

be terribly sick." To go from one doctor to the other is also a very good method to increase sleeplessness and to get attention on the side. Some people insist that they cannot sleep until one o'clock; or they cannot sleep without playing cards until two o'clock. All of these rules are excuses and add to the significance of sleeplessness.

Many persons spend their lives concerned with the disturbance of their sleep. It is like claiming a privilege. A person who cannot sleep must be considered in a different way. Everybody can see that he could accomplish much more if he only could sleep. Therefore, he has a certain privilege and cannot be measured with the same gauge as others. We doubt whether he really could accomplish more. In the therapy we make him understand that it is not entirely true that he would accomplish more if he would sleep. Amount of sleep and accomplishment are not related and cannot be measured by each other. But many connect the two. They insist that they can sleep only if they do not drink black coffee, or if they drink liquor. With this assumption they regulate sleep as they need it. They arrange their sleeplessness when they are not sure of success, if they need an alibi for an expected failure. In that way they combine two things which have nothing to do with each other. Sleeplessness occurs only in a situation in which a person is confronted with a problem for which he is not prepared.

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### CLASS ROOM DISCIPLINE

#### WILLARD BEECHER

The most precious possession of an individual is his "sense of importance." No one can long bear the feeling of being insignificant. When something happens to make one feel belittled in his own estimation, there is always an effort to build up as quickly as possible the damaged feeling of self-esteem. Mark Twain says in his essay, "What Is Man?" that "from his cradle to his grave a man never does a single thing which has any first and foremost object but one--to secure peace of mind, spiritual comfort, for HIMSELF." The child who is

creating a disturbance in the classroom, neglecting his studies, being a burden, obstructing the aims of the group, is not an exception to this law. Adler says that life is a striving for a successful achievement. Therefore, whatever we do must be part of our striving for success-importance.

Let us consider the active child who, for example, throws chalk in the classroom. According to this child's understanding of life, throwing a bit of chalk proves his courage--he risks punishment, he outwits authority, he gains the special attention of the class, he has influenced the lives of others, he is, for the moment, a "special person"--he has gained a momentary elevation above others who had not the "courage" to throw chalk in the teacher's presence. Furthermore, the ensuing disturbance requires the attention and effort of the teacher to create order--he has made the teacher his servant! This is a large "gain" on so small an investment as is represented by throwing chalk.

Or we may consider the passive child who pleads inability to do the work--or the lazy child--the so-called "stupid" child. These passive children need to be taken by the hand, metaphorically speaking, to get them to do any work. The fact that they do work when coddled proves that they, too, are capable of achievement. The great difficulty for the teacher lies in the fact that they do not go on alone,--that they seem to have no "self-starters." It would appear that their idea of life was to OCCUPY others and press them into servitude (a position of inferiority). The child, by a specious claim of being "inferior" obliges others to be subservient to him! Thus he wins control over others (a position of superiority) by a show of weakness (as if to be inferior). He gains a "sense of importance" by being the special care of the teacher; he is always on her mind; he succeeds in making his welfare HER responsibility instead of his own!

Individual Psychology teaches that the behavior of a child is always in complete accord with his personal interpretation of significance. If he does not adjust to the aims of the class, it is because these aims do not approximate his private idea of "how to gain significance." As long as a boy believes that he elevated

himself by throwing chalk, it would be futile to thwart or stop him from doing it. If we devise a punishment strong enough to defeat and deter him from this, he must find some other way to annoy others: FOR THIS IS HIS IDEA OF BEING IMPORTANT! As long as a passive child gains a feeling of spiritual contentment from having others worried and solicitous about him, it is futile to urge him to independent activity. In short, it is useless for the teacher to preach, nag, or punish children who are a burden in the classroom.

The sooner the teacher recognizes anti-social activity as the result of a mistaken conception of "how to be significant," the sooner she will be in position to begin educating the child. She must recognize the gulf which lies between her conception of "worth-while behavior" and the conception the child has of "significant activity." The striving for spiritual contentment is an urge too deep for any human being to give up. "You cannot condition anyone for defeat," says Adler. Individual Behavior is never wrong, as we are all perfectly behaved in relation to our INTERPRETATION of significance. Only a "goal" (conception) can ever be wrong, and perhaps no goal can ever be wholly wrong.

Every goal has as a nucleus the striving to overcome limitations--to rise from a minus feeling or situation to a plus. This is right, for the preservation of life depends on it. However, the conception of direction in which security and comfort may be found may be AWAY FROM SOCIAL USEFULNESS. This can never be more than a mistake, for the biological interdependence of man does not permit movement AWAY FROM common good! The "trouble maker" by his acts tells us that he does not feel bound by the immutable law of interdependence (that he does not understand the futility of his striving). Since all behavior is "good" behavior, let us no longer attack the child for what we call bad behavior; it contents him.

What shall we do then with a burdensome, disturbing child? We must change his understanding of SIGNIFICANCE. When his understanding is more social, his activity will agree with his understanding. TRUST ONLY MOVEMENT; if activity damages and burdens the group, seek ways to develop concepts of the interdependence of

mankind; abandon punishment forever. Only in this way can a child learn that "life means to contribute to mankind" (Adler) and not to be a burden or an irritation to others. Fair play is the secret of life. If and when a child understands interdependence, he cannot long gain spiritual contentment by so simple an expedient as that of making a nuisance of himself; he must then develop his social feeling and release his creative energy in the direction of social usefulness.

**KEY TO UNDERSTANDING THE ACTIVE CHILD:** The active child is much attracted by ideas of "courage", particularly deeds of daring. It is easy for him to believe that daring and courage are the same thing. If he lacks social intelligence (social feeling), he cannot understand courage and is obliged to content himself with acts of daring. If he lacks fellow feeling, these acts will frequently be damaging to the well-being of others; the result is a fight.

The active child who has a high degree of "sense of community" is beloved by his teachers, parents, children;--in short, by the whole community. We need not consider him, for he will always find a socially useful answer to any problem life presents. The active child who has a low degree of fellow feeling, however, is a great concern to everyone, for his life is a series of injuries to himself and the community. In childhood he breaks windows and toys, and as an adult he breaks faith and relationships. These deeds are perpetrated in the name of courage! It may require daring activity to break some fellow being's nose, but it takes courage (social feeling) to suffer a hurt to one's vanity. But since he lacks social understanding, he does not know this! These children are punished, scolded, shamed, and often thwarted temporarily, but to no avail. The only result is that they "toughen" themselves to stand the ever increasing doses of punishment until they present the aspect of incorrigible delinquents. How can they change until their understanding of courage is improved? **COURAGE DEMANDS THAT THEY BE A HELP AND NOT A BURDEN.** It could never mean less than this. If someone good at the art of explanation could show these children the difference between daring and courage, they would in time take small comfort in their "lawless" deeds. These illicit activities serve to build up their sense of im-

portance. When such children understand that theirs is only a "tin-horn imitation of significance," they can no longer employ socially useless acts for a "feeling of elevation."

**KEY TO UNDERSTANDING THE PASSIVE CHILD:** The passive child wants to feel important as does every other human being. The problems of life DEMAND ACTIVE CONTRIBUTION; therefore, we see at once that the passive child is making a serious and dangerous mistake in understanding. Adler says that the passive child wants to live "like a worm in an apple." No one who understood the interdependence of mankind (the necessity for contribution) would remain passive before problems. The passive child expects others to solve his problems. He has found that "dragging his feet" is useful, that when he lags too far, some kind (socially interested) person comes along and does his work for him! Because he does not understand the necessity for contribution and fellow feeling, he stubbornly sticks to his passivity as a means of enslaving others. He REFUSES to be encouraged, for courage would place him in the ranks of contributing members of the group. He prefers the special privilege of "being helped," of dragging nursery privileges into maturity. It is useless to speak to him of "being cowardly," for he prides himself on his "timidity," he asks for exemption from community and group demands on account of his "lack of courage." Thus he creates for himself a very favorable situation wherein others must bear his burdens while he remains free of responsibilities other than those he chooses to assume! He sabotages his courage and limits his activity to minimum essentials the better to reach his goal of IMPORTANCE. Importance, as he understands it, is to occupy the attention and support of others.

Because of human weakness and interdependence, there can in fact be no such thing as a personal problem. All human problems are social problems in a social setting and there are no other problems (Adler). The activity or inactivity of an individual is experienced either directly or indirectly by all mankind. One cannot dip his finger in the ocean without raising the level of the entire body of water. This is equally true of human behavior; each act of omission or commission influences the entire course of human welfare! Activity or inae-

tivity without feeling for the commonweal impoverishes the group, community, nation and mankind.

It is evident that each individual must be interested in the welfare of mankind (society) or he will be tempted to support his feeling of importance (personal advantage) in ways which damage social relatedness. Human beings and nations are too weak to live unto themselves as self-sufficient entities. To survive, they must depend upon and contribute to each other; they cannot exploit and enslave without damage to themselves as well as to others. In the classroom we find that "bad behavior," (either active or passive) tends to hold back the excellence and contribution of the entire group. Superficial observation of the behavior of offending parties shows that they lack understanding of social interdependence. They seek personal significance, attention, help, support without regard for the rights of others, as if such a thing were possible to accomplish. But human beings are not born with social understanding and the knowledge that they must BE HELPFUL if they want validity. It is the function of education to assist them to this point of view of life. The child who is a burden in the classroom does not yet understand that "life means to be a help and not a burden" (Adler). Force may suppress active children and goad passive children to a show of activity, but this is not education, for the child will revert to type when pressure is removed.

From this it appears that only socially interested children can be trusted to accomplish socially directed activity. Many children act as if they understood that life means to be a help, to accomplish tasks in socially useful ways, to gain significance by virtue of their contribution to the group. These children are never a problem to the teacher, for they accomplish rightly the tasks ahead of them. The need for "discipline" arises always from the children who lack social awareness and fellow feeling. Pressure cannot instill these qualities. Mistakes in the environment and early training in these children have lured them into striving for personal significance in unsocial directions. It is the task of the teacher to explain the biological weakness and resulting interdependence of the human animal--to show how man survives ONLY because he has trained

himself to live in groups and contribute to mutual security--that significance depends on what the individual CONTRIBUTES to the community--that without contribution man must perish from the face of the earth--how every considerate act lifts the entire level of the group and therefore the level of all society to the advantage of every member of the group.

When this has been explained, it is necessary to show these socially uninterested children how they damage themselves as well as others--how socially useless activity deprives them of the significance they seek to gain by it--that such activity is "cowardly" no matter how daring it may be; that the notice and attention gained from it is a cheap, easily won commodity which any child could get if he had the same lack of social understanding. When the futility of such striving has been explained, it is necessary to encourage the child to seek socially useful ways of gaining approval through contribution to the group. Such efforts should be praised. Useful tasks which the child is able to do should be provided for him and public recognition given for their accomplishment. When the child understands the tawdriness of socially useless triumphs and when they are, through explanation, divested of glamor in his imagination, he is more easily lured to attempt useful activities. If the way to social approval is made easy for a short time so that he finds it possible to feel significance through contribution, his new understanding of life tends to keep him striving on the "useful side of life." Each experience of success adds to his feeling of worthwhileness and he soon finds it more "profitable" to be a help than a burden.

Therefore, the problem of classroom discipline is not to find a way to bring pressure or punishment to bear on children but rather to destroy false strivings for a "sense of importance," through explanation of the interrelatedness of human striving and of the child's place in this intricate pattern.

No one can accomplish more than he UNDERSTANDS--hence the problem of discipline is to furnish the child with understanding rather than with compulsion. Every child is seeking power and expression. If he experiences our authority as power over him, he will seek to be-

come still more powerful, and get a sense of significance in defeating our personal and group aims. Let us not be guilty of stimulating his striving in this mistaken direction. Who gave us authority over our fellow beings? We are equally responsible to the group. Understanding will encourage contribution, but force discourages it and engenders resistance; compulsion does not increase social feeling and "sense of community." We "educate" only when we correct the mistaken conceptions a child may have of the problems of social-relatedness. Anyone can domineer and suppress weaker individuals, but education is the art of increasing social feeling and social awareness.

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THE FIRST INTERVIEW  
(THREE APPROACHES TO GUIDANCE)

Charles Alfred Adler

Success or failure in guidance work depends on the worker's attitude toward three constituent factors of democratic living: cooperation, regard for the individual in his uniqueness, the use of intelligence as a method of approach. It is assumed that the goal a modern guidance worker is driving at is the more and more adequate, and more inclusive meeting of basic human needs as these have been formulated by recent investigation such as that of Daniel A. Prescott in "Emotion and the Educative Process."<sup>1</sup> If met in a democracy, needs are to be determined (a) cooperatively. There must be an opportunity for everyone to offer his cooperation in co-determining needs. No individual alone, no group by itself can do the determining. Scientific research, even, is only a help, not a dictate in this. In order to feel emotionally ready for cooperation, an individual must be convinced that he is really wanted, needed, enjoyable, and actually enjoyed for his (b) personal uniqueness. To be enjoyed means also to be (c) understood--there must be a rational awareness of an individual's needs. Is he successful? Is he not? If yes--in what respect is he successful? If no--is his failing rooted within himself, or in the situation, or in what

1. American Council on Education, 1939