

Alfred Adler, the founder of Individual Psychology, developed a holistic, goal-oriented, and socially focused approach to counselling. His techniques are still widely used in contemporary Adlerian Therapy, which focuses on understanding the individual within their social context and helping them achieve a sense of belonging and significance.

Alfred Adler saw people as capable, connected, and creative. His principles are optimistic, practical, and deeply respectful of human potential.

Adler's Core Principles

1. Holism – The Unity of the Individual

- The person is a whole, integrated being—not a collection of parts.
- Mind, body, emotions, and social context function as one system.

2. Purposeful Behavior – Goal Orientation

- All behavior is purposeful, even if the goal is unconscious.
- People strive to overcome challenges and achieve a sense of significance.

3. Social Interest (Gemeinschaftsgefühl)

- The highest expression of mental health is a deep sense of connection, contribution, and empathy for others.
- We are social beings whose wellbeing depends on cooperation and belonging.

4. Striving for Significance or Superiority

- Everyone has a basic drive to overcome feelings of inferiority.
- This striving is not about dominating others but about **mastery, growth, and contribution**.
- Problems arise when striving becomes distorted (e.g., power-seeking or avoidance).

5. Lifestyle (Style of Life)

- Each person develops a unique pattern of beliefs, habits, and goals, usually shaped in early childhood.
- This lifestyle guides how they interpret life and respond to challenges.

6. Creativity and Choice – The Creative Self

- People are not passive products of their environment.
- We have the **power to choose**, interpret, and creatively shape our responses and futures.

7. Family Constellation and Early Influences

- Birth order, sibling relationships, and early experiences play a key role in shaping one's worldview and goals.
- Early recollections offer insight into how the person sees themselves and life.

8. Encouragement

- One of the most powerful tools in Adlerian practice.
- Encouragement helps people build courage, confidence, and a sense of belonging.