

Mental health has become the focus in the West over the last few decades. It's been long overdue. There are still misunderstanding and intolerance for mental health problems although we started to work on declining mental health attentively to understand its effects on society at large.

While looking for ways to better explain mental health, we need to a different perspective than the offer of the media which includes pop psychology or cod Freudian studies. Here, the psychologist Alfred Adler, who had the most brilliant period in the early twentieth century, is discussed with his ideas and interesting responses to Freud.

In this book, how Adler's psychology and ideas are understood and applied today will be discovered. Even though his ideas were nearly a century old, it is still an important idea that we need to be active agents to control our lives.

**Although people can always change, they tend to believe that their past determines the future.**

If you've heard of a recluse living in the building across the street and spending all the time in his apartment by closing himself, you will undoubtedly make hasty conclusions.

You can think that he had traumatized past so that person's life had changed because of traumatized experience and he will be like that forever.

Of course, these assumptions come from the idea that past experiences shape future behavior and life.

Such suppositions are based on the popular conception of human psychology. We imagine that it's all rooted in trauma.

Here is the classic example: A child who had trauma in the home or schoolyard might face in adulthood as social problems. It works the other way too: We tend to imagine that a spoiled child has insufficient equipment to cope with the realities of the adult world.

That's all to say that, to a vast majority of us, psychological problems appear to have some root cause in the past.

In fact, this type of deterministic thinking is for the birds. According to the view of twentieth-century Austrian psychologist Alfred Adler, we are actually free to do whatever we want and this doesn't need to be defined by trauma.

After all, children who exposed to abuse didn't all become socially excluded adults. So, there must be another explanation.

The self-locking recluse may have chosen to do this because he doesn't want to leave the house. He might have worried about it as an excuse to stay inside.

In other words, the condition is not fixed. There are reasons for action that can be changed and the freedom to transform is always available.

## **People determine their own specific views on their lives and resist thinking otherwise.**

There are all sorts of character types in our social circles. As traditional psychology suggests us, the simplest distinction is between optimists and pessimists. We all know them and believe that their personality is so constant. Although we talked about the tendencies of being cheerful or happy or moody, we started to think that there were various species that we should all follow.

However, Adlerian psychology does not fit into that approach. The term lifestyle is used in Adlerian psychology to describe what traditional psychology refers to a character or personality.

This change in terminology stresses the fact that people's moods are not fixed by some deep-set laws. Rather, it represents individual perspectives in the world. In other words, if your worldview is negative, pessimism will govern the day.

Adler claimed that we have chosen both our negative and positive lifestyles and our world views actively around the age of ten. He based this decision on previous life experiences.

For all conversations of changing perspectives, it is still not true that we are exceptional in allowing ourselves to do just that.

According to the author, if people want something to be really different, they will have already done something about it. Think of all the people you know, who speak a lot about their unhappiness and how they want their lives to be different. They may seem to want to change, but in reality, the opposite is true.

They might feel uncomfortable with their current situation but at least they have the comfort of knowing what they deal with. On the other hand, change needs courage. You need to brace yourself for unknown and the possibility of failure.

Another classic example is an unhappy singleton. He can't feel enough courage for getting out of there and meeting new people because he has been alone for years. So networking and socializing are too much for him, let alone dating.

The author explained that it happens because he is in his own way and loneliness and unhappiness are turned into his lifestyle. After all, better the devil you know than the risk of getting hurt!

## **Self-hatred: Just a strategy to withdraw from others.**

We all have shortcomings and all tend to complain about them willingly. Is there any person who hasn't looked in the mirror and worry a little bit about something s/he sees?

The main problem is to have the biggest issues because of too much thinking small concerns which have a small impact.

Ichiro Kishimi, one of the writers, saw this way of thinking in action. One of his students said that he disliked himself. Kishimi was surprised, why should that be?

The student said he was aware of his mistakes. His self-esteem was very low and his perspective on life was pessimistic. He was so self-conscious and strange when he was in social situations and he felt that he could not act around others naturally.

The student believed that if he could change the personality traits he hated, he would solve the problem. So that he was willing to take a lesson to increase his self-confidence.

However, Kishimi wasn't pleased with what he heard. When he asked the student how it felt to openly discuss these feelings of humiliation, he learned that the student was feeling worse. Moreover, the student claimed that he understood the reason for the fact that no one wanted to spend time with him because of his awfulness.

And there were answers for those feelings of self-loathing. The negative aspects of the student's personality were observed exclusively in accordance with him; as a result, there were "good reasons" for the student to be isolated.

Think about it: People prefer to keep away from others because they don't want to be hurt by others. Here is the irony. They often seem as aloof and arrogant by distancing themselves.

But there is no necessity to be that way. People who choose to retreat as a kind of tactic will solve nothing. They need to accept pain and exclusion as parts of life as joy and inclusion. If they don't, they will create the wrong solution for a problem that they misunderstood.

**You shouldn't allow external worries come in front of you with the destructiveness of the competitive societies.**

When considering the path of construction of the world, we see that competition in society has a great premium, because development is encouraged in this way.

However, there is a problem with that. Mental well-being is affected negatively this competitive mind-sets.

The perspective of being competitive directs us to separate people as winners or losers. So, being loser seems a negative thing. As a result, we tend to perceive others as a rival so they become dangerous for our success. Of course, this perception causes a highly stressful life.

The negativity is for both winners and losers here. Because low self-esteem people start to suffer in life with that system and people who are winners are forced to think the next success and protect their position as a winner.

This explains the reason for the unhappiness of highly productive people despite their success.

Protecting ourselves from a competitive position has a logical result: You should not feel that anyone is holding you back.

For instance, the state of concern about appearance is quite common. We may feel anxious about what others see when they look at us. Sometimes, it is enough to trigger the feeling that people are judging us even when they are just walking down the street.

Of course, it is often ridiculous. People just don't give a fig about how others look at all and probably don't even notice a thing!

It's easy for people to create a fantasy world full of judgmental and sad faces. But it's just a dream. The moment we realize that no one cares about our appearance, our life choices, or anything is when we learn to accept freedom. Then, nothing can make you do anything which you don't want and cannot stop you from doing what you really want.

## Life is yours, stop acting according to others' expectations.

People need to be approved so it is too easy for them to get caught up while doing awful things. This is how bullying shows up. The nerd is chosen because half of the people want to be popular with the bigger bullies so they tend to move on that way.

However, you don't have to choose that way. There is no need being recognized or approved by others.

Imagine that: One of your colleagues has made an effort to collect garbage around the office. In most cases, if no one paid attention or noticed his or her efforts, s/he would usually stop doing this social benefit.

Also, the dynamic of seeking approval includes a risk. Think accordingly to our education culture. Almost all are based on reward and punishment. Since we were very young, we learned that if we do something good, we will be rewarded, but in the same way, we will be punished if we do something wrong.

As a result, people have difficulty while motivating themselves without pressure or a guarantee of the reward of recognition. This type of thinking or feeling is too destructive for us.

If we want to break this cycle, we have to realize that we have no obligation to meet the expectations of others. If this is the thing that directs you, you can take all kinds of decisions based on what others think, such as the choice of job or partner.

For example, families often put pressure on adolescents to choose certain types of a profession and this pressure may be related to familial traditions and even to societal expectations. Here, the risk is that young adults are unhappy and avoiding their true desires by causing them to collapse under this pressure and go into completely inappropriate work.

That means if you are making the most appropriate life choices for you, you should be ready to disappoint everyone, including your family.

So if picking up litter is going to bring you more satisfaction than performing triple heart bypasses then let that direct your career, regardless of what others think you should be doing.

**It is best not to interfere in others' lives to interact. There are other ways to do this.**

Most parents tend to be stricter when their child's interest in school decreases and s/he starts getting bad marks because discipline is the key to solve the problem for them.

Unfortunately, that is definitely the wrong thing to do. Getting involved in other people's lives will not lead you anywhere because each of us must learn to take responsibility for our own actions in life.

So, children who are forced to work more for school by their parents will not love studying. They will just learn following obliged rules and routines.

It does not show any concern; in contrast, it is just forcing to an agenda promoting his interest and there is little difference between this kind of interference and outright control. So, this example shows that parents may want successful children to prove that they are successful parents for themselves and for the wider community.

What parents need to do is provide children their freedom while showing that they are a supporter for them in all situations. As a result of this kind of parenting, children become more independent and mature so there will be children who love learning.

With all that is said, it can be difficult to accept that you are getting involved in people's lives and you have to change the way of interaction with others.

After all, we tend to think people who are close to us such as our children or partners as little more than appendages to ourselves. That means that what we called as "support" often causes being self-interested manhandling.

Imagine you have an unemployed partner. You can develop a strategy that leads to a particular business opportunity for her/him and compels to follow. But this will not be a real support.

In reality, if you learn to empathize with others without trying to control, you will love someone despite his/her imperfections and that means you are not in the position of paying.

## If you all see us as part of a large global community, you don't need to inflate your ego like you're bigger.

Nowadays, people tend to feel isolated and alone like cutting off from society. That is a common feeling for everyone but not true. All humans are inherently part of a larger community.

Adlerian psychology claimed what is not surprising at first glance that a community has central importance for people. Adler, however, went a step further, arguing that a community is not just about people who spend most of our time or live in the same block.

According to Adler, there is a global community which includes everything and everyone: Any plant, mineral or animal across the entire universe.

The idea is that humans have a responsibility as part of this massive community so they need to fulfill themselves with development. When we realize how we fit into this big plan, we'll start acting differently. We're going to start listening more about things around us and starting to get a little bit more interested.

The realization of the fact that we are not the center of the universe around which all else revolves causes change occurring partly.

Of course, people tend to see themselves as the main hero of their own lives and it is quite normal. However, when they reach the wrong conclusion by thinking they're even greater than this, the problems start to appear.

If we start seeing ourselves as the supreme admiral of the cosmic expanse, we will tend to interact with people by looking at what they can give or do for us without reciprocity.

Attitudes like that will only cause a feeling of frustration because nobody is actually that important; so an ego that big never be sated!

That's why we have to reverse it. Rather than think about what the world can give us, we must think about what we can give to the world because, otherwise, our expectations will not lead us anywhere.

## The reason for losing perspective which leads to becoming a workaholic is self-obsession.

The fact that we're all familiar with this kind of trap is showing that you don't really have to waste time thinking about yourself as an oppressed victim. After all, even if you meet a few people who are absolutely disrespectful, most folks are still pretty swelling all in all.

This way of thinking which represents the idea that we are victims appears when we are too obsessive about ourselves.

Our perspective may be lost because of self-obsession and it is a dangerous world with warped subjective realities where negativity is dominant.

For example, the statements that "Nobody loves me" or "I always lose" are expressed by people commonly but that doesn't change its nonsense. All they do is emphasizing isolated unfortunate incidents and trying to find extra value.

On a related note, those who stammer are particularly interested in Adlerian psychology. The theory stated that the starting point of a stammer is people's worries about their talking. Maybe we can think of someone saying a rough word at some point. From this one encounter, they may feel threatened by constant criticism. This worry forces them stammer even more.

Those who stammer can believe they're better off if other people are more polite. But, of course, most people are kind and they do not prone to annoy stammerers. For this reason, Adlerian psychology offers one's own solution: They should stop focusing on themselves and their fears and stop caring about others.

On the other hand, being a workaholic is a problem comes from self-obsession. Just think about it. In our society, people may tend to put work above their family and friends because being esteemed and remarkable are based on their work. That leads selfishness by preferring to be approved by people rather than to interact with them.

We can start drawing some conclusions from all these consequences and aspects of Adlerian psychology. If we want to achieve happiness, we must make some subtle changes in our way of thinking. First of all, there are some learning issues which we need to understand well: Be more independent, reduce competition and stop worrying about others' approval. Also, we need to keep away from considering ourselves as the center of everything and focus more on what we give community at large. Importantly, we need to stop selfishly self-obsessing.

It might sound like a tricky balancing act but it can be done!

## The Courage to Be Disliked: The Japanese Phenomenon That Shows You How to Change Your Life and Achieve Real Happiness by Ichiro Kishimi, Fumitake Koga Book Review

As long as you have the opportunity to change and develop as much as they want, there's no reason to feel like you're stuck even that means getting hurt and disappointed in the process. Success and enjoying life is not beyond reach. We can learn to ignore what other people think and what they want us to do. We need to focus on the global community and fulfillment to contribute.

I mean, live in the moment.

People believe that there are only two ways to achieve success which are making plans and focusing efforts. For instance, they believe that great musicians work in that way. However, the best way to live is actually from moment to moment. Your dream may be to be a musician, but you should live the moment and play your music freely instead of postponing your life until you reach that dream because if you postpone, you will suffer. If your practice brings success to you, then that would be great, but it shouldn't be the be-all and end-all.

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