th>Preferred</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cognition</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Affect</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Behavior</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Richard E. Watts – 11-22-14
The purpose of using hypothesis interpretation is to convey to the client that more than one explanation for behavior exists and that the counselor wants to check out his or her own hunches to see if they are on the mark.

When using this technique, phrasing is important.

Should be phrased tentatively:
- “Could it be that...”
- “I have a guess that...”
- “Is it possible that...”

Observing an "ah-ha" moment in the client's expression (recognition reflex) or a quick glance of disapproval in response to the interpretation would be enough for the professional counselor to continue or to move in a different direction.

Richard E. Watts - 11-22-14
The push button technique seeks to interrupt a depression and help clients become aware of their role in maintaining, or even creating, their unpleasant feelings (Carlson, Watts, & Maniacci, 2006; Mosak & Maniacci, 1998).

Although originally developed for working with clients struggling with depression, this technique can also be useful in working with other presenting problems because clients may benefit from realizing that they have primary control over their feelings rather than the people or situations they encounter when reorienting to life’s challenges.
Encouraging clients to recognize behaviors contributing to their presenting problem(s) on their own

Clients may initially catch themselves too late and fall into old patterns of behavior; however, with practice, clients can learn to anticipate situations, recognize when their thoughts and perceptions are becoming self-defeating, and take steps to modify their thinking and behavior.

Catching oneself involves helping clients identify the signals or triggers associated with their problematic behavior or emotions.

When triggers are identified, clients can then make decisions that stop their symptoms from overwhelming them.
A process of interpreting goals in order to facilitate change
Assist the client in recognizing possible behavioral intentions they may previously have been unaware of that are not consistent with conscious goals
Cost/Benefit Analysis
- Discuss possible meanings for behaviors and the consequences
Helps client to gain:
- Power over their process
- Ability to make intentional decisions
- Freedom to choose future directions
- A recognition of potentially futile behavior
Professional counselors ask clients to begin acting as if they were already the person they would like to be. For example, a confident person

Ask clients to pretend and they clients are only acting

The purpose of the procedure is to bypass potential resistance to change by neutralizing some of the perceived risk.

The professional counselor suggests a limited task, such as acting as if an individual had the courage to speak up for himself or herself.

- Expectation is that the client will successfully complete the task
- If the task is not completed successfully, then the counselor explores with the client what prevented a successful experience
Reflecting As If – An integration of Adlerian and constructive counseling ideas (Watts, 2003, 2013)

Expands the Adlerian technique by having clinicians ask clients to take a reflective step back prior to stepping forward to act “as if.”

- This process encourages clients to reflect on how they would be different if they were acting “as if” they were who they desire to be.
- By using reflective questions, counselors can help clients construct perceptual alternatives and consider alternative behaviors toward which they may begin moving.
RAI Phase One

The therapist uses reflective questions such as:

- If you were acting as if you were the person you would like to be, how would you be acting differently? If I were watching a videotape of your life, what would be different?

- If a good friend would see you several months from now and you were more like the person you desire to be or your situation had significantly improved, what would this person see you doing differently?

- What might be some initial indicators that would demonstrate that you are headed in the right direction?
RAI Phase Two

- Subsequent to the reflective questioning phase of the process (phase one), the client and therapist co-construct a list of ‘as if’ behaviors that are indicative of how the client will act as he or she moves toward his or her desired goals.
- After developing the list of behaviors, the client—in dialogue with the therapist—ranks the as if behaviors from least difficult to most difficult.
- The client is now ready to begin enacting the behaviors.
Prior to the next counseling session, the client selects one or two of the least difficult behaviors to begin enacting.

Commencing with the least difficult behaviors increases the potential for client success, and success is typically encouraging for clients and often increases their perceived self-efficacy.

Having had some success, clients’ motivation to courageously engage the more difficult tasks on their list is usually stronger.
**RAI Phase Three - II**

- In the following sessions, the client(s) and therapist discuss the enactment of the as if behaviors selected for the previous week.
  - Enacting new behaviors often helps clients perceive themselves, others, and the world differently.
- Some erroneously assume that Adlerian therapy asserts that *insight* always precedes behavior change.
  - However, Adlerians often use action-oriented procedures—such as acting ‘as if’ and RAI—in order to facilitate perceptual alternatives.
  - The Adlerian therapeutic process, like that of many constructive therapies, seeks to change clients’ “doing,” “viewing,” and invoke their strengths, assets, and abilities.
As the client attempts the more difficult tasks on his or her as if behavior list, it is crucial that the therapist use encouragement to help him or her frame success in terms of effort and potentially smaller amounts of successful movement.

Clients may be more patient and find the process less frustrating if they understand success in terms of effort and incremental growth rather than simply final outcomes.
Corey (2005) stated that Adler's most important contribution was his influence on other theoretical perspectives. Adler's influence has been acknowledged by, or his vision traced to, neo-Freudian approaches, existential therapy, person-centered therapy, cognitive-behavioral therapies, reality therapy, family systems approaches, and constructivist and social constructionist (e.g., solution-focused and narrative) therapies.
Adlerian therapists tailor therapy according to the unique needs and situations of clients. A vital aspect of Adlerian therapy is its integrative flexibility. Adlerians can be both technically integrative, whilst maintaining theoretical consistency.

**Being a Therapeutic Chameleon**

“Different clients may require different therapeutic metaphors. One client may prefer or be best served using cognitive-behavioral techniques, another may prefer solution-focused procedures, and yet another systemic or narrative oriented methods. Adlerian therapy allows the therapist to tailor therapy specifically to clients’ unique needs, situations, and expectations, rather than forcing clients into one therapeutic or technical framework. The Adlerian approach provides a solid base for integrating diverse treatment modalities and formats.”

(Carlson, Watts, & Maniacci, 2006, p. 10)
Raskin and Rogers noted that Adler was among theorists united by six basic premises of humanistic psychology.

1. People’s creative power is a crucial force, in addition to heredity and environment.
2. An anthropomorphic view of humankind is superior to a mechanomorphic model.
3. Purpose, rather than cause, is the decisive dynamic.
4. The holistic approach is more adequate than an elementaristic one.
5. It is necessary to take humans’ subjectivity, their opinions and viewpoints, and their conscious and unconscious fully into account.
6. Psychotherapy is essentially based on good relationship

The importance of the therapeutic relationship significantly resonates with Adlerian perspective regarding relationship between the client and the counselor.

The first and the most important phase of Adlerian therapy is entitled “relationship.”

Therapeutic efficacy in other phases is predicted by development and continuation of strong therapeutic alliance. (Carlson, Watts, & Maniacci, 2006; Watts, 1998)

“Of all the techniques, client-counselor characteristics, and procedures that have been studied, it is only the relationship that has consistently been found to contribute to success of the therapeutic process” (Sexton & Whiston, 1994, p. 6)
About 30 percent of client improvement is attributed to the client-therapist relationship (Lambert & Barley, 2001; Norcross, 2002)

“It seems that without a doubt that a positive therapeutic relationship is a necessary (but probably not sufficient) component of all effective psychotherapy” (Bachelor & Horvath, 1999, p. 161)
A – B – C: The Cognitive-Behavioral Model of Mental Health and Maladjustment

A – *Activating Event*

B – *Belief System* (automatic thoughts – core schema)

C – *Consequences* (Emotional and/or Behavioral)

According to the Cognitive-Behavioral Therapies, we do not become inappropriately disturbed by the events of life in and of themselves, but rather the disturbance stems from the meaning or interpretation we give to the events.
THREE LEVELS IN ADLERIAN AND COGNITIVE THERAPIES

Level 3
Adlerian: Basic Mistakes
CT: Cognitive Distortions

Level 2
Adlerian: Private Logic
CT: Assumptions

Level 1
Adlerian: Core style of life convictions
CT: Core beliefs (schema)

Watts (2013). What Adlerians can learn from cognitive therapy. Workshop presented in Tel Aviv, Israel, October, 2013.
COGNITIVE RESTRUCTURING TECHNIQUES

- **Examining the Evidence Questions**
  “What evidence supports this belief? What evidence does not support it?”

- ** Asking for Alternative Explanations (similar to Perceptual Alternatives in AT)**
  “What are some alternative explanations?” “What are some other ways to explain the situation?”

- **Cost Benefit Analysis Counting the Cost Questions (can be used with “Spitting in the Soup” in AT)**
  “What do you gain by holding to the belief? What does it cost you?”

- **Benefit of Alternative Perspective Question**
  “How will you benefit by choosing an alternative perspective?”

- **Alternative Behavior Question**
  “How will you behave differently if you chose an alternative perspective?” (Burns, 1999)
Triple Column Technique (A-B-C)

Step 1. Invite the client to talk about the presenting problem.

Step 2. Ask for a recent specific occurrence of the problem. (A)

Step 3. Ask the client to relate his or her feelings and behaviors related to the situation. (C)
“Were there any disturbing feelings and/or behaviors?”

Step 4. Ask the client to share his/her beliefs about the situation? (B)
“What thoughts and images crossed your mind?”

Watts, R. E. (2013) Using the triple column and vertical arrow techniques to access core convictions. Manuscript in progress.
Step 5. The Vertical Arrow Technique

1) If I don’t study harder, I may blow the exam.
   If this were true, what would it mean to or about you? Why would be upsetting to you?

2) If I blow the exam, I may fail the course.
   And if you failed, why would that be upsetting to you? What would it mean to or about you?

3) That would mean I was a failure and people would think less of me.
   And if you failed and people thought less of you, what then? Why would this be upsetting to you?

4) Then I’d feel terrible, because I need people’s approval to feel happy and to be worthwhile. (adapted from Burns, 1999)
Examining the Evidence Questions
“What evidence supports this belief? What evidence does not support it?”

Asking for Alternative Explanations (similar to Perceptual Alternatives in AT)
“What are some alternative explanations?” “What are some other ways to explain the situation?”

Cost Benefit Analysis Counting the Cost Questions (can be used with “Spitting in the Soup” in AT)
“What do you gain by holding to the belief? What does it cost you?”

Benefit of Alternative Perspective Question
“How will you benefit by choosing an alternative perspective?”

Alternative Behavior Question
“How will you behave differently if you chose an alternative perspective?”
Adler most likely developed the first professional couple and family counseling and family education models and these were used in child guidance centers in Europe from immediately after World War I until 1934. Consequently, there is ample literature discussing the similarity or integrative compatibility of Adlerian therapy and family systems approaches.

Foley (1989) stated that Adler has significantly influenced family therapy and Adlerian therapy and family therapy share many similarities.

[Adlerian therapy’s] emphasis on the family constellation is a major concept borrowed by family therapists. Adler’s approach was holistic, as is family therapy. The use of paradox, a major weapon in family therapy, has its roots in Alfred Adler. . . . The freedom to improvise is a feature of family therapy and . . . has roots in Adler (p. 458) . . . . Adler emphasized the conscious, the positive, and the ability to change. This typifies family therapy. . . . Oscar Christensen, an Adlerian family therapist, says “Adler would view behavior as movement, communication, movement toward others, and the desire to belong—the desire to be part of” . . . . This is a description of family therapy. (p. 460)
According to Goldenberg and Goldenberg (2000):

Adlerian theory emphasizes the social content of behavior, the embeddedness of the individual in his or her interpersonal relationships, and the importance of present circumstances and future goals rather than unresolved issues from childhood. Both Adlerian psychotherapy and family therapy take a holistic view of the person and emphasize intent and conscious choices. Adler’s efforts to establish a child guidance movement, as well as his concern with improving parenting practices, reflects his interest beyond the individual to family functioning. (p. 379)

- Adler stated that the prototype of personality (style of life) is formed in the first sociological environment of the child: The Family.
- Style of Life (Lifestyle) analysis questions spend significant amounts of time looking at family atmosphere, family constellation, etc., related to one’s family-of-origin.
- Early recollections ask clients to recall specific events from age 8 or earlier, when clients typically are living with their family-of-origin (whatever it may look like).
Historical context

- Adler supported women’s right to work
  - Alleged inferiority of women and masculine superiority
- Married to a feminist (influenced his stance)
- Dreikurs: Social Equality
  - How the struggle for power effects families and influences the family system itself
  - Discussed socio-cultural construction of female inferiority (Watts & La Guardia, 2012)
PRINCIPLES OF FEMINIST THEORY

- Personal is Political
- Egalitarianism
- Valuing the female voice (the marginalized voice)

- All positions congruent with Adlerian theory and multiculturalism (Watts & La Guardia, 2012)
FEMINIST THERAPY

Discuss power imbalance and role differences in the therapeutic relationship

- Help clients understand process of counseling
- Dialogue on ways to reduce power differentials
- Therapy is a collaboration where clients are viewed as active participants in redefining themselves

Transparency in the counseling process (Watts & La Guardia, 2012)
VALUING VOICE

- Challenging sexual stereotypes
- Developing opportunities for those with a marginalized voice to speak (multicultural perspective)

In Therapy:
- Asking women to comment on their lives and relationships
- Listening empathically
- Validating their experiences
- ENCOURAGING their growth and development
- Understanding that some cultural messages can be discouraging and led to a sense of disconnection with others (Watts & La Guardia, 2012)
View of Homo-Affectional Orientation

- Saw lesbian and gay community as lacking courage and being in retreat from the task of love, marriage, and intimacy.

“Whereas Adler’s views on the equality of women were ahead of his time, his criticism of homosexuality . . . reflects the common bias of his time and place.” - Henry Stein (2005, p. 73)

- All theory can be limited by its time, therefore it is up to practitioners to understand the needs of their clients and respect the diversity inherent in societal striving toward equality by reflecting that in the counseling room (Watts & La Guardia, 2012)
Brown v. Board of Education (May 17, 1954)

Kenneth C. Clark headed a team of social scientists who called on Adlerian theory to explain the need for equality American society. Their argument against separate-but-equal schools swayed the highest court in its decision that ruled in favor of the plaintiffs. (LaFountain & Mustine, 1998, p. 196).

- Adlerian theory can be utilized to create an atmosphere of equality in society
- Society is reflected in the counseling relationship and therefore is meant to be utilized to create a egalitarian atmosphere that values and encourages difference (Watts & La Guardia, 2012)
Adlerian psychotherapy is a relational constructivist approach that remarkably resembles many contemporary cognitive and constructive approaches (Watts, 2003; 2013).

Adlerian psychology and psychotherapy contains many tenets that resonate with those from constructivist and social constructionist perspectives.

- **Epistemology and social embedded and relationally distributed nature of human knowledge**
- **Clinical practice characteristics:** Relationship focused, optimistic and present/future oriented, and emphasizing clients’ strengths, assists and abilities
- **Many interventions discussed in the constructive therapy literature are either similar to or congruent with ones used in Adlerian therapy.**

Therefore, it is not surprising to see significant opportunities for technical integration between the two.

Richard E. Watts - 11-22-14
Solution Focused Brief Therapy Questions

- **Pre-Session Change Question**
  “Between when you called to make the appointment and your arrival here today, have you made any movement toward a solution to your problem?”

  *If movement has occurred*, also ask, “What do you need to do to keep this going?”

- **The Miracle Question (“The Question” in AT)**
  “Suppose tonight when you are asleep a miracle happens and the problem is solved. When you awake in the morning, what will be different in your life that will let you know that the miracle occurred and the problem is solved?”

  Follow up with **The “First Sign” Question**: “What will be the first indication that the problem is gone or that you are headed in the right direction?”

  “What do you need to do to start implementing some of this, *not all, but some?”

Richard E. Watts - 11-22-14
**Variation of the Miracle Question: The Crystal Ball**

“Imagine that there is a crystal ball sitting in front of you. This is a special kind of crystal ball. It’s one that lets you see yourself in the future. Now peer into the crystal ball. Notice that you can see the kind of future that you want for yourself- the kind of future where things work out for you. As you look into this crystal ball, what does that ‘future you want’ look like?”

**Exception-Finding Questions**

These questions look for times when the solution is occurring. There are two types:

(A) “Are there times when the problem does not occur? How are things different?”

(B) “Are there times, even now, when some of the solution, even a small part, is already occurring?”
Scaling Questions [Use numbers, percentages, etc.]

On a scale of 1 to 10 . . . of 1% to 100% . . .

“How committed are you to solving this problem?”
“If I were to talk to ___, how would he/she answer?”
“What will this person need to see you do for him/her to get the idea that you have moved up the scale (from a 3 to a 4)?”

Scales can be adapted for use with children:

😊 😒 😊

1 5 10
Scaling questions are very adaptable to information you want or need to know in counseling.

Assessment and progress evaluations:

- “How motivated are you to change?”
- “How hopeful are you that you can change?”
- “How ready are you to stop coming to counseling sessions?”
Coping Questions.

- These questions can be used for chronic situations (e.g., terminal illness, permanent disability, HIV/AIDS, etc.).
- “How do you cope?”
- Ask the question to move from
  - simple actions (“get up”) to
  - more complex (“get to the appointment”).
Analogizing: Unpacking Meanings in Metaphors
(Constructivist technique)

Personal and novel meanings are often difficult to convey in standard discourse. A staple intervention used by constructivists is Analogizing, which constructivists describe as reflecting upon an image or metaphor—sometimes suggested by counselors, sometimes suggested by clients—to stretch the capacity of language. Clients and counselors are then able to collaboratively unpack meanings that may have been out of awareness or elusive in articulation (Rosen & Kuehlwein, 1996).

Client Metaphor: “If I could only find the missing pieces to my life.”
Analogizing Questions:

Client Metaphor: “Since my wife asked for a separation, I feel this curtain of rejection whenever I’m in her presence.”
Analogizing Questions:
CONSTRUCTIVIST PROCEDURES

**Movieola** (Constructivist technique similar to the “Frame-by-Frame” technique in CT)

Using the language of cinema, because of its familiarity, the counselor reconstructs with the client the succession of scenes in the event under investigation. Then, as if they were in the editing room, the client “pans” the succession of scenes, going back and forth in slow motion, “zooming in” on a singularly important scene and unpacking its meaning. Next the client is encouraged to “zoom out” and reflect on the scene in the dialogic space created by the “zooming out” process. The client then “zooms” back into the scene that has been enriched by dialogue. The scene begins to mutate, taking on new connotations and permitting the emergence of other details in the scene (Rosen & Kuehlwein, 1996).
Narrative Therapy Questions

Externalizing Questions. “What does Depression whisper in your ear?” “What does Blame have you doing to each other?” “What conclusions about your relationship have you drawn because of (the externalized problem’s) influence?”

Unique Outcome Questions. “Can you remember a time when (the externalized problem) tried to take you over, but you didn’t let it. What was that like for you?” “How did you do it?” Similar to the Miracle Question in SFBT, unique outcomes can also be asked in future tense: “What will be different when you are standing up to (the externalized problem)?”
Preference Questions. These questions seek to make sure that the unique outcomes were indeed preferred experiences. “Was the way you handled the situation better or worse?” “Was this more or less like the way you want things to be?” “Was that a positive development or a negative one?”

Landscape of Action Questions. When discovering an event, thought, action, belief, etc. that does not fit with the dominant story, explore, in specific detail, the unique outcome. These questions often begin with Who? What? Where? When? so that the particularities of the unique outcome can be explored in detail. “Where were you when this happened?” “When did it happen?” “How long did it last?” “What happened just before and after?” “How did you prepare yourself?” “Did you tell anyone about it? If so, what did he/she say?” “Have you done this before?” “What steps led up to this?”
Landscape of Consciousness (Meaning) Questions.
These questions invite clients to reflect on the meanings of the events or unique outcomes they have described. An exploration is undertaken into what the unique outcome means in terms of the person’s desires, intentions, preferences, beliefs, hopes, personal qualities, values, strengths, commitments, plans, characteristics, abilities, and purposes. “What do you think that says about the hopes you have for your relationship with your daughter?” “What personal values does the choice you made demonstrate?” “When that happened, how would you describe your relationship with your wife at that time?” “What did it take in order to do that at this point in your life?” “When you took this step what were you intending for your life?” “What does it say about you as a person that you would do this?” “Can you help me understand more about what that says you believe in or value?” “What do you think that says about your abilities/skills/knowledges?”
Circulation Questions. When the counselor begins to discover unique outcomes they are curious to discover as much about them as possible via landscape of action questions. As these events are discussed, clients are invited to explore their meanings. These meanings are linked into an alternative or unique outcome story, and this alternative narrative is more thoroughly explored. Circulation Questions are helpful for describing the history of the alternative story. “Now that you have reached this point in your life, who else should know about it?” “Who would be least surprised to hear you say this?” “I guess there are a number of people who have outdated views of who you are as a person. What ideas do you have about updating these views?” “If I wanted to discover some more about this skill of yours, who (other than you) would be able to tell me about it?”