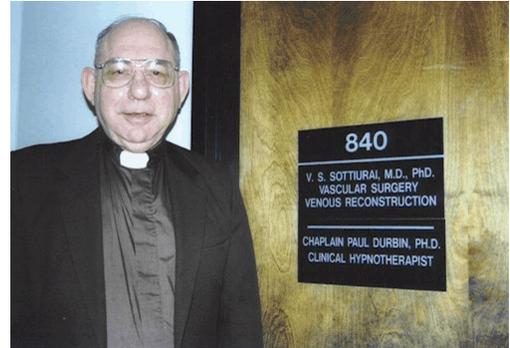


ALFRED ADLER AND VIKTOR FRANKL'S CONTRIBUTION TO HYPNOTHERAPY

by Chaplain Paul G. Durbin



Introduction: In 1972 and 1973, I went through four quarters of Clinical Pastoral Education (C.P.E.) at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington D.C. When I went there, I was a very outgoing person but inside, I felt inferior. When someone gave me a compliment, I would smile and say "Thank you," but inside I would discount the compliment.

During the second quarter of C.P.E., our supervisor Chaplain Ray Stephens assigned each student, two pioneer psychologist to present a class on each. I was assigned to report on Alfred Adler and Viktor Frankl. As I prepared those two classes, I began to notice a change in how I felt about myself. I recognized that I could overcome my inferiority feelings (Adler) and that I could have meaning and purpose in my life (Frankl). As a result of those two classes, I went from low man on the totem pole to a class leader. The transformation I experienced (physically, emotionally and spiritually) could be compared to a conversion experience. Adler and Frankl have contributed to my understanding of human personality and how I relate to an individual in the therapeutic situation. Though neither were hypnotherapist, they have contributed greatly to my counseling skills, techniques and therapy.

Alfred Adler: What is the difference between "Inferiority Feeling" and "Inferiority Complex" and "Superiority Complex"? What is meant by "Organ Inferiority"? "Birth Order"? "Fictional Fatalism"? "Mirror Technique"? These are concepts developed by Alfred Adler.

In his youth, Adler was a sickly child which caused him embarrassment and pain. These early experiences with illnesses and accidents probably account for his theory of organ inferiority and were the foundation for his theories on inferiority feelings. According to Adler, each individual has a weak area in his/her body (organ inferiority) which tends to be the area where illness occurs - such as the stomach, head, heart, back, lungs, etc. Adler said that to some degree every emotion finds expression in the body. From his understanding of organ inferiority, Adler began to see each individual as having a feeling of inferiority. Adler wrote, "To be a human being means to feel oneself inferior." The child comes into the world as a helpless little creature surrounded by powerful adults. A child is motivated by feelings of inferiority to strive for greater things. Those feelings of inferiority activate a person to strive upward so that normal feelings of inferiority impel the human being to solve his problems successful, whereas the inferiority complex impedes or prevents him from doing so.

The healthy individual will strive to overcome her inferiority through involvement with society. She is concerned about the welfare of others as well as herself. She develops good feelings of self-worth and self-assurance. On the other hand, some are more concerned with selfishness than with social interest. From this unhealthy responses, the person develops an inferiority complex or a superiority complex. A superiority complex is a cover up for an inferiority complex. They are different sides of the same coin. Understanding feelings of inferiority, compensation, and striving for superiority should be an asset in counseling your clients.

"Style of life" or "life style" are common terms for us today. It may come as surprise to many that Alfred Adler coined those phrases. "Style of life" was the slogan of Adler's Individual Psychological and theories of personality. It is the recurrent theme in all of Adler's later writings and the most distinctive feature of his psychology. In his writings, Adler used the terms "style of life," "pattern of life," "life plan," "Life scheme," and "line of movement" interchangeably. For Adler, the individual's STYLE OF LIFE is one's personality, the unity of the personality, the individual form of creative opinion about oneself, the problems of life and his whole attitude to life and others.

Adler believed that an almost radical change in character and behavior will take place when the individual adopts new goals. People can change, the past can be released so that the individual is free to be happy in the present and future.

The Mirror Technique can be used to help the individual change his way of viewing life. This technique can be very effectively used by the hypnotherapist. While in the hypnotic state, have the client imagine looking at the mirror and seeing himself as he believes or feels himself to be. Project the client into the future so he can see himself as he would like to be. Do this several time with the present picture becoming dimmer and the way he wants to be becoming clearer and clearer. Always end the session with the image of the person as he desires to be. Adler writes, "If an individual, in the meaning he gives to life, wishes to make a contribution, and if his emotions are all directed to this goal, he will naturally be bound to bring himself into the best shape. He will begin to equip himself to solve the three problems of life (behavior toward others, occupation and love) and to develop his abilities." If he works to ease and enrich others as well as himself, he shall enrich his own life and others. If he develops his personality without regards to others, he will make himself unpleasant and seek to solve the problems of life in unhealthy ways.

Adler's "Fictional Finalism" is an interesting concept for hypnotherapist. Fictional finalism simply states that people act as much from the "as if" as from reality. One of my understandings of the subconscious mind is that whatever the subconscious mind accepts as true, it acts "as if" it is true whether it is or not. When one imagines tasting a lemon, his mouth waters and often taste the lemon "as if" there really was a lemon to lick.

According to Adlerian counseling, the counselor explores the current life situation as it is viewed by the client to include his complaint, problems and symptoms. The client's early

life and position in the family constellation are discussed. Adler believed that the order of birth is an important determiner of personality. The first born is given a great deal of attention until the second child is born and the first is dethroned. The dethroning experience may affect the child in a number of ways such as hatred for the second child, conservatism, insecurity, or may cause a striving to protect other and be a helper. The second child is in a different situation for he shares attention from the beginning which may cause him to be more cooperative or competitive. He may strive to surpass the older child.

All other children may be dethroned but never the youngest who is always the baby of the family and often spoiled in the process. As he has no followers but many pacemakers, he may strive to overcome them all. Adler believed that the oldest child would most likely become a problem child and a neurotic maladjusted adult with the youngest following closely behind. The second child is by and large better adjusted than either his older or younger siblings.

The only child has problems of his own for the mother often pampers him. She is afraid of losing him, so spoils him as a result of her over protectiveness. As he has no siblings, his feelings of competition is often directed against his father or a girl against her mother. In later years when he is no longer the center of attention, he may have difficulties.

Adler had very little to say about hypnosis, but what little he did say indicates that he did not understand the clinical possibilities of hypnosis. He recognized that no one can be hypnotized against his will. He did believe that the individual who allowed himself to be hypnotized placed himself under the power of the hypnotist. In spite of his misunderstanding of hypnosis, he offers a lot to the hypnotherapist with his Fictional Finalism, Mirror Technique, Family Constellation, and his understanding of Inferiority Feelings and Inferiority Complex.

The Adlerian Therapist departed from Freud's method of having the client recline on a couch while the therapist sits behind the client. Adler preferred to face the client and engage in free discussion, not free association. There are four phases of counseling for the Adlerian: (1) the relationship, (2) the investigation of dynamics, (3) interpretations to the client and (4) reorientation.

The relationship with the client that the Adlerian seeks to establish is one of friendliness and cooperation. Adler places a high value on the social relationship between the therapist and the client.

He believed that this relationship could serve as a reeducation bridge to other relationships. He felt that all people who fail are deficient in concern and love for their fellow human beings. He spent a lot of time in an attempt to help the client develop social interest. The Adlerian's concept of cooperation follows as the therapist sets the example of love, concern and friendship. Adler personally emanated a quiet magic and one felt his inner warmth and interest so strong that there was immediate rapport

between him and the client.

The investigation phase explores the current life situation as it is viewed by the client to include his complaints, problems, and symptoms. The functioning of the individual in the three major areas of life (work, social, and sex) are investigated and discussed. The patient's early life, position in the family constellation, and his relationships to siblings and parents are discussed. The following questions and similar ones are often asked, "And why do you feel like that about it?" "What do you think is the reason for your reacting that way?" "What purpose does your illness serve?" Gradually the client realizes how he got into his way of making inappropriate reactions to his problem. Knowing why he reacts as he does, he has the opportunity to change. As he changes, he is in a position to substitute a wise for a foolish reaction, a courageous for a cowardly one, a normal for a hysterical one.

The interpretation phase put an emphasis on the goals and style of life of the client. The therapist has the client look at his feelings and the purpose for his feelings. The client will not be told what to do but is shown how he is living out his style of life and what it cost the client to do so. The mirror technique is used by which the individual looks at himself.

In the reorientation stage, the client is encouraged to drop the old style of life and take up another that will help him to deal with the realities of life and receives satisfaction from living. The Adlerian uses encouragement extensively in their therapy. The purpose of this encouragement is to help the patient make the transfer from a style of life that is faulty to one that is healthy. Encouragement is given with the understanding that the client must gain for himself an attitude toward life that will allow him to approach and overcome his problems in a realistic manner. To be healthy, the client must learn to handle his problems with common sense and social interest instead of fantasy. The therapist should be optimistic, cheerful, tolerant, active and have empathy. Clients should find the therapist a dependable and benevolent human being.

Adler compares the individual who has a faulty style of life with a person who is caught in a dark room and cannot find an exit. The therapist helps the client illuminate the room so that he can find a way out to a new way of dealing with his problems. Adler wrote, "Every individual represents both a unity of personality and the individual fashions that unity. The individual is thus both the picture and the artist. Therefore if one can change his concept of himself, he can change the picture that he is painting."

Viktor Frankl: Though Viktor Frankl was not known as a hypnotherapist, his theories and counseling techniques can be used by hypnotherapist. In an address on Hypnosis and Religion, Augustin Figueroa said, "Though he may or may not be a hypnotist, Victor Frankl's Logotherapy coincides with hypnosis in the search for information of self in order to find means to cope with disastrous situations. His ability to "talk himself" into a condition which enabled him to cope with his terrible situation at the Nazi concentration camp can most certainly be equated to hypnotic trance, His search for meaning is certainly a process similar to the utilization techniques of Ericksonian therapy."

Viktor Frankl was born in Vienna on March 26, 1905 and died in the same city on September 2, 1997. He was a professor University of Vienna and guest professor at several universities in the United States to include Harvard and Southern Methodist University. Frankl was on the staff of Rothschild Hospital in Vienna when he was taken prisoner by the Nazi. Following his arrest, he was in German concentration camps till the end of World War II.

In an interview with Dr. Robert Schuler, Dr. Frankl told this story about his decision to stay in Europe when he had an opportunity to come to America in the early 40's. The situation in his homeland was becoming more and more difficult for those of the Jewish race. The local Jewish Synagogue had been bombed and left in ruins by the Nazis. Dr. Frankl was offered an opportunity to go to America. As the synagogue was destroyed, he went to a nearby Christian Church. He prayed that God would give him some direction as to what he should do. He wanted to know if he should go to America or stay with his family. Though he earnestly prayed, no answer came. He left the Church feeling that God had ignored him.

On the way home, he came to the destroyed Synagogue. He stopped for a few moment and picked up a piece of wood to take home as a keepsake for his father. When he arrived home, he examined the piece of wood more closely. As he read the inscription on the piece of wood, he realized that indeed God had heard his prayer and had answered him. The inscription on the piece wood read, "Honor your father and mother." He stayed in Europe and eventually ended up a prisoner of the Nazis.

If Frankl had not gone to that Church, stopped at that destroyed Synagogue, picked up that piece of wood and carried it home and read what was inscribed on it; would we have ever heard of Viktor Frankl? Maybe! Would he have had the impact on the second half of the Twenty Century that he had. I doubt it! He did go by that Church, stopped at the destroyed Synagogue, picked up that piece of wood, carried it home, read it and become one of the great contributor psychology, life and meaning in the Twenty Century.

Frankl survived the Holocaust and the Nazi death camps. During his time in the concentration camps, Frankl developed his approach to psychotherapy known as logotherapy. At the core of his theory is the belief that humanity's primary motivational force is the search for meaning.

Even in the degradation and misery of the concentration camps, Frankl was able to exercise the most important freedom of all: the freedom to determine one's own attitude and spiritual well-being. No sadistic Nazi SS guard was able to take that away from him or control the inner-life of Frankl's soul. One of the ways he found the strength to fight to stay alive and not lose hope was to think of his wife. Frankl clearly saw that it was those who were without hope who died quickest in the concentration camp. "He who has a why for life can put with any how." (Nietzsche) Frankl's first book in English *Man's Search For Meaning* was written while in a Nazi prison camp during World War II. (According to United States Library of Congress poll, that book is one of the ten most

influential books in America.) During those years, he experienced incredible suffering and degradation but further developed his theory of Logotherapy which focuses on the meaning of human existence and man's search for meaning.

During his years in the concentration camp, he experienced incredible suffering and degradation but further developed his theory of Logotherapy. "Logos" is the Greek word for "Meaning." Logotherapy focuses on the meaning of human existence and man's search for meaning. According to Frankl, the striving to find meaning in one's life is the primary motivational force in man. In using the term, "man," Frankl is referring to the "Human Race": male and female. Logotherapy forms a chain of interconnected links; (1) freedom of will, (2) will to meaning, and (3) meaning of life.

1. FREEDOM OF WILL: Man has freedom of will which remains even when all other freedoms are gone because he can choose what attitude he will take to his limitations. Determinism is an infectious disease for many psychiatrists, educators and adherents of determinist religion who are seemingly not aware that they are thereby under-minding the very basis of their own convictions. For either man's freedom must be recognized or else psychiatry is a waste of time, religion is a delusion and education is an illusion. Freedom means freedom in the face of three things: (1) the instincts, (2) inherited disposition, 3 environment

2. WILL TO MEANING: The basic striving of human beings is to find and fulfill meaning and purpose. People reach out to encounter meanings to fulfill. Such a view is profoundly opposed to those motivational theories which are based on the homeostasis principle. Those theories depict man as if he were a closed system. According to them, man is basically concerned with maintaining or restoring an inner equilibrium and to this end with the reduction of tensions. In the final analysis, this is also assumed to be the goal of gratification of drives and the satisfaction of needs.

Thus the homeostasis principle does not does not yield a sufficient ground on which to explain human behavior. Particularly such human phenomena as the creativity of man which is oriented toward values and meaning. It is Frankl's contention that the pleasure principle is self-defeating. The more one aims at pleasure, the more his aim is missed. (The hypnoterapist should understand this principle because we know that the harder you try, the more difficult it become to achieve. "Your eyes a stuck shut. Your eye are sticking tighter and thither. You cannot open your eyes. You can try, but the harder you try, the tighter they stick.") Pleasure is missed when it is the goal and obtained when it is the side effect of attaining a goal.

3. MEANING OF LIFE; Logotherapy leaves to the client the decision as to how to understand his own meaning whether along the lines of religious beliefs or agnostic convection. Logotheapy must remain available to everyone and so must hypnotherapy. The therapist can help an individual to discover his/her meaning, but it is the individual's responsibility to come to understand the meaning of his or her life.

Humans are ultimately self-determining. What one becomes within limits of endowment

and environment, he has made for himself. Frankl wrote, "In the concentration camp, we witnessed some of our comrades behave like swine while others behaved like saints. Man has both potentialities within himself: which one is actualized depends on decisions but not on conditions. Our generation is realistic, for we have come to know man as he really is. After all, man is that being who invented the gas chambers and he is also that being who entered the gas chambers upright, with the Lord's Prayer or the Shema Yisrael on his lips."

It was Frankl's contention that the pleasure principle of Freud is self-defeating. The more one aims for pleasure, the more his aim is missed. The very "pursuit of happiness" is what thwarts it. Pleasure is missed when it is the goal and attained when it is the side effect of attaining a goal. Hypnotherapist calls this the Law of Reversed Effect: "The harder you try...the more difficult it becomes."

I am reminded that in the Museum of the State House of Mississippi there are an old rusty breastplate and sword. They are relics of the first expedition of Spanish of Florida and the lands to the west. The Spanish came in search of gold, but found only lonely stretches of sand, dense forest, poisonous snakes and insects, wild beast and hostile people. They were at times discouraged, disheartened and ready to quit. On other occasions, they were feverish with hope from the report that gold was just around the bend, just over the hill, or just across the river. It seemed the further they went in search of gold, the further from gold they got. Is not this a parable of life?

The therapist's role consists of widening and broadening the visual field of the client so that the spectrums of meaning and values become conscious and visible to her. Meaning to life may change, but it never ceases to be. We can discover meaning through creative values, experience values and attitudinal. Meaning can come through what we give to life (creative values), by what we take from the world: Listening to music, reading, enjoying sports, etc. (experience values), and through the stand we take toward a situation we can no longer change such as the death of a loved one (attitudinal values). As long as one is conscious, he is under obligation to realize values, even if only attitudinal values. Frankl does not claim to have an answer for the client's meaning to life. Meaning must be found but it cannot be given. Logotherapy is an optimistic approach to life for it teaches that there are no tragic or negative aspects which cannot be the stand one takes to them be translated into a positive accomplishment.

It is commonly observed that anxiety produces precisely what the client fears. Frankl called this "anticipatory anxiety." For instance, in the cases of insomnia, the client reports that she has been having trouble going to sleep at night. The fear of not going to sleep only adds to difficulty of trying to go to sleep. Fear of test taking, sexual problems (impotence, failure to experience orgasm)

are intensified by anticipatory anxiety.

Frankl developed the technique of "paradoxical intention." For instance, when a phobia client is afraid that something will happen to him, the Logotherapist encourages him to

intent or wish for, even if only for a short time, precisely what he fears. Hypnotherapist calls this method or a slight variation of it, "desensitization." There can also be a bit of humor involved with paradoxical intention. I used this method with a lady who ate two bags of popcorn each night and wanted to stop or cut down. During the counseling session, I said to her, "Now, tonight just say to yourself, 'Well, I have been eating two bags of popcorn each night. Tonight, I am going to eat four bags. I am sure that if I can eat two, I can eat four.'" She began to laugh and said, "That is ridiculous. I don't want four bags. Two bags are too much also. I can be satisfied with one or less."

You may notice there can be a touch of the ridiculous and humor in the approach. Paradoxical Intention allows the client to develop a sense of detachment toward her problem by laughing at it. This procedure is based upon the fact that problems are caused as much by compulsion to avoid or fight them as by the problem itself. The avoiding and fighting the problem focuses on the problem and strengthens the symptoms. Another part of paradox intention is to exaggerate the problem. By exaggerating the problem and then letting it go, one may observe that the symptom diminishes and the client is no longer haunted by them (circle therapy).

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