Applying Adlerian Therapy with Clients who Seek Reconciliation with Absent Others

A Research Paper

Presented to

The Faculty of the Adler Graduate School

___________________________

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the

Degree of Master of Arts in

Adlerian Counseling and Psychotherapy

___________________________

By:

Tim Scott Herzog

March 31, 2012
Abstract

Psychotherapists are often sought by clients regarding the breakdown of intimate relationships, wanting to improve their situation. However, the success rate of therapists to reconcile fractured relationships is well below what clients and therapists would like. Because traditionally therapy has focused on the psychological health of the individual client, restructuring severed relationships has been secondary at best. To help in the repair of relationships, Adlerian principles offer powerful options. This paper will present who the candidates are that seek relational reconciliation, what benefits the client can experience by working toward reconciliation, what practices by therapists hinder relational reconciliation, and what practices help reconciliation.
Acknowledgements

I am grateful to those who have contributed so much to the writing of this thesis. Mona Gustafson Affinito, Ph.D., L.P. has so patiently challenged the reasoning within the paper to ensure each proposition has solid support to back it up. Her tenacity was greatly appreciated. I appreciate Dr. William Doherty for his scholarly contributions and advise, as well as pioneering the commitment friendly concept of marriage therapy.

Thanks to Charlene and Robert Steincamp, who have experienced hundreds of reconciliations, for giving proven insight to the uncommon process of reconciling intimate relationships.

Finally to Colleen Herzog, who passed away during the writing of this thesis, for her display of commitment to healing of difficult relationships. For our lives are really measured and fulfilled by our relationships.
Table of Contents

Abstract ......................................................................................................................... 2

Acknowledgements ...................................................................................................... 3

Applying Adlerian Therapy with Clients who Seek Reconciliation with Absent Others . 6

Providing Therapy for Clients Seeking Reconciliation without the Relational Other ..... 8
  Examples of Contemporary Reconciliation of Relationships ................................. 9

Benefits of Relational Reconciliation........................................................................... 16

Current practices of some therapists regarding reconciliation ................................. 21

Helpful therapy for clients who seek Reconciliation .............................................. 26

Social Interest provides self-fulfillment and improved attractiveness .................... 28

Inferiority .................................................................................................................. 30

Teleology .................................................................................................................. 36

Problems of Life ....................................................................................................... 39

Society ....................................................................................................................... 46

Not to pressure the departed.................................................................................... 48

Forgiveness .............................................................................................................. 51

Understand the Issue of Masculine Protest ............................................................. 57

Association with those who encourage reconciliation .......................................... 61

Conclusion ............................................................................................................... 66

References .............................................................................................................. 68

Appendix A  American Psychotherapy Associations’ Oath ...................................... 80

Appendix B  A Standers Affirmation ...................................................................... 81

Appendix C University of Minnesota study ............................................................. 82
Appendix D Cycles of Reconciliation ................................................................. 83

Appendix E Religious Beliefs Help in Conflict .................................................. 84
Applying Adlerian Therapy with Clients who Seek Reconciliation with Absent Others

Psychotherapists are commonly visited by clients looking to resolve problems in their relationship with another person who will not attend a therapy session with them. Of these clients some want to know how to end the relationship with the least amount of pain possible; some want to know how they can continue to disagree with the other and yet remain cordial and civil. There are also those that seek to reconcile a relationship that has gone bad.

There can be a number of reasons why a client seeking reconciliation for a relationship arrives without the other participant: divorce, disinterest, resistance, affair, geographical distance, or death to name a few. While psychotherapy can be challenging when all the parties involved are present in the therapy sessions, the challenge is greater when all the parties involved are not present.

Therapists are trained to help clients in the therapist’s office improve their mental condition but are not able to impact the status of a person they cannot interact with. This scenario creates a dilemma for the therapist on if or how to counsel a client about a relationship without both parties being present. A therapist promises to seek the wellbeing of the client (See the American Psychotherapists Association oath Appendix A) and studies to learn what is best for the client. The statement “I will promote healing and wellbeing in my clients and place the client’s and public’s interests above my own at all cost” compels the Psychotherapist to have a keen awareness of what constitutes the wellbeing of the client.

The problem becomes what type of therapy the therapist should provide for a client that seeks reconciliation with a person who does not attend the therapy sessions. If the therapist encourages the client to pursue reconciliation of the relationship and the efforts are
unsuccessful, the client could become discouraged and consider the work a waste of time, energy and money. The therapist does not want to give the client false hope.

This may be the reason therapists most commonly are neutral regarding the issue of divorce or staying together. In a 1999 survey of 1,035 therapists, 61% stated that they are “neutral on divorce and do what is best from a therapeutic point of view.” Of those questioned, 67.9% of the women therapists and 59.4% of the men gave this response. 33.3% of those questioned stated that they are ‘committed to preserving marriage and avoiding divorce whenever possible’ (Wall, Needham, Browning & James, 1999, p. 146). A small percentage, 1.4% of those asked; frequently suggest divorce as a solution to relational difficulties. Thus the majority of therapists are more committed to what they deem is best for the client present in their office than they are to what is best for the relationship the client has with the absent person.

In the United States divorce has a high probability of invading a couple’s marriage. Depending on the age of the couple, the likelihood of divorce can range from 24 – 40% (Bramlett, 2002, p. 18). Many, if not most, of these divided unions have a participant that would prefer to remain united. In the mental health profession clients who seek to reunite relationships can make up a large number of clients marriage and family therapists see. There have been reconciled relationships that give them hope. “Approximately 10 percent of all currently married couples (9 percent of white women and 14 percent of black women) in the United States have separated and reconciled” (Wineberg 1993, p. 87).

Therapists have been trained to provide effective therapy advantageous for their clients. If the client wants to resolve problems of a relationship with someone that will not attend therapy, a therapist’s intention can be to provide therapy advantageous to the relationship and
for the well-being of the client. If the relationship does not improve, the therapy provided will still have been beneficial for the client. This paper discusses the therapies that have been effective in helping clients reconcile their most coveted relationships. These same therapies are also effective toward the welfare of the client regardless of the condition of the targeted relationship.

**Providing Therapy for Clients Seeking Reconciliation without the Relational Other**

Reconciliation is defined as “to restore friendship between.” Its roots come from the Latin word *reconciliare* (American Heritage Dictionary, 2009 p. 790). The word can be broken into two parts; *re* – again and *conciliare* – conciliate or bring together. Putting these two parts of the word together means ‘to bring together again’.

Dr. Jim Talley states

...reconciliation has been accomplished when both of you can carry on normal human communication. This is a goal to achieve at whatever your legal, moral, or emotional level. Your stomach does not knot up, your blood pressure does not rise anymore, and your voice does not rise in verbal communication. You are able to communicate with each other as you would with any person in your circle of acquaintances (1991, p. 13).

W. Robert Beavers records the conundrum a therapist can face when approached to provide marital counseling. Often one spouse will request marriage counseling of a therapist. When the person increasingly requests such counseling the therapist should decide to work with them. Usually the spouse requesting the therapy will come with the other spouse reluctantly agreeing to come (1985, pp. 12-13, 20). Beavers suggests to therapists to not take the case of couples who voice they lack desire to remain together.
Examples of Contemporary Reconciliation of Relationships

Reconciliation can happen on many levels, from a reconciliation of millions of people to single persons reconciling with themselves. Currently the nation of Rwanda is experiencing reconciliation between the Hutu and the Tutsi peoples. The genocide that took place in the early 1990’s claimed the lives of over 800,000 people (Zorbas, 2004, pp. 49 - 52). Presently the people are beginning to relate and unify among themselves. The National Unity and Reconciliation Commission (NURC) was created by the government of Rwanda in 1999. Recruiting leaders of the community and clergy the NURC promotes and teaches forgiveness and confession of crimes done among the people. While there is a great deal of work to be done there has been a reversal of the tragedies and decay that the country experienced. Using conflict resolution training and reconciliation skills the villages of Rwanda have reconciled murderers of parents with their victim’s children. Warring villages are cooperative in bringing peace and unity to other villages.

In August 1996 the African National Congress created the “Statement to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission” proclaiming the wrongful acts of the peoples and governments of the Union of South Africa. This commission requested that victims be heard telling about the offenses inflicted upon them, and the plea for amnesty. Victims were then allowed to request reparations. All the hearings were public (Tutu, 2010). The intent of the commission was for reconciliation, not for retribution as the Nuremberg trials after World War II. The statement recorded the following: “Only by confronting the past can there be genuine reconciliation, nation-building and unity in our country” (Statement, 1996).

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) has been considered a successful initiative as a tool for the healing of a nation after 300 years of apartheid. Its emphasis upon
revealing the truth about offenses and laying a foundation for reconciliation has been patterned by other nations dealing with post conflict issues.

When experiencing an amazing display of restitution as forgiveness was granted during the TRC, the chairperson of the commission wrote his response. Desmond Tutu was presiding when the head of the Ciskeian Defense Force was to speak regarding the multiple atrocities leveled against him and his soldiers. There were many in attendance who had experienced firsthand abuses against themselves or their loved ones. The Caucasian officer stated plainly that he was sorry, and took the burden of their actions upon his shoulders. He knew that those in attendance would never forget the unthinkable acts committed against them by him or his soldiers. He asked that they only understand the pressure put upon them and to forgive them of their brutality. He asked for forgiveness as he expressed his remorse.

The crowd who had moments ago exuded hostility broke out in applause. This amazing turn of events provoked Chairman Tutu to say;

Can we just keep a moment’s silence, please, because we are dealing with things that are very, very deep. It isn’t easy, as we all know, to ask for forgiveness and it’s also not easy to forgive, but we are people who know that when someone cannot be forgiven there is no future. If a husband and wife quarrel and they don’t one of them say ‘I am sorry’ and the other says ‘I forgive’, the relationship is in jeopardy (Tutu, 1999, p. 151).

Other species that experience reconciliation. Species other than humans show the capability of reconciling close relationships. The more familiar the relationship the more common the conciliation activities. Other animals practice reconciliation with common gestures such as physical comfort, empathic postures and sacrificial behaviors. The primary
function of these contacts is assumed to be the restoration of social relationships (de Waal, 1991, p. 72).

For example, Jan-Dieter Ludwigs and Peter H. Becker in 2005 observed the Common Tern in their mating practices. They observed the mating behaviors of birds known for their fidelity (2007, pp. 46-56). Each year the Common Terns return to a breeding ground at the harbor area of Wilhelmshaven Germany. 84 pairs of birds were observed regarding when they arrived at the breeding ground, how old the birds were, and who they paired with for breeding.

They observed that the males arrived at the breeding site a few days earlier than the females. The researchers noted that the ‘divorce rate’ (birds that mated with a different bird than the previous year) was at 45%, close to the divorce rate among American humans. The reproductive success of first year arrivals was poorest, having the fewest offspring. The second season had a divorce rate of 46%. Those who had mated with the same partner for over three years up to six years had a divorce rate of exactly 50%. Couples who mated the previous year but did not mate the next were categorized as divorced. If the same couples mated again for six years in a row the divorce rate dropped to about 19%. The older pairs tended to arrive within two days of each other at the breeding ground.

The researchers observed that couples who were monogamous had greater success in producing offspring and their chances of divorcing the next year decreased the longer they remained monogamous (Ludwigs, & Becker, 2005. p. 53). They theorized that familiarity and recollection of past successes increased the chance of the birds mating the next year.

The Bonnet Macaques are another species that exhibit relational reconciliation. An article by Matthew Cooper, Filippo Aureli & Mewa Singh (2007, pp. 26-38) observed how relationships were normalized after a conflict among members of the Bonnet Macaques tribe.
The researchers observed some 40 Macaques living at the Chamundi Temple near Mysore, India. The group was made of males, females, adults and juveniles. They recorded Post-Conflict Anxiety (PC) of the animals after aggressive behavior which included chasing, charging and contact aggression.

Ethologists refer to affiliative behavior as activity promoting group cohesion like grooming, embracing, mounting (including hip touch), genital touch, contact (which included manual touch, passive touch, and huddling), and a head and shoulder grasp that often includes a muzzle touch or gentle bite. Agonistic behavior is expressed by fighting or avoidance. Agonistic behavior includes silence, bared teeth display, avoidance, fleeing, open-mouth threat, lunge, charge, chase, manual contact aggression, and biting. Anxiety was shown by the Macaques scratching themselves in a particular way.

The study watched how Macaques experienced reconciliation within their relationships and what aided in reconciling. Anxious behavior was displayed by all participants after a fight, whether it was male against male, female against female, female against male or if multiple Macaques were involved. Once a Macaque showed anxious scratching, if affiliative behavior was shown by another there often was a reduction of scratching. If the Post Conflict behavior was agonistic the scratching did not decrease. If the PC was affiliative there still could be fighting or agonistic behavior but the scratching among those involved in the aggression was reduced.

Once when a fight occurred among Macaques, all participants of the fight exhibited anxiety (scratching). When there was affiliative behavior by at least one of the participants of the fight there was reduced anxiety behavior, even if one of the participants in the fight became aggressive again. The affiliative behavior seems to fall into a submissive or empathic role in
the relationship. But agonistic behavior did not lead to reconciliation or a reduction in scratching. Macaque behaviors of empathy and caring for the welfare of the other reduced anxiety with those who were conflicted. Affiliative behavior may not lead to reconciliation, but agonistic behavior never did.

A study of Grey wolves in the Pistoia Zoo of Tuscany, Italy observed that wolves perform conciliatory actions after a conflict. This behavior often resulted in a restored relationship among the wolves (Cordoni & Palagi. 2008. p. 302). The more important the relationship (like close relatives) the more conciliatory a wolf would be, whether it was the victim or initiator of aggression. The researchers found little difference between the winner and victim of the conflict regarding who was first in displaying affinitive behavior (Cordoni & Pelagi. 2008. p. 305).

**People who seek reconciliation.** Reconciliation at some point involves the participation of both entities in the relationship. A therapist can get involved to help both persons in the relationship when they want to continue the relationship. It may be that a mother and son work out their problem(s) with each other so that they will continue to spend holidays and family gatherings without incident. Reconciling two sisters can mean that they are able to have their children play together in the park like they used to, having resolved a problem of financial dealings they may have had with each other.

In the book ‘Forgiving our Parents Forgiving Ourselves’ the authors mention what they believe are necessary components of reconciling relationships. They state that reconciliation “can occur only when both parties to a relationship want it to happen; when both have accepted their own responsibility for what went wrong, have sorted out their emotions, and worked through the processes of both repentance and forgiveness” (Stoop, 1996, p. 266).
Jill Brook, who identifies herself as a “divorce coach”, wrote an article in the Huffington Post about the reunion of some popular celebrities. She mentions celebrities such as Pink and Cary Hart, Balthazar Getty, Elliot Gould, Mick Jones, Courtney Cox and David Arquette, who have reunited or are reuniting. Brook states that the reconciliation rate for divorced couples is less than 10%. She purports that

Part of the reason for such a low reconciliation rate may be due to what Pink so eloquently sang about in her hit song. In one stanza she sings, "How did I become so obnoxious, what is it with you that makes me act like this?" In any relationship, there is always someone who leaves and someone who is left. The person who is left must process the pain of rejection which too often turns into venom spewing anger (2010).

Ms. Brook has touched on the subject discussed in this paper; how intimate relationships can become intimate again. It appears that some relationships which dissolved from a legal or experiential standpoint have reconciled and either become cordial or close or even recovered to their committed status.

Scott and Deborah Stevens of Eden Prairie, MN experienced the difficulties of marriage, divorce and remarriage. In this author’s interview with them they discussed two points of interest to this thesis: (1) the lack of support for reconciliation – in fact, pressure to remain separate, and (2) suggestions they had for couples who want to reconcile. The Stevens were married in 1992 for seven years before Scott left home intending to never come back. They were separated for six years and divorced for seven.

In 2005 they married each other again. Both Scott and Deborah sought counsel from various psychotherapists, all of whom encouraged them to seek to create a new life without their former spouse. They stated that they did not have anyone encouraging them to reconcile or to
work toward reconciling with each other. Their family, friends or clergy did not encourage them to seek reconciliation with each other but advised them to date other people. For much of the time they were apart, Deborah held out hope for reconciliation. Scott also had the possibility of reconciliation in the back of his mind.

When they did agree to remarry after 13 years of living separately, they had difficulty finding a clergy member who would perform the ceremony. The Catholic Church would not marry them because they had not sought an annulment. The Protestant clergy were concerned that the marriage would not last. The Stevens have been working on improving and enjoying their marriage ever since but have had difficulty finding others to help them enhance their relationship.

Deborah, when asked what she thought would help other people in similar situations of divorce yet open to reconciling, stated there were five conditions that would help. One; keep an open mind toward the possibility of reconciliation. Two; acknowledge the role each partner played in the breakdown of the relationship. Three; seek out those interested in their reconciling who would mentor and encourage them toward that goal. Four; do not destroy relationships with others involved with your mate’s life; i.e. family and friends. Finally; try to maintain whatever bonds you presently have with the former spouse; such as events involving the children, gifts for family members, holidays, even times of providing financial support or exchange of the children (S. Stevens & D. Stevens, personal communication, Oct. 27, 2010).

A recent study at the University of Minnesota showed there were some couples who had filed for divorce and were in the midst of divorce proceedings who were still interested in reconciliation. When these couples were asked the question “If the court offered a reconciliation service, I would seriously consider trying it.” 12.9% of the respondents said
“yes” and 15.9% said “Maybe”. These responses were from both participants in the couple’s marriage, not just one partner. The researchers paired up the individual questionnaires by wedding information. See Appendix C.

These results indicate that some couples at the point of divorce would be interested in reconciling their marriages. Contrary to the current cultural trends it appears that conflicting couples might be inclined to reconcile their relationships when given the opportunity and assistance. Couples who consider the evidence that remaining in a marriage and making steps toward improving the marriage health is in the best interest of the their well-being decide that they would like to give their relationship another try.

**Benefits of Relational Reconciliation**

The oath taken by Psychotherapists includes a promise to perform therapy for the well-being of their clients (Appendix A). Reconciliation of relationships can have many benefits for the client. Laura Davis tells of her reconciliation with her mother in her book “I Thought We’d Never Speak Again.” In a letter from Laura Davis’s mother, Temme Davis, (2005) she mentioned that reconciliation gives a person a sense of optimism, reclamation of lost history, a sense that we can work things out in our circumstances.

Stephen Covey mentions two great benefits for those reconciling their troubled relationships. One, if people can reconcile one troubled relationship all their other relationships are affected. What people experience when rebuilding a relationship changes them and impacts their relationships with those who witnessed that reconciliation. Two, by modeling how healing can take place other people gain hope for recovering the broken relationships they have (Covey, 1999, p. 9).
Those who can reconcile their troubled marriage can continue to experience the health benefits of marriage. Non-married women have a 50% higher mortality rate than married women; non-married men have a 250% higher mortality rate than married men (Ross, 1990, p. 1061). Longitudinal evidence from studies across a variety of literatures indicates that married people suffer less psychological illness, live much longer, and are healthier and happier. These gains are not merely because married people engage in fewer risky activities; marriage quality can influence the size of the gains (Wilson, 2005, p. 87). Couples in conflict-ridden marriages take longer than the happily married to heal all kinds of wounds, from minor scrapes or athletic injuries to major surgery; hostile couples healed the slowest, taking 40% longer to heal (Kiecolt-Glaser, 1997, pp. 339-349).

An unhappy marriage can increase the chance of illness by 35% and shorten life by four years. Happily married people live longer, healthier lives than divorced or unhappily married couples (Verbrugge, 1979, pp. 267-285). Divorce generally does not lead to a better life (Hetherington, 2002, p. 5). Hetherington found that two in ten individuals appeared to have enhanced their lives through divorce but three in ten seemed to do worse. Four in ten were able to build other romantic relationships but experienced similar kinds of problems as their previous marriage and were no happier. The last 10% did not rebuild romantic relationships.

The Life Stress Test considers the most stressful experiences that an individual can experience are; first the death of a spouse, then divorce, then marital separation (Lowenstein, 1997) The effects of broken intimate relationships affect all participants within the family structure. Children who experience a parental divorce have their life expectancy shortened by an average of four years (Dawson, 1991, pp. 573-584). Studies have discovered that while 10 –
12% of children from intact families receive some kind of mental health treatment, roughly 25% of children of divorced families receive similar treatment (D’Onofrio, 2008).

When people divorce they have a greater likelihood of divorcing again were they to remarry. The experiences learned in the first marriage should improve the success of a second marriage, or so one might think. The evidence shows different results however. Surveys show that second marriages have a higher rate of divorce than first marriages. 33% of women divorce within ten years in their first marriage. If they enter into a second marriage at an age older than 25, 34% of the women divorce again. If they enter their second marriage at age 25 or younger their divorce rate is 47% (Department of Health and Human Services, 2002, pp. 24 – 26). It appears if we do not change the mistaken ideas we had in our first marriage prior to a second marriage; the second marriage has a high probability to fail as well.

Couples may decide to live together instead of marry to avoid the pain of divorce. In 1997, the total number of unmarried couples living together in America topped 4 million, up from less than half a million in 1960 (U.S. Census, 1997). In 2001 3.8 million were classified as unmarried-partner cohabitating couples (Fields, 2001, p. 12) but in 2009 there were 6.6 million unmarried couples living together (U.S. Census, 2010). Over half of all first marriages are now preceded by cohabitation, compared to virtually none earlier in the century (Bumpass, 1998). A psychotherapist can be visited by more clients who desire reconciling their relationship with their cohabiter than in previous times. Cohabitating and married relationships have many similarities and the desire of one who has been abandoned within either situation can experience emotional pain.

One study found that only 24 percent of couples who marry will remain very happily married until death (Glenn, 1998, pp. 569-576).
Divorce and breakups of couples continue to occur at very high rates. In 2003 the marriage rate per 1,000 Americans was 7.5% while the divorce rate was 3.8% (U.S. Census, 2006). The divorce rate has hovered at about half of the marriage rate for the past four decades. The marriage rate has dropped from 10.2% in 1982 to the 2003 rate.

The experiences of divorce and breakups of cohabitating adults can be very harmful. Among the various living arrangements of adults, researchers discovered that divorced and separated people have the highest rates of mental disorders, with intermediate rates among the single and widowed. Cohabitating adults had higher rates of mental disorders than married people, who had the lowest rates (Malzberg, 1936, pp. 245-261). Unmarried women, especially those living with a man they are not married to, have a considerably higher risk of domestic violence than married women. Married men are less likely to commit domestic violence (Stets, 1991, pp. 669-680).

In the article “Separations, Reconciliations, and Living Apart in Cohabiting and Marital Unions” (Binstock & Thornton, 2003, pp. 432-443) the authors use data from the Intergenerational Panel Study of Parents and Children. The sample group of the study was 800 people who formed a union, whether cohabiting or marital, by the age of 31. The participants were all from the metropolitan area of Detroit. The research showed couples who cohabit and then separate because of conflict recovered their relationship 10% of the time. They found if they do reconcile the reunion lasts for a short time and then they separate and terminate the relationship. If they do reconcile after their first separation, they often marry instead of return to cohabiting.

Of the married couples in the study who separated and reconciled, at least 60% of them separated again one or more times. If they separated multiple times they often ended up
divorcing. The researchers also studied those who separated, not because of conflict, but because of job commitments, school or something else. These relationships do not last any longer or shorter than those who separate because of conflict.

The researchers found that those who marry are less likely to separate than cohabiters. They reason that married couples have a higher degree of commitment and stability. Married couples experience fewer interruptions in their relationship that would cause them to live apart than cohabiters do.

Howard Wineberg has been cited previously as a researcher of divorce, remarriage and reconciliation. Dr. Wineberg has another interest; physician-assisted suicide. In August of 2000 he wrote an editorial in the Western Journal of Medicine regarding this issue (Wineberg & Purtzer, 2000, p. 87). He wrote that never-married people are 4.2 times more likely than married people to use physician-assisted suicide. Divorced persons are 3.2 times more likely to commit suicide.

If psychotherapists seek the health and wellbeing of their clients it appears that helping them retain their intimate relationship would be an important part of therapy. Helping them have a healthy relationship is in the best interest of the client, while encouraging the client to dissolve the marriage usually is not. When clients experience a rejection of an intimate relationship they experience real pain, psychologically and physiologically (Kross, Berman, Mischel, Smith & Wager, 2011. p. 4).

Dr. John Gottman writes:

There are serious consequences of marital dissolution for the mental and physical health of both spouses. These negative effects include the increased risk of psychopathology; increased rates of automobile accidents, including fatalities; increased incidence of
physical illness, suicide, violence, and homicide; decreased longevity; significant immunosuppression; and increased mortality from diseases (1999, p. 3).

As mentioned before, such reconciliation can manifest itself by couples remaining married or cohabitating. It can mean that they do not restore the relationship to its most intimate point but rather choose to live separate lives without conflict. A therapist can do what he can to help couples be ‘brought together again’ but how that may look will be determined by the couple.

**Current Practices of Some Therapists Regarding Reconciliation**

Therapists have varying views on how to work with fractured relationships. In the book “Procedures in Marriage and Family Therapy” one of the recommendations for marriage and family therapists is to assist the client with *divorce planning* (Brock & Barnard, 1988, pp. 174-175). The authors of the book describe this procedure as useful for couples who remain stuck over the decision of whether to divorce or remain married. This might be because they do not have the information required to weigh one alternative over the other. Divorce and marriage seem equally onerous and equally attractive. Only with new information can spouses get off the fence, and the authors consider it the therapist’s job to provide it.

Divorce planning is one procedure they feel helps illuminate the pros and cons of either course. The objective of divorce planning is to stop thinking that has become nonproductive and to dump new information into the dyad. Planning for the divorce recommends that the client(s) consider all the arrangements they would need to make and what changes would take place in the family’s life if they got a divorce.

Bertrand Russell wrote about the inevitability of the breakdown of marriage as we know it, or knew it back at the time of his writing *Marriage and Morals* (1929, p. 166). He wrote that
RECONCILING CLIENT RELATIONSHIPS WITH ABSENT OTHERS

no marriage should be legally binding until the wife’s first pregnancy; trial marriages should be allowed which can be dissolved at will. The state would replace a father’s perceived role and infidelity should be tolerated. Some therapists have a similar notion that marriage is an outdated institution (Berry, 2009). He cites the high divorce rate, the romanticizing of marriage that never matches expectations, and lack of preparation of the participants of marriage.

Current psychotherapeutic counseling has had a discouraging record of helping clients reconcile with someone with whom they have had a very close relationship. There is not a great difference between couples who have been involved in marriage counseling and those that have not. The article “A Survey of Adlerian Marital Therapy” compiled the results from a questionnaire given to a random selection of members of the North American Society of Adlerian Psychology (NASAP). Of those questioned 20% had counseled couples that divorced (Evans, Dedrick & Dinkmeyer, 1993, p. 473).

One of the questions was ‘of those couples (who divorced) what percentage did you believe should not have divorced?’ The mean of the responses was 14% and the standard deviation was over 25%. Nearly half (49%) of the marital therapy conducted by the practitioners involved separate sessions for one or both partners in the marriage and could be interpreted as “individual counseling” (Evans, 1993, p. 474).

Practicing Emotionally Focused Therapy (EFT) showed some effectiveness in couples reconciling their relationship (Makinen & Johnson, 2006, p. 1058). EFT has led the way in fostering the inclusion of a focus on emotion and attachment in the field of couple therapy. Initially the study included couples who had altered the quality of their relationship by an event, such as infidelity, abandonment, or financial deception/loss. Of 30 couples in the study, five left it before it concluded. Of those five, three dropped out of the study and two dissolved the
relationship. The remaining 24 completed the study, 13 sessions of EFT therapy and pre- and post-treatment questionnaires. Of the participating couples 63% of them experienced a significant improvement in their relational distress and forgiveness.

Some therapists believe that when a couple is most conflicted is the best time for real change and positive outcome. This can depend upon how the therapist handles the situation.

Dr. Howard Richard Wax has endeavored to treat couples who deem their relationship hopeless. He works with couples who believe “their relationship is hopeless, irreconcilable, and they cannot find the door marked exit. They feel trapped, victimized, paralyzed, abused, trampled, shamed, wounded and usually without resource. They all hold one other commonality, which is desperation” (Wax, 1998). Dr. Wax seeks to restore the couple’s wholeness around a mutually agreed upon intention, that of rescuing their marriage.

It is difficult for therapists in family therapy to avoid favoritism or siding with one family member over another. Therapists try to keep a posture of being neutral; remaining allied with all members of the family (Gehart & Tuttle, 2003, p. 68). An analysis of therapists talk in contrast to what family members reveal in ‘backstage’ comments shows some disparity. Whatever the therapist’s intentions were to avoid position-taking in the session, the experience by individual family members was that the therapist failed to understand or validate their own particular moral position (Standcombe, 2005, p. 27).

Of concern are the methods used when couples participate in marriage counseling. Some therapists have postulated reasons why marriage counseling has not been very successful. William Doherty has a concern with the practice of neutrality within therapy sessions. Neutrality in marriage and family counseling is when the therapist does not have a stronger bond or agreement with one of the parties in the session over another. Having a greater affinity
with one person over another is detrimental to the therapy process because the other, less appreciated individual can begin to feel like the minority in the therapy session and can resort to defensiveness. Practicing neutrality is to have the same concern and agreement with all participants in the session. However, Dr. Doherty encourages therapists not be neutral about the marriage.

Dr. Doherty has been an open critic of the profession he is a part of:

In the 1970s and 1980s, I was a neutral therapist on marriage and divorce, which is what over 60 percent of marriage and family therapists currently report themselves to be (Wall et al., 1999, pp. 139-150). I helped people do a cost-benefit analysis--what does the individual gain and lose by staying married or getting divorced. This consumerist cost-benefit analysis disguises itself as neutral. A sole emphasis on the questions "What do you need to do for you?" and "What’s in it for you to stay, what’s in it for you to not stay?" are not neutral because they focus only on what the individual sees as his or her own personal gain or loss... An alternative to neutrality is to let the couple know that, except where there’s abuse and danger, I will try to support the possibility that they can salvage their marriage. I am an advocate for their marriage. They can call me off but they’re going to have to look me in the eye and call me off. I’m going to try to support the possibility they can work this out, knowing that they must want it and that it is not always possible (Doherty, 1999).

Doherty has stated that the biggest problem in couple’s therapy, beyond raw incompetence, is the ‘myth of neutrality’ (Doherty, 2002, p. 39). Neutrality keeps the therapist from talking about his or her values and the values of the clients. Marriages that are close to breaking are considering whether the individual’s suffering is great enough to cancel a lifetime
commitment, or whether the individual’s dreams for a better life outweigh the needs of their children for a stable family.

In the State of Minnesota the bill ‘Couples on the Brink’ was passed in May of 2010. This bill provides funds from Minnesota Marriage Licenses to finance programs to help divorcing couples attempt reconciliation (Minnesota State Legislature, 2010). Dr. Doherty was a supporter of this bill and is responsible for organizing programs for these couples. The bill provides couples counseling, mentorship, and education from various sources. The project is still in its initial stages and looking for ways to help some estimated 1,500 couples in the State of Minnesota (Doherty, Froehle & Peterson, 2011).

Adlerian psychology encourages a therapist to help couples work out the problems in a relationship rather than abandon the person and create a new relationship with someone else. All unhappiness is caused by a person’s disregard or violation of the rules of cooperation. Rudolph Dreikurs wrote that persons living in an unhappy relationship can correct their mistakes rather than undo the relationship, which will be committing a new blunder by breaking an already established relationship (1946, p. 98). While it may be easier to cut ties rather than strengthen a strained but existing relationship, the task of choosing a mate or a new relationship can be difficult.

Often it is not the other person that needs to be changed to someone else but the one who expresses being unhappy needs to change to make a better relationship. “We ourselves are the source of success or failure” (1946, p. 98). Individual psychology asks clients to discover themselves and the changes they need to make. Clients are encouraged to “rediscover their present mate and, with more understanding, the second choice of the same person may prove to be more fortunate. Many marriages could be saved and many an erroneous choice transformed
into the right one if people understood better how to live together.” Alfred Adler stated himself that “The hardest thing for human beings to do is to know themselves and to change themselves” (1992, p. 22).

Accomplishing marital reconciliation can be time consuming for the couple and therapist. Dr. Gottman suggests that a couple coming to marriage counseling schedule regular six month follow-up sessions for at least two years (Gottman, 1999, p. 306).

**Helpful Therapy for Clients who Seek Reconciliation**

Psychotherapists who decide to provide help for a client or clients that would like to reconcile an intimate relationship can utilize some of the following techniques and methodologies for improving their possibilities for success. Many of these skills are central to the Adlerian Individual Psychology practice in dealing with relationships.

Individual psychology considers each human being as a unique, undivided personality. This is contrary to the Freudian view of individuals made up of an id, ego and super ego. ‘The conscious and unconscious are not separate and conflicting parts, but complimentary and compensatory parts of one and the same reality” (Adler, 1929, p. 29). Doherty proposes that there are three entities of a marriage; the wife, the husband, and the commitment to each other, the marriage. Some Adlerian therapists have similar views.

Reorientation is also the stage of therapy when the therapist begins to help each spouse develop beyond a predominantly self-orientation and toward greater concern for what is best for the other spouse, children and/or the marriage itself. When conflict has persisted for some time, the individuals involved begin to view the relationship with an increasingly narrow perspective, focusing only upon the personal concerns, hurts and
injustices inflicted upon them. Both husband and wife can present a good, sound argument for their positions and justify their feelings and actions in the marriage. A synergic effect occurs when the couple learns to combine what is best for each individual with what is ultimately best for the relationship, so that as each spouse grows, the relationship grows, and conversely as the relationship grows, each spouse grows also (Kern, Hawes & Christensen, 1989, p. 25).

The therapist can be asked to help heal a relationship by both participants of the relationship or can be approached by just one party of the relationship. Depending upon the participants of the therapy sessions the therapy will most likely be different. This paper is concerned about what can be done for a client that comes alone to the therapist’s office. The therapist can encourage the individual to do the work that is necessary to improve their chances of reconciling.

Components of therapy that have had some success with clients seeking reconciliation with absent others are:

- Social Interest. This would be an interest in helping others and being more of a well-rounded person
- Overcoming the experience of being inferior. Not viewing themselves as victims or as defeated individuals because of the relational breakdown
- Setting their sights on the goal they want to achieve and live according to those goals (teleology)
- Being encouraged to be more balanced in living regarding the tasks of life; work, love and society
- Not pressuring the absent other
• Practicing forgiveness toward the spouse and themselves

• Considering masculine protest and its influence on the situation. Masculine protest is the Adlerian concept of rejection of male dominance and female devaluation.

• Associating with those who encourage reconciliation

Social Interest Provides Self-Fulfillment and Improved Attractiveness

To improve readability with the remainder of this thesis the client seeking reconciliation with another that will not attend therapy sessions will be referred to as CSR (Client Seeking Reconciliation). The other person they seek reconciliation with but is not participating in the therapeutic sessions or reconciliation activities will be referred to as AO (Absent Other).

The CSRs can benefit by increasing their social interest; to be interested in helping others and becoming more well-rounded people. The German term ‘Gemeinschaftsgefühl’ is most often translated as social interest in the context of Alfred Adler. “The term social interest denotes the innate aptitude through which the individual becomes responsive to reality, which is primarily the social situation” (Ansbacher, 1956, p. 133). The greater an individual’s social interest the more the individual’s psychology is in balance. Individuals can be more socially adjusted when they take society’s well-being into consideration in all they do. Intimate relationships are similar in that they require an interest in the well-being of another individual.

A therapist is challenged when working with those in a relationship where neither participant is interested in the well-being of the other. To have just one of the participants in the therapeutic session makes the challenge that much greater. ‘We may say that for a full solution for this cooperation of two, each partner must be more interested in the other than in himself. This is the only basis on which love and marriage can be successful’ (Ansbacher, 1956, p. 432).
Helping CSRs evaluate and begin to develop their social interest is beneficial for many, especially the CSRs. They can experience normalcy (Ansbacher, 1956, p. 432), and be well adjusted. The principle of social interest cannot be a negative application for CSRs but will enrich and improve their life experience even if it does not result in a reconciliation of their relationship. However, such change can have a positive effect upon the AO.

Willard Harley wrote that individuals who are having difficulties within their intimate relationship can change from being incompatible to irresistible by becoming interested in the needs of their mate. If a man were to seek to meet the need of affection of his wife or girlfriend, or meet her need for intimate conversation, for honesty and openness, for financial support, and for family commitment, he could become an irresistible person to his mate. If the female client could seek to meet the need of her mate for sexual fulfillment, for recreational companionship, for being attractive, for giving domestic support, and his need for admiration then she could become irresistible to him (Harley, 1986, pp. 16-19).

The Prevention and Relationship Enhancement Program (PREP) from the Center for Marital and Family Studies at the University of Denver implements the Speaker / Listener technique to help relationships. The technique enables two people in conflict to understand the perspective of each other and hopefully cause empathy for each other’s situation. The technique of being intentional when one speaks and being an attentive listener is the cornerstone of the PREP program, one of the most successful programs for sustaining marital satisfaction (Markman, 2001, p. 4). PREP also promotes ‘I statements’ which enable the speakers to admit that they are only speaking from their perspective and therefore acknowledging that another perspective can exist which could be as relevant and accurate. PREP encourages participants in a dialogue to be cognizant that they can be influenced by elements of their surroundings which
can taint their understanding of what the other person is expressing. All these techniques are aimed at increasing interest and concern for the other person and diminishing the attention upon oneself. Couples can become reunited and relate better with one another if they can become understanding of the others point of view. The techniques are structured around intentionally hearing the other person and being concerned about their needs. These exercises have proven to be very successful in resolving conflicts and bringing couples back together (Renick, Blumberg & Markman, 1992, pp. 141-147).

In her book ‘How One of You Can Bring the Two of You Together’ Susan Page discusses how conflicts break apart the married couple. To prevent the polarizing effect of dealing with conflict she suggests creating the conditions that allow a third alternative. This involves two steps “(1) Develop empathy for the other point of view … and (2) relax the urgency about your own” (Page, 1997, p. 129). Adlerian psychology agrees that empathy for others and concern about their welfare is critical to successful living together (Adler, 1992, p. 60).

**Inferiority**

Individual psychology holds that people can be driven to improvement when they consider themselves inferior in some way. For instance, those who speak with a lisp often involve themselves with speech exercises allowing them to not only speak better but sometimes become excellent speakers. Some have taken occupations that require perfect enunciation like broadcasting. Their weakness became their strength because they strove to overcome. “… the psyche, under pressure from feelings of inferiority or helplessness, tries with all its might to overcome this ‘inferiority complex’ ” (Adler, 1992, p. 71).
A CSR can often feel inferior as the one who was left by the AO. They can think that they are deficient in some way which caused the AO to sever the relationship. The CSR need not be a victim or a defeated individual because of the relational breakdown. A common problem with CSR’s is to appear needy. This is not an attractive stance but repelling to an AO. When people date and look for a mate they show themselves as self-sufficient and ‘having their act together.’ Those who seem desperate for a date or friend are not as appealing.

The CSR will do well to seek to be sufficient emotionally, physically, financially and socially. The therapist can guide a CSR toward being capable of living on their own without their intimate friend, family member or spouse. They are able to enjoy life and be a productive person regardless of what their AO does. Not only is this a healthier and truer state for the CSR to live in but also will be more attractive to others for a satisfying life and better social interaction.

A beneficial motivation the client can experience is the motivation of compensation. In each mind there is the conception of a [fictional] goal or ideal to get beyond the present state and to overcome the present deficiencies and difficulties by postulating a concrete goal for the future. By means of this concrete goal, the individual can think and feel himself superior to the difficulties of the present because he has in mind his success of the future (Ansbacher, 1956, p. 432).

In the article “Remarriage and the Nature of Divorce: Does It Matter Which Spouse Chose to Leave?” Sweeney (2002, pp. 410 – 440) suggests that the initiator of a breakup is most likely the one who has the most say about the future of both parties. The author of the article seeks to answer whether the initiator of a separation of a couple fares better than the non-initiator. The researcher speculates that the initiator of a couple’s breakup or divorce may be
better prepared for the demise of the relationship since they made the decision. The initiators have most likely considered the outcome longer and may have emotionally begun adjusting to the split prior to those that are presented with the initiators decision. The initiators often have reasons outside of the relationship which encouraged them to want the separation, such as another love interest.

In Sweeney’s research there were two samplings. The first survey used was by the National Survey of Families and Households (NSFH) in 1988. 752 women and 463 men participated in this first sampling. In 1994 another survey was taken again by the NSFH with 726 women and 447 men in the second sampling. The questions were to agree or disagree with statements like ‘I wanted the marriage to end but my husband/wife or partner did not’. The researcher did find that women initiated a divorce far more often than men (31% versus 11%). Men were more likely to not want the union to end (10% women and 20% men).

While women most often wanted the divorce the men were most likely to remarry after the divorce. By the ninth year after the divorce 73% of the men who did not want the divorce were either married or cohabitating, while 66% of the women who initiated the divorce were married. The difference between those who remarry and those that do not is even greater between women not wanting the divorce compared to men who did. After the divorce 43% of the women and 54% of the men wanting the divorce were in a relationship. But after the first three years the percentages do not increase very much, especially for the women. For women, the more educated they are the greater the chance of remarrying.

Those who did not want to get a divorce are less likely to remarry within the first three years than the one initiating the divorce. Initiators who have a change of heart and would like to reconcile with their former spouses or roommates have a greater chance of reconciling with
their former mates than the non-initiators have with their former mates. Also, after the first three years of the breakup, if the mate is not in a serious relationship by then, the possibility of the former mate getting into another relationship is reduced.

Initially for a woman who has been divorced by her spouse her financial income is about 30% lower than it was prior to the divorce. This gap does not close quickly, unless the woman does remarry. At that time her income reaches nearly the same level as the previous level. The author cites that men’s standard of living actually increases after a divorce, a figure that has since been refuted by other studies which mention that men’s standard of living plummets like their former spouse.

Most often a CSR will be the one that did not initiate the breakup of the relationship. This study revealed that while at first the initiator of the breakup will experience a better position in life than the non-initiator, the situation evens out after three or four years. There is little fuel to ignite the argument they are inferior to their AO. If the CSR is a male in a heterosexual relationship he may be at an advantage over his former partner as it is more difficult for her to find another mate than it is for the male.

CSR s may think of themselves as less attractive or think less of themselves than they did before the breakup. Research shows that the individuals who initiate a breakup will think of themselves as the good one in the relationship and correspondingly their former partner as the bad one. In the article “Opposite Sides of the Same Coin: Former Spouses’ Divergent Perspectives in Coping with their Divorce” (Gray & Silver, 1990, pp. 1180-1191) the opinions of those who participated in divorce are tabulated. Researchers mailed out a questionnaire to 113 men and 194 women who had filed for divorce in Ontario, Canada during a seven-month span. The researchers were able to anonymously pair up 45 couples out of the sample, or 29%
of the participants. Participants were asked their perception of the breakup, who was the villain, who was selfish, what impact their involvement with another person had on the marriage if applicable, and the perceived control over the divorce.

The research included the use of measurement scales such as the Brief Symptom Inventory (Derogatis & Melisaratos, 1983, pp. 595-605), the Self Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965) and the Satisfaction With Life Scale (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffen, 1985, pp. 71-75). The outcome of the research indicated that participants in the divorce had quite compassionate views of themselves and very negative views of the former spouse. The former spouses were seen as the villains, and they were the victims. The responsibility of the breakup was usually seen as the other spouse’s fault regardless of whether they introduced another person into the relationship or not.

Interestingly, both the husband and the wife considered the wife to be primarily in control of the divorcing process. Depending upon how the individual scored in the Self-Esteem Scale the ones who thought of themselves as the cause of the divorce expressed a great amount of guilt which hurt their satisfaction in life.

Problems the couples had were often perceived in two different ways, most often as the fault of the other spouse. Those who chose to respond to the questionnaire may have decided to participate in order to express their displeasure and gripes, or to seek to absolve themselves from blame. Those that chose not to participate may have resolved the issues within their minds and did not feel the need to vent their thoughts.

For those looking to gain insight for help in reconciliation it would be good to know that the former spouse may think in the same way as this study; that the spouse seeking reconciliation was the one at fault. In fact, the findings of the research showed that the initiator
of the divorce thought the ex-spouse wanted to reconcile more than the ex-spouse expressed that interest. Much of these perceptions of being in the right are to provide aid for adjusting to the divorce. Those who felt they were responsible for the divorce and were the villain were having more difficulty in adjusting to their new singleness.

Howard Wineberg was the former Senior Research Associate at Portland State University in Oregon and is now a professor of Sociology at Rutgers University. He has written numerous articles regarding separation, divorce and reconciliation. He and James McCarthy give some instructional advice for CSRs. If there has been financial instability within the relationship, then improving this area of their lives would be a plus. If the marriage was initiated at a very young age, gaining maturity or waiting for your spouse to continue to mature may improve the chances (1994, pp. 21-42). Gary Chapman wrote;

Why not use some time while separated to take an honest look at your personality?

Discover your basic patterns of thought, feeling, and behavior. Then decide where your strengths lie and utilize them to expand your horizons. At the same time be realistic about your weaknesses. Decide what needs to be changed and take steps toward growth. Admit those things that cannot be changed and accept them. This could be an exciting time of self-discovery and growth for you. You can be a different person…” (1996, pp. 41-42).

If a therapist can encourage CSRs to compensate for their present disenfranchisement with a determination to overcome and become the persons they would like to be then both the CSR and the therapist can take advantage of this situation.
Teleology.

Clients benefit by setting their sights on the goals they want to achieve and living according to those goals.

Alfred Adler taught:

It is impossible to conceive of psychological development except within a pattern depending on an ever-present objective, which is determined in turn by the dynamics of life. The goal itself we may conceive either as changing or as static. On this basis, all the phenomena of our psychological existence may be considered as preparation for some future situation. The soul, indeed, seems to consist chiefly of a force moving towards a goal, and Individual Psychology considers all the manifestations of the human spirit as though they were directed towards such a goal (Adler, 1927, p. 29).

CSR can live in such a way so they can achieve a predictable outcome. If they set a goal of reconciling the relationship they cherish, their lifestyle ought to give them the greatest opportunity to obtain that goal. It would be advisable for a psychotherapist to illuminate to the CSR what behaviors and thoughts give them the greatest possibility of reaching their goal.

Based on their own experience, Charlyne and the late Bob Steincamp provided a program to assist separated couples in their work toward reconciliation. While their approach is practiced within a religious setting, their methods can be restated in language that provides suggestions to any therapist. The Steincamp’s website www.stopdivorce.org has proven to be very influential in helping couples reconcile their relationships according to the feedback they receive. The Steincamps stated in personal correspondence that consistency is the first consideration for reconciling relationships (Steincamp, 2010). They recommend that CSR be deliberate in their position. CSR who want to reconnect and restore their relationships with
AOs, need to remain in the position of wanting to reconcile. They may set a time period in their mind, thinking that they will wait for the AO to reconcile for six months or a year, or even for a lifetime. During that period of time their chances for reconciliation are the most potent if they remain willing to reconcile.

The lifestyles of CSRs need to match their speech. The Steincamps demonstrate this mindset with a pledge on their website that they encourage CSRs to take under consideration. (Appendix B)

The Steinkamps recommend that a married CSR continue to wear the wedding ring all the time even while separated or divorced. They recommend that the CSR not date or have intimate relationships with the other gender. They also recommend to CSRs that their acquaintances know that they desire reconciliation with their AO. The Steinkamps had been divorced for two years and then reconciled and married again. Robert stated he never once questioned Charlyne wanted any other relationship than to reconcile with him. They recommend that CSRs be contrary to the advice that many friends and family undoubtedly offer, to begin a new life without consideration of their AO (Steincamp, 2008).

Country singer Andy Landis wrote a book entitled ‘She Stays’ which records the ordeal Bettye and Ricky Van Shelton went through when country singer Ricky Shelton was involved in adultery. Their song also was popular by the same name. The theme of the song and book was that Bettye Shelton stayed at home and in love with Ricky while he was with other women. They have since reconciled and consider the constancy of Bettye as a major reason for their reconciliation (Shelton, 1995, pp. 278-279).

Dr. Jim Talley describes the process of staying on the “line of reconciliation.” Talley states with relationships there is the force of homeostasis. “When a couple is locked into a
friendship, a relationship, or a marriage, their lives are held together by an invisible rubber band called ‘homeostasis.’ The further they pull away from the line of reconciliation, the stronger the force that pulls them back” (Talley, 1991, p. 43). The diagram in appendix D illustrates a distressed relationship with one of the participants outside of the limits of harmony into disharmony and the other participant staying within the limits of harmony and close to the line of reconciliation. Talley’s contention is if a participant hovers near the line of reconciliation he or she will be prepared to reconcile when the other participant spouse has a hankering for harmony.

Talley states that within his practice there will be one half of the relationship that desires reconciliation (spouse 1) and the other (spouse 2) does not but is in a state of disharmony. At some point often the spouse in disharmony considers returning to harmony with the former spouse. At this time the relationship has a convergent point where reconciliation could take root. Spouse 1 may or may not be hugging the line of reconciliation however.

If spouse 1 (or the CSR) is near the line of reconciliation, then the desired opportunity can be grasped. If not, then the opportunity may be lost. If spouse 1 is contemplating the hurt inflicted by spouse 2 (AO) and wants the AO to experience punishment, then a golden opportunity for reconciliation will be missed. Or if the CSR becomes romantically involved with someone else and is indifferent regarding reconciliation with the AO the sought for chance can be lost.

Talley believes the spouse seeking reconciliation needs to be in the state of harmony and always open to reconciliation with the departed loved one. The AO may not consider returning to harmony with the CSR for a long time, even years. It is a very conscious effort for the one
waiting to be in a state of harmony, but if she or he wants to reconcile the waiting will need to be endured.

**Problems of Life.**

It is helpful for the CSR to be encouraged to be more balanced in living. Adlerian psychology upholds that there are tasks in life all persons need to solve. These tasks are interrelated. These tasks or problems of life are:

- Occupation
- Love relationships
- Relationship with society

These problems of life bind us as human beings together. How the CSRs handle these tasks of life can indicate imbalances which can cause strains in their relationships.

For the right choice of a partner, in addition to physical and intellectual suitability and attraction, the following qualities, which indicate a sufficient degree of social interest, ought principally to be taken into consideration: (1) capacity for retaining friendship; (2) an ability to be interested in his work; (3) more interest in the partner than in self (Ansbacher et.al. 1956. p. 438).

Adlerians see that there needs to be a balance between a person’s occupation, social involvement and love interests. Periods of crisis, when CSRs seek drastic measures to regain a lost relationship, are often good times to enact behavioral change. CSRs may need to re-evaluate the problems of life and reorder how they handle them.

**Occupation.** How has work affected the CSR’s relationship with the AO? In western society the occupation of the CSR can exact numerous struggles in relationships. “It is vital to
marital happiness to recognize that any disturbing problem is a common task which calls for mutual encouragement and assistance” (Driekurs, 1949, p. 101).

S.P. McCoy found that some occupations have a higher divorce rate than others (2008).

The results of the survey are: Highest divorce rates

- Dancers & choreographers (43.05%)
- Bartenders (38.43%)
- Massage therapists (38.22%)
- Gaming cage workers (34.66%)
- Extruding machine operators (32.74%)
- Gaming services workers (31.345)
- Factory workers: Food & tobacco (29.78)
- Telephone operators (29.30%)

Lowest divorce rates

- Media & communication equipment workers (0.0)
- Agricultural engineers (1.78%)
- Optometrists (4.01%)
- Transit and railroad police (5.26%)
- Clergy (5.61%)
- Directors, religious activities (5.88%)
- Sales engineers (6.61%)
- Podiatrists (6.81%)
- Nuclear engineers (7.29%)
One consideration of the CSR is if they may need a career change. If a CSR has an occupation that has high divorce rates, they may want to switch careers to one that has a lower divorce rate, like working on telephone equipment. Such a change may remove an obstacle for relating to the AO.

Does the CSR believe working long hours at work contributed to the demise of the relationship? Workers at Boeing Corporation asserted that working mandatory overtime hours for several months broke up their marriages (Matthee, 1997, p. 10). Harriet Presser attributed night shifts for men to a six-fold increase in the probability of divorce (2000, pp. 93–110). John H. Johnson found that men who work more than 40 hours did not impact the frequency of divorce as much as women working more than 40 hours. The more females worked, the greater the possibility of divorce. The possibility of divorce increases slightly if the male worked more than 50 hours (2004).

A balance in life, between work, love, family, and friendship is best achieved by developing a stronger feeling of community that embraces the well-being of all, including oneself. A person can be considerate of and helpful to others, but they also need to know when to stop, when to rest, and when to ask for help. Taking care of oneself is an essential part of the feeling of community. Self-care should embrace physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual health. Many "workaholics" make generous financial contributions to their families but ignore the impact of their limited family time and pervasive negative feelings.” (Stein, 2010)

If CSRs dedicated more time and energy to their occupations than to their relationships, the time of separation from the AO can be a good time to reconsider the amount of time and energy they put into their jobs, occupations or fields of study. Adlerian psychology would
encourage the CSRs to reflect upon their involvement with the AOs and their involvement with their occupation.

If CSRs are more interested in themselves and what they can do for their own enjoyment instead of others, they become less interesting and enjoyable for others, including their AO. Yet situations where they become desperate for the AO and the love they experienced can create an impetus for personal change. They can begin to regard others as needing their skills and contributions to the welfare of others. When they become concerned about society they can become more trustworthy individuals and more attractive to their estranged loved ones.

**Love relationships.** Love is a task for two individuals. Problems arise in love relationships when the participants before their relationship had not been practicing interest in the welfare of others. Because of these problems that seem so pervasive, there are critics of the institutions that seek to establish lifelong dedication, like marriage.

Many modern writers describe marriage as a sick institution held together only by lies and hypocrisy, mutual deception and self-deception. Family life, then, would consist in an endless two-way torment. The mendacity and hypocrisy in the so-called bourgeois marriage is one of the favorite targets of modern authors. In this view one might be tempted to paraphrase Shakespeare’s Hamlet: Something is rotten indeed- not in Denmark, but in family and marriage” (Guggenbühl-Craig, 1977, p. 9).

There are notions that some relationships should not be reconciled. When there is violence, adultery, financial depravation, abandonment, and drug usage, the question of whether a relationship should be reconciled is raised. Dr. Diane Medved, a clinical psychologist wrote:

My idea of the point when separation is unavoidable has four components, all of which must be present over a period of *at least* several months:
• Your day-to-day relationship is so punishing, distant, or unbearable that your functioning is impaired.

• You strive to be apart from your mate as much as possible

• You would unhesitatingly choose to be alone for the rest of your life rather than to continue on with your partner.

• Your basic values have diverged irreconcilably (e.g., he values monogamy, she insists on diversity; she adheres to religious tenets, he has conflicting religious requirements; he refuses to have children, she believes marriage means having a family).

If you fill all four of the above criteria, you should get a divorce’ (1989, pp. 116-117).

These critics miss the vitality of love. They do not seem to value committing to a loving relationship because of the possibility that the love interest may not treat the one committed to them the way they wish to be treated. Adler said

How unrequited love will work itself out in a given person depends on his total attitude toward life, his life line. If in the face of difficulties one loses his courage and calls off his activity, foundering in love may mean foundering in life. But this is then not a consequence of unrequited love itself. One who goes by the plan of being stimulated by difficulties will pull himself together after unrequited love and arrive at great achievements. A courageous person will draw a different conclusion than a defeated person. Popular psychology frequently points to the great achievements after unrequited love and sometimes recommends it like a medicine. But we know of people who have achieved great things without unrequited love (1978, p. 119).
Those who have cared about others learn easily how to consider the interests of the other in an intimate relationship. Regarding the problem of life entitled ‘love and marriage’ the therapist needs to assess where the CSR’s priorities lie. “

Two people cannot live together successfully if one wishes always to be the ruler which the other must obey. The attitude that the man’s role is to be a dictator is the reason, according to Adler, for so many divorces. Too frequently today, people have been trained for individual success and not cooperation.” (Lundin, 1989, p. 80)

A psychotherapist can encourage the CSRs to divert the energy used on anger and blame toward the AOs instead to becoming better persons. The client can use that energy as motivation and an impetus to change themselves. Therapists can help the CSRs redirect this drive to propel them to become what they can and indeed desire to be.

“All failures in life, all unhappiness and disappointment can be traced back to disregard and violation of the necessary rules of cooperation” (Dreikers, 1946, p. 100). Dr. Dreikers goes on to say “All those acts which tend to remove friction and antagonism from human relationships seem to be in accord with the rules of cooperation” (1946, p. 101).

Love can be the primary reason people become romantically involved with each other. Other considerations can be motivations for the CSR such as missing the companionship, the presence, financial help, social contribution and other benefits the AO brought to the relationship. Such motivations may not be powerful enough to enable the CSR to make the changes necessary to draw the AO’s attention.

As mentioned before, people enjoy being with another person when they like how they think and feel because of that person. When people enjoy themselves with another person consistently they can consider themselves in love with the other. It makes sense then that love
needs to be involved, if not the primary reason, in drawing the AO to reconsider the relationship with the CSR. Ed Wheat states that “we all hunger to be loved. And we want tangible proof that we are loved. But someone in the marriage has to take the initiative and begin the loving process. When misunderstandings piled upon misunderstandings erect walls between husband and wife, this can be difficult” (Wheat, 1983, pp. 18-19).

The AO may sense ulterior motives of a CSR if they exist. The motivation of love by the CSR when approaching the AO will be the most effective. Gary Chapman writes, “Try love! Loving your spouse while estranged is not the easiest task in the world, but it may be the most productive. Many will balk at the statement Try love!” (1996, p. 61). If the AO senses a different incentive for relating to the CSR they likely will not have any interest in recreating a relationship with them.

The reaction of love will be the interest in the welfare of the other. This attitude is not interested in condemning the AO for their actions. This attitude is not interested in soliciting sympathy or consideration for the CSR. Love from the CSR to the AO will be attractive, which is a positive step toward reconciliation.

Individual Psychology states that each individual in the love relationship must be more interested in the other than in themselves.

Here we find the fundamental guarantee of marriage, the fundamental meaning of happiness in the relation. It is the feeling that you are worthwhile, that you cannot be replaced, that your partner needs you, that you are acting well, that you are a fellow man and a true friend (Adler, 1978, p. 125).

A psychotherapist can remind the client of the commitments she or he made in the relationship with the Absent Other and to uphold those commitments. If the Absent Other is an
offspring of theirs they can be reminded the child came into the world with total dependence upon them. Often parents felt at some point that they would die if it meant the child could have a happy life. If clients are estranged from their spouses or significant others they can be reminded of the vows they made in public or private to each other. The vow made to love until death is being tested at this time whether they really meant it or not.

Adlerian psychology is holistic in its approach to life. The psychology has an understanding that the union of a marriage retained is for the welfare of the society, not just the participants of the union. The therapist can help the client understand the proper attitude toward the AO which impacts the world around him or her. “He will try to solve the problem of love and marriage as if the welfare of others were involved” (Adler, 1978, p. 123). Since the client’s relationship with the AO has an impact on others around the client and the client cares for those individuals, she or he can be motivated to love the AO out of love for these others.

A psychotherapist with a client seeking reconciliation will be well served to spend time with the client on working on loving the AO. The client likely will need to work on bitterness, anger, resentment and other negative reactions toward the AO before significant progress will be achieved in mending the fractured relationship.

**Relationship with society.** Alfred Adler is considered to be the first of the social analysts. He stressed that humanity inherently needs society, and that predicates the need for social interest.

However we may judge people, whatever we try to understand about them, what we aim at when we educate, heal, improve, condemn—we base it always on the same principle: social feeling! Cooperation! Anything that we estimate as valuable, good, right, and
normal, we estimate simply in so far as it is "virtue" from the point of view of an ideal society (Adler, 1930, p. 402).

The societal problem of life involves a concern for society and the influence a person can have on it. Society also has an influence on people, the psychotherapist’s clients. The therapist can have a positive influence on the client and the absent other by deciphering the client’s relationship with their surroundings. The therapist can determine if the client has been pampered and living for themselves or is conscious of helping to meet the needs of others. The consciousness of the society around them can be an area of improvement for the client which can improve the interest from the AO.

Those who have a positive experience in their relationship in marriage tend to also have a sense of doing what is correct for society. Those who have a high level of marital adjustment have a correspondingly high score regarding their social adjustment (Sharpley & Khan, 1982, p. 68). To help clients in their overall personal satisfaction the therapist can address their involvement on improving the community they live in.

In 1996 the U.S. Congress stated “Marriage is the foundation of a successful society. Marriage is an essential institution of a successful society which promotes the interests of children” (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services).

Keith Edwards states, “I believe the single biggest threat to the institution of marriage is the continuing erosion of a commitment to marriage as a life-long relationship with one’s spouse” (2003, p. 188). He further states “…the self-centered, pleasure-oriented, individualistic, materialistic values propagated by advertising and programming in our media-saturated society are a major cause” (2003, p. 188).
Not to Pressure the Departed.

One rather graphic article regarding behaviors to avoid when seeking reconciliation is “Women’s Use of Aggression Toward Their Former Spouses During Marital Separation” (Toews, Catlett & McKenry, 2005, pp. 3-4). The subjects of the study were 276 divorcing parents of a child less than 18 years of age. 147 females participated in the study and 129 males completed a questionnaire. The women were separated from their spouse but had not yet divorced. The questions related to the women’s view of their spouse, themselves and their coping with the separation.

The authors recorded the results of the questions and determined that women use verbal aggression toward their spouse more if the women were positively related to insecure attachment style. They used physical aggression when their husbands use physical aggression toward them. The men would be verbally abusive if they felt their gender role was being questioned or if their self-esteem was low. These acts of aggression further distanced the mates from each other. However, women who had a higher degree of education and psychological fortitude to better handle the separation were involved in less aggression both by themselves and their spouses.

These findings can encourage female clients separated from their AO to gain inner strength. The therapist can encourage them to avoid initiating or being drawn into verbal battles with their AO. To do otherwise can drive the AOs away. To try and pressure the AO is counterproductive. The CSR is best served by retaining their self-worth and dignity while desiring the resumption of a relationship gone badly.

The following is a story about a man pressuring a woman to marry him:
A love-struck man holed up in a $200-a-day Washington hotel has spent, at latest estimate, close to $20,000 demonstrating to his beloved that he won’t take “no” for an answer to his marriage proposal. On bended knee on Christmas Day, 35-year-old Keith Ruff, once a stockbroker in Beverly Hills, proposed marriage to 20-year-old Karine Bolstein, a cocktail waitress at a Washington restaurant. He met her in a shoe store last summer. The pair had gone out a few times over a two-month period before the proposal. To his proposal, she looked down and said, “No.”

Since then, Ruff has remained in Washington and demonstrated his wish that she reconsider by sending her everything but a partridge in a pear tree. That may be next. He is, the thinks, “close to spending all of my money. I’m not an Arab sheik.”

The tokens of his affection include:

A Learjet, placed on standby at the airport, “in case she wanted to ride around.”

Between 3,000 and 5,000 flowers.

A limousine equipped with a bar and television, parked outside her door.

A gold ring.

$200 worth of champagne.

Catered lobster dinners.

Musicians to serenade her.

A clown to amuse her younger brother.

A man dressed as Prince Charming, bearing a glass slipper.

Cookies, candy, and perfume

Sandwich-sign wearers walking around her home and the restaurant where Bolstein works, conveying the message “Mr. Dennis Keith Ruff LOVES Ms. Karine Bolstein.”
Balloons, which she promptly popped. “What else would she do?” said the undaunted Ruff. “The house was so full of flowers there was no room to walk around.”

For her father, a basket of nuts and $300 worth of cigars “to pass out to his friends at the Labor Department. It may sound goofy, but I like him.”

For her mother, flowers at the French Embassy, where she works. “I don’t think her mother likes me. She called the police,” Ruff said. “But I’ll keep sending gifts to her also. How could anyone be so mad?”

For both her parents, a stepladder, “so they might look at the relationship from a different angle.”

He said he will spend his last dime and will beg for money if he has to, that he will “keep on trying for 10 years, 20 years. I’ll ask her to marry me 50,000 times.”

Bolstien, meanwhile, said she is flattered, but too young to get married. She also said the house looks like a funeral parlor.

Ruff said, “I don’t want to force her to love me, but I can’t stop. Maybe this makes her nervous, but at least she gets to smile along with being nervous. Anybody would like it somewhat.

Ruff said Bolstein called him once. “But I hung up on her. I didn’t like what she said. Reality, to me, is disturbing,” Ruff said. “I’d rather close my eyes and see her face.

Fantasy is where I’m living. I’m living with hope. And some very big bills” (Cuniberti, 1982).

This story illustrates that pressuring the desired individual with an aggressive pursuit has the opposite effect than what the pursuer wants. Dr. James Dobson wrote about the story,
There are several things ol' Ruff needs to know about women, assuming Miss Bolstein hasn't gotten the message across by now. He could cry in his hotel room for the next 50 years without generating the least bit of sympathy from her. Very few women are attracted to sniveling men who make donkeys of themselves in view of the whole world. Who wants to marry an unambitious weirdo who grovels in the dirt like a whipped puppy? (Dobson, 1996, pp.204 – 205).

Alfred Adler stated “In a human community, one must respect the freedom of the personal individuality to the extent of leaving the other person free choices” (Adler, 1978, pp. 110 – 111). CSRs conducting themselves in such a way that they are not demanding the resumption of the relationship is important. This has the potential to drive the AO further away. They are less attractive to the AO when they are demanding or pushy. When the CSR relates to the AO in a way that does not communicate a demand or requirement then they may experience a better response from the AO.

**Forgiveness**

Forgiveness is essential to reconciliation or progressing in life without the other person. CSRs usually have experienced some negative behaviors from their AO about which they may experience animosity. They may have exhibited negative behavior toward their AOs which harmed the relationship. The injection of forgiveness would have a great impact on reconciling the relationship.

The key to encouraging forgiveness in Adlerian psychology is the client’s willingness to become more understanding, to have more compassion, and to experience empathy for the offender. In Adler’s words, this would mean living with social interest. These emotions are needed if the forgiver is to succeed in releasing resentment, anger, and
hurt. Adlerian counseling includes goals for developing social interest. With clients working on forgiveness issues, these goals are expanded to include the fullest, that is, cosmic, expression of social interest (McBrien, 2004, p. 415).

Such is the topic of research done by Virginia Todd Holeman in her paper “Marital Reconciliation: A Long and Winding Road” (Holeman, 2003, pp. 30-42). Ms. Holeman found that reconciliation can occur in the most unlikely situations. It can happen if the couple makes reconciliation central in their lives and if the reconciliation was related to the individual’s relationship with God. Her study involved a small demographic, a sampling of 12 couples, 24 people. The participants were suggested by their clergy of the local churches in the area.

These couples met with the researcher for three 90 minute interviews which were taped. The couples had either separated or divorced because of various negative experiences in the marriage, i.e. affairs, abuse, addictions, etc. The couples all reconciled their relationships and remained married. A few common traits were noticed in the research that the author considered significant for reconciliation. One was the recognition of their shared history that they did not want to throw away. Another was that reconciliation became a central focus in both of their lives. They also made decisions to do whatever was for the betterment of the marriage.

Another crucial element discovered by the author was that the participants expressed that they had experienced forgiveness from God and so offered forgiveness to their spouse. Without forgiving each other they were not able to rebuild trust. Without trust they did not want to reconcile with their spouse. Since they had experienced forgiveness they felt equipped to extend forgiveness to their spouse.

This small study illustrates three elements for a successful reconciliation. One is to value the shared history of the relationship. This history is the memories they share and years they
spent together. The shared history is what is still common among the participants of the marriage. Another was to make reconciliation a primary focus of their lives.

Finally it was to experience a forgiveness from another that was not deserved. In this study the experienced forgiveness was acknowledging forgiveness from God. The participants expressed experiencing forgiveness of their offenses from their Supreme Creator and therefore found it easier to forgive others who offended them.

Ms. Holeman is a professor at Asbury Theological Seminary and clearly demonstrated her bias toward the Christian theology. Her findings correlate with her stated expectations and assumptions very well. So the study has its flaws. However, it is difficult to dismiss the experiences of the subjects and the outcome of their actions. True forgiveness is not easily arrived at and may be discussed with the client after the initial sessions. Forgiveness has been defined as “deciding not to punish a perceived injustice, taking action on that decision, and experiencing the emotional relief that follows” (Affinito, 1999, p. 11).

In intimate relationships usually the interaction the parties have is enhanced by the experiences they share. When we enjoy ourselves with other people we seek out opportunities to be with that person or persons again. When we have positive experiences that involve another person or persons we want to repeat them. Interestingly, it appears that we like how we feel when we are with someone rather than what the other persons do. When we continually feel good when with those people we would say that we like that person or even love that person. In fact, we are in love with how we feel when we are with that person.

This dynamic is recounted in a depiction of a Love Bank (Harley, 1986, p. 176). When someone feels good when encountering another person, a “love unit” is deposited in the “Love Bank.” The person who feels good receives a deposit in their account by the one who caused
them to feel good. The more a person associates good experiences with an individual, the more love units are deposited within their bank account. It does not matter what the other person does or says, it is that the individual associates a positive experience with her or him. When someone has received a supply of love units deposited in their love bank account by the other person, they become quite enamored with that person. An individual will seek out all sorts of opportunities to be with the one who causes such enjoyment. According to Harley the individual enjoys himself, however, and not necessarily the other person. It is how they feel that they enjoy. An individual might feel relaxed, or accepted, or pretty, or witty when with the other person. If feeling pretty is very enjoyable then they will like whoever influences them to feel pretty. They like to be with that person again because they expect to feel pretty again, and they like that.

Psychotherapists can have clients who like or dislike another because of how they felt while with them. They can dislike someone because of the feelings they had while around another. If they felt in a way they did not like they will tend to not like them. If they associate feeling sad, or stupid, or angry with them they will avoid or dislike them. They are withdrawing love units from the client’s love bank account. Again, it is not so much who the person was but rather what feelings associated with them.

Sometimes there is a deficit in the “love bank account” so that the client may entertain the idea of the other experiencing pain. The client may even believe the pain of the other might make them feel better. The thought of making the other person feel bad may restore a sense of fairness, or it might seem to stop the offender from causing others to feel bad, or it might be intended to show the offender that the offended is a strong individual (Affinito, p. 95).
It is part of human nature to associate with those who have brought on good feelings and avoid those who associate with bad feelings. CSRs will benefit if they understand that the AO may not like how they feel with them. CSRs will need to examine themselves to determine if they wish the AO to feel bad because of the pain they experienced from the AO.

When people are around those they have hurt they may not like to be around them because it does not feel good. If CSRs wish their AOs to feel bad because they feel bad, they are driving away the one they want to be close to. A CSR can benefit by forgiveness. The therapist can work with the CSR to decide if they want to forgive the AO or not. If not then reconciliation of the relationship will be tough if not impossible.

CSRs may need to forgive themselves for their own behavior. It will be difficult for CSRs to enjoy being with themselves if they wish they were punished for something they did. If they feel bad about themselves then that feeling can easily be sensed by others around them. That can result in others not liking how they feel while they are around the CSR. Self-forgiveness can be “connecting with the need we were trying to meet when we took the action which we now regret” (Rosenberg, 2005, p. 134).

If CSRs can forgive themselves and forgive the AOs, they have improved their chances of helping the AOs feel good around them and of reconciliation.

Frank Fincham and Steven Beach created a research paper on “Forgiveness in Marriage: Implications for Psychological Aggression and Constructive Communication” (2002, pp. 239-251). Their paper tries to make the point that forgiveness is not condoning (to overlook or approve an offense) or necessarily reconciling (which restores a relationship and is therefore a dyadic process). The researchers used two sample groups; one of 42 couples who were in their first year of marriage and had a high school education. The second group had 66 couples
involved. These couples were a little older and at least one of them had an undergraduate degree.

The Spouse Specific Aggression Scale (O’Leary & Curly, 1986, pp. 281-289) was used to measure psychological aggression. They asked the first group of couples 12 questions which asked how they related to the description of a behavior. Questions like “I often say nasty things to my spouse.” The coefficients of the answers were .89 for the male and .87 for the female. Then they were asked how their spouse might answer the question. Then they were to give their reaction to that response. Two reactions were given, either to forgive or to retaliate. After these questions they were asked how they would rate their marital satisfaction.

The couples in the second group were administered the Spousal Specific Aggression Scale and asked the same questions as the first group. They also measured their marital happiness.

The results found that injecting forgiveness into how the couple interacted with each other had a dramatic effect in lowering the use of psychological aggression. When either member of the couple offered forgiveness during their interactions aggression diminished. Those who were not forgiving of their spouse did state they experienced marital satisfaction. However their level of satisfaction was not as high as that of the couples who offered forgiveness in their interactions. They also found that a husband’s propensity to forgive had a greater impact on reducing aggressiveness than if the wife was forgiving. The participants of this study were British subjects belonging to a society which the authors called paternally dominant. The injection of forgiveness in an interaction between husband and wife would logically help in improving communication since forgiveness alleviates the need for defensiveness.
The researchers were emphatic that the practice of forgiveness is an important part of weaving a marital union. Without it a person seeking reconciliation with their spouse would be seeking in vain. If AOs are not interested in forgiving CSRs of perceived wrongs committed against them, then the CSRs will not experience a relationship with the AOs. When both parties are willing to forgive each other the relationship has a better chance of drawing together. However, as the authors of this study said at the beginning of the study, forgiveness does not necessitate reconciliation, at least to return to the nature of the relationship as it was before.

**Understand the Issue of Masculine Protest**

Alfred Adler understood the conflict existing for women and men regarding the position men can have in the relationship. If a man feels superior to a woman because of his gender then there will be continuous conflict within the relationship. All humans strive for significance. Feeling inferior to another person often generates a desire for superiority. “The two factors that dominate all psychological processes are social interest (Gemeinschaftsgefühl) and striving for significance (Geltungsstreben)” (Adler, 1978, p. 3). Therapists are helping their clients when they emphasis the equality of the two sexes. This Adlerian principle is very important for intimate relationships.

The struggle for equality is pervasive in many societies such as the western society. The client will profit by understanding that there is no inferiority because of gender. The genders are different but not superior or inferior to each other. Female clients benefit when the therapist encourages them that they are in no way subservient or inferior to the men they love. Male clients will do well to abandon any supposed supremacy because of their sex at birth. “It is the task of education and psychotherapy to uncover this dynamic and make it conscious. Thereby the biased overgrowth of the “feminine and masculine traits” will disappear, and the childish
valuation give room to a more mature world view; likewise, the dissociative processes, split consciousness, and *double vie* will stop” (Adler, 1978, p. 43).

The effectiveness of any reconciliation attempt can be impacted positively or negatively by this problem termed “masculine protest”. Both males and females have reasons to reject the presumption of the supreme male. The idea of the supremacy of males is offensive to woman, and often accompanies suppression of who a woman is. Men object to a fictitious image that society asks them to emulate regarding who they are supposed to be.

Research on the topic of reconciliation from the Journal of Counseling and Clinical Psychology entitled “Predicting Who Will Benefit from Behavioral Marital Therapy” (Jacobson, Follette & Pagel, 1986, pp. 518-522) seems to bear this problem out. One of the discoveries of this study regarded couples who were not very different from each other concerning personality traits. However, if the woman scored low in a femininity assessment and the man scored high in a masculinity assessment, they tended to have lower marital satisfaction compared to others in the study.

Researchers looking for the impact of Behavioral Marital Therapy (BMT) on reconciliation sampled 60 heterosexual couples who were either married or cohabitating for at least six months. The researchers used the Dyadic Adjustment Scale or DAS (Spaneir, 1976, pp. 15-28) to measure marital satisfaction both before and after the six month treatment of BMT. Subjects were also tested with the Marital Status Inventory or MSI (Weiss & Cerrato, 1980, pp. 80-85), and the Bem Sex Role Inventory (Bem, 1974, pp.155-162) before and after the treatment. They used the Bem test to discover the perceived femininity of the wife. Another measurement was with the Edwards Personality Preference Schedule (EPPS) used to
detect the affiliative tendencies and independence of the participants. The BMT treatment covered these topics; behavior exchange and communication/problem solving training.

The outcomes were generally encouraging. Most of the couples responded that they were happier with their marriages after the BMT treatment and continued to be satisfied six months later in follow-up sessions. However, couples with a wife who did not score high in femininity according to the Bem score, and with a husband who scored highly independent on the EPPS score, did not report much marital satisfaction. It appeared that the administrators of the BMT concluded that women who were not strongly feminine and men who were highly independent were not good candidates for using BMT. Other therapies may be more effective for those combinations.

Behavioral Marital Therapy normally requires the therapist to meet with both members of the marriage. The therapy involves the cognitive and behavioral change of the individuals in the marriage. If therapists wanting to use BMT are unable to meet with both members of the relationship, one change they can promote with the CSRs is to help them understand the equality of the masculine and feminine role in a relationship. If the CSRs can come to understand there are no superior or inferior participants in an intimate relationship they may manifest an attitude regarding gender superiority that their AO may find more appealing.

Males seeking to reconcile with females will hamper their chances if the males believe they have more privileges than females. It can also be counterproductive for females to behave as inferior to men in order to reunite a relationship with males. Women can be proudly equal to men and still be attractive.

A study by Clifford Broman examined the expectations of those entering into an intimate relationship. Broman set out to discover why some people get divorces and others
consider divorce but do not. Broman discovered two factors impacted whether a divorce was sought or not; if there are unmet expectations of the relationship and what solutions are considered acceptable to resolve the dilemma of unmet expectations. He found if the participants of a marriage anticipate the relationship will be fine if they just perform their perceived societal gender roles, they will most likely be disappointed in the relationship.

The article “Thinking of Divorce but Staying Married: The Interplay of Race and Marital Satisfaction” (Broman, 2002, pp. 151-161) examines the expectations of people entering divorce. The author included in this article that one of the steps in the process of obtaining a divorce is to begin thinking about it. Why do some think about divorce as a fleeting thought, a momentary notion during a difficult time in the marriage, or wishful thinking while for others thinking about divorce begins a cycle eventually leading to marital dissolution?

Clifford Broman found that whether someone gets a divorce or not is dependent upon the gender expectations going into the marriage. One cannot assume that fulfilling the expected societal gender role will assure that the marriage will stay intact. Fulfilling traditional gender roles may have been sufficient fifty years ago but the husband “bringing home the bacon” and the wife providing childcare and housework no longer meet current expectations. The CSR seeking reconciliation with their AO would be well served to learn the expectations of the AO regarding their role in the marriage. Psychotherapists can stress the importance of the Adlerian teaching of the equality of the sexes to aid the CSRs in their reconciliation attempts.

Although it may have been true in the past that adopting traditional gender roles contributed to a lasting marriage, today it is important to recognize that the culture has changed. If the man in a heterosexual relationship grew up in a home where he was looked down upon because his parents did not feel he measured up to being a ‘real man’, he may feel inferior. The
woman in the relationship may expect the man to be comfortable in his role of being a man as her father was. The man is not confident in his ability to perform the socially constructed male role, while the woman may assume the man will confidently tackle the male responsibilities in the relationship.

The woman can become disappointed in the man’s performance and the expectations of the man about himself will be fulfilled. Such expectations can cause those having them to think about divorce. As time goes by and such expectations are unmet from the woman’s perspective, or fulfilled on the man’s perspective, the likelihood of a divorce occurring increases. The therapist can help the clients discover what the expectations they may have and also help learn the expectations of the AOs. If there are expectations regarding the male or female role based upon fictitious inequality of the genders, the Adlerian principle of masculine protest can be helpful to in removing offensive attitudes about gender.

**Association with Those Who Encourage Reconciliation**

Our attitudes are influenced by those around us. One study found that the views of the family of origin regarding relationships had an impact on what the offspring expected in relationships. Families that placed a high value upon the permanence of marriage had children who tended to nurture stability in their relationships (Weigel, Bennet, Ballard-Reisch, 2003, p. 472). The results of the study provided preliminary support for the transmission of relationship commitment attitudes from families of origin.

Regarding family and friends; the CSR will need to be careful about who they allow to influence them while seeking reconciliation with the AO. The client cannot live in a vacuum but will be influenced by the surroundings. Friends or family will affect how the CSR thinks about the AO and can contribute adverse attitudes regarding the AO to complicate the
reconciling process. The client need not avoid people who do not agree with seeking reconciliation but seek out support with those that do.

Individual Psychology was a term chosen by Alfred Adler to describe his theories of therapy. He used the Latin meaning of the word indivisible “...for he regarded the person as an indivisible organic unit, in contrast to the view that an individual can be meaningfully analyzed into parts” (Ansbacher, 1956, p. 126). In Individual Psychology the total individual must be understood within a larger whole, made of the groups the person belongs to, to the community and the whole of mankind.

Adlerian psychology teaches that a person’s lifestyle depends upon a myriad of organic and environmental influences that people experience. The influence of family or friends can direct a person toward relational health or dysfunction. Individuals need to adjust to their environment in order to feel a sense of belonging. Individuals behave in ways that are acceptable to their surroundings so that they feel they belong (Steward, 2007, p. 80).

Howard Wineberg (1994, pp. 80-88) sought to find what made reconciliation attempts by women successful or unsuccessful. He questioned the women regarding whether they had experienced separation from their mate at any time in their relationship. Were they presently separated or divorced? Were they now living together with their mate and considered the relationship reconciled? What did the women think contributed to the reconciliation of the relationship? A successful reconciliation is when the couple is living together for one year’s time after a separation.

For the women who considered the relationship reconciled, Wineberg found religious affiliation by the women had the greatest impact for reconciliation. In particular, the same religion as their spouse significantly increased the probability of reuniting. The author
hypothesized that religion’s traditions, values and sense of community helped keep the marriage intact. If the couple did not have the same religious affiliation they had less in common and decreased compatibility. Those who changed religious affiliation to match that of their spouse after marriage were twice as likely to reconcile as those who did not have a religious conversion.

This study concluded that the influence of others interested in the reconciliation of the relationship can have a positive impact upon the reconciliation process. If a person is seeking reconciliation with a spouse, one of the most effective behavioral changes can be dedication to the faith tradition of that spouse. Religious adherence often equates to a strong commitment to marriage as many belief systems have strong admonitions to stay in a committed marriage.

In the article “Premarital Counseling with Interchurch Couples: Clinical Implications from Recent Research” Lee Williams sought to discover some healthy advise to give a couple looking to marry for life (Williams, 2002, pp. 45-64). People from a Christian heritage often marry people who are members of churches that have differing theological foundations. Couples that come from different theological backgrounds divorce more often than those from intra-church marriages. The samples for this study come from the Center for Marriage and Family, which conducted an explorative, qualitative study of 29 couples. The couples, who were all interchurch couples, were asked a variety of questions.

Counselors can discover ways to incorporate a couple’s faith as something that binds a couple together. The participation with the community of the same faith can increase the cohesion of the marriage.

Mullins, Brackett, Bogie and Pruett (2004, pp. 338-354) looked at the impact that religious communities have on divorcing in the U.S. The question they sought to answer was
whether couples with a close affiliation to a religious group had a lower divorce rate than couples without such affiliation? They used data from the 1990 U.S. Census and the Glenmary Research Center.

The sample was gathered from 621 counties in the U.S. The analysis of this data was to determine if couples from the same religious group tended to stay married more than those not holding the same religious tenets. They wanted to discover whether it was true that the divorce rate is highest among those with no religious affiliation, and lowest among non-fundamental Protestant groups as reported in the article ‘Divorce and group commitment: The case of the Jews’ (Brodbar-Nemzer, 1986, pp. 329–40; Glenn & Supancic 1984, Coombs & Zumeta, 1970).

Religious homogeneity is operationally defined as the extent of concentration of organized religious denominations within a county. The covariates of this study include age, race, region, and employment.

Taking into consideration the other variables which seem to have a significant impact upon the divorce rate within the sample, the authors came to the conclusion that the concentration of the religious community was consistently a major factor. They found a correlation between a community’s strong religious ties and a reduction in the number of divorced persons. The authors did not discuss the differences of various religious systems but rather the unity provided by the religious system the couple is a part of. They found that American society is transitioning from solidarity-based groupings of the “mechanical”, where all parts of the society work together by necessity, to solidarity stemming from increased differentiation and specialization, or becoming “organic”, or complementary. The society is moving from being participants of a corporeal group to being multiple individual entities.
This can be of true of religious tradition whether Catholic, Jewish, Muslim, Mormon or Pentecostal. The authors did not differentiate the beliefs of the religious system but rather the amalgamation of the grouping into an identifiable whole. Those who are from smaller churches or synagogues tend to be more homogenous than those of larger congregations which allowed for more individualism. The endurance of the marriages may be caused more by constraint than voluntary dedication but research has shown that even these marriages have greater possibilities for contentment if the participants weather the storms.

One other study further presents that those we associate with can help recover a relationship that has difficulty. The article “How Religiosity Helps Couples Prevent, Resolve, and Overcome Marital Conflict” considers the stability of a marriage and a couple’s involvement with a group that encourages reconciliation (Lambert & Dollahite, 2006, pp. 439-49).

For the purposes of this paper, this study increases the view that therapists can encourage the CSR to see the value of communing with people who value reconciliation. Various components of a religious belief system encourage resolving conflicts between people, especially the married. The research found that the community the participants belonged to aided in

- turning the focus of the conflicted couples away from the offenses of their spouse,
- having a shared a common sacred vision of their relationship,
- forgiving each other and
- committing to relational permanence that could lead to a couple reuniting.
If the therapist perceives that the client’s relationship breakup was aided by the social network they are a part of, he or she can help the client realize it. Friends or family members that have been granted a divorce can influence others against reconciliation within their social network. Divorce does have a ripple effect not only to the first tier of friends but also to the second tier (McDermott, Fowler & Christakis, 2009). Divorce has been shown to be contagious. As the previously cited interview with the Stevens disclosed, a strong proponent of Deborah’s determination to remain faithful to her husband was the positive encouragement she received from one friend.

The McDermott study also revealed that couples having mutual friends who were intact influenced their friends to keep their relationship intact. The therapist can encourage clients to keep friendships they have with intact couples who were mutual friends of their former loved one.

**Conclusion**

Psychotherapists will often be visited at their office by clients seeking to recover a relationship that has been broken off, often by another person that will not visit the therapist. The focus of this thesis has been to discover whether reconciliation is a helpful endeavor for clients to pursue, and if so, what methods can be employed to aid in this pursuit which will be helpful for the client even if reconciliation does not occur. Reconciliation is a regular occurrence in the world today; from members of nations recovering from the devastation of travesties like ‘ethnic cleansing’, to animals reconciling after aggressive behavior, to family members returning to harmonious cohabitation. There are common traits among these reconciliations that therapists can utilize to increase client’s chances of reconciling with the absent other.
Many of the primary concepts of Adlerian psychology are effective in enhancing the possibility of a restored relationship for the client. The principles of overcompensating for perceived inferiority, social interest, teleology, tasks of life, and masculine protest. Other concepts such as forgiveness, associating with others encouraging reconciliation and respecting the other’s freedom are compatible with Adlerian psychology.

A psychotherapist utilizing these tools in sessions with a client can be assured that the client will benefit, even if the relationship is not restored. The desire for recovering a relationship can be a great motivator toward positive change in the client. The psychotherapist can seek to channel the client’s impetus toward reconciliation to personal psychological and social health for the client. Indeed the drive for personal improvement to attract the person who left the relationship can motivate the client to make positive changes they were not interested in doing before.

The psychotherapist is advised to communicate to the client that restoration of the relationship is a possibility but the likelihood can be uncertain at best, especially without the other person in therapeutic sessions. The length of time that a client can wait for improvement in the relationship is undetermined. The benefits of reordering the life of the client to apply the Adlerian principles of Individual Psychology will help the client enjoy life and be a contributor to the society around them. It is this author’s contention that assisting the client, with the principles and concepts described in this paper, in attempting reconciliation is a worthwhile endeavor.
References


https://www.hnfs.net/res/tricare/beneficiary/healthy%20living/pdf/-
107529343/PF0107x026_LifeStressTstFly.pdf


Malzbug, B. (1936). Marital status in relation to the prevalence of mental disease. *Psychiatric Quarterly, 10.* (pp. 245-261)


National Public Radio.


Minnesota State Legislature. (2010). Bill Name: SF2383 to pass as amended 4/19/2010


Appendix A  American Psychotherapy Associations’ Oath

These responsibilities are contained in the American Psychotherapy Associations’ oath:

As a psychotherapist:

I must first do no harm.

I will promote healing and well-being in my clients and place the client’s and public’s interests above my own at all times.

I will respect the integrity of the persons with whom I am working, and I will remain objective in my relationships with clients and will act with integrity in dealing with other professionals.

I will provide only those services for which I have had the appropriate training and experience and will keep my technical competency at the highest level in order to uphold professional standards of practice.

I will not violate the physical boundaries of the client and will always provide a safe and trusting haven for healing.

I will defend the profession against unjust criticism and defend colleagues against unjust actions.

I will seek to improve and expand my knowledge through continuing education and training.

I will refrain from any conduct that would reflect adversely upon the best interest of The American Psychotherapy Association and its ethical standards of practice. (2010)
Appendix B  A Standers Affirmation

A Standers Affirmation

I AM STANDING FOR THE HEALING OF MY MARRIAGE!... I will not give up, give in, give out or give over 'til that healing takes place. I made a vow, I said the words, I gave the pledge, I gave a ring, I took a ring, I gave myself, I trusted GOD, and said the words, and meant the words... in sickness and in health, in sorrow and in joy, for better or for worse, for richer or for poorer, in good times and in bad...so I am standing NOW, and will not sit down, let down, slow down, calm down, fall down, look down or be down 'til the breakdown is torn down!

I refuse to put my eyes on outward circumstances, or listen to prophets of doom, or buy into what is trendy, worldly, popular, convenient, easy, quick, thrifty, or advantageous... nor will I settle for a cheap imitation of God's real thing, nor will I seek to lower God's standard, twist God's will, rewrite God's word, violate God's covenant, or accept what God hates, namely divorce!

In a world of filth, I will stay pure; surrounded by lies I will speak the truth; where hopelessness abounds, I will hope in God: where revenge is easier, I will bless instead of curse; and where the odds are stacked against me, I will trust in God's faithfulness.

I am a STANDER, and I will not acquiesce, compromise, quarrel or quit.. I have made the choice, set my face, entered the race, believed the Word, and trusted God for all the outcome.

I will allow neither the reaction of my spouse, nor the urging of my friends, nor the advice of my loved ones, nor economic hardship, nor the prompting of the devil to make me let up, slow up, blow up, or give up 'til my marriage is healed. (Steincamp, 2010)
## Appendix C University of Minnesota study

**Table 1. Descriptive results for belief the marriage could still be saved (Individuals)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>No (%)</th>
<th>Maybe (%)</th>
<th>Yes (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2484</td>
<td>74.1</td>
<td>14.4</td>
<td>11.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>1124</td>
<td>67.7</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>15.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>1360</td>
<td>79.4</td>
<td>12.4</td>
<td>8.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 2. Descriptive results for “seriously consider a reconciliation service” (Individuals)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>No (%)</th>
<th>Maybe (%)</th>
<th>Yes (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>71.3</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>12.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>64.4</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>18.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>77.0</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix D Cycles of Reconciliation

(Talley, 1991, p.136)
Appendix E  Religious Beliefs Help in Conflict